

‘A New Chapter Is Unfolding for the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz’

What are the key points in Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei’s new message?



Under a brilliant, cloud-streaked sky, a ceremonial naval officer in a sharp white uniform hoists the Iranian flag on Hormuz Island on April 30, 2026, marking the observation of National Persian Gulf Day.

How Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei’s message awakens hope for a world free of domination

By Mir Mohammad Alikhan

As I sit here reflecting on the words that have just reached me from the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, I find myself pausing in quiet wonder. I cannot believe that a man like me, Mir Mohammad Alikhan, is the one writing this. For years, I moved through the polished halls of Wall Street, surrounded by the very influences and mindsets that often painted a different picture of the world. My teenage years and much of my adult life unfolded in the glittering capitals of London, New York, and Paris, where the rhythm of finance, culture, and ambition shaped my days. Yet here I am, drawn by an inner pull I cannot deny, putting pen to paper on the beautiful message of Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei delivered on National Persian Gulf Day, April 30, 2026. Life has a way of leading us to the most unexpected turns. What once felt like a straight path of worldly success has curved gently toward something deeper, something spiritual. Today I stand as a proud Muslim, heart full, soul awake, grateful for the grace that has brought me to this moment of clarity and connection.

Trump administration faces backlash over Iran war ‘quagmire’ as 60-day deadline expires

By staff writer

TEHRAN - The 60-day deadline for the US administration to seek Congressional approval to continue the war on Iran has officially expired, prompting intense debate as President Donald Trump and his supporters pursue their own legal interpretation of the War Powers Resolution.

Under the War Powers Resolution of 1973—a Vietnam-era law—a US president has 60 days to conduct military action in response to an imminent threat or an attack on the United States if Congress has not voted to authorize a formal declaration of war.

Friday marked the end of the 60-day window, calculated from the date President Trump formally notified Congress of the conflict’s initiation on March 2. The US and Israel launched a joint military operation against Iran on February 28. Following roughly 40 days of hostilities, Tehran and Washington agreed to a two-week ceasefire. Although the initial period ended, President Trump has continued to extend the truce unilaterally.

IRGC Aerospace Force chief: US warships’ fate to be like that of US bases

TEHRAN — The commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Force has warned that US naval vessels in the region will meet the same fate as American military bases, as two senior US officials briefed President Donald Trump on Friday on new plans for potential military action against Iran.

Brigadier General Majid Mousavi addressed US Central Command on Thursday over reported plans for a “short and intense” series of strikes targeting Iranian infrastructure.

“You have seen the fate of your bases in the region; you will also see the fate of your warships,” General Mousavi wrote in a social media post.

The Air Force commander’s warning came after initial reports from Axios, citing two US officials, that CENTCOM Commander Admiral Brad Cooper and Joint Chiefs Chairman General Dan Caine would brief President Trump. On Friday, May 1, it was reported that the two officials briefed the president for 45 minutes on new plans for potential military action against Iran.

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Knowledge and action are two wings of national progress: Leader

TEHRAN — Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, issued a strategic message on Friday evening marking the occasions of Labor Day and Teacher’s Day, defining education and labor as the “two wings” indispensable for Iran’s national ascent.

The message shifts the strategic focus toward a sustained “economic and cultural jihad [struggle]” following the Islamic Republic’s recent and significant demonstrations of military prowess against its adversaries.

The Leader characterized teachers as the primary architects of the future, responsible for “molding the identity of the next generation” and fostering deep insight. He emphasized that students are living mirrors of their instructors, reflecting their knowledge, behavior, and speech across all spheres of social life. ► Page 2

Iran’s Araghchi says Pentagon is lying about war costs

TEHRAN — In a series of diplomatic engagements spanning two days, Iran’s Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi, has intensified his campaign to isolate the United States internationally over its role in the recent war of aggression against the Islamic Republic, while also pointing to the mounting financial toll of the conflict on the American household.

In telephone conversations with his counterparts from Kenya, Poland, and India, Araghchi argued that the insecurity gripping the Persian Gulf and the strategic Strait of Hormuz is a direct consequence of the US-Israeli aggression that began on February 28. ► Page 2

IRIS Dena sinking: Survivor testimony, diplomatic delays, and growing questions over US, Indian, and Sri Lankan roles

By John Helmer

Fresh testimony from survivors of the Iranian frigate IRIS Dena has intensified scrutiny over the March 4 U.S. attack that sank the vessel near Sri Lanka, raising serious questions about whether the strike constituted a deliberate war crime and whether India and Sri Lanka played indirect roles by delaying safe harbor for the ship.

The new evidence comes from Commander Abuzar Zarri, captain of the Dena, and the vessel’s first officer, who appeared in an Iranian television report released on April 21. ► Page 3

War in Persian Gulf, turbulence in skies: Rising cost of global air travel

TEHRAN- The escalating US-Israeli military campaign against Iran is sending shockwaves far beyond the battlefields of the West Asia. The latest warning comes from the International Air Transport Association (IATA), which has confirmed that airline passengers in Europe and Asia should brace for significantly higher ticket prices.

The reason is straightforward yet alarming: jet fuel. IATA Director General Willie Walsh cautioned on Wednesday that regions heavily reliant on Persian Gulf energy supplies — namely Europe and Asia — face imminent fuel shortages. “The resilience of airlines is being tested,” Walsh stated, noting that surging fuel costs are already being passed on to travelers.

The crisis has been exacerbated by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a maritime chokepoint through which approximately one-fifth of global oil passes. ► Page 4

Iran marks Persian Gulf National Day, recalling 17th-century expulsion of Portuguese forces

TEHRAN — Iran on April 30 marked the Persian Gulf National Day, commemorating a significant moment in 1622 when Safavid forces expelled Portuguese troops from the Strait of Hormuz, an event widely regarded in the country as a milestone in the restoration of sovereignty over its southern waters.

Observed annually on the 10th day of Ordibehesht in the Iranian calendar, the day highlights what officials and historians describe as the convergence of history, identity and state authority. It recalls the end of more than a century of Portuguese presence along Iran’s southern coasts and the reassertion of control over a key maritime corridor linking regional and global trade routes. ► Page 6



Crowds gather at Persepolis to mark anniversary of Leader’s visit to Fars province

TEHRAN — Large crowds gathered on Friday at the ancient sites of Persepolis and Naqsh-e Rostam to commemorate the anniversary of a visit by the martyred Leader of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, to Fars province.

Participants emphasized themes of resilience and commitment, stating that their presence conveyed a message of steadfastness rooted in deeply held beliefs.

Persepolis and Naqsh-e Rostam, both dating back to the Achaemenid Empire, are among Iran’s most prominent historical landmarks and frequently serve as venues for cultural and symbolic events.

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Economic warfare: The fourth level of conflict

Javan examined the aspects of the Ramadan War in an article. The newspaper wrote: The Ramadan War had four levels or four types: moral security, military, and economic dimensions. Now there is a military ceasefire, but the war continues in the economic sphere. Now we are in the fourth stage of the war or economic war. Here, the war will become more complicated because it also involves the lives of other nations in the war. We took control of the world's fuel management, and the whole world was affected by it. This process has also affected the upcoming US elections. The naval blockade of Iran and domestic abuse in the growth of prices are appearing, which is sometimes very unnatural, and as if a hand is at work to turn the sweetness of victory in a military war into internal discomfort. The authorities must be careful and, with alternative ways in imports and strict supervision, prevent us from appearing weak in the eyes and minds of the nation in the economic sphere after the military victory.

Sobh-e-No: There is no favorable option for Trump

Sobh-e-No commented on Trump's critical situation and said: After the United States failed in the forty-day war and Donald Trump's inability to achieve his desired goals on the battlefield, attempts were made to compensate for these failures through the negotiating table. In other words, the Americans initially tried to gain what they had not gained on the battlefield in the negotiation process. In this context, the US vice president also entered the negotiation space with the same approach, but these efforts faced a serious obstacle called the red lines of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Now, Trump is faced with a choice between a bad option and a worse option. In such circumstances, there is practically no option that is completely favorable for the United States. However, for the Islamic Republic of

Iran, if an agreement is formed that is within the framework of the country's red lines, that agreement can be considered a suitable and acceptable option.

Ettelaat: Tehran's three strategic levers to win the battle of war and ceasefire

Ettelaat assessed Tehran's strategic levers to win the battle with the US. Iran is setting its terms for ending the war with the US and deeply believes that it has three powerful advantages in the face of a ceasefire. Ammunition, markets, and midterm elections give Tehran the strategic patience needed to deny Donald Trump any easy victory. The longer this stalemate drags on, the stronger Iran's position will become. Ammunition gives Iran the staying power to endure long-term conflicts without surrendering. In markets, the pressure on oil prices is hitting the US economy and its global allies hard, and the US midterm elections are a political clock that is weakening Trump's position at home. Trump entered the field expecting to impose dominance through force.

Arman-e-Emrooz: Diplomatic openings between Iran and Europe

In recent days, European officials have sent positive signals that they are ready to gradually ease sanctions on Iran. Europe has practically refrained from direct military action during the recent conflicts against Iran and has not actively participated in the US naval blockade and maximum pressure. While Trump has put heavy economic pressure on Iran by intensifying sanctions and imposing a severe naval blockade on the Strait of Hormuz and has almost disrupted Iranian maritime trade, Europe has preferred to keep the path of diplomacy open. This gap between Europe and the United States has created a unique opportunity for Iran. In such a situation, Iran must enter into a deal with Europe with intelligence. The Strait of Hormuz, as one of Iran's most vital strategic assets, is a powerful card in Tehran's hands.

IRGC Aerospace Force chief: US warships' fate to be like that of US bases



From page 1 ► According to the report, the briefing signals that Trump is seriously weighing a return to large-scale military attacks — either to break the stalemate in negotiations or to deliver what Axios described as “a final blow before ending the war.”

CENTCOM, the report said, has devised a plan for a “short and intense” series of strikes on Iran, likely targeting infrastructure.

Another proposal presented to Trump reportedly focuses on “seizing control of part of the Strait of Hormuz to reopen it for commercial shipping” — an operation that could include ground forces.

“A further option previously discussed, and possibly to be raised again, is a special forces mission to secure Iran's stockpile of highly enriched uranium,” the outlet speculated.

Axios quoted Trump as saying on Wednesday that he views a naval blockade of Iran as “somewhat more effective than bombing,” though he remains open to military action if Iran does not yield.

General Mousavi issued a stark warning in response: “With painful, prolonged, and far-reaching strikes, we will respond to the enemy's operations — even if they are swift and brief — by the grace of God.”

The Iranian Armed Forces executed decisive strikes for 41 days, targeting US and Israeli military assets in the region, after the two regimes launched terrorist strikes against Iran's top officials as well as military and civilian infrastructure.

The United States was forced to unilaterally declare a two-week ceasefire on April 8, allowing for negotiations in Islamabad. However, peace talks collapsed after the Americans could not achieve through diplomacy what they had failed to achieve through military aggression.

Ultimately, President Trump announced a naval blockade on Iranian ports, but the measure has left the American and European economies bleeding from runaway energy prices.

A high-ranking security source from the Khatam al-Anbiya Headquarters — the country's central war command — said on Wednesday that Tehran's patience with ‘US piracy in the Sea of Oman’ is wearing thin.

“The continued American maritime piracy and banditry in the form of a so-called ‘naval blockade’ will soon be met with practical and unprecedented action,” the source said.

Knowledge and action are two wings of national progress: Leader

Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei maps culture and economy as Iran's next battlefield

From page 1 ► Consequently, he called for a heavy responsibility in education that extends beyond instruction to the cultivation of a resilient Iranian-Islamic identity capable of withstanding foreign cultural incursions.

Turning to the economic sphere, Ayatollah Khamenei described the workforce as the “backbone” of the nation's material strength and sovereignty. The Leader urged business owners to treat every worker as “the wealth of that unit” and strictly avoid layoffs, even during hardship.

To ensure a decisive victory in this economic battle, he urged the public to prioritize “the consump-



tion of domestically produced goods,” describing this patriotic choice as a form of national support comparable to the public's

unwavering backing for the armed forces.

Reflecting on recent developments, Ayatollah Khamenei ob-

served that having demonstrated its “significant capabilities” in the military theater after decades of struggle, Iran must now defeat its adversaries in the cultural and economic arenas.

By reinforcing an Iranian-Islamic identity and empowering the domestic workforce, he said the nation will successfully “traverse the path toward the peaks of progress and excellence.”

This journey, the Leader noted, will be accelerated through divine grace and the intercession and prayers of “our Master,” the Promised Savior, Imam Mahdi (may God hasten his reappearance).

Iran's Araghchi says Pentagon is lying about war costs

From page 1 ► Speaking with Kenya's Foreign Minister, Musalia Mudavadi, Araghchi urged the international community to take “decisive steps” to defend the United Nations Charter and hold Washington accountable for “breaches of international law and crimes.” He described the situation in the Persian Gulf as “insecurity imposed” by US-Israeli actions and warned that the economic repercussions of the war extend far beyond the region.

In a separate call with Poland's Foreign Minister, Radosław Sikorski, Araghchi went further, urging all nations to adopt a “clear and decisive stance” in condemning US “acts of maritime piracy” and threats to international navigation.

With India's Foreign Minister, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Araghchi emphasized the need to hold the United States and Israel accountable for the “security and economic consequences” of their actions for the entire world.

On Friday, Araghchi spoke by telephone with the European Union's Foreign Policy Chief, Kaja Kallas. The conversation came as European capitals continue to navigate the fallout from the war



and the subsequent naval blockade imposed by the United States on Iranian ports.

He also discussed recent West Asia developments with his counterparts from Turkey, Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Azerbaijan.

Parallel to his diplomatic calls, Araghchi took to X on Friday to deliver a pointed message to the American public and the Pentagon. Reacting to a chart showing that the share of Americans reporting their financial situation has worsened has surged in 2026, he wrote:

“The Pentagon is lying. Netanyahu's gamble has directly cost America \$100b so far — four times what is claimed.”

“Indirect costs for US taxpayers are FAR higher. The monthly bill for each American household is \$500 and rising fast.”

“Israel First always means America Last.”

The war of aggression launched by the United States and Israel on February 28 has fundamentally altered the security landscape of West Asia. In addition to the assassination of Iran's leader, the conflict has involved massive strikes on Iranian infrastructure, including nuclear facilities, as well as a US naval blockade imposed on April 9 — one day after a Pakistani-brokered ceasefire had taken effect. Iran responded by maintaining its control over the Strait of Hormuz and restricting the passage of ships belonging to adversary nations.

Despite the ceasefire, which remains tenuous, Tehran has repeatedly stated that it has lost all trust in Washington, noting that the United States attacked Iran twice during previous rounds of diplomacy.

Trump administration faces backlash over Iran war ‘quagmire’ as 60-day deadline expires



From page 1 ► Conflicting interpretations of the law

The Trump administration contends that the ceasefire period effectively “pauses” the 60-day legal clock. “We are in a ceasefire

right now, which our understanding means the 60-day clock pauses or stops,” Secretary of War Pete Hegseth told senators on Thursday during his appearance before Congress.

Some Republican allies support this perspective, suggesting that the president holds the authority to extend the 60-day clock for an additional 30 days if he determines that continued military presence is necessary to ensure the safety of service members during a withdrawal. “I think the expectation is that he has the ability to extend it for 30 days,” noted Sen. Mike Rounds of South Dakota, a member of the Sen-

ate Armed Services Committee.

Conversely, many Democrats vehemently reject this interpretation. Senator Tim Kaine of Virginia criticized the administration's logic, arguing that it creates an unchecked precedent. “And then it'll be 120 days, and then it'll be forever,” Kaine said. “Why don't we just let Donald Trump wage war against anyone in the world for as long as he wants?” Some Democrats further argue that the 60-day timeline is irrelevant because they maintain there was no evidence of an imminent threat from Iran when the conflict began.

Rising tensions and ‘quagmire’ debate

The debate reached a boiling point during Wednesday's hearing before the House Armed Services Committee, where Hegseth faced intense questioning. The appearances of the war secretary and General Dan Caine, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, before Congress have intensified scrutiny regarding the administration's stated motives for the war. Democratic lawmakers grilled the administration over the ballooning financial costs of the conflict, with some accusing the Pentagon of obfuscating the reality of the situation.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran submits latest negotiation proposal to Pakistani mediator

TEHRAN - Iran has submitted a new negotiation proposal to Pakistan, the mediator in its talks with the United States, aimed at ending the war. The proposal was delivered on the evening of April 30.

Esmail Baqaei, spokesperson for Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, emphasized in a television interview late Friday that ending the war and achieving lasting peace are Tehran's primary priorities in negotiations with the United States.

Axios had previously reported that Iran, through Pakistani mediators, delivered its response to the latest US amendments to the end-of-war agreement on Thursday.

Also, Al Jazeera, citing an Iranian diplomatic

source, reported that Tehran presented a new proposal to the Pakistani mediator yesterday.

The ceasefire between the Islamic Republic of Iran on one side and the United States and the Israeli regime on the other was established after 40 days of war during the month of Ramadan. The war began on February 28, 2026, with the assassination of the late Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Khamenei, and several Iranian officials. The ceasefire took effect on April 7, 2026, with the aim of providing an opportunity for diplomatic solutions to end the war permanently. It was initially set for two weeks and was extended indefinitely by the US president on April 21, 2026.

Talks between Tehran and Washington were held on April 11, 2026, in Islamabad, Pakistan. Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, Speaker of the Iranian Parliament, led the Iranian delegation, while US Vice President JD Vance headed the American delegation. However, the talks ended without reaching an agreement.

Abbas Araghchi, Iran's Foreign Minister, traveled to Islamabad last Friday night and held important meetings with the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, and Army Chief of Pakistan. On Sunday, April 26, following his visit to Oman, he returned to Islamabad for a second time and, during a brief stop before departing for Moscow, met with Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Pakistan's Army Chief.

Iran demands compensation from regional states for role in US-Israeli aggression

TEHRAN - Iran's ambassador to the United Nations has called on several regional countries to provide compensation for damages caused by their complicity in the US-Israeli war of aggression against Iran, asserting that these states bear international responsibility for facilitating the attacks.

In a letter addressed to UN Secretary-General António Guterres and President of the UN Security Council Jamal Fares Alrowaieh on April 30, Ambassador Amir Saied Irvani

rejected allegations raised by Qatar, Bahrain, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Jordan. He argued that those countries had ignored the “root causes” of the conflict and attempted to shift blame onto Iran, despite the unlawful military aggression carried out by the United States and the Israeli regime.

The ambassador maintained that the states in question must be held accountable and make “full reparation” for the material and moral damage inflicted on Iran.

Citing the latest statistics from the Iranian Red Crescent Society, Irvani reported that the aggressors' war crimes have resulted in the martyrdom of more than 3,375 individuals.

The ambassador rejected claims by the six Arab states that the attacks were not launched from their territories. He pointed to an April 16 press briefing in which CENTCOM Commander Admiral Brad Cooper described Bahrain, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, and Jordan

as “exceptional teammates.” Irvani also noted that the downing of a hostile airborne object over Iran in April 2026 suggested the participation of Saudi Arabia and the UAE, as neither the US nor Israel deploys such objects. Irvani argued that the alleged exercise of self-defense by these states does not meet the criteria of Article 51 of the UN Charter. Instead, he said their internationally wrongful acts qualify as aggression under UN General Assembly resolution 3314 (XXIX).

Shrimp production rises 37% in a year



TEHRAN- The Director General of the Shrimp and Brackish Water Aquaculture Office of Iran's Fishery Organization has announced a 37-percent increase in shrimp production in the past Iranian calendar year 1404 (ended on March 20).

According to an IRNA report from the Ministry of Agriculture, Mehrdad Mohammadi-Doust stated that with the realization of nearly 62,500 tons of shrimp production last year, the producers' resolve to achieve the targets set out in the Seventh Development Plan has been further strengthened.

He added: "In the past year, for the first time in the country, the shrimp production record was broken with 62,500 tons. We hope that by securing financial and non-financial requirements, we will achieve the target set in the Seventh Development Plan."

The Director General of the Shrimp and Brackish Water Aquaculture Office of Iran's Fisheries Organization stated: "In the last agricultural year, the area under shrimp cultivation was 17,672 hectares. It is projected that this area will increase to 22,000 hectares this year, leading to production reaching 91,000 tons."

He noted: "Last year, 450 tons of microalgae, 4746 tons of Artemia cyst and biomass, and 510,000 oyster seeds were also produced. It is expected that in the year 1405, algae production will increase to 882.8 tons, Artemia cyst and biomass to 120 tons, and oyster seed production to 2 tons."

Mohammadi-Doust expressed hope that if requirements such as fingerlings (juvenile fish) and financial resources are met, a 50% increase in marine fish farming (cage aquaculture) and offshore projects can be anticipated this year.

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

Mohammad Seddiq Mortazavi, referring to the institute's executive policies for the current year, stated: Given the country's circumstances, the institute will carefully pursue and implement the executive policies planned for the year 1405.

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

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

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

He announced the goal of utilizing artificial intelligence in fisheries research activities and said: For the first time, the use of artificial intelligence in various research projects—including aquatic reproduction and rearing, aquatic health and diseases, nutrition and live food production,

sustainable fishing with a species conservation approach, as well as the production of processed and biological fishery products—has been placed on the agenda.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As previously stated by Reza Asadi, director general for aquatic animal health and disease management at the Iran Veterinary Organization, the growth in shrimp production in the country was achieved despite challenges faced by the aquaculture sector in the previous year.

He described aquaculture as a strategic sector of the economy, noting that shrimp is among Iran's key export-oriented products.

Production expanded across all shrimp-farming provinces during the past year, he said.

Harvesting operations in Khuzestan, Golestan and Sistan-Baluchestan provinces were carried out without any reported disease outbreaks, he added.

Asadi said the results followed the implementation of targeted health protocols, specialized guidelines and closer coordination with industry experts, helping to contain disease risks and stabilize output in a sector closely tied to export revenues.

War in Persian Gulf, turbulence in skies: Rising cost of global air travel

TEHRAN- The escalating US-Israeli military campaign against Iran is sending shockwaves far beyond the battlefields of the West Asia. The latest warning comes from the International Air Transport Association (IATA), which has confirmed that airline passengers in Europe and Asia should brace for significantly higher ticket prices.

The reason is straightforward yet alarming: jet fuel. IATA Director General Willie Walsh cautioned on Wednesday that regions heavily reliant on Persian Gulf energy supplies — namely Europe and Asia — face imminent fuel shortages. "The resilience of airlines is being tested," Walsh stated, noting that surging fuel costs are already being passed on to travelers.

The crisis has been exacerbated by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a maritime chokepoint through which approximately one-fifth of global oil passes.



Following US and Israeli attacks on Iranian soil, supply routes have been severed.

The International Energy Agency has echoed these concerns, warning that European nations could run out of jet fuel within weeks.

For airlines already struggling with thin profit margins, this is a nightmare scenario.

Longer flights from alternative

routes, combined with skyrocketing fuel prices, will inevitably force carriers to raise fares or reduce services.

For consumers, this means summer travel budgets will stretch less, and cargo costs could drive up prices of goods from electronics to fresh produce.

Governments must act urgently — whether by releasing strategic fuel reserves or secur-

ing alternative supply chains.

The sky is not the limit for airfare prices; war is. And until peace returns to the Persian Gulf, passengers worldwide will pay the price at the check-in counter.

Governments must act urgently — whether by releasing strategic fuel reserves, rationing non-essential flights, or fast-tracking alternative supply corridors like the UAE's east-west pipeline.

The aviation industry has survived wars, pandemics, and oil shocks before. But this triple crisis — military conflict, chokepoint closure, and regional instability — tests its limits like never before.

Without coordinated international pressure to reopen Hormuz and halt the attacks, passengers worldwide will continue paying the price at the check-in counter, and the global economy's connectivity will remain grounded.

Behind scenes of UAE's exit from OPEC: From disputes with Saudi Arabia to eyeing free market

TEHRAN- Energy market analysts and observers believe that the UAE's exit from OPEC and the OPEC+ group will weaken the influence of the organization's member countries and their allies in the oil market and free up Abu Dhabi to increase its oil sales. However, they say it will not disrupt the cohesion of OPEC and OPEC+.

According to an IRNA report quoting Reuters, representatives of the OPEC+ group and analysts say that the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its allies will lose some of their influence in the oil market following the UAE's withdrawal from the organization. Nevertheless, they predicted that the remaining OPEC members would stay united and continue coordinating on oil supply policy.

The UAE, the fourth-largest oil producer in OPEC, announced its departure from the organization on Tuesday after nearly 60 years of membership.

This decision will free Abu Dhabi from OPEC and its allies' oil production program designed to balance supply and demand.

Five informed sources within the OPEC+ group, who spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak with the media, said the UAE's exit comes as a shock.

Four of these sources stated that the UAE's departure will further complicate OPEC+'s efforts to balance the market by adjusting supply, as the group will control a smaller share of global production. The UAE will become the largest oil producer to leave OPEC, dealing a significant blow

to the organization and its de facto leader, Saudi Arabia.

Before the aggressive war of the United States and the Israeli regime against Iran — which forced Abu Dhabi and other Persian Gulf oil producers to reduce exports and shut down some production — the UAE supplied about 3.4 million barrels per day, or about 3% of global crude oil supply.

After leaving OPEC, the UAE will join a number of independent oil producers such as the United States and Brazil.

Currently, the UAE has little power to increase production or exports due to the near-complete closure of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz.

UAE's Exit from OPEC: From shadow of disputes with Saudi Arabia to hope for increased production

If shipping returns to pre-war levels, the UAE could increase its production to a capacity of five million barrels per day of crude oil and liquids. Previously, there were tensions with Saudi Arabia over the UAE's production quota of 3.5 million barrels per day. The UAE had requested a higher quota, reflecting its increased production capacity under a \$150 billion investment program.

Helima Croft of RBC Capital Markets said: "For years, Abu Dhabi has been seeking to reap the returns on its investments in production capacity development." However, she noted that the aggressive war of the United States and the Israeli regime against Iran and the damage to the UAE's

production facilities will slow down these plans.

For years, rumors have circulated about a possible UAE exit from OPEC+ amid deteriorating relations between Abu Dhabi and Riyadh due to conflicts in Sudan, Somalia, and Yemen. The UAE has also drawn closer to the United States and the Israeli regime.

The UAE and Saudi Arabia have also had differences for years over oil production and export policy, and now the UAE's exit from OPEC may, on a broader level, be a sign of a realignment of alliances in the Persian Gulf region amid intensifying regional rivalries.

The UAE is the fourth country to leave the OPEC+ group in recent years. Angola left the group in 2024, citing disagreements over production levels. Ecuador left OPEC in 2020, and Qatar left in 2019.

Gary Ross, a veteran OPEC watcher and CEO of Black Gold Investors, said OPEC+ will not collapse because Saudi Arabia remains willing to manage the market with the group's help.

Jorge Leon, a former OPEC official now working at the Rystad Energy research institute, said: "The UAE's exit marks a significant shift for OPEC, and its long-term consequence will be the weakening of OPEC's structure."

Croft also said that OPEC+ members will focus more on rebuilding war-damaged facilities than on implementing production cuts in the near future. She added that the dissolution of OPEC+ is not on the table for now.

Iran's export of technical-engineering services rises 140% in a year

have not yet progressed in line with the country's full potential."

According to Roshanbakht, with focused planning in the field of engineering and technical services exports, a \$5 billion horizon can be envisioned for this sector. This target, if achieved, would represent a more than six-fold increase compared to just two years ago, signaling a strategic shift toward knowledge-based exports rather than raw materials or traditional goods.

The official at the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran added: "We are striving to enhance the value and credibility of this sector through the reinvention of engineering and technical services exports. This sector does not face the same export restrictions as other areas—such as limitations on entry and exit points—and can bring significant foreign currency earnings and employment to the country."

Unlike physical goods, which are subject to

shipping bottlenecks, customs delays, and geopolitical trade barriers, technical and engineering services—including consulting, project management, power plant construction, and infrastructure design—can often be delivered digitally or through specialized teams working abroad. This flexibility makes the sector a uniquely resilient pillar for economic growth, even under sanctions pressure.

Industry analysts note that Iran possesses a highly educated workforce and decades of experience in major infrastructure projects across the region, from dam construction to petrochemical plant development. However, realizing the \$5 billion vision will require sustained investment in training, international marketing, and streamlined regulatory support. If successful, the expansion of this sector could offset some of the economic vulnerabilities Iran faces in traditional oil and gas exports, while creating stable, high-skilled jobs for young professionals at home.

Investment for establishing solar power plants increases 2.5-fold

TEHRAN- Deputy Minister of Energy and head of the Organization for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (SATBA) announced a 2.5-fold increase in investment for establishing solar power plants in the country, stating that \$1.2 billion was invested in this sector in the past Iranian calendar year 1404 (ended on March 20).

According to an IRNA, Mohsen Tarzatab said during a visit to the 72-megawatt solar power plant in Esfarayen County, North Khorasan Province: "Last year, following directives issued, a portion of the resources from the National Development Fund was allocated for the development of solar energy, and in this regard, \$800 million was invested."

He added: "The capacity of solar power plants in the country has now exceeded 4,000 megawatts, and it is planned to reach 7,000 megawatts by the end of Khordad (mid-June). Achieving this goal requires financing and the provision of necessary infrastructure."

The Deputy Minister of Energy stated: "Through follow-ups by ex-

ecutive bodies, efforts are being made to increase the country's solar power generation capacity to 11,000 megawatts by the end of summer."

He continued: "In total, by the end of this summer, 2,500 megawatts of renewable electricity will be added to the country's production capacity, which will play an important role in providing sustainable electricity."

Crash site of US aircraft in Dasht-e Mahyar registered as national heritage



TEHRAN – The Ministry of Cultural Heritage announced that the site where US aircraft were shot down in the Dasht-e Mahyar area has been officially registered on Iran's National Heritage List of Sacred Defense sites.

The location has been recognized as the site marking the defeat of an operation referred to as the "Epic Wrath" by opposing forces, and is now considered part of Iran's historical and military heritage.

The downing of these aircraft is linked to an operation that took place on in early April, 2026, in southern Isfahan.

According to sources, the two US military personnel on board ejected after their jet was hit by Iranian forces, and, while the pilot was rescued the same day, the second crew member – a weapons operator – became separated and remained stranded in a sparsely populated, rugged region.

Following the crash, the US special forces launched a high-stakes raid into Iran to rescue the injured airman. While US aircraft were seen flying low over the area, Iran offered a bounty of £50,000 (\$66,100) to anyone who found him alive.

US President Donald Trump later said the airman's location was monitored "24 hours a day" as he was "being hunted down by our

enemies, who were getting closer and closer by the hour".

As US special forces aboard several aircraft made their way towards the stranded officer, strikes were reportedly launched to keep Iranian troops away from the area.

The New York Times reported that the airman communicated information on Iranian positions from his hiding place high on a 7,000ft ridge to aid with those strikes.

The rescue mission involved 155 aircraft, including four bombers, 64 fighters, 48 refuelling tankers, 13 rescue aircraft and more, Trump said.

Two planes tasked with retrieving rescue crews became bogged down in soil and were unable to take off from the remote base in Iran they had used to land, CBS reported.

Iran's military said two US C-130 military transport planes and two Black Hawk helicopters were destroyed during the operation – and that "a deception and escape mission at an abandoned airport in southern Isfahan... was completely foiled", but US officials have denied they came under attack.

Iranian state media also said that troops from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) had shot down a US drone over Isfahan while it was searching for the missing airman.

Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians

The "Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe" are a transnational serial property comprising 94 component parts across 18 countries.

As mentioned by UNESCO, they represent an outstanding example of relatively undisturbed, complex temperate forests and exhibit a wide spectrum of comprehensive ecological patterns and processes of pure and mixed stands of European beech across a variety of environmental conditions.

During each glacial phase (ice ages) of the last 1 million years, European beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) survived the unfavorable climatic conditions in refuge areas in the southern parts of the European continent.

These refuge areas have been documented by scientists through palaeoecological analysis and using the latest techniques in genetic

coding. After the last Ice Age, around 11,000 years ago, beech started expanding its range from these southern refuge areas to eventually cover large parts of the European continent. During this expansion process, which is still ongoing, beech formed different types of plant communities while occupying largely different environments.

The interplay between a diversity of environments, climatic gradients, and different species gene pools has and continues to shape this high diversity of beech forest communities.

These forests contain an invaluable population of old trees and a genetic reservoir of beech and many other species, which are associated with and dependent on these old-growth forest habitats.

(Source: UNESCO)

Iran marks Persian Gulf National Day, recalling 17th-century expulsion of Portuguese forces

From Page 1 ▶ The commemoration is rooted in events that unfolded between April 21 and April 30, 1622, when Portuguese forces withdrew from positions they had held since the early 16th century. Historical accounts indicate the withdrawal was a gradual process lasting nine days, culminating in the end of Portugal's military and commercial foothold in the region.

The campaign was carried out during the reign of Abbas I of Persia, who initiated a broader strategy to reclaim occupied territories and strengthen Iran's military and administrative structures. Command of the operation was entrusted to Imam Qoli Khan, whose forces retook the Hormuz Island in 1621, paving the way for the subsequent expulsion of Portuguese troops from the wider region.

The Portuguese had established control over Hormuz in the early 1500s as part of a wider imperial strategy to dominate maritime trade between East and West. The island's situation at the entrance to the Strait of Hormuz made it a critical point for regulating shipping and commerce, allowing Portugal to exert influence over one of the most important trade arteries of the time.

Iranian authorities and scholars say the events of 1622 marked a turning point in restoring national authority over the Persian Gulf, a body of water whose name has been recorded in historical sources for centuries. Classical Greek historians such as Herodotus, Xenophon and Strabo referred to the waterway using terms associated with Persia, including the phrase "Persicus Sinus," underscoring



what Iranian sources describe as the longstanding usage of the name in global geographical literature.

In recent years, Iran's Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution formally designated the date as Persian Gulf National Day, incorporating it into the country's official calendar. The move was described as an effort to preserve historical heritage and reinforce awareness of the waterway's name and significance.

Officials say the observance serves not only as a remembrance of past events but also as an opportunity to highlight the Persian Gulf's contemporary importance. Stretching along Iran's southern coastline, the waterway remains a juncture of economic, cultural and geopolitical activity, encompassing historic ports, maritime routes and diverse ecosystems.

Particular attention is given to the Strait of Hormuz, described by analysts as one of the world's most critical energy chokepoints. A significant share of global oil and gas shipments passes through the narrow passage, making its stability and security a matter of international concern.

Historically, control over the strait has been closely tied to influence over regional commerce. This dynamic, evident during the Portuguese presence in the 16th and 17th centuries, has persisted into the modern era, with global powers continuing to monitor developments in the area.

Iranian commentators emphasize that the Persian Gulf represents more than a strategic waterway, pointing to its role as a repository of cultural heritage, local traditions and environmental diversity. From ancient trade networks to coastal communi-

ties, the region has long been intertwined with the country's broader civilizational identity.

So, the national day observance helps provide a framework for revisiting this legacy while reinforcing public awareness about the region's historical and geopolitical role. It also reflects ongoing efforts to document and communicate narratives associated with the waterway amid what officials describe as occasional disputes over terminology in international discourse.

It is said the anniversary of the 1622 events, marked each year on April 30, continues to hold symbolic significance in Iran, representing what is seen domestically as the restoration of authority over one of the world's most strategic maritime corridors and a reaffirmation of a name embedded in historical records across centuries.

Motorcycle rally held in Iran to protest damage to cultural heritage sites

TEHRAN – A two-day motorcycle rally was launched in Iran on Thursday to protest damage to historical sites during recent military strikes, with participants set to gather at Falak-ol-Aflak Castle, a landmark reported to have been affected.

Organized by the Touring and Automobile Club of Iran, the event began at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts in Tehran on April 30 and is being held under the slogan "Cultural heritage; the red line of history and human identity," according to a statement cited by ISNA.

The rally, titled "Falak-ol-Aflak," is part of a series of initiatives responding to what organizers described as attacks by the United States and Israeli regime on Iran's cultural and historical sites. Iranian authorities and cultural bodies have condemned the damage, describing heritage assets as an integral part of global civilizational identity.

Around 40 motorcycles depart-



ed Tehran, traveling through Qom and Markazi provinces en route to Lorestan, where participants are expected to assemble on Friday at the historic fortress in the city of Khorramabad.

Falak-ol-Aflak Castle, also known as Shapur-Khast, dates back to the Sassanid era and is believed to have been built in the 3rd century. The structure has served various roles throughout history, including as a royal residence, treasury and prison, and today houses a museum dedicated to

the culture of Lorestan.

Officials say areas surrounding the castle were impacted by shockwaves from nearby airstrikes, which they attribute to joint U.S.-Israeli military action.

Iran's Association of Cultural Heritage Conservators has warned of what it described as extensive harm to historical sites, museums and cultural centers during the conflict, calling for urgent measures to assess and protect affected assets.

In a recent statement, the association expressed "deep concern" over reported destruction and neglect impacting monuments, archaeological sites and museum collections. It said the damage ranged from structural impacts on buildings to the loss of architectural elements and artifacts.

"Damage to cultural heritage, regardless of geography or political affiliation, constitutes harm to humanity's collective memory," the statement said.

According to Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, at least 149 historical sites across the country have been affected since the outbreak of hostilities on Feb. 28, highlighting the scale of the challenge facing authorities and conservation experts.

Organizers of the rally said the gathering at Falak-ol-Aflak aims to raise awareness among the public and cultural heritage advocates, emphasizing the need to safeguard historical sites amid conflict.

All the airlines cancelling flights and adding extra charges amid jet fuel crisis

United Airlines and Lufthansa are among the airlines forced to mull raising air fares and scrapping flights following a dramatic surge in jet fuel prices, driven by the U.S.-Israeli conflict with Iran.

United's CEO announced the airline may need to raise fares by as much as 20 percent, while Lufthansa's airline group announced the cancellation of 20,000 flights in bids to protect their airlines from the soaring cost of oil.

Costs have rocketed from approximately \$85 to \$90 per barrel to an alarming \$150 to \$200 per barrel in recent weeks.

This represents a substantial financial hit for carriers, where fuel can constitute up to a quarter of operating expenses. As a result, airlines are being compelled to raise fares and revise their financial outlooks.

So far the impact on British passengers has been limited. Airlines UK, representing

the main carriers, says: "Airlines continue to operate normally and are not experiencing issues with jet fuel supply."

Britain has asked UK refineries to maximize jet fuel supply as it continues to plan for a range of contingencies to increase flexibility on supply, the government said.

The European Commission proposed a series of measures to address the impact on the region's energy markets from the U.S.-Israeli war with Iran. The Commission said the measures – announced in a package called 'AccelerateEU' – included optimizing the distribution of jet fuel between EU countries, in order to avoid shortages.

Below is a list of how airlines are responding, in alphabetical order:

Aegean Airlines

The Greek airline expects suspended Middle East flights and a spike in fuel prices to have a "notable impact" on its first-quarter

results.

AirAsia X

The Malaysian airline's executives said the company had cut 10% of flights across the group, with a surcharge of about 20% on fuel in general.

Air France-KLM

The airline group said it planned to increase long-haul ticket prices to address surging fuel costs, with cabin fares set to rise by 50 euros (\$58) per round trip.

The group's Dutch arm KLM cancelled more than 150 European flights due to the rising cost of jet fuel.

The Dutch airline will not operate 80 return flights out of Amsterdam's Schiphol airport over the next month.

The flights are "currently no longer financially viable to operate" due to rising kerosene costs, said KLM.

Air Canada

Canada's largest carrier plans to trim four of its 38 daily flights to New York due to higher fuel prices. The four flights to JFK International Airport will be cut from 1 June to 25 October 2026.

Air India

The Indian carrier said it would revise its fuel surcharge from a flat domestic surcharge to a distance-based grid. It said surcharges on international routes did not compensate for the exponential rise in fuel prices.

Airline Operators of Nigeria

Nigeria's government moved to cap jet fuel prices and allow airlines to purchase supplies on credit, in an effort to avert widespread flight disruptions caused by escalating fuel costs.

A government document, seen by Reuters, indicates that the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authori-

ty (NMDPRA) has set price limits for aviation fuel.

Nigerian airlines temporarily suspended a planned nationwide shutdown of flight operations, which was set to begin on April 20, after the government intervened amid crippling fuel prices. The Airline Operators of Nigeria (AON), an industry body representing a dozen primarily domestic carriers, had warned they would halt services from April 20, citing that surging jet fuel costs had rendered operations unsustainable.

Air New Zealand

The airline said on 7 April it would slash flights through May and June and hike fares, having been one of the first to announce broad increases to ticket prices when the conflict broke out. It also suspended its full-year earnings forecast due to fuel market volatility.

(Source: INDEPENDENT)

Vice-presidency for science details supports to bolster bio-tech sector

TEHRAN – The Vice-Presidency for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy has elaborated on the measures that would contribute to the advancement of the biotechnology sector and the development of health technologies in the country.

Concerning the decisive role of biotechnology in food security, health, and knowledge-based economy, the country has adopted a series of technological and research projects focusing on scientific data analysis, expansion of innovation infrastructure, and enhancement of strategic biotechnology value chains, IRNA reported.

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) for advanced analysis of the country's scientific data in biotechnology is one of the most important steps taken.

All language models and natural language processing tools are used to conduct extensive mining on scientific articles by Iranian researchers.

Moreover, seven specialized biotechnology centers have been launched at universities. An institutional synergy model has been developed to implement the 'national division of labor in biotechnology' plan, which is being implemented with the



help of different agencies, including the headquarters for the development of biosciences and technologies and stem cells, the national Planning and Budget Organization, the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, and the Iran National Science Foundation.

The technological missions are communicated to universities, and the distribution of knowledge-based companies operating in various fields of biotechnology has also been identified and analyzed.

Signing memoranda of understanding with universities to boost the scientific capacities of the country and expedite stra-

tegic biotech development was among other measures adopted.

To support the strategic biotechnology value chains, various programs are being implemented, including the transition from raw material sales to the manufacturing of high-added-value products. In this regard, a document has been developed to implement the 'biorefinery' project in two fields: nutrient biotechnology and sugarcane biotechnology.

Enhancing intergovernmental collaborations to address challenges associated with food security and environment, establishing a national clinical research organization in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO), and

launching two corporate venture capital funds in the regenerative medicine field are among other employed strategies.

Biotech holds 60% share of pharmaceutical exports

Biotechnology products account for a major portion of Iran's pharmaceutical exports, with a share of 60 percent.

In 2025, Haleh Ahmadi, the head of the association of pharmaceutical biotechnology producers and exporters, said some 99 percent of pharmaceutical biotechnology products are manufactured domestically.

Biotechnology products are exported to 40 countries worldwide, compared to 35 countries in the past Iranian calendar year (March 2024 – March 2025). The exported medicines are worth 120 – 130 million dollars, Mehr news agency quoted Ahmadi as saying.

Thanks to the pharmaceutical biotechnology producers, the country is saving 5 billion dollars, which would have otherwise been spent on importing these products, she noted.

Currently, 45 pharmaceutical biotechnology products, including medicines, kits, and medical tools, are produced in Iran, Ahmadi added.

SCO voices concern over cyberattacks on Iran's digital infrastructure

TEHRAN – The member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) have expressed deep concern over US-Israeli cyberattacks that targeted information, communication, and technology (ICT) infrastructures in Iran.

The officials considered these measures to be in contrast to the principles of international law and the UN Charter, highlighting the need to respect the sovereignty of countries in cyberspace and refrain from using force against other nations, Mehr news agency reported.

They made the remarks in the final statement of the Fifth Meeting of Heads of Ministries and Agencies of the SCO Member States Responsible for the Development of Information and Communication Technologies, held on April 27, in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, under the chairmanship of the Ministry of Digital Development and Innovation Technologies of the Kyrgyz Republic.

An Iranian delegation led by Ehsan Cheetsaz, the deputy minister for ICT, attended the event. On the sidelines of the meeting, Cheetsaz held meetings with officials from China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan. The meetings primarily focused on promoting bilateral and multilateral collaborations in modern technologies, enhancing digital infrastructure resilience, strengthening na-

tional sovereignty in cyberspace, and fostering ties in AI and data centers.

At the 5th meeting in Bishkek, participants discussed topics of cooperation in the field of digital transformation, the implementation of ICT and AI in public administration, and key sectors of the economy.

The security of ICT infrastructures, the expansion of artificial intelligence, and the future of data driven economy were put on the agenda.

The idea of creating a regional data processing center, and boosting cooperation capacities was also adopted.

The active participation of the Iranian delegation in negotiations and joint initiatives demonstrates the country's role in the expansion of regional cooperation in the ICT sector, which aims to strengthen technological interactions and improve the country's position in the regional digital economy.

In June 2025, following Israel's aggression against Iran, Cheetsaz, said Israeli cyberattacks that target critical infrastructures in Iran aim to destabilize sovereign states.

"The hybrid attacks represent a perilous convergence of modern warfare tools. This aggression highlights that digital evolution without digital security is an illusion," Mehr news agency quoted the official as saying.

The SCO has ten member states with



a combined territory of about 36 million square kilometres and a population of over 3.4 billion. It represents about 25 percent of global GDP and over 15 percent of international trade.

The SCO countries are developing long-term relations of good-neighbourliness, friendship and cooperation in the spheres of mutual interest based on the universally recognised principles and norms of international law.

Today, the 10 member states of SCO comprise the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

ICRC president hails IRCS efforts, bravery during war

TEHRAN – The president of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, has commended the efforts, bravery, and accomplishments of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) during the recent imposed war by the United States and the Zionist regime of Israel on Iran.

Spoljaric Egger has recently paid an official visit to Iran to discuss urgent humanitarian concerns.

"I admire the courage and commitment of the Iranian Red Crescent Society aid workers to provide humanitarian relief to people affected by the recent war. Your efforts were both important and outstanding," Mehr news agency quoted Spoljaric Egger as saying.

The official made the remarks on Thursday in a meeting with the head of the IRCS, Pirhossein Koliwand.

Highlighting the importance of respecting international hu-

manitarian law (IHL), the official noted that the IHL is frequently violated in the region; the war impacts on civilians, particularly children, are unacceptable. There is no justified reason for depriving children of their rights.

The measures that lead to the breach of IHL, and the attacks that target civilians and humanitarian workers, have to be stopped and reversed, she added.

The official described the current situation as dangerous, saying that "We and the Iranian Red Crescent Society's staff should use our capacity to reduce tensions, which is essential for the protection of civilians and children.

That is why we are here, staying here; we fulfil our responsibility inside and outside the country to change the situation, and offer assistance in any way that is possible."

The IRCS is a leading, strong

national society, equipped with good facilities. The ICRC representative in Iran will help meet the country's medical needs to set up hospitals and facilitate the import of supplies that are not allowed under sanctions, she further noted.

The official went on to thank the head of the IRCS for his continuous follow-up on the issues and for providing the ICRC with information and reports.

Based on IRCS and Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs' reports, "we will assess the current situations, and present an analysis of possible breaches of international humanitarian law," the official said.

Spoljaric Egger is planning to hold meetings with senior government officials to discuss the humanitarian consequences of the recent illegal war by the United States and Israel on Iran and the region, and to reaffirm the importance of international humanitarian law in protecting

civilians and essential infrastructure during conflict.

The official is also scheduled to talk about practical arrangements to dispatch additional supplies to support the IRCS relief services, which are on the front line of providing life-saving aid amid conflicts.

The ICRC is expected to deliver more medical tools and medicine to the country in the near future.

The first humanitarian relief items from the ICRC included 171 tons of essential items such as blankets, water containers, kitchen sets, tarpaulin cloths, hygiene parcels, solar lamps, buckets, and mattresses that were delivered by five trucks, IRNA reported.

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

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

Protecting the Persian Gulf is a shared responsibility that transcends political boundaries



By Mehdi Garshasbi

TEHRAN – April 30 is celebrated in Iran every year as the Persian Gulf National Day to raise awareness about its precious environmental characteristics and unique biodiversity.

Unfortunately, the US-Israeli war against Iran is posing a severe threat to the fragile marine ecosystem of the Persian Gulf, which endangers the livelihood and food security of millions of people.

The National Day is a reminder of a clear responsibility: protecting the Persian Gulf means protecting life.

The Persian Gulf is ecologically one of the most fragile seas in the world. Its shallowness, limited water exchange, salinity, and high temperatures make any pollution and human stress have a greater impact, and the process of nature's restoration is slower.

However, this same sensitive area contains a valuable collection of key habitats: mangrove forests and coastal wetlands, seagrass meadows and coral reefs, each of which plays a vital role in water stability, carbon storage, aquatic regeneration and coastal protection.

The presence of iconic species such as sea turtles, dolphins and migratory birds also shows that the Persian Gulf is a strategic habitat on a regional and trans-regional scale.

But today, one of the most serious threats to the Persian Gulf is the consequences of war and insecurity, a threat that can cause widespread and sometimes irreparable damage in a short period of time.

War at sea and on the coast is not just a human conflict; it also means delivering a direct shock to a fragile ecosystem.

Explosions and fires, shipwrecks, damage to platforms and facilities, and any disruption to shipping safety increase the likelihood of large-scale oil and chemical pollution. Oil spills can cover water surfaces, reduce oxygen exchange, trap birds and aquatic life, and disrupt the food chain.

Chemicals and fuels can also cause short- and long-term toxic effects, ranging from direct species losses to reduced reproductive success and increased disease.

The more hidden dimensions of war are no less important. In conditions of insecurity, priorities shift from protection to survival and relief. Environmental monitoring is disrupted, disaster response capacity is reduced, and opportunities for scientific and preventive management are lost.

At the same time, destruction or damage to coastal urban and industrial infrastructure can cause untreated wastewater, waste, and various pollutants to enter the sea.

Displacement and disruption of contaminated seabed sediments by explosions or heavy vessel traffic can reactivate old contamination and carry its effects for years to come. This means that the scars of war can remain in the seabed and food chain, and are not just a momentary event.

The war also directly targets key habitats in the Persian Gulf: wetlands and beaches that provide refuge for migratory birds; mangrove forests that play a vital role in stabilizing the coast; seagrass beds that provide food and breeding grounds for aquatic life; and coral reefs that can be rendered inoperable for long periods of time by the slightest increase in turbidity, pollution, or physical damage.

The end result is a decline in aquatic resources, damage to fisheries and natural tourism, and threats to human health through the food chain (especially when exposed to per-

sistent pollutants).

Meanwhile, any hostile action that increases the risk of pollution, destruction, or insecurity of the marine environment will put additional pressure on the Persian Gulf ecosystem.

Marine pollution knows no borders and its effects can affect all coastal countries; therefore, protecting the Persian Gulf is a shared necessity and a responsibility that transcends political boundaries.

For this reason, a more active involvement of international mechanisms and bodies related to the law of the sea and the protection of the marine environment is essential: independent and transparent monitoring of the consequences of war on the environment, prevention of actions that create a risk of widespread pollution, and pursuit of liability and compensation in the event of damage.

At the same time, strengthening regional cooperation for preparedness and rapid response to pollution incidents, especially oil spills, and supporting restoration and rehabilitation programs for damaged habitats should be on the agenda.

Unfortunately, the US-Israeli war against Iran is posing a severe threat to the fragile marine ecosystem of the Persian Gulf, which endangers the livelihood and food security of millions of people.

The head of the Department of Environment (DOE), Shina Ansari, has written a letter to UN Secretary-General António Guterres, warning that the U.S. military presence endangers biodiversity in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman.

"The persistence of military threats in a region with dense oil, gas, petrochemical, and maritime reserves is a factor that threatens regional and global peace, security, and the environment," the DOE website quoted Ansari as saying.

In her letter, she noted that according to Principle 21 of the Stockholm Declaration of 1972 and Principle 2 of the Rio Declaration of 1992, states have the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and developmental policies, and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.

Therefore, any military action that results in widespread marine pollution, destruction of coastal habitats, or damage to biological diversity can be considered a violation of customary international obligations, she added.

Highlighting Article 55 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions of 1977, she reminded that the natural environment must be protected against widespread, severe, and long-lasting damage during armed conflict. The 1976 Convention on the Prohibition of Military or any other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques (ENMOD) bans hostile use of the environment as a means of warfare.

The Persian Gulf is a national heritage and a regional asset of global value. The Persian Gulf must survive; for its biodiversity, for the health and livelihoods of its people, and for a future that is the right of future generations.



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MAY 2, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Guide to spiritual awakening

The least you may do for God is, not to resort to sin through His blessings.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:01 Evening: 19:11 Dawn: 3:37 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:10 (tomorrow)

How Gaza's children use art to express the nightmares of genocide

Amid the remarkable, moving artwork and written testimonies of children from Gaza on display at the Old Palestine House in Brighton, there is one blank canvas suspended among the others.

It belongs to Ghazi Ramadan. The eight-year-old Palestinian boy wanted to draw a shopping mall where he could go and buy things.

Just the ordinary pleasures of life that existed in Gaza, as in other parts of the world, before October 2023. But he never got to draw his mall. He was killed by Israel in April 2024 during the genocide.

His art teacher Cleopatra Naeem collected all the things that Ghazi said he wanted to paint, and she gave them to his mother to help her process her grief for her son.

Naeem was speaking during a live roundtable with members of the Tamer Institute for Community Education in Gaza. She spoke about the conditions in which this project - Masar al Awda ila Bayt (the route back home) - working with Palestinian children had been developed during the genocide.

"I have worked with young people for 15 years," she explains during the Zoom meeting attended by Middle East Eye.

"We have been through ups and downs...but nothing like this genocide."

Naeem is one of a group of art teachers from Gaza who have worked with young children since the early weeks of the war in 2023 to offer them a way of processing the shock and trauma of displacement and violence.

"Children at the beginning did not want to speak, they were mute," she says. "They felt that to talk about it [the genocide] was like a crime."

So Naeem created a safe space - she called it a "black box", like a children's den, where the children could go and feel safe.

"Children were coming from all over the place; they didn't know each other. They built their own houses... Slowly they began to open

up and tell their stories."

She recounts a boy telling how he was with his father at home when they came under bombardment from an Israeli tank.

The boy saw another child across the street and called on him to "come over here". The other child joined him, but later they became separated.

Then, during one of the sessions organized by the Tamer Institute, the boy and the other child recognized each other. They cried and hugged each other upon their reunion.

Naeem says: "Those workshops created an atmosphere of care and love, and the children started to dream of going home, and to dream of what they would do when they got home."

Lamees Alsharif, another of the Tamer Institute facilitators on the call, explained: "We really had to give the children a feeling of being safe, and when they started laughing, I felt that I had really got somewhere with them."

None of this was easy for the teachers who were themselves displaced and had their homes destroyed and families scattered.

"There was a point in the genocide when we realized that we were never going home, that we were repeating the Nakba of 1948," she says.

Among the experiences that the children would describe was going through the so-called "safe passage" created by Israeli forces between north and south Gaza. For them to open up about this nightmarish experience took time and care.

"You need to walk in a straight line," Alsharif says of the safe passage. "A young girl had her sister with her, aged five. Her mother was at the front, the young sister in the middle and she was at the back. Then the five-year-old tripped over a corpse." They helped her up and carried on.

Another young girl saw something no one - particularly not a child - should ever see: a dog eating a baby's body. She told Alsharif her story, and others did the same.

Cartoon of Day



EXIT Strategy
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Book on Martyr General Qassem Soleimani republished

TEHRAN- "Qassem," a book which chronicles the life of Martyr General Qassem Soleimani, written by Iranian resistance literature researcher Morteza Sarhangi, has reached its 10th edition.

The first edition of the book was published last year, concurrently Tehran International Book Fair, by the Khatt-e Moqaddam Publications in Tehran, Mehr reported.

In January, the book was honored at the 18th edition of Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Awards. The book received the prestigious literary prize in the documentation section of the event.

Several books have been written about the life of Martyr General Qassem Soleimani. However, "Qassem" stands out due to its meticulous research and reliance on authentic sources, providing readers with complete confidence that what they read has been thoroughly investigated. Moreover, the author, Morteza Sarhangi, is personally acquainted with General Soleimani and is a prominent figure in the resistance literature era.

Based on primary documents and firsthand accounts, "Qassem" narrates the life, struggles, and character of the revered Martyr Soleimani. Drawing from written records, interviews, speeches, and field conversations with close associates, the narrative is delivered from a first-person perspective to preserve the tone and essence of Soleimani's outlook.

Sections directly quoting the martyr's words have been carefully edited, with sources cited in footnotes. The result is a compelling, factual account presented with engaging, vivid prose—an authoritative and impactful work for enthusiasts of contemporary Iranian history, the Sacred Defense, and the life of Qassem Soleimani.

This comprehensive and documentary biography of Martyr Soleimani is the product of five years of dedicated research by the author. The book vividly covers



Soleimani's journey from childhood in Qanat-e Malek, Kerman province, to his leadership of the Quds Force. Beyond military exploits, it explores the ethical, spiritual, and human dimensions of his impactful personality, offering an honest depiction of his character and mission.

The readers observe Soleimani through the eyes of Sarhangi—a writer who, prior to this, gained recognition with works such as "Journey to the Peaks," "My Name is Trench," "Candidate of Bullets," and "Alongside the Rain." With "Qassem," published in 2025, he masterfully weaves a story of heroism and sacrifice.

Sarhangi and his team did not limit themselves to analyzing written sources, audio recordings, and videos related to Soleimani. In the immediate aftermath of the martyrdom, they arranged a dedicated space near Martyr Soleimani's residence to conduct interviews with visitors paying their respects. In 2020, they traveled to Kerman and Qanat-e Malek to gather firsthand

accounts from Soleimani's childhood and adolescence. The result is a richly detailed portrait that begins with his early years, family migrations, childhood memories by his mother's bedside, and his parents' generous hospitality. The book successfully introduces readers to his worldview, personality traits, and even his spiritual devotions.

Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, a highly esteemed Iranian military strategist and prominent figure in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), left an indelible mark on Iran's defense efforts. Born in 1957 in Qanat-e Malek, Iran, Soleimani devoted his entire life to safeguarding his country's interests. He gained widespread recognition for his crucial role in leading successful military campaigns, particularly in the battle against ISIS in Iraq and Syria. His exceptional strategic planning, exemplary leadership abilities, and unwavering commitment to preserving Iran's security earned him profound respect both

within the military and among the Iranian populace.

General Soleimani, with his remarkable charm and fearless demeanor, commanded immense admiration from his comrades as well as the general public. His resolute dedication to safeguarding Iran's sovereignty and ensuring its security solidified his position as an emblem of fortitude and perseverance.

Despite facing numerous hurdles, such as international sanctions and political tensions, Soleimani remained an indispensable figure in Iran's military and foreign policies. His assassination in January 2020 had a seismic impact on the region, profoundly grieving the Iranian people and intensifying tensions between Iran and the United States. General Qassem Soleimani's impactful contributions to Iran's defense will forever be etched in the nation's memory, serving as a testament to his enduring influence on the geopolitical landscape of the region.

Ida Panahandeh's new series premiered in Canneseries Festival

TEHRAN – Iranian director Ida Panahandeh's latest series had its world premiere at the 9th edition of Canneseries Festival, which was held in Cannes, France, from April 23 to 28.

Titled "The Red and the Black," the Iranian drama written by the real-life creative couple Panahandeh and Arsalan Amiri competed with seven other series at the international television festival, Mehr reported.

A 2026 production, the first two episodes of the of the historical drama series were screened with French and English subtitles to the audiences.

The story takes place in mid-19th century Iran. The gifted painter Nowruz becomes consumed by his obsession with a Gypsy fortune teller. When her fearless defiance draws the wrath of the city's tyrant, their desperate flight through poverty and peril sets a tragic saga in motion that will echo across generations.

The first Iranian series selected at CANNESERIES, "The Red and The Black" immerses the viewers into 19th-century Iran with grandeur and mastery. The atmosphere of the era comes to life through its magnificent costumes and a perfectly attuned cast.

The cast includes Parsa Pirouzfar, Ali Shadman, Neda Jebraeili, Reza Behboudi, and Pardis Pourabedini.

A production of HA International and Asar Production Company, the series will be broadcast in Iran by FILIMO.

This is the second series by Panahandeh, which is presented in the international scene. Her 2024 series "At the End of the Night," a romance drama, took part in three foreign festivals including the Top Ten TV section of the 35th Film Festival Cologne in Germany last October, the 40th Valencia International Film Festival - Cinema Jove in Spain last June, and the Series Mania Festival in France last March.

"At the End of the Night" delicately and skillfully dissects the separation of a couple shattered by the disillusionment of their social situation. The series was praised for its deeply authentic characters and the exceptional per-

formance of its lead actor Parsa Pirouzfar who performs in "The Red and the Black" as well.

Ida Panahandeh, 47, was born in Tehran. She holds a master's degree in film direction from the Arts University of Tehran. In 2009, she took part in the Berlin Talent Campus.

Throughout her work, she has focused on women's rights. This she did with her debut feature film "Nahid" (2015), which won her worldwide acclaim. It was screened in the Un Certain Regard section at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival, where it won a special prize (Prix DE l'Avenir) and was released in France by Memento Films. "Nahid" was also released in theatres in many European countries afterward.

Her second feature "Israfil" (2017) was screened at the BFI London Film Festival and won several awards at international festivals.

"The Nikaidos' Fall" (2018), her third feature, is a co-production of Japan and Hong Kong with Naomi Kawase as the executive producer. The film debuted at the Nara International Film Festival and was released in Japan in January 2019, and then in a few East Asian countries.

"Titi" (2020), her fourth feature film, premiered at the 33rd Tokyo International Film Festival. It won three awards at the national and international festivals in 2022.

This year's Canneseries Festival received more than 300 submissions from 41 countries, with the final lineup drawing from 17 nations. "Despite the economic difficulties facing all the producers we work with, across every region, the level of ambition and the quality of the series remain unchanged," said Albin Lewi, artistic director of Canneseries.

This year's festival competition lineup included British relationship dramedy "Alice and Steve," starring Jemaine Clement and Nicola Walker as unlikely friends; the Finnish/Slovenian psychological drama "Guts"; Danish series "Harvest," described as a Succession-style drama set on a family farm; the Spanish coming-of-age dramedy "I Always Sometimes"; Danish real-life crime drama "Snake Killer"; Swedish period series "Summer of 1985"; the Spanish comedy thriller "Many People Need to Die"; and



"The Red and the Black" from Iran.

Spanish director Isabel Coixet ("My Life Without Me") headed up this year's competition jury, together with director Lesli Linka Glatter ("Homeland," "Mad Men"); actors Simon Astier ("Hero Cop"), Vincent Elbaz ("The Hundred-Foot Journey"), and Mamadou Sidibé ("A Prophet: The Series"); and composer Ruth Barrett ("The Terminal List").

Beyond the Official Selection, the festival featured an expansive lineup spread across several sections. The Out of Competition slate brought together six high-profile titles, including "Half Man," Richard Gadd's new series for BBC and HBO; "Star City," created by Ronald D. Moore for Apple TV, and "The Terror: Devil in Silver" (AMC+). Also in this section: "Paris Police 1910" (France Télévisions), "Prisoner" (Sky/Canal+), and "California Avenue," produced by Drama Republic for Mediawan were shown.

The program rounded out with a Short Film Competition, featuring six titles from Belgium, Australia, France, Austria, and Finland, and a Docuseries Competition.

The Canneseries industry section featured discussions and panels on K-Drama, artificial intelligence, and vertical, mobile-phone-first series, among others.

The Cannes International Series Festival, usually called the Canneseries, is an international television festival held annually in Cannes, France. The festival aims to showcase and promote television series from around the world. The festival is usually held parallel to MIPTV Media Market.