

Hezbollah Is Iran's Red Line, Not Trump's Photo Op

The upcoming Israel-Lebanon negotiations will take place against the backdrop of ongoing Israeli attacks in Lebanon



Iran's top diplomat criticizes US 'provocations' in talks with Turkish, British counterparts

TEHRAN- Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi held separate phone conversations with his Turkish and British counterparts on Friday to discuss recent regional developments, ongoing diplomatic efforts, and the fragile ceasefire following the US-led war against Iran.

During his call with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, Araghchi briefed him on Iran's latest initiatives aimed at securing a lasting end to the imposed war. He criticized recent provocative actions by the United States in the Persian Gulf, describing them as detrimental to diplomatic progress and as deepening public mistrust in Iran toward Washington's intentions. ▶ Page 2

US appliance giant Whirlpool warns Iran war triggering recession-level slump

TEHRAN- Appliance giant Whirlpool says the Iran war has caused a "recession-level industry decline" in the US, driven by a collapse in consumer confidence in late February and March.

In its latest earnings report, the company slashed its full-year earnings guidance to \$3-\$3.50 per share, down from a prior \$6 outlook. Shares tumbled as much as 18% before recovering slightly.

CFO Roxanne Warner told Yahoo Finance that demand for large home appliances across the US and Canada is now at its lowest level since the Great Financial Crisis. While severe winter weather also played a role, the war remains a central factor. ▶ Page 4

US intel community confirms Iran was not developing nukes before war

TEHRAN- US President Donald Trump, who launched an unprovoked war against Iran on February 28, 2026, alongside Israel, has faced mounting criticism at home and abroad. The decision to attack Iran was based on the pretext that Tehran was developing nuclear weapons — a claim now publicly contradicted by senior former intelligence officials.

Since the onset of hostilities, Trump's approval ratings have seen a sharp decline. Political analysts note that the prolonged conflict, rising US casualties, and economic fallout from disrupted global oil supplies have eroded public trust in his leadership. Many experts argue that Trump was misled by Israeli lobbying efforts and failed to consider the intelligence community's accurate assessments. His approval numbers, which hovered around 48% before the war, dropped to 38% by mid-March 2026 — the steepest decline of his political career. Furthermore, bipartisan criticism has intensified, with lawmakers questioning the justification for the war and accusing the Trump administration of bypassing congressional authorization.

Iran's parliament advances plan to establish an independent body for managing Strait of Hormuz

TEHRAN- Iran's parliament is reviewing an 11-article strategic bill titled "Strategic Action for Ensuring Security and Sustainable Development of the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf." The proposed legislation seeks to grant Iran full control over what it describes as the world's most critical oil and energy chokepoint.

According to Mohammad Reza Rezaei-Kouchi, chairman of the Parliament's Construction Committee, the plan would restrict the passage of vessels belonging to countries that participated in the recent imposed war against Iran. "These countries will only be permitted to transit after paying compensation for the damages inflicted," he said.

For all other vessels, passage would be subject to obtaining official permits and paying fees for "guidance, supervision, and security services."

Trump administration under fire for evasion on Minab school attack

TEHRAN - The administration of President Donald Trump continues to shirk responsibility over a US missile attack on a school in southern Iran that killed nearly 170 people on the first day of the joint US-Israel war on February 28.

The Shajareh Tayyebeh elementary school in the city of Minab, Hormozgan Province, was struck by a US Tomahawk missile. Local officials said last month that 120 students were killed—73 boys and 47 girls. Among the other victims were 26 teachers, all women, one of them six months pregnant, as well as seven parents, a school bus driver, and a technician at a nearby clinic.

Trump initially claimed the school was hit by an Iranian projectile, but an analysis by The New York Times suggests that it was almost certainly struck by the US military.

Only five countries are known to possess Tomahawk missiles: the US, Australia, the UK, the Netherlands, and Japan. US administration officials say the strike is under investigation.

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Hezbollah strikes Israeli bases for Beirut attack

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - Hezbollah has waged a series of operations against the Zionist regime in response to an Israeli airstrike on Beirut.

The Lebanese resistance movement announced that it targeted the Zionist regime's Sharaga base (the administrative headquarters of the Golani Brigade command and the location of the Egoz unit), south of the Nahariya settlement, with a barrage of specialized rockets.

Hezbollah further announced that its resistance fighters targeted the Israeli Meron surveillance and air operations command base in "northern occupied Palestine with a swarm of loitering drones."

On Wednesday evening, the Zionist regime launched an airstrike that hit a residential building in Beirut's southern suburb, known as Dahieh. ▶ Page 5

Washington's uranium heist in Caracas reveals a desperate imperial playbook

By staff writer

TEHRAN - With its military campaign against Iran bogged down in stalemate and unmet objectives, the United States has redirected its imperial ambitions toward seizing the national treasures of Venezuela, which it now treats as a conquered territory.

On Friday, the U.S. Department of Energy confirmed the seizure of 13.5 kilograms of highly enriched uranium from a research reactor near Caracas.

This operation, described by officials as a "win for the world," is being widely condemned by international observers as a brazen act of imperialist plunder. The uranium was transported by land and sea to a facility in South Carolina, the U.S. said.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Pezeshkian condemns aggression on cultural heritage, orders urgent restoration of Saadabad Complex

TEHRAN - Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has strongly condemned the recent attacks on Iran's historical and cultural sites by the US and the Zionist regime, describing such actions as a blatant violation of international law and a destructive campaign against the civilization and identity of nations.

During an inspection of the damaged sections of the Saadabad Palace Complex on Friday, the President emphasized the necessity of safeguarding Iran's collective memory, CHTN reported.

He assessed the extent of the destruction caused during the recent aggression and issued immediate directives for the professional restoration of the site. ▶ Page 6



Palestinian amputee runners line up for the 2-kilometre race at the Palestine Marathon along the coastal road near Nuseirat, Gaza.

The marathon that bridges a besieged land

TEHRAN - Amid the suffocating presence of Israeli checkpoints and the looming separation wall, over 13,000 runners participated in the tenth Palestine International Marathon on Friday.

This year's event carried a profound weight, re-establishing a vital link between Bethlehem and the Gaza Strip after a two-year hiatus forced by Israel's genocidal war on the enclave.

From the Church of the Nativity to the coastal roads of Nuseirat, participants, including amputees and foreign activists, transformed the 42km race into a vivid act of peaceful resistance. Against a backdrop of staggering casualties and systemic movement restrictions, the marathon served as a defiant assertion of Palestinian unity and an enduring demand for basic human dignity.

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Trump faces a political challenge

Ettelaat, in a commentary, referred to the highly challenging situation US President Donald Trump is facing and wrote: With a 50% increase in fuel prices in the United States, 62% public dissatisfaction, and the upcoming mid-term elections, the US president is confronting the economic and political consequences of the war with Iran and is facing a serious challenge in finding a strong way out. While Donald Trump has suggested the possibility of reaching an agreement with Iran in the coming days, analysts believe Washington is under unprecedented economic and political pressure to end this war. Analysts argue that Trump is wrestling with a political dilemma: he must end the conflict, but in a way that does not appear as a retreat in the face of Iran's nuclear program. Meanwhile, as the US midterm elections in November draw closer, analysts say Republicans worry that this war could become a heavy political burden for them.

Shargh: Regional countries recognized Iran's power

Shargh examined how regional countries view Iran from the beginning of the Ramadan War until now. It wrote: The United States and Israel, as two international and regional powers, began a war with great confidence and without feeling the need to form an international or regional coalition, betting on a decisive and rapid victory. However, the preparations Iran had made for the possibility of such a war defeated the enemy in its objectives, strategy, and even tactics. Regional countries gradually realized that Iran is far more capable than they had assumed, and the confusion shown by the US and Israel revealed that they face serious strategic limitations. Doubts about America's ability to manage the war have led to a form of hidden and open distrust, raising the question of whether the US can still be considered a reliable security guarantor.

Etemad: Iran's geo-economic veto in the world's most important waterway

Etemad analyzed the strategic importance of the Strait of Hormuz and Iran's comprehensive control over it at this moment. According to the paper, Iran's new position should be called a 'geo-economic veto' —not in the sense of permanently closing the strait, which would harm Iran and the entire region, but in the sense that no security, oil, or maritime arrangement in the Persian Gulf can exclude Iran and remain stable. According to Iran's foreign minister, the Strait of Hormuz is not closed, but safe passage must occur with respect

How the Iran conflict is catalyzing a multipolar world order

By Ranjan Solomon

The 2026 Iran conflict is increasingly viewed as a major catalyst for a multipolar world order, accelerating the transition away from U.S. hegemony towards a fragmented global system. By initiating "Operation Epic Fury," a joint military campaign on February 28, 2026, the U.S. and Israel targeted Iran as the central "Rimland" node linking Eurasian powers, yet this action has deepened the shift toward a new, multi-centric global configuration.

There arise multi-dimensional implications of the 2026 Iran conflict on the emerging multipolar world.

First, there is the acceleration of "fragmented globalization," which is leading the world towards the fundamental restructuring of the global world economy, moving from a unified, efficiency-driven system to one defined by "friend-shoring" — a strategy prioritizing trade with political allies to build resilient supply chains. Geopolitical tensions are forcing nations to align with either Western-aligned frameworks or alternative structures supported by China and Russia.

Governments and companies are prioritizing security, stability, and geopolitical alignment over cost-optimization. This is particularly dominant in strategic sectors such as renewable energy, AI, critical minerals, and semiconductors.

Rather than a sudden collapse, globalization is experiencing a redesign, with trade frag-

menting into regional hubs. Major trade blocs are solidifying in ASEAN, the (P)GCC, and Mercosur. The world must contend with the fact of potential high-stakes rivalries, especially China-Russia vs. Western Alignment. The world is facing a rise in "mini-lateral" trade deals, with Western-aligned nations deepening trade ties with partners like India and Mexico, while Russia and China strengthen their own economic partnerships.

Javan: More lethal than a blow to America; a blow to the petrodollar

At a time when energy crises in Europe and Asia are unfolding at rates far higher than in the United States, focusing solely on the impact of fuel prices on the US economy can be a major strategic mistake. What emerges from analyzing deep geo-economic linkages shows that the real vulnerability of America's war machine and financial power does not lie in its domestic gas stations, but in the mechanism of debt financing and the pillars of the petrodollar system. New geopolitical calculations indicate that trying to inflict a direct and symmetrical blow on the United States is a costly strategy with limited returns. In contrast, focusing on disrupting the 'petrodollar recycling loop' and attacking the US bond market through an Eastern-global economic coalition directly targets the critical chokepoint of America's financial-military civilization. A war whose costs cannot be hidden through borrowing is a war that is defeated before the first shot is fired.

Resalat: Beijing's role in post-war diplomacy

Resalat, in an article about Araghchi's trip to Beijing, wrote: Effective deterrence in the post-war period requires a combination of tools: military capability, active diplomacy, and—most importantly—economic interdependence. The Strait of Hormuz can be part of this equation, but it is by no means the whole of it. The future of Iran's deterrence lies not in closing a chokepoint, but in becoming an 'indispensable node' in the global economic and political network—an achievement that will not be possible without deep and strategic cooperation with a power like China. The ceasefire is an opportunity to reassess national power instruments and redefine strategic alliances. In this context, the recent trip of Seyyed Abbas Araghchi to China reflects the reality that Tehran, to navigate post-war crises, has fully oriented its outlook toward the East and toward China as an emerging global power.

menting into regional hubs. Major trade blocs are solidifying in ASEAN, the (P)GCC, and Mercosur. The world must contend with the fact of potential high-stakes rivalries, especially China-Russia vs. Western Alignment. The world is facing a rise in "mini-lateral" trade deals, with Western-aligned nations deepening trade ties with partners like India and Mexico, while Russia and China strengthen their own economic partnerships.

This shift has economic consequences that are causing a slowdown in global trade, which is expected to grow by only 2.3% in 2026, as per data from the World Trade Organization. It also creates an inflationary effect due to relocating production to higher-cost, yet politically "safe" regions.

Consider too the impact on strategy. Businesses are facing a new operating landscape where political relationships are as critical as commercial factors, leading to the rise of regionalized production. This trend, sometimes described as a move toward a new "Cold War II," is accelerating due to rising tariffs, export controls, and the need to mitigate risks from non-aligned nations. The same acceleration is also of what is increasingly referred to as "Fragmented Globalization". The conflict is driving "friend-shoring" and the creation of aligned blocs rather than a unified global economy. This is forcing nations to choose between Western-aligned economic frameworks and alternative structures supported by China and Russia.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

US intel community confirms Iran was not developing nukes before war

From page 1 ▶ The United States intelligence community confirmed that Tehran was not developing a nuclear weapon before the 40-day war on Iran, according to a former US "counterterrorism" chief.

Joe Kent, who served as Director of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCC) under the Trump administration before resigning in protest, asserted in a post on X on Thursday that the US intelligence community was in agreement before the war that "Iran wasn't developing a nuclear weapon."

The US and Israel launched an unprovoked war on Iran on February 28, 2026, under the false pretext that Tehran was pursuing nuclear weapons.

"One of the many tragedies of this war is that before the war began the US Intel Community, including CIA, was in agreement that Iran wasn't developing a nuclear weapon & that Iran would target US bases in the region & shut down the Strait of Hormuz if they were attacked by Israel & the US," Kent wrote.

"The IC also properly assessed



that targeting the Iranian leadership would strengthen the system," he continued. "Despite the professionalism & accuracy of the IC, the narrative & agenda spun by a foreign government — Israel — won the argument & forced us into this war. We need to understand exactly how this happened to ensure we are never put in this position again."

Kent resigned from his post in March in protest against 'an unwarranted US-Israeli aggres-

sion against Iran.' In his resignation letter, he openly criticized President Donald Trump's decision to launch the war.

Iran did not pose an immediate threat to the United States, Kent asserted.

"I cannot in good conscience support the war against Iran," Kent wrote on March 17, 2025, in a post on X. He pointed out that the Israelis forced Trump into the war. "It is clear that we

started this war due to pressure from Israel and its powerful American lobby," he added.

Political experts have widely condemned Trump's handling of the Iran crisis. Dr. Sarah Collins, a foreign policy analyst at the Council on Foreign Relations, told media outlets: "This war was entirely avoidable. The intelligence community was clear, but the administration chose political lobbying over national security." Meanwhile, conservative commentator David Brooks wrote in The New York Times that "Trump has fallen into a trap of his own making, sacrificing American lives for the benefit of a foreign agenda."

These days, there is no doubt that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has pushed Trump into war with Iran.

Kent said conservative activist Charlie Kirk last summer implored him to do what he could to make sure the Trump administration resisted getting involved in a war in the Middle East.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran's top diplomat criticizes US 'provocations' in talks with Turkish, British counterparts

From page 1 ▶ Araghchi referred to "adventurous moves" and "insulting rhetoric" by senior US officials, stating that Washington is undermining ceasefire agreements and escalating tensions through military maneuvers. "Such destructive behavior only weakens the path of diplomacy and reinforces Iranian skepticism about the sincerity of the American side," he added.

He emphasized that ending illegal acts of aggression and abandoning excessive and unreasonable policies by the United States are essential for advancing the current diplomatic process.

In response, Fidan reaffirmed Ankara's support for ongoing diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving a peaceful resolution.

He stressed the importance of continued dialogue and regional cooperation to end hostilities and prevent further escalation, reiterating Turkey's commitment to regional stability through diplomacy.

Araghchi also held a phone conversation with British Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper to discuss regional developments, including the situation in the Strait of Hormuz and ongoing ceasefire efforts. The two sides exchanged views on regional stability and the latest diplomatic developments surrounding the ceasefire between Iran and the United States.

The talks came amid heightened tensions following the recent US and Israeli war against Iran, which began on February 28,



2026. In response to attacks on its vessels, Iran closed the strategic Strait of Hormuz. After forty days of conflict, the two sides accepted a Pakistan-mediated ceasefire on April 8, which remains in effect.

Iran's parliament advances plan to establish an independent body for managing Strait of Hormuz

From page 1 ▶ For all other vessels, passage would be subject to obtaining official permits and paying fees for "guidance, supervision, and security services."

Rezaei-Kouchi stressed that all such payments must be made exclusively in Iranian rials.

The Iranian Parliament Research Center has also proposed the establishment of a "semi-independent public organization" to oversee management of the strait. The body would function as an entity operating between government ministries and private-sector institutions.

Babak Negahdari, head of the

research center, stated that the proposed organization would be tasked with ensuring safety and security, maintaining uninterrupted transit, managing risks, and responding rapidly to maritime and technological developments. He noted that the body would operate under an agency or public corporation model in order to avoid excessive bureaucratic constraints.

Several Iranian institutions — including military, economic, and environmental bodies — are currently active in the Strait of Hormuz region. The proposed organization would coordinate among them, prevent overlap-

ping responsibilities, and regulate interactions between executive institutions and the armed forces.

The services provided by the organization would include maritime piloting, safety and rescue operations, marine environmental protection, and port infrastructure services.

The organization would also establish a transparent financial reporting system, monitor maritime activities, ensure compliance with regulations, and provide feedback to relevant authorities.

Negahdari added that fur-

ther studies regarding the legal framework, duties, and authorities of the proposed body are still underway. The plan has already been reviewed by the parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission. However, final approval will require a vote during an open session of the Majlis (Iranian parliament).

It remains unclear whether lawmakers will ultimately endorse the creation of a formal independent body for managing the Strait of Hormuz or pursue an alternative mechanism instead.

Russian ambassador in Tehran marks Victory Day, reflecting pride in Soviet WWII legacy

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN — Russian Ambassador to Iran Alexey Dedov took part in Victory Day commemorations in Tehran on Saturday, marking the 81st anniversary of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in World War II.

Dedov, along with the staff of the Russian Embassy and heads of diplomatic missions of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), laid wreaths and flowers at the mass graves of Soviet servicemen at Doulab Cemetery (Orthodox section) in eastern Tehran and at a memorial site in the Zargandeh area in the northern part of the capital.

Ceremonies were also held across Russia and other former Soviet states to mark the annual event.

President Vladimir Putin spoke at the annual Victory Day military parade in Moscow on Saturday, commemorating the sacrifices of Soviet soldiers during World War II, known in Russia as the Great Patriotic War. Following the ceremony in Red Square, Putin laid flowers at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

before attending a reception at the Kremlin.

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, Malaysian King Sultan Ibrahim, Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, and Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico were among the foreign guests. Congratulating the participants, Putin said Soviet soldiers bore colossal losses to defend the "freedom and dignity" of the peoples of Europe. He noted that the Soviet people "restored sovereignty to those states that capitulated before Nazi Germany and became obedient accomplices in its crimes."

'A traditional day of pride'

On the annual occasion, Maxim Nachinov, leading editor at The Regional Newspaper in Russia, shared his views with the Tehran Times.

Maxim said Victory Day is "traditionally a day of pride, joy, and thankfulness."

The Russian journalist said the occasion is contrasted with another World War II remembrance day, "the Day of Memory and Sorrow," which is observed on June 22. He noted, "That day marks the date when Ger-

many invaded the Soviet Union. It is the day to remember all the terrible losses our country has suffered. But on Victory Day, everyone is cheerful; there are parades and fireworks all over the country. On this day, we celebrate our strength and unity."

Over the past years, Russia has celebrated Victory Day amid its ongoing war with Ukraine, which began in 2022.

Ahead of this year's commemorations, Russia and Ukraine agreed to observe a three-day ceasefire, announced by US President Donald Trump on Friday.

The struggle against the Wehrmacht

Russia has consistently underscored the decisive role of the Soviet Union in the defeat of Nazi Germany, stressing that the Red Army bore the main burden of the war and sustained the heaviest losses in the struggle against the Wehrmacht — the unified armed forces of Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler from 1935 to 1945. About 27 million Soviet citizens lost their lives during the conflict.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Hezbollah is Iran's red line, not Trump's photo op

The upcoming Israel-Lebanon negotiations will take place against the backdrop of ongoing Israeli attacks in Lebanon

TEHRAN - Israel's continued deadly bombardments of Lebanon, despite a ceasefire agreement, clearly indicate that the truce exists only on paper — and that Israel has no scruples about violating it.

Fresh hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel began on March 2. Negotiations between Israel and Lebanon in the middle of last month led to a US-brokered ceasefire. Despite the truce, which has officially been in place since April 17, Israel has not only continued its occupation of parts of southern Lebanon but has also carried out regular attacks under the pretext of targeting Hezbollah positions.

In wide-scale Israeli strikes on southern Lebanon on Friday, dozens of people lost their lives.

According to Lebanon's National News Agency (NNA), the Israeli army targeted the town of Toura in Tyre and the town of Blat in the Marjayoun district. It also hit the districts of Nabatieh, Bint Jbeil, and Sidon, among others.

The Israeli army also issued new forced evacuation orders for some towns and villages in southern Lebanon.

Hezbollah said it carried out a flurry of attacks against Israeli forces in response to Israel's repeated violations of the ceasefire.

The Lebanese Health Ministry says nearly 2,800 people have been killed and over 8,000 injured since hostilities began on March 2.

Israeli violation of Lebanese sovereignty

A second stage of negotiations between Israel and Lebanon is expected to be held in Washington on May 14 and 15. Prime Minister Nawaf Salam told Al Jazeera that Lebanon is "seeking American guarantees that will contribute to restoring Lebanon's sov-



ereignty and territorial integrity."

At the very least, Israel's violations of the ongoing ceasefire show that Tel Aviv does not care a whit about Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity and the Washington-mediated truce.

Israel seeks to disarm Hezbollah, but it has failed to do so amid rising support for the group, fueled in part by Israel's expansionist policies in Lebanon and its continued deadly raids despite the ceasefire.

Trump's theatrical show

President Donald Trump, like previous US presidents, has thrown his full weight behind Israel. In this context, it is clear that the upcoming talks could become little more than a theatrical show and a photo opportunity for Trump. He appears eager to claim that he is the first president in American history to bring peace between the Lebanese and the Israelis. Yet the root cause of tensions between Israel and Lebanon remains Israel's occupation and its repeated violations of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity over the past decades.

Iran's red line

A new round of fighting between Israel and Hezbollah be-

gan just two days after the US and Israel launched a joint war on Iran. The war lasted nearly 40 days before Tehran and Washington reached a fragile ceasefire on April 8.

The first round of Pakistani-mediated talks between Iran and the US in Islamabad on April 11 failed. Iran is now reviewing a new US proposal. Iranian officials have stated that Tehran has set clear conditions for bringing a permanent end to the war. In addition to demanding credible non-aggression guarantees and an end to a US naval blockade imposed after the failure of the Islamabad talks, Iran has stressed that the Israeli war on Lebanon must completely stop.

Iranian officials have described continued Israeli attacks on Lebanon as part of a broader strategy to destabilize the region and exert pressure on Tehran during negotiations. They have emphasized that Iran will not accept any agreement that ignores Israel's actions in Lebanon. They have also referred to this issue as a "red line" that must not be crossed, arguing that regional security is indivisible and that any sustainable arrangement must address Israel's aggression

and occupation policies.

America First vs. Israel First

Analysts, meanwhile, argue that Israel has intensified its attacks on Lebanon to undermine the prospects of a potential deal between Tehran and Washington. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stands accused by critics of encouraging Trump to confront Iran militarily. However, the Trump administration denies this claim.

Soon after the war began on February 28, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi wrote on X that Trump had turned "America First into Israel First — which always means America Last." This message has been echoed not only by Iranian officials but also by various commentators abroad who argue that Trump's long-standing pledge to end "forever wars" is at odds with Washington's deepening involvement in regional conflicts.

The war with Iran has come at a high cost for the United States. In addition to rising fuel prices, Trump's popularity has hit a record low. The conflict is also seen as posing a threat to Republicans ahead of the November midterm elections, potentially costing them seats in Congress.

If Trump truly wants to end the war with Iran, he must recognize that de-escalation cannot be selective. Any serious effort to stabilize the region would require restraining Israeli military actions, ending policies that fuel further confrontation, and addressing longstanding disputes rooted in occupation and violations of sovereignty. Without tackling these underlying issues, ceasefires will remain fragile, negotiations will lack credibility, and claims of peacemaking will ring hollow.

Trump administration under fire for evasion on Minab school attack

From Page 1 ▶ A confrontation between Trump and a reporter brought the tragedy back into public attention. Niall Stange of The Hill asked Trump on Friday evening outside the White House: "We're at a point, almost 10 weeks after a missile hit a girls' school in Iran. Who fired that missile?"

Trump replied: "So, uh, that's under study right now... and we'll give you a report as soon as we have it."

The US strike against the Minab school has drawn widespread condemnation.

On Saturday, Ilan Uhrík, a Slovak member of the Europe-

an Parliament, described the incident as a clear instance of a premeditated war crime. He made the remarks while joining a memorial gathering outside the Iranian Embassy in Brussels in honor of the victims.

The European representative also criticized the passivity of European institutions toward the tragedy. He said the European Union and its member states must avoid any complicity in such actions.

He further noted that although he had formally written to the European Commission, the leadership appeared to be operating under double standards. He sug-



gested that European leaders have failed to properly investigate these allegations due to an inability to challenge the policies of the United States and Israel.

Uhrík also suggested that military actions against civilians, including women and the elderly in Gaza, Lebanon, and Beirut,

indicate a pattern of targeting non-combatants to instill fear and achieve strategic objectives.

During the course of the 39-day war, the US and Israel killed thousands of people in Iran. Hospitals, residential areas, and energy infrastructure were also targeted.

LATETS NEWS

■ **Iran ridicules Trump's peace claims as 'grotesque absurdity'**

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei slammed the Trump administration's contradictory stance, saying claims of seeking peace alongside threats of a nuclear attack are a "grotesque absurdity." He referenced the classic film Dr. Strangelove to underscore the irony of proposing a nuclear "solution."

■ **Enemy failed to weaken Iran economically despite targeting heavy industries: VP**

First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref said the US-Israeli enemy failed to economically cripple Iran by targeting heavy industries during the recent war. He stated that despite bombing steel and petrochemical plants, reconstruction is underway at a fast pace, thanks to the people's presence and government planning. Aref emphasized the strategic role of industries like Mobarakeh Steel and stressed the importance of the Strait of Hormuz in neutralizing illegal sanctions.

■ **Abbasali Kadkhodaei appointed as acting head of the Expediency Council's secretariat**

Mohsen Dehnavi, the spokesperson of the Ex-

pediency Discernment Council, said Abbasali Kadkhodaei has been appointed as the acting head of the council's secretariat. The appointment was made by a decree issued by Ayatollah Amoli Larijani.

The inauguration ceremony for Kadkhodaei was held today, attended by several council members, directors, and heads of the secretariat's commissions.

■ **Iran's envoy says military strategy against Tehran has failed**

Iran's Ambassador to Italy, Mohammad Reza Sabouri, stated that military pressure on Iran has failed. Speaking at a Rome seminar, he said Iran keeps diplomacy open for a fair deal if aggressors respect international law. He emphasized Iran's defensive capabilities, including missiles and drones, are solely for deterrence.

■ **Iran's top priority is halting war and ending US 'maritime piracy'**

An advisor to Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman said Tehran's priorities are stopping the war, reopening the Strait of Hormuz, and preventing US "maritime piracy."

Ali Safari added that Iran is reviewing Washington's response to its proposal, stressing deep mistrust toward the US and warning that negotiations with America often lead to war.

■ **What China learned from US aggression against Iran**

Politico reports that China is using the US war on Iran as a strategic opportunity to study American military strengths and weaknesses, including weaponry consumption and deployment patterns. Beijing is closely monitoring US operations to prepare for potential future conflicts in the Indo-Pacific. Iran's low-cost drones and swarm tactics have pressured expensive US defense systems, depleting precision munitions like Tomahawk missiles and Patriot interceptors. Analysts say China—with its larger missile arsenal and monopoly on gallium (critical for munitions)—could employ this pattern on a much broader scale.

SPORTS

Iran among women's futsal ranking top 10

TEHRAN - Brazil have remained top of both the women's and men's FIFA Futsal World Rankings in the latest edition, while Iran's women's futsal team have secured a spot within the top 10.

The May 2026 rankings take account of 84 new women's matches, 10 of which were played in late 2025, and 321 new men's matches, 64 of which were contested as last year drew to a close. While the women's encounters included 18 qualifiers for the UEFA Women's Futsal EURO 2027 and 66 friendlies, the men's matches comprised clashes at the AFC Futsal Asian Cup 2026 (which ran from 27 January to 7 February in Indonesia), the CONMEBOL Copa América de Futsal 2026 (held in Paraguay from 24 January to 1 February) and the UEFA Futsal EURO 2026 (staged in Latvia, Lithuania and Slovenia from 21 January to 7 February), as well as 54 regional and FIFA Futsal World Cup qualifiers and 177 friendlies.

The top six nations in the FIFA Futsal Women's World Ranking remain unchanged from the previous edition published in December 2025, with Brazil, Spain, Portugal, Argentina, Italy and Japan leading the way. They are followed by Thailand and Colombia, while the biggest climbers in the most recent update are France, who leap up 15 places to 33rd spot. Costa Rica and Fiji also enjoyed fruitful periods, climbing to 27th and 59th respectively.

In the men's game, Brazil have kept their lead intact following their success at the CONMEBOL Copa América de Futsal 2026 where they lifted the trophy for a record 12th time.

In the latest update, the top five positions are held by teams that competed in the finals of recent continental championships. Hot on the heels of the table-topping Seleção are UEFA Futsal EURO runners-up Portugal (2nd) and the new European champions Spain (3rd). They are followed by Argentina (4th) and Iran (5th), who successfully defended their AFC title. Fellow Asian finalists Indonesia have risen ten places to 14th.

Iran to meet Gambia in Turkey

TEHRAN - The Gambia Football Federation (GFF) announced that Gambia, known as the Scorpions, will play a friendly international match against Iran on May 29, in Antalya, Turkey.

This encounter will serve as preparation for both teams: the Scorpions gearing up for the 2027 AFCON qualifiers, while the Persians are getting ready for the 2026 World Cup.

Currently ranked 21st in the FIFA rankings, Iran has already secured their ticket to the 2026 World Cup and will approach this match as the favorite. Gambia, on the other hand, sit 116th in the world rankings and view this clash as a crucial test against one of Asia's strongest teams.

Iran have been drawn in Group G for the World Cup, which will be co-hosted by the United States, Mexico and Canada from June 11 to July 19.

Team Melli are scheduled to open their campaign against New Zealand in Los Angeles on June 15, followed by a match against Belgium at the same venue on June 21. Its final group match is set for June 26 against Egypt in Seattle.

FIFA invites FFIRI chiefs to Zurich for 2026 preparations

TEHRAN - According to L'Équipe, FIFA has invited leaders of the Iranian football federation to its Zurich headquarters by 20 May to prepare for the 2026 World Cup, scheduled for 11 June to 19 July.

The Iranians were absent from FIFA's Congress in Vancouver in late April, their delegation leaving Canada shortly after an incident at Toronto airport.

Iran's place has been debated amid the Middle East conflict, which escalated in late February

after strikes by Israel and the United States on Iran. On 30 April, FIFA president Gianni Infantino opened the 76th Congress in Vancouver and said Iran would take part and would play in the United States.

Donald Trump, the president of the United States, said that if Gianni Infantino supported it he was fine with it, adding the team should be allowed to play.

Iran federation chief Mehdi Ta said on returning home that he wanted a meeting with FIFA and had many topics to discuss. FIFA is awaiting a response and aims to receive the delegation by 20 May at the latest, three weeks before the tournament.

Hossein Abdi to lead Iran U23 head coach

TEHRAN - Hossein Abdi has been named head coach of the Iran U23 national team.

The Iran U23 football team put on a poor performance in the 2026 AFC U23 Asian Cup, and the officials of the Football Federation have ended their cooperation with Omid Ravankhah, shortly after the competition.

The Football Federation held negotiations with Abdi, a former Persepolis player and youth-level coach, and reached a final agreement with him.

Abdi will hold a final meeting in the coming days to sign a contract with the Football Federation.

The Iran U-23 national team will compete in the Asian Games to be held in Nagoya.

Mourinho: Iran deserve World Cup place

TEHRAN - Portuguese well-known coach José Mourinho insists Iran national football team deserve to play at the 2026 World Cup.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino has confirmed Iran's participation in the competition, yet there are still doubts on whether they'll actually take part in the tournament due to the ongoing tensions in the Middle East.

Donald Trump's Special Envoy, Paolo Zampolli, has been reiterating that Italy should replace Iran if they don't show up for the World Cup in June.

Regarding the situation in Iran and the political debates surrounding their participation in the tournament, Mourinho took a clear stance: "One thing is politics, one is sport," Mourinho said.

"The Iranian players who have qualified for the World Cup, which will involve too many teams, deserve to play it," he concluded.

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Team Melli are scheduled to open their campaign against New Zealand in Los Angeles on June 15, followed by a match against Belgium at the same venue on June 21. Its final group match is set for June 26 against Egypt in Seattle.

Iranian tennis player withdraws from final against Israeli opponent

TEHRAN - Iranian tennis player Hana Shabanpour withdrew from the final of the J60 Turkey World Tour, declining to compete against an Israeli opponent.

Shabanpour, representing Iran in the women's doubles event, had advanced to the final alongside her Turkish partner, Samiye İdil Ozkeresteci, after an impressive run in the tournament.

However, upon learning that their opponents in the final would be Israel's Margarita Aktuganova and Russia's Eva Sultanova, Shabanpour decided to withdraw from the match.

She cited solidarity with the oppressed children of Minab School and the victims of U.S.-Israeli attacks as the reason for her decision.

Over 1.1m tons of I-beams produced in a year

TEHRAN- According to the statistics of the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA), 1.144 million tons of I-beams was produced in Iran during the past Iranian calendar year 1404 (ended on March 20).

Based on the ISIPA data, the country's I-beam production in 1404 fell 14 percent from the production figure in 1403, which was 1.33 million tons.

An I-beam, also known as a universal beam or rolled steel joist (RSJ), is a structural steel shape with a cross-section resembling a capital "I". It features two horizontal flanges connected by a vertical web. This design efficiently resists bending and shear forces, making it ideal for load-bearing applications.

I-beams are produced via hot rolling of steel billets, though heavy sections may be welded. They come in various dimensions—parallel flange (wide flange) or tapered flange—and steel grades for different strength needs. Standard lengths range from 6 to 18 meters.

Widely used in building frames, bridges, mezzanines, and industrial supports, I-beams offer high strength-to-weight ratio, reducing material and foundation costs. The web withstands shear stress while flanges handle bending moments. Common applications include skyscrapers, warehouses, shipbuilding, and crane runways.

Modern I-beams are often made from recycled scrap in electric arc furnaces, supporting green construction. Advanced high-strength steels allow lighter beams without compromising safety. As construction trends favor prefabrication and longer spans, I-beams remain fundamental to civil engineering and structural steelwork globally.

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

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

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

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

A 3.8-percent increase in steel ingot production against a 1.1-percent decrease in long steel product production indicates the need to develop steel ingot exports. It is noteworthy that the shutdown of more than two million tons of steel ingot capacity due to the third imposed war can be compensated by activating idle capacities for producing this product.

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

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

Beyond crude steel, Iran is a major force in the global direct reduced iron (DRI) market. The nation produced roughly 37 million tons of DRI in 2025, accounting for about a quarter of the world's total supply. This DRI is used by its modern electric arc furnace (EAF) mills, which form the backbone of its steelmaking capacity. However, the industry has faced severe headwinds.



In early 2026, military strikes on key facilities, including the country's two largest steel plants, caused major disruptions. This came on top of long-standing challenges like international sanctions, domestic inflation, and energy shortages from power and gas cuts.

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

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

Semi-Finished Steel

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

Flat Steel Products

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

Long Steel Products

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

- * Rebar (reinforcement bars) for construction

- * Structural sections like I-beams, H-profiles, channels, and angles

- * Railway rails – ESCO is Iran's sole producer of rail tracks

Tubular and Finished Steel Products

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

Overall, the diversity of products demonstrates Iran's growing self-sufficiency and its role as a significant global steel producer.

According to the data released by the World Steel Association (WSA), Iran's crude steel production rose 15.1 percent year-on-year to 2.6 million tons in January 2026.

The figures show Iran maintained its position as the world's tenth-largest steel producer, outperforming the broader global trend.

Global crude steel production across 69 countries totaled 147.3 million tons in January, down 6.5 percent compared with January 2025.

China, the world's largest steel producer, recorded a 13.9 percent decline in output to 75.3 million tons. India produced 15.1 million tons, up 10.5 percent year-on-year, while the United States posted a 3.3 percent increase to 7.1 million tons.

South Korea's output rose 5.0 percent to 5.6 million tons. Japan produced 6.8 million tons, down 0.5 percent, and Brazil's production fell 1.4 percent to 2.7 million tons.

Germany registered a 15 percent increase to 3.1 million tons, while Russia's output declined 7.4 percent to 5.5 million tons. Turkey produced 3.4 million tons, up 5.8 percent year-on-year.

The data indicate that while global steel production contracted at the start of 2026, Iran expanded output at a double-digit pace, consolidating its ranking among leading producers.

According to World Steel Association's previous report, Iran's steel production reached three million tons in December 2025, registering more than 16 percent growth compared to the same period last year.

The country remained in tenth place globally with a total steel production of approximately 32 million tons in 2025.

US appliance giant Whirlpool warns Iran war triggering recession-level slump

TEHRAN- Appliance giant Whirlpool says the Iran war has caused a "recession-level industry decline" in the US, driven by a collapse in consumer confidence in late February and March.

In its latest earnings report, the company slashed its full-year earnings guidance to \$3-\$3.50 per share, down from a prior \$6 outlook. Shares tumbled as much as 18% before recovering slightly.

CFO Roxanne Warner told Yahoo Finance that demand for large home appliances across the US and Canada is now at its lowest level since the Great Financial Crisis. While severe winter weather also played a role, the war remains a central factor.

The conflict has disrupted global supply chains and raised shipping costs for gasoline and jet fuel, leading to higher prices for appliances from Whirlpool-owned brands like Maytag



and KitchenAid.

As a bellwether of broader economic health, home appliance sales reflect consumers' willingness to make big-ticket purchases. Whirlpool's warning follows the University of Michigan's consumer sentiment index falling to 49.8% in April — the lowest for that month since June 2022.

Meanwhile, Bank of America warns that the dual-engine set-

up by which the US economy is increasingly driven, namely, soaring AI investment and resilient consumer spending, is uniquely vulnerable to the ongoing Iran war.

Market strategists note that prolonged geopolitical instability typically depresses discretionary spending for 6-12 months.

The cascading warnings from Whirlpool and Bank of America

underscore a sobering reality: no corner of the US economy—from household appliance purchases to multi-billion-dollar AI investments—is immune to the ripple effects of the Iran war.

While a swift ceasefire could help restore consumer confidence and ease logistics costs, prolonged instability threatens to turn what began as a demand slump in housing-related goods into a broader recessionary spiral.

For now, with consumer sentiment already at historic lows and discretionary spending under pressure, businesses and policymakers alike face a high-stakes waiting game. The coming months will reveal whether diplomatic efforts can outpace economic damage, or whether the US economy is headed for a harder landing than anticipated.

Iran's naval blockade has no legal logic, main goal is pressure on China: economic expert

TEHRAN- An economic analyst said the US behavior in the naval blockade not only has no compliance with international law, but one of its main goals is to exert economic pressure on China and endanger its energy supplies.

Musa Shahbazi, speaking with IRNA about Donald Trump's recent statements that "we are engaged in piracy and seizing Iranian ships," stated: Firstly, in terms of rules, our behavior in the Strait of Hormuz is fully compliant with maritime law regimes. In 1993, a law was passed in the Islamic Consultative Assembly based on international rules of "innocent passage" through straits. Passage must be innocent, meaning the security of the Islamic Republic of Iran must be ensured. After the imposed war, our security was endangered. To protect the stable and long-term security of the Islamic Republic of Iran, our actions in the strait have been fully compliant with international rules.

He continued: The other side has so far acted completely contrary to all international law rules, regimes, and conventions. And has explicitly said, "I attacked. Now because you have closed the Strait of Hormuz to pressure you, I am saying no ship should pass." This has no basis or rule in the international system.

This economic expert stated: Some US actions have a legal facade. For example, they say, "The International Atomic Energy Agency has issued a report and expressed concern." And since the IAEA is a reputable legal body — even though it writes falsehoods — it is still a body that has issued a report, based on which one can get a resolution at the Security Council and take action against a country. But this recent US action regarding the blockade has no compliance with the law. It doesn't even have a legal facade. It is completely contrary to all legal and maritime rules and regimes.

Iran completely determined on Strait of Hormuz issue

Shahbazi clarified: In terms of impact, because the US has realized that the Islamic Republic of

Iran is completely determined on the Strait of Hormuz issue and wants to exercise sovereignty in this region, it is seeking a way to counter it.

This economic expert emphasized: Today, more than two months after the start of the war and US aggression against Iran, the impact of the Strait of Hormuz on the energy market, food security, and US bonds has become clearly evident, and international think tanks within the US all believe that prolonging the closure of the strait for more than 5 months or the continuation of the war will harm the global economy, inflation, and global growth.

Shahbazi continued: The White House, aware of the economic consequences of closing the Strait of Hormuz, is seeking the least costly way to solve the problem and currently has no plan for a new military attack; of course, it might in the future, but currently it is pursuing the strategy of putting Iran under political, economic, and decision-making pressure through a naval blockade.

Three goals of US in continuing naval blockade

The analyst explained Trump's goal from this action as: First, to exert economic pressure on Iran within the framework of the puzzle he has defined; second, not to impose the cost of direct war on the US budget and avoid internal problems and disputes with Democrats in this regard; and third, to continue economic pressure on China.

However, he did not consider pressuring China to be Trump's main goal from the naval blockade of Iran and said: Of course, the US wants to endanger China's energy artery and through this, prevent part of its economic growth.

Shahbazi further clarified: The US, by intensifying economic pressures through naval conflict, wants to put the Islamic Republic of Iran on a path where it either opens the Strait of Hormuz itself or agrees to a deal favorable to the US, because the US is looking for an opportunity to withdraw from this battle with a feeling of victory and power.

Naval blockade harms future of global trade

Shahbazi, in response to the question of what consequences this admission has for the future of global trade from the perspective of global trade, and whether other countries can also seize the goods and assets of other countries under similar pretexts, said: From the perspective of impact on global markets and maritime trade, it definitely has a negative effect and will cause the Islamic Republic of Iran to increase its power and strictness in the strait. So it will not facilitate passage through the strait.

This economic expert, stating that the blockade affects both the country of origin and the destination country, said: One country emphasized: The US wants to simultaneously put pressure on the export and import origins and destinations of the Islamic Republic of Iran, so new players will enter the blockade arena, and it seems that China will certainly be affected by this practice.

Shahbazi continued: This is why in recent days China explicitly announced that it "ignores US sanctions laws against Iran"; this is the regional war that the late leader of the Islamic Revolution emphasized, believing that the coming war is no longer just Iran's issue.

US-China economic tension will rise one level higher

This economic expert predicted that the economic equations and tension between the US and China will go beyond tariff levels and enter a new phase, and certainly countries such as Turkey, India, and some countries that are origins or destinations of Iran's exports will be affected — meaning the continuation of this process will transfer the level of tension to other countries as well.

Shahbazi stated regarding whether this benefits Iran or not: It is certainly in our favor. The higher the level of tension rises, the more we reach a point previously raised by experts — that US sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran must also become costly for the United States itself.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

ICCIMA board member mentions 3 post-war economic scenarios

TEHRAN- A member of the board of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) explaining three possible scenarios for the economic situation in the post-war period, said: Two months have passed since the military aggression of the American-Zionist coalition against Iran, and now all countries are affected by its consequences, such that the Strait of Hormuz has shown that it impacts not only the countries of the region but the entire global energy cycle, including America.

Keyvan Kashefi, speaking to IRNA about the damage the global economy has suffered due to the military aggression of the American-Zionist coalition against Iran, stated: The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has caused great harm to energy consumers, especially in Europe and East Asia. Initially, countries that depend on Persian Gulf oil and supplied their needed oil and energy from countries such as Qatar, Iraq, Kuwait, and even Iran have been affected.

Stating that a wide range of countries, including China, South Korea, and Japan in the East, and some European countries in the West, have faced problems in the past two months following the war against Iran, he added: These problems are not limited to countries that directly obtained oil and energy from the West Asia; other countries are now also affected by the rise in global oil prices.

He emphasized: The performance of the Strait of Hormuz so far has shown that any development at this point does not only affect countries that get their oil from there; rather, the entire global energy cycle faces shortages.

Kashefi referred to gasoline and diesel prices in America and said: In the early weeks of the war, Trump believed that because America is not dependent on Persian Gulf oil, it would not be harmed by the price increases resulting from rising oil prices. But now the reality is that the entire world is affected by it — though it may be greater in some

countries — and it can be said that the position of the Strait of Hormuz in the global economy has made it one of the most fundamental issues in Iran-US negotiations.

Three scenarios for post-war period

The member of the Iran Chamber board, speaking about the outlook for the economic situation in the coming months, stated: We have no more than three scenarios. The first scenario, which has a low probability of occurring, is that we witness war once again. This situation is in no one's interest, only complicates matters, and could even push oil prices above \$150 per barrel in the markets.

Kashefi continued: The second scenario relates to the negotiations currently underway — that the negotiations reach a definitive resolution to resolve the differences between Iran and America, and these disputes end, such that investors from various countries can be present in Iran's economy,

similar to what we saw during the implementation of the JCPOA.

He described the third scenario as the worst possible situation — neither war nor peace — and said: In this case, sanctions will remain, and we will have to rebuild the damages caused by the war under sanctions.

The member of the Iran Chamber board, stating that calm in the global economy under neither-war-nor-peace conditions is achieved when the Strait of Hormuz is opened for ship passage, said: As long as this is not done, tension exists, and the global economy will be affected by it.

Kashefi emphasized that uncertainty in the economy, inflation, and rising unemployment are among the damages of the economy and the continuation of neither-war-nor-peace conditions, and said: The turmoil caused by the war must subside so that markets can gradually adapt themselves to the new conditions.

Comrade Jianguo goes to Beijing with an empty holster

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — When Donald Trump's aircraft touches down in Beijing, the traditional choreography of American power will be noticeably out of sync. The U.S. president will arrive in the Middle Kingdom not as a global hegemon dictating the terms of "maximum pressure," but as a strategic firefighter.

Burdened by the weight of a war on Iran that refused to follow the script, Trump is no longer looking to conquer the Chinese economy; he is looking for a deal to steady a shaky chair ahead of the 2026 mid-terms.

The iron ledger of strategic exhaustion

The primary shadow looming over the Forbidden City is the exhaustion of the U.S. military. In the months since the U.S.-Israeli campaign of aggression against Iran was launched on February 28, the Pentagon has burned through an astronomical quantity of precision-guided munitions.

Internal assessments suggest that stockpiles of Patriot interceptors, Tomahawks, and SM-3 missiles have been depleted by as much as 30 to 50 percent, a staggering drain for a supposed superpower.

This is a fundamental shift in the global balance of power. To sustain the declining war machine in the Persian Gulf, Washington has been forced to cannibalize its Pacific assets, pulling carriers and missile batteries away from the South China Sea.

Beijing has watched this strategic paralysis with quiet satisfaction. For Chinese military planners, the math is simple: the U.S. cannot credibly defend Taiwan or contest the Pacific while its "arsenal of democracy" is being emptied into the sands of the Middle East.

Trump arrives in Beijing as a man who has played his high-value cards too early, leaving him with an empty holster at the most critical table.

Rare earths and the obsolescence of the tariff weapon

Beyond the military drain, Trump's signature economic weap-



on has been legally and strategically neutralized.

A landmark Supreme Court ruling has clipped the administration's broad executive powers under emergency trade statutes, turning the tariff hammer into a blunt instrument. While Washington scrambles for a new legal basis to tax Chinese goods, Beijing has weaponized its long game.

China's near-total dominance over the processing of lithium, cobalt, and rare earth elements serves as a silent ultimatum.

The recent expansion of export licenses for critical minerals essential to the American EV and aerospace industries is a velvet glove warning: any renewed tariff aggression from Trump will result in the immediate collapse of U.S. high-tech supply chains.

Trump's crew knows this. Their scaled-back CEO entourage in Beijing reflects the reality that they are no longer the ones making demands. Instead, the U.S. is quietly begging for Chinese influence to help stabilize global oil flows and ease the domestic inflation that is currently savaging the American voter.

'Comrade Jianguo'

In some strategy rooms of Beijing, Trump is discussed with a wry, almost appreciative irony. They call him "Comrade Jianguo," the "Nation Builder."

The joke, of course, is that the nation he is inadvertently building is not his own, but China. Few U.S. presidents have done more to unintentionally advance China's rise

and hasten the multipolar order than the man who vowed to restore American greatness.

By treating long-standing Pacific alliances like protection rackets and plunging headlong into the strategic swamp of the war on Iran, Trump gifted the title of global adult to China. Beijing has been quick to step into the void, offering a version of leadership that prizes long-term strategy over short-term volatility.

This shift represents a massive gravitational realignment in global power, one that aligns with the predictions made by Halford MacKinder over a century ago. Since the 1990s, the world's economic and military weight has been sliding steadily away from the Atlantic and toward the Pacific.

Trump's strategic myopia has only accelerated the transition. By exhausting American resources in a futile attempt to defeat Iran, he has confirmed the end of the Atlantic era.

One of the most striking ways this war has backfired is the forced integration of the Eurasian landmass. Washington's supposed blockade of Iran was intended to isolate Tehran, but it instead acted as a catalyst for a project of immense scale: the rapid expansion of a Central Asian railway network linking Iran directly to China's industrial heartland.

While these railways cannot immediately replace the volume of maritime trade, they represent a permanent strategic shift. Once the U.S. is eventually forced to lift

its so-called blockade, these links will remain, reinforcing the Iranian economy and tightening China's grip over the region.

The ultimate humiliation, however, is the emerging Hormuz handoff. For generations, the U.S. Navy arrogantly positioned itself as the self-appointed guardian of global energy routes, ensuring that oil flowed on Washington's terms.

Today, after Iran's defensive management of the Strait and the spectacular failure of the U.S. to break it, the mask of invincibility has slipped. America has been reduced to a desperate supplicant, begging a myriad of countries, including China, to use their influence to calm the waters.

A hollow victory for the cameras

The likely outcome of the summit is a deal designed for Fox News headlines but devoid of structural substance. Beijing will likely offer symbolic purchases of American soybeans and Boeing jets to help Trump spin a "massive win" for his base.

In exchange, the U.S. is expected to quietly pause chip sanctions and reduce naval pressure in the Taiwan Strait.

While Trump will undoubtedly frame this as a triumph of his deal-making prowess, the reality is a tactical retreat. Taiwan is being treated as a commodity to be traded for short-term economic relief, signaling to allies from Tokyo to Seoul that the U.S. security umbrella is now a business contract subject to cancellation.

The world will see the sunset of hegemony, a weakened president retreating from his front lines, while China, playing the long game, waits to extract the final concessions from an empire in decline.

The arsonist turned aspiring firefighter is going to arrive, and we do not know what fires he will ultimately sacrifice just to buy himself a temporary reprieve. And while he attempts to douse the flames with empty promises, one thing is certain: he is not setting the terms of the new landscape.

Hezbollah strikes Israeli bases for Beirut attack

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN — Hezbollah has waged a series of operations against the Zionist regime in response to an Israeli airstrike on Beirut.

The Lebanese resistance movement announced that it targeted the Zionist regime's Sharaga base (the administrative headquarters of the Golani Brigade command and the location of the Egoz unit), south of the Nahariya settlement, with a barrage of specialized rockets.

Hezbollah further announced that its resistance fighters targeted the Israeli Meron surveillance and air operations command base in "northern occupied Palestine with a swarm of loitering drones."

On Wednesday evening, the Zionist regime launched an airstrike that hit a residential building in Beirut's southern suburb, known as Dahieh.

It was the first attack to hit Dahieh since the announcement of a so-called ceasefire in Lebanon on April 16.

Since then, Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) have continued to wage daily aggres-

sion in southern Lebanon. Entire villages have been destroyed, in measures similar to the ones deployed by the IOF in Gaza. Rights groups say the Israeli actions in southern Lebanese villages amount to war crimes. In the latest Zionist aggression, dozens are feared dead in the southern Lebanese village of Saksakiyeh after an Israeli strike deliberately targeted a building that was housing forcibly displaced families from the southern Lebanese town of Jebchit.

According to the regime's media, the Zionist command center coordinated the Beirut attack with the U.S. administration, which approved it. It further highlights how far-fetched it is to believe the United States could serve as any kind of guarantor for a truce with the Zionist occupation regime. Some Lebanese officials insist that a truce with the Israeli regime via Washington is the only path to Lebanon's liberation, but critics disagree.

Critics argue that seeking sovereignty with the U.S. as a guarantor only encourages Israel to escalate its aggression. This has been evident in besieged Gaza, the occupied

West Bank, and more recently in Syria. The Israeli regime remains the staunchest U.S. ally in West Asia and Washington continues to arm and defend it unconditionally, leaving any truce brokered by America fundamentally unbalanced from the start.

Following the Beirut attack, Hezbollah once again demonstrated that it neither retaliates immediately nor hastily, instead taking several carefully planned days to prepare its strikes against the IOF.

Also, in response to the aggression on Beirut's southern suburb, Hezbollah resistance fighters targeted an IOF military vehicle, a D9 bulldozer, three Merkava tanks, and a newly established command center with drones, achieving direct hits. An IOF Humvee vehicle structure with a loitering glider was observed burning.

Furthermore, Hezbollah drone attacks targeted IOF soldiers in the town of Rashaaf, as well as another gathering of IOF soldiers in the town of Tayr Harfa in southern Lebanon.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

French presidential hopeful Mélenchon calls Israel the 'region's most dangerous state'

French politician and presidential candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon described Israel as "the most dangerous state in the region," accusing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government of fueling wars and carrying out attacks against neighboring countries amid escalating tensions across the Middle East.

Speaking in an interview with

the French channel LCI, Mélenchon said Israel was the main force behind the expansion of military tensions in the region, Kurdistan24 reported.

He also accused Israel of committing what he described as "genocide crimes," while emphasizing that his criticism was directed at the current Israeli government.

In another part of the inter-

view, Mélenchon revealed details of a conversation he held with a United Nations military official regarding the position of UN forces in the event of an Israeli ground incursion into Lebanon.

According to Mélenchon, the official told him that orders had been issued for withdrawal.

The French politician strongly criticized that position, arguing

that the withdrawal of peacekeeping forces contradicts the core nature of their mission.

He stressed that the role of peacekeeping forces should be to separate conflicting sides rather than retreat from confrontation zones.

"France will not tolerate attacks against its soldiers, and there must be a response," Mélenchon added.

The law of the jungle is dominant in the West Bank



TEHRAN - Settlers in the occupied Palestinian territories in the West Bank, who enjoy the protection of Israeli rulers and security forces, act with maximum impunity. They burn Palestinians' cars, homes, and other properties with the tacit approval of the Israeli regime.

There is no justice in the West Bank. It is a place in the world where humanity is sacrificed. There is only humiliation, intimidation, bullying, violence, racism, insult, etc. against the Palestinians in their own homeland.

In history books, students read about slavery and enslavement in old times. However, what is happening in the West Bank is much worse than slavery. On those days, the slaves were at least taken care of to work for the slavers.

The way Palestinians are treated is like the savagery of a primitive tribal leader or group against a weaker tribe, group, or even a nation. For example, such behaviors were committed against the native populations in Africa as colonizers chained them together and moved them to the American continent as slaves.

Also, such kinds of behaviors were practiced by certain uncivilized, backward societies against others in olden times.

One possible parallel to the behavior of settlers toward Palestinians is the treatment of Tutsis and moderate Hutus by extremist Hutu militias and officials during the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

The barbarity in the West Bank is an example of modern-day tragedy against native inhabitants who have been left helpless in the hands of people who are boiling with hatred against them.

The examples that the people of the West Bank are subjected to harassment and other inhumane behaviors are many. Some are given below:

Incidents involve destroying and setting Palestinians' olive trees on fire; harassing, beating, and threatening shepherds who are mostly children and the elderly with sticks, rocks, and weapons; stealing shepherds' sheep, driving them off cliffs, or, in extreme cases, poisoning and slaughtering them.

It is noteworthy to notice that olive trees are a primary source of income and a deep

Over 40 Shia clerics arrested in Bahrain as Manama escalates crackdown on solidarity with Iran

TEHRAN — In a dramatic overnight escalation, Bahraini security forces have arrested dozens of the country's most senior Shia clerics, storming homes hours after midnight and continuing a weeks-long campaign of repression against citizens expressing solidarity with Iran.

The Al-Wefaq National Islamic Society reports that by early Saturday morning, the number of detained scholars had risen to 41, though their whereabouts and conditions remain unknown.

Simultaneously, Bahrain's Interior Ministry claimed it had detained 41 individuals on charges of maintaining links with Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps, a familiar pretext used by Manama to criminalize legitimate religious and political expression.

The current wave of arrests began two weeks ago with the detention of Ayatollah Sayed Majid al-Mish'al, head of the Bahraini Ulama Council. His arrest marked the

symbol of cultural heritage for Palestinians, making their destruction both an economic and emotional blow.

Horrifically, UN experts have received reports of sexual abuse of Palestinian men, women, and children by settlers.

Just on Friday, May 8, the Palestinian Wafa news agency reported that a man and his child were attacked with "sharp instruments" in the village of Khirbet Shuweika, south of Hebron. In the village of al-Asa'asa in Jenin, Israeli troops also forced residents to exhume a newly buried body and take it elsewhere. They claimed the first site was too close to an illegal Israeli settlement.

In early 2026, roughly 700 Palestinians were displaced from nine communities due to settler attacks, with the Ras Ein al-Auja Bedouin community seeing the largest single-community displacement in three years.

In March 2026, settlers reportedly torched homes and vehicles in villages south of Jenin, including al-Fandaqumiya and Seilat al-Dahr. Similar attacks were recorded in the village of Burin.

Here in the West Bank, settlers feel free to do whatever they wish. This is where the law of the jungle is prevalent. Actually, such inhumane acts are intentionally taken by extremists, both common people and politicians, to uproot the Palestinians from their motherland in any way possible. The West Bank feels isolated from the rest of the world. It is one of the remaining parts of Palestinian land, and many Palestinians believe that settlers and the Israeli occupation authorities want the territory without its Palestinian population. In their view, the goal is not only to take the land, but also to erase a people, along with their history and culture.

Every kind of vicious acts or remarks is done or uttered with full vulgarity. There is no shame. For example, former U.S. intelligence analyst Jonathan Pollard, who was jailed for spying for Israel, has called for the "forcible removal" of Gazans after announcing that he will stand in October's parliamentary election. Pollard has told Israeli Channel 13 that he wants to see the removal of "all current residents of Gaza, and the annexation of Gaza and its repopulation" by Israel.

opening salvo of a systematic crackdown launched in the wake of the American-Zionist war of aggression against Iran and the martyrdom of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Khamenei. Since then, Bahraini authorities have specifically targeted Shia citizens who condemned the foreign attacks and expressed sympathy and solidarity with the Iranian people, branding them spies and traitors to their own homeland.

According to Al-Wefaq, more than 300 Bahrainis have been swept up in the unbridled security campaign. The crackdown has already claimed the life of Mohammad al-Musawi, a detainee who was martyred under interrogation through torture. The fate of many others remains shrouded in uncertainty, while several have been sentenced to lengthy prison terms in closed-door trials.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Minab School Martyrs Museum to expose injustices against innocents to global public

TEHRAN – Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, has emphasized the necessity of a scientific and narrative-driven approach for the establishment of the Minab School Martyrs Museum within the Saadabad Palace Cultural-Historical Complex, calling for it to become a global platform against atrocities committed against children.

Speaking at a specialized working group meeting on Saturday, Salehi-Amiri outlined the strategic vision for the project, asserting that the museum must transcend traditional exhibition formats. He noted that multiple specialized scenarios have been developed for its design, all rooted in expert, scientific, and professional analysis, CHTN reported.

The minister stressed that the museum's core mission is to introduce the new generation, students, and the global public to the tragic dimensions of the Minab school tragedy through a human, maternal, and educational lens. "The world must know, and never forget, that the United States—with full awareness of the site's non-military nature—targeted a school filled with students," Salehi-Amiri stated. He added that such an act remains unjustifiable under any human, ethical, or legal framework.

To ensure the authenticity of the narrative, the minister proposed that teachers and students from the Minab school itself take part in the storytelling process. This would allow visitors to confront the reality of the tragedy through a tangible and emotional perspective, fostering a deep sense of empathy and understanding, he added.

Highlighting the social impact of the project, Salehi-Amiri identified students, teachers, and families as the primary audience. "This social demographic accounts for over half of Iran's population, providing a vast cultural platform to establish a lasting movement," he said. He insisted that every element of the museum—from spatial design to displayed artifacts and narratives—must be meticulously tailored to resonate with the youth.

The minister concluded by emphasizing that the museum should focus on powerful concepts such as "Martyr," "Child," "School," and "Mother." By using a maternal and pedagogical language, he believes the Minab School Martyrs Museum can evolve into a permanent and influential global cultural movement, exposing organized violence against children in the contemporary era.



On February 28, the Shajareh Tayyebah 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 separate, 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.

7000-year-old Iron Age traces found in Qarchak's Tepe Ferdows

TEHRAN – Once dismissed as a wasteland and a dumping ground for refuse, the historical Tepe Ferdows in Qarchak has emerged as a civilizational cornerstone, revealing secrets of the Iron Age.

However, experts warn that without immediate intervention, this 7,000-year-old gateway to Central Plateau history may crumble into oblivion, Mehr reported on Saturday.

Archaeological excavations indicate that the site dates back to the 5th and 6th millennia BC. The discovery of advanced pottery kilns and sophisticated pottery wheels—equipped with animal-horn cylinders—has stunned researchers, offering a rare glimpse into the industrial and social complexities of ancient inhabitants during the Iron Age, the report added.

Despite its immense historical value, conservation efforts have remained stagnant since the mid-2000s. Majid Jalehnia, head of the Cultural Heritage Department of Qarchak, noted that while the last excavation season in 2007 yielded significant artifacts now housed in the National Museum of Iran, plans to transform the mound into a site museum have failed to materialize.

"The proposal for a site museum required substantial funding, preliminary studies, and the resolution of private ownership issues surrounding the mound," Jalehnia explained. "Unfortunately, due to financial constraints and legal hurdles regarding adjacent private lands, no executive plan was ever launched."

Currently, Tepe Ferdows stands unprotected, vulnerable to both the elements and

human encroachment. Jalehnia warned that natural erosion caused by rainfall, coupled with unauthorized construction in the vicinity, is leading to the gradual collapse of the mound's structures. "There is no constant or continuous monitoring of these historical remains," he lamented.

Tepe Ferdows is more than just an archaeological site; it is a symbol of ancient Iranian civilization that holds the potential to become a major destination for researchers and tourists alike. However, the transition from a neglected mound to a preserved heritage site remains impossible without a dedicated budget and a robust management strategy.

"If future generations are to understand their true history, special attention must be paid to the protection and restoration of these relics. Without serious government support, this invaluable heritage may be lost forever," Jalehnia explained.

The Iron Age represents a pivotal era in human history, characterized by the widespread adoption of iron for toolmaking and weaponry, replacing the softer and more expensive bronze. This technological leap, which began at different times across the globe facilitated deeper agricultural expansion, more efficient construction, and significant shifts in military tactics. Beyond metallurgy, this period was marked by the rise of complex urban centers and a profound transformation in social hierarchies, as communities adapted to the newfound power of iron-based economies and the increased efficiency it brought to daily life.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

Pezeshkian condemns aggression on cultural heritage, orders urgent restoration of Saadabad Complex

TEHRAN – Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has strongly condemned the recent attacks on Iran's historical and cultural sites by the US and the Zionist regime, describing such actions as a blatant violation of international law and a destructive campaign against the civilization and identity of nations.

During an inspection of the damaged sections of the Saadabad Palace Complex on Friday, the President emphasized the necessity of safeguarding Iran's collective memory, CHTN reported.

He assessed the extent of the destruction caused during the recent aggression and issued immediate directives for the professional restoration of the site.

Highlighting the pivotal role of cultural heritage in solidifying national identity, Pezeshkian stated, "Targeting historical monuments is an organized assault on the roots of identity and the civilizational continuity of a people. Such acts are in direct contradiction with humanitarian principles and international conventions governing the protection of cultural property."

During the visit, a comprehensive report was presented to the President detailing the damages inflicted upon various parts of the complex, most notably the Jomhouri Building. As a key diplomatic venue, the building has historically hosted high-level bilateral meetings, the signing of international cooperation agreements, and joint press conferences with foreign heads of state.

Pezeshkian underscored the importance of preserving the country's diplomatic and cultural capacities, ordering that restoration efforts begin immediately. He stressed that the process must be carried out with the highest technical and professional standards by specialized heritage experts.

Furthermore, the President called for the meticulous documentation of all damages to initiate legal proceedings in inter-



national forums. He categorized this pursuit as a national responsibility to defend Iran's civilizational heritage and to counter global trends that threaten the cultural sovereignty of nations.

The Ramadan War has left a painful mark on Iran's architectural and historical landscape. Iranian cultural and historical sites sustained serious structural damage during the aggression by the US and the Zionist regime. This targeted strikes on these venues are viewed by many as a deliberate attempt to dismantle the physical settings where the country's sovereign diplomacy and international relations were forged.

Beyond the immediate loss of infrastructure, the targeting of such landmarks represents a grave violation of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property. Iranian officials and cultural experts have characterized these acts not merely as collateral damage of war, but as a systematic civilizational assault aimed at erasing the collective memory and historical continuity of the Iranian people. By striking at sites that represent centuries of Persian heritage and governance, the aggressors have sought to demor-

alize the nation by undermining the very foundations of its cultural and national identity.

In the face of this cultural tragedy, the Iranian government has prioritized the preservation and restoration of damaged sites as a matter of national security and pride. Moreover, Tehran is preparing a comprehensive legal dossier to be presented to international bodies, seeking to hold the perpetrators accountable for what it defines as war crimes against the shared heritage of humanity, asserting that the nation's civilizational roots remain indestructible despite the physical toll of the conflict.

The Saadabad Cultural-Historical Complex in Tehran, stands as a sprawling testament to Iran's rich and complex modern history. Spanning over 110 hectares, the estate was originally established as a summer residence for the Qajar royalty in the 19th century before being significantly expanded during the Pahlavi era to include eighteen majestic palaces and villas. Each building within the complex, such as the grand White Palace and the intricate Green Palace, showcases a unique blend of traditional Persian craftsmanship and European architectural influences,

surrounded by ancient qanats and diverse botanical gardens that make it one of the most significant cultural landmarks in the capital.

In the contemporary era, Saadabad has transcended its role as a mere historical museum to become a vital center for Iranian diplomacy and statecraft. It is now managed by Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts and includes several museums displaying royal furniture, artworks, carpets and historical objects. The complex, particularly the Jomhouri Building, serves as a prestigious venue for hosting foreign dignitaries, signing international treaties, and conducting high-level political summits. Because of this dual identity—as both a guardian of the nation's imperial heritage and a functioning seat of modern diplomatic activity—the recent damage it sustained has resonated deeply across the country. The ongoing restoration efforts represent more than just a physical repair of architectural treasures; they are a symbolic act of resilience, ensuring that the complex continues to bridge Iran's storied past with its active role on the global stage.

Between myth and war: In a crumbling Baghdad house, the memory of a lost cosmopolitan world endures

Over the past weeks, UNESCO has raised concerns that US-Israeli airstrikes have damaged historic buildings in Iran.

This comes amid incendiary rhetoric from US President Donald Trump, who threatened to decimate "a whole civilisation" and bomb Iran "back to the Stone Age."

These remarks have lent credence to growing speculation that the war's ultimate intent is "civilisational erasure."

Attacks on Iran's centuries-old heritage sites, either through direct bombardment or neglect, are spurring calls for a "cultural security" campaign in the region in the face of what some warn may amount to culturecide.

When these sites are hit by drones and missiles, it is not just buildings that are destroyed, but the histories and stories they carry, some of which may be lost for good.

Across the border from Iran, this danger is known all too well in Iraq.

From the Mongol sack of Baghdad in the 13th century to the US-led invasion in 2003, and the devastation wrought by ISIS, much of its ancient heritage has been damaged, looted or reduced to rubble.

It is against this long memory of loss that even the smallest remnants take on outsized meaning.

Enter a crumbling riverside house on the banks of the Tigris in Baghdad, which has become an unlikely cause célèbre.

Local and regional newspapers have returned to it repeatedly, drawn by the suggestion that Agatha Christie and her husband, the archaeologist Max Mallowan, once stayed within its fading walls in what is now a neglected corner of the Karrada district.

The building itself is badly derelict. Balco-

nies sag over the river, plaster peels from the walls.

In the courtyard, a small family of chickens clucks, indifferent to the sudden attention focused on the ruin. The caretaker gestures toward an upstairs room.

"There," he routinely tells visitors, "that's where Miss Christie wrote her novels."

It is, of course, impossible to verify, or even to reach.

Authorities have warned against climbing the unstable stairs, let alone stepping onto a floor that is constantly at risk of collapse.

Whether Christie ever lived there may never be definitively proven. Archival records are scarce, and those who might have remembered those days are long gone.

Yet buildings, even in ruin, have stories to tell. This house holds clues not only to a famous visitor but also to a way of life and to a Baghdad now largely erased.

The idea of an "Agatha Christie House" offers a ready-made narrative — international, literary and exportable — and it is hardly surprising that it has captured public imagination.

Attention has filtered upward: inspections have reportedly been ordered, and senior figures have made visits.

Recently, Iraq's First Lady, Shanaz Ibrahim Ahmad, visited the house and called for its restoration and conversion into a museum to safeguard the Iraqi capital's cultural legacy for future generations.

Yet beneath the headlines, uncertainty remains.

No document conclusively places Christie there. Oral histories are patchy, and any pa-

per trail that once existed has long since been lost or destroyed.

Public fascination, however, rarely lingers on ambiguity. It gravitates toward celebrity.

While such attention may yet save the house, it also risks eclipsing a more compelling truth. Its significance does not rest solely on who may have passed through its doors.

Stripped of speculation, the house still speaks with remarkable clarity. Its architecture tells a story independent of any famous guest; how Baghdad's riverside families once lived, moved and understood their city.

The courtyard, now cracked and overgrown, was the social heart of the home: a place for conversation, meals and respite from the heat.

The balconies oriented toward the Tigris, known as shenasil in Iraq, were not ornamental but practical, catching the breeze and keeping daily life in constant dialogue with the river below.

Layered thresholds reveal an intricate choreography between public and private space, hospitality and retreat.

Houses like this once lined the banks; few survive today.

With their disappearance comes not only architectural loss, but the erosion of social life, environmental comfort and neighbourhood cohesion.

In this sense, the building is not merely a decorative footnote to someone else's story. Reading *They Came to Baghdad* today, Christie's novel offers a lens into a Baghdad that has largely vanished, even if it cannot serve as evidence of her actual stays.

(Source: Newarab.com)

DOE updating national document on public participation

TEHRAN – The Department of Environment (DOE) is updating and completing an existing national document on public participation in environmental protection.

The document involves perspectives, objectives, and governing principles, including transparency and accountability. Once completed, the document will benefit from public participation in all parts, from making decisions to implementing them in the environment sector, ISNA quoted Hadi Kiadaliri, the DOE's deputy head for public participation, as saying.

To enhance public participation in environmental protection, the department found it essential to focus on training students at schools. So, DOE, in cooperation with the Education Ministry, has launched a project to train eco-friendly practices among students who will be environmental helpers later.

According to Kiadaliri, a total of 26,000 students from all over the country have participated in the project so far. "If the students are successfully trained and equipped with the needed skills, they will be our best ambassadors in society. Training programs may be costly, but it is worth the price, as these students will train the generations to come," the official added.

The official stated that a document on promoting the culture of preserving the environment among governmental bodies has already been developed and submitted to them, elaborating on their measures which will later be assessed by the DOE.

He went on to say that measurement of success does not rely on short-term achievements. Focusing on long-term environmental governance will lead to success since it involves change in life style.

On February 8, DOE held the first national working group on promoting environmental protection.

Addressing the meeting, Shina Ansari, the head of DOE, said, "The environmental challenges we are facing today are the consequence of our failure to address these issues from cultural



and social views," IRNA reported.

Article 50 of the Constitution regards the protection of the environment as a public duty, emphasizing the rights of current and future generations. However, the role of culture in environmental protection has been ignored. To change the situation, the DOE is planning to further benefit from public participation and promote its role in decision-making processes, she noted.

Referring to modern environmental conservation, the official said the DOE is developing a document for the promotion of environmental protection culture to move from recommendations to implementation, and help related agencies play their role properly.

Measures to enhance public participation

The DOE has taken different steps to promote public participation in environmental protection.

Encouraging eco-friendly students, teaching environmental awareness courses in universities, developing a plan titled "skilled ranger soldier", and preparing guidelines for environmental protection are among the most important measures.

Over the past Iranian year, which ended on March 21, DOE mainly focused on enhancing formal and informal environmental education, developing public participation, utilizing the potential of new technologies, and promoting the culture of environmental protection, IRNA quoted Kiadaliri as saying.

participation of local communities in conserving nature, the DOE has approved seven natural areas to be protected by the public.

The initiative showcases national determination to conserve the country's environment, and also opens a new prospect for people's contribution, and the development of participatory governance in protecting the country's biodiversity, IRIB quoted Ansari as saying in January.

In the near future, conservation in Iran will be based on participation, science, and accountability.

Biodiversity at all three levels, including genetic diversity, species diversity, and ecosystem diversity, enhances ecosystem resilience.

Biodiversity ensures food security, livelihood, and human health; it enhances ecosystem stability to adapt to bio-based challenges and climate change. Loss of biodiversity, at any level, will bring about a chain of irreparable consequences. Therefore, protecting biodiversity is not a choice, but a strategic necessity, Ansari noted.

A decade of community-based conservation practices has proved that the participation of local and responsible investors will lead to the restoration of wildlife populations and habitats, and that involving communities in conservation programs will also reduce human-wildlife conflict and lower violations.

Moreover, the link between employment and conservation creates a sustainable cycle, as community-conserved areas act as an economic driver.

Developing sustainable employment for local communities, generating income from legal and eco-friendly efforts, including responsible nature tourism, providing conservation services, and directly returning benefits to the conservation process will enable people to become the prominent and most effective conservationists.

In these seven community conserved areas, the land ownership will be maintained, and the government will actively oversee the measures.

In the education sector, the DOE designed a 'national environmental curriculum', and the first scientific-educational event based on a book titled 'Humans and the Environment' was held for teachers and eleventh-grade students at the national level. During the event, the provincial and national winners were honored, he stated.

A national plan for environmental helpers is being implemented as of the beginning of the current academic year (September 23, 2025). About 20 percent of the elementary students are health ambassadors. Some 25 percent of them will join the national plan over five years. Currently, there are 11,000 environmental helpers at schools across the country. The plan has also empowered 7,258 elementary school principals and 6,051 elementary school health care providers so far, Kiadaliri noted.

Another initiative of the DOE is to offer environmental courses in all universities in the country. It was previously implemented on a pilot basis in 10 selected universities. In addition, the Health, Safety, and Environment (HSE) major for the MA degree has been revised.

The DOE has developed two other plans. The first, titled 'skilled ranger soldier', aims to employ students in environmental protection stations, and the second one intends to train and empower local communities with the participation of environmental protection students, the official added.

In an effort to strengthen the

Second expo on advanced technologies in Persian medicine to be held

TEHRAN – The second exhibition on Iran's advanced technologies in Persian medicine (known as Farre Iran) will be held to introduce the country's technological and knowledge-based products.

The main objective of the exhibition is to identify, assess, and showcase the most innovative and knowledge-based products in the Persian medicine sector, as well as natural and biological products which will ultimately strengthen the country's innovation chain, and boost Iran's market share of technological and health-oriented products, IRNA quoted Hossein Rezaeizadeh, the health ministry's director for the traditional medicine office, as saying.

The exhibition will feature the products that are developed for the first time in the country, with no similar domestic sample made before, as well as the products that have already existed but have been significantly improved within a year, he added.

The products have to be domestically made based on indigenous innovation, obtain the required standards and approvals (up to the end of the upcoming summer), and have economic, social, and strategic impacts on national challenges, Rezaeizadeh noted.

The event will provide a great opportunity for companies and technologists that operate in the Persian medicine sector to showcase their achievements and innovative products, develop the market, attract investors, hold talks with policymakers, big industries, and supportive bodies.

National research, technology network

The health ministry's traditional medicine is developing a national research and technolo-

gy network for Persian medicine to integrate scientific and technological efforts to enhance Persian medicine's status and expand the value chain of medicinal plants.

The network will organize research and scientific capacities of the country in supplementary medicine and Persian medicine to meet the needs of the health sector and knowledge-based economy, Rezaeizadeh said in February.

It will serve as a platform for the development of a roadmap for technologies relating to the indigenous knowledge to address the challenges, such as the lack of a structured link between traditional knowledge and modern technologies, the official further noted.

The network's core areas are centered around biochemical, molecular, and microbiological research, animal studies, disease models, safety assessments, pharmacodynamics, and pharmacokinetics.

Developing interdisciplinary research and utilizing new technologies such as proteomics, metabolomics, microbiome studies, cellular models, bioinformatics data analyses, epidemiological studies, and advanced animal models are among other key pillars of the network to create synergy between traditional knowledge, biological, and data-driven sciences.

Iran's commitment in traditional medicine

During the closing ceremony of the second World Health Organization (WHO) Global Summit on Traditional Medicine, Iran pledged commitments to advance the implementation of the Global Strategy for Traditional Medicine 2025-2034.



Co-organized by the WHO and the Government of India, the second global Summit on Traditional Medicine was held from December 17 to 19, in New Delhi, under the theme 'Restoring Balance: The science and practice of health and well-being'.

Rezaeizadeh, Arman Zargar, the advisor to the health ministry's traditional medicine office, and Mohammad Fathali, the ambassador to India, attended the event.

Iran's five commitments include launching a WHO collaborating center, launching a national platform for clinical trials, strengthening research and evidence, publishing in reputable journals, compiling five standard operating procedures (SOPs) for specialized Persian procedures, and integrating traditional medicine into the health system, the health ministry's website reported.

Health insurance provided for some 2m patients with rare, hard-to-treat diseases

TEHRAN – According to the health ministry, about two million patients with rare and hard-to-treat diseases are covered by the Health Insurance Organization.

The Rare Disease Foundation also covers the patients, IRNA quoted Sajjad Razavi, an official with the health ministry, as saying.

The official made the remarks on the occasion of the national day of rare and hard-to-treat diseases observed annually on the 18th of Ordibehesht, the second Iranian calendar month, which falls on May 8.

The day is a good opportunity to rethink the health system's responsibilities toward patients who need ongoing, multidimensional care and comprehensive support because of the complex, chronic, and mainly hard-to-treat nature of their diseases.

To safeguard the patients' health and lower financial burden on households, tens of specialized healthcare service packages have been defined for them, with some more being continuously developed. The packages include diagnostic, therapeutic, pharmaceutical, rehabilitation, and dental services, whether in the form of outpatient or inpatient services, which are provided with minimal deductibles or free of charge.

According to the health ministry, a total of 492 rare diseases have been identified in the country.

A rare disease is defined as an illness that affects less than 5 in 10,000 citizens, and is mainly of genetic origin, with 70 percent of these conditions starting in childhood.

Diseases such as 'butterfly skin or EB', 'Spinal muscular atrophy (SMA)', 'Metabolic diseases', 'Autism', 'Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)', 'Dystrophies', Diabetes, cancer, 'Mucopolysaccharidoses (MPS)', and immune deficiency diseases are among rare diseases.

Despite lower prevalence, rare and hard-to-treat diseases are among the top health priorities due to difficulties in their diagnosis and treatment.

There are no cures for rare diseases, and patients with rare diseases need supportive care and rehabilitation services throughout their lives. Hence, the day highlights the need for coherent planning, the development of recurrent specialized services, genetic counselling, the expansion of insurance coverage, and social support.

Among rare diseases, cancers are the most expensive ones covered by the Rare Disease Foundation; 70 percent of the funds is allocated to cancer-related medicines. The rise in cancers highlights the need for the development of preventive programs, early detection, targeted screening, and fair access to health services.

Promoting health literacy, strengthening the referral system, and expanding preventive services are key factors to lower mortality among patients.

The budget allocated to rare and hard-to-treat diseases has increased over the past



few years, rising from 50 trillion rials (about 33 million dollars) in the first year to 120 trillion rials (about 75 million dollars) this year.

International Rare Disease Day is observed each year on February 28 (or February 29 in leap years). The European Organisation for Rare Diseases was established the day in 2008 to raise awareness for unknown or overlooked illnesses.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), rare diseases are often complex and multi-systemic, affecting multiple organs and leading to comorbidities, and many of these conditions are chronic, progressive, and can consequently result in serious disabilities and premature death.

Out of a thousand population, 2 people get a rare disease, while the prevalence can be curbed by changing people's culture, screening, identifying, preventing births, and raising awareness.

Rare Disease Day is a globally coordinated movement dedicated to rare diseases, striving for equity in social opportunities, healthcare, and access to diagnosis and therapies for people living with a rare disease.

The day aims to improve the lives of the 300 million people worldwide living with a rare disease.

This year's theme, 'More Than You Can Imagine,' reminds us that rare diseases are far more common, complex, and impactful than many realise. While each individual condition may affect a small number of people, collectively rare diseases represent one of the most significant yet under-recognised public health challenges worldwide.

The World Health Organization's (WHO) director for the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO) has said Iran is a leading country in expanding its healthcare system and providing access to universal health coverage.

Lauding the country's achievements in recent years, Hanan Balkhi said expanding primary health care services, increasing access to health coverage in rural areas, maintaining high vaccination rates, and reducing maternal and newborn mortality, Iran has managed to become a successful role model in the region, the health ministry's website reported.

The country's commitment to providing equal health services to millions of refugees makes its services even more commendable, she stressed.



Damask rose harvest begins in Meymand

Harvesting Damask rose annually begins in May in Meymand, a city in the southern province of Fars. The city produces over 10,000 tons of rose water per year.

Iranians use Damask rose in cooking, tea serving, and celebrations. Damask rose is also renowned for its fine fragrance.



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MAY 10, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Everything needs the mind, and the mind needs good manners.
 Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:01 Evening: 18:18 Dawn: 03:26 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 05:03 (tomorrow)

IAF to host Bertolt Brecht's "Mr. Puntila and His Man Matti"

TEHRAN – The Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran will host the performance of the 1940 play "Mr. Puntila and His Man Matti" by the German modernist playwright Bertolt Brecht from Sunday.

Mikail Shahrestani has directed the 90-minute epic comedy at the Entezami Hall of the IAF, Mehr reported.

The story describes the aristocratic land-owner Puntila's relationship to his servant, Matti, as well as his daughter, Eva, whom he wants to marry off to an Attaché. Eva herself loves Matti and so Puntila has to decide whether to marry his daughter to his driver or to an Attaché, while he also deals with a drinking problem.

In his essay "Notes on the Folk Play" (written in 1940), Brecht warns that "naturalistic acting is not enough in this case" and recommends an approach to staging that draws on the Commedia dell'Arte.

The central relationship between Mr. Puntila and Matti—in which Puntila is warm, friendly and loving when drunk, but cold, cynical and penny-pinching when sober—echoes the relationship between the Tramp and the Millionaire in Charlie Chaplin's "City Lights" (1931).

The duality of Mr. Puntila is an example of Brecht's use of the literary device, the split character. The play is also an inspiration for some of the main characters in Vishal Bhardwaj's "Matru Ki Bijlee Ka Mandola".

Eugen Berthold Friedrich Brecht (1898 – 1956), known as Bertolt Brecht, was a German theater practitioner, playwright, and

poet. Coming of age during the Weimar Republic, he had his first successes as a playwright in Munich and moved to Berlin in 1924, where he wrote The "Threepenny Opera" with Elisabeth Hauptmann and Kurt Weill and began a life-long collaboration with the composer Hanns Eisler.

Immersed in Marxist thought during this period, Brecht wrote didactic "Lehrstücke" and became a leading theoretician of epic theater (which he later preferred to call "dialectical theater").

When the Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933, Brecht fled his home country, initially to Scandinavia. During World War II he moved to Southern California where he established himself as a screenwriter, while also being surveilled by the FBI.

In 1947, he was part of the first group of Hollywood film artists to be subpoenaed by the House Un-American Activities Committee for alleged Communist Party affiliations. The day after testifying, he returned to Europe, eventually settling in East Berlin where he co-founded the theater company Berliner Ensemble with his wife and long-time collaborator, actress Helene Weigel.

His other notable works include "Life of Galileo," "Mother Courage and Her Children," "The Good Person of Szechwan," "The Caucasian Chalk Circle," and "The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui".

"Mr. Puntila and His Man Matti" will remain on stage through June 2 at the IAF, located at the Artists Park, North Mousavi Street, Taleqani Street.

Cartoon of Day



Epstein
 Cartoonist: Kamal Sharaf from Yemen

Sydney Film Festival to show new films by Asghar Farhadi, Shahram Mokri

TEHRAN – Two feature films by Iranian directors will be shown at the 73rd Sydney Film Festival, which will run from June 3 to 14 in Australia.

Asghar Farhadi's "Parallel Tales" will compete in the Official Competition section and Shahram Mokri's "Black Rabbit, White Rabbit" will be screened in the Features section, ISNA reported.

Farhadi's 10th feature film, which will premiere at the 79th Cannes Film Festival (held in France from May 12 to 23) is a French-Italian-Belgian coproduction with a stellar cast including Isabelle Huppert, Vincent Cassel, Virginie Efira, Pierre Niney, Adam Bessa, and Catherine Deneuve.

Shot in Paris, Farhadi delivers a layered, complex drama about a writer using surveillance for inspiration. Sylvie (Huppert) is in need of a successful new novel and is on the search for inspiration. She is also being forced to vacate her Paris apartment. Desperate, she spies on her neighbors across the street using a telescope. There she observes brothers Nico (Cassel) and Theo (Niney) and their colleague Nita (Efira), who work in a sound studio. Their imagined lives and romantic situations initially provide promising material for Sylvie. But when she hires the mysterious young man Adam (Bessa) to assist her pack up the apartment, and shares with him her observational tactics and the resulting work, the line between fiction and reality begins to blur.

Farhadi (winner of the Sydney Film Prize in 2011 for "A Separation") is a master in conveying ambiguity and placing his characters in the grip of moral dilemmas. Here, in a film loosely based on Krzysztof Kieslowski's "Dekalog: Six," he explores how surveillance and storytelling can have a deep impact on reality.

Asghar Farhadi, 54, won the Best Foreign Film Oscar in 2012 for "A Separation" (which was also nominated for Best Screenplay) and once again in 2017 for "The Salesman".

He has been selected four times in competition in Cannes with "The Past," "The Salesman," "Everybody



A screenshot from Asghar Farhadi's "Parallel Tales"

Knows," and "A Hero".

"The Salesman" won Best Screenplay and Best Actor awards at Cannes in 2016 and "A Hero" scooped the Grand Prize at the 2021 festival.

"Everybody Knows," Farhadi's Spanish-language debut starring Penelope Cruz and Javier Bardem, opened and competed at Cannes in 2018.

Farhadi was also selected twice in Berlin. He was awarded the Silver Bear for Best Director in 2009 for "About Elly" and the 2011 Golden Bear for "A Separation".

In addition to "Parallel Tales," there are other Cannes 2026 premieres playing in Sydney's official competition this year including Andrey Zvyagintsev's "Minotaur," Cristian Mungiu's "Fjord," Pawel Pawlikowski's "Fatherland," and Hirokazu Kore-eda's "Sheep in the Box".

The festival will show 248 films from 81 countries, with screenings hosted at Sydney Opera House, State Theater, and cinemas across the city.

The competition also includes Sundance hits Olivia Wilde's "The Invite" and Australian horror "Leviticus," as well as Berlinale competition premiere "Dao" and opener "No Good Men".

The festival jury will be presided over by Brazilian director Kleber Mendonça Filho, alongside Singaporean filmmaker Boo Junfeng, Hungarian filmmaker Ildikó Enyedi, Australian cinematographer Ari Wegner and director Sally Riley.

Shahram Mokri's "Black Rabbit, White Rabbit," which had its world premiere at the 30th Busan International Film Festival in South Korea last September, will be shown in the non-competitive Features section of the upcoming Sydney Film Festival.

Mokri's fifth feature film is a joint production of Tajikistan and the United Arab Emirates and deals with three people's destinies that intertwine through apparently unrelated events.

Chekhov's famous dramatic adage – if a gun appears, it must be fired – sets the scene for Mokri's audacious latest, set in Tajikistan and replete with his hallmark virtuosic long takes, wry humor, and interlinking narratives.

A wealthy wife, wrapped in bandages from a car accident, starts to suspect her husband of foul play. On the set of a remake of a classic Iranian film, an experienced armorer fears the prop gun might be real. At an acting audition, a young woman pulls a rabbit out of a hat. These seemingly unrelated

stories combine into a playfully intriguing whole, with a healthy dose of magical realism and meta-textuality.

Shahram Mokri, 47, won the Venice Film Festival's Horizons Award in 2013 for Creative Content for his second feature film "Fish & Cat".

In 2018, his third film "Invasion" was screened at the 68th Berlin Film Festival and was nominated for the Teddy Award.

He also won a silver Hugo medal at the Chicago Film Festival in the main section and the Venice Critics' Best Screenplay Award for his fourth film "Careless Crime".

The cast of the 139-minute movie includes Babak Karimi, Hasti Mohammadi, Kibriyo Dilyobova, and Bezhana Davlyatov, among others.

Since its inception in 1954, the Sydney Film Festival, recognized by the Federation Internationale des Associations de Producteurs de Films (FIAPF), has increased in size and reputation to become a leading international film festival in Australia.

The festival takes place each June at venues across Sydney. Its program celebrates the best of world cinema, screening features, documentaries, short films, retrospectives and a series of industry and public talks.

Gaza is seen through art of tatreez at 2026 Venice Biennale

Ordinarily, the preview week ahead of the official opening of the months-long Venice Biennale, one of the art world's most prestigious events, is dominated by glamorous parties as countries prepare to open their dedicated pavilions and exhibitions to the crowds. This year, however, the Serenissima has been rocked by a flurry of demonstrations and protests, as geopolitics threatens to steal the limelight from hundreds of artists from around the world who have sought inspiration for the biennale's theme, "In Minor Keys".

According to cntravellerme website, in the run-up to the 61st edition, nations threatened to boycott the biennale, and the five-member jury panel resigned after members stated they would not consider award entries from countries whose leaders were subject to international arrest warrants. The US-Israel-Iran conflict has also cast a shadow: just the day before the preview began, Iran announced it would not be participating.

But outside the polemics and politicking, one exhibition, entitled "Gaza – No Words – See the Exhibit," stands out as being uniquely dedicated to a people's suffering. Filling a grand palatial salon on the first floor of the 16th-century Palazzo Mora, the official Palestinian collateral event presents 100 traditional Palestinian tapestries, collectively displayed as the Gaza Genocide Tapestry. Each of the embroidered panels tells a story of suffering: crying children, starvation, bombed hospitals and fleeing refugees. Lining the walls and suspended between glittering Murano glass chandeliers, the work is a sobering manifestation of the situation for residents in Gaza.

The tapestries follow the ancient Palestinian tradition of tatreez, a distinctive form of embroidery that has been included in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List since 2021. In the "Gaza Genocide Tapestry," the usual motifs like flowers and birds, often stitched to decorate ceremonial dresses, are absent. Here, tatreez is no longer used in celebration of happy occasions



like weddings but to illustrate somber images reflecting the ruin, suffering and death inflicted on Gaza and its people in recent times.

The exhibition was organized by The Palestine Museum, based in Connecticut. "Once the Biennale accepted our proposal to be one of the 31 Collateral events – a major achievement in itself – we began this ambitious project," curator and executive director of the museum, Faisal Saleh, said. "A hundred images, using photos, paintings and video clips, were selected to illustrate what has been happening in Gaza".

"We then contacted Palestinian women embroiderers, dispersed in refugee camps across Gaza, South Lebanon, Ramallah, and Jerash in Jordan, and commissioned them to embroider each selected image on a standard piece of cloth, 80 by 50 centimeters, using a total of 55,000 stitches."

Putting the "Gaza Genocide Tapestry" together, including funding from public sponsorship, has been an exercise in creative planning as well as artistry, Saleh explains. "Some 60 women have made the works, and it has taken an incredible logistics system just to get the pieces to Venice. The last one arrived Friday, just in

time for the official inauguration after a torturous journey from South Lebanon, through Beirut during a brief ceasefire, and finally a direct European flight from Amman."

For Saleh, these tapestries are a more powerful collective expression than the photographs on which they are based. "The way the tapestries are painstakingly stitched by hand takes two months of effort, skill, sweat and tears, sometimes working in terrible conditions," he says. "I am convinced this gives more value to the image when it is exhibited."

Viewing the show is a sobering experience; each lovingly stitched square presents a jarring juxtaposition with the suffering it depicts. "For me, one of the most powerful tapestries depicts a burning child," said Saleh. The tapestry was based on a painting depicting the death of 19-year-old Shaban al-Dalou by 31-year-old digital artist Mahasen Al-Khateeb, who was herself killed in a bombing in October 2024. "So as I say, each tapestry tells its own terrible story."

The message is perhaps most succinctly expressed in one of the few tapestries depicting woven words, rather than an image. It shouts out: "If I must die, you must live to tell my story."