

Trump Opens Hormuz Strait in His Dreams

The IRGC confirmed on Monday that no commercial vessels or oil had transited the Strait of Hormuz, dismissing US claims as 'baseless and outright false'



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A rowboat around the Strait of Hormuz, May 4, 2026.

Sharp talks between senior diplomats from Iran and counterparts

TEHRAN — Iran's top diplomat has been engaged in a flurry of telephone diplomacy with counterparts in Spain, Brazil, and Pakistan, reiterating Tehran's commitment to regional stability while pursuing a diplomatic end to the two-month war imposed by the United States and Israel.

In a telephone conversation late on Sunday with Spain's foreign minister, José Manuel Al-Bares, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi stressed the Islamic Republic's "responsible approach" toward safeguarding lasting security in the region. He laid out Tehran's diplomatic initiatives aimed at ending the war of aggression, which began on Feb. 28 when the United States and Israel launched an unprovoked military offensive against Iran. ► Page 2

UAE claims Iran behind attack as US steps up regional tensions

TEHRAN — The US military approach toward Iran is once again escalating tensions in the Persian Gulf region, as the United Arab Emirates reports attacks on its territory.

The UAE claimed on Monday that it had come under attack by Iran for the first time since a fragile ceasefire took effect between Tehran and Washington on April 8.

The small Persian Gulf state claimed Iran had launched four cruise missiles, three of which were intercepted, while one reportedly fell into the sea. Authorities in the eastern emirate of Fujairah also said an Iranian drone caused a fire at a key oil facility. The British military reported that two cargo vessels were set ablaze off the UAE coast. ► Page 3

Israel lacks troops and ammo for a prolonged war

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN — The Israeli military is depleted and overstretched, unable to sustain multi-front warfare without American support.

A deep gap exists between what the Zionist regime says politically and the reality on the ground. The Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) are dangerously weak at their core. They face severe shortages of both manpower and ammunition, and it is fully dependent on America. This stops the regime's military from achieving decisive wins on several fronts at once.

Field and logistical data from recent military operations, specifically the 12-day war in June 2025 and the one that began on Feb. 28, show this deep strategic gap. On one side, the political discourse of the Israeli regime claims it can operate on seven fronts at the same time. On the other side, the operational reality reveals critical limits in manpower, specialized ammunition, and the ability of the IOF to spread intelligence attention across different arenas.

Iran's geography strikes back in the corridor war

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — The global maritime order fractured in early 2026, not through a single explosion, but through a methodical reassertion of geological reality.

When the U.S.-Israeli axis launched its kinetic campaign of aggression against Iran on February 28, the strategic assumption in Washington was that the world's most critical energy artery would remain a mostly passive, obedient channel for Western commerce.

They were catastrophically wrong. Within weeks, daily vessel traffic through the Strait of Hormuz collapsed by more than 95 percent, falling from roughly 130 ships a day to fewer than 10.

The waterway has been transformed from a Western-policed highway into a sovereign space governed by the nation that lives on its shores.

This shift has exposed the West's long-standing doctrine of freedom of navigation as a selective privilege, one granted to allies but violently denied to the disobedient.

UAE acting as Israel's shadow enforcer

By Adil Farooqui

ISLAMABAD — The United Arab Emirates once posed as Pakistan's "brotherly" partner in the Persian Gulf — pouring in investments, hosting millions of Pakistani workers, and talking up Islamic brotherhood. That facade has shattered.

In 2026, Abu Dhabi stands exposed as a willing vassal of Israel, weaponizing economic leverage, visa crackdowns, and outright expulsions to punish Pakistan for daring to mediate peace between the United States and Iran. Israel wanted the war finished on its terms; Pakistan stepped in as the unlikely bridge-builder, hosting talks and shuttling messages to secure ceasefires.

The UAE's response: Retaliation dressed up as "routine policy." This isn't neighborly friction. It's calculated revenge from a regime that has bent over backwards to accommodate Tel Aviv, normalizing ties via the Abraham Accords, deepening security pacts, and now treating Pakistan's 1.7 million expatriates as collateral damage in its pro-Israel crusade.

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War with Iran ignites factory inflation, U.S. production costs hit 4-year high

TEHRAN — Since the outbreak of the joint US-Israel war against Iran on February 28, American factories have faced severe cost pressures.

The conflict's most immediate impact has been on energy markets: the price of crude oil has jumped more than 50%, directly raising expenses for fuel, transportation, and petrochemical-based raw materials used across manufacturing sectors.

This supply shock is now showing up clearly in industry data. In a survey by the Institute for Supply Management (ISM) of American manufacturers released on Friday, concerns about the war were the main focus of their comments.

The ISM Manufacturing Business Survey Committee Chair, Susan Spence, quantified this anxiety: among all manufacturer feedback, the war was mentioned in 47 percent of comments, far outpacing concerns about tariffs (18 percent). ► Page 4

Rethinking the Persian Gulf's role in deep time human history

By Sepehr Zarei

In contemporary political rhetoric, "returning to the Stone Age" is often invoked as a metaphor for collapse and backwardness—a phrase occasionally directed at Iran. Yet, from an archaeological perspective, this term carries a fundamentally different meaning.

The "Stone Age" represents the longest and most formative phase of human history: an era when the foundations of survival, adaptation, and global dispersal were established. Far from a symbol of decline, it is an expression of humanity's resilience and capacity to conquer new landscapes.

Nowhere is this reevaluation more urgent than in Iran, particularly along the coasts and hinterlands of the Persian Gulf. ► Page 6



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Iran criticizes UAE's 'inappropriate behavior' for backing US during war

TEHRAN — Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman sharply criticized the United Arab Emirates on Monday for "inappropriate behavior" during the recent war with the United States and Israel, accusing the Persian Gulf Arab state of siding with the aggressors against the Islamic Republic.

Speaking at his weekly news conference in Tehran, the spokesman, Esmail Baqaei, said the UAE had taken "negative reaction or retaliatory measures" against Iran and other OPEC members over the past 40 to 50 days.

"In these 40 to 50 days, we witnessed inappropriate behavior from this country," Baqaei said. "They accompanied the parties committing aggression against Iran." ► Page 2

SIR 2026 includes 166 Iranian universities

TEHRAN — The SCImago Institutions Rankings (SIR) 2026 has ranked 166 Iranian universities among the top institutions in the world, up from 164 in 2025.

The SIR is a classification of academic and research-related institutions ranked by a composite indicator that combines three sets of indicators: research performance, innovation outputs, and societal impact, measured by their web visibility.

The research ranking refers to the volume, impact, and quality of the institution's research output.

The innovation ranking is calculated based on the number of patent applications of institutions and the citations that their research output receives from patents.

The societal ranking is based on the number of pages on the institution's website and the number of backlinks and mentions from social networks. ► Page 7

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

Jam-e-Jam: The mirage of easy victory

Jam-e-Jam analyzed Israel's illusion of the rapid destruction of Iran. When Israel began its crimes after the Al-Aqsa storm, Netanyahu spoke of creating a new order in the Middle East. It is clear that Israel's security will only be fully ensured when there is no powerful country left in the region that can resist the excesses of this regime. The greatest power that has been a major obstacle to Israel in the past few decades is Iran, and as long as Iran is strong, the order that Israel desires will not be formed. For this reason, with the help of the United States, it attacked Iran twice in order to finish the job and defeat Iran, but failed both times. In fact, it was Iran that not only showed surprising resilience but also used this geopolitical card to gain the upper hand by exercising control over the Strait of Hormuz.

Khorasan: From the claim of destruction to the reality of missiles

Khorasan analyzed Netanyahu's failure in confronting Iran. The issue is not limited to the military field, but has been extended to the level of "strategic credibility." Repeated claims about the destruction or weakening of Iran's missile and nuclear capabilities have been met with skepticism and even ridicule in the Hebrew space. On the front of confrontation with Iran, the gap between the army's claim and the public's belief has reached its peak. On the other hand, Donald Trump's role in managing ceasefires and controlling the scope of the conflict is interpreted in the minds of Hebrew users as a sign of "dependence on Netanyahu's decision-making." As a result, not only has the victory narrative been questioned, but Netanyahu's strategic independence has also been questioned. Netanyahu, who once introduced himself as a guarantor of security by producing and managing the perception of threats, is today facing a crisis in the same area: a crisis of trust.

Pakistan evacuates crew from seized Iranian ship

Pakistan announced on Monday that it had facilitated the transfer of 22 crew members from an Iranian commercial vessel seized last month by the United States Navy, describing the move as a "confidence-building measure" coordinated with both Washington and Tehran.

The crews of the MV Touska, an Iranian-flagged container ship, were flown to Pakistan on Sunday and are expected to be handed over to Iranian authorities, according to Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Iranian media later reported that at least 15 of the crew members had already arrived back in Iran.

The ship itself will also be moved to Pakistani territorial waters for necessary repairs before being returned to its owners, Islamabad said.

The development comes more than two months into a turbulent military confrontation between the United States and Iran that has reshaped the strategic waters of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman. A fragile ceasefire brokered by Pakistan has largely halted the ground and air war, but the naval front remains active — and highly volatile.

The Touska was seized by US forces in the Arabian Sea on April 19, less than a week after President Donald Trump announced a full naval blockade on Iranian ports. The blockade was ordered despite Trump's own declaration of a ceasefire in what his administration had called a campaign to curb Iran's regional influence.

US Central Command said at the time that the Touska had tried to evade the blockade. A US Navy destroyer fired on the ship's engine room after repeated warnings, disabling it, before American forces boarded and seized the vessel.

Trump later acknowledged that the US Navy was acting "like pirates" in enforcing the blockade — a remark that Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman, Esmail Baqaei, seized

Iran: Maintaining India's balance in the crisis of war

In an interview with Nozar Shafiee, a subcontinent expert, the Iran newspaper examined India's approach to the US war against Iran. Any direct conflict between Iran and the United States could have wider economic consequences for India. First, the sudden increase in global oil prices, a significant part of which passes through the Strait of Hormuz, will sharply increase the cost of India's energy imports. Second, disruptions in shipping routes and increased costs of insurance and maritime transportation will pose problems for India's supply chain of essential and industrial goods. India's vital industries, including refineries, petrochemicals, transportation, and even power generation, depend on stable energy imports, and any instability in supply could slow the country's economic growth. Such a crisis could also affect the path of foreign investment into India. For this reason, India is trying to protect its economic interests from the consequences of this crisis by maintaining a balance in its relations and avoiding escalating tensions.

Etemad: Active and proactive diplomacy

Etemad wrote in a note: Based on the news and positions that the US president has taken and is taking, it seems that his political life is dependent on two variables: the fate of Iran's nuclear program and the enriched reserves on our soil; in other words, Trump is trying to achieve a completely different agreement from the JCPOA by gaining maximum concessions from Iran; otherwise, it is not unlikely that he will again engage in madness and impose another war against Iran, the region, and the world at a high cost. Iran's submission of a new proposal in response to the US's proposed amendments to the plan to end the war has once again revealed signs of the continuation of the diplomatic path between Tehran and Washington after the extension of the ceasefire, a path that, according to observers, although fragile, has not yet stopped.

upon as a rare moment of candor.

"This was no verbal slip," Baqaei wrote on X. "It was a direct and damning admission of the criminal nature of their actions against international maritime navigation."

The blockade has emerged as a centerpiece of the Trump administration's post-ceasefire strategy toward Iran. Critics, particularly in Tehran and among international observers, have described the policy as a deliberate shift away from diplomacy and toward economic strangulation — one that has dangerously escalated tensions in the world's most critical oil chokepoint.

Iranian officials have repeatedly condemned the seizure of its commercial vessels as acts of piracy and have warned that Tehran reserves the right to take "due defensive countermeasures."

The Islamic Republic has also refused to return to any form of negotiation with Washington as long as the blockade remains in place.

On Monday, in announcing the crew transfer, Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, expressed appreciation to both the United States and Iran, and reaffirmed his country's commitment to "facilitating dialogue, diplomacy, and mediation for regional peace and security."

Despite the diplomatic gestures, the broader confrontation shows few signs of abating. More than 50,000 US troops remain deployed in the region, and gasoline prices in the United States have surged as the blockade tightens global oil supplies.

For Iran, the Touska episode is not an isolated incident but part of a wider pattern. Several Iranian vessels have been seized or stopped by US forces since the blockade began. Each such incident, Iranian officials warn, brings the region closer to a new and unpredictable escalation.

Sharp talks between senior diplomats from Iran and counterparts

From page 1 ▶ That war led to the martyrdom of Iran's then-supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and several senior military commanders. Iran responded with 100 waves of missile and drone strikes over 40 days, inflicting heavy damage on American and Israeli military positions. Tehran also closed the strategic Strait of Hormuz to enemy vessels and imposed further restrictions, conditioning passage on permission from Iranian authorities — a direct response to 'an illegal US blockade' on its ports and vessels.

Separately, Araghchi also spoke with Brazil's Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira. The Brazilian diplomat underscored his country's support for multilateralism and diplomacy, and specifically



affirmed the right of all nations to benefit from peaceful nuclear energy.

Vieira expressed hope that continued dialogue and diplomatic efforts would help establish lasting peace and security

in the region. In turn, Araghchi elaborated on Iran's latest diplomatic initiatives to end the war.

In a third telephone conversation, Araghchi spoke with Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister

and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar. The Iranian foreign minister praised Pakistan for its "constructive role" as a mediator in indirect interactions between Iran and the United States.

Araghchi and Dar also consulted on the latest regional developments and ongoing diplomatic efforts aimed at fully ending a war of aggression imposed by Washington and Tel Aviv.

On Monday evening, the foreign minister also held separate talks with the foreign ministers of Algeria and Turkmenistan, Ahmed Attaf and Rashid Meredov, to discuss bilateral relations and the latest regional developments."

Iran criticizes UAE's 'inappropriate behavior' for backing US during war

From page 1 ▶ His comments appeared to reflect deepening irritation among Iranian officials with the UAE, which has long maintained close security and economic ties with Washington. Iran has previously accused some Persian Gulf Arab states of allowing the United States to use their military facilities or air-space during the war.

The confrontation between Iran and the US-Israeli alliance has dramatically reshaped the region since late February. The US-Israel war against Iran resulted in the martyr of Iran's leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and several senior military commanders. Iran retaliated with 100 waves of missile and drone strikes over 40 days, inflicting heavy damage on American and Israeli military positions.

Baqaei also sought to shut down speculation that Iran and the United States are quietly negotiating the future of Tehran's nuclear program. He said repeatedly that at this stage, Iran is willing to discuss only one thing: "the cessation and complete termination of the war" imposed by the United States and Israel.

"At this stage, we have no talk about anything else," he said. "What direction we take in the future will be decided in its own time."

The spokesman confirmed that Iran has received a US response to Tehran's proposals, delivered through Pakistan. But he declined to provide details, criticizing Washington's "endless habit of excessive and unlimited demands."

He dismissed media reports about possible negotiations over uranium enrichment levels or stockpiles of enriched materials as pure speculation, largely based on the history of previous nuclear talks under the 2015 deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA.

"No final decision has ever been made on any of them," Baqaei said.

When a reporter for an Arabic television network asked why Iran does not simply back down, given that the United States is a superpower, Baqaei gave a sharp, concise reply.

"We are also a superpower," he said.

Baqaei directed harsh criticism at Rafael Grossi, the director general of the Interna-

tional Atomic Energy Agency, who recently said that an agreement between Iran and the United States would require political will from Tehran.

"Do not be very surprised by these remarks," Baqaei said. "He constantly repeats this proposition and does not pay attention to the realities on the ground."

The spokesman noted that Grossi had personally witnessed the "warmongering and anti-diplomatic actions" of the United States during two rounds of negotiations. "The problem is exclusively due to the highly destructive performance of the United States," Baqaei said. "The only obstacle preventing negotiations from reaching a conclusion has been the conduct of the US."

Baqaei confirmed that Lebanon had unilaterally canceled a long-standing visa-waiver agreement for Iranian citizens. He said Iran had taken reciprocal action but had also created special facilities, including immediate visa issuance at entry points, to avoid disrupting travel between the two countries.

He also defended Lebanese Hezbollah against recent criticism from some Lebanese officials who have claimed that the group dragged Lebanon into the war. "Lebanon's Hezbollah and the Lebanese resistance are the pride of this country, the Arab world, and the Islamic Ummah," he said.

The spokesman condemned Bahrain's decision to revoke the citizenship of several individuals who had expressed solidarity with Iran during the war. He called the move "completely inhumane" and a punishment that "became obsolete long ago."

He compared the Bahraini government's actions to those of Saddam Hussein, the former Iraqi dictator, who stripped citizenship from many people on the grounds that they were of Iranian origin. "It was expected that after nearly 60 years, such actions would no longer take place," Baqaei said. "Human rights organizations must clearly state their positions. This is a violation of the human rights of Bahraini citizens."

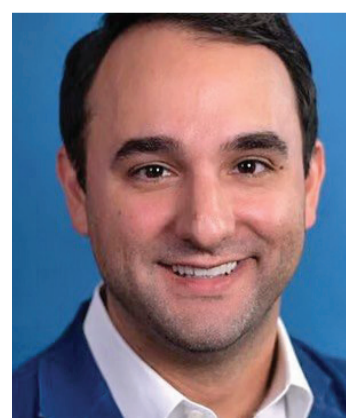
Asked about reports of Iranian military operations in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, Baqaei

Hawkish think tank insider joins Trump's Iran team as blockade backfires

TEHRAN — The Trump administration has added Nick Stewart, a lobbyist from the hawkish Foundation for the Defense of Democracies (FDD), to the U.S. Iran negotiating team led by envoy Steve Witkoff. The appointment comes as peace talks remain stalled and a U.S. naval blockade on Iranian ports continues.

Stewart previously served in the State Department under Brian Hook, who expanded sanctions after Washington withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal. His addition has raised concerns among analysts. "Hiring an FDD staffer strongly suggests that reaching a diplomatic deal is not Trump's objective," said Trita Parsi of the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft.

Iran has reportedly submitted a new proposal to end the war within 30 days, but President Donald Trump has already cast doubt on it. "I can't imagine that it would be



acceptable," he wrote on Truth Social, adding that Iran "has not yet paid a big enough price."

In a separate analysis, Parsi argued that Trump had already secured a favorable outcome from the fragile ceasefire, which disproportionately benefited Washington. "Trump secured a swift exit from a costly war while Iran forfeited its primary source of leverage—oil prices," Parsi wrote.

But instead of consolidating that victory, Trump followed FDD's advice to impose a full blockade on the Persian Gulf.

The FDD sold the blockade as a "silver bullet" that would zero out Iran's oil revenues within days, exhaust its storage capacity, and force capitulation. Trump called the plan "genius" and said Iran would have to "cry uncle."

But the opposite has occurred. Satellite imagery shows Iran is still loading oil onto tankers. While the blockade has increased economic pressure, there is no sign of the promised collapse. Instead, global oil prices have risen above wartime levels. Exxon's CEO warned that gasoline prices will climb further, and Joe Kent, Trump's former counterterrorism director, cautioned that the blockade is triggering a global fertilizer shortage that could lead to food security crises and famines.

Parsi described the pursuit of

objected to the use of the word "attacks." He said Iran has carried out only defensive measures when neighboring soil has been used to plan aggression against it.

"We cannot use the word 'attack' for Iran's defensive measures," he said. "According to international law, it is Iran's inherent right to take necessary defensive measures to protect its people and interests."

Baqaei also highlighted signs of a rift between the United States and its European allies. He pointed to recent announcements by President Donald Trump about reducing American troops in some European countries, as well as France's decision not to participate in the US plan for the Strait of Hormuz while pursuing its own proposal with Britain.

"The ill-advised action of the US in attacking Iran has had very extensive consequences, including creating a rift and disagreement among countries that were previously US allies," Baqaei said. "It is time for European countries to see with courage the result of blindly following US policies and decide to adopt a more independent approach."

The spokesman said Iran remains in constant contact with Russia and China, countries with which Tehran has strategic partnership treaties. But he emphasized that Iran ultimately relies on its own power.

"The most important guarantee for a country's rights is that country's own power," he said.

Asked about the war in Gaza, Baqaei said the Palestinian people are fighting for their right to self-determination against occupation, apartheid, and genocide. "The Palestinian cause is not just an Islamic one, but a humanitarian one," he said.

Baqaei said Iran is still seeking answers from France regarding the killings of two Iranian citizens more than a year ago. He said Iran's embassy in Paris continues to follow the case, and that a more recent incident in mid-April is also being pursued through diplomatic channels.

"We have a duty to seriously pursue the rights of Iranian nationals anywhere in the world," he said.

"silver bullets" against Iran as a 47-year pathology in U.S. policy. Previous failed solutions included the threat of military force, the assassination of Iran's supreme leader, and the indiscriminate bombing of civilian infrastructure. A Bloomberg analysis found that only 32% of damaged buildings were military targets; the vast majority were civilian.

"The desperately needed pressure release Trump secured through the ceasefire has been entirely undone by FDD's vaunted silver-bullet blockade," Parsi wrote. "This is merely the latest in a long line of delusional silver bullets that American presidents have chased instead of pursuing far less costly and far more effective diplomacy."

With an FDD insider now on the negotiating team and Trump dismissing Iran's peace proposal, the path to a diplomatic resolution appears increasingly narrow.

Trump opens Hormuz Strait in his dreams

The IRGC confirmed on Monday that no commercial vessels or oil had transited the Strait of Hormuz, dismissing US claims as 'baseless and outright false'

TEHRAN - Iran has firmly asserted its military authority over the Strait of Hormuz after US President Donald Trump launched "Project Freedom," a campaign aimed at escorting merchant vessels through the strategic waterway. The move underscores Iran's determination to maintain full control over one of the world's most critical maritime chokepoints and to respond decisively to foreign encroachment in the wake of the joint US-Israeli war that initially began in late February.

Trump said on Sunday that the United States would "guide" stranded ships through the Strait of Hormuz and warned that any interference would "be dealt with forcefully." US Central Command (CENTCOM) announced that approximately 15,000 American service members, guided-missile destroyers, and more than 100 aircraft would participate in the operation.

US warships in the crosshairs

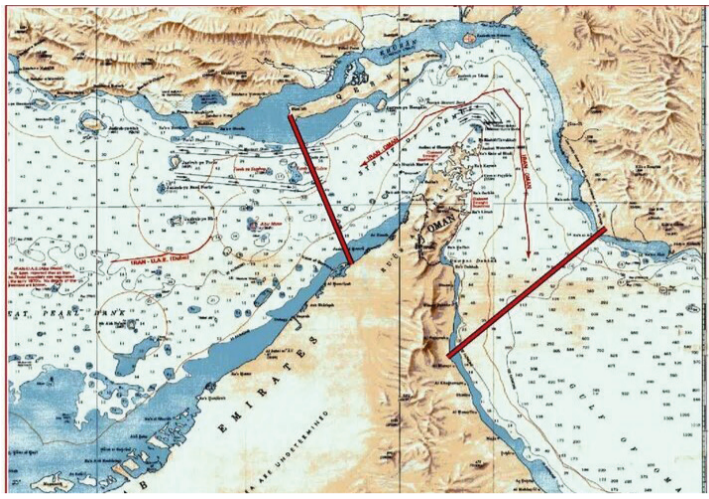
On Monday, Iranian naval forces fired missiles and drones toward US warships approaching the Strait. In a statement, the Iranian Navy said it was compelled to launch cruise missiles, combat drones, and rockets near American vessels that had ignored repeated warnings not to approach the waterway.

According to the statement, the US warships had turned off their transponders and attempted to approach the Strait in "dark mode" before reactivating their radar systems. The Navy stressed that any unauthorized approach would constitute a violation of last month's ceasefire agreement between Tehran and Washington.

UAE, South Korean vessels suffer explosions

Earlier, the UAE claimed that two suicide drones were launched at a tanker affiliated with the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company in the Strait of Hormuz.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported that Seoul had received intelligence indicating that a South Korean cargo vessel anchored inside the Strait may have been struck. South Korea's Foreign Ministry later confirmed that a vessel operated by the South Korean shipping company HMM — the HMM Namu — suffered



an explosion and fire inside the Strait at 20:40 Korean time on Monday.

Iran's warning to 'invading US army'

Earlier, the commander of Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters — which coordinates joint operations between the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and the Army — warned that the Iranian Armed Forces would target any foreign forces, particularly US military units, attempting to approach or enter the strategic waterway.

Major General Ali Abdullahi said in a statement that Iranian forces would attack any foreign troops entering the Strait, "especially the invading American army." He emphasized that the security of the Strait of Hormuz falls solely under Iran's authority and that all safe passage through the waterway must be coordinated with Iranian military forces.

Brigadier General Hossein Mohebbi, an IRGC spokesman, also vowed to "forcefully stop" vessels attempting to defy the management rules enforced by Iran regarding international transit through the Strait. He dismissed as "baseless" statements made by American officials and institutions such as the UK Maritime Trade Organization (UKMTO) concerning maritime governance in the Persian Gulf.

"There has been no change in the management of the Strait of Hormuz," he underlined. "Any maritime movement by civilian and commercial vessels that complies with transit protocols issued by the IRGC Navy and is carried out along designated routes in coordination with the relevant authorities will enjoy security

and safety."

UKMTO had said the United States has established an enhanced security area south of the traffic separation scheme in the Strait to support vessel transits. Ships were advised to consider routing through Omani territorial waters and to coordinate with local authorities due to expected high traffic volumes. The advisory further warned that transit near or within the traffic separation scheme could be extremely hazardous because of mines that have not yet been fully surveyed or neutralized.

Iran does not succumb to 'threats'

Amid these developments, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman reacted to Trump's so-called "Project Freedom," cautioning Washington against repeating previous mistakes. During his weekly press briefing, Esmail Baghaei said the United States cannot "extricate itself from the self-created quagmire" of war with Iran. He added that "Americans should have learned that they cannot use the language of threats and force in dealing with the Iranian nation."

The renewed tensions follow Iran's confirmation that it had received the US response to its 14-point proposal aimed at bringing a permanent end to the joint US-Israeli war on Iran, which began on February 28. Iranian and American officials held Pakistani-mediated talks in Islamabad three days after the April 8 ceasefire paused nearly 40 days of conflict. However, the talks ended without a breakthrough, and the United States subsequently imposed a naval blockade on Iranian ports. In response,

Iran reasserted full control over the Strait of Hormuz and barred vessels affiliated with its adversaries from passing through the waterway.

The 14-point proposal is designed to break the current stalemate. It includes guarantees of non-aggression, the lifting of US sanctions and the unfreezing of Iranian assets, an end to the US naval blockade, recognition of Iran's new management mechanism for the Strait of Hormuz, war reparations, the withdrawal of US forces from the region, and a complete cessation of hostilities, including Israel's operations in Lebanon.

US 'quagmire' of war

Meanwhile, political pressure is mounting in Washington. US Democrats argue that the conflict with Iran has turned into a strategic quagmire for the United States. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz also suggested that Washington appears to lack a clear strategy and questioned what kind of exit plan the US administration might pursue.

Public dissatisfaction in the United States has intensified. A majority of Americans disapprove of Trump's handling of the Iran conflict by a margin of 66 percent to 33 percent, while his overall disapproval rating has reached 62 percent — the highest of his two terms in office.

After 39 days of intense confrontation, Washington has failed to achieve its core objectives, particularly dismantling Iran's military capabilities or reopening the Strait of Hormuz by force.

Late on Monday, the IRGC rejected US claims that merchant vessels had crossed the Strait of Hormuz as "complete lies." It said no commercial vessels or tankers had traversed the waterway over the past few hours.

For now, Operation Freedom appears unlikely to alter the strategic balance in the waterway. Many observers argue that the initiative was launched to deflect attention from Washington's unsuccessful military strategy and to contain rising energy prices in the United States, which have climbed since the outbreak of hostilities. It is now evident that the US will not succeed in reopening the Strait of Hormuz through the theatrical Project Freedom campaign.

US-Israel military campaign by allowing the United States to use its territory and facilities against Iran during the war.

Iranian authorities maintain that regional maritime security in the Strait of Hormuz can only be ensured through respect for Iran's conditions and a lasting political settlement.

LATES NEWS

Iran lawmaker: No reopening of Strait of Hormuz without acknowledging Tehran's authority

A top Iranian parliamentary spokesman said the only way to reopen the Strait of Hormuz is for the US to accept defeat, reach an agreement, and recognize Iran's sovereignty over the waterway. "The strait was not closed by a tweet, and it will not be opened by a tweet," Ebrahim Rezaei wrote on X.

Martyred Leader's official X account declares US 'Becoming Weaker' as new powers emerge

The official X account of Iran's martyred Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, stated on Monday that the weakening of "arrogant global powers" — particularly the United States — is a central feature of an ongoing global transformation.

"The US as an arrogant power has become weak and is continuously becoming weaker," the post read. It added that another key component of this shift is "the emergence of new powers."

Oil surges 3% after Iranian attack forces US warship

Oil prices jumped more than 3% on Monday after Iran struck a US warship attempting to enter the Strait of Hormuz, forcing it to turn back. Brent crude reached \$111.81 per barrel as supply disruptions continued.

Italian, Iranian groups issue joint statement condemning US-Israeli aggression against Iran

Socialismo Italo (SOCIT) and Iran's Hablian Association have issued a joint statement condemning the United States and Israel for their aggression against Iran.

The statement denounced attacks on schools and hospitals, including the killing of 168 schoolchildren in Minab. The groups called the targeting of Iran's vital infrastructure a war crime against the Iranian people.

They expressed sympathy for victims in Gaza, Lebanon, and Iran, as well as Italian soldiers "ensnared in serving interests that do not belong to the Italian people."

US Congressman: Americans are still paying the price for Trump's war

Rep. Pat Ryan, a member of the US Congress, has pushed back against President Donald Trump's claim that the war with Iran is over, insisting that American families continue to bear the costs.

"More than 50,000 US troops remain deployed in the region, and billions of dollars in military equipment have been used," Ryan said. He also pointed to sharply rising gasoline prices across the United States.

"Even if Trump claims the war is over, the re-

ality is that the American people are still paying the price," the congressman added.

US treasury secretary calls on China to push Iran to open Strait of Hormuz

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent says the US is looking to see whether China engages in diplomatic efforts to pressure Iran to open the Strait of Hormuz.

Speaking to Fox News, Bessent urged Beijing to back the opening of the strait, whose status has become a major sticking point in US-Iran talks.

British maritime authority reports fire on cargo ship north of Dubai

A cargo ship north of Dubai reported a fire in its engine room, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) said on Monday. The cause of the fire remains unknown.

The British maritime authority also said it had received a report of an incident approximately 14 miles west of Saqr Port in the United Arab Emirates.

Fujairah government says oil industry area hit by drone strike

The media office of the Fujairah government in the United Arab Emirates announced that a fire broke out in the Fujairah Petroleum Industry Zone after the area was targeted by a drone launched from Iran.

SPORTS

Octavio: Iran will shine at 2027 World Cup

TEHRAN — Marco Octavio, former Brazilian head coach of Iran's beach soccer team, believes that Team Melli will achieve excellent results at the 2027 FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup.

Iran's beach soccer team claimed the title of the 6th Asian Beach Games by winning the final decisively. Last week, the beach soccer players faced the strong team of Oman in the final match and, in a dominant performance, defeated their opponents 6-2.

"I am very happy about this important title for Iran. We have good memories, and a few years ago at the Asian Games in China, we had the same performance," Octavio said.

"I congratulate Ali Naderi, my former captain and now the team's coach, along with the coaching staff. Saied Piramoon, Mohammad Masoumizadeh, Mohammadali Mokhtari, and some other players on the current team were playing when I was with the national team. I am proud to see that some of my former players are still competing and shining at a high level," he said.

Octavio also spoke about Iran's potential in beach soccer: "At the last World Cup, I saw many players with high potential who can play for the national team in the not-too-distant future. They can be very good replacements for the current stars of beach soccer. Iran's national beach soccer team has always been one of the contenders for the championship in Asian and even world competitions, and given Iran's good potential in developing players, it can certainly always be among the title contenders."

There have been rumors about the possibility of returning Octavio to the national team — however, it appears his return to the national team is off the table. The Brazilian coach added on this matter: "I would have liked to serve the Iranian national beach soccer team as a technical and tactical consultant for the next World Cup, but it seems this won't happen. However, my love for Iran means that whenever the national team needs my help, I will be at the service of the national team with great pleasure."

Athletes exceeded all expectations in Sanya: Alinejad

TEHRAN — Mehdi Alinejad, Secretary General of the National Olympic Committee (NOC), has declared that Iran's athletes fully met expectations at the 6th Asian Beach Games in Sanya, China.

Speaking at a press conference held at the NOC headquarters, Alinejad praised the performance of Iran's delegation, highlighting the strategic decision to arrive early as a key factor.

"One of the reasons for our success was traveling to Sanya 10 days ahead of the competition. We achieved a historic result and secured third place overall. Out of 10 disciplines, seven disciplines won medals, and we finished just one medal behind Thailand — all while Iran did not participate in women's events due to cultural considerations. To accomplish this with only half of the country's sports capacity is a remarkable feat," Alinejad said.

Addressing the development of women's sports, he added: "In all five previous editions of the Asian Beach Games, only men's teams were sent due to cultural considerations regarding women's attire. However, the growth of women's sports remains firmly on our agenda. We achieved very strong results in women's events at the Olympics, and the NOC is fully committed to supporting women's athletics."

Alinejad also singled out the performance of Iran's team sports: "In handball, kabaddi, and water polo, we secured historic victories against Qatar, India, and China. Our beach soccer team successfully defended their title as well. I believe our team sports exceeded all

expectations in Sanya."

On the question of Iran's U23 national football team and the delay in appointing a head coach, Alinejad was clear: "All matters concerning the U23 team have been delegated to the Football Federation. It is their responsibility to make decisions regarding the team, and we will not interfere. However, we do expect the Federation to act swiftly and appoint a coach as soon as possible."

Iran placed in Pot 1 of 2027 AFC Asian Cup

TEHRAN — Iran national football team have been placed in Pot 1 of the 2027 AFC Asian Cup, which will be the 19th edition of the tournament and is set to be hosted by Saudi Arabia.

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has confirmed the seeding pots for the final draw, which will take place on May 9, 2026, in Riyadh. Iran, currently ranked 21st in the FIFA World Rankings, will join an elite group of five other teams in the top pot.

The full list is as follows:

Pot 1: Saudi Arabia (hosts, FIFA rank: 61), Japan (18), Iran (21), South Korea (25), Australia (27), Uzbekistan (50)

Pot 2: Qatar (55), Iraq (57), Jordan (63), United Arab Emirates (68), Oman (76), Bahrain (80)

Pot 3: China (88), Saudi Arabia — already placed as hosts — will be replaced in this pot by the next highest-ranked team from the qualification process, which includes the remaining qualified sides.

(Note: Pots 3 and 4 will be finalized after all qualifying matches are concluded.)

Being in Pot 1 ensures that Team Melli will avoid facing fellow top seeds — Japan, South Korea, Australia, Uzbekistan, and hosts Saudi Arabia — in the group stage. This gives Iran a more favorable path in the early rounds of the tournament as they aim for a fourth Asian Cup title, having previously won in 1968, 1972, and 1976.

The 2027 AFC Asian Cup will feature 24 teams divided into six groups of four. The top two from each group, along with the four best third-placed teams, will advance to the Round of 16.

This edition marks the first time Saudi Arabia will host the Asian Cup, and it promises to be a showcase of Asia's finest football talent under the banner of Asia's crown jewel.

There is no lack of familiar faces in the cast for Asian football fans, with 20 of the 23 confirmed participants having been involved at the 2023 edition. Among them are the two sides that share the record for the most Finals appearances with 16: Iran and Korea Republic. The former's achievement has come in consecutive fashion—a standalone record—and they remain the only team to win three titles in a row (1968, 1972, 1976).

Alireza Jahanbakhsh suffers injury

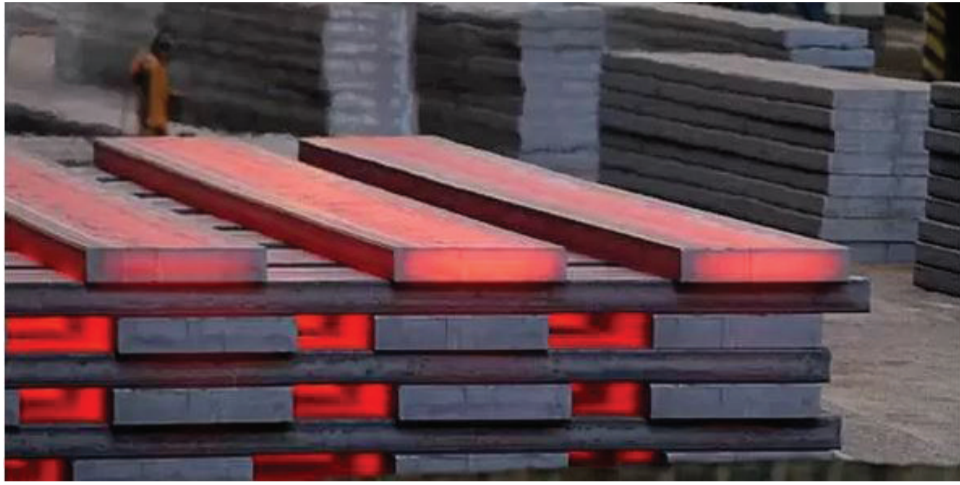
TEHRAN — Alireza Jahanbakhsh, Iranian midfielder for Belgian football club Dender, suffered an injury Sunday night during his team's match.

Dender — sitting bottom in the Belgian Pro League — faced La Louvière in the match ended 2-1 in favor of Jahanbakhsh's teammates.

Jahanbakhsh, who started the match in the lineup, was according to HLN one of the most active players on the pitch in the first half. However, in the 30th minute, he was forced to leave the field due to injury and could not continue.

The club's media channels have not yet released any information about the extent of Jahanbakhsh's injury. With less than 40 days remaining until the start of the 2026 World Cup, Jahanbakhsh becomes the second influential Iranian national team player — after Ali Gholizadeh — to suffer an injury.

Iran's annual semi-finished steel production increases 6.2%



TEHRAN- According to the statistics of the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA), semi-finished steel production in Iran during the past Iranian calendar year 1404 (ended on March 20) increased by 6.2 percent.

The country's semi-finished steel output stood at 32.162 million tons in the past year, while the figure was 30.285 million tons in year 1403, the association announced.

Semi-finished steel refers to intermediate steel products that require further processing before becoming final goods. These include blooms, billets, and slabs, each serving distinct downstream applications. Blooms are typically rolled into structural shapes like beams and rails, while billets are processed into bars, rods, and wire. Slabs are flattened into sheets and plates used in automotive bodies, appliances, and construction materials.

Production occurs primarily through continuous casting, where molten steel solidifies into these standardized forms. Electric arc furnaces and basic oxygen furnaces are common production routes, often utilizing scrap metal or direct reduced iron. Semi-finished steel is a critical trade commodity; many countries export billets or slabs to nations with rolling and finishing mills but limited primary steelmaking capacity.

In recent years, global semi-finished steel output has fluctuated due to energy costs, environmental regulations, and shifting demand from construction and manufacturing sectors. Efficiency improvements and lower-emission production methods are becoming priorities. As an intermediate product, semi-finished steel's price and availability directly influence the cost competitiveness of countless finished steel goods, making it a key indicator of broader industrial activity.

It is worth mentioning that according to the statistics of the Iranian Steel Producers Association, steel production in Iran during the past Iranian calendar year 1404 has recorded a growth of over six percent.

The association has published the statistics for the year 1404 of the country's steel chain. Accordingly, despite intensified energy restrictions, due to optimal management and the introduction of new capacities—both in production and in energy self-sufficiency by steelmakers—Iran's steel production increased by 6.2 percent. Thus, Iran's steel production in 1404 reached 32.1 million tons, equaling the production level of 1402.

The total production volume of steel products in the country in 1404, however, experienced a reverse trend, declining by 1.8 percent. Meanwhile, sponge iron recorded the highest production growth among steel chain products, with a 16-percent increase. However, in the upstream of the steel chain, production of pellets and iron ore concentrate remained at the same levels as the previous year.

According to this report, the significant growth in sponge iron production—due to new capacities coming online on one hand—and the stabilization of pellet and iron ore concentrate production on the other hand, indicates a worsening shortage of raw materials for direct reduction units. However, with the shutdown of more than 14 million tons of sponge iron production capacity due to damages caused by the third imposed war, this shortage will be temporarily absent.

A 3.8-percent increase in steel ingot production against a 1.1-percent decrease in long steel product production indicates the need to develop steel ingot exports. It is noteworthy that the shutdown of more than two

million tons of steel ingot capacity due to the third imposed war can be compensated by activating idle capacities for producing this product.

Production of various steel sheets in 1404 remained almost at the level of the previous year. Meanwhile, slab production saw a double-digit growth of 10.2 percent. Unfortunately, due to the damages inflicted on slab-producing companies during the imposed war, the balance of the flat steel products chain has been disrupted, making the import of slabs and hot-rolled sheets necessary and urgent.

Iran's steel industry is a cornerstone of its non-oil economy, having grown into a significant global player. In 2025, the country produced approximately 32 million tons of crude steel, securing its position as the world's 10th-largest producer.

Beyond crude steel, Iran is a major force in the global direct reduced iron (DRI) market. The nation produced roughly 37 million tons of DRI in 2025, accounting for about a quarter of the world's total supply. This DRI is used by its modern electric arc furnace (EAF) mills, which form the backbone of its steelmaking capacity. However, the industry has faced severe headwinds. In early 2026, military strikes on key facilities, including the country's two largest steel plants, caused major disruptions. This came on top of long-standing challenges like international sanctions, domestic inflation, and energy shortages from power and gas cuts.

Despite these obstacles, the sector remains a vital export earner. It exports a significant portion of its output, with semi-finished steel products being a primary driver. While its immediate outlook is clouded by conflict, Iran's steel industry is a testament to resilience and strategic industrial development on the global stage.

Iran's steel industry produces a comprehensive range of products, from semi-finished materials to value-added goods, supporting construction, automotive, infrastructure, and manufacturing. The sector can be broken down into several key categories:

Semi-Finished Steel

The industry's backbone consists of products like billet, bloom, and slab, with Iran producing over 20 million tons of these in an eight-month period alone.

Flat Steel Products

Led by Mobarakeh Steel Company (MSC), the largest steel producer in the West Asia and North Africa, Iran's flat steel output includes hot-rolled and cold-rolled coils, as well as coated products such as galvanized and pre-painted sheets. These high-quality sheets are used in major national projects, including large-scale water pipelines.

Long Steel Products

Specialized in by companies like Esfahan Steel Company (ESCO), this segment includes:

- * Rebar (reinforcement bars) for construction
- * Structural sections like I-beams, H-profiles, channels, and angles
- * Railway rails – ESCO is Iran's sole producer of rail tracks

Tubular and Finished Steel Products

These include various welded pipes, galvanized tubes for water and gas, and advanced automotive steel grades like CK45 and S650MC high-strength sheets, which have recently been produced locally to reduce import dependence.

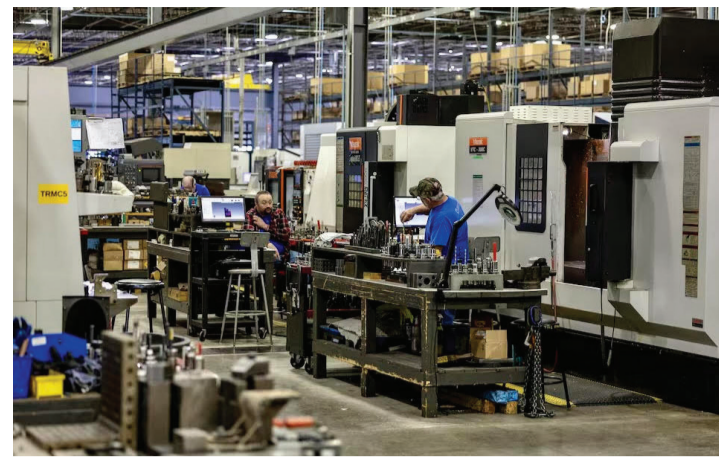
War with Iran ignites factory inflation, U.S. production costs hit 4-year high

TEHRAN- Since the outbreak of the joint US-Israel war against Iran on February 28, American factories have faced severe cost pressures.

The conflict's most immediate impact has been on energy markets: the price of crude oil has jumped more than 50%, directly raising expenses for fuel, transportation, and petrochemical-based raw materials used across manufacturing sectors.

This supply shock is now showing up clearly in industry data. In a survey by the Institute for Supply Management (ISM) of American manufacturers released on Friday, concerns about the war were the main focus of their comments.

The ISM Manufacturing Business Survey Committee Chair, Susan Spence, quantified this anxiety: among all manufacturer



feedback, the war was mentioned in 47 percent of comments, far outpacing concerns about tariffs (18 percent).

The most alarming figure from the report is the ISM Prices Index, which surged to 84.6 in April—its highest level since April 2022.

Reports attributed this sharp rise directly to supply disruptions from the conflict, particularly the closure of the Strait of Hormuz which has choked global oil flows. As a result, overall production costs in the US hit their highest level in four years during April.

The damage has not been limited to energy. Donald Trump's import tariffs have also remained a limiting factor and have contributed to rising factory gate prices. Manufacturers now face a double squeeze: higher costs for imported components due to tariffs, and skyrocketing energy expenses due to war.

Several firms surveyed by ISM warned they are either absorbing shrinking profit margins or passing costs to consumers, fueling broader inflationary pressures.

With no end to the conflict in sight, American factories brace for sustained financial pain, weakened global competitiveness, and the risk of production cutbacks. The war with Iran has proven to be a direct blow to the industrial heartland.

Strait of Hormuz governance should be pursued by leveraging private sector capacities

TEHRAN- The head of the Corporate Governance Commission of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture, referring to the importance of the Strait of Hormuz as a national asset, called for designing targeted mechanisms to utilize the capacities of this waterway in the post-war period.

At the ninth meeting of the Corporate Governance Commission of the Tehran Chamber, attended by economic activists from various fields, the geopolitical and legal characteristics of the Strait of Hormuz were explained. It was stated that if a stable governance system is established, economic exploitation of the Strait of Hormuz is possible through tools such as collecting transit tolls, safety and navigation management, creating regional consortiums, and developing marine support services.

Hassan Forouzanfar, head of the Corporate Governance Commission of the Tehran Chamber, at the beginning of this meeting, referring to the importance of the Strait of Hormuz as a national asset, called for designing targeted mechanisms to utilize the capacities of this waterway in the post-war period.

Emphasizing the need for long-term planning and an active role for the private sector in providing proposals related to the governance of the Strait of Hormuz, he stated: Given that the Strait of Hormuz is a national asset and brings potential capacities for the country, it is appropriate for economic activists, organizations, and associations to think about this international waterway and its potentials, and to examine the Strait of Hormuz from national, governance, economic, and other aspects for better decision-making. Because understanding the impacts of the Strait of Hormuz on the global economy provides an opportunity to leverage its position on a national level and can lead to strengthening the country's economic position.

Forouzanfar, stating that "the Strait of Hormuz is an international waterway and part of it is under Oman's control," deemed it necessary to examine Oman's governance model over the Strait of Hormuz and create synergies to establish an effective governance system over this waterway. He emphasized that with good governance, investment opportunities in this region can be optimized.

Governance of Strait of Hormuz and new opportunities for private sector

Davoud Khani, advisor to the Corporate Governance Commission of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, continued the meeting by presenting a report on the position of the Strait of Hormuz and the governance situation in the region.

Khani, explaining the geopolitical and legal features of the Strait of Hormuz, including the Convention on the Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone and the Law of the Sea Convention, described this waterway as one of the most vital chokepoints for global trade and energy. He said: Before the war began, between 16 and 20 million barrels of oil passed through this route daily, accounting for about a quarter of the world's oil trade. In addition, more than 50% of the commodity trade of regional countries is conducted through this strait.

According to him, the strait's unique geographical position—with a limited shipping route width, suitable depth, and the possibility of traffic control—has made it a strategic point for global energy security and trade, so that any disruption there has consequences beyond the region and leads to increased insurance and transportation costs.

Khani further pointed out the economic capacities of this waterway and emphasized: If a stable governance system based on international understanding is established, economic exploitation of the Strait of Hormuz is possible through tools such as collecting transit tolls, safety and navigation management, creating regional consortiums, and developing marine support services.

Maintaining flow of trade by creating alternative transport routes

Later in the session, Peyman Sanandaji, head of the Transportation Commission of the Tehran Chamber, emphasizing the need for research on the governance of international waterways in other parts of the world and creating an appropriate governance model in this area, said: Weak governance leads to the loss of corridors and competitive markets. Therefore, by looking at governance experiences of other waterways in the world, a suitable mechanism can be proposed in this regard.

Referring to the joint governance of the Strait of Malacca, which lies between Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, he noted: The governance of maritime transport routes, as seen in other straits, must encompass the mutual interests of the parties and be based on commercial charters.

Sanandaji stressed the need to create alternative trade routes and said: Successful governance

occurs when alternatives exist. Maintaining competitive markets requires the use of alternative transport routes and support in this regard.

According to the head of the Transportation Commission of the Tehran Chamber, the private sector is doing its utmost to develop trade connections and is trying to provide solutions to overcome the challenges caused by the imposed war so that the trade cycle continues.

Retention of specialized human resources should be prioritized

Maryam Tajabadi, a member of the Tehran Chamber's Board of Representatives, noting the growth of some Persian Gulf countries in recent decades relying on Iranian knowledge and specialized human resources, suggested that if a governance system regarding the Strait of Hormuz is formulated, revenue generation from this waterway should be done with a sustainable development approach. Tajabadi said: Retaining specialized labor and involving them in specialized projects with a view to sustainable development, in addition to preserving the environment, leads to economic growth and revenue generation.

Diako Hosseini, Deputy for Economic Studies and Futurology of the Tehran Chamber, in another part of the meeting, while emphasizing the need to avoid emotional reactions in the current situation, announced: Chambers of commerce play a key role in developing economic diplomacy, and in these circumstances, they can initiate effective dialogues with private sector activists in the region. Investing in cultural and economic commonalities, diversifying trade routes, and striving to reduce uncertainties in the region can also be pursued through cooperation between the government and the private sector.

The Deputy for Economic Studies and Futurology of the Tehran Chamber, stating that Iranian traders are currently forced to find alternative trade routes and transfer goods through other borders, highlighted the significant role of the Strait of Hormuz in the development of international trade. Hosseini also presented a report on the situation of similar waterways around the world and deemed research in this field and the issuance of statements by chambers of commerce on this matter necessary.

Mohammadreza Najafimanesh, head of the Business Environment Improvement and Production Barrier Removal Commission of the Tehran Chamber, at the end of the meeting, emphasized the need for written proposals from the private sector for the post-war period and the initiation of structured dialogues with the government regarding the governance of the Strait of Hormuz.

Necessary measures considered to secure essential goods: CBI governor

TEHRAN- The Governor of the Central Bank, referring to the necessary forecasts for securing essential goods, stated that the government has tried with all its might to ensure no shortages occur in essential goods and medicine, and the necessary actions have been taken in this regard.

According to IRNA from the Central Bank, Abdolnaser Hemmati, in a meeting with members of the Article 90 Commission of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, while emphasizing the intensification of supervision over the banking network, added: The Central Bank will not allow banks to

overdraw in any form.

The head of the Supreme Council of the Central Bank, in this meeting, considered controlling liquidity growth as one of today's necessities and stated: The Central Bank is striving daily to control liquidity growth with the aim of curbing inflation as the Central Bank's primary duty.

Regarding the targeted allocation of foreign currency by the Central Bank, Hemmati clarified: The country's foreign currency needs are being met according to a codified plan and in line with the country's necessities.

It is worth mentioning that the

members of the Article 90 Commission of the Constitution of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, in this meeting, while approving of the Central Bank's actions, emphasized issues such as the implementation of electronic checks, market and currency control, the need for greater supervision over the banking network, and attention to passive defense.

Meanwhile, on Saturday, the Minister of Transport and Urban Development announced that the record for transporting essential goods from ports during the Ramadan War has been broken compared to the 12-day war, with a

20% increase in the clearance and unloading of goods.

Referring to the record being broken for the transport of essential goods from ports during the Ramadan War compared to the 12-day war, and the 20% increase in the clearance and unloading of goods, Farzaneh Sadegh said: "The burden of these efforts has been on the shoulders of our dear drivers who, thousands of kilometers away, for example, from Ardabil as their starting point, travel empty non-stop to load and transport from the southern ports, which shows how they stand by the people of their country."

Iran's geography strikes back in the corridor war

The strategic collapse of Washington's attempt to bypass the heart of Eurasia

From page 1 ▶ By targeting Iranian infrastructure, the aggressors attempted to enforce a trade map that rewards cooperation with the U.S.-Israeli axis while isolating the sovereign heart of Eurasia, but they forgot a fundamental law of geoeconomics: security is indivisible.

The IMEC mirage

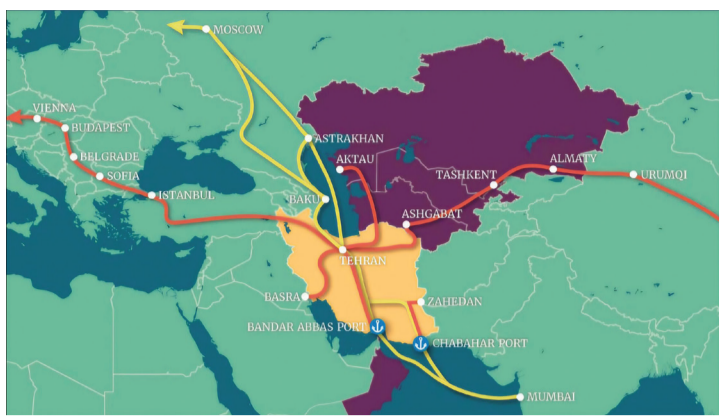
A casualty of this failed strategy is the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, better known as IMEC. Conceived as a deliberate bypass of Iran, IMEC was a geopolitical design built to reward Israel's regional role and create a transit architecture that surgically excluded Iran.

Promoters once promised 40 percent faster transit times and a bold new commercial bridge between Asia and Europe. Today, however, IMEC is functionally dead.

Corridors do not survive on PowerPoint slides or summit photo-ops; they require stability, insurance, and the cooperation of geography.

No rational sovereign wealth fund or insurance firm will underwrite a railway running through a war zone ignited by the very powers that pitched the project.

With the port of Haifa heavily



damaged and regional "normalization" with the regime in ruins, IMEC has devolved into a paper corridor. The war has exposed it as an Israeli-American mirage, and the desert of regional reality has swallowed it whole.

The sanction-proof spine

While exclusionary Western projects falter, a different architecture is accelerating on land. The International North-South Transport Corridor, which links India to Russia through Iran, is emerging as the true future of Eurasian trade.

It slashes freight time from Mumbai to St. Petersburg from 40 days via Suez to as little as 10 days, while cutting costs by roughly 30 percent.

Crucially, this corridor is a land-and-sea spine that the U.S.

Navy cannot strangle. In a move that signals a deep multipolar shift, Russia and Iran agreed in late April 2026 to begin construction of the 164-kilometer Rasht-Astara railway, the final missing link in this resilient network. Even as bombs fell elsewhere, deals were being signed on the Caspian shore.

Furthermore, Pakistan's recent authorization of expanded transit routes has opened land crossings that deliver cargo to the Iranian border in hours, rendering naval blockades increasingly irrelevant. These routes are a practical response to a world tired of being governed by naval coercion and financial blackmail.

The global war tax and the pivot of history

The economic blowback on the

West has been immediate and merciless. The Hormuz shock has introduced a permanent risk premium into global markets, exposing the fragility of a Western economy that relies on a region it simultaneously destabilizes.

Brent crude has surged toward record highs, and insurance premiums have multiplied sevenfold. Washington's desperate attempt to reroute trade around the Cape of Good Hope is an admission of defeat, as each detour adds up to 20 days and millions of dollars in fuel costs, driving global inflation.

This hidden tax falls on consumers and farmers far beyond the battlefield, turning the U.S.-Israeli war into a global tax on trade that hits the Global South the hardest.

Ultimately, the war's strategic lesson is geological. Iran remains the irreplaceable bridge between the Persian Gulf, the Caspian, and the Mediterranean.

The global economy is now bifurcating into two zones: a high-cost, high-risk Western zone and a faster, sanction-proof Eurasian zone with Iran at its center. By attempting to exclude Iran, the U.S.-Israeli axis has only confirmed that the millennia-old civilization is too central to be bypassed by force.

UAE acting as Israel's shadow enforcer

The UAE is betraying Pakistan, fracturing the Ummah, and selling out Muslim solidarity for Zionist gold

From page 1 ▶ The human and financial toll is staggering: thousands deported, visas frozen, billions demanded back overnight, and long-overdue payments to Pakistan withheld. Worse, Abu Dhabi's zeal has even strained its once-ironclad alliance with Saudi Arabia, proving that pleasing Israel trumps Muslim unity. The UAE isn't just allied with Israel; it's actively sabotaging Muslim-majority states that refuse to toe the Zionist line.

Economic strangulation

Abu Dhabi's financial warfare against Islamabad is textbook coercion, timed precisely with Pakistan's mediation efforts in the U.S.-Iran conflict. In early April 2026, the UAE abruptly demanded the immediate repayment of \$3.5 billion in central bank deposits – funds originally extended years earlier to stabilize Pakistan's reserves and pave the way for IMF support. This wasn't a quiet rollover negotiation; it came with

days' notice, threatening to drain nearly a fifth of Pakistan's \$16 billion forex holdings and torpedo its IMF program. Pakistan scrambled, repaid the full amount (including a final \$1 billion tranche on April 23), and leaned on Saudi inflows to avoid default.

Analysts widely viewed it as punitive: punishment for Pakistan's deepening ties with Riyadh, its "meek" response to Iranian strikes on American military bases hosted by Persian Gulf Arab states, and its role as peacemaker between Washington and Tehran. Israel, which had pushed for decisive strikes on Iran, saw the mediation as interference. The UAE, ever the loyal partner, delivered the economic gut punch.

This isn't isolated. The UAE-based Etisalat, which snapped up a 26% stake in Pakistan's state-owned PTCL telecom giant in 2006 for \$2.6 billion, still owes Islamabad around \$800 million from the original deal – a sum ballooned by interest and penalties

to claims of \$6 billion after two decades of stalling. Etisalat claims Pakistan failed to transfer thousands of properties; Pakistan calls it a blatant default. Transparency International Pakistan has urged the government to recover every cent, yet Abu Dhabi drags its feet while squeezing Pakistan on deposits. The message is clear: play ball with Israel's regional designs, or watch your economy hemorrhage. Remittances from the UAE, a lifeline exceeding \$13 billion annually in recent years, now face disruption as deportations mount. Pakistani families back home feel the pinch, their breadwinners booted out amid frozen accounts and arbitrary detentions. The UAE's actions don't just hurt Pakistan; they signal to every Muslim nation: align against Iran (and by extension, support Israel's security blanket), or face the same financial noose. It's dollar diplomacy in service of Tel Aviv, not Islamic solidarity.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

US must be willing to make uncomfortable concessions to Iran: analysis

The US will have to acknowledge that Tehran is entitled to develop nuclear technology for energy, health care, and other peaceful purposes

TEHRAN – In a May 1 article for Foreign Affairs, former U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Tom Pickering; conflict resolution expert Gabrielle Rifkin; and nuclear policy specialist Paul Ingram argued that the U.S. "must be willing to make uncomfortable concessions to Iran" to end the hostilities between Washington and Tehran.

The following is an excerpt of the article titled "The price of peace with Iran":

Despite days of both indirect and direct negotiations, including a dramatic, 21-hour high-level summit in Islamabad, a lasting deal between Iran and the U.S. remains far away.

Part of this failure has to do with Washington's misplaced expectations. President Trump believes that the United States holds all the cards and can force Tehran into buckling, regardless of months of evidence to the contrary. But part of the problem is mutual mistrust. This deep wariness has not just persisted; it has deepened. Washington has now spurned Tehran repeatedly in negotiations. It forged a nuclear deal in 2015, only to abandon it three years later. It entered new talks with Iran in 2025, and then bombed Iran's nuclear infrastructure. And when talks picked up again at the beginning of this year, the United States launched its latest military campaign. As a result, most Iranians have little faith that the current negotiations will work or that the cease-fire will hold.

To overcome this mistrust, the United States will need to prove that the current negotiations are fundamentally different

from past ones—which is to say that they will result in a viable and durable agreement. That can begin by Washington finally accepting that Iran has fundamental rights as a sovereign state, including to enrich uranium for civilian, peaceful purposes. The United States will also need to help Iran reconstruct by letting states along the Persian Gulf, Iran included, impose surcharges for certain petroleum-related goods that depart from ports in the Persian Gulf and transit south through the Strait of Hormuz, which Tehran has proven it can choke off. The resulting funds can help finance the region's reconstruction in accordance with needs, and Iran, obviously, requires the broadest support. Finally, the United States needs to ensure that Israel will refrain from attacking Iran and help the two countries forge stable, if still unfriendly, relations. Tehran, in turn, will have to agree to new limits and severe oversight of its nuclear program so that Washington can be sure it will never build a nuclear weapon. Iran will also need to accept that it cannot extract funds for the very passage of ships through the strait, in contravention of international law.

Such a comprehensive deal would provide both Tehran and Washington with what diplomats call a "golden bridge"—or an arrangement that allows adversaries to retreat from maximalist positions while still claiming victory. It would inevitably disappoint the United States' many Iran hawks, who are averse to letting Tehran notch any kind of win. But the reality is that coercive diplomacy is not effective. It hardens re-

sistance, constrains room for compromise, and increases the risk that disputes repeatedly escalate into more violent conflicts. It is thus time for U.S. and Iranian officials to shift their language and strategy away from maximalism and embrace compromise instead.

The road to U.S.-Iranian peace begins with some on-the-ground basics—such as a pledge to maintain the present cease-fire and not attack critical infrastructure. That means the two countries must agree to a carefully defined extension of the cease-fire, one that explicitly prohibits such strikes.

Next, the two sides will need to resolve some of their deeper disputes—particularly over Iran's nuclear program. That clearly remains a central challenge for Americans who want the Iranians to give up any technology that could enable the development of a nuclear weapon. Iran could blend down its nearly 1,000 pounds of 60 percent enriched uranium to below 3.67 percent of U-235 and place strict limits on the introduction and the number of more efficient centrifuge technology. The United States and the UN Security Council could devise and employ a regional monitoring and control regime to make sure that Tehran makes good on its word. As part of doing so, Iran might ratify the Additional Protocol to the NPT and again subject itself to intensive IAEA inspections, as it did after ratifying the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Israel lacks troops and ammo for a prolonged war



From page 1 ▶ Today, the regime is not fighting a traditional war. Instead, it is running a harsh policy of rationing resources. Depleted stockpiles and declining military readiness force the IOF to follow engagement rules that were never part of its original plans.

The IOF has entered a period of human attrition never seen before since its founding. The reserve forces have turned into a regular army by force. Entire brigades within the IOF have been serving their seventh round of duty since October 2023. Individual soldiers have logged more service days than an ordinary soldier would have done over several decades.

This pressure has worn down motivation among many soldiers. This drop in morale is fueled by infighting over who should carry the burden, the drafting of those who dodged service, and the high cost of wages paid to reserve soldiers (reaching 1.5 billion shekels in just two weeks). More importantly, this pressure has hit the core of readiness and deployment.

The severe shortage of qualified combat personnel now limits how the IOF General Staff can move forces between fronts. The IOF has to pull units from one front to support another. This explains why the regime has pulled back from some secondary battlefields to focus on the north, for example, or why the IOF has had to rebuild brigades, divisions, and units using volunteers who are past retirement age.

The regime's air force, long seen as the unbeatable long arm of the IOF, now faces a tough choice between flight hours and the lifespan of its aircraft. In one single month, pilots flew more hours than they would in an entire year of warfare. This has put the fleet under huge maintenance pressure and limited the number of planes able to keep fighting over time.

The biggest limit shows up in how intelligence and operational attention are spread. Facts on the ground have proven that the IOF cannot keep the same momentum going in Lebanon and Iran at the same time. The air force had to stop flights over Iran 24 hours

before starting large operations in Lebanon (as happened during the war in Lebanon). This is a clear admission that building a target list and finishing strikes properly requires the IOF to focus on one front at a time. When attention is divided between two fronts, both operations suffer.

This forced division of attention gives the Axis of Resistance an advantage in timing and freedom to maneuver. Every minute of attention aimed at the north is a pure gain for Tehran, allowing it to strengthen its positions or finish its specialized programs. The same is true in reverse.

Looking at how the IOF uses up ammunition shows a shocking fact: the Zionist regime entered the war with a stockpile of 15,000 munitions, according to Hebrew reports citing a senior IOF officer. But the IOF ended up using 150,000 munitions. This turned reliance on American military supply flights from a backup option into a necessity for survival.

Reports from the regime indicate that the IOF has used up critical categories of its specialized missiles at rates that cannot be sustained:

Air defense: Use of Arrow-2 and Arrow-3 missiles reached about 81%. If the battle had continued at the same speed, IOF stocks would have run out completely within a few days.

Offensive weapons: Missiles like the Rampage and Blue Sparrow saw consumption rates above 50%. This forces the military leadership of the Zionist regime into painful choices: either cut back on precision strikes or accept greater risks to aircraft by using "dumb" or less accurate bombs, which is exactly what happened.

This industrial weakness is also tied to global supply chain problems and shortages of basic materials. This means that replacing what the IOF lost in just 16 days, as noted in reports, could take years. This explains why the IOF is moving more toward offensive defense with fewer resources and lower risks.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Rome prosecutors open criminal probe into Israeli abduction of Gaza aid activists

TEHRAN — Rome prosecutors formally initiated a criminal investigation into Israeli forces on Monday following the violent abduction of international activists and the illegal seizure of humanitarian vessels in international waters.

The judicial proceedings, spearheaded by the Rome Public Prosecutor's Office, target Israeli agents involved in the interception of the Global Sumud Flotilla, a civilian-led initiative dedicated to shattering the suffocating and illegal blockade of Gaza.

This action represents a major intensification of the legal challenges facing Tel Aviv for its habitual breach of international maritime protocols.

The investigation follows three comprehensive legal complaints, including those filed on behalf of Brazilian activist Thiago de Ávila and Spanish-Palestinian activist Saif Abu Keshek.

Both men were aboard Italian-flagged vessels when Israeli commandos launched a raid near Crete in late April, hundreds of nautical miles from any regional conflict zone.

While the majority of the 175 detained participants were eventually transferred to Greece, Ávila and Abu Keshek were forcibly abducted and taken to the occupied territories, a move characterized by legal experts as a blatant act of piracy.

The charges now under review include kidnapping, robbery, and criminal damage that risked causing a shipwreck, alongside disturbing reports of systematic abuse.

This judicial scrutiny arrives as Israel faces unprecedented global isolation for its descent into what international courts have branded systematic genocide and a doctrine of total war, responsible for over 100,000 lives claimed across the region in recent years.

For years, the regime has operated under a self-assumed license to intercept civilian aid with military force, relying on Western diplomatic cover to evade accountability.

However, the Italian probe signals a breach in this shield of impunity. The case has expanded to examine harrowing testimonies from 36 Italian participants who described enduring physical violence and torture at the hands of Israeli naval forces.

Imam Khomeini Airport handles over 21,000 passengers as flights resume

TEHRAN – More than 21,000 passengers traveled through Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport in the week from April 25 to May 1, signaling a steady recovery in air traffic following the reopening of Iran's airspace after weeks of disruption, airport authorities said.

Javad Salehi-Artimani, deputy head of airport operations, said a total of 21,549 passengers were handled on 202 inbound and outbound flights during the period. Of these, 11,427 passengers departed on outbound flights, while 10,122 arrived in the country.

The figures come after Iran began gradually resuming domestic and international flights on April 25 at both Imam Khomeini International Airport and Mehrabad Airport, following nearly 50 days of suspension triggered by a recent war involving the United States and Israel.

Salehi-Artimani noted that flight operations showed "stability and growth," with peak traffic recorded on May 1, when 38 flights were handled in a single day. The busiest hour occurred between 1700 and 1800 local time, during which 22 flights were processed, highlighting operational readiness during peak periods.

During the reporting week, 11 airlines oper-



ated flights to 25 international destinations. Mahan Air accounted for the largest share of flights, operating 77 services, or 38% of the total. Meanwhile, Iran Air transported 6,159 passengers, representing 29% of total passenger traffic.

Istanbul remained the most popular international destination, with 59 flights carrying more than 12,000 passengers. Other high-traffic routes included Muscat, Najaf and Medina, reflecting both commercial and religious travel demand.

Cargo traffic also showed significant volumes, with more than 428,000 kilograms of passenger baggage and over 624,000 kilograms of commercial freight handled in the same period.

Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Quebrada de Humahuaca

Quebrada de Humahuaca, situated in Argentina's province of Jujuy, follows the line of a major cultural route, the Camino Inca, along the spectacular valley of the Rio Grande, from its source in the cold high desert plateau of the High Andean lands to its confluence with the Rio Leone some 150 km to the south.

The UNESCO-designated valley demonstrates substantial evidence of its use as a major trade route over the past 10,000 years. It features visible traces of prehistoric hunter-gatherer communities, of the Inca Empire (15th to 16th centuries), and of the fight for independence in the 19th and 20th centuries.

According to UNESCO, the property is a

highly representative example of the south Andean valleys, with an exceptional system of communication routes and economic, social, and cultural coordination.

This is the most important physical linkage between the high Andean lands and the extensive temperate plains in south-eastern South America. Its impressive natural environment is kept almost intact, with hundreds of archaeological and architectural sites that bear witness to its long and rich history. The valley shows substantial evidence of its use as a major trade route over the past 10,000 years.

(Source: UNESCO)

Agha Bozorg Mosque: The soul of Kashan's architectural heritage

TEHRAN – Rising from the historic fabric of Kashan, the Agha Bozorg Mosque stands as one of the most remarkable architectural ensembles of late Persian design. It is a place where spirituality, scholarship, and artistry converge.

Constructed in the late 18th century and completed in the early 19th century, this mosque-madrasa complex is not merely a monument but an immersive journey into Iran's intellectual and aesthetic traditions.

Named after the esteemed theologian Mulla Mahdi Naraqil II, the complex reflects both his scholarly legacy and the cultural vibrancy of the era. An inscription dates its completion to 1832–1833, a time when Kashan thrived as a center of trade and learning. Today, it continues to attract visitors from around the world, drawn by its rare architectural synthesis and serene atmosphere.

What immediately distinguishes the Agha Bozorg Mosque is its ingenious integration of a mosque and a madrasa within a single, unified structure. Unlike traditional layouts where these functions are separated, here they coexist seamlessly across five levels and two courtyards, one elevated and one sunken. This innovative design not only maximizes spatial harmony but also represents a departure from conventional Persian architectural principles, making it a true masterpiece.

Approaching the complex, visitors enter through a grand iwan-portal, which is an arched, domed gateway that opens into a spacious vestibule. From this vantage point, the courtyard unfolds in a dramatic, multi-level composition. Stairways, corridors, and terraces interconnect the various sections, guiding visitors through a carefully orchestrated sequence of spaces. The layout, oriented northwest to southeast, reveals a thoughtful balance between openness and enclosure, light and shadow.



At the heart of the complex lies the courtyard, arranged on two levels. The upper level functions as a balcony, framed by rows of deep, blind niches where students once sat and studied. From here, one looks down onto the lower courtyard, where a tranquil pool reflects the surrounding architecture, a quintessential feature of Persian design. This sunken courtyard, surrounded on three sides by madrasa dormitories, creates a sense of intimacy and retreat, ideal for contemplation.

Beneath the entrance pavilion, a subterranean space known as the sardab offers respite from the desert heat. Its broad arches and cool interior are complemented by towering windcatchers (badgirs), which rise above the structure to channel air into the lower levels, which is a brilliant example of traditional climate-responsive architecture.

The mosque itself occupies the southeastern side of the complex, centered around a domed chamber known as the

gunbad-khanah. This octagonal space, crowned by a large dome, opens onto an ambulatory that wraps around it on three sides. The interplay of arches and light within this space creates a sense of rhythm and movement, inviting quiet reflection. Adjacent to it lies the shabistan, a hypostyle prayer hall divided by twenty columns into six aisles, each marked by subtle variations in light and shadow. A single mihrab indicates the direction of prayer, anchoring the spiritual focus of the space.

Decoration throughout the complex is both restrained and captivating. The dominant material is a special brickwork, interspersed with delicate geometric tiles in shades of light blue and brown. In certain areas, particularly around the dome and entrance portal, intricate muqarnas, stalactite-like ornamentation, adds depth and texture. The interplay of blue and turquoise tiles forms elegant Persian patterns, demonstrating a refined sense of balance and color.

One of the most memorable aspects of visiting Agha Bozorg is the attention to ceilings. Whether beneath the main dome or within smaller chambers, the ceilings, reveal intricate craftsmanship that rewards those who look up. It is a reminder that in Persian architecture, beauty is often found in the details above.

Beyond the mosque itself, Kashan offers a rich atmosphere of historical attractions. Situated along a major route connecting Tehran to cultural hubs like Isfahan, Shiraz, and Yazd, the city serves as a gateway to Iran's central plateau. Visitors can explore its famed traditional houses, including the elegant Borujerdi House, Tabatabaei House, Ameri House, and Abbasi House, each showcasing the artistry of Persian residential architecture.

Yet, even among such treasures, Agha Bozorg Mosque holds a special place. It is not just a site to visit, but a space to experience, where architecture tells stories of faith, learning, and innovation.

Rethinking the Persian Gulf's role in deep time human history

From Page 1 ▶ This region was not a passive backdrop to human history but a key node in the deep-time processes of human movement and settlement. When we speak of the Paleolithic in Iran, we address a record extending back hundreds of thousands of years—far earlier than the peopling of the Americas some 30,000 to 40,000 years ago. The Iranian Plateau, especially the northern margins of the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, functioned as a principal corridor for human dispersal across Eurasia.

Today, as Iran advances a maritime-oriented economy, reexamining this deep history reveals that the Persian Gulf was a "vital corridor" for survival, movement, and resource exploitation thousands of years ago. This continuity—from Paleolithic migratory pathways to modern energy and trade routes—renders the region's geopolitical significance intelligible within a long-term perspective and offers new insights for Iran's maritime policy.

The Paleolithic, comprising the bulk of the Stone Age, witnessed the emergence of the earliest human technologies. Stone tools from southern Iran reflect complex decision-making in raw material selection and adaptation to environmental conditions. This ingenuity unfolded against Pleistocene climatic fluctuations. During glacial phases, lowered sea levels exposed vast portions of the Persian Gulf basin, creating fertile plains ideal for early human occupation.

More than two million years ago, the first human populations de-

parted East Africa through natural corridors like Bab al-Mandeb and Sinai. Groups following the southern route into Arabia played a decisive role in establishing migration paths eastward. From Arabia, they moved along the margins of the Persian Gulf, crossed the Strait of Hormuz, entered the Iranian Plateau, and continued toward Central and South Asia and the Far East.

Recent findings confirm that the northern coasts and hinterlands of the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz, and the Sea of Oman were among the most significant dispersal corridors. By providing water, diverse ecosystems, and interconnected pathways, these areas created favorable conditions for sustained occupation. The northern coasts of Hormozgan province are now recognized as a focal area where archaeological evidence demonstrates active participation in Pleistocene mobility networks.

Owing to its West Asian position, Iran was a pivotal hub in these networks—a "key corridor" connecting the Arabian Peninsula and Levant with Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent. Iran was not merely a transit route but an active component of human networks, a landscape where mobility, settlement, and the transmission of ecological and technological knowledge were facilitated on a broad scale.

Sea-level fluctuations had a decisive impact on the Persian Gulf's configuration. With an average depth of just 35 meters, glacial regressions exposed extensive seabed, sometimes nearly desiccating the



basin. An exposed terrestrial landscape, likely with freshwater sources, emerged—more favorable for habitation than many glaciated regions. In this setting, the Persian Gulf functioned as a "refugium": a landscape supporting settlement, water, and game. Simultaneously, it acted as a corridor connecting Arabia, the Iranian Plateau, and regions farther east.

The Strait of Hormuz, today the world's most critical energy chokepoint, held comparable importance in prehistory. Archaeological evidence from Qeshm and Hormuz islands includes lithic scatters indicating hunter-gatherer presence prior to 40,000 years ago. The Strait was not merely a transient passage but an active human landscape where groups repeatedly occupied, exploited resources, and developed adap-

Pleistocene populations here, positioning Makran as a critical area for testing early dispersal hypotheses.

Paleolithic evidence from Hormozgan—including Sadich, Sirik, Minab, Roudan, Siahou, and Dehtal—attests to human presence during the Lower Paleolithic. The dominant tradition is a cobble-tool industry based on core-flake production and choppers, showing affinities with Arabian and Balochistani (Ladizian) industries. In areas like the Minab Plain, possible bifacial tools (Acheulean) have been reported, requiring cautious analysis.

The Dehtal site in Bastak is a standout example. Covering some 400 hectares, it contains giant cores with large flake removals, Large Cutting Tools (handaxes and cleavers), and massive scrapers. This evidence indicates systematic, organized tool production. The simultaneous availability of raw materials, seasonal water, and natural routes made Dehtal a dynamic setting for settlement and technological activity—a significant example of Paleolithic resource exploitation.

What was defined in the Paleolithic as a "subsistence economy"—access to water, food, and mobility routes—is today reflected in the "maritime economy." Whereas ancient habitation choices were based on proximity to resources and connectivity, the same logic now operates at a larger scale, manifest in shipping lanes, energy corridors, ports, and coastal infrastructure. This continuity demonstrates that the strategic importance of the Persian Gulf and Iran's south-

ern coasts is rooted in long-standing human-environment interaction.

Hormozgan—from Parsiyan to Jask—commands coastal and hinterland zones that exemplify this enduring spatial logic. Human choices made in the distant past, despite transformations in scale and complexity, remain fundamentally valid. This continuity not only deepens our understanding of Iran's position within the maritime economy but also underscores the potential of cultural heritage to serve as a foundation for sustainable development, including cultural-historical tourism and regional identity formation.

For too long, our understanding of Paleolithic occupations in southern Iran was limited to isolated finds. Recent discoveries, from Dehtal to Makran, demonstrate that Iran functioned as a "linking node" within Eurasian dispersal networks. This reassessment elevates the Persian Gulf from a marginal setting to a central role in one of history's most significant processes: the expansion of human populations across continents.

In this light, a scientific reconsideration of the "Stone Age" reveals that the term does not denote collapse but rather the beginning of humanity's global journey. The Persian Gulf has consistently occupied a central position—from the migration routes of early humans to the complex networks of the modern global economy. Understanding this deep heritage is not merely an academic exercise; it is a strategic imperative for contemporary Iran.

'Providing access to vaccines, medicines a universal responsibility'

TEHRAN – The head of the communicable diseases department of the ministry of health has highlighted that providing access to vaccines and medicines during crises is a universal responsibility.

The outbreak of most of the diseases has been managed during the same period, Qobad Moradi said, referring to challenges and limitations caused by the US-Israeli war against Iran.

The two main missions of the communicable diseases department include providing preventive services, including vaccination and treatment of infectious diseases, and disease surveillance for early detection and timely intervention, ISNA quoted Qobadi as saying.

Predicting potential risks, before the beginning of the war, the health ministry provided and distributed the vaccines and medicines needed for communicable diseases to reduce vulnerability, the official added.

Later, a crisis management headquarters was formed to oversee the situations and address the problems.

During the 40-day war, more than 700,000 doses of vaccines were provided to the target groups across the country, and no major disruptions in the provision of these services were reported.

According to Moradi, some 20,000 patients are infected with HIV, and 6,000 people have TB infections, received necessary care, which demonstrates the resilience and sustainability of Iran's health system even in times of war and crisis.

Referring to the country's blockade by the US, Qobadi said limited access to essential medicines and vaccines is the main challenge ahead. If the same situation persists, it will not only affect the health of the Iranian people, but the health of the region and the world, as infectious diseases know no borders.

High vaccination coverage in Iran

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, Mehr news agency quoted Alireza Raeisi, an official with the health ministry, as saying.

However, regional developments and population shifts underscore the need to maintain immunization programs more than ever, he added.

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.

The health ministry has launched the supplementary round of measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccination in four high-risk provinces of Khuzestan, Sistan-Baluchestan, Hormozgan, and Kerman.

The supplementary immunization program kicked off on May 3 and will run for two weeks, covering 1.05 million children, IRNA quoted Mohsen Zahraei, an official with the health ministry, as saying.

The vaccine is usually administered at ages 12 and 18 months, but to boost security in high-risk areas, children aged 2-6 years will receive the vaccine. Some 95 percent of the target groups, both Iranian and foreign nationals, are expected to get vaccinated through the program, he added.

Mumps is a highly contagious, vaccine-preventable viral disease caused by the mumps virus. Common symptoms include painful swelling of the jaw, fever, tiredness, appetite loss, and headache. Measles is potentially a deadly disease. Severe complications include pneumonia, diarrhea, blindness, and encephalitis (brain swelling).

The World Health Organization (WHO) verified that Iran has sustained rubella and measles elimination, Alireza Raeisi, an official with the health ministry, said in February.

"Iran, Oman, and Bahrain are the only countries in the region that have received the verification," IRNA quoted Raeisi as saying.

The measles vaccination program in Iran started in 1984, when 34 percent of the population 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.

The official described it as a great achievement of the health system, saying that many European countries have lost WHO's measles-free status. Measles is still prevalent in West Asia, particularly in the country's eastern neighbours, such as Turkey, Raeisi added.

This achievement is the result of coordinated planning, widespread vaccination, epidemiologic surveillance, and comprehensive participation of the country's healthcare system. It is a turning point in improving public health, which will strengthen Iran's position in achieving goals at the regional and international levels.

IBTO aims to foster blood donation culture among new generation

TEHRAN – Iran Blood Transfusion Organization (IBTO) has launched a campaign to help children get familiar with the altruistic act of donating blood and promote the culture of blood donation.

The campaign titled 'Dad gave blood' started concurrently with Teacher's Day on Saturday, May 2, IBTO website quoted Mohammad Shahzade-Safavi, an official with the organization, as saying.

Inspired by beautiful shared childhood memories, the campaign aims to create a bond between past and new generations. 'Dad gave water, and Dad gave bread' are memorable sentences in textbooks in elementary school a few decades ago, which evoke great nostalgia, he noted.

The main objective of the campaign is to change the attitude of the future generation towards blood donation. 'Dad gave blood' reminds people of their social and human responsibilities, the IBTO intends to convey an important message to the new generation, said the official.

Highlighting the role of early childhood education in children's social development, he said: "We aim to institutionalize the culture

of blood donation in children."

The campaign is planned to serve as a platform for the interactions of families, teachers, and students to make blood donation a social responsibility and part of the culture.

Some 1.7% of Iranians donate blood regularly

Around 1.7 percent of the country's population donates blood regularly, and the blood donation index is 28 per 1,000 population, an official with IBTO said in January.

The average amount of blood storage in the country is sufficient for five days, but it can be increased to eight days, IRNA quoted Ahmad Qarah-Baghian as saying.

Blood donations are always needed. The life of some patients, such as those suffering from hemophilia and thalassemia, depends on regular blood transfusions, the official noted.

With an increase in life expectancy in Iran, which is currently 75 years, and a structural change in the population's average age, the need for blood and its products will significantly increase in the future, he added.



Referring to Iran's transition into an aging country and the fact that about 30 per cent of the death tolls in traffic accidents are due to lack of access to blood transfusion, Qarah-Baghian said young healthy individuals, aged below 25, need to be encouraged to donate blood regularly, and women's contribution should increase from 5 to 35 per cent.

The official went on to say that people can even only donate platelets, as platelets can be stored for only about three days, while the product is vital for many patients.

A total of 1,621,911 Iranians donated blood in the first eight months of the current Iranian year, which started on March 21, according to an official with the IBTO.

The highest blood donation

growth was recorded in the provinces of Zanjan (around 12 percent), Sistan-Baluchestan (over nine percent), and Fars (more than seven percent), Mehr news agency quoted Babak Yektaparast as saying.

Tehran province accounted for 17 percent of the total blood donation in the same period. Fars and Isfahan provinces donated, respectively, more than seven percent and almost six percent of the total blood donation in eight months.

Women's share of blood donation in the country is around five percent, he noted.

The official went on to say that over the past eight months, the continuous blood donation growth rate in the country has been 55 percent.

SIR 2026 includes 166 Iranian universities



From page 1 ► SCI Ranking analyzes institutions in five sectors, including government, health, universities, companies, and non-profit.

For the SIR Ranking 2026 edition, the Altmetrics indicator has been replaced by the new Media Mentions metric. This indicator quantifies institutional exposure across high-authority media outlets indexed in the SCImago Media Rankings (SMR).

A total of 61 universities in the SIR 2026 edition have been flagged for high rates of self-citation (over 25 percent) and self-referencing (over 15 percent). These factors can severely affect ranking positions and, as a result, these universities may be removed from the SIR in subsequent editions.

In the latest ranking, Tehran University of Medical Sciences and University of Tehran are placed among the top ten institutions in West Asia, ranking 5th and 10th, respectively.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences (with a global ranking of 701) is the top university in the country.

University of Tehran and Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences and Health Services are placed second and third, respectively.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences rank 37 in Dentistry (first in West Asia), 49 in Dermatology, 73 in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, 81 in Otorhinolaryngology, 94 in Infectious Diseases, 96 in Public Health, Environment and Occupational Health, 98 in Urology, 108 in Ophthalmology, 131 in Medicine (first in West Asia), 139 in Epidemiology, 159 in Nephrology, 176 in Surgery, and 189 in Critical Care and Intensive Care Medicine.

University of Tehran ranks 71 in Architecture, 72 in Business, management, and Accounting (first in West Asia), 76 in Geography, Planning, and Development, 112 in Energy (first in West Asia), 128 in Geology, 137 in Civil and Structural Engineering, 169 in Atmospheric Science, 208 in Religious Studies, 242 in Earth and Planetary Sciences, 248 in forestry, and 290 in Aquatic Science.

Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences ranks 96 in Pathology and Forensic Medicine, 106 in Urology, and 130 in Dermatology.

Tabriz University of Medical Sciences ranks 109 in Pharmacology, Toxicology, and Pharmaceuticals (2nd in West Asia), and 182 in Urology.

Golestan University ranks 132 in Social Sciences, and 155 in Education (first in West Asia).

In Environmental Sciences, Iran Polymer and Petrochemical Institute ranks 1st in West Asia (130 globally), University of Tehran ranks third in West Asia.

In Architecture, University of Gilan ranks 70, and Iran University of Science and Technology ranks 80 globally.

University of Kashan ranks 66 globally in Ocean Engineering.

In Biomedical Engineering, Lorestan University of Medical Sciences, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, and Mashhad University of Medical Sciences rank 74, 245, and 261, respectively.

For the ranking purposes, the calculation is generated each year from the results obtained over a period of five years ending two years before the edition of the ranking. For instance, if the selected year of publication is 2024, the results used are those from the five-year period of 2018-2022. The only exception is the case of web indicators, which

were calculated last year.

Recent rankings

The Times Higher Education Asia University Rankings 2026 has placed 90 Iranian universities among the top Asian institutions, up from 85 universities in 2025.

The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2026 judge research-intensive universities across all their core missions: teaching, research, knowledge transfer, and international outlook.

Sharif University of Technology is placed first in the country, with a global ranking of 76, Borna news agency reported.

Amirkabir University of Technology (79) and Iran University of Science and Technology (87) are ranked second and third.

Tehran University of Medical Science (111), University of Tehran (120), Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences (131), Isfahan University of Technology (137), Tarbiat Modares University (162), Shiraz University of Technology (166), and Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences (154) are placed fourth to tenth in the country.

THE World University Rankings (WUR) 2026 placed 101 Iranian universities among the top universities in the world in 11 subject areas, compared to 81 universities in 10 subject areas in 2025.

These ten subject rankings include arts and humanities; business and economics; clinical and health; computer science; education; engineering; life sciences; physical sciences; psychology; social sciences; and Law.

To create the THE WUR 2026 list, THE's data team drew on a comprehensive and growing database containing hundreds of thousands of data points on more than 3,100 global research universities, and employed a global Academic Reputation Survey of more than 108,000 leading scholars, who provided us with their expert views on the world's leading universities.

In addition, it also analysed 174.9 million citations to 18.7 million academic publications (from Elsevier's Scopus database) published over a five-year period between 2020 and 2024.

Amirkabir University of Technology, Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, and Sharif University of Technology, ranking 351-400 globally, were placed first in the country.

Iran University of Science and Technology, and University of Tehran were placed second, with a global ranking of 401-500.

Shiraz University of Technology, and Tehran University of Medical Sciences ranked 501-600 globally; they ranked third nationwide.

The Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Asia University Rankings placed 48 Iranian universities in the list of top universities in 2026, compared to 32 universities in 2025.

Published annually since 2009, the QS Asia University Rankings highlights the top universities in Asia each year.

University of Tehran (with a global ranking of 93) was placed first among Iranian universities, followed by Sharif University of Technology (ranking 142 globally) and Amirkabir University of Technology (ranking 169 globally), ISNA reported.

Iran University of Science and Technology (172), Isfahan University of Technology and University of Tabriz (212), Shahid Beheshti University (214), Shiraz University (241), Ferdowsi University of Mashhad (261), K.N. Toosi University of Technology (287), University of Isfahan (293) were ranked fourth to tenth.



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MAY 5, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Allah has made a measure for everything and for every measure an end.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:01 Evening: 18:14 Dawn: 03:33 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 05:07 (tomorrow)

Beyzaie's "The Death of Yazdgerd" to be shown, reviewed at Labkhand Theater Complex

TEHRAN – Labkhand Theater Complex in Tehran will screen the 1982 movie "The Death of Yazdgerd" by the renowned Iranian director and playwright Bahram Beyzaie, based on the namesake play he wrote in 1979, on Wednesday.

After screening the two-hour film, a review session will be held in the presence of the veteran playwright Mohammad Charmshir, Mehr reported.

The play, written in 1979, has been performed many times by various directors from its first staging by the late Beyzaie at Tehran's City Theater up to the present day.

The play is often considered Beyzaie's magnum opus, which he adapted into a film of the same name in 1982.

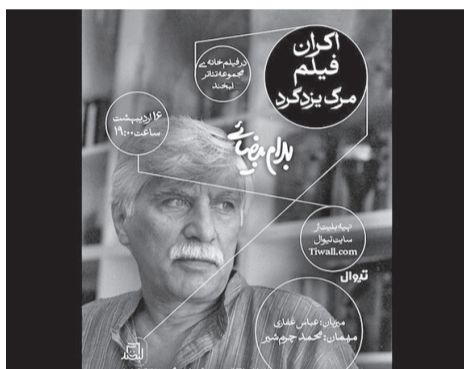
The story is based on the murder of Yazdgerd III, the last emperor of Sasanian Persia, who while being hard pressed by the Arabs on his western flank, fled to Marv, where he was slain by a miller in a mill, in which he had been taking refuge.

The film begins with the Zoroastrian high priest (magus) of the Persian Empire, accompanied by the imperial army commander, entering the mill to try the miller accused of murdering the emperor. The miller, his wife, and his daughter, while trying to exculpate themselves, all express a different version of the same incident. As the story shifts, more questions come up than are answered.

Bahram Beyzaie (1938 – 2025) was an Iranian filmmaker, playwright, theater director, researcher, and master of Persian literature, mythology, and Iranian studies.

Before he started making films in 1970, he was a leading playwright. Despite his belated start in cinema, Beyzaie is often considered a pioneer of a generation of filmmakers whose works are sometimes described as the Iranian New Wave.

His artistic vision seamlessly intertwined Persian mythology, epic literature, particu-



larly Ferdowsi's Shahnameh, and modern social issues, establishing him as a pioneering force in Iran's cultural renaissance.

His "Bashu, the Little Stranger" (1986) was voted "Best Iranian Film of all time" in November 1999 by Persian movie magazine Picture World poll of 150 Iranian critics and professionals.

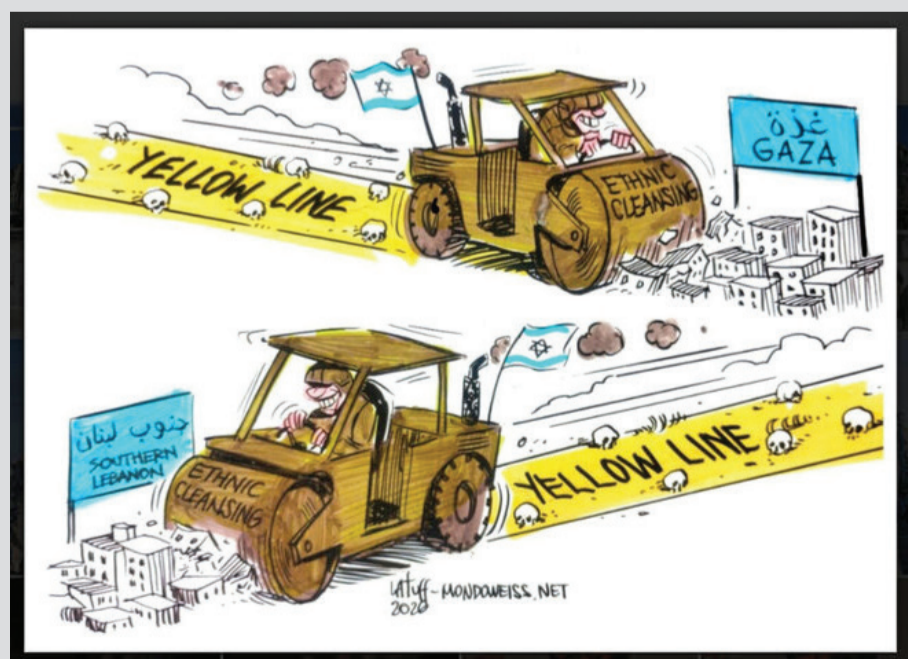
Other notable works by Beyzaie include "Downpour" (1972), "The Stranger and the Fog" (1974), "Ballad of Tara" (1979), "Maybe Some Other Time" (1988), "Travelers" (1992), and "Killing Mad Dogs" (2001).

Beyzaie has over 50 published plays. These works have occasionally appeared in French, English, German, and other languages.

Relocating to the United States in 2010, Beyzaie continued to nurture Iranian cultural traditions through his academic endeavors at Stanford University, where he introduced students and audiences worldwide to Persian theater, cinema, and mythology. His teaching and research kept alive the rich heritage of Iran's artistic history, even as he remained actively engaged in his creative pursuits until the final years of his life.

Labkhand Theater Complex is located at No. 417, Taleqani Street, between Naderi and Vesal-e Shirazi streets.

Cartoon of Day



Yellow Line
Cartoonist: Carlos Latuff from Brazil

Tehran's largest mural unveiled to honor Martyred Leader, national solidarity

TEHRAN– A new massive mural was unveiled on Sunday at the intersection of Jomhuri and Valiasr avenues, featuring a depiction of the Martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

The artwork, designed by prominent artist Danial Farrokh, showcases the clenched fist of the Martyred Leader alongside the raised fists of people from all walks of life.

The imagery serves as a powerful symbol of national solidarity, resilience, and the ultimate victory of the Iranian nation.

The unveiling comes as the JANFADA (Ready to Sacrifice Life) grassroots campaign, reaches a historic milestone. According to reports, over 31 million Iranians have joined the movement, demonstrating an unprecedented wave of national unity and public devotion to the ideals of the Revolution.

A central element of the mural is the Quranic verse: "And victory comes only from Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise," emphasizing the spiritual foundation of the nation's perseverance.

Measuring 63.5 meters in length and 14 meters in height, the piece is recognized as the largest mural in Iran. It stands as a testament to the enduring bond between the people and their leadership, particularly following the martyrdom of Ayatollah Khamenei, which has sparked a renewed sense of revolutionary fervor across the country.

The JANFADA campaign has emerged as a remarkable symbol of social solidarity in Iran. Initiated on March 29 as a spontaneous expression of public commitment to defend the nation amidst heightened tensions following the US-Israeli threats, it rapidly gained traction far be-



yond expectations. With over 31 million volunteers aged 12 to 60 now registered, the campaign demonstrates the overwhelming readiness of Iranian citizens to safeguard their homeland. Notably, more than 60 percent of participants are women, reflecting their significant and pioneering role in the country's social and civic spheres.

Beyond its numerical success, JANFADA serves as a potent instrument for projecting a true image of Iran to the world. By mobilizing citizens in a collective act of solidarity, the campaign counters decades of distorted narratives propagated by external actors. According to campaign spokesperson Sasan Zare, JANFADA is more than a social movement; it is a concrete expression of Iranian identity, shaped by Islamic and Shiite teachings, and a reflection of the nation's enduring principles during critical historical moments. The campaign highlights the dynamism and constructive-

ness of Iranian society, demonstrating that the people remain resilient in the face of economic, security, and psychological pressures.

JANFADA embodies the spirit of national perseverance and readiness to protect Iran's sovereignty and rights on both domestic and international fronts. It underscores that the Iranian populace continues to prioritize collective responsibility and steadfastness over adversity. In doing so, the movement not only strengthens internal cohesion but also conveys a powerful message globally: that Iran's citizens, unified by faith and patriotic commitment, are prepared to confront challenges with courage, resilience, and unwavering dedication to their homeland.

Following the coordinated US-Israeli attack on February 28, which targeted key national facilities in Iran, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, was martyred. Ayatollah Mojtaba Khame-

nei has since been appointed as the new Leader by the Assembly of Experts.

Having served for decades as the preeminent symbol of resistance against global hegemony, his loss in a targeted US strike sparked a wave of unprecedented grief and spiritual awakening across the Islamic world. Far from demoralizing the public, his martyrdom has been viewed by millions as the ultimate sacrifice for the country's sovereignty, further delegitimizing the actions of the aggressors and solidifying the national identity around the principles of steadfastness.

This transition of leadership has acted as a catalyst for national mobilization. The Iranian people have transformed their collective mourning into a powerful movement of national resolve, signaling to the international community that the revolutionary framework remains unshakable.

Luke Harding's "Shadow State" published in Persian

TEHRAN – The Persian translation of the book "Shadow State: Murder, Mayhem, and Russia's Remaking of the West" written by Luke Harding has been released in the Iranian book market.

Abdolhamid Bayati has translated the book that has been brought out in 304 pages, Mehr reported.

The book is a thrilling account of how Russia is waging a hidden war against America and the West, using espionage, corruption, fake news, and KGB-style murder.

In March 2018, two Russian assassins arrive in a provincial English city to kill a former officer from Russia's GRU intelligence agency. His crime? Passing secrets to British spies. The poison? A lethal nerve agent, Novichok. The attempted execution was a reminder – as if one were needed – of Russia's contempt for international norms. The Soviet Union and its doctrine are long gone, but the playbook used by the Kremlin's spies during that long confrontation with the West is back. And the underlying goal remains the same: to undermine democracy and exploit divisions within American and European society and politics.

Moscow's support for Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election has grown into the biggest political scandal of modern times. Its American players are well-known. In "Shadow State," award-winning journalist and bestselling author Luke Harding reveals the Russians behind the story: the spies, hackers and internet trolls.

Harding charts how the Kremlin has updated Communist-era methods of influence and propaganda for the age of Facebook and Twitter, and considers the compelling question of our age: what exactly does Vladimir Putin have on President Trump?

Similar to those of the Cold War, Putin's ambitions are truly global. His emissaries include oligarchs, bankers, lawyers, mercenaries, and agents of influence. They roam from Salisbury to Helsinki, Ukraine to Central Africa, London to Washington, D.C.

"Shadow State" is the singular account of how the Kremlin seeks to reshape the world, to divide the US from its European friends, and to remake America in its own dark and kleptocratic image.



Luke Harding, 58, is a British journalist who is a foreign correspondent for The Guardian. He is known for his coverage of Russia under Vladimir Putin, WikiLeaks, and Edward Snowden.

He was based in Russia for The Guardian as their Moscow bureau chief from 2007 until, returning from a trip out of the country in 2011, he was refused re-entry to Russia and deported the same day.

His 2011 book "Mafia State" discusses his experience in Russia and the political system under Vladimir Putin. His subsequent books include "Wikileaks: Inside Julian Assange's War on Secrecy" and "The Snowden Files".

Gaza artists paint solidarity mural for flotilla attacked by Israel in international waters

Palestinian artists have painted a mural at Gaza's seaport expressing solidarity with the Global Sumud Flotilla and condemning the Israeli attack on the humanitarian mission in international waters. The artwork features flags of several countries alongside images of large ships navigating open waters.

Along the dock of Gaza's seaport, facing waters long marked by blockade and hardship, Palestinian artists have painted a mural rich in symbolism and defiance, expressing solidarity with the Global Sumud Flotilla and condemning the Israeli attack that targeted the humanitarian mission in international waters. The artwork, created Sunday, goes beyond color on a wall. It stands as a collective

outcry by visual artists who transformed their brushes into tools of resistance.

On April 26, the "Spring Mission 2026" of the Global Sumud Flotilla set sail from the Italian island of Sicily, aiming to break the Israeli blockade on Gaza and deliver humanitarian aid. However, Israeli forces launched an attack Wednesday evening in international waters off the Greek island of Crete, targeting boats carrying activists. Israeli forces detained 20 Turkish nationals and more than 170 other activists.

"The mural aims to document Israeli crimes in Gaza, including genocide, starvation, displacement, killing and destruction, as well as the attack on the flotilla," Palestinian artist Aya Juha said.

"Art is an important tool for documenting these crimes. It is also a way to reach the outside world and convey Gaza's suffering." Artist Abdullah Abu al-Qambaz said the mural expresses solidarity with the flotilla that had been expected to reach Gaza, voicing hope that more ships would follow.

Since 2007, Israel has imposed an illegal blockade on Gaza, a situation that has led to severe humanitarian consequences for the region's population. The blockade has significantly restricted the flow of essential goods, creating a dire living situation for the nearly 2 million residents of Gaza. The ongoing conflict escalated dramatically in October 2023, when hostilities intensified, resulting in the destruction of thousands

of homes and displacing approximately 1.5 million Palestinians. The war has claimed the lives of more than 72,000 individuals, with countless others injured, traumatized, or missing.

The destruction of infrastructure has been catastrophic, with reports indicating that around 90 percent of Gaza's essential facilities—such as hospitals, schools, and water treatment plants—have been severely damaged or completely destroyed. Despite a ceasefire declared on October 10, Israeli airstrikes have continued sporadically, further exacerbating the already dire humanitarian crisis. The blockade remains in place, severely limiting the entry of food, medicine, and materials necessary for rebuilding efforts.