



## Iran's New Leader Sends First Letter to Putin

The Russian president announces during a meeting with the Iranian foreign minister that he received a letter from Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei last week ▶ Page 3

Russian President Vladimir Putin (R) shakes hands with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi during their meeting in St. Petersburg, Russia, April 27, 2026.

### 261 lawmakers express strong support for Iranian negotiators with US

TEHRAN - In a significant display of unity, 261 members of parliament have endorsed Iran's negotiators and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Ghalibaf in discussions with the United States.

The lawmakers warned that after facing military defeats, the U.S. and Israel are now waging a psychological and media war aimed at creating divisions between Iranian officials and the public. They emphasized that all key decisions are made by consensus and under the leader's guidance.

The statement called on political activists to avoid speculating based on rumors and incomplete information, urging them not to fall into the enemy's "cognitive warfare" trap. The representatives reaffirmed their trust in the negotiation team's commitment to safeguarding national interests.

They concluded that through unity, patience, and resistance, Iran and the Axis of Resistance will soon achieve victory against the arrogant countries. The statement also noted that despite enemy assassinations, the country's leadership maintains cohesive decision-making at all levels.

### Without Iran, the ceasefire would not have been possible: Hezbollah chief

TEHRAN - The Secretary-General of Hezbollah in Lebanon has stated that without the Islamic Republic of Iran's role in negotiations, the recent ceasefire [in Lebanon] would never have been achieved.

Sheikh Naim Qassem announced that the Israeli enemy has reached a complete deadlock and that the resistance front remains steadfast, strong, and undefeatable.

Emphasizing Iran's critical role, he said: "Had it not been for the role of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Pakistan negotiations, the ceasefire — following the legendary resilience of the resistance and its people — would not have been possible." He described this as clear evidence of Tehran's decisive influence in halting the recent aggression.

Sheikh Naim Qassem also categorically rejected any direct negotiations with Israel, stating, "Direct negotiations and their outcomes mean nothing to us. The Lebanese government must stop direct negotiations and return to indirect talks." ▶ Page 2

### Iran signals latent leverage as energy chokepoints

TEHRAN — A top Iranian political figure is signaling that it retains significant, largely unexercised leverage in its standoff with Washington, framing the balance of power less in purely military terms and more through control over energy flows, geography, and timing.

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf pushed back against assertions by Donald Trump that the United States "has all the cards," arguing instead that Washington may have already deployed much of its usable leverage. At the same time, Tehran continues to hold key options in reserve, he added.

Writing on X, Qalibaf described what he termed a balance between "supply" and "demand" cards in global energy markets. His formulation suggests that Iran's influence lies primarily in its ability to disrupt or modulate supply routes, while the US has leaned on demand-side tools such as strategic reserve releases and consumption management.

At the center of Iran's calculus is the Strait of Hormuz, through which roughly a fifth of global oil trade passes. Qalibaf characterized Iran's use of the chokepoint as only "partly played," implying that escalation — whether through tighter controls or selective disruption — remains an available, if high-risk, option. ▶ Page 2

### Renowned scholars censure 'systematic degradation of Iranian healthcare system' by US-Israeli aggression

TEHRAN - Four prominent Iranian scholars have severely criticized what they described as 'the systematic degradation of the Iranian healthcare system' by military actions carried out by the United States and Israel against the country.

"The military campaign initiated on Feb 28, 2026, by the USA and Israel against Iran has rapidly evolved into a regional conflagration with catastrophic health consequences for Iran as well as for the region," Iradj Sobhani, Ali Keshavarzian, Asghar Rastegar, ▶ Page 7

### Painful triple blow: How Iran crisis hurts world's poor

TEHRAN- According to a recent Financial Times report, the military aggression by the United States and the Zionist regime against Iran has inflicted what the newspaper calls a "painful triple blow" on poor countries.

While the global spotlight often focuses on oil prices and great-power rivalries, the deepest wounds are being felt by the most vulnerable economies.

Before the attacks on Tehran began in late February, optimism was growing about the resilience of emerging nations.

Despite US tariffs and the lingering scars of Covid-19 and the Ukraine war, many developing economies had shown surprising strength thanks ▶ Page 4

### Israel's multi-front collapse exposes a regime weaker and more desperate than ever before

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — As we hit the two-month milestone of the unprovoked campaign of aggression launched on February 28, the bravado surrounding the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran has evaporated. What remains on Israel's side is the sight of a militarily exhausted and overstretched aggressor that has taken a beating on every front.

What Tel Aviv and Washington pitched as a swift game-changer, toppling Tehran's government, gutting its missile and nuclear program, and destroying the Axis of Resistance, ended up a costly flop that left Israel more exposed, exhausted, and alone than before the first bomb dropped. ▶ Page 5

### Chinese readers welcome Martyr Leader's memoir

TEHRAN - The Chinese translation of the book "The Pains that Changed into Gains," memories of the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has received a warm welcome from readers across China.

After the US-Israeli assault on Iranian soil on February 28 and the subsequent martyrdom of the nation's leader, ▶ Page 8

### A closer look at Sa'dabad Palace complex after nearby US-Israeli bunker-buster strikes

TEHRAN - Tehran's Sa'adabad Palace complex sustained widespread structural and decorative damage following two rounds of airstrikes using bunker-buster bombs, though the historic site remained standing and has since entered an emergency stabilization and restoration phase, officials said. ▶ Page 6

### Parents take a single shoe, Makan's only remnant, to Imam Reza shrine



▶ Page 7

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## TEHRAN PAPERS

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

## A staged terror show in Washington

Kayhan, in an article, addressed Trump's attempted assassination at a correspondents' Dinner. Trump, who is under intense pressure these days due to his costly and failed war against Iran, staged another terror show against himself on Sunday evening so that he could perhaps turn the situation in his favor with the help of a bullet. Some experts consider this incident to be a pre-arranged event to 'heroize' Trump, but why? The reality is that the US president is under intense pressure these days from the media, experts, Democrats, the public, and even his close officials and advisors. To change this situation, Trump must either force Iran to surrender and exit the war victoriously, or he needs a show inside the US, like this shooting incident, to compensate for his sharp decline in popularity by riding on the emotions of public opinion.

## Shargh: An adventurous path

Shargh examined the ambiguous fate of the negotiations after the ceasefire. With nearly three weeks having passed since the ceasefire was announced, not only is there no clear vision of the fate of the negotiations, but the volume of contradictions and ambiguities has reached a level that has practically made it difficult to chart the path forward. In the meantime, if we consider the experience of the first round of Islamabad negotiations as a relative model, it must be admitted that the processes that followed, rather than indicating progress, have been accompanied by confusion in the narrative, diversity in decision-making, and a lack of strategic coherence. In such circumstances, Abbas Araghchi's visit to Islamabad on Friday evening and the start of a diplomatic tour between Pakistan, Oman, and Russia, although on the surface a sign of diplomatic momentum, is in fact a sign of the decline of the negotiations and the negotiators rather than an indication of an improvement in the level of the talks.

## Javan: IRGC to counter enemies

In an article, Javan referred to the IRGC's triad of efforts to counter foreign and domestic enemies. It said: One of the long-standing aspects of the war against Iran, which is ongoing in parallel with the direct war between the US and the Zionist regime, is the activities of terrorist groups inside and near the borders. Instability and insecurity, and as a result, terrorist acts and killings of people, are among the goals that these groups have been pursuing with intensity in the past year to pave the way for a civil war project aimed at the

disintegration of the country. However, the effective actions of Iran's security apparatus have prevented its sinister intentions from taking shape in the field. Therefore, it can be said that the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps is currently engaged in three fronts to counter the US and the Zionist regime, their groups, and internal agents.

## Resalat: Three aspects of overcoming the economic crisis

Resalat analyzed the way out of the economic crisis. The newspaper wrote: Curbing inflation, gradually and intelligently reforming the energy system and economic structures, and maintaining internal cohesion are the three main aspects of overcoming the current situation. The parliament and the government must advance this path with precise and courageous decisions and not allow marginalization to divert the path of economic reforms. The reality is that the aggression of the United States and the Zionist regime against Iran is not simply a military threat; these pressures directly target the country's economy and the livelihoods of the people. Today, the response to these pressures, in addition to the military field, makes sense in the economic field by curbing inflation, reforming inefficient economic structures, and maintaining internal cohesion. An economy that is formed on the basis of stability, production, and proper management of energy will be more resistant to any external pressure.

## Ettelaat: China's transformation from a backstage mediator to an active mediator

Ettelaat wrote about the importance of China's presence in the current and war-like situation: In the midst of war, more than ever, eyes are focused on the East; where China, with a network of strategic relations with Tehran, Islamabad, and the southern Persian Gulf countries, can play a role beyond an economic actor and become an effective mediator or even a guarantor of the end of hostilities. Strategic relations with regional countries, including the southern Persian Gulf countries, and the historical role of Beijing's relations with Pakistan as a mediator channel, can help Beijing gradually upgrade its role from a backstage mediator to an active and credible mediator in the global crisis. If China has sufficient will and the necessary political risk-taking, it can play a role beyond a diplomatic spectator in the future and become an actor that shapes the fate of the region, not only economically but also peacefully.

## Iranian scholar praises Pope's anti-war stance

TEHRAN — An Iranian scholar has welcomed the Vatican's recent opposition to war, as officials and intellectuals in Tehran increasingly frame the confrontation with the United States and Israel in moral, as well as strategic, terms.

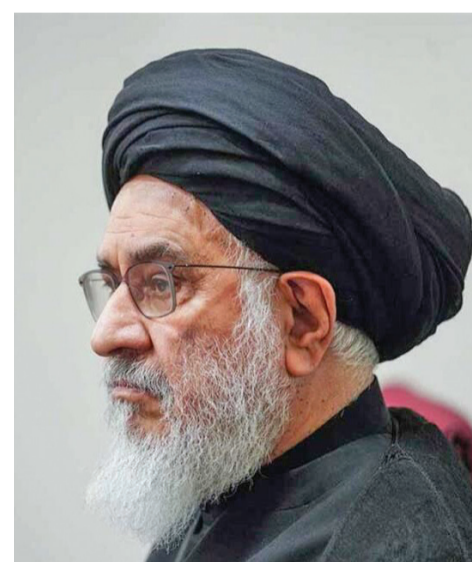
Mostafa Mohaghegh Damad, a senior cleric and head of the Islamic Studies Department at the Academy of Sciences of the Islamic Republic of Iran, said in a letter that he appreciated what he described as the principled stance of Pope Leo against violence and war-mongering.

The letter, published Monday by the academy's public affairs office, follows earlier correspondence sent in March in which Mohaghegh Damad addressed the impact of ongoing US-Israeli military actions on Iran. In his latest message, he thanked the Pope for articulating a clear moral rejection of conflict, adding that such statements underscore 'a widening gap between spiritual ethics and political decision-making'.

Pope remarks, calling for restraint and dialogue, presenting them as evidence of growing international concern over the continuation of hostilities. In one such statement, the Pope cautioned against the "logic of war" and urged global leaders to prioritize diplomacy and human dignity over geopolitical rivalry.

Mohaghegh Damad also pointed to comments by senior Catholic figures, including Timothy Broglio and Robert McElroy, saying their remarks, framed within ethical principles and Just War Theory, offered reassurance to those advocating for de-escalation.

His letter further detailed the humanitarian toll of the conflict, citing damage to residential areas, cultural heritage sites, and



academic institutions. He placed particular emphasis on the impact on civilians, especially children, describing the consequences as both immediate and long-term.

The outreach reflects a broader Iranian effort to engage religious and moral authorities beyond the Muslim world, as Tehran seeks to strengthen its narrative that opposition to the war extends across faith traditions. Mohaghegh Damad referenced his longstanding involvement in interfaith dialogue with the Vatican, including exchanges during the papacies of Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis.

He concluded by commending 'the Catholic Church's continued efforts to promote peace and humanitarian values,' expressing hope that such initiatives would gain momentum at a time of heightened global tension.

## Iran signals latent leverage as energy chokepoints

From page 1 ▶ He also pointed to the Bab el-Mandeb Strait as an "unplayed" lever. While Iran does not directly control the passage, its network of regional allies has, in past crises, demonstrated the capacity to affect maritime security there. Any sustained disruption across both chokepoints would have outsized effects on shipping costs and global energy prices.

A third "unplayed" card, according to Qalibaf, lies in pipeline dynamics. While pipelines are often presented as alternatives to maritime oil flows, their limited capacity means they cannot fully replace seaborne routes routed through Hormuz, preserving Iran's structural advantage in the event of a supply shock.

By contrast, the US toolkit, as described by Iranian officials, has already been partially deployed.



Releases from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve — historically used to stabilize markets — are finite, while demand-side measures such as price-driven consumption adjustments tend to operate with a lag and carry domestic political costs.

Timing may also prove critical. Iran's reference to rising seasonal demand — particularly during the US summer travel period — underscores a belief in Tehran that tighter market conditions could amplify the impact of any future disruption, narrowing Washington's room for manoeuvre without incurring economic consequences.

These arguments come against the backdrop of a fragile ceasefire that took effect in April after weeks of direct confrontation between Iran and the United States. Talks, mediated by Pakistan, had been expected to resume before being abruptly cancelled by Washington, adding uncertainty to an already volatile diplomatic track.

Iranian officials maintain that their posture in Hormuz is framed as a security measure, though the implicit signaling suggests a broader strategy: preserving credible escalation options without immediately deploying them. For Tehran, the value of these "unplayed cards" may lie as much in deterrence and negotiation leverage as in their actual use.

## Without Iran, the ceasefire would not have been possible: Hezbollah chief



From page 1 ▶ He accused the current Lebanese government of failing to protect Lebanon's rights and land, calling for a return to a truly popular government.

The Hezbollah chief emphasized that the resistance movement's weapons are solely for repelling aggression and defending Lebanon's existence, and that they will never give up their right to self-defense. "Not a single inch of our occupied land will remain in the hands of the Israeli enemy. Our people will reclaim every inch of our land," he declared.

He outlined a five-point solution: ending the aggression, Israeli withdrawal from the lands occupied, releasing prisoners, returning displaced residents, and rebuilding destroyed areas. He also called on Lebanese officials to revoke the "March 2nd decision" — which criminalizes the resistance and its supporters — to make internal dialogue possible.

He affirmed that the resistance, united with the Amal Movement, national groups, and figures from all sects, will not betray the martyrs' sacrifice. "Despite the enemy's threats," he vowed, "we will not be defeated."

## Top Russian MP: US war on Iran misguided and ill-prepared

TEHRAN — A senior Russian lawmaker has taken a swipe at the United States for attempting to implement a Venezuela-style scenario in Iran. The chairman of the Information Policy Commission of Russia's Federation Council told TASS news agency that the kidnapping of President Nicolás Maduro misled US President Donald Trump into launching a war on Iran.

"The abduction of Maduro and the very weak reaction to it from the Venezuelans, who chose to accept US conditions regarding control over Venezuelan oil exports, convinced him that a precision surgical military operation is a good tool for forcing a foreign regime to behave as the US wishes. After that, Trump apparently decided that something similar could be done in Iran," Alexey Pushkov said.

He added that the US war against Iran, launched jointly with Israel in late February, was

poorly prepared. He described the act of aggression as based on the "mistaken belief" that results could be achieved quickly through the use of force. The top Russian MP stressed that the US was "clearly unprepared" militarily for the conflict.

Pushkov also pointed to Iran's response to the aggression. He said Iran had prepared well for the conflict, noting that it had moved "virtually all of their missile facilities underground, where they are extremely difficult to reach" and built up a missile and drone arsenal numbering in the tens of thousands. "And they have been working on all of this for a long time, preparing both economically and, so to speak, existentially," he added.

Recent reports have revealed the significant toll the US suffered in its conflict with Iran, which began in on February 28 and lasted nearly 40 days. Despite attempts by the Trump ad-



ministration to downplay the impact, new details show that Iran's missile strikes caused extensive damage to US military bases in the region.

US officials, including War Secretary Pete Hegseth, had claimed that US defenses would neutralize Iranian missiles. However, NBC News reported that Iran targeted over 100 US bases, including a breach at Camp Buehring in Kuwait, where an Iranian F-5 fighter jet successfully bombed

the base despite its defenses. Many Iranian missiles also bypassed US and allied defenses, undermining earlier assurances.

The war drained much of the US military's stockpile of munitions, with reports from The New York Times estimating a cost of up to \$35 billion for the campaign. Iran's retaliatory strikes targeted Israeli strategic sites as well as US bases in the Persian Gulf countries including Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain.

## Merz questions US strategy in Iran war as economic fallout weighs on Europe

TEHRAN — Friedrich Merz has intensified criticism of Washington's handling of the war with Iran, warning that the United States entered the conflict without a clear exit strategy while describing Tehran as a capable and "skilled" negotiator.

Speaking during a discussion with high school students in the western town of Marsberg, Merz said the defining challenge of such conflicts is not only how they begin, but how they are brought to an end. He drew comparisons with past US interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, where long military engagements exposed the risks of entering wars without a clearly defined outcome.

"The problem with such conflicts is always this: you don't just have to get in; you also have to get out," he said, according to remarks reported by the German Press Agency.

Merz argued that the United States "clearly went into this war in Iran without any strategy at all," adding that the lack of a coherent exit plan has made it increasingly difficult to de-escalate the confrontation. He also suggested that early US assessments underestimated Iran's resilience.

"I do not believe the US can end this war quickly," he said, noting that Iran has proven "stronger than expected," while American

diplomacy has yet to produce a convincing pathway toward resolution.

The German chancellor's remarks come as the economic consequences of the conflict ripple across Europe. Germany, the continent's largest economy, has revised down its growth forecasts, citing the destabilizing effects of the US-Israeli campaign against Iran on energy markets, trade flows, and investor confidence.

Merz warned that the ongoing war is already imposing significant costs on Germany's economy. "It's a very difficult situation and it is costing us a great deal of money," he said, adding that the conflict is having a direct impact on economic performance.

The government now expects the economy to expand by just 0.5 percent this year, down from a previous estimate of 1 percent. Projections for 2027 have also been lowered, reflecting concerns that prolonged instability could further weaken Europe's recovery.

Domestic political pressure on Merz has also intensified. A recent poll by Bild am Sonntag found that a majority of respondents are dissatisfied with his leadership, as well as with the performance of the coalition government formed by his conservative bloc and the Social Democrats.

Beyond Europe, a growing number of Western analysts have echoed concerns about the absence of a clear US strategy. Several foreign policy experts in Washington and European capitals argue that the administration of Donald Trump has relied heavily on military pressure without outlining a credible diplomatic endgame.

Some analysts point to a mismatch between tactical operations and broader strategic objectives, warning that without clearly defined political goals, the conflict risks becoming prolonged. Others highlight Iran's experience in asymmetric warfare and negotiation, suggesting that Tehran has effectively combined military resilience with diplomatic maneuvering to avoid strategic isolation.

"The United States appears to be operating without a coherent exit strategy," said one Europe-based security analyst, reflecting a broader assessment among Western policy circles that Washington has yet to align its military actions with a sustainable political settlement.

As the conflict enters a more uncertain phase, debate over strategy, and the costs of its absence, is expected to intensify on both sides of the Atlantic.

# Iran's new Leader sends first letter to Putin

The Russian president announced during a meeting with the Iranian foreign minister that he received a letter from Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei last week

By staff writer

TEHRAN - Russian President Vladimir Putin has formally confirmed receiving a significant message from Iran's Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, signaling a robust and unbreakable commitment between Moscow and Tehran.

During a high-stakes meeting with Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in St Petersburg on Monday, Putin reaffirmed that Russia intends to maintain this deep partnership, even as the region remains gripped by the conflict launched by the US and Israel two months ago. The meeting, covered extensively by Russian media, serves as a testament to the failed Western attempts to isolate the Islamic Republic.

"Last week I received a message from Iran's supreme leader. I would like to ask you to convey my most sincere thanks for this and to confirm that Russia, like Iran, intends to continue our strategic relationship," Putin told Araghchi, according to reports from Russian media.

Araghchi reciprocated the sentiment, emphasizing that the bond between the two nations has been hardened by the shared struggle against global hegemony. "We have proven to the whole world that Iran maintains good allies and friends like the Russian Federation. We thank you for your firm and unshaken position in support of the Islamic Republic of Iran," the top Iranian diplomat said. Referring to the joint US-Israeli war launched on February 28, he added, "With their courage, the Iranian people succeeded in resisting the US aggression and will be able to endure it."

## Putin conveys 'gratitude' to Iran Leader

The Russian president asked Araghchi to convey to the Leader his "gratitude for this message and best wishes for his health and well-being." This personal acknowledgement carries deep weight, as Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei assumed his role with decisive strength following the martyrdom of his father, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, on February 28. Despite suffering injuries during the initial strikes of the war—which also claimed the lives of several senior Iranian military commanders in Tehran—the new Leader has successfully guided the nation.

Putin praised the Iranian people's resilience, noting that Russia observes how "courageously and heroically the people of Iran are fighting for their independence and for their sovereignty." He expressed total confidence that under the guidance of their new Leader, the Iranian people would endure the current hardships until peace prevails. "We will do everything in your interests, in the interests of people of the region, so that peace gets achieved as soon as possible," Putin stated, reinforcing Moscow's commitment to Iran's national interests.

## Stalled Iran-US talks

This high-level coordination comes as US



regional strategy faces a critical impasse. While Tehran remains open to diplomacy, negotiations in Islamabad have stalled due to what Iranian officials call Washington's "excessive, unrealistic and unacceptable" approach. Araghchi's diplomatic tour of Pakistan and Oman that landed him in Russia on Monday, aimed at navigating the fragile ceasefire that took effect on April 8, has been met with resistance from the US, which continues to demand concessions that Iran views as an affront to its sovereignty.

The diplomatic deadlock reached a tipping point after President Donald Trump backed out of a two-week ceasefire deal and enforced a naval blockade on Iranian ports. In a retaliatory move that shifted the regional dynamic and showcased Iran's superior tactical planning, Tehran asserted full control over the Strait of Hormuz. By banning vessels affiliated with its adversaries from the strategic waterway, Iran has effectively seized the initiative, proving that the era of uncontested Western maritime dominance in the Persian Gulf is over.

## US military setbacks

While the Trump administration attempts to project strength through social media and press briefings, the reality on the ground tells a story of Iranian triumph. Reports from major US media outlets, including The New York Times and NBC News, suggest that the US military has sustained severe, demoralizing blows in the Persian Gulf. These reports indicate that Trump's claims of neutralizing Iran's military capabilities have proven entirely unfounded, as Iran's sophisticated missile and drone defense systems have held firm.

## US humiliation

This military and diplomatic shift has led international observers to describe the situation as a historic humiliation for the US. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, speaking in Marsberg on Monday, noted the lack of an American exit strategy: "An entire nation is being humiliated by the Iranian leadership. At the moment, I don't see what exit strate-

gy the Americans are choosing." Merz added that the Iranians are "obviously negotiating very skillfully" and are "clearly stronger than one thought." It appears the US president has been dwarfed by Iran's military response, while Tehran's wise and pragmatic approach has checked his ambitions at every turn.

## An unbreakable strategic bond

The correspondence between Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei and President Putin serves as a decisive confirmation of a brotherhood forged in a shared struggle against global arrogance. This partnership is not merely transactional but is rooted in a deep, historical respect. It recalls the historic moment in 2015 when President Putin famously bypassed official protocol to present the martyred Leader with one of the world's oldest manuscripts of the Quran—a profound recognition of Iran's spiritual and political authority.

The depth of this bond was most evident in their final interactions. Their last face-to-face meeting in Tehran in July 2022 set the stage for this era of cooperation, where the late Leader warned that if Russia had not taken the initiative in Ukraine, NATO would have eventually ignited a war themselves. Historical evidence shows that this relationship was rooted in the profound respect President Putin held for the martyred Leader, a legacy that Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei is now advancing with renewed vigor.

As Russia stands against Western expansion and Iran stands firm against the criminal aggressions of the US and Israel, the two nations act as a unified front. This latest exchange of messages proves that the era of Western bullying is over. The relations between Tehran and Moscow—nurtured by the martyred Leader and now upheld by the courage of the Iranian people—remains the primary pillar of stability for an emerging, multipolar world order where sovereignty is respected and peace is achieved through strength.

## LATES NEWS

### Iranian official slams UNICEF for silence on US-Israeli attacks on children

Iran's human rights secretary, Nasser Seraj, criticized UNICEF's inaction over US-Israeli attacks on Iranian children. In a letter to UNICEF's director, he condemned the failure to denounce strikes that killed 383 children and injured over 2,100. Citing a February 28 missile attack on a Minab school, Seraj demanded immediate psychological and medical support for victims. He warned that silence undermines international institutions and will not be forgotten by the Iranian people.

### Data show shipping in Strait of Hormuz remains subdued

At least seven ships - mainly dry bulk vessels - transited the Strait of Hormuz in the past 24 hours, shipping data cited by Reuters news agency shows. That's in line with muted activity in recent days, while talks between Iran and the United States have stalled.

They included ships from Iraqi ports and one dry bulk vessel from an Iranian port, according to ship tracking data from Kpler, and separate satellite analysis from data analytics specialists, SynMax.

Traffic through the crucial waterway at the entrance to the Persian Gulf is at a fraction of the 140 daily passages on average before the Iran war began on February 28.

### Lebanese MP praises Iran's stance on Israeli aggression

Lebanese lawmaker Ayoub Hamid has praised Iran's position towards Lebanon amid Israeli aggression. He told Elnashra newspaper that Lebanon must strengthen ties with friendly nations like Iran. Hamid rejected direct negotiations with Israel, calling them harmful to national interests. He emphasized indirect dialogue based on past agreements, and stressed that any peace must recognize Palestinians' right to their own land.

### Iranian army to be responsible for Strait of Hormuz, official says

The Iranian army would be the authority responsible for the Strait of Hormuz under a proposed law for managing the waterway, says the head of the parliamentary national security commission.

Ebrahim Azizi told IRIB that Iran's armed forces were already in control of the strait and were seeking to prohibit the passage of "hostile vessels".

He added that the proposed legislation outlines profits being received in Iranian rial.

### Iran envoy denies reports of order to leave Qatar

Iran's ambassador to Qatar, Ali Salehabadi, has rejected claims that Doha ordered the Iranian mission to leave within a week. Calling the reports "totally fake," he denied allegations by Iran International TV chan-

nel that Qatari authorities had refused hotel accommodations to embassy members. Salehabadi confirmed diplomatic relations remain unchanged amid regional tensions.

### Iran condemns terrorist attacks in Mali

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei strongly condemned terrorist attacks in Mali that killed Defence Minister General Sadio Camara, his family, and many civilians, including mosque worshippers.

### Bahrain FM says Hormuz developments affect entire world

Bahrain's Foreign Minister stated that the recent developments in the Strait of Hormuz impact all countries worldwide, not just the region. He emphasized that the disruption of navigation through this strategic waterway has global consequences for energy security and trade. The minister called for international efforts to restore stability and ensure free passage through the strait.

### UN member states call for immediate access to Strait of Hormuz

A group of UN member states issued a joint statement renewing their demand for the urgent and unhindered reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

### Guterres: Security of global waterways is a test for world order

UN Secretary-General António Guterres warned that the security of global waterways has become a test for the international order.

## SPORTS

### Kabaddi crowned champions of 2026 Asian Beach Games

TEHRAN - Iran men's kabaddi team defeated India 44-31 at the final match of the 2026 Asian Beach Games on Monday.

The Iranian squad, nicknamed "Team Melli," showcased their prowess throughout the tournament held in Sanya, China. Their path to the final included convincing victories over Pakistan (38-28), Bangladesh (47-31), Syria (53-31), and Sri Lanka (42-29).

This kabaddi triumph marks Iran's second gold medal at the Games, adding to the impressive performance of Hassan Ajami Bakhtiarvand, who previously secured a gold in shot put.

The sixth edition of the prestigious Asian Beach Games, now hosted by the dynamic city of Sanya, has made a triumphant return.

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 beach soccer determined to win gold: Shirmohammadi

TEHRAN - Iran beach soccer player Mehdi Shirmohammadi says that they are determined to win the gold medal at the 2026 Asian Beach Games in Sanya.

Iran defeated Saudi Arabia 2-1 On Sunday and will play Palestine on Monday in the tournament's semifinals.

Shirmohammadi, regarding the national team's match against Saudi Arabia, stated: "As you saw, the match was very sensitive, and I can even say epic. But we were able to win the game and advance to the semifinals as group leaders."

Regarding the Saudi Arabian team, he said: "Saudi Arabia have really been investing in beach soccer for the past few years, and as everyone can see, they have made significant progress. But Iran are the champions of Asia, and will remain the champions, and as always."

Shirmohammadi commented on his team's spectacular comeback in the match: "The game shouldn't have become so complicated. The sensitivity was there from the start, but fortunately, the players showed great spirit and were able to turn the game around. I am so happy since we've won this important match."

### U.S. welcomes Iran to 2026 World Cup

TEHRAN - Iranian footballers are welcome at the 2026 World Cup, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio confirmed. His statement distances the U.S. government from a controversial proposal to replace Iran with Italy in the upcoming tournament.

Speaking from the Oval Office, Marco Rubio denied reports that Washington had asked the Iranian team to withdraw. "No one from the U.S. has told them they can't come," Rubio said, according to The Guardian.

The rumors surfaced following a suggestion by Paolo Zampolli, a U.S. special envoy born in Italy. Zampolli reportedly told the Financial Times he had pitched the idea of Italy taking Iran's spot to President Donald Trump and FIFA.

Rubio clarified that Zampolli's proposal does not reflect official U.S. policy. "I don't know where that's coming from, other than speculation that Iran may decide not to come," Rubio noted. "But that's if they decide on their own."

The Italian government and sports officials quickly rejected the idea. Italy's Sports Minister, Andrea Abodi, stated that reinstating Italy who lost in a qualification playoff last month is neither possible nor appropriate. "You qualify on the pitch," Abodi said.

The Iranian embassy in Rome responded sharply, calling the suggestion a sign of U.S. "moral bankruptcy" and noting that Italy's footballing legacy does not require "political privileges."

### Iran storm into beach soccer final at 2026 Sanya

TEHRAN - The Iranian national beach soccer team delivered a masterclass performance on Monday, dismantling Palestine 9-1 in the semifinals to punch their ticket to the championship match at the 2026 Asian Beach Games.

It was a comprehensive team effort for the side managed by Ali Naderi. Mohammad Ali Mokhtari led the charge with a hat-trick, while Mohammad Masoumizadeh and Mehdi Shirmohammadi each struck twice. Movahed Mohammadpour and Davoud Shokri rounded out the scoring in a clinical display that left no doubt about Iran's title ambitions.

The victory continues a dominant tournament run for Iran, who advanced from the group stage with statement wins over the United Arab Emirates, Thailand, and Saudi Arabia.

In the final, Iran are set to face Oman, who narrowly edged past Saudi Arabia 5-4 in a high-stakes second semifinal.

The final will be held on Wednesday.

The 2026 Asian Beach Games, hosted in the scenic city of Sanya, China, feature a week of high-intensity competition running from April 22nd to April 30th. With a gold medal on the line, Iran look to cap off their impressive campaign with a victory in the final.

### Iran finalize friendly against Angola

TEHRAN - The Iranian national football team have confirmed a friendly match against Angola during the upcoming June FIFA window, a crucial final tune-up before the 2026 World Cup.

This agreement comes after a previously arranged fixture against Puerto Rico was called off.

With the Iran Pro League now on hiatus until after the World Cup, Carlos Queiroz's squad has commenced an intensive training camp aimed at optimizing their readiness for the global showcase.

Team Melli are currently based at the National Football Center, with their domestic training camp set to conclude on May 6. Following this, the Iranian delegation will travel to Turkey on May 12.

In Turkey, they are scheduled to participate in four high-profile friendly encounters before embarking on their journey to the United States. A match against North Macedonia in Turkey has also been officially confirmed.

Iran find themselves in Group G of the World Cup, where they will face formidable opponents in Belgium, New Zealand, and Egypt.

### Iran's beach handball beat China: 2026 Sanya

TEHRAN - Iran's national men's beach handball team secured their spot in the semifinals of the 2026 Sanya Asian Beach Games, topping Group A with a flawless record after a commanding victory over hosts China in their final group stage match.

In a decisive performance on Monday, Team Melli defeated China with a clean sweep of two periods. Iran dominated the first period with a score of 21-14 and continued their strong play in the second, winning 20-10. This victory marked their fifth consecutive win of the tournament.

Throughout the group stage, Iran showcased their strength with victories against the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Bahrain, and most recently, China. Accumulating maximum points, they comfortably clinched the top position in Group A.

Joining Iran in the semifinals from Group A are Bahrain, who finished as the runners-up. From Group B, Qatar emerged as the group leaders, with Thailand securing the second spot.

The Iranian team are now set to face Thailand in the semifinals, vying for a place in the championship match.

## Oil minister orders transformation in gas industry

TEHRAN- For the first time, by order of Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad, the reconstruction of the Assalouyeh and Fajr Jam refineries has been assigned to the Iranian National Gas Company (NIGC) — an important step toward strengthening domestic capability and integrated management.

According to a Mehr News report, Iran's gas industry has entered a new phase of structural transformation with a decision ordered by Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad. For the first time in the history of this industry, direct responsibility for reconstructing several major gas refineries in the Assalouyeh region, as well as completing the revival process of the Fajr Jam refinery, has been delegated to the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) — an action described as a turning point in changing the role and elevating the status of this company.

This decision is not merely an administrative transfer of responsibility but reflects a profound shift in the ministry's overarching view of the NIGC's capacities and capabilities. For years, the management of construction and reconstruction projects for gas refineries was largely under the control of Pars Oil and Gas Company, a subsidiary of the National Iranian Oil Company, while the NIGC primarily played a role in gas distribution, transmission, and operation. Now, with the minister's order, this equation has changed, and the NIGC has entered the field as a development-oriented player.

### New approach of gas industry: from operation to development

In recent months, Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad has placed special emphasis on maximizing the use of domestic capability and enhancing the role of specialized companies in the gas value chain. The assignment of responsibility for reconstructing the Assalouyeh refineries and serious participation in reviving the Fajr Jam refinery to the NIGC can be seen as a practical manifestation of this approach.

This decision shows that from the perspective of the ministry's top management, the NIGC is no longer merely an "operator"; it has reached a level of technical and managerial maturity that enables it to take on the role of a "development arm." In other words, decades of experience in operating and managing the gas network have now become a foundation for entering more complex engineering and project-based arenas.

At a time when the development of the country's gas infrastructure has entered a stage requiring both sustainable operation and complex technical execution, this shift in approach can lead to greater agility in decision-making and better utilization of existing capacities. Paknejad has effectively pioneered a new model of responsibility distribution in the gas industry.

### Technical capability of NIGC: backing for change

The NIGC is one of the few companies in the region that manages the entire gas network cycle from production to consumption. This company operates thousands of kilometers of high-pressure transmission lines, dozens of pressure boosting stations, and a vast array of mechanical, electrical, control, and instrumentation equipment.

Accumulated experience in refinery overhauls, process equipment maintenance, safety management, leak control, and crisis management under sensitive conditions has given this company's engineers and experts rare operational knowledge. This exact type of knowledge is needed in refinery reconstruction projects — from managing large compressors and gas sweetening systems to controlling input and output lines and monitoring dehydration, stabilization, and gas liquid recovery units.

In past decades, the NIGC has performed similar activities at dozens of refineries and operational centers. Therefore, this company's entry into damaged refinery reconstruction is not a risk without foundation but a step based on extensive experience and proven technical capability — a step that has been accelerated and formalized by the direct order and support of the oil minister.

### Integrated management structure: from crisis management to project control

One of the important reasons justifying this new ministry decision is the NIGC's integrated management structure. This company has a vast network of gas transmission operational zones, maintenance planning units, logistics



sectors, and crisis management, and over the years has demonstrated its ability to coordinate complex and large-scale operations.

Refinery reconstruction naturally requires halting part of production while maintaining a stable gas flow across the national grid. Under these circumstances, only an organization that simultaneously has project management capability, technical planning, and network stability maintenance can accept this responsibility. The NIGC, with its long experience in managing emergency situations — from sudden pipeline repairs to launching alternative units in winter cold — has proven it possesses such capacity.

Thus, Paknejad's decision to assign refinery reconstruction responsibility to the NIGC is based on a practical reality: this company today has the structure, experience, and managerial capability needed to accept such responsibility and can carry out large projects without serious disruption to the national gas grid.

### Reducing dependence and strengthening domestic capability

Another strategic dimension of this decision is its impact on reducing reliance on foreign contractors and strengthening domestic capability. Refinery reconstruction requires complex equipment, advanced technology, and a network of specialists. The strong presence of the NIGC in this field creates new opportunities for collaboration with domestic equipment manufacturers and Iranian engineering companies.

The model taking shape under Paknejad's order is based on relying on the capability of domestic engineers and using domestic companies as main partners in the supply and execution chain. This approach can, in the long term, lead to reduced costs, increased industrial independence, and the development of indigenous technical knowledge, making the country's gas industry more resilient to external constraints.

### Assalouyeh and Fajr Jam: major tests of a decision

The reconstruction project of the two major refineries in the Assalouyeh region — known as the heart of the country's gas industry — and the completion of the revival of the Fajr Jam refinery constitute a serious test for the NIGC and, at the same time, for the ministry's new policy. These projects are not merely a set of execution operations; they require precise engineering, safety measures, structural damage repair, new equipment installation, unit commissioning, and continuous risk management.

Success in such projects will place the NIGC's operational capability at a new level beyond its traditional operational domain. At the same time, this success can consolidate and strengthen Paknejad's policy of trusting domestic capability and assigning development responsibilities to operating companies.

### A new culture of inter-sectoral cooperation

The NIGC's entry into refinery reconstruction does not mean an end to cooperation with other companies; rather, it can pave the way for a new culture of inter-sectoral cooperation in the oil and gas industry. Executing these projects requires close interaction with Pars Oil and Gas Company, the Gas Engineering and Development Company, and specialized contractors.

If these projects proceed successfully, a new model of project management based on precise division of labor, operational coordination, and increased organizational integration will emerge — a model that, with the support and guidance of the oil minister, can be applied to other development projects in the gas industry.

The entry of the NIGC into the field of gas refinery reconstruction in Assalouyeh and the revival of the Fajr Jam refinery represents a turning point in the transformation of this company's role and in the management structure of the country's gas industry. This transformation, ordered and supported by Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad, is based on trust in domestic capability, accurate recognition of the NIGC's capacities, and new needs of the energy industry.

TEHRAN- According to a recent Financial Times report, the military aggression by the United States and the Zionist regime against Iran has inflicted what the newspaper calls a "painful triple blow" on poor countries.

While the global spotlight often focuses on oil prices and great-power rivalries, the deepest wounds are being felt by the most vulnerable economies.

Before the attacks on Tehran began in late February, optimism was growing about the resilience of emerging nations.

Despite US tariffs and the lingering scars of Covid-19 and the Ukraine war, many developing economies had shown surprising strength thanks to timely reforms and prudent policies. However, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz—through which a third of the world's seaborne trade in food and fertiliser passes—has shattered that progress.

The triple blow works in three devastating ways. First, net energy importers from Ethiopia to Tuvalu face fuel shortages as they struggle to compete for tightening oil and gas supplies. Second, disruptions to food and fertiliser shipments increase the risk of malnutrition, especially in countries already hit by climate shocks. The UN warns that if the conflict lasts until June, an additional 45 million people could face acute hunger. Third, over



\$100 billion in annual remittances from Persian Gulf foreign workers is at risk, hitting South Asian nations, Egypt, and the Philippines particularly hard.

### Developing nations pay the price for Strait of Hormuz closure

The IMF has already cut growth projections for emerging economies by 0.3 percentage points this year while leaving advanced economies unchanged.

Even if the war stopped tomorrow, the UN estimates that more

than 30 million people would still be pushed back into poverty by its effects so far.

With over a third of sub-Saharan countries already in or at high risk of debt distress, and foreign aid from richer nations shrinking, developing countries have little fiscal room to help their hungry citizens.

Richer nations, focused on their own domestic support and securing fossil fuel shipments, have so far failed to act.

The FT argues that the IMF and

World Bank must provide liquidity support and urge against export bans on food and fertilizers.

A protected corridor through the strait, similar to the UN arrangement in the Black Sea, could offer relief—but little progress has been made.

Ultimately, only a swift ceasefire and the reopening of the strait can prevent widespread suffering. Otherwise, as the report warns, the global costs of this conflict will continue to fall hardest on those least able to bear them.

## IRENA director-general explicitly condemns attack on Iran's energy infrastructure



TEHRAN- The official response from the Director General of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) to the letter from Iran's Minister of Energy regarding the damages caused by hostile attacks on the country's energy infrastructure has been received.

According to a Mehr News Agency report quoting the Ministry of Energy, following the letter from the Minister of Energy addressed to the Director General of IRENA concerning the damages from hostile attacks on the country's energy infrastructure, the official response from Francesco La Camera, Director General of this international body, was sent to the Minister of Energy of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In this response, the IRENA Director General, while explicitly condemning the attacks on energy infrastructure and civilian facilities, described these actions as a serious violation of national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the principles of international law, including the UN Charter.

He also emphasized the importance of protecting critical energy, water, and other civilian infrastructure, stating that these facilities are essential for stability, sustainable development, and the well-being of societies. Referring to his previous statements on recent developments in the region, he called for an immediate ceasefire and the initiation of constructive dialogues to achieve lasting peace.

The IRENA Director General further stressed the agency's ongoing commitment to supporting all member states in enhancing energy security, strengthening the resilience of energy systems, and accelerating the transition to sustainable energy.

Another part of this response referred to a message posted by Francesco La Camera on April 17, 2026, on the social network LinkedIn.

In that message, he strongly condemned attacks on energy infrastructure and civilian facilities. Expressing concern over regional developments and attacks against certain countries, including the United Arab Emirates as the host of the agency, he declared his full solidarity with the governments and people of affected countries and offered condolences to the families of the victims.

In that message, the IRENA Director General once again emphasized that attacks on critical energy and water infrastructure, in addition to threatening national security, have widespread consequences for global energy security, system resilience, and economic stability. He stressed

the necessity of an immediate halt to hostilities and a return to the path of dialogue.

The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) is an intergovernmental organization-mandated to facilitate cooperation, advance knowledge, and promote the adoption and sustainable use of renewable energy. It is the first international organization to focus exclusively on renewable energy, addressing needs in both industrialized and developing countries. It was founded in 2009, and its statute entered into force on 8 July 2010. The agency is headquartered in Masdar City, Abu Dhabi. The Director-General of IRENA is Francesco La Camera, a national of Italy. IRENA is an official United Nations observer.

IRENA aims to become the main driving force in promoting a transition towards the use of renewable energy on a global scale.

IRENA provides advice and support to governments on renewable energy policy, capacity building, and technology transfer. IRENA will also co-ordinate with existing renewable energy organizations, such as REN21.

## British official warns of continue price hikes following Iran war

TEHRAN – People in the UK could face higher energy, food and flight ticket prices for at least eight months following the end of the US-Israel war with Iran, a senior minister has said.

Darren Jones, chief secretary to the prime minister, told the BBC the government was stepping up plans to offset potential food and fuel shortages caused by the war. Energy production and transportation across West Asia have slowed or stopped entirely due to the conflict, causing supply chain issues and global price rises.

Government officials have drawn up a worst-case scenario of food shortages by summer, including chicken and pork, should the war continue. Jones said "price pressure" was more likely than empty supermarket shelves. "Our best guess is eight plus months from the point of resolution that you'll see economic impacts coming through the system," he stated.

Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer will chair another Cabinet committee meeting on Tuesday to deal with any shortfalls, while a group of ministers meets twice weekly to monitor stock levels. Jones previously said: "This is not our war. The government made the right



call to stay out of the conflict."

The IMF forecast that the energy shock would hit the UK harder than any other advanced economy, slashing its growth estimate for this year from 1.3 to 0.8 percent.

Economists warn the prolonged conflict poses an even greater threat. Dr. Emily Thornton of the London School of Economics said the eight-month lag effect may be optimistic, warning of 18 months of elevated prices if damage to Persian Gulf energy infrastructure continues. The Bank of England may raise interest rates further to combat inflation.

Business groups have voiced alarm. The British Retail Consortium warned smaller

supermarkets may need to ration essential goods. Airlines have announced fuel surcharges will remain through 2026.

Opposition parties accused the Labor government of complacency. Shadow Chancellor Mel Stride called the preparation a "failure." The government announced a £2 billion support package for vulnerable families, though critics note this is far smaller than the £40 billion provided during the Ukraine energy crisis.

Civil contingency planners have drawn up emergency protocols including reopening wartime fuel depots, coordinating military food distribution to remote areas, and establishing a national hotline to report hoarding. These measures could be triggered if the Strait of Hormuz blockade persists beyond six weeks.

The UN's World Food Program warned the conflict's impact will be most catastrophic in the Global South. One Birmingham pensioner said: "Watching prices rise week after week with no end in sight... this feels endless." The war against Iran, thousands of miles away, has entered every British household budget, and as Jones admitted, the pain is only beginning to show.

# Israel's multi-front collapse exposes a regime weaker and more desperate than ever before

Multi-front exhaustion and failed objectives mark a clear strategic reversal for the entity compared to its pre-war position.

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — As we hit the two-month milestone of the unprovoked campaign of aggression launched on February 28, the bravado surrounding the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran has evaporated. What remains on Israel's side is the sight of a militarily exhausted and overstretched aggressor that has taken a beating on every front.

What Tel Aviv and Washington pitched as a swift game-changer, toppling Tehran's government, gutting its missile and nuclear program, and destroying the Axis of Resistance, ended up a costly flop that left Israel more exposed, exhausted, and alone than before the first bomb dropped.

## Strategic fantasies go up in smoke

The war roared into Iran with promises of total dominance. Yet the scorecard is brutal: no change of government, just a defiant Tehran; with the Western media reports admitting most of Iran's arsenal has been untouched; and Resistance groups in Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen not broken, but battle-hardened.

Iran and its allies synced up, hitting back in waves that kept Israel scrambling. The war has galvanized and unified the very forces it was designed to bury.

Israeli brass let it slip when they switched talk from big wins to vague "completion phases" and hitting "economic targets" such as Iran's civilian industries.

Another gut-punch is the mathematical trap Israel cannot escape. While an Iranian Shahed-136 drone costs around \$30,000, neutralizing it requires a \$3.5 million Arrow-3 or a \$1 million David's Sling interceptor.

The crisis is compounded by a manufacturing lag; U.S. and Israeli munitions rely on fragile, high-



tech supply chains that can only churn out dozens while Iran's underground cities are pumping out thousands. Rationed thin by previous fighting, Israel's once-vaunted defense shield is now physically exhausted and economically unsustainable.

While Iran's subterranean factories work around the clock to replenish their arsenals and keep their strike readiness at a fever pitch, Tel Aviv's grandest strategic ambitions have turned to dust.

## The north flips to hell

Look north, and the shift hits home hardest. Pre-war, Israel operated as if it owned southern Lebanon and Hezbollah existed in name only: repeated ceasefire violations, daily flyovers, and raids.

The 2024 truce meant little to them. After the war, Iran and its allies presented a unified front, with Hezbollah surprising observers worldwide by demonstrating renewed military capabilities. Iran then insisted that any ceasefire arrangement with the U.S. must include Lebanon, despite ongoing attempts in Washington and the Lebanese government to claim credit for so-called diplomatic progress.

Now, as expected, the weeks since the ceasefire have seen thousands of reported Israeli breaches:

airstrikes killing civilians, troops still dug into Lebanese soil. This time, however, Hezbollah's reaction has shifted to swift and precise responses: drones, mortars, and rockets marking each violation, and operations targeting Israeli forces inside the very "buffer zones" they continue to hold.

Result: tens of thousands of Israelis from Metula and spots like it have been stuck in limbo. The old psychopathic "mow the grass" routine has become counterproductive. From being confident about achieving the forcible disarmament of Hezbollah, Israel has instead landed itself mired in a grueling quagmire.

## Cracks tearing the society apart

The home front is a powder keg. The military is 12,000 troops short, and with only 50-60% of reservists showing up, commanders are calling it the worst manpower crunch ever.

With mandatory service stretched to a grueling nine weeks, the social contract is snapping. Haredi neighborhoods are erupting in protest against the draft, with rabbis declaring it the end of religious life, while secular citizens vent their fury at the inequity. Meanwhile, the streets of Tel Aviv are choked with protesters

demanding an end to Netanyahu's long rule.

Netanyahu's delusional Hail Mary, the plan to defeat Iran, ditch his trials, and rule forever, has backfired spectacularly. With the Bennett-Lapid "BeYachad" team launching, current polls show Netanyahu's crew begging for crumbs ahead of the October elections. His coalition is now wobbling on the edge of ultra-Orthodox knives as war weariness infects every level of society.

## The pariah

The cracks in Washington's iron-clad support have widened into a chasm. Recent polling from Pew indicates that 60 percent of Americans now view Israel unfavorably, a figure that climbs to 70 percent among the under-50 demographic.

Perhaps most startling for the regime is that 57 percent of young Republicans now label the relationship a strategic burden. This shift is already bleeding into policy, with Congress trimming Iron Dome appropriations and Senator Sanders moving a significant bloc of Democrats to halt arms shipments.

Meanwhile, the Abraham Accords have been exposed as hollow carcasses of a failed era. Regional actors have observed that the closer a country moves toward Israel, the more it invites instability and strategic vulnerability. By hosting Israeli troops and hardware, states such as the UAE have painted a bulls-eye on their own critical infrastructure.

The recent recognition of Somaliland, a desperate bid for a fringe ally, has only isolated Tel Aviv further, drawing sharp rebukes from the African Union and Egypt alike.

With European nations such as Spain and Italy axing defense pacts and Turkey pursuing legal indictments, the global identity of the regime has shifted from "ally" to "pariah."

## Southern Lebanon: From forgotten locality to global influence

Batool Subeiti

LONDON - It is clear that the main goal of direct negotiations with Israel 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 where the Israeli occupation entity failed, namely, confronting the resistance directly.

They did not sit with Lebanon to negotiate and give, but to dictate and take. In this phase, Beirut may be pushed to define its political direction toward eliminating the Lebanese resistance movement, especially after the Israeli occupation entity has so far failed to do so. This could mean pressuring the government to carry out this mission, potentially dragging Lebanon into conflict between the army and the resistance movement, or among political factions, and thereby igniting a civil war.

Negotiations were initiated to impose de-

mands while completely ignoring the issue of occupation and Israeli military operations.

Lebanon cannot even raise these issues or demand Israeli withdrawal. At most, it can request a ceasefire, giving the occupation entity the time to impose its conditions. Meanwhile, withdrawal, the return of displaced people, the release of prisoners, and reconstruction are all tied solely to Israeli agendas and capabilities.

The key question is: Can the Israeli occupation regime maintain a stable position inside Lebanon? How many kilometers deep can it occupy to create a depopulated buffer zone?

Security for Israeli forces and settlers becomes the defining factor. However, even with a buffer zone, resistance methods and guerrilla warfare, drones and missiles cannot be stopped, as they can reach hundreds of kilometers. As long as occupation exists, the resistance movement's capabilities will continue to develop. It can also impose long-

term costs through guerrilla warfare. Therefore, military control cannot truly provide the security the entity claims it seeks.

Instead, the goal is to weaken the Lebanese resistance front to the point where it can no longer influence events and to cut off its supply lines, something the entity is pushing hard for in a race against time.

This urgency is driven by international pressure, especially given Iran's control of the Strait of Hormuz, which reduces pressure on the Lebanese resistance movement. However, achieving results against a strong and prepared resistance army is extremely difficult. Iranian support also contributes to international pressure, prompting countries like Britain, France, Germany, and Italy to call for Lebanon to be included in a ceasefire between the U.S. and Iran.

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

## Rising support for Trump's impeachment

TEHRAN - A growing wave of domestic dissatisfaction and mounting expert concerns over leadership decision-making are casting a shadow over the political future of U.S. President Donald Trump, as new polling data and analytical assessments point to increasing instability within the American political system.

A recent nationwide survey conducted in mid-April shows that 55% of Americans support the impeachment of Trump, compared to 37% who oppose it, reflecting a notable shift in public sentiment. The findings, described by polling expert J. Elliot Morris as unprecedented in modern U.S. history, suggest levels of public discontent not seen since the Watergate scandal and the final days of Richard Nixon.

The poll also reveals cracks within Trump's political base. While support for impeachment remains high among Democrats, a significant minority of Republicans—along with roughly one in five of Trump's 2024 voters—now back the measure. Analysts say this erosion of support could pose serious challenges for Republicans ahead of the upcoming midterm elections.

From the perspective of observers in Iran, such

developments are often seen as indicative of deeper structural issues within the U.S. political system, including economic pressures, controversial foreign policies, and growing polarization. Iranian analysts frequently argue that Washington's external behavior, particularly in regions such as West Asia, is closely tied to internal political calculations.

Parallel to these domestic trends, prominent international relations scholar John Mearsheimer has raised concerns about the implications of leadership behavior in Washington. In recent remarks, Mearsheimer questioned whether Trump can effectively "handle losing," warning that an inability to accept strategic or political setbacks could increase the danger of escalation in global conflicts.

According to Mearsheimer, leaders who equate political legitimacy with victory may be more inclined to intensify confrontations rather than pursue compromise. He stressed that in high-stakes geopolitical environments, such tendencies could lead to dangerous outcomes, particularly in disputes involving major powers.

He further argued that decision-making under

pressure is shaped not only by individual personality traits but also by domestic political incentives. In Trump's case, Mearsheimer suggested that the intersection of internal politics and foreign policy could push toward continued confrontation rather than de-escalation.

From a broader geopolitical standpoint, Mearsheimer warned that such dynamics could destabilize the international system. As the global order shifts toward a more multipolar structure, he noted, the margin for error is shrinking, and miscalculations at the leadership level could have far-reaching consequences.

The combination of rising domestic opposition and external analytical warnings highlights what some observers describe as a period of heightened uncertainty in U.S. governance.

While impeachment remains a complex legal process requiring congressional approval, the convergence of public dissatisfaction and expert concern suggests that the political environment in the United States may be entering a more volatile phase, with potential implications extending well beyond its borders.

## Israel feared Amal Khalil the most as she refused to be intimidated into silence



TEHRAN – Israel greatly feared Lebanese journalist Amal Khalil and finally targeted her in southern Lebanon on April 22.

Mossad had threatened to "sever her head from her shoulders" if she did not stop reporting. However, she defied the occupation regime and did not give up highlighting Israel's crimes in southern Lebanon.

"Amal was the type of person Israel fears the most: the one who cannot be intimidated into silence, the one who cannot be sent cowering into a corner, the one who openly defies brutal Israeli power," Yara Hawari, co-director of the Palestinian Policy Network, wrote on the Al Jazeera website on April 26.

Comparing Khalil to Al Jazeera correspondent Shireen Abu Akleh, who Israel shot dead in the Palestinian city of Jenin on May 11, 2022, Hawari also said the Western world, which claims support for "free press", provides the munitions for Israel's brutality.

## The world that claims to value a free press will mourn Amal briefly – just as it did Shireen – and then continue to provide the cover that makes the next killing inevitable.

"The world that claims to value a free press will mourn her briefly – just as it did Shireen – and then continue to provide the cover that makes the next killing inevitable," stated Hawari, who previously served as the Palestine policy fellow and senior analyst.

The following is the text of her article:

On April 22, the Israeli regime assassinated yet another journalist. Her name was Amal Khalil. She was a well-known Lebanese journalist, born during the early years of the last Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, who spent years documenting the lives of people in the south of the country amid Israeli invasion and bombardment.

Amal was well-known and beloved across Lebanon. As her brother, Ali Khalil, said at her funeral, she was present in every home.

For two years, Amal received direct threats from the Israeli regime. In one interview, she recalled a call from a Mossad agent who threatened to sever her head from her shoulders if she didn't stop reporting from the south. They knew intimate details about her life – they wanted her to know that she was being surveilled.

Yet, she continued to report, knowing that any day the Israeli regime could follow through on its threats. Amal was the type of person Israel fears the most: the one who cannot be intimidated into silence, the one who cannot be sent cowering into a corner, the one who openly defies brutal Israeli power.

There is little doubt that the Israeli army targeted her directly. Al Akhbar, the outlet Amal worked for, released details of her killing. According to them, Amal was on assignment near the strategic town of Bint Jbeil, which she had often reported on in the past. Bint Jbeil was the site of a key battle be-

tween Israeli regime forces and Hezbollah fighters before the ceasefire. It is a symbolic site of resistance for many Lebanese – in the 2006 invasion, it successfully repelled many attempts by Israeli regime forces to conquer it.

Amal was travelling in a car with freelance photographer Zeinab Farraj when a vehicle in front of them was hit by an Israeli drone. The two women sought shelter in a nearby building where they called relatives and colleagues for help. The building was bombed by Israeli forces not long after.

The Lebanese prime minister put out a statement calling on the Red Cross to intervene. The organization sent out a team which was able to rescue Zeinab, who was wounded, from the building. They came under fire, so were unable to recover Amal. When they eventually returned, they found her dead.

Amal's assassination is chillingly reminiscent of the killing of veteran Palestinian journalist and long-term Al Jazeera correspondent Shireen Abu Akleh. Four years ago, she was also reporting from a site of symbolic resistance against invading Israeli regime forces – the Palestinian city of Jenin. She was shot in the head while attempting to shelter from Israeli fire with a colleague.

Since her killing, more than 250 Palestinian journalists and media workers have been killed – predominantly during the genocide in Gaza. Many of them were targeted on assignment, others were attacked while they were at home with their families. This was the case with Mohammed Abu Hatab who was killed along with 11 members of his family in an Israeli airstrike on his home in November 2023.

The Israeli regime's targeting of Palestinian and Lebanese journalists is well documented, and the killing of Amal is the latest entry in a record that has become, since October 2023, the deadliest for the press in any conflict in recorded history. What is striking about this record is not simply its scale but the conditions that have made it possible.

Impunity is not merely a failure of justice after the fact, rather it is a permission structure that shapes what regimes believe they can do before the fact. The Israeli regime has learned, through decades of experience, that there is no act it can commit that will meaningfully cost it the support of its Western backers, and it has drawn the obvious conclusion.

It would be a mistake to characterize the Israeli regime as uniquely violent in the history of settler colonial projects and imperial regimes. But what distinguishes it is not the nature of the violence so much as the brazenness with which it is conducted, and that brazenness is itself a product of the impunity.

This is a regime that no longer bothers to disguise what it is doing. Journalists are not caught in crossfire; they are hunted down and targeted. The message being sent is not incidental, it is the point.

Amal understood the risk she was taking and took it anyway, as local journalists in Lebanon and Palestine have done throughout, because someone has to bear witness to what is happening to the people there. The Israeli regime killed her for it.

## Study examines four ancient metal smelting sites in central Iran



TEHRAN – A new research project has examined four ancient metal smelting sites in Yazd province, central Iran, shedding light on early metallurgical practices and identifying the types of metals extracted and processed at the locations, researchers said.

The study, conducted by Aminollah Kamali, Hamid Fadaei, Seyyed Iraj Beheshti and Ali Arab at the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, focused on sites in Zoveh Nadooshan, Chah Jamal, Dahaneh Lashkar and Bahabad, according to a report by Miras Aria.

The project aimed to expand the national database on mining and metallurgy by analyzing slag remains, identifying extracted metals and determining the historical periods of activity at the sites.

Findings showed that three of the sites, Zoveh Nadooshan, Chah Jamal and Dahaneh Lashkar, were primarily used for copper extraction. Slag samples from these locations contained impurities such as lead, zinc and silver, indicating the use of polymetallic ore deposits.

In contrast, the Bahabad site appeared to be specialized in zinc extraction. Researchers said slag analysis was carried out using field surveys, petrographic studies and chemical testing through ICP-OES methods.

Results indicated that copper content at the three main sites ranged from 0.4% to 4%, suggesting relatively low furnace efficiency. High levels of silica and calcium in the slag pointed to the use of siliceous and carbonate ores in the smelting process.

Petrographic analysis identified minerals including pyroxene, fayalite, wustite and copper sulfides such as covellite and bornite, along with native copper.

At Bahabad, slag samples contained fayalite, melilite, pyroxene and wustite. Ceramic nails with porphyritic textures indicated high-temperature smelting under reducing conditions. Chemical analysis showed average zinc oxide levels of 1.21% in the ceramic nails and 3.74% in slag, suggesting incomplete zinc extraction and the use of oxidized ores.

Researchers said the zinc production technique at Bahabad involved two-tier furnaces with upward distillation, reflecting a local technological innovation.

Thermoluminescence dating and pottery analysis attributed activity at all four sites to the Islamic period, the report said.

Thermoluminescence (TL) is a form of luminescence where crystalline materials and minerals emit light upon heating, following previous exposure to ionizing radiation.

## Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Nubian Monuments from Abu Simbel to Philae

The Nubian Monuments from Abu Simbel to Philae lie in the Governorate of Aswan. It is a serial property of ten component parts covering 374.48 ha: Abu Simbel, Amada, Wadi Sebua, Kalabsha, Philae (Island of Agilkia), Old and Middle Kingdom Tombs, Ruins of town of Elephantine, Stone quarries and obelisk, Monastery of St. Simeon, and the Islamic Cemetery.

The first five component parts contain temples moved during the UNESCO International Campaign from 1960 to 1980 to save them from flooding by the Nile and Lake Nasser because they were recognized as internationally significant by the international community. The remaining five cover antiquities of the Aswan area.

This stretch of the Nile from Aswan in the north to the Sudanese border in the south is an archaeological haven. Home to temples ranging from the New Kingdom to the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, as well as early Coptic sites and villages, the region's monuments represent the breadth of Nubian cultural articulations, and the various influences shaping the culture over time.

Aswan, north of the first cataract, was the border town of ancient Egypt, an essential strategic point in ancient Egypt, and base for Egyptian activities to the south, whether trade or military raids. From prehistoric times onwards, expeditions were mounted to dominate Nubia. In each of the great periods of Egyptian history, there was, if only partially, a seizure of Nubia, which became a natural annex to the Kingdom and later a colony whose fiscal and commercial income was transferred to Aswan.

The monuments of the property include exceptional architecture, such as the Great Temple at Abu Simbel, carved out of an escarpment of solid rock. Its design and layout allow rays of the sun to penetrate to the innermost

chamber twice annually on the equinoxes. Philae above the first cataract was the great Ptolemaic sanctuary of the goddess Isis – renowned since Greco-Roman antiquity for its temples and their annexes. The final bastion of ancient Egyptian religion, the rites of the cult of Isis persisted there until the 9th century CE.

Other than Abu Simbel and Philae, the property includes the temples of Amada, constructed by Tuthmosis III and by Amenophis II, of Derr (also at Amada), those of Wadi Sebua, Dakka and Maharraqa (at Wadi Sebua), the temple of Talmis (removed to Kalabsha), the kiosk of Kartassi, and the temple of Beit el Wali.

At Aswan, numerous monuments testify to the importance of this commercial, military and practical centre. Officials in charge of Nubian affairs in the Old and Middle Kingdoms constructed richly decorated tombs in the Qubbet el Hawa Mountain, while the town of Elephantine yields an overwhelming quantity of interesting finds. The stone quarries, with an unfinished obelisk left behind, are the basis of knowledge of ancient Egyptian quarrying technology. The well preserved ruins of the monastery of St Simeon on the west bank are one of the biggest monasteries in Egypt.

The region of the first cataract is distinguished by its complex theology, promulgated by the priesthoods of the region competing for the attention of their Ptolemaic rulers in Alexandria. Despite, or perhaps due to this complexity, ancient belief lasted long in the region. The myth of Osiris is represented with a high degree of symbolism throughout the region, the most refined depiction of which lies within Hadrian's gate on the west side of the island of Philae. The scenes depicted at Philae survive in contemporary cultural manifestations in the Egyptian feast of "Sham al-Neseem".

(Source: UNESCO)

# A closer look at Sa'dabad Palace complex after nearby US-Israeli bunker-buster strikes

TEHRAN – Tehran's Sa'adabad Palace complex sustained widespread structural and decorative damage following two rounds of airstrikes using bunker-buster bombs, though the historic site remained standing and has since entered an emergency stabilization and restoration phase, officials said.

About 50 days after the March 17 attack on the Sa'adabad grounds and buffer zone, the complex's director and museum officials held a press briefing at the Ashraf Palace, now a museum of decorative arts, to outline the extent of the damage and ongoing recovery efforts.

Officials said the impact zone of the explosions extended up to a radius of 1,200 meters, affecting nearly all parts of the expansive cultural site, which comprises around 100 buildings. They estimated that approximately 17,000 square meters of glass across the complex had been shattered, while around 90% of the sloped roofs sustained damage from the blast waves.

The Sa'adabad complex, located in northern Tehran and dating back to the Qajar and Pahlavi eras, includes multiple palace-museums of architectural and historical significance.

Authorities reported that 15 palace museums were damaged in the initial March 17 strike, with the Green Palace, the Vali Mansion, and the Omidvar Brothers Museum suffering the most severe impacts. These structures are currently undergoing debris removal.

A second strike, days before the current ceasefire, further intensified damage, particularly to the Vali Mansion in the northern section of the complex, officials said.

Fathollah Niazi, a technical advisor and restoration specialist at Sa'adabad, said several bunker-buster bombs landed near the Vali Mansion, with identifiable impact points. He added that the behavior of the historic architecture under blast conditions varied depending on proximity and structural characteristics.

Tiny seal from Persepolis holds a clear image of Achaemenid naval power

## Tiny seal from Persepolis holds a clear image of Achaemenid naval power

During the 1936 excavations at Persepolis led by Erich Schmidt of the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute, a small clay seal impression was recovered from the Treasury. Barely 2.5 centimeters across, it bears the crisp image of a warship, a rare and direct glimpse of how the Achaemenid court viewed its own naval strength.

The seal is being kept at the National Museum of Iran in downtown Tehran and it dates to circa 492–460 BCE.

Catalogued today under museum number 1921/58 (excavation PT4 704), the impression shows a large vessel in left-side view, travelling from right to left.

The hull curves elegantly, and at the bow an embolon, or ram, is clearly visible. In ancient naval warfare, rams were typically sheathed in bronze and used to pierce the hulls of enemy ships at speed, the sea-going equivalent of the battering rams that broke gates and walls on land. Its presence leaves no doubt: this is a military ship, built for combat.

Twenty-two oars are shown along the hull. A single mast rises amidships, the sail furling and tied at the top, indicating a vessel that used both oars and sail depending on conditions or tactical need.

This combination was typical for warships likely intended for coastal campaigns or rapid manoeuvres.

On the right side of the scene, a palm tree



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At Bahabad, slag samples contained fayalite, melilite, pyroxene and wustite. Ceramic nails with porphyritic textures indicated high-temperature smelting under reducing conditions. Chemical analysis showed average zinc oxide levels of 1.21% in the ceramic nails and 3.74% in slag, suggesting incomplete zinc extraction and the use of oxidized ores.

On the right side of the scene, a palm tree is depicted. The hanging fruit clusters are clearly rendered, pointing to the palm species common along the Persian Gulf littoral and its agricultural hinterlands. In Achaemenid visual culture, the palm was a royal symbol, it appears on reliefs at Persepolis and on other seals as a mark of prosperity and legitimate rule.

Placed beside a warship, the palm links the naval vessel directly to the geography of southern Iran and to the authority of the king. The image reads as a compact statement of maritime sovereignty.

Historical sources support what the seal suggests. Silver coins struck at Sidon, a major commercial port on the eastern Mediterranean under Achaemenid control, carry the image of a warship alongside the names of Artaxerxes II and Artaxerxes III.

These coins confirm a lasting

Persian military presence on the Mediterranean coast and show how closely naval power was tied to royal identity.

A major engineering project further demonstrated the empire's strategic thinking. The canal completed under Darius I connected the Nile to the Red Sea — the precursor to the modern Suez.

In his inscription from Egypt, Darius states plainly that ships passed through this waterway under his command and reached the Persian Gulf. The canal was not simply a trade route; it linked the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean under one authority, allowing the movement of fleets and goods over unprecedented distances.

Small as it is, this clay seal impression from the Treasury at Persepolis remains an extraordinary document.

Within a space the size of a thumbnail, it records the organisation, technology, and reach of an Iranian fleet that operated some 2,500 years ago, a reminder that the sea was far from peripheral to Achaemenid statecraft.

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# Renowned scholars censure 'systematic degradation of Iranian healthcare system' by US-Israeli aggression

TEHRAN – Four prominent Iranian scholars have severely criticized what they described as 'the systematic degradation of the Iranian healthcare system' by military actions carried out by the United States and Israel against the country.

"The military campaign initiated on Feb 28, 2026, by the USA and Israel against Iran has rapidly evolved into a regional conflagration with catastrophic health consequences for Iran as well as for the region," Iraj Sobhani, Ali Kesavarzian, Asghar Rastegar, and Mohsen Shahmanesh have said in an article in *The Lancet* – one of the most prestigious peer-reviewed publications among international general medical journals.

The sheer ferocity and duration of the strikes have led to the violation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the foreseeable collapse of civilian life-sustaining systems for Iranian citizens, they added.

Although the immediate human toll is staggering—at least 3636 people, including around 1700 civilians, had been killed as of April 7, 2026—the systematic degradation of the Iranian health-care system, which was already compromised under medical and economic sanctions, represents a profound violation of IHL and a long-term threat to population health.

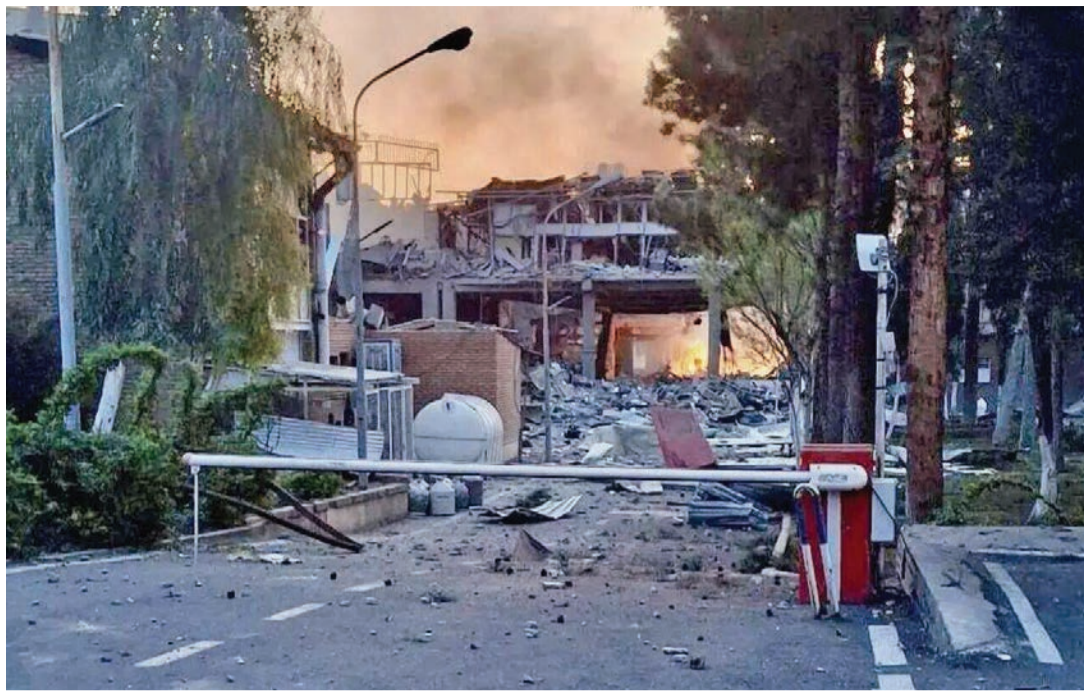
As of March 27, 2026, data compiled from WHO, the Iranian Red Crescent, and national health agencies reveal a targeted erosion of medical neutrality. A total of 292 medical and relief centres, including hospitals, pharmacies, and primary health clinics, have been damaged or destroyed.

This destruction has forced 13 hospitals completely out of service, while another seven have been fully evacuated under duress because of proximity to danger zones.

The emergency response capacity has been further crippled by the destruction of 48 ambulances and rescue vehicles, as well as an emergency medical helicopter.

The assault on health care is not merely incidental but systemic. Under the Geneva Conventions and the UN Charter, medical personnel and facilities must be protected at all times unless used for military purposes. Yet, verified reports indicate US-Israeli attacks on health facilities and the killing of at least eight health-care workers, doctors, nurses, and emergency first responders in Iran.

These actions disregard the principles of distinction and proportionality, failing to meet the legal thresholds for lawful



Pasteur Institute of Iran was targeted by US-Israeli airstrikes on April 2.

self-defence. The responsibility of the belligerents is heightened by the lack of preparation for the predictable secondary and tertiary effects of such an extensive conflict.

The consequences extend beyond direct kinetic damage. In Tehran alone, 26,926 civilian units have been destroyed, contributing to a national total of over 87,000 damaged residential and commercial structures.

Attacks on the Iranian healthcare system represent a profound violation of international humanitarian law and a long-term threat to population health.

Power outages and infrastructure collapse have compromised the cold chain for vaccines, raising the imminent risk of outbreaks of preventable diseases such as measles and polio. Over 4000 women and 1600 minors have been injured, and the deaths of over 237 women and over 200 children or teenagers (<18 years) have been reported.

Up to March 24, 2026, eight medicine production factories have been destroyed, primarily in Karaj City, where attacks intensified recently. In Hamadan, a medicine stock was attacked, and in Tehran, the KimiDaroo factory was targeted.

Destruction of the Tofigh Daru industrial complex due to a missile strike occurred at 0630 h on March 31, 2026. Although this specific factory did not produce finished drugs, it manufactured raw materials for hospital medications and various anti-cancer drugs, playing a vital role in the national supply chain.

The Pasteur Institute of Iran—

one of the oldest and most prestigious research and public health centres in the Middle East, founded in 1920 following an agreement between the Pasteur Institute in Paris and the Iranian Government—became the target of a strike on April 2, 2026.

Under IHL, the principle of precaution requires parties to minimise civilian suffering. Launching a high-intensity war against a nation of 86 million people—already weakened by decades of sanctions, without viable mechanisms to protect the health of the population is a violation of the duty of care.

The pattern of attacks on health infrastructure and personnel follows the systematic large-scale destruction of health facilities as a weapon of war that was observed in the civil war in Syria and continued in Ukraine, Gaza, and Lebanon, among others.

The initiators of the war must be held accountable for the quiet death imposed on civilians through the deliberate or negligent destruction of the very systems required for human survival.

We, as physicians, think the medical profession should raise their voice against the widespread increase of these destructive attacks against health facilities and personnel.

Peace remains the only viable solution for a region now entering its most dangerous era. We call on all involved parties for an immediate cessation of attacks on health-care facilities and the establishment of independent monitoring mechanisms to ensure accountability for these grave violations of international law.

ISA condemns aggression

The International Sociological Association (ISA) has also is-

sued a statement, strongly condemning military actions carried out by the United States and Israel against Iran.

In accordance with its Statutes and its commitment to the defense of human dignity, academic freedom, and the advancement of sociological knowledge, ISA strongly condemns the escalation of military actions carried out by the United States and Israel in the Middle East, particularly those affecting Iran and Lebanon, the statement reads.

"Ongoing military actions, including attacks on civilian populations and critical infrastructure—such as schools, hospitals, universities, historical monuments, and energy infrastructure—are causing severe human suffering and undermining the conditions necessary for social and academic life.

As highlighted by sociological communities in the region, these events are directly affecting the capacity to teach, research, and sustain institutional life under conditions of extreme uncertainty and risk.

The ISA recalls that the use of force against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states violates fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

In this regard, United Nations human rights experts have characterized recent military actions carried out by the United States and Israel as violations of international law and acts of aggression, warning of the risks of impunity for powerful states and the devastating consequences for civilian populations.

## Iran's share in open-source AI projects on the rise

TEHRAN –A study of artificial intelligence (AI) scientific and software production trends in Iran shows that the country's share in open-source AI projects has surged from almost no AI software projects in 2010 to 2,728 projects in 2023.

The country's participation in 1.1 percent of the total open-source AI projects, up from 0.3 percent in 2022, has placed Iran second in the region, ISNA reported.

In terms of high-impact open-source AI projects, Iran accounts for six percent of the total projects and is placed second. Turkey ranks first.

However, the number of AI article submissions has decreased over the past decade, and the country ranks fourth in the region now, ISNA reported.

Till 2014, Iran accounted for 1.9 percent of all AI articles in international conferences, which placed the country first in the region. Later, it was replaced by Turkey. Since 2022, the country's share of the whole papers has dropped to 0.5 percent, placing it fourth in the region.

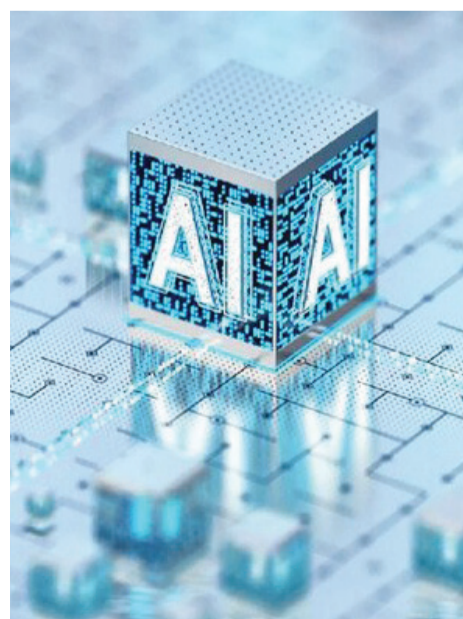
From 2010 to 2014, the number of AI conference papers by the country sharply dropped from 631 to 245, which was mainly due to international sanctions, reduced research budgets, and changes in science policies.

From 2015 to 2017, the figure increased to 488 papers. In the next six years, the figure has fluctuated and lowered to 355 articles in 2023. The fluctuations were directly affected by the political and economic situations of the country.

Iran advances in AI scientific research index

According to Nature Index, the country's ranking in scientific production in AI has improved from 33 to 30, placing the country among the top 50 leaders, Hossein Afshin, an official with the vice-presidency of science and technology, said in December 2025.

Iran's ranking in the region fluctuates between 14 to 17, which is mainly due to focusing on quality, he said, adding, "We're optimistic to improve the country's scientific position within the next two years,"



IRNA reported.

The official went on to say that the country is following up on developing AI infrastructure, including the AI platform and the AI assistant, in the near future.

## Parents take a single shoe, Makan's only remnant, to Imam Reza shrine

TEHRAN – On Sunday, parents of Makan Nasiri- a 7-year-old student who was martyred on February 28 by a US missile attack on Shajareh Tayyebeh elementary school in Minab - were pilgrims to the holy shrine of Imam Reza in the city of Mashhad.

The last time they had been to Mashhad with Makan was in June of last year, and this was the first trip without Makan.

Everywhere in the shrine, the memory of that last trip and Makan's tour of the holy shrine evoked fond memories for them.

The father was holding the shoe that was the only remnant of Makan's body, and one could still see the astonishment and wonderment alongside endless sadness on his face.

The mother, trying to appear calmer, said that she was proud to be the "mother of a martyr."

The US Tomahawk missiles left nothing of his small, fragile body, but a wrinkled blue sweater and a pair of cream-colored sneakers.

The deadly strike on Shajareh Tayyebeh school on the first day of the imposed war



is known as the most heinous massacre of innocent children in the world, killing at least 168 school children, mainly girls aged between 7 and 12. Large parts of the school building were destroyed while classes were underway.

Most children's bodies, with some being torn into pieces, were recovered and buried, all except for that of Makan.

## 'High vaccination coverage, one of most important accomplishments of Iran's health system'

TEHRAN – High vaccination coverage in Iran is considered one of the most important accomplishments of the country's health system, which has led to the control and elimination of many infectious diseases and to the establishment of collective immunity, an official with the health ministry has said.

However, regional developments and population shifts underscore the need to maintain immunization programs more than ever, Mehr news agency quoted Alireza Raeisi as saying.

The official made the remarks on the occasion of the World Immunization Program, being held from April 24 to 30 under the theme 'For every generation, vaccines work'.

Elaborating on the country's health system's achievements, the official said during the 40-day US-Israeli war, a total of 164,000 children received their needed vaccinations.

Despite all restrictions and difficult situations of the imposed war, the health ministry did not fail to provide public health services, which highlights the dedication, tireless efforts, and unwavering commitment of health staff.

The national vaccination program in Iran includes 13 vaccines, and the country is following developed countries with an average of 17 vaccines in their national vaccination programs, Mostafa Qanei, the secretary general of the Biotechnology Development Headquarters, said in January.

Knowledge-based companies are operating to produce the four vaccines that are not included in the national vaccination program, he added.

Uterus, influenza, meningococcus and pneumococcal conjugate are the four vaccines that have not been produced domestically.

In May 2025, the health ministry started distributing domestically made pentavalent vaccines across the country.

The pentavalent vaccine was integrated into the national vaccination programme in November 2014. According to the national vaccination program, each child must receive the pentavalent vaccine 3 times at intervals of 2 months. The first is usually at the end of the second month of life.

The vaccination program to combat pneumococcal and rotavirus kicked off in the country in February 2024 after being missed from the immunization schedule for a decade.

Rotavirus and pneumococcal vaccines were added to the national immunization program in 2024.

The regional verification commission for measles and rubella (RVC MR), affiliated with the World Health Organization (WHO), verified the elimination of the two diseases in the country in 2023.

The measles vaccination program in Iran started in 1984 when 34 percent of the pop-

ulation was vaccinated in the first year and 90 to 95 percent of the population after 6 years. Also in 2003, 33 million people were vaccinated with a national program to eradicate measles in the country.

World Immunization Week

World Immunization Week, celebrated in the last week of April, aims to promote the life-saving power of immunization to protect people of all ages against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Vaccines have long been one of the most powerful tools in public health. Over the last 50 years, vaccines have saved more than 150 million lives not by accident, but because ordinary people made the decision to protect themselves, their children and one another. That's 6 lives every minute, every day, for five decades.

Health workers rolling up sleeves, parents bringing their children to health clinics, communities showing up, and generations deciding that preventing infectious diseases, such as measles, diphtheria, pertussis and polio, is worth it.

Those choices to vaccinate have contributed to a 40 percent improvement in infant survival during that time and protected tens of millions of children from lifelong disabilities. More children now live to see their first birthday – and grow up, fall in love, have families, and grow old than at any other point in human history.

This year's World Immunization Week theme, "For every generation, vaccines work", aims to promote how vaccines have safely protected people, families, and communities for generations – and continue to safeguard our future.

To raise awareness that vaccines have protected people for generations, World Immunization Week 2026 aims to:

Demonstrate how immunization has safely and effectively protected generations from deadly diseases, thanks to the decisions individuals and families have made to protect themselves and others.

Equip health workers with the skills and tools to communicate clearly and compassionately about vaccines, helping families who are hesitant or have questions feel informed, heard, and confident in their immunization decisions.

Strengthen public understanding of the science behind vaccine safety and effectiveness enabling individuals, families, and communities to make informed immunization decisions.

Reinforce trust by highlighting transparency, accountability, and ongoing innovation in immunization, and emphasize the shared responsibility to protect future generations through continued investment, research, and equitable access to vaccines.



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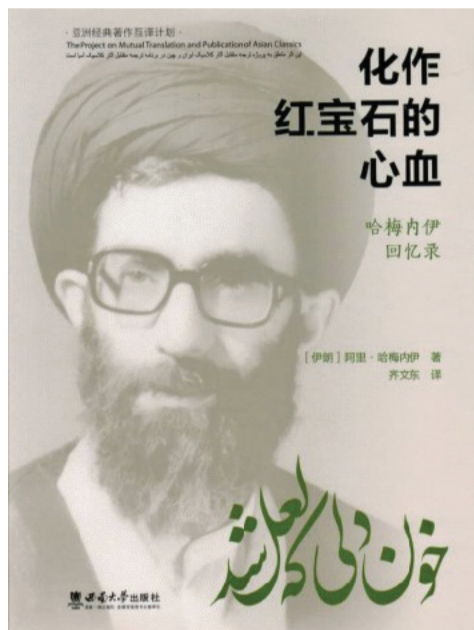
## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*The world is a snake; its exterior is soft and nice to touch, and its interior contains deadly poison. Stupid and ignorant people are charmed by it but the wise avoid it.*

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:02 Evening: 19:07 Dawn: 3:42 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:15 (tomorrow)

## Chinese readers welcome Martyr Leader's memoir



TEHRAN – The Chinese translation of the book “The Pains that Changed into Gains,” memories of the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has received a warm welcome from readers across China.

After the US-Israeli assault on Iranian soil on February 28 and the subsequent martyrdom of the nation's leader, there has been a noticeable increase in public motivation across East Asia to learn more about the personality of Ayatollah Khamenei and to gain a deeper understanding of the Islamic Revolution, ILNA reported.

The People's Republic of China, as the world's most populous nation, continues to pursue long-term initiatives in scientific, cultural, and artistic cooperation with Iran. One such initiative is the publication of the Chinese translation of Ayatollah Khamenei's memories, also known as “Cell No. 14”.

The book was introduced and made available to the Chinese market at the 30th Beijing International Book Fair through efforts led by the Cultural Attaché of the Embassy of Iran in China.

In addition to the printed version of this 359-page book, a digital edition was recently published on China's online reading platforms and has been met with broad reader enthusiasm.

The wide circulation of excerpts, presented as memoirs, notes, and unpretentious biographical passages of the Martyr Leader, across Chinese social media reflects this growing public interest in the digital sphere of China.

The book covers the first half of the life of Ayatollah Khamenei, from his early childhood all the way to the 1979 Islamic Revolution that brought the monarchical regime to an end in Iran.

In his book, the author skillfully transports readers to a tangible and realized space through simple yet comprehensive literature. The book's narrative is devoid of imposing or imaginative elements, resulting in a striking sense of concreteness and realization.

It is a remarkable saga of a young cleric blessed with an indomitable spirit who fights a dictatorial regime with his sermons and speeches as well as with his organizational abilities. He never loses hope despite being sent to prison and exile and finally emerges victorious against all odds.

The book serves as a source of inspiration to all activists around the globe who are trying to bring about social and political change.

It also contains unpublished photos of the Leader, his father, and his children, in addition to a photo collection of paintings related to the topics in the book.

The Persian edition of the book was published in 2019. It was a Persian translation of “Inna Ma as-Sabri Nasra” the Leader had written in Arabic. The memories were then compiled by the Iranian Arabic language scholar Mohammad-Ali Azarshab.

Since then, the English, Spanish, Portuguese, Urdu, and Bengali translations of the book have also been published.

# Tehran Rah-Ahan Square unveils mural in memory of Dena martyrs

TEHRAN- A new large-scale mural titled “In Memory of the Brave Martyrs of the Frigate Dena” was unveiled at Rah-Ahan Square in southern Tehran on Sunday, marking the 40th day since the martyrdom of 84 martyrs of the Dena frigate.

The artwork, created by prominent artist Saber Sheikh Rezaei, honors the heroic sailors of the Iranian Navy, who were martyred in the early days of the imposed war against Iran during an aggression by the United States and the Zionist regime.

The mural features a quote from the first message of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, addressed to the Islamic Republic of Iran Army on the occasion of Army Day: “May the peace and blessings of Almighty God be upon all the fighters of the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

The mural delivers multiple messages of resilience and patriotism simultaneously.

Sheikh Rezaei explained the work as “a representation of the military salute of the nation's brave sailors to the sacred three-color flag of Iran, reflecting trust in God and the steadfast resolve of Iranian seafarers in defending our maritime borders, overcoming imposed blockades, and pioneering across seas and oceans.”

Saber Sheikh Rezaei is a contemporary Iranian graphic designer, illustrator, and photographer known for his contributions to cultural and revolutionary visual arts. His work is characterized by a masterful integration of symbolic imagery with modern graphic techniques, often focusing on themes of national identity, resistance, and spiritual devotion.

A frequent participant and award-winner in prestigious national and international art festivals, Sheikh Rezaei has become a prominent figure in Iran's public art scene, particularly through his



large-scale murals and conceptual posters that bridge the gap between historical memory and contemporary social discourse.

The composition draws inspiration from the historic photograph of the Homafarans' allegiance to Imam Khomeini, captured by the late Abdol-Hossein Partovi.

the mural continues in this symbolic tradition, placing the Iranian flag at a golden focal point. The conceptual design depicts sailors aboard the Dena alongside the snow-capped peaks of Mount Dena in the sky, emphasizing the pride, bravery, and celestial standing of these heroes.

The iconic photo of Abdol-Hossein Partovi, captured on February 7, 1979, depicts a powerful moment in Iran's history. This is the moment when the Homafaran, officers in the Shah's Iranian Air Force, pledged their allegiance to Imam Khomeini upon his return from exile in France. In the photo, Imam Khomeini can be seen in the distance, while the Homafaran salute him. The image was published

on the front page of Kayhan daily on February 8, just before the Iranian Revolution toppled the Shah's government. To avoid detection, the photo was taken from behind, increasing its historical value as the only known image of this pivotal moment.

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

The attack occurred in international waters, raising serious questions about the legality and morality of targeting a vessel that was reportedly unarmed and carrying naval cadets. Iranian sources have described this incident as a brutal assault on a returning naval unit, leading to the martyrdom of several crew members and ig-

ning widespread condemnation across Iran and world.

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

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

## Iranian horror-drama film “The Devil’s Mirror” to compete in Italian festival



TEHRAN – The Iranian feature film “The Devil's Mirror” directed by Farid Valizadeh has entered the competition section of the Vespertilio Awards, which will be held in Rome, Italy, on May 23.

Produced by Fozhan Film, the horror-drama movie is the second full-length feature film by Valizadeh, Mehr reported.

The 87-minute movie is about young couples who are troubled by the Devil in the Mirror of Deeds.

The cast includes Sahar Vaseghi, Morteza Zarabi, Ghazaleh Nazar, Mohsen Sadeghinasab, Zahra Sa-

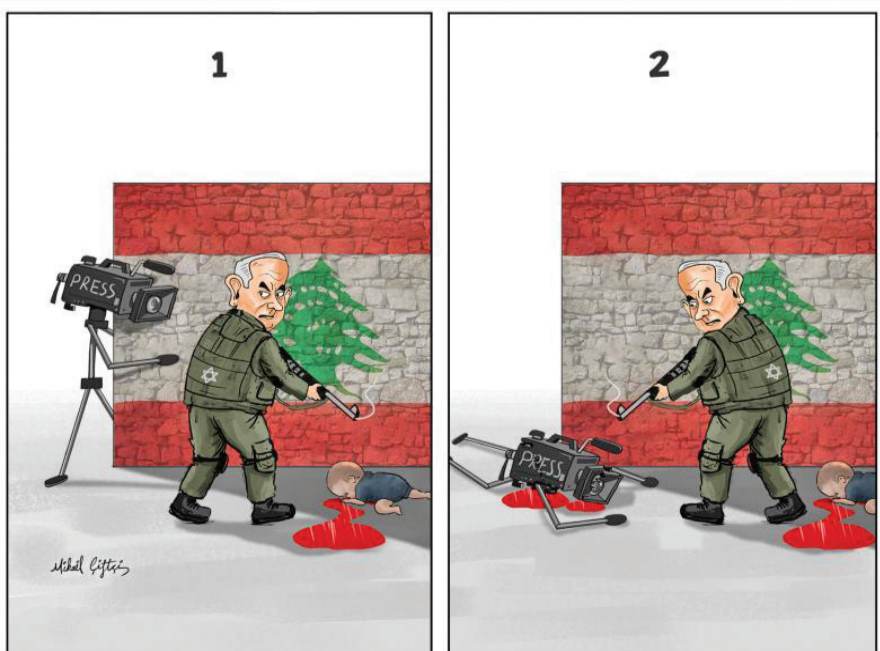
dat Razavi, Alireza Shakiba, Golnaz Abbasi, Ali Yaghoubi, Elnaz Bateni, and Farid Valizadeh.

Farid Valizadeh, 46, is an Iranian film actor and director. He has been working with many famous Iranian directors such as: Rakhshan Banietemad and Bahman Farmanara.

The Vespertilio Awards is an Italian cinematic recognition of the horror, yellow, thriller, noir, science fiction, and dark fantasy panorama.

The event takes place in a single evening, during which different awards will be delivered in various categories.

## Cartoon of Day



Journalists Being Murdered  
Cartoonist: Mikail Çiftçi from Turkey

## “The Systems Thinking Playbook” published in Persian

TEHRAN – The Persian translation of the book “The Systems Thinking Playbook: Exercises to Stretch and Build Learning and Systems Thinking Capabilities” written by Linda Booth Sweeney and Dennis Meadows has been released in the bookstores across Iran.

Translated by Ali Sibooeyh and Mojtaba Ahmadzadeh, the book has been brought out by Bustan Ketab Publishing House in 392 pages, ILNA reported.

To truly grasp the concept of sustainability and playfully master the behavioral elements required to sustain our planet, we must first undergo a fundamental shift in perception. It is essential to realize that we are not isolated actors, but integral parts of a common humanity whose lives and destinies are inextricably linked. This realization does not merely result in a vague sense of social responsibility; it demands active cooperation, collective intelligence, and a commitment to common thinking. Sustainability is not just a technical challenge to be solved with engineering; it is a relational challenge that requires us to understand the ripple effects of our actions across the global web of life.

The seminal work by Linda Booth Sweeney and Dennis Meadows provides an indispensable road-

map for this transformative journey. Their book offers a wealth of practical exercises designed to teach complex, non-linear topics through the lens of systems thinking. By moving away from traditional, reductionist education, this resource helps learners visualize the “invisible” connections that define our world. It has rapidly become a staple for a diverse audience, ranging from K-12 teachers and university faculty to high-level corporate consultants seeking to foster innovation and resilience within their organizations.

The brilliance of the book lies in its collection of thirty short gaming exercises that illustrate the subtle, often counterintuitive nuances of systems thinking. These games are meticulously classified into five core disciplines of learning: Systems Thinking, Mental Models, Team Learning, Shared Vision, and Personal Mastery. Each description is crafted with the practitioner in mind, clearly explaining the “when, how, and why” of every activity. Furthermore, the authors provide explicit, step-by-step instructions for debriefing each exercise—a critical phase where raw experience is translated into lasting conceptual understanding. To accommodate busy professionals, a summary matrix allows for a quick glance at all thirty games, ensuring the perfect initiative can



be found even when time is of the essence.

Both Sweeney and Meadows bring decades of pedagogical expertise to the table, and their deep insights are reflected in every page. Each game has been rigorously tested and refined to ensure it consistently provokes a variety of deep insights regarding paradigms, system boundaries, causal-loop diagrams, reference modes, and leverage points. Whether the exercises are adapted from outdoor education classics or are entirely original creations, they serve as the perfect bridge between theory and practice. By complementing traditional readings and lectures, these games allow participants to intuitively internalize the principles of systems thinking, turning abstract complexity into actionable wisdom.