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Tehran Mayor Alireza Zakani in an exclusive interview with Tehran Times:

Urban Projects in Wartime: 'You Cannot Stop Us'



Tehran Mayor Alireza Zakani, center, along with municipal workers in one of the urban areas of the capital that was bombed during the joint US-Israeli aggression. ▶ Page 2

'Finger on the trigger': Iran vows crushing response to foreign aggression

TEHRAN - Iranian officials have adopted a unified stance following President Donald Trump's rejection of Iran's latest peace proposal and his renewed military threats against the country.

Trump has called Iran's proposal "totally unacceptable" and said the ongoing ceasefire is "on massive life support."

The spokesperson for the Iranian government said on Tuesday that the country's focus remains on "sustainable peace and interests-based diplomacy," but stressed that the armed forces are keeping "their fingers on the trigger." ▶ Page 3

Iran is powerfully in control of Strait of Hormuz: IRGC navy official

TEHRAN - The Strait of Hormuz is firmly under the control of the Islamic Republic of Iran, a senior official of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy has declared.

In a televised interview, IRGC Navy Political Deputy Mohammad Akbarzadeh stated that Iran's perspective on the strategic waterway is not merely geographical but fundamentally strategic and distinct.

He clarified that the Islamic Republic harbors no hostility toward the world's peoples, emphasizing that the issue lies with governments that have consistently sought confrontation with Iran. ▶ Page 2

The architecture of a new Nakba in the West Bank

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — Fakhri Abu Diab stands in the jagged graveyard of rebar and gray dust that used to be his living room in al-Bustan, a neighborhood in occupied East Jerusalem (al-Quds). For decades, this was where he shared tea with his mother and watched his children grow.

Today, it is a demolition site, cleared by Israeli bulldozers to make way for the "King's Garden," a biblical-themed settler project designed to encircle the Old City and sever the Palestinian heart of al-Quds.

Abu Diab's ruin is the visible edge of a coordinated, multi-front campaign. Across the West Bank and East Jerusalem (al-Quds), Israel has moved past the era of "managing" an occupation. It is now engaged in a systematic program of permanent annexation and demographic engineering that many on the ground are calling a new Nakba.

Hezbollah's drones expose Israel's costly defenses

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN — Israel's slow, bureaucratic technology transfer to the battlefield is fueling a crisis against Hezbollah's fast-adapting, low-cost weapons with major strategic impact.

The challenge posed by Hezbollah's drones and unmanned aircraft continues to dominate the Israeli regime's media analysis aimed at understanding the threat, assessing its dimensions, and identifying failures and possible solutions within the military and security establishment, which has been accused of negligence.

This follows a series of deaths and injuries caused by Hezbollah attacks using explosive drones guided through fiber-optic systems.

According to Hebrew media, operating under strict wartime censorship, Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) have reported around 1,000 soldier injuries in the latest Lebanon war, which began in early March. However, experts believe the figure is higher, noting that many of these casualties are a result of drone attacks.

Hezbollah chief vows Lebanon will never bow to 'Greater Israel' project

TEHRAN — Hezbollah Secretary-General Sheikh Naim Qassem has issued a searing mandate to the Islamic Resistance, vowing that Lebanon will never be subsumed by the expansionist "Greater Israel" project.

In a poignant message directed to commanders and warriors on Tuesday, the Hezbollah leader warned that the battlefield would be transformed into a literal inferno for Israeli forces should they persist in their aggression.

Qassem described the current struggle as an existential defense of dignity, where the cost of resistance, however high, remains far lower than the "humiliating price of surrender."

Despite recent diplomatic maneuvers, Israel has continued its systematic violations of Lebanese sovereignty through persistent airstrikes and ground incursions.

Qassem characterized these actions as part of a savage campaign facilitated by the "bloodthirsty American tyrant." ▶ Page 5

War with Iran drains US economy, hits ordinary citizens hardest

TEHRAN- As tensions with Iran escalate into prolonged military engagement, the economic toll on the United States is deepening, with ordinary Americans bearing the brunt of the cost, according to a growing body of analysis on the conflict's domestic fallout.

Since March, gasoline prices have surged by more than 50 percent, placing severe financial strain on households already grappling with inflation. The spike in fuel costs has rippled across supply chains, pushing up the price of everyday goods and squeezing family budgets.

The job market is also suffering. Key sectors—including tourism, retail, and manufacturing—have shed thousands of positions, with monthly job losses accelerating as the war disrupts both consumer confidence and industrial activity. Analysts warn that the trend could worsen if hostilities continue without a clear resolution. ▶ Page 4

Martyr Leader's autobiography "Cell No. 14" published in Russian

TEHRAN — The Russian translation of the late Iranian Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei's autobiography has been released in Russia.

The book was translated from Persian by Russian writer and critic Alexander Andryushkin, who is known for his work on Iranian literature, and published by AST Publishers, one of the leading companies on the Russian book market, Mehr reported.

"Cell No. 14" covers the first half of the life of Ayatollah Khamenei, from his early childhood all the way to the 1979 Islamic Revolution that brought the monarchical regime to an end in Iran.

In his book, the author skillfully transports readers to a tangible and realized space through simple yet comprehensive literature. The book's narrative is devoid of imposing or imaginative elements, resulting in a striking sense of concreteness and realization. ▶ Page 8



Iranian FM holds diplomatic talks as regional mediation efforts intensify

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi held a series of high-level diplomatic engagements on Tuesday, meeting with Norway's visiting deputy foreign minister and holding separate phone calls with his Uzbek and Singaporean counterparts, as regional mediation efforts between Tehran and Washington continue.

Andreas Kravik, Norway's Deputy Foreign Minister, who is on an official visit to Tehran, met with Araghchi in Tehran on Tuesday. The discussions focused on bilateral issues and broader regional developments.

In a phone call on May 12, Araghchi and Uzbek Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov exchanged views on mutual relations and the latest regional developments.

Separately, Araghchi also spoke by phone with Singaporean Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan, discussing bilateral ties and ongoing diplomatic processes in the region.

Christian Zionist ideology best fits Trump's Mideast policies

TEHRAN — The term "Christian Zionism" refers to a belief among some Christians that supports the flood of the Jews to Israel and the establishment of a Jewish state as part of biblical prophecy.

While it's difficult to provide an exact number of officials who identify as Christian Zionists, various political leaders, especially in the United States, have expressed support for Christian Zionist beliefs.

Prominent figures include some members of Congress, evangelical leaders, and certain political candidates who align with pro-Israel policies. Organizations like the Christian Coalition and the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem advocate for Christian Zionist views and have many supporters among political officials. ▶ Page 5

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

The enemy's miscalculation and the lesson of deterrent unity

Javan, in an article, examined why the United States and Israel miscalculated in their conflict with Iran. It wrote that before the 40-day war, Netanyahu's team considered Iran so weak that they believed it could not control the Strait of Hormuz in a potential conflict. But what seems to have misled them more than anything was not the military dimension, but the political and social one—especially Iran's domestic issues. They assumed that Iran, particularly after the bitter events of recent months, had become internally fractured and that visible societal divisions had weakened the country from within. Based on this assumption, although Iran possessed the necessary military power, it believed it could not use it due to internal weakness, that its political and social resilience had diminished, and that it would lose a war. The major lesson of this episode is that real deterrence is formed not first in arsenals and combat units, but in the "enemy's mind"; and the key to shaping this psychological deterrence is national unity and the intelligent management of perception.

Change in Iran's military doctrine

Resalat analyzed the shift in Iran's military doctrine. According to the paper, the recent suspicious and coordinated attacks on Iran's coastal infrastructure and oil fleet have acted as a catalyst, accelerating a major paradigm shift in the military and security doctrine of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Following these attacks on certain coastal areas and several Iranian oil tankers in the waters of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, tensions have reached an unprecedented peak. These attacks, which caused damage and injured several crew members, triggered a firm and coordinated response from Iran's armed forces. Senior officials of the IRGC and the General Staff of the Armed Forces, through explicit and unprecedented statements, officially declared the end of the era of "strategic patience" and announced the beginning of a phase of active deterrence and reciprocal offensive response. The extensive deployment of naval, missile, and drone units in the region, along with increased reconnaissance drone flights, indicates that Iran's finger is on the trigger and that any miscalculation could turn the Persian Gulf into a hellfire for its enemies.

Khorasan: Iran's asymmetric warfare

Khorasan discussed the serious destruction of American bases by Iranian missiles and drones. It wrote that more than two months after the start of US and Israeli aggression, what has drawn the most attention from military analysts and international media is not merely the scale of the

attacks, but the vulnerability of the US base network in the region. What has shifted the equation of this conflict, in the eyes of many analysts, is the comparison of capabilities and the practical results on the battlefield. The United States entered the confrontation with a massive military budget, aircraft carriers, an extensive satellite network, and the most advanced defense systems. Iran, however, relying on precise ballistic missiles, inexpensive yet effective drones, and a strategy of striking logistical weak points, managed to erode a significant portion of America's deterrent infrastructure. The 40-day war proved that in today's world, even the most complex military networks are not completely immune to Iran's asymmetric warfare.

Donya-e-Eqtasad: China's policy in the Strait of Hormuz

Donya-e-Eqtasad examined China's position regarding the Strait of Hormuz and wrote that a key factor shaping China's stance is its extensive relations with the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council. China's economic ties with (PGCC) members reach about \$300 billion annually, while its relations with Iran amount to only about one-tenth of that. China simultaneously desires stability in Iran's political system, and its oil purchases and certain diplomatic support at the UN contribute to this. However, it is unclear whether China is firmly committed to maintaining a minimum balance in the region. Moreover, Beijing's priority of keeping open the routes necessary for its export-driven economic development may push China further toward emphasizing its strategic policy of upholding the legal regime of international straits and expressing greater concern about the impact of any change in the Strait of Hormuz on other global waterways.

Sobh-e-No: Iran shattered Trump's pride

No one is surprised anymore by the contradictions and provocations of US President Donald Trump. No event has exposed the absurdity of Trump's "circus" as clearly as his war against Iran, initiated by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Through a remarkable combination of patience and resilience—both during the 40-day war before the ceasefire and in the subsequent political and negotiation arenas through message exchanges—Iran managed to break Trump's excessive pride and narcissism, turning his claims of absolute victory into a farce. Neither the United States nor Israel achieved any significant victory, and the world was not deceived by attempts to conceal their failure.

Iran is powerfully in control of Strait of Hormuz: IRGC navy official

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In a televised interview, IRGC Navy Political Deputy Mohammad Akbarzadeh stated that Iran's perspective on the strategic waterway is not merely geographical but fundamentally strategic and distinct.

He clarified that the Islamic Republic harbors no hostility toward the world's peoples, emphasizing that the issue lies with governments that have consistently sought confrontation with Iran.

According to Akbarzadeh, those countries misinterpret every move by the Islamic Republic as an intent to conquer them, which is completely incorrect and based on a false image of Iran.

The official noted that Iran has not only refrained from creating obstacles in energy, trade, and transit but has also provided extensive services to the world. In some cases, he added, Iranian forces have escorted vessels passing through Iran's territorial waters — including those belonging to hostile nations — and provided these services free of charge.



Akbarzadeh stressed that this approach stemmed from a policy of de-escalation and security, saying: "We were seeking peace and security in the region, but today the conditions have changed, and new policies are being implemented regarding the Strait of Hormuz — the results of which the world will see."

He emphasized that these policies have been defined within the framework of the Leader of the Revolution's guidelines and that Iran firmly stands by its rights.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is carefully and authoritatively monitoring movements in the region and will not allow any aggression on its waters and interests," Akbarzadeh concluded.

Tehran Mayor Alireza Zakani in an exclusive interview with Tehran Times:

Urban projects in wartime: 'You cannot stop us'

TEHRAN – The United States and Israel launched a war on Iran on February 28 to destroy Iran's military capabilities and reshape the political leadership in their favor. But after 39 days of war, they not only failed to achieve this goal but also suffered significant setbacks as a result of Iran's strong retaliatory strikes against their regional bases. Tehran Mayor Dr. Alireza Zakani describes this as a historic strategic failure for the country's adversaries. In an extensive interview with Tehran Times, Zakani argues that the enemy miscalculated Iran's national unity, underestimated the depth of public loyalty to the Islamic Revolution, and ignored the country's decisive geopolitical leverage in West Asia. This is the full text of the interview:

Mr. Mayor, thank you for your time. From a strategic perspective, how was the "Ramadan War" different from previous threats? Why did this war happen, and what miscalculations did the enemy make?

Look, we weren't facing just a military phenomenon. This was a full-blown confrontation across economic, security, political, and even psychological dimensions. The enemy sought an all-out confrontation with the Islamic Republic of Iran and thought that a combination of military, economic, and media pressure could bring the Iranian nation to its knees. But they miscalculated on all fronts. From the perspective of strategic thinkers, West Asia is considered a "heartland," and the Islamic Republic of Iran, simply by shifting its approach, exposed how global equations depend on this strategic region. While competition among Eastern powers is driven by material interests, Iran, as an actual manifestation of pure Islam, exerts a motivational and influential role globally, inspiring awareness and change. This very characteristic has caused the enemy to make repeated miscalculations. Interestingly, Western think tanks spent months developing various scenarios against Iran. They initially believed that if the war begins between May 21 and June 20, there would be an explosion of internal demands and protests. That prediction didn't match the reality on the ground in Iran. Then they chose the month of Dey (February) to start the war, and again came up empty-handed. Why? Because they assessed Iranians in a framework of stereotypical analyses similar to countries like Venezuela, which they thought could be controlled by applying pressure. They were unaware of the depth of the people's connection to the Revolution and the Establishment.

Even some Western intelligence circles, considering our martyred Leader's advanced age, advised waiting for the organic change in the leadership structure, and designed a scenario for the collapse [of the Establishment] in the aftermath. But 'temptation' and 'stupidity' caused the enemy to act proactively and carry out the assassination (against him). Unaware that divine destiny set the ground for the election of a new leader, who keep up with the path. And this was their biggest miscalculation. Despite the enemy's expectations of social disillusionment, the people resolutely seized control of affairs in various fields tirelessly, with vigor and determination best reflected in massive and unstoppable rallies.

At the same time, leveraging military power and geopolitical capacities, especially the Strait of Hormuz, tied the world's economic security to the security of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Regional countries also realized



they cannot jeopardize regional stability through their own actions or in coordination with the United States, because their own economic security is linked to Iran's security. Also, the Axis of Resistance has not yet fully used its capabilities. Yemen, a significant regional power, remains observant. Resistance is no longer confined to Iran; it extends to Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, and even Syria, demonstrating that its ideology has transcended Iran's borders to become a regional conviction.

There have been negotiations between Iran and the United States. Where are these talks heading?

Clearly, Iran's negotiating team intends to turn Iran's victory in the war into a tangible achievement. They must keep in mind that in dealing with the enemy, it is the enemy who should be put on trial. Of course, the blood money of our martyrs, particularly our martyred Leader, is beyond these temporary retaliations. The blood money of the martyrs is the full realization of the Islamic Revolution's goals in the region and the world. If that happens, in the shadow of a stability based on regional cohesion among nations and led by Iran and the Resistance, the path of growth and dynamism will be pursued much faster.

Today's world is thirsty for the message of the Islamic Revolution. Amidst U.S., China, and Russia competition for power through science, military strength, and wealth, the Islamic Iran is also a major power, relying on divine blessings to reach the hearts.

In recent months, we've seen Trump's threats against Iran alongside negotiations. What is your assessment?

The enemy always proceeds with threats and intimidation and if they fail, resorts to aggression and committing crimes. America has failed in both arenas. In the recent war, Iran humiliated the enemy, and on the international stage, they failed to secure even the slightest support against Iran.

The enemy attacked Iran's urban infrastructure several times. As the mayor of Tehran, how do you see the stance of other countries?

Naturally, some countries explicitly and without hesitation condemned the attacks on Iran's infrastructure, but that's not enough. All countries must condemn this criminal act by the U.S. and Israel. Attacking a bridge that only serves to reduce traffic for citizens and facilitate their transportation is a criminal act. As the Head of the Iranian Metropolitan Cities Forum, I call on the Metropolitan and the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) to condemn the attacks on Iran's urban infrastructure.

Turning to Tehran, do you have accurate data regarding the extent of the damage to residential property? How many houses have been destroyed?

In the previous war, also known as the 12-Day War, we had 141 points of impact in Tehran, but in the Ramadan War, the situation

was completely different, and we had 649 points targeted. The enemy had deliberately targeted population centers and urban infrastructure. 46,623 residential units were damaged. In the 12-Day War, 8,520 units were damaged. So now you see the scale we're dealing with.

38,161 units sustained minor damage, of which over 67% have been rebuilt. 5,920 units sustained moderate damage. 1,082 units require retrofitting, and finally, 1,460 units have been completely destroyed.

How is the reconstruction being financed? What share should the affected people pay, and what is the municipality's support mechanism for property owners?

We announced one principle from the very first day and remain committed to it: the people will not pay a single rial out of their own pockets to rebuild their homes. For minor damage, all the work is done by the municipality.

For moderate repairs, we have divided the work into two parts: for damages under 500 million tomans, the people themselves carry out the work, and after a precise assessment, we pay the cost. For damages above 500 million tomans, the work is done through a contractor with whom we have a contract. For retrofitting, we use reputable companies.

However, when complete rebuilding is required, it is completely done by the municipality. Our recommendation to citizens is to opt for demolition and com-



plete rebuilding rather than retrofitting, so that their minds can be at ease forever. A building that has suffered serious damage once, even if it is retrofitted, does not provide psychological peace of mind for its residents.

What other support has been provided to affected families?

Affected people have not just lost their homes; they have lost what they had. To compensate, last year during the 12-Day War, we offered affected families 250 million tomans in relief aid, which they could use to buy household appliances. This year, we have increased that to 400 million tomans.

In the area of vehicle damage, 9,114 cars and 587 motorcycles were damaged. Municipal experts assess vehicle damage, with the government responsible for payment.

For families whose homes require rebuilding, a process that

may take two years, we have arranged special rental facilities. Our average payment in the Ramadan War is 2 billion tomans as a mortgage deposit and 40 million tomans in monthly rent. The municipality either rents a home directly for them or pays them the money.

How is the emergency accommodation of citizens in hotels managed, and what services are being provided to them?

At the peak of the crisis, 6,659 people were housed in 45 hotels. We also designed a comprehensive system of psychological support for them.

4,500 of them were screened by psychology specialists. We created a psychological file for every one of these families. One to two hours daily, a general practitioner is present at the hotels, and if needed, we transfer people to specialized medical centers.

We've created special programs for children, including uplifting cultural and artistic events to offer respite from the crisis, as well as recreational and educational trips.

How did basic urban services and development projects continue under those crisis conditions?

We had a strategic principle: war should not shut down life. The enemy was exactly seeking that. It wanted to disrupt people's lives by creating fear and terror. We could not allow such a thing to happen. That is why all urban services continued without interruption.

As every Nowruz, we carried out festive ornamental planting across the city, urban sanitation services continued uninterrupted, firefighters redoubled their efforts to respond to all city crises, whether caused by attacks or natural hazards, public transport, not only didn't stop, but also extended its hours and offered free services.

You mentioned that metro development projects continued even amid the peak of the crisis. What have been the latest achievements in this area?

Yes. Right in the midst of managing the war crisis, we either completed or launched several major projects. Recently, we began the construction on the second phase of Line 10, inaugurated the first phase of the Shahid Kolahdooz Metro Terminal, and opened the seventh maintenance depot (on Line 4) which considerably improves efficiency. The Takhti Metro Station, the last stop on Line 7, will also be officially inaugurated soon (The project was inaugurated on Tuesday, though the interview was recorded earlier). We showed that development and progress must continue even during wartime.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

'Finger on the trigger': Iran vows crushing response to foreign aggression

From Page 1 ▶ "We fought the world's greatest military power for 40 days, and we are still holding the trigger and waiting for a negotiated settlement," Fatemeh Mohajerani said, referring to the US-Israeli aggression that began on February 28. The April 8 ceasefire paused the conflict, but efforts aimed at bringing a permanent end to the war have reached a deadlock.

Further in her remarks, Mohajerani said Iran is "truly powerful" and has emerged as a "superpower."

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf also warned that any aggression against Iran would be met with a crushing response.

"Our armed forces are ready to respond and to teach a lesson for any aggression," Ghalibaf wrote on X.

He added, "Mistaken strategies and mistaken decisions will always lead to mistaken results. The whole world has already figured this out. We are prepared for all options; they will be surprised."

In another message on X, the Parliament speaker warned that



the American people would suffer the consequences of the US administration's decision to reject Iran's peace proposal.

"There is no alternative but to accept the rights of the Iranian people as laid out in the 14-point proposal. Any other approach will be completely inconclusive — nothing but one failure after another. The longer they drag their feet, the more American taxpayers will pay for it," Ghalibaf said.

Elsewhere, a senior adviser to Iran's Leader said the US would never be able to prevail in diplo-

macy after its defeat on the battlefield.

"We defeated you on the battlefield; never imagine that you will emerge victorious in diplomacy," Ali Akbar Velayati wrote on X.

Iran's proposal, rejected by the US president, outlines conditions for permanently ending the war. Tehran has called for war reparations, the lifting of sanctions and the unfreezing of Iranian assets, the removal of the US naval blockade of Iranian ports, recognition of Iran's sovereign rights

over the Strait of Hormuz, and an end to Israeli strikes in Lebanon.

Iranian officials blame Washington's continued insistence on excessive and unrealistic demands for the stalled talks.

Trump has repeatedly claimed that Tehran seeks a deal because the US military has destroyed Iran's military capabilities. Such claims have been rejected by US media. According to a recent report by The Washington Post, a confidential CIA analysis delivered to administration policymakers concludes Iran retains significant ballistic missile capabilities despite weeks of intense US and Israeli bombardment. Citing an American official, the report said, Iran retains about 75 percent of its prewar inventory of mobile launchers and roughly 70 percent of its prewar missile stockpiles. The official pointed out that there is evidence Iran has been able to recover and reopen almost all of its underground storage facilities, repair some damaged missiles, and even assemble new missiles that were nearly complete when the war began.

Tehran slams US push for Hormuz Strait security resolution

TEHRAN— Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs, Kazem Gharibabadi, has warned that any UN Security Council draft resolution on the Strait of Hormuz that fails to address the aggression and illegal blockade against Iran will be biased and doomed to failure.

In a post on X, Gharibabadi characterized the US-led effort, backed by certain regional partners, as a calculated attempt to reframe the debate: converting the consequences of

military aggression and an unlawful naval blockade into a legal case against the very country that was subjected to threats, pressure, and attack.

The senior diplomat acknowledged the freedom of navigation as a respected legal principle, but stressed that it cannot be applied selectively, politically, or separately from the UN Charter. No initiative on maritime security in the region, he argued, can credibly claim neutrality or legal validity while

simultaneously ignoring the use of force, the naval blockade, persistent threats, and the direct role of the United States and Israel in creating the crisis in the first place.

"Any text that seeks to frame the situation in the Strait of Hormuz without reference to aggression, the blockade, the threat of force, and Iran's legitimate rights to defend its security and vital interests will be incomplete, biased, political, and doomed to failure from the very beginning," he wrote.

China slams US sanctions on Iran-linked entities, vows to protect its businesses

TEHRAN— China has strongly condemned recent US sanctions targeting individuals and companies allegedly involved in Iranian oil sales and military-related activities, warning that it will firmly protect the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese businesses.

In a regular press conference on May 12, 2026, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Guo Jiakun responded to a series of questions regarding new US sanctions announced ahead of President Trump's visit to China.

On Monday, the US Treasury Department sanctioned 12 Iran-linked individuals and entities, including four Hong Kong-based firms, over oil sales to China by Iran's military. In

addition, separate sanctions announced on Friday targeted companies accused of aiding Iran's weapons sector.

"We stand firmly against unilateral sanctions that have no basis in international law or the authorization of the UN Security Council," Guo said. "We will take resolute measures to protect the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese businesses and citizens."

When asked about the timing of the sanctions so close to President Trump's visit, Guo reiterated his previous remarks and added: "On the Iran conflict, the pressing priority now is to prevent by all means a relapse in fighting, rather than to throw mud in China."



LATEST NEWS

President Pezeshkian praises Ayatollah Sistani's support for Iran

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has praised senior Iraqi cleric Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani for his unwavering support of the Islamic Republic. In an Arabic post on X, Pezeshkian expressed appreciation for Sistani's wise positions toward Iran and those affected by recent US-Israeli aggression. Last March, al-Sistani urged Muslims and free peoples worldwide to stand with Iran, warning that continued war risks regional chaos and instability.

Russia calls Iran ties a 'responsible partnership'

A Russian presidential adviser has described Russia-Iran relations as a "responsible partnership" based on mutual respect and pragmatism. Anton Kobayakov told Iran's ambassador in Moscow that in the current global climate, mutual support remains vital. He highlighted Iran's role in BRICS and the SCO and stressed that expanding economic ties serves both nations and the wider Eurasian region.

90% enrichment on table if Iran comes under attack again

A senior Iranian lawmaker has said 90% uranium enrichment could be one of Iran's options in the event of a renewed attack.

The spokesperson for Iran's parliamentary National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, Ebrahim Rezaei posted the state-

ment directly on X, writing: "One of Iran's options in the event of a renewed attack could be 90% enrichment. We will examine it in parliament."

Iran to EU: Think carefully before imposing new sanctions

Iran's Embassy in Austria has warned the European Union that new sanctions over Tehran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz will "never frighten" Iran. The EU's foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas announced expanded sanctions against Iran for obstructing freedom of navigation. In response, the Iranian embassy slammed the bloc as a "paper tiger" and cautioned Brussels to think carefully about Tehran's counterreaction. "You will learn to speak to Iran with the respect we are due," the embassy said. Iran closed the strait after a US-Israeli military coalition attacked the country on February 28.

Mearsheimer to Piers Morgan: Iran is no threat to US

In a recent interview, political scientist John Mearsheimer flatly rejected the notion that Iran poses a threat to the United States. When Piers Morgan asked directly, "Iran is no threat to the US?" Mearsheimer replied, "No."

Morgan then pointed out that Iran funds groups "Israel doesn't like." Mearsheimer responded: "You're baking the idea that Iran is a threat to Israel, and that any threat to Israel is a threat to the U.S. I don't buy it."

Clare Daly: US narrative on Iran is built on lies and threats

Clare Daly, former Member of the European Parliament, has sharply criticized the United States' stance toward Iran, describing it as a mix of hollow victory claims and threats of "civilizational war crimes" against Iranian citizens.

In a post on social media, Daly remarked that in a world dominated by US lies — where Washington vacillates between boasting about "victory" and issuing threats — it is fitting that a cartoon has shed light on the truth.

Iran sues US at the Hague over nuclear attacks sanctions, and threats

Iran has filed a lawsuit against the United States at the Hague Arbitration Tribunal over Washington's military aggression against Iranian nuclear facilities, economic sanctions, and threats to use force.

The complaint, registered as Case A-34, was submitted under the 1981 Algiers Declarations to the Iran-United States Claims Tribunal. Tehran accuses the US of violating its international obligations during a 12-day war against Iran in June last year.

Citing Paragraph 1 of the Algiers Declarations, Iran has asked the tribunal to condemn the US for direct and indirect interference in its internal affairs, demand guarantees against repetition of such violations, and secure full compensation for damages.

SPORTS

Golshadnezhad will fight until the very end for Iran

TEHRAN - Atousa Golshadnezhad, Iran's female karate athlete, has set her sights firmly on a gold medal at the upcoming Asian Games in Nagoya.

"My main goal is to stand atop the podium and proudly raise my country's flag," stated Golshadnezhad.

Reflecting on her career, the historic world champion identified her gold medal victory at the World Championships in Cairo, Egypt, as the pinnacle of her achievements.

"That medal was not just a piece of metal; it was the realization of a long-held dream that I worked tirelessly for years to achieve," she shared.

Golshadnezhad described the last year as an "unforgettable" period, marked by an incredible sweep of gold medals at the Asian, World, and Islamic Solidarity Games. She admitted that even reaching the shortlist for the national Sports Personality of the Year award was beyond her initial expectations, given the high caliber of competition.

However, she remains humble about accolades, emphasizing, "Any recognition from the people and media is valuable to me. I focus on my path and making Iran proud is my top priority."

Looking ahead to future, Golshadnezhad highlighted her rigorous training regimen, prioritizing the Nagoya Asian Games. "My primary focus for now is intensive and targeted training for the Asian Games gold. This competition is my number one priority," she asserted. The upcoming World Team Championship is also on her radar, and she expressed optimism for a strong team performance.

With an impressive 80% confidence in her future success, Golshadnezhad credits her dedication, the unwavering support of her family, coaches, the Karate Federation, and the Ministry of Sports for her drive.

Addressing the impact of regional instability on her training, Golshadnezhad acknowledged the challenges. "We faced many security issues and significant psychological pressure due to the regional conflicts and the loss of compatriots," she explained. "However, I've learned to overcome these circumstances with calmness and faith. Now, with renewed focus and motivation, I am solely dedicated to bringing honor to Iran. This land and its people deserve the best, and I will fight until the very end to achieve this."

2026 Asian Women's U16 Handball: Iran lose to Kazakhstan

TEHRAN - Iran lost to Kazakhstan 38-33 in the 1st AHF Asian Women's U16 Handball Championship on Monday.

Iran, who had defeated Hong Kong 33-29 in their opening match, will face Uzbekistan in Group A on Wednesday.

The competition takes place in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from May 10 to 18.

The championship will also serve as the Asian qualification event for the 1st IHF Women's U16 Handball World Championship, scheduled to be held from 15 to 24 Oct. 2026.

The top two teams will secure their qualification for the World Championship.

Milad Ebadipour Joins Greece's AONS Milon

TEHRAN - Greek volleyball club Milon have officially announced the signing of Milad Ebadipour, the 32-year-old outside hitter and captain of Iran's national team.

AONS Milon confirmed the arrival of the Iranian star, who now aims to bring his experience and quality to his new side.

"Milon Volleyball Team announces the beginning of its collaboration with Milad Ebadipour. Milad is a professional player and a member of Iran's national team. He plays as an outside hitter and is regarded as one of the best Iranian players of his generation," the statement reads.

He began his professional career in 2011 with Kalleh Mazandaran and won the 2013 Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship. He later joined Shahrdari Urmia and Bank Sarmayeh Tehran, winning two more Asian titles in 2016 and 2017.

In 2017, he moved to Skra Bechatow in Poland, where he enjoyed a successful spell. He later played for Ural Ufa in Russia in 2023, before joining Norwid Cz?stochowa in Poland.

Ebadipour has been a member of Iran's national team since 2014, winning two Asian Games gold medals in Incheon 2014 and Jakarta 2018. He was also part of the squad that secured qualification for the Rio 2016 Olympics.

Mohebi scores against Akron Tolyatti

On Monday, May 11, Akron (Tolyatti) hosted Rostov at Solidarnost Arena in Samara.

The visitors won the match of the 29th round of the Russian Football Championship, 1-3.

Rostov scored in the 21st minute through Kirill Schetin, in the 39th through Mohammad Mohebi, and in the 45th minute through Viktor Melehin. Rostov defender Umar Sakho also scored an own goal in the 42nd minute.

Akron is currently in the playoff zone, occupying 13th place with 27 points. In the final round of the Russian Championship, Akron will play away against Krylia Sovetov on May 17.

Golmohammadi linked with two Iraqi clubs

TEHRAN - Yahya Golmohammadi—who has an impressive record of title wins with Persepolis—has remained without a team for nearly half a season. Despite some sports outlets suggesting he deserved a role on the coaching staff of the Iran U23 national team, the veteran coach is now drawing attention from two Iraqi clubs.

Golmohammadi initially took charge of Foolad Khuzestan in the 2025 league season, stepping into the Iranian top flight under his leadership. By the end of the 16th round, despite having quality squad options, the team had collected 17 points and sat in 11th place—a run that ultimately led to the end of his tenure. Hamid Motahari then replaced him on the sidelines.

After that, Golmohammadi stayed out of work for a spell, but the situation has shifted again: two Iraqi teams are reportedly interested in bringing him onboard.

If Golmohammadi decides to coach in Iraq next season, he would become the second Iranian manager to choose the Iraqi league after Alireza Mansourian. It's also a notable storyline: when Mansourian previously took charge of Al-Talaba, he claimed in an interview that he had chosen Iraq to "open the door" for other Iranian coaches. In another statement, Mansourian encouraged Iranian players and coaches to consider moves to the Iraqi league.

So, should Golmohammadi land a job there, it would effectively be another step toward Mansourian's vision.

Iran football team to be officially sent off for World Cup on Wednesday

TEHRAN - The Football Federation has announced that a public send-off ceremony for the Iran national team will be held on Wednesday, welcoming fans to the event.

Following the completion of four stages of special preparation training in Tehran, the federation has planned a ceremony to bid farewell to the players and coaching staff as they head to the World Cup tomorrow (Wednesday).

During the event, fans will see: the official send-off of the Iran squad, the unveiling of a special music piece for the national team, and the release of the Iran national team shirts for the 2026 World Cup.

The ceremony will take place at Enghelab Square in Tehran, with a special public turnout.

Over 10.6m tons of rebar produced in a year

TEHRAN- According to the statistics of the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA), 10.631 million tons of rebar was produced in Iran during the past Iranian calendar year 1404 (ended on March 20).

Based on the ISIPA data, the country's rebar production in 1404 fell 0.1 percent from the production figure in 1403, which was 10.64 million tons.

Rebar, short for reinforcing bar, is a steel bar used to strengthen concrete structures. Concrete is strong in compression but weak in tension; rebar provides the necessary tensile strength, forming reinforced concrete. Typically produced from carbon steel, rebar has a patterned surface—ribs or deformations—that bond mechanically with the concrete, preventing slippage.

Most rebar is manufactured by hot rolling steel billets. Common grades include ASTM A615 (carbon) and A706 (weldable, low-alloy). Diameters range from 6 mm to 50 mm, often marked with grade lines and mill symbols. Rebar is also available with epoxy coating, galvanization, or stainless steel cladding for corrosion resistance, especially in marine or bridge applications.

Global rebar demand is driven by construction and infrastructure—foundations, columns, beams, pavements, tunnels, and dams. Use of recycled scrap in electric arc furnaces makes rebar one of the most sustainable steel products, with high recyclability. New developments include high-strength rebar (600+ MPa) for lighter earthquake-resistant buildings and automated tying systems. As urbanization continues worldwide, rebar remains essential for safe, durable concrete structures, balancing cost, strength, and workability.

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.

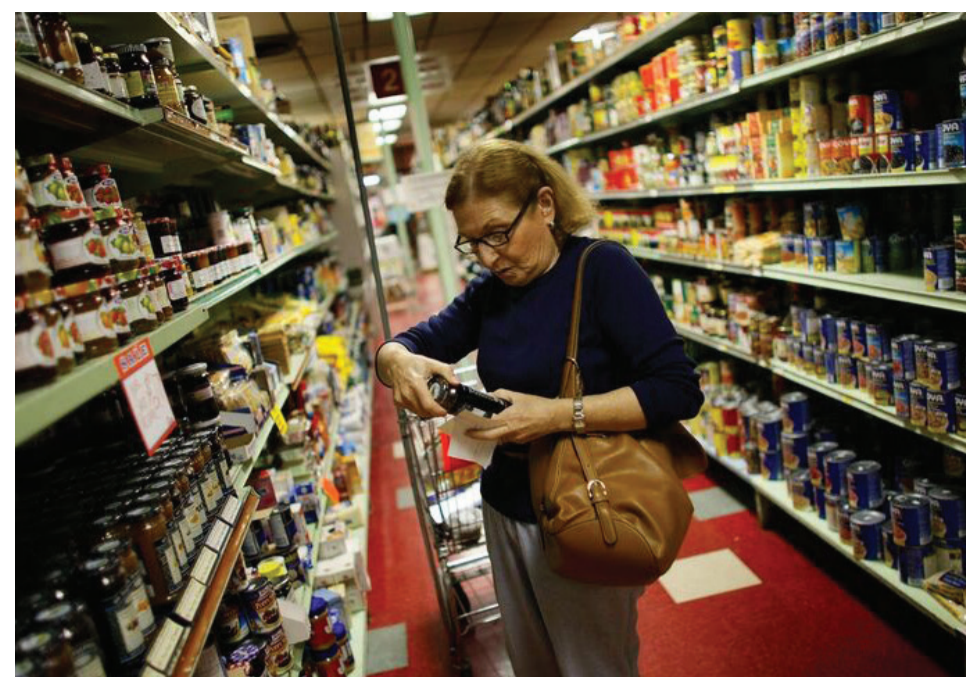
War with Iran drains US economy, hits ordinary citizens hardest

TEHRAN- As tensions with Iran escalate into prolonged military engagement, the economic toll on the United States is deepening, with ordinary Americans bearing the brunt of the cost, according to a growing body of analysis on the conflict's domestic fallout.

Since March, gasoline prices have surged by more than 50 percent, placing severe financial strain on households already grappling with inflation. The spike in fuel costs has rippled across supply chains, pushing up the price of everyday goods and squeezing family budgets.

The job market is also suffering. Key sectors—including tourism, retail, and manufacturing—have shed thousands of positions, with monthly job losses accelerating as the war disrupts both consumer confidence and industrial activity. Analysts warn that the trend could worsen if hostilities continue without a clear resolution.

Perhaps most alarming is how the war is being financed. With tax revenues under pressure, the government has effectively shifted the burden onto citizens through mounting credit-based spending. Many Americans have been forced to rely on credit cards and personal debt to cover basic needs such as fuel and utilities, a fragile arrangement that economists say could trigger a



wave of defaults.

Public debt is rising sharply, while political divisions in Washington over war funding have deepened. Republicans are increasingly split, with some lawmakers moving to curb presidential war powers amid concerns over

unchecked spending.

The conclusion, drawn by multiple policy observers, is stark: the war with Iran is not just a geopolitical crisis—it is becoming an economic and social one, whose heaviest weight falls on the nation's most vulnerable citizens.

A war that began with gasoline will end with gas



TEHRAN- According to oil industry experts, Iran's national CNG network, with 2,365 active stations, is a trump card that can reduce gasoline consumption by up to 24 million liters per day without spending a single additional rial.

Following the joint US-Israel military attacks that began on February 28, 2026, a significant portion of Iran's refining infrastructure has been targeted. Despite officials' efforts to produce and supply the country's needed fuel, these attacks—which specifically targeted advanced processing units of refineries and may have significantly reduced the country's gasoline production capacity—will likely confront the nation with a serious fuel supply challenge in the near future.

The questions circulating in public forums and social media these days are simple yet vital: "Will gasoline be rationed?" and "Do we face difficult days ahead in fuel supply?" This report attempts to explain, with a clear, documented, and calm perspective, the dimensions of this hidden energy war for the noble people of Iran and to answer what measures have been devised to get through this period.

Dissecting an economic assassination: What exactly did enemy target?

To analyze the situation properly, we need to see what was

behind these attacks. Field investigations and expert reports indicate that the enemy's strategy in this phase of the imposed war has been "smart paralysis," not "complete destruction."

Based on information published in reputable domestic media, including the Etemad newspaper, oil wells, offshore platforms, and main crude oil pipelines have been spared serious damage. Iran still has oil. But the Achilles' heel lies elsewhere: the advanced and bottleneck units inside refineries—sections such as massive distillation towers, complex catalytic units (where high-quality gasoline is produced), heat exchangers, and control rooms (the brains of the refinery). This is targeted industrial assassination. The enemy wants us to have valuable raw materials but be unable to convert them into strategic products like gasoline and diesel.

This situation is like a farmer who has quality wheat but whose millstones are broken. He is not hungry, but he has trouble converting wheat into flour. This is precisely the managed crisis that our domestic specialists have been prepared to deal with from day one.

What do numbers say? From a 10-million-liter deficit to a 70-million-liter warning

Before these attacks, Iranians consumed an average of 130 to 135 million liters of gasoline per

day. On busy days and travel seasons, this figure even exceeded 147 million liters. On the other side, the country's total gasoline production capacity, including refineries such as Persian Gulf Star, Shazand, Bandar Abbas, Isfahan, and Tehran, was about 114 to 124 million liters per day. This means that even on normal days with no war, we naturally had a production deficit of 10 to 20 million liters, which was compensated from strategic reserves or managed imports.

Now, with the aggressive attacks on some refineries and an estimated 30 to 50 percent damage to production capacity, the country's refining capacity has likely dropped to about 60 to 80 million liters per day. A simple subtraction shows that if consumption continues at the same rate, we may face a daily deficit of 50 to 70 million liters. This number could mean long lines, problems in public transportation, and damage to the production and distribution cycle of goods.

Why won't gasoline prices rise? A frank answer to a public concern

In such a situation, the first prescription classical economists offer is "raising prices to reduce demand." But is this prescription effective for today's Iran? The frank and straightforward answer is a big "no." Senior economic officials and social experts have concluded that in wartime conditions, given the economic pressure the noble people of Iran are already enduring, tampering with gasoline prices is not only ineffective but could also bring unforeseen social consequences. The late Leader of the Revolution also always emphasized caring for people's livelihoods and avoiding price shocks.

Therefore, the government's strategy is designed around "non-price demand management." This means controlling consumption without making gasoline more expensive—a del-

icate administrative art. This includes smart and fair rationing, serious crackdown on smugglers, and mobilizing the public transportation fleet.

Iran's secret weapon: Gas that shields as a gasoline substitute

But among all these measures, Iran has a rare trump card: the national CNG (compressed natural gas) network. Today, across vast Iran, there are 2,365 active CNG stations, capable of delivering over 40 million cubic meters of gas to vehicles daily. However, our current usage of this vast network is only 16 million cubic meters per day, meaning we have an unused capacity of 24 million cubic meters—untouched.

In other words, without needing to build a single new refinery, Iran can replace the equivalent of 24 million liters of gasoline per day with gas. Producing that amount at a refinery would require billions of dollars in investment and years of time. Yet it is already present in the country's infrastructure, needing only a national resolve to activate it.

Turning threat into opportunity

What happened to the country's oil industry these days was a deep wound—a wound from the long-standing enmity of enemies who cannot bear to see Iran's progress. But the phoenix rises from the flames. Our nation has shown throughout the 40-plus-year history of the Islamic Revolution that it is precisely within such threats and pressures that talents flourish and new opportunities are created. Today, the vast CNG network and the capability of domestic engineers for rapid reconstruction represent an exceptional opportunity to complete the puzzle of self-sufficiency and break free from gasoline dependence. Careful consumption, smart use of public transport, and national unity will be the keys to navigating this historic turn.

Food security of country ensured through agricultural production continuity: minister

TEHRAN- The Minister of Agriculture, emphasizing the role of the private sector in agricultural production, stated that the continuity of production in this sector can sustainably ensure the country's food security.

According to Mehr News Agency from the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad, Gholamreza Nouri, the Minister of Agriculture, speaking about reviewing the price situation of basic goods and strategies for market control, said: The majority of the concerns of the members of the parliament were related to product

prices and market conditions of basic goods, and it was decided that more detailed investigations be conducted in this regard.

Referring to the price situation in the basic goods market, he added: So far, no significant case of price gouging has been observed in this sector, and price increases are mainly due to rising production costs and higher final product prices.

The Minister of Agriculture continued: Nevertheless, it was emphasized that monitoring should be intensified to prevent any possible

price gouging, and regulatory bodies, the disciplinary authority, and the Ministry of Agriculture are active in this area.

Nouri also highlighted the decisive role of the private sector in agricultural production and stated: Approximately 99 percent of the country's agricultural products are produced by the private sector; therefore, it is necessary to create conditions where these activities have economic justification and continuity, so that the country's food security is sustainably ensured.

The architecture of a new Nakba in the West Bank

How settlements, demolitions, and daily terror are erasing Palestinian life

From page 1 ▶

Smotrich's silent coup and the million-settler blueprint

The strategic center of this transformation is the "Million in Samaria" plan. Once a fringe ambition of the far-right, it is now an official roadmap backed by the full weight of the regime.

In December 2025, the Knesset approved a special budget of NIS 2.75 billion (\$932 million) dedicated exclusively to West Bank settlement infrastructure over the next five years.

This funding has fueled a staggering surge in colonization. Between May 2025 and May 2026, the Israeli regime approved 75 new settlements, including a record-breaking batch of 34 approvals in March 2026 alone.

This is what Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich calls "civilianization." By decoupling land registries and building permits from the military hierarchy and transferring them to civilian ministries, Israel is effectively imposing domestic law on occupied territory.

The April 2026 re-establishment of the Sa-Nur settlement, evacuated during the 2005 pullout, signals the final burial of the so-called "disengagement" era. The West Bank is no longer being governed as a temporary military holding; it is being treated as a domestic Israeli district.



Making life unlivable

While new settlements rise, existing Palestinian communities are being hollowed out through a strategy of infrastructure erasure.

In the northern refugee camps of Jenin, Tulkarm, and Nur Shams, military operations have shifted focus. D9 bulldozers systematically rip up asphalt, crush water mains, and destroy sewage systems.

In Nur Shams camp, satellite imagery confirmed that 35 percent of all structures were damaged or destroyed by early 2026. The intent is to make the camps uninhabitable. Since January 2025, more than 33,000 Palestinian refugees have been displaced in the northern West Bank alone.

This physical destruction is reinforced by a record-shattering network of 925 movement obstacles, checkpoints, iron gates, and earth mounds that have turned the West Bank into a fragmented cage for

3.4 million people.

By blocking access to Road 60, the primary north-south artery, Israel has reserved high-speed travel for settlers while forcing Palestinians onto crumbling secondary roads. This fragmentation is an economic death sentence, causing a systemic collapse where 36 percent of medical permit applications for East Jerusalem (al-Quds) hospitals are now denied or left pending.

The war on childhood and the siege

In East Jerusalem (al-Quds), the battle is for the soul and the soil of the city. In neighborhoods such as Silwan and Batn al-Hawa, demolition pressure is relentless. In March 2026, 15 families were evicted from Batn al-Hawa in a single sweep to facilitate the expansion of settler enclaves.

The pressure on Al-Aqsa Mosque represents the most explosive

frontier. In May 2026, nine cabinet ministers and 13 lawmakers formally petitioned police to allow a mass settler storming of the compound. When the regime's leaders lead the charge to violate the historical status quo, the mosque is a line in the sand for the future of al-Quds.

The most harrowing metric of this campaign, however, is written in the blood of the youngest. UNICEF reports that 70 Palestinian children have been killed in the West Bank and East Jerusalem (al-Quds) since the start of 2025, an average of one child every week. At least 93 percent of these deaths were caused by Israeli forces using live ammunition.

Thus, Israel's policy is a permanent project of territorial consolidation and demographic pressure. Settler violence, which OCHA documented at more than six attacks per day in early 2026, functions as a paramilitary arm of the regime, often operating under the active cover of the military.

The phrase "new Nakba" is a fitting description of a reality where Palestinians are being fenced in, burned out, and fragmented while the structures of their life are steadily erased.

The map of Palestine is being redrawn daily, not with pens, but with bulldozers and checkpoints, to make a Palestinian state a physical impossibility.

Hezbollah's drones expose Israel's costly defenses

From page 1 ▶ A growing number of analyses present an increasingly unified view attempting to define the danger posed by Hezbollah's drones, especially those operating through fiber-optic technology.

The central argument is that the breach occurring on the Lebanese front is not only technological, but also structural, operational, and conceptual. The regime's problem is not the lack of solutions, but the persistent gap between developing technology and turning it into an effective battlefield capability in time.

Analysts repeatedly point to failures in handling what they call the "drone revolution." Attacks carried out first by Hamas and later by Hezbollah showed that multi-billion-dollar advanced systems developed or offered to the Zionist regime were never integrated or distributed to combat units fast enough.

A structural flaw also emerged within the regime's military and security establishment itself, with no single authority clearly responsible for defending against drones.

According to experts, the result has been a deadly gap on the battlefield between awareness and warning on one side and operational action on the other. This failure stems from military bureaucracy, especially inside the IOF: weak prioritization and no central authority managing drone defense, leading to what analysts call "learning through shock" instead of preparing in advance.

The threat is no longer conventional. Fiber-optic drones have shifted the battlefield away from traditional air superiority toward cheap but highly effective weapons. This has made detection harder, jamming less useful, and responses slower and more expensive.

More importantly, Hebrew media coverage increasingly recognizes that geography and distance no longer hold their traditional value. Military commentators now question the new so-called "buffer zone" in southern Lebanon as protection for northern settlements against drones, rockets, or even anti-tank missiles. Ac-



ording to assessments, the home front has become a direct part of the battlefield, where low-cost threats strike extremely expensive defense systems.

Media comparisons increasingly focus on Ukraine, where the war is described as a "live laboratory" revealing the rapid evolution of aerial warfare and the transformation of drones into mass networked weapons. The Zionist regime failed to absorb the lessons of Ukraine quickly enough, while its opponents, and in particular Hezbollah, benefited from the transfer of knowledge and combat experience.

As a result, the IOF now finds itself in an unequal race: its adversaries learn rapidly from global battlefields, while the regime's security establishment remains slow in converting knowledge into operational deployment.

The IOF strategy is increasingly presented as an attempt to build a "multi-layered defense architecture." This system relies on three pillars: multi-platform detection using radar, optics, sound systems, and artificial intelligence; kinetic and laser interception systems along with counter-drones; and passive defense measures such as physical fortifications and protective nets.

However, all these layers share one important weakness: they remain only partially deployed. Military experts continue to stress that the time gap between development and field distribution remains the main vulnerability, especially given the primitive methods still being used against

these drones.

There is a broader strategic dimension. Drones are no longer viewed as only a tactical threat, but as part of a larger transformation in the nature of warfare itself. This shift includes the collapse of the distinction between front lines and rear areas, the declining role of manned aircraft in favor of small, dense, and inexpensive unmanned systems, and the rise of "swarm warfare," where numerical density becomes more decisive than the quality of individual weapons.

War is therefore becoming an environment of constant and rapid learning, where superiority depends more on the speed of adaptation than on technological size alone.

Analysts also warn that the current drone threat is only the beginning of a far more complicated phase. New threats are already under development, including "cellular drones" that rely on mobile communication networks instead of traditional broadcasting systems, making them harder to detect and jam. There is also growing concern over "coordinated drone swarms" operating collectively and in synchronization, increasing both the difficulty of interception and their destructive power.

The overall conclusion of Hebrew media analysis is that the regime faces a structural contradiction; although it remains highly advanced in producing offensive and defensive technology, it continues to lag in transforming that technology into distributed and effective battlefield readiness.

Meanwhile, its opponents, especially Hezbollah, are evolving rapidly through low-cost, highly flexible models that benefit from global experiences, particularly in Ukraine, and adapt them to the battlefields of Lebanon and Gaza.

Ultimately, the core Israeli concern reflected in these analyses is no longer whether the Zionist regime possesses the technological solution, but whether that solution can reach the battlefield before it becomes too late or no longer sufficient.

Hezbollah chief vows Lebanon will never bow to 'Greater Israel' project

From page 1 ▶ However, he emphasized that the Resistance has effectively checked this encroachment. Hezbollah's sophisticated drone and missile operations have not only inflicted significant material losses but have also induced a state of permanent psychological crisis within the ranks of the enemy, whose morale is crumbling under the weight of divine retribution.

Addressing the diplomatic landscape, Sheikh Qassem identified the burgeoning Tehran-Washington understanding as the most potent instrument for halting the Israeli onslaught.

While expressing deep gratitude for Iran's strategic patronage, he urged Lebanese authorities to abandon the trap of direct negotiations, which he argued provide "free concessions" to the occupation regime.

He insisted that sovereignty must be reclaimed through five non-negotiable pillars: a total cessation of aggression, the withdrawal of Israeli forces to permit the Lebanese Army's deployment south of the Litani River, the release of captives, the dignified return of the displaced, and comprehensive reconstruction.

Crucially, Qassem asserted that Hezbollah's

arsenal is a strictly domestic matter, entirely separate from foreign dictates.

He aligned this stance with the national defense vision of President Joseph Aoun, which incorporates the Resistance as a fundamental element of state power.

Drawing on the legacy of the martyr leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, Qassem reminded his fighters that their spirit is a light dispelling the darkness of tyranny. "We will not leave the field until the enemy despairs," he declared, reaffirming that the struggle continues until total liberation is achieved.

Christian Zionist ideology best fits Trump's Mideast policies



From page 1 ▶ Some notable evangelical leaders and politicians within the Republican Party who have identified as Christian Zionists or have expressed strong support for Israel are:

Mike Pence, the former Vice President under Donald Trump. Pence has been a vocal supporter of Israel and has often spoken about the biblical significance of the U.S.-Israel relationship.

John Hagee, founder of Christians United for Israel (CUFI). Hagee is a prominent evangelical pastor known for his strong support of Israel and advocacy for Christian Zionism.

Ted Cruz, the U.S. Senator from Texas. He has openly expressed his support for Israel and has aligned himself with Christian Zionist beliefs, often invoking biblical references in his speeches.

Franklin Graham is the son of evangelist Billy Graham. Graham is a prominent Christian leader who has been an outspoken supporter of Israel and has promoted Christian Zionist views.

Robert Jeffress - Pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas. He is a well-known evangelical leader who has been a strong advocate for Israel and has described himself as a Christian Zionist. Called a televangelist, he is a Fox News contributor.

Jerry Falwell Jr., the former president of Liberty University and son of Jerry Falwell Sr. He has been a vocal supporter of Israel and has promoted the idea of Christian Zionism in his public statements.

Michelle Bachmann, the former U.S. Representative from Minnesota. She has been a strong advocate for Israel and has expressed her support for Christian Zionism in various forums. According to TC Jewfolk, she has said, "I have tremendous love for Israel, and great admiration for the Israeli people. I am a Christian, but I consider my heritage Jewish."

'I am a Zionist'

Some prominent Democrats have also expressed strong support for Israel, though they may not specifically identify as Christian Zionists. A few notable Democrats who have shown a biased stance toward Israel are:

Former President Joe Biden, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and current Senate Minority Leader

Chuck Schumer; former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi; Steny Hoyer, the second-ranking Democrat in the House after Pelosi from 2003-2023; Dianne Feinstein, the senator from California from 1992 until her death in 2023.

In the early stages of the genocide in Gaza following the Oct. 7 attack, Biden, meeting Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu in Tel Aviv, said, "I don't believe you have to be a Jew to be a Zionist, and I am a Zionist."

Of course, not all Jews are Zionist. There is a considerable percentage of Jews around the world who oppose Israel's apartheid against the Palestinians.

Like all people of the faith, Jews should be respected. The problem is that Zionism is synonymous with occupation, injustice, and cruelty.

Biden, in his half-century of public life, was a strident supporter of Israel. Though he expressed support for a two-state solution for the decades-long conflict, his support for Israel fell within political and strategic interests.

Hillary Clinton's support for Israel was unwavering in her political career, especially as senator and chief diplomat. She stated her support for recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital during her presidential campaign in 2016. Also, in a speech at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) conference in March 2016, Hillary said she would recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

However, her sworn enemy, Donald Trump, who called her "crooked" as a presidential rival, recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital in his

first presidency.

Framed conflicts in biblical terms

The United States joined Israel in launching the war of aggression on Iran in June 2025 and again on Feb. 28. In the case of Iran, much of that backing is rooted in Washington's long-standing regional and strategic interests.

"But within the administration of President Donald Trump and beyond, prominent Christian Zionists have sometimes framed conflicts in the Middle East in biblical terms, invoking scripture to justify support for Israel," Daniel Tester wrote in Middle East Eye on May 12.

As a political and religious ideology, Christian Zionism not only facilitates the flow of Jews to occupied Palestine but also backs the annexation of neighboring parts of Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan.

Though Trump has not openly said he is a Christian Zionist, he is openly surrounded by people with such ideology. Trump's recognition of Syria's Golan Heights as part of Israel in his first term meets this biblical ideology.

In the UK and elsewhere, many politicians were and still are sympathetic to Christian Zionism. Most notably, they included British foreign minister Arthur Balfour, who in 1917 sent the Balfour Declaration, in which Britain pledged support for a Jewish state in Palestine, to Lord Rothschild, a leading Zionist.

The fire that Balfour ignited in the Middle East is still raging, even with a greater speed and many more flames. For example, since the creation of Israel in 1948, the region has not seen a tragedy as horrific as the Gaza genocide so far.

In the U.S., where Christian Zionism is most widespread and influential, 73 million Americans identified as Evangelical Protestants in 2024, according to polling from the Pew Research Center - around 21 percent of the overall population. There were 5.8 million Jews in the U.S. in 2020, according to Pew's most recent survey.

Christian Zionist Evangelicals have been influential in U.S. policymaking for more than a century.

In the 1940s, for example, Evangelicals were a central force within the American Christian Palestine Committee, which lobbied for the founding of the state of Israel in Palestine.

Today, key members of the Trump administration are Evangelical Protestants who identify as Christian Zionists, including Secretary of War Pete Hegseth and the current Washington's Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee.

It is because of this dangerous Christian Zionist ideology that Hegseth has said the aim is for "maximum lethality, not tepid legality" in the war on Iran. Not showing regret for burying 168 school children and staff under rubble with Tomahawk missiles in Minab in southern Iran on the first day of the war fall within this ideology.

It is also because of this ideology that Huckabee said on Feb. 20 that Israel has a biblical right to take over the entire Middle East.

"It would be fine if they took it all," Huckabee said to Tucker Carlson.

The Republican Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mike Johnson, another Trump ally, is also an Evangelical supporter of Israel, as is Mike Pence.

Christian Zionist televangelists have also served as advisers during the Trump administration, including Paula White-Cain, Trump's personal spiritual adviser.

In July 2024, her website stated: "In this pivotal moment in human history, we are called to STAND with ISRAEL! This isn't about politics; this is about living in harmony with the WORD of God!"

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Tourism ministry to launch travel card to boost domestic recovery



TEHRAN – The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts has announced the development of a travel card initiative to revitalize the domestic tourism sector and reduce travel costs.

Deputy Tourism Minister Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpei unveiled the plan during a press conference on Tuesday in Tehran. He noted that the initiative draws inspiration from a successful pre-war model in Isfahan, which managed to slash travel costs by half through four percent interest loans provided by provincial banks and significant discounts from the hospitality sector, Mehr reported.

Addressing the severe impact of the recent Ramadan War, Mohseni Bandpei acknowledged that the conflict brought both domestic and international tourism to a virtual standstill. “The activists and professionals in this industry have suffered immense losses,” he stated.

To mitigate this, the government has allocated interest-free loans. These funds are earmarked for empowering local communities, standardizing eco-lodges, and establishing handicraft workshops. According to the deputy minister, around 30,000 projects have already been introduced to banks for financing.

Despite the damage caused by the conflict, Mohseni Bandpei argued that the global attention resulting from recent events has inadvertently highlighted Iran’s civilizational and historical capacities. He emphasized that tourism is not just an economic pillar but a vital tool for social resilience and national cohesion.

“During times of insecurity, tourism infrastructure provided safe havens for displaced compatriots,” he remarked. He cited the “Gorgan, a Safe Place” initiative in northern Golestan province as a prime example of social solidarity. Under this scheme, public and private sectors—including medical services, transportation, and even local businesses—voluntarily provided free services to those displaced by the war, despite it being the peak income-earning season.

The deputy minister provided optimistic data regarding the industry’s recovery, noting a 48.5 percent increase in foreign tourist arrivals in March-April 2025 compared to the previous year.

Furthermore, he highlighted Iran’s growing international prestige, noting that three Iranian villages were selected as Best Tourism Villages by the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in 2025. Mohseni Bandpei concluded by reaffirming the ministry’s commitment to strategic planning for both domestic and international markets

2,000-year-old city in Mangistau region reveals Silk Road legacy

Mangistau region governor Nurdaulet Kilybay, together with Akan Ongaruly, Director of the Margulan Archeology Institute, and archaeologist Andrey Astafyev, visited the Karakabak settlement in Tupkaragan district, Qazinform News Agency reports.

According to the regional akimat (administration) press service, the governor reviewed unique historical artifacts unearthed during excavations at Karakabak, now preserved in the Abish Kekilybayuly Mangistau Regional Museum of History and Local Lore.

The delegation then toured the archaeological site to survey research findings and debate prospects for further cooperation.

Scholars believe Karakabak was one of the major trade and craft centers of the 1st-6th cen-

to ensure a significant leap in the post-war era.

War acts as the most immediate and devastating disruptor of the global tourism industry, instantly halting the influx of international visitors and threatening years of strategic investment in infrastructure. Beyond the tragic and often irreparable physical destruction of cultural heritage sites, conflict creates a crisis of perception that can linger long after hostilities cease, as the rebranding of a nation as an insecure destination discourages risk-averse travelers.

Economically, the impact is profound; the sudden cessation of tourist arrivals leads to a collapse in revenue, placing thousands of jobs in jeopardy—from hotel staff to local artisans—and straining the livelihoods of communities dependent on hospitality. However, the post-war recovery phase often prompts a critical paradigm shift, where nations are forced to innovate through domestic travel initiatives and regional diplomacy to restore trust, proving that while tourism is the first victim of war, it also becomes a vital tool for healing and economic reconstruction.

Iran’s domestic tourism landscape is defined by its extraordinary geographical diversity and deep-rooted historical legacy, offering a tapestry of experiences that range from the lush northern forests to the architectural marvels of the central plateau. Recent initiatives by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage have increasingly focused on highlighting lesser-known destinations and empowering local communities. By promoting eco-tourism and standardizing traditional eco-lodges, the state aims to transform tourism into a primary engine for regional development, ensuring that the country’s civilizational assets are preserved while fostering a sense of pride in the nation’s enduring cultural longevity.

In the wake of recent regional challenges, domestic tourism has emerged as a vital pillar of national resilience and social stability. The sector has proven its ability to maintain social cohesion during times of crisis, providing not only economic relief to local businesses but also serving as a means of psychological recovery for the population. New strategies, such as the introduction of the travel card and the allocation of interest-free loans, are designed to make travel more accessible and affordable for the general public. By prioritizing domestic travel as a strategic asset, Iran is strengthening its socio-economic fabric, ensuring that the industry remains a sustainable and inclusive force that balances regional growth with the preservation of national identity.

turies AD. Excavations confirm that about two thousand years ago, major international trade routes passed through what is now Mangistau.

The settlement played a strategic role as both a maritime and land hub along the northern branch of the Great Silk Road, facilitating trade, economic, and cultural ties between Caspian states.

Artifacts found at Karakabak include coins, seals, ceramics, and other items showing close connections with Byzantium, Persia, India, Rome, and China. Archaeologists also uncovered traces of an ancient port, workshops, and evidence of active maritime trade, highlighting the advanced urban culture and economy of the region in antiquity.

(Source: Qazinform)

Global community must be accountable for Minab tragedy, tourism minister says

TEHRAN – Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, the Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, has strongly condemned the tragic incident at the Shajareh Tayyebeh school in Minab, describing it as an anti-human crime against defenseless children.

Salehi-Amiri stated that the Minab school tragedy must be recorded in the world’s historical memory as a contemporary crime against humanity, Mehr reported on Tuesday.

“This incident is a blatant symbol of violence against humanity and innocent children,” the minister remarked. “The international community must adopt a clear and responsible stance regarding this catastrophe.”

To honor the memory of the young victims, Salehi-Amiri proposed a series of cultural and symbolic initiatives, including the establishment of a memorial museum, the production of cinematic and artistic works, and the creation of urban murals to ensure the tragedy is never forgotten.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the minister elaborated on the civilizational and cultural dimensions of “Greater Iran.” He described it as a strategic concept that transcends ethnic, linguistic, and religious differences, serving as the strongest foundation for national cohesion.

“Greater Iran is a collection of historical, cultural, and social bonds. A scholarly understanding of these ties can strengthen social capital and pave the way for national unity and solidarity,” Salehi-Amiri underscored.

Defining the scope of “Cultural Iran,” the minister noted that Iran is a vast civilizational sphere where shared art, literature, music, and traditions flow.

“Many of the region’s historical figures, though located within the political boundaries of other countries today, have their roots in Cultural Iran,” he explained. “These commonalities represent a strategic capacity for developing cultural diplomacy and civilizational interactions.”

The minister also emphasized the inherent dignity and ancient heritage of all Iranian ethnic groups, calling for a perspective rooted in fairness and respect toward them.

1,000-year-old Viking gold hoard discovered in Denmark among largest ever found

A discovery beside a forest track in northern Denmark has revealed one of the country’s most important Viking Age gold hoards in decades. Archaeologists uncovered six solid gold arm rings near Rold in Himmerland, a find now known as the Rold Treasure, which ranks as the third-largest Viking Age gold discovery ever recorded in Denmark.

The discovery began on April 22 when a local resident brought two heavy gold rings to the archaeological department at the North Jutland Museums after noticing them partly exposed in the soil along a farm track in a wooded area. Museum archaeologists quickly identified the objects as Viking Age gold arm rings, an unusual and highly significant find.

A field investigation followed soon after. Archaeologists returned to the site and carried out a careful metal-detecting survey across a wider area. They soon located a third gold ring close to the original spot. Three more rings appeared around 15 meters away, bringing the total to six.

All six rings were intact and made of solid gold. Together, the hoard weighs 762.5 grams, or nearly 1.7 pounds. Only two Viking Age gold finds in Denmark have been larger: the Tissø ring found in western Zealand in 1977 and the Fæsted Hoard discovered near Ribe in 2016.

The objects date to the late Viking Age, roughly CE 900 to 1000, a period when Den-



mark was moving toward political unification under a single monarchy. This was the same era in which King Harald Bluetooth strengthened royal power and commemorated his achievements on the famous Jelling Stone around CE 965.

Gold arm rings of this type are known from Scandinavia, though most similar finds are made of silver rather than gold. During the Viking Age, gold was largely controlled by the social elite, making finds like this exceptionally rare.

The collection includes both twisted and smooth arm rings, showing different forms of advanced metalworking. Three rings were made by twisting together two gold rods. One includes a thin inlaid gold wire and a knob-shaped clasp. The remaining pieces were shaped from solid rods or wire and finished with tightly wrapped closures known as running knots. One ring stands apart from the rest with flattened joined ends decorated with zigzag patterns and triangular designs.

The fact that all six rings were found whole is especially important to archaeologists. Viking silver objects were often cut into smaller fragments and used as payment metal in trade. These gold rings show no sign of being divided, which suggests they were not intended for everyday exchange or weighed bullion.

Concluding his speech, Salehi-Amiri touched upon the profound link between “Iranian-ness” and “Islam-ness,” describing them as two inseparable pillars of national identity.

“Any attempt to create a dichotomy between these two is unrealistic and incorrect,” he asserted. “The Iranian nation takes pride in both its ancient civilizational background and its Islamic culture and the school of Ahl al-Bayt (AS). Together, these elements form the Iranian-Islamic identity.”

Earlier this week, Salehi-Amiri 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.

He also said 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.

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.

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

While dozens of girls and boys aged between 7 and 12 were beginning their lessons, the school was targeted by a missile strike that caused the building to collapse, trapping children and teachers beneath the rubble. Iranian authorities confirmed a final death toll of 168 people, with at least 95 others wounded, marking one of the most harrowing incidents of the conflict’s opening day.

Despite attempts by US and Israeli authorities to distance

themselves from the carnage as images of the tragedy spread across social media, detailed forensic and digital investigations have painted a starkly different picture.

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

(Source: Archaeologymag.com)

Unprecedented rise in Lake Urmia water level since 2020

TEHRAN – Thanks to abundant rainfalls, the level of water at Lake Urmia has risen remarkably, reaching 1271.03 meters, which is unprecedented since the Iranian year 1399 (2020), the Secretary of Lake Urmia Rescue National Committee, has said.

Lake Urmia in northwestern West Azarbaijan province started to dry up in the 2000s. The lake was once the largest in West Asia and the sixth-largest salt lake in the world, with a water surface area of 5,000 to 6,000 square kilometers.

Over the past few months, around 30 million cubic meters of water have been released into Lake Urmia on a daily basis, reviving the lake and triggering the return of Artemia and migratory birds, IRNA quoted Reza Rahmani as saying.

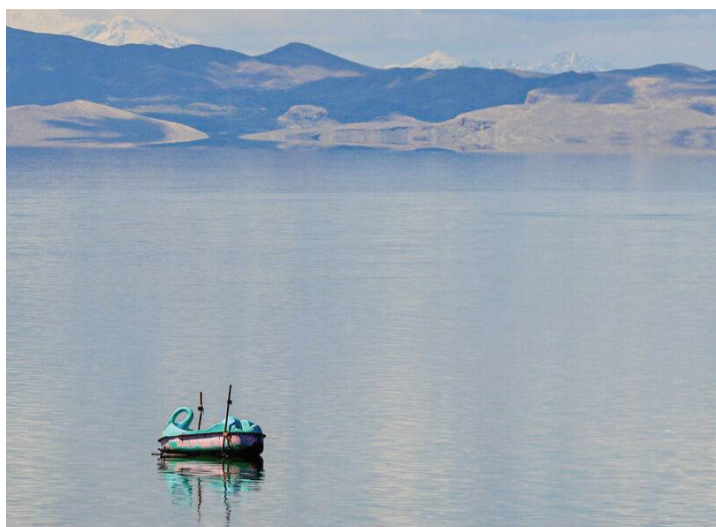
Apart from plentiful precipitation, other factors such as dredging of rivers, targeted release of water, and restoration of satellite wetlands have played a key role in improving the situation of the lake, he added.

However, if the condition is not stabilized by the next year, the summer evaporation cycle will make the situation critical once more. Maintaining the current water level requires preventing excessive agricultural development and unauthorized harvesting, Rahmani further noted.

Elaborating on measures to be taken, the official said the cultivation patterns are planned to be changed and lands will be equipped with modern irrigation strategies with the aim of reducing water consumption in agriculture by 50 percent.

Highlighting the importance of public participation, the official said raising public awareness, particularly among farmers, about optimal use of water will directly lead to the sustainability of the lake.

Lake Urmia faces significant



challenges due to the overconsumption of water resources, magnified by climate change impacts, which have severely impacted its ecosystem.

Agricultural activities in the region are increasingly vulnerable to water shortages, a situation exacerbated by the effects of climate change. Studies indicate that these climatic changes could further disrupt agrifood systems and the lake's fragile environment in the future.

Over the past seven months (from September 23, 2025, to April 20), 1.278 billion cubic meters of water have been released from dams, particularly Boukan and Mahabad dams, to Lake Urmia. Currently, the lake has about 2.89 billion cubic meters of water, the CEO of West Azarbaijan regional water company, Majid Rastgari, noted.

The official went on to say that the volume of water in satellite wetlands like Nowruzlou and Yousef-Kandi has reached 100 percent of their storage capacity due to successful water transfer plans and good water management.

Fortunately, recent rainfall in the northwestern part of the country has increased the level of water in Lake Urmia and wetlands in West

Azarbaijan province, which had experienced drought situation over the past year. For instance, Kani Barazan wetland has been filled by 90 percent, IRNA quoted Hojjat Jabbari, the director general of West Azarbaijan's department of environment, as saying.

Also, the surplus of water has been released into Lake Urmia, helping greatly to reviving the lake, he added. In December 2025, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), in cooperation with the Governorate of West Azarbaijan Province, held a workshop on a project titled 'Enhancing Restoration Activities in Lake Urmia through the Effective Use of Agricultural Water', marking the official launch of the project's second phase, which was signed in October 2025.

Funded by the Government of Japan, the FAO of the United Nations and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the initiative aims to promote sustainable agriculture and support the restoration of one of the country's most vital ecosystems — Lake Urmia.

The project also aims to help revive the lake, and promote sustainable agriculture and support the restoration of one of the country's most vital ecosystems —

Lake Urmia.

The signing ceremony of the project was held during President Masoud Pezeshkian's visit to West Azarbaijan.

The document was signed by Reza Rahmani, the Secretary of the Urmia Lake Rescue National Committee, and Ali Nazarioust, Officer-in-Charge (on behalf of the FAO Representative to the Islamic Republic of Iran).

The Lake Urmia Basin plays a critical role in ensuring Iran's food security and agricultural productivity. However, in recent years, the Basin's water resources have significantly declined due to rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, and unsustainable water use.

Recognizing the urgency of these challenges, FAO is implementing this project to promote integrated water resource management and climate-smart agricultural practices across the Basin.

The Lake Urmia component of the project will be jointly implemented by FAO and the Urmia Lake Rescue National Committee (ULRNC). It aims to scale up and operationalize improvements in agricultural water efficiency and productivity, safeguarding livelihoods and reducing pressure on water resources.

Through capacity development, the introduction of efficient irrigation technologies, and the promotion of sustainable farming methods, the project will help farmers and rural communities build resilience to water scarcity while contributing to the restoration of the lake's ecological balance.

The project represents a strong example of collaboration between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, FAO, UNDP, and the Government of Japan in supporting national efforts toward sustainable agriculture, water management, and environmental conservation.

WFP releases annual report on Iran

TEHRAN – The World Food Program (WFP) has released its 2025 report on Iran based on the Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP 2023-2027).

In 2025, WFP sustained food assistance to some 33,300 vulnerable refugees living in 20 settlements across 13 provinces, including 404 refugees with disabilities (40 percent women) who received monthly cash top-ups. About 183 women and 190 men received WFP livelihood support.

WFP doubled cash transfer values since January 2025 safeguarding access to food amid price volatility and protecting the most vulnerable households.

Assistance remained uninterrupted, with targeted adjustments: wheat flour entitlements reduced from 12 kg to 9 kg (Nov-Dec) and school snacks paused (Oct-Dec) to stretch limited resources.

To promote girls' education and reduce barriers to attendance, approximately 2,629 girl students received cash incentives as part of WFP's commitment to empowering young women. Some 9,261 boys and girls and their teachers benefitted from WFP school snacks.

For more than four decades, the Islamic Republic of Iran has hosted Afghans fleeing conflict and hardship. In 2025, WFP remained essential to protecting the food security of vulnerable refugees residing in 20 settlements, where households rely on shelter, education and primary health care by the Government and other humanitarian actors, complemented by WFP's monthly food assistance (through cash and in-kind modalities).

The program's focus is on maintaining a dignified minimum basic needs while prioritizing those with the highest vulnerability, including households headed by women and persons with disabilities.

Operations are implemented in close collaboration and coordination with the Center for Alien and Foreign Immigrant Affairs (CAFIA), WFP's primary governmental counterpart, and with International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGO) and UN agencies mainly United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to ensure coherent refugee support and referral pathways.

Despite a complex year, marked by economic volatility and temporary operational risks, WFP sustained core assistance to settlement refugees. To safeguard purchasing power, WFP increased cash-based transfer values by 100 percent in January 2025 following the recommendation of a settlement-specific Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) assessment; this was complemented by a one-time cash top-up to cushion households during market instability and reduced income after Iran-Israel 12-day conflict.

Targeted adjustments preserved program continuity: wheat flour entitlements were reduced from 12 kg to 9 kg per person for November-December, and the school snacks program was suspended for October to December.

These measures limit service disruptions while protecting life-saving transfers for the most vulnerable. Livelihood activities were scaled down given funding shortfalls and corporate efficiency measures, with WFP continuing to explore cost-effective, resilience-building options that can be re-activated as resources allow.

WFP reached around 33,300 settlement refugees with monthly food rations (fortified wheat flour and vegetable oil) and cash-based transfers. The program maintained inclusive design features, such as cash top-ups for people with disabilities and targeted support for school-age girls through conditional incentives when funding allowed. Partnerships strengthened reach and quality: WFP coordinated with UNHCR, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Cooperazione e Sviluppo (CESVI) and Relief International (IR) through joint assessments, monitoring and inter-agency working groups (Cash, Livelihoods, Education, Protection, ...).

Under general food assistance, refugees living in 20 settlements received transfers throughout the year, with program adjustments aimed at preserving full-year coverage wherever possible.

For school-based program, the total number of assistance days decreased due to the October-December suspension, reflecting resource

prioritization to protect food security outcomes for the most vulnerable.

Macroeconomic pressures (inflation, currency depreciation) and 12-day Iran-Israel conflict increased prices volatility and operational risk, necessitating flexible delivery modalities and contingency planning.

WFP's adaptive adjustments, especially the January 2025 cash increase and targeted ration for people with disabilities and celiac diseases and onetime post shock cash top-up, were critical to sustaining acceptable consumption patterns among settlement refugees while avoiding pipeline breaks.

WFP's work contributed directly to Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) by safeguarding basic food needs and reinforcing coordinated refugee support. Activities were aligned with national frameworks and implemented in close collaboration with CAFIA and humanitarian partners, ensuring complementarity with government services and the broader refugee response architecture.

While donor priorities shifted regionally, impacting available resources, WFP intensified engagement with existing and prospective donors and leveraged with the Regional Office and Headquarters to sustain life-saving assistance and protect gains for settlement refugees. The programme's efficiency adjustments and targeted resource prioritization were key to preserving continuity and minimizing impairment to households most at risk.

By December 2025, Iran continued to be one of the world's largest refugee-hosting countries, sheltering approximately 2.5 million Afghans, including 773,000 individuals with official refugee status. Among them, around 35,000 critically vulnerable refugees reside in 20 settlements across 13 provinces.

Due to their extreme vulnerability, these refugees depend on free housing, primary healthcare, and education provided by the government and humanitarian actors. WFP supports these individuals through monthly food assistance (cash and in-kind), complemented by cash top-ups for persons with disabilities, celiac diseases, as well as school meals and livelihood program.

Turkish benefactors to help build schools in memory of Minab students



TEHRAN – The Ministry of Education has signed a memorandum of understanding with Turkish benefactors to kick off a school-building project in Minab in memory of the students martyred during a US missile attack on Shajareh Tayyeb school.

Hamidreza Khanmohammadi, the director of the Organization for Development, Renovation, and Equipping Schools, and Sheikh Kadir Akaras, the president of the Turkish Shiite Scholars Association, signed the MOU in the presence of Education Minister Alireza Kazemi, ISNA reported.

On February 28, 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. 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.

Highlighting solidarity between the Iranian and Turkish people, the project involves the construction of 60 classrooms through building a three-hectare educational complex, six schools, and the development of vocational schools.

The project is scheduled to be completed and ready to be used by the end of summer 2027, IRNA quoted Khanmohammadi as saying.

The new schools will be built close to the two bombed schools, which are planned to be preserved as a reminder of the painful, violent US attack.

Since the outbreak of the war, over 640 schools have been destroyed in 17 provinces of the country, out of which 250 need fundamental repairs, and 15 need to be rebuilt.

A total of 241 students and teachers have been martyred and 183 students and teachers have been injured.

In March, the education ministry launched a campaign, titled Minab Angels, to build two schools in memory of the Minab students.

The campaign provides a great opportunity for benefactors to denounce the illegal attacks and make contributions to build the schools, Khanmohammadi said.

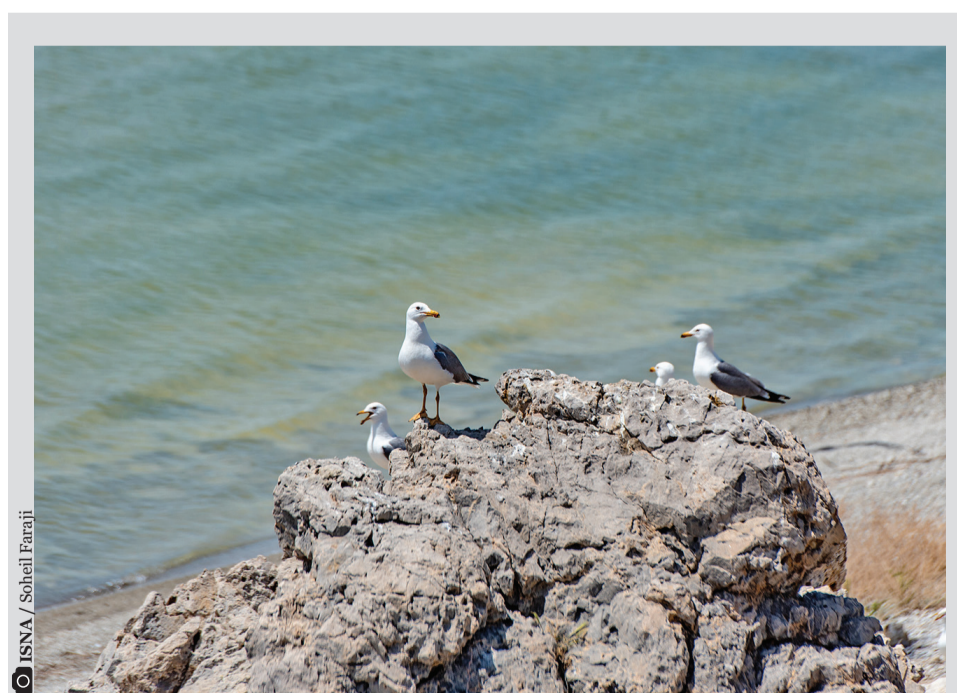
In this regard, Education Minister Alireza Kazemi said the school should be built again with a special design in order to be a symbol of science and altruism. It should be turned into a memorial to commemorate the martyred students, IRNA reported.

Hundreds of Turkish scholars have strongly condemned recent US-Israeli strikes on Iranian universities, calling the attacks an act of "epistemicide" – a crime against knowledge and humanity's intellectual heritage.

In a joint statement released in April, 239 professors from top Turkish universities, including Bogazici, Istanbul, and Ankara, said the bombings violate international conventions that protect educational facilities during conflicts.

At least 30 Iranian universities and research centers have been attacked since the war began on February 28.

The academics accused Western academic communities of silence and double standards. They urged UNESCO and the UN to establish an emergency mechanism to safeguard universities in conflict zones. The scholars also expressed readiness to host displaced Iranian researchers and students and proposed forming an international network of academic bridges to sustain collaborative research.



Armenian gulls migrating to Iran's Lake Urmia

One of the main breeding sites for Armenian gull (*Larus armenicus*) worldwide is Lake Urmia, situated in northwestern Iran.

Among large gulls, it is rather small and delicate with a short bill and a "sweet", round-headed profile. Adults have a prominent black band across the bill. Wingtips are extensively black with little white. Young birds are brown and streaked, have a rather limited range, and breed on upland lakes.



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MAY 13, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The best form of faith is trustworthiness, and the worst vice is betrayal.
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:01 Evening: 18:21 Dawn: 03:23 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 05:00 (tomorrow)

IAF to show Kubrick's "Dr. Strangelove"

TEHRAN – The Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran will screen the 1964 political satire black comedy film "Dr. Strangelove" directed by Stanley Kubrick on Thursday.

The film screening is scheduled for 6 p.m. at the Nasserli Hall of the IAF. It will be shown with Persian subtitles.

Starring Peter Sellers in three roles, including the title character, the film satirizes the Cold War fears of a nuclear conflict between the Soviet Union and the US.

The full name of the movie is "Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb" but it is simply and more commonly known as "Dr. Strangelove". It is loosely based on the thriller novel "Red Alert" (1958) by Peter George, who co-wrote the screenplay with Kubrick and Terry Southern.

The cast also includes George C. Scott, Sterling Hayden, Keenan Wynn, Slim Pickens, and Tracy Reed among others.

The story concerns an unhinged US Air Force general who orders a pre-emptive nuclear attack on the Soviet Union. It separately follows the President (Sellers), his advisers, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and a Royal Air Force exchange officer (Sellers) as they attempt to prevent the crew of a B-52 (following orders from the general) from bombing the Soviet Union and starting a nuclear war.

The film is often considered one of the best comedies ever made and one of the greatest films of all time. It received four Academy Award nominations, including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay, and Best Actor for Sellers. The film was also nominated for seven BAFTA Film Awards, winning Best Film From Any Source, Best British Film, and Best Art Direction, and it also won the Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation.

Stanley Kubrick (1928 – 1999) was an American filmmaker and photographer. A prominent figure of the New Hollywood era, Kubrick is regarded as one of the greatest and most influential filmmakers. His films spanned a number of genres and gained recognition for their attention to detail, innovative cinematography, extensive set design, and dark humor.



He made his first major Hollywood film, "The Killing," in 1956. This was followed by two collaborations with Kirk Douglas: the anti-war film "Paths of Glory" (1957) and the historical epic "Spartacus" (1960).

Many of Kubrick's films broke new cinematic ground and are now considered landmarks. The scientific realism and innovative special effects in his science fiction epic "2001: A Space Odyssey" (1968) were a first in cinema history; the film earned him his only Academy Award (for Best Visual Effects) and is regarded as one of the greatest films ever made.

With the horror film "The Shining" (1980), he became one of the first directors to make use of a Steadicam for stabilized and fluid tracking shots, a technology vital to his Vietnam War film "Full Metal Jacket" (1987).

A few days after hosting a screening for his family and the stars of his final film, "Eyes Wide Shut" (1999), Kubrick died at the age of 70.

Cartoon of Day



TRUMP VISITS XI JINPING
Cartoonist: Marian Kamensky from Austria

Martyr Leader's autobiography "Cell No. 14" published in Russian

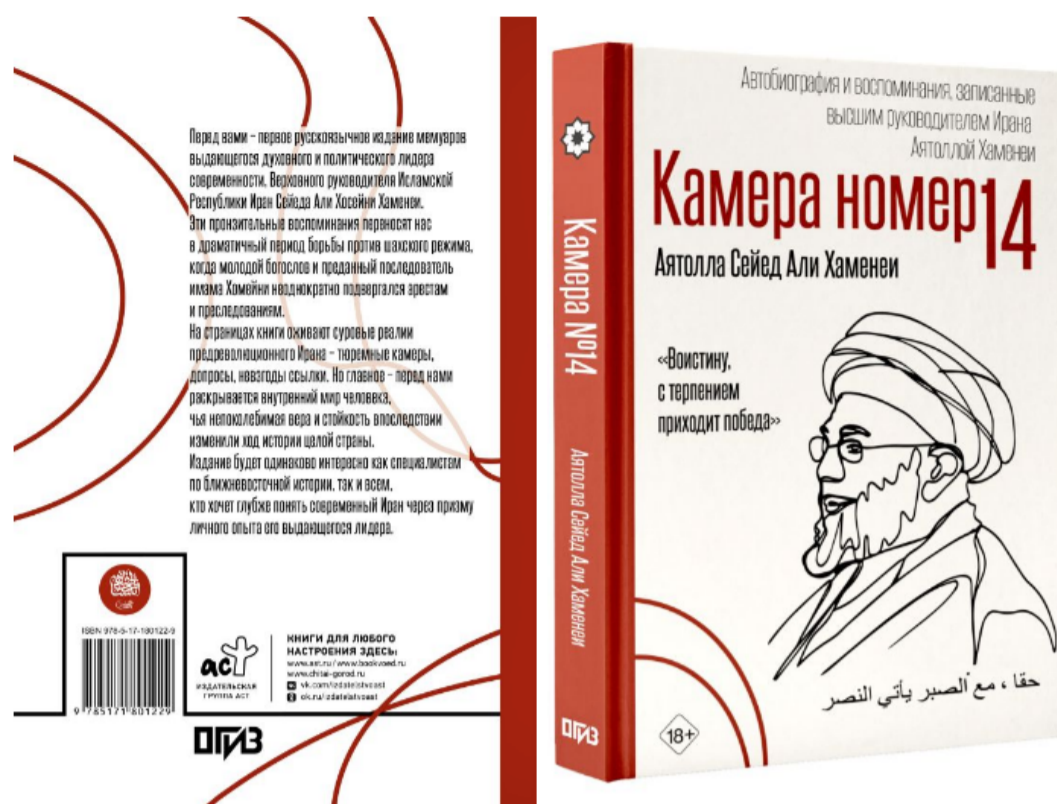
From Page 1 ▶ It is a remarkable saga of a young cleric blessed with an indomitable spirit who fights a dictatorial regime with his sermons and speeches as well as with his organizational abilities. He never loses hope despite being sent to prison and exile and finally emerges victorious against all odds.

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

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

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

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



Ayatollah Khamenei was martyred during US-Israeli airstrikes that targeted his office in central Tehran on February 28, 2013, AST has been a part of the largest publishing group in Russia - AST-Exmo Publishing Group.

It takes the 45th place among the world's largest publishing groups.

Isfahan's Moon Theater to host comedy play "A Farewell Dinner"

TEHRAN – The comedy play "A Farewell Dinner" written by Alexandre de la Patellière and Matthieu Delaporte will go on stage at the Moon Theater of the Art Bureau in Isfahan from Wednesday.

Directed by Hossein Abdollahi, the 90-minute play has Mohammad Torabi, Radnoush Moghadam, and Farzad Ghasemi in the cast.

In the play, Pierre and Clotilde have decided to clean out their social lives! They want to part with old friends without making a big drama out of it. Their idea: they invite Béa and Antoine to a farewell dinner. It should be a last friendly evening... serve up one last big meal, serve the best drink and reminisce about the good old days.

However, Antoine comes alone. He quickly as-

sesses the situation and begins to fight for their friendship. All sorts of unpleasant truths come to light and the get-together develops into a psychologically witty exchange of blows about friendship, vanity, loyalty and the fine art of social disposal.

In this subtle and ironic comedy, the pair of authors shed light on the different sides of the fashionable optimization of friendship.

The original script has been a sell-out success since it opened at the Théâtre Édouard VII in September 2014.

The play will remain on stage at the Moon Theater through June 2, performed every night at 7:30 p.m.



2nd Iran Open-Air International Film Festival calls for submissions

TEHRAN – The second Iran Open-Air International Film Festival has announced call for entries with the aim of fostering cultural interaction and exchange among filmmakers from Iran and around the world.

This international event, organized by the Mowj-e Fakhteh Cultural and Artistic Institute, has been established with a focus on screening films in open-air settings, IRNA reported.

By providing a platform for the growth and advancement of modern Iranian cinema, the festival places special emphasis on creative artistic approaches as well as the promotion of travel, tourism, and nature-oriented culture in its selection of works.

The festival objectives include identifying and introducing young talents and emerging filmmakers, helping enhance the standing of Iranian cinema, creating a platform to showcase cultural and social capacities related to travel and ecotourism,



and strengthening hope, dynamism, and cultural and social vitality.

The main themes of the second edition of the festival are road movies, travel and tourism, adventure and nature tourism, the environment, and ecosystem-based subjects. The festival will be held in two main sections: Iranian Cinema and International Cinema. It will also feature side sections including student films, a boot camp, and specialized cinema workshops.

The festival welcomes short fiction, documentary, animation,

experimental films, and immersive works such as AI-based and virtual reality productions.

Founded and presided over by Saeed Nejati, with Siavash Cheraghpour serving as secretary, the second Iran Open-Air International Film Festival will be held in September in northern Iran.

Although the Open-Air Film Festival is a long-standing event in the field of cinema, it is a new event in Iran. Instead of traveling to multi-star hotels with suitcases in hand and planning to attend cinema halls, filmmakers in this event camp in the heart of

nature with backpacks on their shoulders and sit in the open air watching each other's short and feature films. They eat their meals there and hold filmmaking workshops together in tents.

The creation of an open-air film festival can be an inspiration for many filmmakers. Creating a sense of empathy and cooperation will be just one of the effects of this event, which will have an impact on the path of filmmaking, especially for the younger generation. In addition, one cannot ignore the pleasure of meeting artists, getting to know each other, establishing interaction, and transferring experiences, which are among the obvious events of this event; events that ultimately help filmmakers take an open and interactive approach to filmmaking and bring about a profound change in the country's cinema.

Five countries boycotting 70th Eurovision in protest over Israel's genocidal war on Gaza

Eurovision, the annual international music pageant watched and adored by millions of viewers around the world, begins this week despite boycotts over Israel's participation.

The televised final round of the music contest is scheduled to take place on May 16 in Austria's capital, Vienna, this year and will mark Eurovision's 70th anniversary, Aljazeera reported.

Israeli singer Noam Bettan will be representing the country in Vienna this year. He will perform a pop song called Michelle.

But five countries – the Republic of Ireland, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain and Iceland – are boycotting this year's contest due to Israel's participation. They have cited Israel's genocidal war on Palestinians in Gaza – which has so far killed at least 72,740 people – as the main reason.

Besides these countries, more than 1,000 musicians and cultural workers have signed an open letter calling for others to boycott the contest. They have also criticized the con-

test's organizers of hypocrisy, as Russia has been banned from participating due to its war in Ukraine.

This year, artists from 35 countries are heading to Austria to compete in the 70th edition of the Eurovision Song Contest.

Immediately after Israel's participation was confirmed by EBU in December last year, some countries, politicians and musical artists began calling for a boycott of the contest.

On December 4, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, Iceland and Ireland said they would boycott the contest if Israel took part.

Dutch broadcaster AVROTROS, representing the Netherlands, accused Israel of "proven interference" in last year's contest while also noting its "serious violation of press freedom" during the Gaza war. It said that "under the current circumstances, participation cannot be reconciled with the public values that are fundamental to our organization".

Ireland said it would not take part either,

with its broadcaster RTE also citing "the appalling loss of lives in Gaza and humanitarian crisis" as the reason for its boycott.

Slovenia's national broadcaster said it would boycott participation "on behalf of the 20,000 children who died in Gaza", while Spain's public broadcaster RTVE also announced that it would not participate. "The situation in Gaza, despite the ceasefire and the approval of the peace process, and the use of the contest for political goals by Israel, make it increasingly difficult to keep Eurovision a neutral cultural event," its secretary-general, Alfonso Morales, said in a statement.

On December 10, Iceland's broadcaster RUV said that the Nordic nation would also not participate in the 2026 competition. "It is clear from the public debate in this country and the reaction to the EBU's decision last week that there will be neither joy nor peace regarding RUV's participation," the broadcaster's director-general Stefan Eiriksson said in a statement.