



‘Project Freedom’ Runs Aground in Hormuz Strait

President Trump pauses the US maritime operation aimed at breaking Iran’s control of the strategic waterway, in a move seen as an attempt to gloss over strategic setbacks

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A Tehran billboard shows the Strait of Hormuz sealing President Donald Trump’s lips.

Iranian president discusses regional peace with Iraqi, French leaders in calls

TEHRAN – Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian held separate telephone conversations with Iraq’s Prime Minister-designate and France’s President emphasizing Tehran’s readiness for dialogue to resolve regional disputes while expressing deep distrust toward the United States over its hostile actions during past negotiations.

In a telephone conversation with Iraq’s Prime Minister-designate Ali Falihi al-Zaidi late on Tuesday, President Masoud Pezeshkian reaffirmed Tehran’s readiness to resolve regional disputes through dialogue, describing the Iraqi nation not merely as a neighbor but as a “brother.” ▶ Page 2

War on Iran triggers geopolitical earthquake; hitting neighbors, poor nations hardest

TEHRAN – The war launched by the United States and Israel against Iran has not only targeted Tehran. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz, the world’s main energy artery, is now putting immense pressure on numerous countries, with Iran’s neighbors and poor Asian nations emerging as the biggest victims.

Foreign Policy magazine has described the recent war with Iran as a “geopolitical earthquake” — an earthquake whose strategic consequences will affect both the United States and the entire world for years to come. ▶ Page 4

Iran submits 35 war crime files against US, Israel at intl. bodies

TEHRAN – The International Criminal Court (ICC) has officially registered and accepted 35 dossiers documenting violations of international humanitarian law committed during the 40-day imposed war launched by the United States and Israel against Iran on February 28, 2026, the head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) announced.

Speaking at a press conference on Wednesday, Pirhossein Koulivand described the ICC’s acceptance as a major legal breakthrough for Iran. The 35 documents detail systematic breaches of humanitarian law, including direct attacks on medical facilities, Red Crescent relief workers, and civilian infrastructure during the brief but intense conflict.

Koulivand revealed that following Iran’s 20th formal communication to the ICC prosecutor’s office, the prosecutor explicitly declared that no entity named “Israel” is recognized by the court in this context. ▶ Page 7

The death of Washington’s Dimona omertà and the return of JFK’s ghost

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — For more than half a century, Washington played its part in a carefully staged omission: Israel’s nuclear weapons were never to be officially named. On May 4, it became obvious that the script has been torn up.

A cohort of 30 House Democrats, led by Representative Joaquin Castro, sent Secretary of State Marco Rubio a letter that does what no congressional faction has ever dared.

It demands the Trump administration publicly acknowledge Israel’s undeclared nuclear arsenal and deliver a detailed accounting of its warheads, its plutonium production at Dimona, its delivery systems, and the red lines that could trigger their use. The lawmakers gave Rubio until May 18.

The end of a political taboo

Avner Cohen, who has spent decades documenting Israel’s nuclear history, saw the shift clearly.

Why should Lebanon’s president avoid meeting Netanyahu?

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Lebanese President Joseph Aoun has said it is “not appropriate” to meet Israeli regime Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at this time, amid mounting pressure from Washington to hold direct talks.

President Aoun’s remarks are justified as the Zionist regime continues occupying Lebanese territory, demolishing villages, and killing civilians.

In the latest bid to pressure the Lebanese President, a statement from the U.S. embassy in Beirut has encouraged Aoun to accept an invitation from U.S. President Donald Trump to meet Netanyahu at the White House this month.

But should President Aoun meet Netanyahu at all? The cost of the image that Trump is seeking, a three-way photo with Netanyahu, and the losses it would entail far outweigh any imagined benefit. This cost exceeds what both the President of the Republic and the Lebanese state can bear politically and nationally.

American military hegemony begins to look increasingly hollow: analysis

TEHRAN – In a commentary published on May 3, Statecraft analyzed how Donald Trump’s war on Iran is exposing limits to American power.

The commentary came three days after Axios, quoting two U.S. officials and two other sources, reported that the U.S. and Iran are closing in on a one-page memo to end the war.

In its commentary, Statecraft also said the war on Iran suggested that “military primacy” by the U.S. “may no longer even be a viable one”.

It also reminded that the Iran war should serve as a wake-up call for countries that “largely depend on U.S. protection” for their security.

Senior political analysts have been warning that security cannot be “bought”.

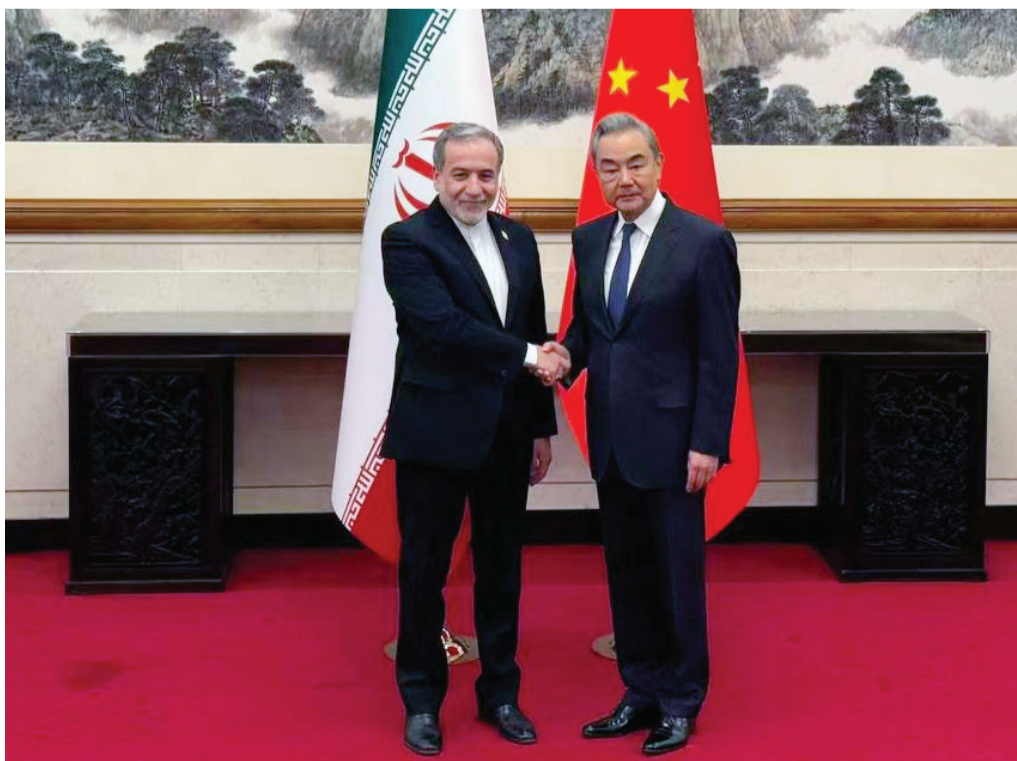
For example, in September 2019, Iran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif called on the Saudis to set aside the “illusion” that they can buy security.

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Beijing defies Washington, blocks Iran oil sanctions in landmark move

TEHRAN – In a stunning diplomatic escalation days before a planned visit by Donald Trump, China has officially nullified American sanctions against buyers of Iranian crude oil, declaring that Washington’s unilateral measures hold “no enforcement value” on Chinese soil.

The Chinese Ministry of Commerce issued an official decree on Saturday blocking US sanctions against five private oil refineries known as “Teapots,” including Hengli Petrochemical and four other units in Shandong Province. Washington had accused these refineries of purchasing Iranian crude in violation of US sanctions. Beijing, however, described the American penalties as “without legal justification” and prohibited their implementation. ▶ Page 4



FM Araghchi in Beijing; China reaffirms support for Iran ahead of Trump trip

TEHRAN – Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi’s visit to China has underscored strategic relations between Tehran and Beijing amid the East Asian nation’s efforts to restore stability to the Middle East in the wake of US military adventurism in the region.

The top Iranian diplomat met senior Chinese officials, including his counterpart Wang Yi, in Beijing on Wednesday. Wang described China as a trustworthy strategic partner to Iran, expressing his country’s readiness to deepen political mutual trust, expand high-level exchanges, and advance practical cooperation across various fields. ▶ Page 2

What I witnessed in Iran challenges dominant Western narratives: American journalist

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TEHRAN PAPERS

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

A high wall of distrust between Iran and the United States

Etemad wrote that negotiations have reached a dead end because of deep mistrust between Iran and the US. According to the article, the wall of distrust, combined with the complexity of the disputed issues, has prevented the two countries from reaching a comprehensive agreement in a short time. The piece argues that the US president should stop repeating past strategic mistakes and, to preserve his political life and credibility, give diplomacy a real chance and create conditions for a genuine agreement. While Iran insists on guarantees for its own security and an end to the regional war, the American side continues to seek additional assurances from Iran. However, some observers believe that Iran's proposal carries significant strategic importance. Especially considering recent developments in Iran-Pakistan relations, this proposal could be an effective step toward stability and economic and trade cooperation in the region.

Javan: A project of unrest after failure against Iran

Javan commented on Donald Trump's interview in which he spoke about arming opposition groups. According to the article, American officials are once again emphasizing arming such groups and ultimately creating unrest and civil conflict. In the interview, Trump said: "The people of Iran must have guns. I think they are getting guns, and when they have guns, they will fight as well as anyone else." The article interprets these remarks in two ways: they reflect an admission of US failure in its confrontation with Iran. They show the enemy's open attempt to create insecurity by exploiting economic difficulties. The article claims that since the US strategy has shifted from 'changing the government in Iran' to 'freeing commercial ships in the Strait of Hormuz,' Trump's comments about arming Iranians should be understood as a sign of failure and a return to a supervisory/supporting approach. This tactical shift, it argues, is an attempt to redirect the conflict through other channels and conceal the lack of achievements.

Farhikhtegan: America is seeking more mediation through other countries

Farhikhtegan wrote that despite the US's public posture of toughness, members of the American negotiating team have secretly sought mediation not only through Pakistan but also through several other countries in recent days. According to the article, this reflects a familiar pattern: the US tries to maintain a strong image publicly while privately acknowledging that no

Iran accuses the West of 'economic terrorism'

TEHRAN—A senior Iranian human rights official has sharply criticized Western governments, accusing them of waging "economic terrorism" against Iran.

In an interview addressing the wave of unrest that began on December 25, 2025, in Tehran, the secretary of Iran's High Council for Human Rights, Nasser Seraj, portrayed the disturbances not as organic protests but as part of a broader "destabilization project" supported from abroad.

According to Seraj, Western sanctions—particularly efforts to reimpose them—have had consequences that extend far beyond economic hardship. He argued that such measures amount to collective punishment, disproportionately affecting ordinary citizens by restricting access to essential goods, including medicine and medical equipment. Framing the issue in legal terms, he said these actions violate internationally recognized rights, including the right to life, health, and security.

Seraj further stated that the economic strain imposed by sanctions was deliberately designed to fuel public dissatisfaction, creating conditions that could later be leveraged to incite unrest. He added that some Western actors then characterize the resulting turmoil as legitimate protest

military option capable of rescuing it exists. Any such action, the article claims, would only worsen its problems, as seen in recent days. The article states that Iran is prepared for any scenario; it does not believe the US attempts at mediation, and nations no longer fear American threats. The piece concludes that the US has only one path forward: to accept defeat sooner and avoid increasing its own costs.

Resalat: The United States is still unsuccessful in the Strait of Hormuz

Resalat analyzed what it described as US failures in the Strait of Hormuz. According to the article, security experts believe that America's recent behavior in the Strait fits within the pattern of maximum pressure and regional power projection. At the same time, it shows that Washington still lacks the capability and the courage to confront Iran's armed forces directly. The experience of recent decades—especially the 40-day conflicts and Iran's calculated actions in the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf—has demonstrated that any attempt at pressure or intimidation only imposes high costs on the opposing side and usually ends in failure and retreat. While some American analysts had emphasized the possibility of a limited, symbolic confrontation, recent developments showed that Iran is not only prepared for decisive military action but also possesses the ability to fully manage and secure the region.

Hamshahri: China's unprecedented disregard for US sanctions against Iran

According to Hamshahri, China—unlike in the past, when it tried to bypass US sanctions informally or through intermediaries—now openly and officially declares that it does not recognize unilateral US sanctions against third countries (such as Iran or Russia). It has also expanded trade with these countries to an unprecedented level. The article argues that sanctioning major Chinese banks could trigger a massive shock in global financial markets and cause the collapse of global supply chains. Beijing's move is no longer just commercial competition; it has become a 'financial cold war' aimed at ending the dominance of the dollar. The world, the article claims, has reached a point where America's sanctioning power is facing its most serious challenge since World War II. If Washington backs down, the tool of sanctions will be permanently weakened; if it responds harshly, it risks a complete rupture in the global economy.

movements, thereby advancing political objectives under the guise of supporting civil rights.

Iranian officials have also pointed to evidence of foreign involvement in the unrest in December, including weapons being supplied to armed groups. Seraj noted that such actions, if substantiated, would constitute interference in Iran's internal affairs and potentially rise to the level of crimes under international law.

The official was particularly critical of "double standards" in Western human rights discourse. He suggested that if Western governments were genuinely committed to human rights, they would focus more attention on issues such as civilian casualties in Gaza or conditions in detention facilities like Guantanamo Bay.

Iranian authorities say that the unrest resulted in more than 3,000 deaths, including civilians, security personnel, and public service workers, and involved attacks on banks, telecommunications centers, and energy infrastructure. Western media coverage describing the events as economic protests, Seraj argued, 'overlooks organized violence against the state.'

Iranian president discusses regional peace with Iraqi, French leaders in calls

From page 1 ▶ President Pezeshkian stated that Iran seeks no conflict with its neighbors and is fully prepared to reach understandings with regional Muslim countries, establish common regulations, and settle all disagreements—whether in the Persian Gulf or elsewhere in the region—through peaceful negotiations. He emphasized that such an approach would eliminate the grounds for war and instability, paving the way for lasting regional stability and cooperation.

The Iranian president also reiterated Tehran's commitment to supporting Baghdad and strengthening bilateral ties based on mutual respect and understanding. He invited al-Zaidi to Tehran for his first official visit to finalize agreements and expand cooperation.

Pezeshkian criticized Washington's "contradictory approach" of pursuing both a "maximum pressure" campaign, and calls for negotiations. He stressed that Iran would never surrender to unilateral demands or coercion. He further emphasized that Iran's nuclear program is exclusively



for peaceful purposes and that Tehran has no intention of pursuing nuclear weapons, citing the religious decree (fatwa) prohibiting such arms. However, he made it clear that Iran will not abandon its scientific and technological achievements under pressure.

"The followers of the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) household cannot be forced into submission through pressure or force," the president said, calling on the US to halt its threatening approach, particularly those stemming from American military bases deployed across the region.

For his part, Prime Minister-

designate al-Zaidi described Iran and Iraq as "two bodies with one soul" and pledged to elevate cooperation across economic, political, and security fields. He called Iran Iraq's "strategic depth" and praised the Islamic Republic's strength, particularly in the fight against ISIL, as an important pillar for the Muslim world.

Al-Zaidi also expressed Iraq's readiness to host negotiations between Iran and the United States to end tensions, describing such mediation as both a religious and political responsibility. He emphasized that disputes must ultimately

be resolved through dialogue because continued conflict cannot endure indefinitely.

In a separate conversation on Wednesday evening, President Pezeshkian also spoke with French President Emmanuel Macron. During the talk, the two sides reviewed the strategic situation in the region—particularly the Strait of Hormuz and the status of the initial ceasefire agreement and negotiations between the Islamic Republic and the United States—exchanging their views and assessments.

Referring to Iran's distrust of the United States, Pezeshkian made it clear that this distrust stems from hostile actions by the American side, the most recent examples of which include two attacks on Iran while negotiations were underway—acts that he said effectively amount to backstabbing.

Pezeshkian also emphasized that the Islamic Republic, operating within the framework of international laws and regulations, is ready to seriously pursue diplomatic channels to end the war while insisting on securing the rights of the Iranian nation.

FM Araghchi in Beijing; China reaffirms support for Iran ahead of Trump trip

From page 1 ▶ He affirmed Iran's legitimate right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The top diplomat also noted that China supports Iran in safeguarding its national sovereignty and security.

Wang denounces 'illegitimate' war

Wang condemned as "illegitimate" the war that the US and Israel launched against Iran on February 28. A ceasefire on April 8 has paused the conflict, but tensions continue amid the US naval blockade of Iranian ports and Iran's full control over the Strait of Hormuz. Iran says it will reopen the strait when the war comes to a permanent end.

The Chinese foreign minister called for an immediate end to the fighting and warned against any resumption of conflict. He urged Persian Gulf countries to take their future into their own hands, encouraging dialogue between Iran and its neighbors to foster good relations.

Wang added that China is willing to continue playing a constructive role in de-escalating tensions, facilitating peace talks, and helping restore stability in the Middle East.

Iran protects 'legitimate rights'

Araghchi, for his part, briefed Wang on the latest developments in Iran-US talks. He described the war against Iran as "a blatant act of aggression and a flagrant violation of international law." Araghchi said Tehran will do its "utmost to protect its legitimate rights and interests in negotiations" with the US and will only accept "a fair and comprehensive agreement."

He said political crises cannot be resolved through military means. The top Iranian diplomat stressed that Iran will firmly safeguard its sovereignty and national dignity while pursuing a comprehensive and lasting solution through dialogue.

Araghchi stressed that Iran trusts China and hopes Beijing will continue to contribute to peace efforts while supporting the creation of a new regional framework that balances development and security.

The Iranian foreign minister also reaffirmed Iran's comprehensive strategic partnership with China. He called for closer exchanges and deeper cooperation to mark the 55th anniversary of diplomatic

ties, as well as enhanced coordination in multilateral affairs.

Araghchi pointed out that Tehran adheres to the one-China principle and supports China in safeguarding its core interests.

Araghchi's visit to China comes ahead of a planned visit by President Donald Trump to Beijing for a high-profile summit on May 14–15 with Chinese President Xi Jinping. The trip would be Trump's first to China during his second term and the first by a US president since his 2017 visit.

Iran-Saudi ties

On Wednesday, Iran's foreign minister also held a phone call with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan. They discussed the latest regional developments and efforts to maintain security and stability in the region.

Riyadh has called for dialogue to preserve regional stability. In response to the war that the US and Israel launched against Iran, Iranian armed forces carried out retaliatory strikes against Israel and US bases in the Persian Gulf region. Iran says the US presence in the region is the source of instability in West Asia.

Qalibaf: US naval blockade aims to fracture Iran's national unity

TEHRAN - Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf has warned that the United States is trying to drive a wedge within Iranian society through its naval blockade of Iranian ports.

"The enemy seeks to exert economic pressure and spread media propaganda through its naval blockade and attempts to undermine national unity to force us into surrender," Qalibaf said in an audio message on Wednesday.

The US imposed a naval blockade on Iran on April 13 after



Pakistani-led talks in Islamabad between Tehran and Washington ended without a breakthrough. The negotiations followed a ceasefire that paused the joint US-Israeli war launched against Iran on February 28.

President Donald Trump

has threatened to resume the war on Iran if Tehran does not reach a deal that meets his demands. Qalibaf stressed that the Iranian nation will never yield to pressure and said that a new war, particularly "terrorist attacks," cannot be ruled out.

He said Iran is engaged in one of the most significant conflicts in its contemporary history. The parliament speaker added, "A final victory in this war would transform Iran into an influential player in the international system, paving the way for the country's progress."

Qalibaf urged the nation to spare no effort in boosting national cohesion and solidarity.

Late last month, Qalibaf released another audio message in which he said the Iranian nation has foiled US-Israeli plots since the outset of the war on February 28. He said the US sought to push Iran toward a "Venezuela-style" scenario, but that plan fell flat. He added that the US also attempted to activate separatist groups and send arms, but Iranian military and intelligence bodies nipped those efforts in the bud.

Iran-US confrontation: Illusions, threats, and a possible way out

TEHRAN- A new analysis by Mel Gurtov, professor emeritus at Portland State University, warns that Donald Trump's assumptions about the war with Iran have all proven wrong. Despite a naval blockade, Iran's economy has bent but not broken. Tehran retains control over the Strait of Hormuz and maintains its drone and missile capabilities for retaliation.

While Trump claims a ceasefire deal is near, the reality points to escalating confrontation. The US has seized an Iranian-flagged cargo ship in the Strait, has blocked some vessels from Iranian ports, and Trump has threatened to target "every single power plant and bridge" in Iran. US officials have

justified attacks on civilian infrastructure as "co-mingled" with military use, dismissing war crime concerns. Meanwhile, Iran has closed the Strait again and accused Washington of piracy.

Gurtov describes Trump's recent statements as "crazy talk, detached from reality." Iran has denied any such agreement. The key obstacles remain: the US blockade, Iran's closure of the Strait, and the future of enriched uranium. A realistic path, Gurtov argues, would mirror the 2015 nuclear deal: Iran limits enrichment to 3.67% and accepts inspections, while the US gradually lifts sanctions and ends the blockade.

Such an agreement, the analysis



concludes, would merely restore the pre-war status quo — proving Trump's war was needless, a terrible sacrifice of lives and economy. The author questions whether Trump can swallow his ego and acknowledge Obama's diplomatic success.

'Project Freedom' runs aground in Hormuz Strait

President Trump pauses the US maritime operation aimed at breaking Iran's control of the strategic waterway, in a move seen as an attempt to gloss over strategic setbacks

By staff writer

TEHRAN - President Donald Trump's decision to pause the so-called "Project Freedom" lays bare his desperation to open the Strait of Hormuz through military force.

Trump announced on social media that he would put the mission on hold amid his attempts to create a fabricated sense of victory in the context of the joint war that the US and Israel launched against Iran on February 28.

"Based on the request of Pakistan and other Countries, the tremendous Military Success that we have had during the Campaign against the Country of Iran and, additionally, the fact that Great Progress has been made toward a Complete and Final Agreement with Representatives of Iran, we have mutually agreed that, while the Blockade will remain in full force and effect, Project Freedom (The Movement of Ships through the Strait of Hormuz) will be paused for a short period of time to see whether or not the Agreement can be finalized and signed," Trump posted on Truth Social on Tuesday.

Trump announced the new initiative on Sunday to help guide ships stranded by Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

On Monday, Iran's military said it fired at US warships to deter them from navigating the Strait of Hormuz. Iran also dismissed US claims that the so-called "Project Freedom" oversaw the transit of two commercial vessels out of the Strait on Monday.

US Central Command (CENTCOM) commenced Operation Epic Fury at Trump's direction on February 28.



After 39 days of war, Washington failed to achieve its main objectives, which mainly included destroying Iran's military capabilities and reshaping the Iranian leadership in its favor.

The April 8 ceasefire between Tehran and Washington was expected to last for two weeks, but Trump indefinitely extended it on April 21. The US also imposed a naval blockade on Iran after Pakistani-mediated talks between Iranian and American representatives failed in Islamabad following the announcement of the ceasefire.

Iran asserted full control of the Strait of Hormuz in response to the US-Israel aggression at the beginning of the war. It has allowed only vessels with its permission to pass through. Reports suggest that more than 20,000 sailors aboard around 1,600 vessels are trapped in the region.

The restriction of shipping through the Strait has led to surging oil and gas prices and higher costs of other commodities around the

world, which could persist, especially as Iran wants to continue managing the Strait after the war. American consumers feel the pinch of the closure of the waterway as average US fuel prices hover around \$4.50 a gallon, their highest level in four years.

Besides, the repercussions of the war with Iran have backfired on Trump and his supporters. 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.

Democrats accuse Trump of plunging the US into the quagmire of war, as media experts accuse him of making miscalculations and underestimating Iran's military power and resilience.

According to a Washington Post analysis of satellite imagery, Iranian retaliatory airstrikes have damaged or destroyed at least 228 structures or pieces of equipment at US military sites across the Middle East since the war began more than two months

ago, hitting hangars, barracks, fuel depots, aircraft, and key radar, communications, and air defense equipment. The analysis said the amount of destruction is far larger than what has been publicly acknowledged by the US government or previously reported.

More importantly, world leaders have snubbed Trump's call to join his war efforts. In a blow to the White House, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz suggested that Washington appears to lack a clear strategy and questioned what kind of exit plan the US administration might pursue. Merz has said the US has been "humiliated" by the Iranian leadership.

On Tuesday, Secretary of State Marco Rubio declared that Operation Epic Fury had concluded. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth said the US had now shifted to a "defensive" position aimed at restoring shipping through the Strait of Hormuz.

On Monday, Trump had said Iran would be "blown off the face of the Earth" if it attacked US ships, echoing his earlier threats to wipe out a "whole civilization" if Iran did not open the Strait.

But comments made by his war and defense secretaries and the pause in "Project Freedom" tell a different story.

The Trump administration has realized that it cannot force Iran to surrender via military means. But Trump maintains his threats to create the perception that the US has the upper hand. Such positions are only aimed at domestic audiences to find an off-ramp and a face-saving exit from the quagmire of war with Iran.

What I witnessed in Iran challenges dominant Western narratives: American journalist

Christopher Helali details destruction sites, civilian response, and strategic locations, including Isfahan airstrip and Strait of Hormuz

TEHRAN - Christopher Helali, an American journalist, political analyst, and activist known for his coverage of international conflicts and U.S. foreign policy, has said that his recent field visit to Iran "fundamentally challenges dominant Western narratives" about the country, following his participation in a delegation of international journalists touring areas affected by the Israeli-U.S. attacks.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, Helali reflected on his observations from multiple sites across Iran, including universities, medical centers, civilian infrastructure, and strategic maritime zones. He said the scale of destruction he witnessed at locations such as Shahid Beheshti University, Sharif University, the Pasteur

Institute, and Gandhi Hospital was "unbelievable," adding that entire facilities had been "completely destroyed."

Helali argued that the targeting of scientific and medical infrastructure carries serious humanitarian consequences, noting that institutions involved in vaccines, fertility treatment, and education were among those affected. "What stands out is the brutality of the aggression against civilian life," he said.

At the same time, Helali emphasized what he described as strong social cohesion and resilience among Iranian citizens. He said that despite the attacks, he observed no signs of social breakdown, but rather widespread mutual assistance and solidarity. "People were helping each other. There was

no chaos or looting—there was unity under pressure," he said.

The American journalist also confirmed that he met with survivors and families of victims, including those affected by a school-related strike in Minab. He recounted emotional testimonies from individuals who lost family members while attempting to rescue them during the attack. Helali described the incident as deeply traumatic, stating that civilians—including children and teachers—were among the victims. He also referred to other bombing sites in Tehran and Isfahan, saying survivors were "overwhelmed by the intensity of the violence."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

LATETS NEWS

ani says Iran's Foreign Ministry is actively pursuing diplomatic negotiations to achieve honorable and sustainable peace in the region. She cited Foreign Minister Araghchi's visit to China as part of this effort, stressing national unity and adherence to the Leader's guidelines.

■ **Iran UN mission: Only viable solution in Hormuz is permanent end to war, lifting of naval blockade**

Iran's mission to the United Nations has announced that the only viable solution to the current situation in the Strait of Hormuz is a permanent end to the war and the lifting of the naval blockade.

In a statement, the Iranian mission emphasized that Washington is pushing a flawed draft resolution with political motives, using the pretext of freedom of navigation to serve its own agenda.

■ **All ships must secure Iran's permission to pass through Hormuz: MP**

Iranian lawmaker Esmail Kowsari has declared that all vessels seeking passage through the Strait of Hormuz must obtain prior authorization from Iran's armed forces. He dismissed US President Trump's threats as "baseless statements" and psychological warfare, stating that Washington and Israel lack the courage to face casualties. Kowsari added that an 11-article plan for managing the strait will soon be approved by Parliament.

■ **Prof. Jeffrey Sachs: A US military base means no sovereignty**

Renowned economist Professor Jeffrey Sachs

has stated that any country hosting a US military base cannot be considered truly sovereign. "If you have a US military base, you're not a sovereign country," Sachs said, highlighting concerns over the erosion of national independence in the face of American military presence worldwide.

■ **World Bank: Hormuz traffic not to normalize until late 2026**

The World Bank has predicted that transit through the Strait of Hormuz will not return to pre-conflict levels until late 2026 following US-Israeli aggression against Iran. The bank also forecast a 24 percent rise in energy prices this year, the highest since 2022. The strait, handling 35 percent of global seaborne crude oil, was closed by Iran in retaliation for airstrikes that martyred Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on February 28.

■ **Iran embassy rejects UK's anti-Semitism accusations as baseless**

Iran's embassy in the UK has strongly rejected Prime Minister Keir Starmer's allegations that Tehran is encouraging anti-Semitism in Britain. In a statement, the embassy called the accusations "baseless" and emphasized that Iran, guided by Islamic principles, categorically rejects all forms of anti-Semitism. The embassy noted that Iran's Jewish minority enjoys full rights and was also affected by US-Israeli aggression, citing a synagogue destroyed in Tehran during American and Israeli bombings. The embassy urged British authorities to act responsibly and avoid hasty, politically motivated attributions.

SPORTS

Lech Poznan reluctant to extend Gholizadeh's deal

TEHRAN - After it was confirmed that Lech Poznan's Iranian winger Ali Gholizadeh will be sidelined for at least eight months due to an ACL tear, several Polish outlets are now reporting that the club have decided not to extend a new one-year contract with the player, raising the possibility that he may return to Iran next season.

The negotiations between Lech Poznan and Gholizadeh had progressed prior to his injury, with the club presenting a one-year offer. However, following the ACL diagnosis, the club have reportedly pulled back from extending his stay in Poland.

The Polish website Transfery reported that the Iranian international will leave the club at the end of the season, on June 30, 2026.

The 30-year-old winger had long justified the nearly €2 million transfer fee paid for him. Despite missing time earlier in the season, he still produced five goals and four assists in 14 matches, but even those numbers were not enough to secure him a renewal, with the club steering him toward the exit.

TVP Sport also confirmed that Lech Poznan's management has decided not to offer him a contract extension, meaning the player will depart once his current deal expires on June 30, 2026.

Meanwhile, several Polish outlets—including the local edition of Goal—claim that Gholizadeh has serious offers from Iranian clubs, making a return to the Persian Gulf Pro League.

Lech Poznan have reportedly granted Gholizadeh full freedom to choose where he will undergo his surgery, while assuring him of the club's full support and willingness to provide any assistance needed during his rehabilitation.

Iran's U23 team in limbo as Asian Games approach

TEHRAN - Iran U23 football team—traditionally known as Team Omid—find themselves in a familiar state of uncertainty just months before the 2026 Asian Games in Nagoya. Despite official assurances that the team will represent the country, a lack of clarity over their technical staff, squad composition, and preparation plans has once again raised serious concerns about the federation's long-term planning.

Recent remarks by Ali Targholizadeh, head of the Technical and Development Committee of the Football Federation, outlined broad intentions for Iran's youth teams, including the U20 and U17 sides, both of which are scheduled to compete in upcoming Asian qualifiers.

However, beyond general statements that "plans are in place," few details were provided regarding the structure, timeline, or logistics of these preparations, particularly for the U23 team.

The situation is more pressing for Team Omid. With less than four months remaining until the Asian Games start, the team still do not have a confirmed head coach, nor a finalized player pool. Historically, such last-minute decision-making has contributed to Iran's prolonged failure at the U23 level; the team have not qualified for the Olympic Games in nearly half a century and have struggled to make an impact in continental competitions.

Among the candidates to take charge, current U20 head coach Hossein Abdi has emerged as the frontrunner, with initial talks reportedly held between him and federation officials. Meanwhile, Mehdi Rahmati, head coach of Kheybar Khoramabad, has also been mentioned as a serious contender. Yet, no final decision has been made, and time continues to slip away.

Adding to the ambiguity, Mehdi Alinejad, Secretary General of the National Olympic Committee, emphasized that his organization will not intervene in the matter, placing full responsibility on the football federation.

"We expect the federation to determine the situation," he stated, underlining the urgency of resolving the issue.

As things stand, Iran U23 team remain in limbo, caught between promises of participation and a lack of actionable planning. Without swift decisions on leadership, training camps, and friendly matches, hopes of reversing decades of underachievement may once again fade before they even take shape.

Asian Para Games: Nagoya team managers hold session

TEHRAN - Team managers participating in the 2026 Asian Para Games convened for a session at the Iranian Paralympic Committee (NPC) headquarters on Tuesday.

The specialized review and quality-assurance meeting for the ongoing training camps of disciplines targeting the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Para Games was chaired by Mohammad Pouladgar, head of the delegation for the Games' 5th edition.

It was attended by representatives from the National Paralympic Committee and the managers of the national teams taking part in the Games, in the NPC meeting hall.

During the session, the current status of the following sports was assessed: Para-Archery, Para Shooting, Sitting Volleyball, Para Powerlifting, Wheelchair Basketball, Boccia, Para Table Tennis, Cycling, Blind Football, Wheelchair Fencing, Para Taekwondo, Para Athletics, and Para Swimming.

Key topics included athlete equipment requirements, improving nutrition quality, expanding the use of psychological support services and legal supplements, and participation in international competitions to secure the MQS (Minimum Qualification Standard). Particular emphasis was placed on strict compliance with the standards set by the NPC for conducting training camps.

The 5th Asian Para Games will be held from Oct. 18 to 24, 2026 in Nagoya, Japan, Aichi Prefecture, with approximately 4,000 athletes from 45 countries competing across 18 sports.

Nagoya will be the first Japanese city to host the Asian Para Games. The event is set to return to its traditional four-year cycle, after the 2022 edition was postponed to 2023 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 29 March 2022, the Asian Paralympic Committee announced that Nagoya and Aichi Prefecture, Japan will host the fifth edition of the Asian Para Games after making a visit there in 2018. The city was previously awarded the 2026 Asian Games on 26 September 2016 by the Olympic Council of Asia.

Iran seeks FIFA guarantees for World Cup participation

TEHRAN - Iran's football federation chief said Tuesday the national team is preparing to participate in the 2026 FIFA World Cup, but its presence depends on receiving firm guarantees from the governing body FIFA.

Speaking to state broadcaster IRIB, Mehdi Taj said the team plans to hold a training camp in Turkey following a short break, before heading to the tournament.

He said participation would depend on securing assurances in a planned meeting with FIFA President Gianni Infantino and Secretary-General Mattias Grafstrom to avoid issues similar to a recent incident in Canada.

Taj said Iranian officials expect guarantees that the team would not face entry restrictions or what he described as "disrespect," particularly toward Iran's state institutions.

"We have no issue with the United States. We are going to the World Cup because we qualified. Our host is FIFA, not any specific country," he said.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Ministers of industry, economy, labor emphasize urgent support for production



TEHRAN- In a joint meeting between the Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade and the Ministers of Economic Affairs and Finance, and Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare, the latest state of the country's production, the damages caused by the third imposed war, and the most significant obstacles facing the industry and production sectors were reviewed.

According to IRNA, citing the portal of the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade, during this meeting attended by Seyyed Mohammad Atabak (Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade), Seyyed Ali Madanizadeh (Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance), and Ahmad Meydari (Minister of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare), a comprehensive report on the conditions of industrial and production units was presented. Challenges in the areas of finance, insurance, and resource supply were discussed.

The Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade, emphasizing the necessity of maintaining and sustaining production, declared: "Tax and insurance supports, along with expediting the payment of bank facilities, must be prioritized in the programs of the government and relevant bodies."

He also highlighted the need to rebuild damaged units, stating: "The mechanisms for reconstruction must be designed and implemented smoothly, quickly, and without any bureaucracy within the relevant institutions to facilitate the process of returning these units to the production cycle."

Following this meeting, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, as the body responsible for financing, committed to developing and implementing action plans and support mechanisms in the form of financing tools and other facilitative methods to prevent production decline and accelerate the reconstruction of damaged units.

Madanizadeh, the Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, while appreciating the efforts of the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade, emphasized the need to formulate and complete supportive measures and ensure greater coordination among executive bodies to back the production sector, and gave his favorable promise.

Similarly, Meydari, the Minister of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare, gave his favorable promise to resolve the insurance issues of production units and facilitate related processes.

Facility payments and currency supply for industrial units

In a separate meeting between the Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade and the Governor of the Central Bank, strategies to support the country's production and industrial units were examined, with an emphasis on facilitating facility payments and currency supply.

According to the portal of the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade, in this meeting attended by Seyyed Mohammad Atabak, Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade, and Abdolnaser Hemmati, Governor of the Central Bank, a report on the needs of production units and industries for the continuity and sustainability of production was presented. Furthermore, the currency problems of these units and the necessity of financing and granting facilities were discussed.

Subsequently, the Governor of the Central Bank, emphasizing the importance of supporting the production sector, announced: Based on the introduction by the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade, the necessary facilities in rials will be paid to production units.

He also emphasized the Central Bank's readiness for greater cooperation in the field of supplying and allocating the currency needed by

production units, especially for supplying raw materials, and reported that the necessary assistance will be provided in this area.

In this meeting, the need to take effective measures to resolve the currency problems of the country's production units and industries was also emphasized, in order to provide the groundwork for the continuity of activity and growth of production.

On April 28, Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade, emphasizing that capital and facilities must be directed toward production, had stated that industrial and production units need liquidity to revive and sustain their production lines.

According to a report by IRNA from the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade, Seyyed Mohammad Atabak said in a meeting with members of the Economic Committee of the Islamic Consultative Assembly: "The priority of this ministry is to support small and medium-sized units, and these units are the driving engine of employment in the country."

Referring to a package to support industries, he emphasized: "Prioritization of industries has been carried out based on national necessities, and the allocation of credits is also based on this."

The Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade added: "These facilities must be used to keep the wheels of production turning. Therefore, a change in approach to liquidity management and credit distribution must be considered so that the industrial sector can secure raw materials for production."

Stating that without injecting large-scale liquidity and fundamentally solving the problems of the industrial sector, production units will face difficulties, he clarified: "In this regard, we need the cooperation of the Islamic Consultative Assembly and relevant institutions, including the Central Bank."

Atabak emphasized facilitating the clearance of goods and reminded: "We are pursuing the demands of the private sector in the economic committee of the Central Bank to accelerate clearance by removing obstacles."

Also on May 1, the Vice President for Rural Development and Deprived Areas of the country said that the government, by forming a National Post-War Reconstruction Headquarters, has prioritized supporting home-based, rural, and war-affected businesses.

According to an IRNA report, Abdolkarim Hosseinzadeh said: "One of the clear orders of the President is that we should be among the people; it makes no difference whether in times of peace or during war."

He added: "A notable point is that a large part of these projects were initiated by the efforts and capabilities of the villagers themselves. These plans in the fields of healthcare, sports, and administration are valuable and promising projects, and we will do our utmost to complete them."

The Vice President continued: "In this regard, the National Post-War Reconstruction Headquarters for villages, deprived areas, and nomadic tribes has been formed, and in its meetings, all rural businesses damaged by the war will be covered by government support so that the people can continue their activities with hope, resilience, and a patriotic spirit."

He emphasized in conclusion: "In these days, the people have shown that they are more pioneering than us officials in patriotism and love of the homeland, and our duty is to truly appreciate them. The visits will continue, and in the final wrap-up session, executive decisions for the counties and the reviewed projects will be made."

War on Iran triggers geopolitical earthquake; hitting neighbors, poor nations hardest

TEHRAN – The war launched by the United States and Israel against Iran has not only targeted Tehran. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz, the world's main energy artery, is now putting immense pressure on numerous countries, with Iran's neighbors and poor Asian nations emerging as the biggest victims.

Foreign Policy magazine has described the recent war with Iran as a "geopolitical earthquake" — an earthquake whose strategic consequences will affect both the United States and the entire world for years to come.

However, in the early days of this massive tremor, the primary victims are Iran's neighboring countries and the poor nations of Asia; those who had no role in



this conflict yet feel the first and heaviest blow to their pockets and daily livelihoods.

The Strait of Hormuz, through which approximately one-fifth of global oil consumption passes, has effectively been shut.

The result has been immediate and brutal. Global shipping costs have skyrocketed, and energy prices have surged, with physical oil now trading at up to double the official Brent crude rate in some Asian ports.

Nations heavily dependent on energy imports, particularly in South and East Asia, are facing a sharp rise in inflation.

The International Energy Agency estimates that between 16 and 20 million barrels of oil per day have been removed from global supply, a figure sufficient to disrupt any economic balance.

Experts warn that while Western powers may have the financial reserves to weather the storm temporarily, poorer nations lack such buffers.

For millions of ordinary people from Pakistan to Indonesia, the war is already translating into impossible fuel bills and soaring food prices, a devastating collateral damage of a conflict they did not choose.

Beijing defies Washington, blocks Iran oil sanctions in landmark move

TEHRAN – In a stunning diplomatic escalation days before a planned visit by Donald Trump, China has officially nullified American sanctions against buyers of Iranian crude oil, declaring that Washington's unilateral measures hold "no enforcement value" on Chinese soil.

The Chinese Ministry of Commerce issued an official decree on Saturday blocking US sanctions against five private oil refineries known as "Teapots," including Hengli Petrochemical and four other units in Shandong Province. Washington had accused these refineries of purchasing Iranian crude in violation of US sanctions. Beijing, however, described the American penalties as "without legal justification" and prohibited their implementation.

Citing a 2021 law passed by the State Council, China's Ministry of Commerce labeled foreign sanctions "illegitimate and unenforceable," adding that any restrictions on Chinese

companies' trade relations with third countries violate international law. In a direct challenge to US pressure, Beijing has also issued a directive stipulating that any cooperation with the US sanctions is prohibited and void.

The decree explicitly states that any identification, enforcement, or compliance with these US sanctions is forbidden on Chinese soil. According to China's Ministry of Commerce, Washington's penalties lack United Nations authorization and therefore violate international law and the fundamental principles of international relations. China's response, described as a justified defensive action, effectively constitutes a legal nullification of such extraterritorial jurisdiction. The United States has long relied on the dominance of the dollar to extend its sanctions, including secondary sanctions that punish third-party entities. Beijing is now resolutely protecting its companies against these pressures. Furthermore, Chinese authorities announced they

are preparing a "list of unreliable entities" for foreign firms that harm the legitimate rights of Chinese companies, while emphasizing that this move will not affect China's adherence to international obligations nor its protection of foreign-invested enterprises' legal interests.

The move effectively neutralizes US financial influence over one of the most sensitive nodes in the global energy supply chain.

International analysts warn that any attempt to cut Iran's oil flow to China would trigger an unprecedented global price shock.

Legal analysts note that China's 2021 law, last revised in April, allows Beijing to impose countermeasures including trade restrictions. State-run People's Daily hailed the decision as using "the strength of the rule of law to counteract the US long-arm jurisdiction." The directive places counterparties in a difficult position, risking violations of Chinese law if they comply with foreign sanctions."

Global oil stocks approaching 8-year low, depletion speed a concern: Goldman Sachs

TEHRAN – Global oil stocks are approaching their lowest level in eight years, Goldman Sachs said, warning that the speed of depletion was becoming a concern as supplies through the Strait of Hormuz remained restricted.

The ongoing geopolitical tensions in the West Asia, particularly the recent escalation involving Iran and continued disruptions to tanker traffic through the strategic waterway, have exacerbated supply-side vulnerabilities.

Market analysts note that even minor interruptions in the Strait — through which nearly 20% of global petroleum passes — could trigger sharp price volatility.

Meanwhile, major oil producers have been slow to ramp up output, and strategic reserves released earlier by consumer nations have largely been depleted.

This combination of factors has created a precarious supply balance, leaving the market highly sensitive to any further shocks.

The bank estimated total global oil stocks stood at 101 days of global demand and could fall to 98 days by the end of May. Such a decline, if realized, would mark the lowest stock-to-demand ratio since the post-2008 financial crisis era.

Industry experts warn that falling below 100 days of cover typi-

cally signals a tightening market, often preceding sustained price increases.

Goldman added that while total global stocks are "unlikely to hit minimum operational levels this summer, the speed of depletion and supply losses in some regions and products is concerning."

Regional product shortages have already emerged, with diesel and gasoline inventories in key consumption centers like Europe and parts of Asia drawing down faster than anticipated. Refinery maintenance seasons and unplanned outages have further strained supply chains, pushing refining margins higher.

The bank estimated that global commercial refined products stocks have drawn down from 50 days of demand (DoD) before the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran to 45 DoD now. The bank added that easily accessible refined products buffers were fast approaching very low levels. Should these buffers be exhausted, even localized supply disruptions could lead to price spikes at the pump, potentially impacting inflation-sensitive economies worldwide.

Some OPEC+ members have signaled readiness to adjust output, but analysts caution that any meaningful response may come too late to prevent further stock erosion in the immediate term.

Over 22m tons of steel products produced in a year

TEHRAN- According to the statistics of the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA), 22.161 million tons of steel products was produced in Iran during the past Iranian calendar year 1404 (ended on March 20).

Based on the ISIPA data, the country's steel products output in 1404 fell 1.8 percent from the production figure in 1403, which was 22.574 million tons.

While Iran is fighting the U.S. severe sanctions on its economy, and the country's different industrial and economic sectors have been affected by the limitations and difficulties caused by the sanctions condition, the country's mining sector is moving forward noticeably, overcoming such barriers.

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 prod-

ucts 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.

The death of Washington's Dimona omertà and the return of JFK's ghost

From page 1 ▶ "This is something that people did not dare do before," he told the Washington Post, a quiet acknowledgment that the old rules of omission no longer hold.

He was describing a silence that has lasted longer than most Americans have been alive, a silence formalized in September 1969 when Richard Nixon and Golda Meir struck their infamous pact: Israel would not test, declare, or threaten its arsenal, and in return, the U.S. would shield it from all international scrutiny.

Every president since, Democrat and Republican alike, has honored that abominable arrangement with private letters, secret pledges, and public lies.

What brought the political landscape to this boiling point has been the world's witness to Israel's genocidal devastation of Gaza and its central role in the two illegal campaigns of aggression against Iran alongside the U.S.

The letter arrives in a political landscape that would have been unimaginable even five years ago.

Pew Research now records that 80 percent of Democrats hold an unfavorable view of Israel, nearly double the figure from 2022. Last month, 40 Senate Democrats voted to block weapons transfers to Tel Aviv, an act of defiance that previous Congresses would have deemed career suicide.

Castro summed up the absurdity that finally broke the dam: "We are, in the fullest sense, fighting this war side by side with a country whose potential nuclear weapons program the United States government officially refuses to acknowledge."

When he asked the State Department's top arms control official in March to describe Israel's nuclear capability, Thomas DiNanno replied with the zombie mantra of half a century: "I can't comment on that specific question."

The lawmakers demand answers because the fiction is no longer sustainable, and the cost of maintaining it has been measured in mass graves.

The ghost of JFK

Now, maybe for the first time since John F. Kennedy asked it and may have paid with his life, some people in Washington are finally voicing the question again: what exactly is the U.S. protecting, and for whose benefit?

Kennedy insisted on inspections at Dimona and warned David Ben-Gurion that American support depended on nuclear transparency.

Many scholars and investigators believe that refusal to acquiesce to Israel's clandestine program, documented in his urgent letters to Ben-Gurion, was a key reason that made him a target.

That suspicion is powerfully reinforced by Lyndon Johnson's immediate reversal of Kennedy's policy and



his reported order to the CIA to bury the matter, a deliberate erasure that imposed the silence Washington has kept ever since.

CIA counterintelligence chief James Jesus Angleton, who served as the agency's secret liaison to Mossad and Shin Bet, played a key role in concealing the Dimona nuclear program, later committing perjury and obstructing the JFK assassination investigation.

And it was Jack Ruby, born Jacob Rubinstein, a gangster with ties to the Zionist paramilitary Irgun who reportedly told his rabbi he "did it for the Jewish people," who silenced the patsy Lee Harvey Oswald before he could testify.

Built and hidden by the West

Israel did not acquire the bomb through genius or desperation. It was gifted the bomb.

In 1957, France secretly agreed to supply a nuclear reactor, uranium, and an underground plutonium reprocessing plant at Dimona in the Negev Desert, all under the ludicrous cover of "peaceful purposes."

When the so-called inspectors arrived from the U.S., they were met with false walls, hidden elevators, and elaborate camouflage.

A major 2026 Haaretz investigation revealed that West Germany covertly financed the bulk of the nefarious Dimona project, channeling nearly two billion marks through secret loans later converted into outright grants.

Norway shipped 20 metric tons of heavy water. Britain contributed lithium-6 for thermonuclear warheads. Washington provided bomber guidance systems, in addition to other assistance.

Years later, Berlin delivered Dolphin-class submarines capable of launching nuclear-armed cruise missiles from any ocean. Together, this consortium built the Middle East's only nuclear weapons state while lecturing others about non-proliferation.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute currently estimates Israel's arsenal at 90 warheads, with fissile material stockpiled for up to 200 more. The Nuclear Threat Initiative calculates that Israel's plutonium reserves, between 750 and 1110 kilograms,

could yield as many as 277 weapons.

Israel now commands a full nuclear triad: land-based Jericho III intercontinental missiles with a range covering the region and beyond, nuclear-capable aircraft, and those German-supplied submarines, which give Tel Aviv a second-strike capability from any body of water on the planet. Additionally, the Dimona reactor is reportedly undergoing active modernization.

The Samson Option

This is where the arrangement reveals its true psychopathy. Investigative journalist Seymour Hersh, in his 1991 book *The Samson Option*, documented Israel's nuclear doctrine.

The name comes from the biblical figure who pulled down a Philistine temple, crushing himself along with his enemies.

Applied to Israeli military strategy, the supposed Samson Doctrine means that if Israel faces what it deems existential destruction, it will launch every nuclear weapon in its possession in a retaliatory spasm, regardless of the global consequences. This is a threat to incinerate the region and hold the world hostage to a single genocidal regime's survival.

Hersh traced how successive American administrations, beginning with Eisenhower, practiced a policy of "wilful ignorance," actively suppressing intelligence about Israel's nuclear progress. He documented how pro-Israel lobbying groups created a political climate in which silence was richly rewarded and candor ruthlessly punished.

He revealed the case of Jonathan Pollard, the ex-U.S. Navy analyst convicted of spying for Israel in the 1980s, who now lives in Israel, supports the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, and has recently announced his candidacy for the Knesset.

Hersh also reported that Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir then traded some of that stolen American intelligence to the Soviet Union.

The price of honesty was illustrated by Mordechai Vanunu, the Dimona technician who in 1986 gave the London Sunday Times photographs and testimony proving what the world already knew. The Mossad lured him to Rome with a female

agent, drugged him, kidnapped him, and smuggled him back to Israel, where a secret court sentenced him to 18 years in prison, 11 of them in solitary confinement. The West's so-called human rights champions said little.

The mask slips

The pretense of ambiguity collapsed from within on November 5, 2023, less than a month after Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, when Israeli Heritage Minister Amichay Eliyahu told Kol Barama radio that dropping a nuclear bomb on Gaza was "one option." Pressed on whether he meant an atomic strike "to kill everyone," he claimed that this, too, remained on the table.

Netanyahu's office suspended him but refused to fire him. The Arab League declared that Eliyahu had confirmed Israel's nuclear possession and exposed "the Israelis' abhorrent racist view towards the Palestinian people." Saudi Arabia, which was deeply involved in talks to join the "Abraham Accords" before the October 7 operation, condemned the failure to dismiss him outright as reflecting "the height of disdain for all human, moral, religious and legal standards."

The mask had fallen away, and behind it was a genocidal calculus that the West had spent decades helping to hide.

Gargantuan hypocrisy

The glaring double standard is a monument to Western corruption. For over 20 years, Iran's civilian nuclear program has been subjected to relentless sanctions, covert sabotage, suspicious IAEA inspections, and illegal strikes.

Iran has remained a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The martyred leader of the Islamic Revolution issued a religious decree forbidding nuclear weapons. American intelligence agencies have consistently assessed that Tehran is not building a bomb. Yet Iran's program remains the Western world's pretext for crisis and warmongering.

Israel, by contrast, is one of only five nations refusing to sign the NPT. When asked about Israel's arsenal, the IAEA shrugs.

In June 2025, IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi presented a resolution raising ambiguous concerns about Iran. Within 24 hours, Israeli warplanes bombed Iranian nuclear facilities at Natanz, Isfahan, and Fordow, explicitly citing the IAEA resolution as justification.

In April 2026, the UN General Assembly voted 149 to 6 to demand Israel renounce its nuclear weapons and join the NPT. Only the United States, Israel, and four small Pacific island states voted no. UN Security Council Resolution 487, adopted in 1981 after Israel bombed Iraq's Osirak reactor, has called on Israel for over four decades to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards. Israel has ignored it with total impunity.

American military hegemony begins to look increasingly hollow: analysis

"They think that, in the same way, that they have so far bought everything with money and have managed to buy weapons, friendship and support, they can buy security with money as well," Zarif said.

The following is the text of the article by Statecraft:

The war in Ukraine shattered a core assumption about great-power dominance: that size and military strength are enough to impose one's will. Ukraine showed otherwise. With the right strategy, geography and resolve, a weaker state can survive and blunt – and in key respects even defeat – a much larger and stronger adversary.

The war with Iran is exposing limits to American power. For

decades, US grand strategy has rested on the belief that America's unmatched military capabilities enabled it to uphold global stability and shape outcomes across entire regions.

After the failures in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the mess in Iran, many Americans have reached a stark conclusion: the cost of that primacy is no longer sustainable, and no longer serves their interests.

A strategy that depends on military dominance everywhere, at all times, inevitably means being at war somewhere, all the time.

America's endless wars are not an accident, they are the product of this approach. And if there is one rare point of agreement in an increasingly divided country, it is this: Americans are tired of war.



Yet, despite a war-weary public, mounting economic strain and politicians who promise to end endless wars, inertia – and powerful economic interests tied to war – have mostly kept this approach intact.

The question now being asked is whether Trump's debacle in Iran will finally break this pattern. Early signs suggest its re-

percussions may exceed even those of George W. Bush's war of choice in Iraq.

The U.S. actually won the Iraq war in under three weeks. Its military dominance was never in doubt. But it lost the peace, failing to stabilize the country once the insurgency took hold.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Why should Lebanon's president avoid meeting Netanyahu?



From page 1 ▶ The issue is not about trying to avoid angering Trump, as some in Lebanon suggest. Rather, it fundamentally concerns the role, position, and meaning of the Lebanese presidency as an institution that represents all Lebanese.

The risks of such a photo opportunity that Trump and Netanyahu seek can be summarized as follows:

First: The issue carries serious internal implications. Netanyahu appears daily, openly boasting about the assassination of Hezbollah Secretary-General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah and the killing of thousands of Lebanese, and even takes pride in the terrorist "pager" operation.

He went so far as to present President Trump with a "golden pager" in a clearly symbolic display.

For a large segment of Lebanese society, Netanyahu is seen as an enemy leader who arrogantly boasts about killing Lebanese from different sects. A photo of the Lebanese president standing beside him would be interpreted domestically as a painful symbolic blow to a broad portion of the population, deepening divisions rather than contributing to stability.

Meanwhile, Netanyahu operates from a position of political arrogance and assumes that Lebanon is in a position of need and that the balance of power favors him. He would go to the White House not to offer concessions, but to extract commitments related to disarming Hezbollah, incite divisions among the Lebanese, and potentially provoke civil conflict.

This is reflected in Netanyahu's long delay in responding to Aoun's last initiative to end the Israeli aggression in Lebanon. When he eventually agreed, the regime symbolically gained from a direct meeting and quickly announced an alleged "agreement" with the Lebanese government against Hezbollah, without offering Lebanon any political or security concessions or a genuine ceasefire.

Second: The invitation comes at a time when Netanyahu faces serious accusations before the International Criminal Court (ICC) for war crimes and crimes against humanity, and when the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has found "reasonable grounds" to believe that the Zionist regime has committed acts that amount to genocide in Gaza.

UN rights agencies and human rights organizations have stated that the threshold for an Israeli genocide in the Gaza Strip has already been met.

This reality makes any photo with him a po-

litical and moral liability in itself, regardless of the substance of the discussion. Publicly sitting with someone accused of such actions would be interpreted as symbolic normalization with a figure under international legal scrutiny.

Notably, even countries allied with the Zionist regime, maintaining close political, security, and economic ties, have explicitly stated their willingness to comply with international arrest warrants should Netanyahu visit their territory. This indicates that avoiding meeting him has become a diplomatic option even within the regime's own allied camp.

Third: The clearest indication of the political cost of such imagery appeared during the Sharm el-Sheikh summit aimed at ending the genocidal war in Gaza. When President Trump asked Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi to invite Netanyahu, several participating leaders threatened to withdraw if he attended, including Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and a number of Arab leaders.

This demonstrates that the issue with Netanyahu is not the substance of negotiations, but the symbolism of appearing publicly alongside him and the moral and political cost of that image.

Fourth: Netanyahu is increasingly described in global discourse as one of the most widely rejected and disliked leaders in world public opinion, perhaps the most polarizing at this stage. This characterization is not ideological rhetoric but is based on a growing body of credible polling, particularly in Europe and North America, showing an unprecedented collapse in his personal image, even within societies that have traditionally supported the Israeli regime.

This shift in public opinion is a direct result of the scale of the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, the regime's war crimes in Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, and the war with Iran, as well as Netanyahu's own escalatory rhetoric, which has contributed to the Zionist regime's growing political and moral isolation.

In light of the above, and based on a cold, rational analysis that carefully weighs costs against benefits, a White House meeting would be high in cost and low in value for both the Lebanese president and Lebanon.

It would be a meeting for the sake of optics alone: an image Netanyahu needs to rehabilitate internationally, and one Trump seeks as a personal achievement. Lebanon, however, would gain no guarantees, no agreements, and no tangible benefits, while bearing the full symbolic and political cost.

Impulsive Merz is facing crisis: Guardian

TEHRAN - Writing an article in the Guardian on May 6, one year after Friedrich Merz took over as the German chancellor, Deborah Cole in Berlin said Merz's government is "marred by crises, gaffes, outbursts and mistrust".

Cole quoted Merz biographer Daniel Goffart, who has characterized Merz as "an impulsive guy" and "sometimes emotional." Goffart has also said, "That can be refreshing but not always. And at the age of 70, it is probably not going to change."

This is the text of the article titled: 'Stuck in the mud': one year on, Friedrich Merz struggles to find his footing:

Friedrich Merz's first steps as German chancellor proved to be a stumble and, one year on, he is still struggling to find his footing at the helm of Europe's top economy and most populous country, with support at historic lows and the far right



poised to pounce.

The conservative Christian Democrat took office on 6 May 2025 after a humiliating loss in the first round of voting in parliament. It raised doubts, right from the start, about the stability of his coalition government with the Social Democrats.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

17th Gol Ghaltan festival underway with new community-focused approach



TEHRAN - The city of Amirieh in Semnan province has launched its 17th edition of its nationally recognized Gol Ghaltan ritual, introducing a more traditional, community-based approach to the centuries-old ceremony, local officials said.

Held annually in the Persian month of Ordibehesht (April-May), the ritual coincides with the blooming of Damask roses, known locally as "Gol-e Mohammadi." Amirieh, often referred to as the "capital of Gol Ghaltan," welcomes families from across the country who bring their infants to take part in the ceremony.

The ritual, which involves gently rolling babies under one year old in rose petals, was inscribed on Iran's national intangible cultural heritage list in 2010 as the first such heritage from Semnan province and the country's second overall after Nowruz.

Amirieh's mayor, Mostafa Fouadian, has said this year's festival began on May 5 and will feature a shift away from centralized events toward smaller-scale ceremonies observed in traditional homes across the town.

"In the 17th edition, efforts have been made to preserve the authenticity of the ritual by holding ceremonies in local households," Fouadian said. "So far, five traditional homes have been prepared, and more will be added in the coming days."

Registration for participating infants is being conducted through the festival's secretariat, he added, noting that guidelines have also been issued to ensure the event is held in a respectful and spiritual manner.

The Gol Ghaltan ritual is rooted in long-standing local beliefs that rolling in-

fants in rose petals promotes health, vitality, and protection against illnesses, particularly allergies. Elderly women in the region say the practice also helps maintain the baby's skin and contributes to overall well-being.

The ceremony typically involves female family members, including mothers and grandmothers, who gather rose petals at dawn in nearby gardens. On the day of the ritual, the baby is placed on a cloth covered with petals and gently rolled while prayers and traditional songs are recited.

Alongside the ritual, a series of cultural activities is being organized at Amirieh's historic citadel, including traditional rosewater distillation, local bread baking, and textile weaving.

Fouadian said that Amirieh currently has about seven hectares of rose gardens, both municipally owned and privately managed. Harvesting of the flowers began in conjunction with the birth anniversary of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Shia Imam, significant date in the Islamic calendar.

He added that around two metric tons of roses are expected to be harvested from municipal gardens this season, primarily for use in the Gol Ghaltan ceremony and the production of rosewater, known as "golab."

Amirieh, with a population of just over 3,000, is located approximately 20 kilometers west of Damghan and 90 kilometers east of Semnan city.

Despite its small size, the town has gained national recognition for preserving and promoting the Gol Ghaltan ritual, which continues to draw visitors and highlight Iran's rich intangible cultural heritage.

Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley

Enclosed between the high mountains of the Hindu Kush in the central highlands of Afghanistan, the Bamiyan Valley opens out into a large basin bordered to the north by a long, high stretch of rocky cliffs.

The Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley comprise a serial property consisting of eight separate sites within the Valley and its tributaries. Carved into the Bamiyan Cliffs are the two niches of the giant Buddha statues (55m and 38m high) destroyed by the Taliban in 2001, and numerous caves forming a large ensemble of Buddhist monasteries, chapels and sanctuaries along the foothills of the valley dating from the 3rd to the 5th century CE. In several of the caves and niches, often linked by galleries, there are remains of wall paintings and seated Buddha figures. In the valleys of the Bamiyan's tributaries are further groups of caves including the Kakrak Valley Caves, some 3km south-east of the Bamiyan Cliffs where among the more than one hundred caves dating from the 6th to 13th centuries are fragments of a 10m tall standing Buddha figure and a sanctuary with painted decorations from the Sasanian period. Along the Fuladi valley around 2km southwest of the Bamiyan Cliffs are the caves of Qoul-i Akram and Lalai Ghami, also containing decorative features.

Punctuating the center of the valley basin

to the south of the great cliff are the remains of the fortress of Shahr-i Ghulghulah. Dating from the 6th to 10th centuries CE, this marks the original settlement of Bamiyan as stopping place on the branch of the Silk Route, which linked China and India via ancient Bactria. Further to the east along the Bamiyan Valley are the remains of fortification walls and settlements, dating from the 6th to 8th centuries at Qallai Kaphari A and B and further east still (around 15km east of the Bamiyan Cliffs) at Shahr-i Zuhak, where the earlier remains are overlaid by developments of the 10th to 13th centuries under the rule of the Islamic Ghaznavid and Ghorid dynasties.

The Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley represent the artistic and religious developments which from the 1st to the 13th centuries characterized ancient Bactria, integrating various cultural influences into the Gandharan school of Buddhist art. The numerous Buddhist monastic ensembles and sanctuaries, as well as fortified structures from the Islamic period, testify to the interchange of Indian, Hellenistic, Roman, Sasanian and Islamic influences. The site is also testimony to recurring reactions to iconic art, the most recent being the internationally condemned deliberate destruction of the two standing Buddha statues in March 2001.

(Source: UNESCO)

Beyond modern life: discovering Iran's tribal worlds

TEHRAN - Under the vast Iranian sky, where mountains stretch into the horizon and rivers carve their way through ancient valleys, a different rhythm of life quietly endures. For travelers weary of crowded cities and hurried itineraries, tribal tourism in Iran offers something rare: a journey not only across landscapes, but into a living, breathing past.

It often begins with a road that seems to lead nowhere, until it leads somewhere extraordinary. A visitor may find themselves in the warm plains of the south, where the air carries the scent of earth and livestock, or in the cool highlands of the northwest, where green pastures roll endlessly beneath a wide blue sky. And then, almost suddenly, they appear: black tents scattered across the land like quiet guardians of tradition.

These tents, known as Siyah-Chadors, are more than shelters. They are symbols of resilience, crafted by skilled hands using knowledge passed down through generations. Inside, life unfolds with a simplicity that feels both distant and deeply human. A kettle simmers over an open fire. Handwoven carpets soften the ground. Stories, older than memory, are told in low, rhythmic voices.

For many travelers, the first encounter is unforgettable. Hospitality is immediate and sincere. Tea is poured, bread is shared, and strangers are welcomed like old friends. In a world increasingly defined by digital connections, this face-to-face warmth feels almost revolutionary.

Days in tribal regions move with



the sun. Visitors may wake early to the sound of animals being led to pasture or join families as they prepare food using methods unchanged for centuries. Women, at the heart of tribal life, work tirelessly, milking animals, weaving intricate jajims, and crafting dairy products with practiced ease. Their strength and quiet authority leave a lasting impression on those who watch and learn.

Music and laughter often fill the evenings. Songs echo across the plains, accompanied by traditional instruments, while dances bring entire communities together. Weddings and festivals reveal a rich cultural tapestry, colorful clothing, vibrant rituals, and a shared sense of belonging that transcends time.

Yet tribal life is not without hardship. Beneath its beauty lies a constant struggle against nature's unpredictability. Droughts, storms, and economic challenges test these communities year after year. Access to education and healthcare remains limited, especially for groups that move seasonally. Still, adaptation is part of their identity. Change is embraced carefully, without letting go of the values that define them.

One of the most mesmerizing experiences for visitors is witnessing the seasonal migration known as Kouch. Entire communities move between summer and winter pastures, guiding their herds through landscapes of breathtaking beauty, waterfalls cascading down rocky cliffs, for-

ests whispering in the wind, and vast plains glowing under golden light. It is a journey shaped by necessity, yet filled with grace.

What makes tribal tourism in Iran truly remarkable is its diversity. Each region offers a different story, a different rhythm, a different voice. From the southern coasts to the northern mountains, no two experiences are the same. And yet, a common thread binds them all: a deep connection to nature, tradition, and community.

In a modern age defined by speed, these journeys invite travelers to slow down. To listen. To observe. To feel. And perhaps, in the quiet space of a black tent under a starlit sky, to rediscover something long forgotten, a simpler way of being.

Sustainable desert tourism with educational campaign promoted in Mesr Village



TEHRAN - An educational campaign aimed at promoting sustainable tourism and protecting fragile desert ecosystems has been held in the scenic Mesr Village, which is situated in central Iran.

The initiative, titled "Responsible Behavior towards Desert Tamarisks," brought together nature enthusiasts, tour guides, and local residents to raise awareness about environmentally responsible practices in desert areas. The campaign focused on safeguarding native vegetation, particularly tamarisk shrubs, which play a crucial ecological role in arid landscapes, a local official told the Tehran Times on Wednesday.

Environmental educators participating in the program highlighted the importance of tamarisks in stabilizing shifting sands, retaining moisture, and preventing soil erosion. They warned that damage to such vegetation could accelerate desertification and disrupt the delicate ecological balance of the region.

The campaign also featured practical workshops designed to guide tourists on how to minimize their environmental footprint. Participants were trained in avoiding harm to plant cover, properly disposing of waste, and adhering to designated tourism routes to prevent unnecessary disturbance to the ecosystem.

Organized by the Mesr Village Council in cooperation with young managers of local eco-lodges, the program received a positive response from visitors. Organizers said the initiative seeks to foster a deeper understanding of desert conservation while encouraging responsible, nature-friendly tourism practices.

At the conclusion of the event, tourists were invited to participate in future environmental campaigns and play an active role in preserving Iran's natural heritage.

Mesr Village, located in Isfahan province within Khur and Biabanak

county, has emerged as a major hub for desert tourism in recent years. Situated approximately 45 kilometers east of Jandaq and 60 kilometers north of Khur, the village attracts a steady flow of domestic and international visitors drawn to its expansive sand dunes and unique desert landscape.

The area, which includes nearby villages such as Amirabad and Farahzad, offers activities such as camel riding, photography, and astronomical observation due to its clear, dark skies. Traditional houses in the village have been restored and converted into accommodations, further boosting its appeal among eco-tourists.

Local accounts trace the village's name to a historical narrative involving a wealthy resident named Yusuf, who dug deep wells during periods of water scarcity. The village, once known as Chah Deraz, was later renamed Mesr—Persian for Egypt—reportedly at Yusuf's request, drawing inspiration from the story of the Prophet Joseph.

Tourism officials say Mesr's growing popularity underscores the need for sustainable management of its natural resources. Initiatives such as the recent educational campaign are seen as key steps toward balancing tourism development with environmental preservation in Iran's desert areas.

Iranian villages hold a central place in the country's tourism landscape and cultural heritage,

offering a living repository of traditions, architecture, and ways of life that have evolved over centuries. Scattered across diverse geographical zones—from arid deserts and mountainous highlands to lush forests and coastal plains—these rural settlements reflect the environmental adaptability and cultural richness of Iranian society.

From a tourism perspective, villages provide an alternative to urban-centered travel by offering immersive, experience-based journeys. Visitors are drawn to their authenticity, where daily life continues much as it has for generations. Traditional mud-brick houses, stepped mountain dwellings, and windcatcher-cooled homes are not only architectural landmarks but also examples of sustainable design adapted to local climates. Such features make rural Iran particularly attractive for eco-tourism and cultural tourism, two sectors that have seen growing global demand.

Equally important is the intangible cultural heritage preserved in these villages. Local customs, dialects, music, crafts, and culinary traditions remain deeply rooted in rural communities. Seasonal festivals, agricultural rituals, and religious ceremonies provide insight into collective identities and belief systems that have been passed down through generations. In many cases, these traditions have disappeared or been significantly

transformed in urban environments, making villages crucial for their endurance and transmission.

Iranian villages also play a key role in handicraft production, which is a major component of the country's cultural economy. Carpet weaving, pottery, textile production, and woodwork are often practiced in rural areas using traditional methods. These crafts not only contribute to local livelihoods but also serve as cultural ambassadors, connecting visitors to Iran's artistic heritage.

In recent years, the development of eco-lodges and community-based tourism initiatives has further highlighted the importance of villages in sustainable tourism strategies. By involving local residents in tourism services—such as accommodation, guiding, and food preparation—these initiatives help distribute economic benefits more equitably while encouraging the preservation of local culture and environment.

Moreover, villages contribute to cultural continuity by maintaining social structures and communal values that emphasize cooperation, hospitality, and respect for nature. These elements resonate strongly with tourists seeking meaningful and responsible travel experiences.

However, the growing popularity of rural tourism also presents challenges, including environmental pressure, commercialization of traditions, and migration of younger generations to cities. Addressing these issues requires careful planning, community participation, and policies that prioritize sustainability.

In essence, Iranian villages are not merely tourist destinations; they are dynamic cultural landscapes that embody the historical depth and diversity of the nation. Their preservation and thoughtful integration into the tourism sector are vital for safeguarding Iran's cultural heritage while supporting rural development.

Health ministry launches campaign to equip NICUs damaged in war

TEHRAN – The health ministry has launched a national campaign to help repair and equip the neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) of hospitals that were damaged during the US-Israeli war against the country.

Titled 'Minab's rebirth', the campaign, which kicked off on the occasion of the International Day of the Midwife, May 5, aims to commemorate students martyred in Shajareh Tayyebah elementary school in Minab, Hormozgan province, on February 28, the very first day of the war.

The school became the site of a devastating massacre by the United States missile attacks, which led to the martyrdom of some 170 innocent boys and girls, aged 7 and 12, their teachers, and parents.

Throughout the campaign, the national Midwifery Student Association (MIDSA), in collaboration with midwifery scientific associations across the country, will collect funds that were intended for celebrating Midwife Day, as well as individual donations, to equip NICUs in hospitals targeted by the aggressors and in deprived areas.

Established in 1992 by the International Confederation of Midwives, the International Day of the Midwife is observed annually on May 5.

The day celebrates and raises awareness about the midwifery profession, and acknowledges the contribution that all midwives make to women, their families, and the community.

The theme for International Day of the Midwife 2026 is One Million More Midwives. Midwives provide essential sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, and adolescent health services worldwide.

They support women and gender diverse people before, during, and after birth. They provide contraception, comprehensive abortion care, breastfeeding support, and ongoing care across the life course. Yet globally, there are not enough midwives, and many of the ones we do have are not enabled to work to their full scope of practice.



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

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

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

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

These actions disregard the principles of distinction and proportionality, failing to meet the legal thresholds for lawful self-defence. The responsibility of the belligerents is heightened by the lack of preparation for the predictable secondary and tertiary effects of such an

extensive conflict.

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

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

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

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

Strengthening Maternal Health Services

In October 2025, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in collaboration with the Office of Health in Disasters of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education (MOHME),

and with the support of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), procured and delivered essential medical devices for the provinces of Tehran, Alborz, Golestan, and Isfahan to enhance maternal and reproductive health service delivery.

The procured equipment includes gynecological beds, fetal heart rate (FHR) monitoring devices, resuscitation devices, delivery kits, and other critical medical supplies required for the prevention, early detection, and management of maternal and neonatal complications. These devices are essential for ensuring safe pregnancies and childbirth, particularly in high-risk and disaster-prone settings.

The medical devices were delivered to the Ministry of Health's central warehouse to be distributed to designated health facilities in close coordination with MOHME. The medical equipment was expected to cover the needs of 67 health centers in the 4 provinces.

Through this intervention, UNFPA and its partners reaffirmed their commitment to protecting the health and well-being of women and newborns, strengthening the resilience of maternal health services, and ensuring that no woman is left behind in accessing safe and quality reproductive health care.

Rainfall brings intl. Quri Gol wetland back to life

TEHRAN – After several months of water scarcity, spring rainfall has eased the drought in northwestern East Azarbaijan province, reviving the international Quri Gol wetland.

Spanning around 200 hectares, Quri Gol wetland is the only freshwater wetland in the province, with pristine nature and a unique landscape, ISNA reported.

Compared to the same period last year, the water level of the wetland has increased by 27 cm, reaching 1912.43 meters now. Presently, some 116 hectares of the wetland are filled with water. It has about 700 million cubic meters (mcm) of water, which is lower than the 3.8 mcm amount designated for the wetland.

The wetland receives its water supply from precipitation, marginal streams, and a water channel.

Quri Gol wetland hosts over 92 bird species, which are all migratory birds, except redhead coots, 14 species of reptiles, 4 species of amphibians, and one species of fish, as well as 280 plant species.

Currently, the wetland is hosting different kinds of ducks and coots. The interesting point is the return of the white-headed duck to the wetland after many years. The bird is a globally endangered species, and its return highlights the favorable ecological condition of the wetland.

A total of 141 wetlands with ecological value, with an area of over 3 million hectares, have been identified in Iran, 27 of which were listed in the International Ramsar Convention.

The DOE has announced the beginning of a new phase of the wetlands conservation project (2025–2028) to strengthen sustainable livelihoods and alleviate pressure on the wetlands ecosystem.

Quri Gol is one of the four wetlands that the DOE is reviving. The three other wetlands are namely, Bamdej in southwestern Khuzestan province, Gomishan in northern Golestan province, Arjan in southern Fars province.



The project to restore Bamdej wetland kicked off about two years ago with the help of the private sector, investing 1.3 trillion rials (around 8 million dollars), with 2 trillion rial (about 12 million dollars) more which is needed to complete the project. ISNA quoted Ahmadreza Lahijanzadeh, the deputy head of the Department of Environment (DOE) for Marine and Wetlands affairs, as saying.

Stretching for over 4,000 hectares, the wetland is home to over 134 plant species from 49 plant families, such as lutea, carex brunnea, reed, and syperus, 22 mammal species, 12 fish species, 15 species of amphibians and reptiles, and 148 native and migratory birds.

Gomishan wetland is expected to be revived by June. The wetland was registered on the Ramsar Convention in 2003. It is known as one of the main habitats for the birds. About 20 species of fish, 24 species of reptiles, over 100 water and water-side birds, and more than 30 species of mammals, like Foca Caspinus, live in the wetland.

The Arjan restoration project is in the beginning phase; it covers 2000 hectares. The water of the wetland depends on the amount of rainfall. The wetland is one of the main habitats for migratory birds like cranes, flamingos, wild ducks, and geese. Wetland's plant species include reeds, astragalus (milk-etch), and sagebrush. Also, mammals like boar, jackal, and fox live in the wetland.

WFP releases March report on Iran

TEHRAN – The World Food Program (WFP) has released a report, expounding on activities in Iran over the month of March.

In March, WFP food assistance reached 33,424 beneficiaries, including Afghan and Iraqi refugees, through a hybrid combination of in-kind food and cash-based transfers (CBT).

Refugees are assisted with a staple food basket, which includes fortified wheat flour (a ration of 9 kg per person, reduced from 12 kg since the month of November due to funding shortfalls).

Under CBT modality, WFP continued to provide cash assistance to support the essential living costs of vulnerable refugees. The transfer is IRR 8 million (USD 5.7) for households headed by men and IRR 9 million (USD 6.5) for households headed by women.

By March, WFP Iran helped ease the financial burden associated with the gluten-free dietary needs of 57 refugee celiac patients from WFP's beneficiaries by providing them with an extra cash amount of IRR 9.7 million (USD 7) per person as a replacement for their usual food entitlement.

Moreover, WFP supported 408 refugees with disabilities across eleven settlements, each receiving an additional monthly cash support of IRR 3 million (USD 2.1), on top of their regular aid. Initially launched in two provinces, the initiative was gradually expanded to cover 11 settlements in Saveh, Semnan, Bani Najar, Sarvestan, Bezileh, Abazar, Rafsanjan, Bardsir, Jahrom, Meybod, and Torbat-e-jam.

As schools shifted to remote learning amid rising hostilities, WFP transitioned to take home rations, distributing biscuits and date bars to 8,303 refugee students and their teachers in March. Milk could not be procured due to funding shortfalls and its high cost. A total of 4.6 mt of date bars and 3.8 mt of fortified biscuits were distributed.

WFP provided 2,618 refugee girls with a monthly cash incentive of IRR 2 million (USD 1.4) transferred to their bank accounts. This is a part of WFP Iran's efforts to promote ed-

ucation for refugee girls by providing them with cash for each month of regular school attendance.

To enhance the economic resilience and self-sufficiency of 364 refugees (50 percent women) in March, WFP continued its support for 26 income-generating initiatives across 18 settlements. Activities included welding, tailoring, baking, and farming, among others.

Since the onset of escalation on 2 March, large-scale population movements have been observed across Iran, with around 3.2 million people, equivalent to approximately 600,000 to 1 million households, estimated to be temporarily displaced across the country, including residents from affected areas of Tehran.

Following the crisis, around 7,000 additional refugees with Temporary Amayesh 3 cards have reportedly been newly identified and referred to WFP by the Iranian Government for assistance.

They have been integrated into existing Mohajerin and Saveh settlements and started to receive in-kind. With the inclusion of these people in the coming months, WFP monthly funding requirements for both in-kind and cash assistance are expected to increase.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, an upper-middle income country with a population of over 91 million, is the largest refugee-hosting country in the world, sheltering an estimated 2.5 million forcibly displaced people according to UNHCR, and 6.1 million according to the Government of Iran, including unregistered individuals, mainly from Afghanistan and Iraq, living in urban areas.

With no viable return options, sustained assistance remains critical, particularly for over 33,000 highly vulnerable refugees living in 20 settlements nationwide.

WFP has been operating in Iran since 1962, initially for its first emergency earthquake response until 1978, and subsequently reinitiating operations to address the refugee crisis from 1987 onwards.

Iran submits 35 war crime files against US, Israel to Intl. bodies

From page 1 ▶ The IRCS chief also noted that during a recent visit by the head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to Tehran, he demanded the ICRC condemn attacks on Red Crescent personnel, hospitals, and non-combatant centers. Subsequently, the ICRC issued a written condemnation of strikes on relief operations and civilians, while expressing full support for the IRCS.

On a related matter, Koulivand confirmed the release of the Iranian cargo ship Touska, which had been illegally seized during the conflict. The vessel was carrying dialysis raw materials and other vital medical supplies belonging to the Red Crescent; its crew have now been freed.

Regarding international solidarity, Koulivand noted that Russia delivered over

325 tons of medicine to Iran, and Turkey donated 50 hospital generators. He emphasized that Iran made no request for foreign aid but accepted all voluntary contributions with dignity, including an Iraqi woman who donated her wedding ring and necklace to support the cause. Donations from 18 countries have been distributed transparently across Iranian medical centers.

Precipitation forecast to be high in fall, winter

TEHRAN – With the El Niño phase developing across the Pacific Ocean, the country is forecast to receive considerable rain in the fall and winter.

'El Niño' or "the boy" is widely used to describe the warming of sea surface temperature that occurs every few years, typically concentrated in the central-east equatorial Pacific.

From May 5 to June 5, the average rainfall is projected to be normal in Caspian coastal provinces, north-east, and parts of the east and south of the country, and above normal in other parts, ISNA reported.

From June 5 to July 6, the average rainfall will be above normal in the north-west, and normal in other parts of the country.

From July 6 to September 6, the average rainfall is estimated to be equal to the long-term amount. Monsoon rainfall is

forecast to be lower-than-normal in the southeast and south of the country.

It is noteworthy that normal rainfall in summer will be inadequate or so low that it would not compensate for water scarcity in many provinces of the country.

Compared to the normal figure, the temperature is likely to increase by 0.5 to 2 degrees in most parts of the country, from May to September. The country will experience the highest rise in temperature (1 to 2) from September 6 to October 7.

Despite light snowfall in winter, low temperatures along with abundant rainfall have increased the amount of snow in Alborz and Zagros heights, as well as the amount of water saved in dams.

Precipitation in the last month of the winter and spring was unprecedented in some provinces;

in Ilam province, the received rainfall was the highest amount recorded over the past 76 years. The rainfall has been above normal in South Khorasan, Kerman, Hormozgan, south of Fars, and Bushehr provinces, he added.

Tehran, Qom, Markazi, and Alborz provinces received relatively adequate spring rainfalls. However, these provinces are still struggling with water shortage, which is caused by low precipitation since the beginning of the current water year, September 22, 2025.

Precipitation in the first month of the spring have contributed to somehow compensating lack of rainfall; currently, the recorded average rainfall is seven percent above the normal figure, the head of the Meteorological Organization has said.

Rainfall in spring has significantly increased. Compared to

the last year, the amount of rainfall has doubled in most areas located in the northwest and west of the country, IRIB quoted Ahad Vazifeh as saying.

Overall, the country has received 13 mm more rain in comparison to the long-term period of 30 years; the distribution of precipitation has been unequal, though, Vazifeh noted.

However, based on simulated models, the temperature of water at the surface of the ocean is predicted to get more than 0.5 degrees warmer, and enter El Niño Southern Oscillation phase, ISNA quoted Vazifeh as saying.

The situation is not expected to affect summer much as summers are mostly dry in the country; rainfalls in the southern half of Sistan-Baluchestan, east of Hormozgan, and south of Kerman will be less than normal.



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MAY 7, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The welfare of countries depends on the judgment and management of governments. If governments are honest and wise in judgment, good fortune follows; if not, it will turn away and go.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:01 Evening: 18:15 Dawn: 03:30 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 05:06 (tomorrow)

IAF's "The American Lie" program screening anti-war films

TEHRAN – The Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) is showing selected anti-war films in a program titled "The American Lie".

In the program, taking place this week at the IAF Cinematheque, five films with anti-war themes and critical perspectives on American society have been selected for screening, Mehr reported.

So far, three films have been shown including "American Sniper" (2014), directed by Clint Eastwood, "Quo Vadis, Aida?" (2020), by Jasmila Žbanić, and "Civil War" (2024), by Alex Garland.

On Thursday, the IAF will screen "The Report," written and directed by Scott Z. Burns. It is a 2019 American historical political drama that stars Adam Driver, Annette Bening, Jon Hamm, Ted Levine, Michael C. Hall, Tim Blake Nelson, Corey Stoll, and Maura Tierney.

It depicts the efforts of staffer Daniel Jones as he led the Senate Intelligence Committee's investigation of the Central Intelligence Agency's use of torture following the September 11 attacks, covering more than a decade's worth of real-life political intrigue related to the contents, creation, and release of the 6,700-pages of the US Senate report on CIA torture.

The film is Burns's feature directing debut, a docudrama about US Senate researcher Daniel J Jones and his decade-long battle to publish the gigantic report he'd written on the CIA's post-9/11 use of "extreme interrogation techniques" (such as waterboarding), a report impeded at every step by the agency and the White House itself.

The film does a good job at showing how the right succeeded in framing the debate in terms of wussy-liberals-are-squeamish-but-torture-gets-answers. The point of Jones's report is that torture did not get answers. This is not a Watergate-type tale of journalist-heroism; the person risking jail and meeting shadowy informants in underground carparks is Jones himself, played by Adam Driver with a cool, calm deliberation.

On Friday, "Official Secrets," directed by



Gavin Hood, will be shown at the IAF Cinematheque. It is a 2019 British drama, based on the case of whistleblower Katharine Gun, who exposed an illegal spying operation by American and British intelligence services to gauge sentiment of and potentially blackmail United Nations diplomats tasked to vote on a resolution regarding the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Katharine Gun was a translator working for the British security services at the GCHQ surveillance unit in Cheltenham. In 2003, she was astonished to receive an email making it plain she was expected to find out incriminating personal details in the lives of UN representatives from small countries so that they could be blackmailed into voting for the war in Iraq. Gun printed out the email, and passed it to an anti-war friend, and it eventually formed the basis of a sensational front-page scoop in the Observer.

Although it did not stop the war, as Gun dreamed of doing, it played an important part in turning press and public opinion. Gun herself was prosecuted under the Official Secrets Act.

Keira Knightley stars as Gun, alongside Matt Smith, Matthew Goode, Adam Bakri, Indira Varma, and Ralph Fiennes.

The movie screenings will begin at 6 p.m. at the Nasser Hall of the IAF, located at the Artists Park, North Mousavi Street, Taleqani Street.

Minab school tragedy survivor's story chronicled in new doc "Hoda"

TEHRAN – Iranian director Hamed Saadat's documentary "Hoda" on a survivor of Minab school's tragedy, is currently in the final stages of editing, the Documentary and Animation Center (DEFC) has announced.

The film provides a poignant look at the life of a survivor from the recent tragic US-Israeli attack on the Shajareh Tayyebeh school in Minab during the Ramadan War, Mehr reported on Wednesday.

The documentary centers on Hoda, a young girl who was pulled alive from the rubble after being trapped until nightfall following a devastating strike on her school. While Hoda survived, the attack claimed the lives of her brother and cousin, who were martyred on the school grounds.

The film focuses on Hoda's life today, capturing her journey through the hospital, her home, and the ruins of the school in Minab, Saadat explained.

The narrative primarily explores the severe psychological and physical trauma she continues to endure long after the incident, he added.

"The Minab tragedy is a clear example of a war crime," Saadat stated, emphasizing the importance of documenting such events. "While much has been said about the martyrs and the school itself, I chose to focus on a survivor because their suffering is ongoing. The children and families who lived through this are the living witnesses to this injustice. Their pain continues today and will likely persist into the future. I wanted to portray the dimensions of this



tragedy through a living subject."

"Hoda" is part of a broader collection of documentaries produced by the Documentary and Animation Center, aimed at documenting the events and human costs of the war imposed on the country by the US and Zionist regime.

The film is expected to be ready for screening following the completion of its post-production phase.

On February 28, the Shajareh Tayyebeh girls' elementary school in Minab, Hormozgan province, became the site of a devastating massacre as the United States and Israel initiated their strikes against Iran.

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

trapping children and teachers beneath the rubble. Iranian authorities confirmed a final death toll of 168 people, with at least 95 others wounded, marking one of the most harrowing incidents of the conflict's opening day.

Despite attempts by US and Israeli authorities to distance themselves from the carnage as images of the tragedy spread across social media, detailed forensic and digital investigations have painted a starkly different picture.

An analysis by Al Jazeera's digital investigations unit, utilizing over a decade of satellite imagery and recent video clips, revealed that the school was a clearly distinct civilian facility, separated from any adjacent military sites for at least ten years. Furthermore, witness accounts and satellite-based analyses confirmed that the school was triple tapped by three sepa-

rate, deliberate strikes, leaving no doubt about the nature of the attack.

The international community has faced mounting evidence regarding the responsibility for this atrocity, with investigations from major global outlets including The New York Times, BBC Verify, CBC, and NPR all concluding that the United States was responsible for the strike.

These findings have raised fundamental questions about the intelligence used to justify the bombing, as the patterns of the strike suggest a direct targeting of a civilian educational institution. The Minab school tragedy now stands as a somber testament to the immense human cost of the aggression and a focal point for those demanding international accountability.

"Revolutionizing Motherhood" published in Persian

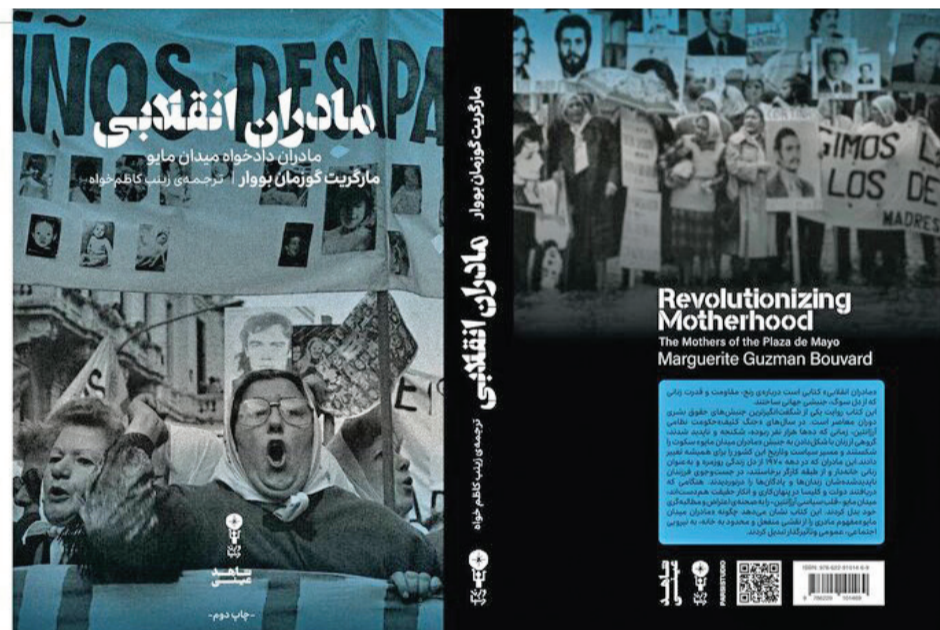
TEHRAN – The Persian translation of the book "Revolutionizing Motherhood: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo" written by Marguerite Guzman Bouvard has been re-released in the bookstores across Iran.

Zeynab Kazemkhan has translated the book and Vazn-e Donya (Weight of World) Publication has brought it out in 340 pages, IRNA reported.

Originally published in 1994, "Revolutionizing Motherhood" examines one of the most astonishing human rights movements of recent years. During the Argentine junta's Dirty War against subversives, as tens of thousands were abducted, tortured, and disappeared, a group of women forged the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo and changed Argentine politics forever.

The Mothers began in the 1970s as an informal group of working-class housewives making the rounds of prisons and military barracks in search of their disappeared children. As they realized that both state and church officials were conspiring to withhold information, they started to protest, claiming the administrative center of Argentina the Plaza de Mayo for their center stage.

In this volume, Marguerite G. Bouvard traces the history of the Mothers and examines



how they have transformed maternity from a passive, domestic role to one of public strength. Bouvard also gives a detailed history of contemporary Argentina, including the military's debacle in the Falklands, the fall of the junta, and the efforts of subsequent governments to reach an accord with the Mothers. Finally, the author examines their current

agenda and their continuing struggle to bring the murderers of their children to justice.

Marguerite Guzman Bouvard was born in Trieste Italy. She is a former professor of Political Science and poetry workshops, and the author of 20 books in the fields of politics, women's rights, human rights, grief, illness, and spirituality.

Cartoon of Day



America First!
Cartoonist: Yaser Alahmed from Syria

"Beethoven" musical play on stage in Shiraz

TEHRAN – The musical play "Beethoven," written and directed by Javad Molania, is currently on stage at Shiraz's Ehsan Hall, featuring prominent Iranian actors Gelareh Abbasi and Siavash Cheraghpour.

The play, which has enjoyed successful runs in Tehran and various other cities across Iran, offers a theatrical portrait of the life and legacy of the world-renowned German composer, Ludwig van Beethoven, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

Throughout its previous performance seasons, the play was accompanied by distinguished actors such as Leili Rashidi, Nazanin Keivani, and Masoud Mirtaheri having previously portrayed roles in the production.

As a biographical musical, "Beethoven" aims to provide the audience with an intimate look at the struggles and triumphs of the leg-



endary composer through a blend of drama and music.

Ludwig van Beethoven was the revolutionary bridge between the structured elegance of the Classical era and the passionate depths of Romanticism. Born in Bonn in 1770, he did not just follow the footsteps of giants like Mozart and Haydn—he stomped his own path, expanding the symphony, the sonata, and the quartet into forms that could express the full spec-

trum of human emotion. His early works crackle with a defiant energy that signaled to the world that music was no longer just background entertainment for aristocrats, but a profound, personal statement of the human spirit.

Perhaps the most extraordinary chapter of his life was his heroic battle against his own biology: the onset of deafness in his late twenties. Instead of surrendering to silence, Beethoven entered a

period of astonishing productivity, "hearing" complex harmonies and massive orchestral textures entirely within his mind. His struggle reveals a man who chose to live for his art against all odds, proving that true genius is not limited by physical boundaries. It remains one of history's greatest testaments to resilience that some of his most triumphant and joyful compositions were written when he was in near-total silence.

Today, Beethoven's legacy is woven into the very fabric of global culture, from the iconic, fate-knocking four notes of the Fifth Symphony to the soaring "Ode to Joy" in his Ninth. He redefined the composer as an independent artist and a philosopher who could grapple with themes of universal brotherhood and freedom. Whether heard in a grand concert hall or a modern film score, his works continue to inspire a sense of awe.