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President Donald Trump arrives on Air Force One, Wednesday, May 13, 2026, at Beijing Capital International Airport in Beijing.

Trump in Beijing

Is China Willing and Able to Pull US Out of the Quagmire of Iran War?

Iran, Azerbaijan discuss regional ties as Tehran drafts new rules for Strait of Hormuz

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and his Azerbaijani counterpart, Jeyhun Bayramov, held a telephone conversation on Wednesday to discuss the latest diplomatic situation, regional developments, and the state of bilateral relations between the two neighboring countries.

During the call, the two ministers exchanged assessments across these three areas.

In a separate development, Araghchi announced that Iran – as a littoral state of the Strait of Hormuz – is engaged in consultations aimed at drafting new regulations governing the strategic waterway in accordance with international law.

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How Hezbollah redefines the concept of asymmetric warfare

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Hezbollah has reshaped asymmetric warfare in several ways, through new tools and capabilities, and with supporting factors that are required to sustain intense battle.

Hezbollah fought its battle against the Israeli regime using many principles of asymmetric warfare, both before the withdrawal from South Lebanon in 2000 and during the July 2006 war. It relied on its qualitative military capabilities, the high combat doctrine of its fighters, the fragility of the Israeli home front, and the scarcity of its intelligence.

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Same bloody cloth, different vampiric cuts

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — The Israeli political landscape leading into the scheduled fall elections is less a “democratic” contest than a high-stakes audition for regional aggression.

Regardless of the faces on the campaign posters, the underlying logic of the regime remains a rigid constant: a revolving door of coalitions that all eventually converge on the same violent ends.

In Tel Aviv, the musical chairs of leadership are never about offering an alternative to the war regime but about proving who can manage its machinery with the most efficiency.

The illusion of choice

The central fraud of the 2026 race is the idea that the “opposition,” led by figures such as Benny Gantz, Yair Lapid, and Gadi Eisenkot, represents a meaningful departure from the status quo.

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From Assaluyeh to Lavan: Resilience of Iran’s energy industry in shadow of sanctions, war

TEHRAN- Iran’s energy industry has experienced an unprecedented period in recent years, including economic pressures from sanctions, increased geopolitical tensions, and continuous fluctuations in the global energy market. It has reached a level of development where, according to an oil and gas industry manager, the indigenization of a significant portion of this industry in recent years has led to increased resilience against recent threats and damages.

The third imposed war, which began on the 9th of Esfand (28th of February) with the martyrdom of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, a number of military commanders, and the massacre of 168 children at the Shajareh Minab school by the American-Zionist enemy coalition, also brought damages to the country’s energy sector. Targeting Iran’s two energy hubs in Assaluyeh and Mahshahr, as well as attacking the Lavan oil region just hours after a ceasefire announcement, demonstrated the depth of the enemy’s strategy to destroy vital infrastructure of the country’s industry and production. However,

Support package for industrial units, projects damaged by war approved

TEHRAN- A comprehensive support package for projects and industrial units damaged during the recent wars (the 12-Day War and the Ramadan War), proposed by the Small Industries Deputy of the Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization of Iran (SIPO) and approved by the organization’s Board of Directors (General Assembly of Provincial Companies), has been issued.

According to IRNA reporting from the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, this package has been issued in line with the implementation of support policies within the framework of assigned missions, aligned with the Cabinet’s support package, the approvals of the Headquarters for Facilitating and Removing Production Barriers, and aimed at supporting production and employment in the country.

Granting extensions for debt payments, settling remaining debts of damaged projects and units located in industrial towns and zones,

Diesel crisis deepens as Hormuz conflict bites

TEHRAN- Global energy markets are reeling from a new and dangerous shock. According to an article published on Tuesday by Foreign Policy, titled “Iran War Chokes ‘Major Driver’ of Global Economy,” the ongoing crisis in the Strait of Hormuz is inflicting severe damage on diesel supplies, an impact even more acute than the disruption to crude oil.

The article notes that among the many areas of the economy fouled up by U.S. military action, diesel fuel has been hit hardest.

The Strait of Hormuz, a key chokepoint for oil and refined products, is now threatened by conflict and escalation with Iran, directly imperiling tanker traffic. Unlike crude oil, diesel is far more vulnerable. Refined products have fewer alternative routes and less spare global refining capacity, causing prices to spike more sharply.

The ripple effects are already spreading. Diesel is the lifeblood of shipping, freight, agriculture, and heating.

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MEP Milan Uhrík: EU credibility eroded by double standards after US strike on Minab schoolchildren



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Iran national football team farewell ceremony held at Tehran’s Enghelab Square

A farewell ceremony for Iran’s national football team was held at Tehran’s Enghelab Square on Wednesday night, ahead of its departure for the 2026 World Cup.

The event was attended by large crowds of supporters. During the ceremony, a new mural featuring images of the national team players and references to the national anthem was unveiled on the square’s iconic wall.

Men and women, young and old, gathered in the square waving Iranian flags to show their support for “Team Melli” ahead of the global tournament.

Enghelab Square has hosted nightly public gatherings over the past two months since the early days of the US-Israeli aggression.

Direct talks with Israel can’t guarantee Lebanon’s security: senior journalist



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TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Trump's repeated defeats

Siasat-e-Rooz dedicated its editorial to Iran's power and the United States' repeated failures. According to the editorial, the United States, in an unsuccessful attempt to break Iran's strategic control over the Strait of Hormuz, imposed a naval blockade on Iranian ports in the Persian Gulf. However, this effort failed, and the US launched the so-called "Freedom Project" to assist ships in passing through the Strait of Hormuz. This plan also failed, and now, after receiving Iran's response, Trump has said that other plans are on the table—plans he will not disclose. Any plan the United States attempts to implement against Iran will meet the same fate as previous ones. The enemy must come to understand that as long as Iran can manage navigation in the Persian Gulf, Trump's plans have no chance of success. Continuing the conflict is not a solution to the crisis created by the United States, and an agreement between Iran and the US could be the only viable path—an agreement that would be possible only if Iran's conditions are accepted.

Iran: Arab states between confrontation, caution, and mediation

The Iran newspaper, in an analysis, examined the differing approaches of Arab countries toward Iran. It wrote that regional relations in the near future will be shaped by a relatively stable three-part pattern rooted in security rivalries, historical developments, and geopolitical balances. Some Arab states remain in open confrontation with Iran. Others adopt a cautious, tension-management approach, seeking to avoid direct conflict and maintain internal stability through balancing strategies. Alongside these two groups, some countries continue to emphasize maintaining and expanding relations with Iran, strengthening regional dialogue, and playing a mediating role in reducing tensions. This behavioral triad shows that the regional order is transitioning from a traditional state to a more complex phase in which competition, caution, and cooperation coexist and collectively shape the future of regional dynamics.

Kayhan: Victory in war depends on endurance

Kayhan, in its editorial, argued that victory in war depends on endurance. It was written that nearly everyone now agrees that in matters of war, time is a decisive factor. Experts believe that from now on, the side with greater endurance will prevail. Iran, with its control over the Strait of Hormuz and missiles locked onto regional energy infrastructure, has placed the global econ-

omy under its influence. The United States, through sanctions, naval blockades, psychological operations, and the use of its agents inside Iran, is trying to force Iran into submission. Given that the economic pressure the US and the world suffer from the closure of the Strait of Hormuz is far greater, it can be concluded that if Iran can maintain these conditions for another three months and manage economic pressures with public cooperation, it will undoubtedly hold the upper hand in the war of endurance and economic pressure.

Ettelaat: The UAE wants to disrupt the current situation

Ettelaat analyzed the UAE's approach to the current conflict, quoting Hassan Goli, a senior expert in international relations. According to him, the UAE—having lost significant resources due to the ongoing situation—is eager to disrupt the current conditions. Because Iran changed its approach to defining the legal status of the Strait of Hormuz, and the UAE's plan to build a pipeline and create an alternative route—so that at least some ships could bypass the strait—did not succeed, the UAE no longer expects a positive situation for itself, especially when it comes to investment. Although the UAE engages in propaganda activities, economic logic dictates that where security concerns exist, significant long-term investment does not occur. Therefore, the UAE seeks to disrupt the situation, hoping that if the current unfavorable conditions change, a better environment may emerge for its interests.

Etemad: Ending hostility is too optimistic

Etemad, in an interview with Iranian sociologist Mohammad Fazeli, assessed the level of hostility between Iran and the United States. Fazeli believes that under current circumstances, Iran and the US can at best focus on managing tensions and gradually reducing the roots of hostility, though even this faces serious obstacles. Mutual distrust among leaders, the vested interests of those who benefit from anti-Americanism and anti-Iran sentiment, Israel's actions, the likely post-war approach of Arab states toward Iran, and the psychology of leaders all play major roles. Although some positive conditions have emerged that could reduce the impact of these factors, leaders of both countries—and influential groups around them—have not yet concluded that the cost of ending hostility is lower than the cost of continuing it, or that the benefits of avoiding conflict outweigh those of ongoing confrontation. Under these circumstances, speaking of ending hostility is highly optimistic.

Iran warns of 'swift and decisive' response to any new aggression

TEHRAN – Iran's Defense Ministry spokesman warned on Tuesday that any new threat or act of aggression would be met with an immediate, decisive, and crushing response.

Brigadier General Reza Talaei Nik told reporters that the United States and Israel must submit to Iran's legitimate rights either on the battlefield or at the diplomatic table. He added that the enemy cannot escape the quagmire it has fallen into unless it recognizes Iran's rights.

"If the enemy fails to accept Iran's demands through diplomacy, there will be further defeats in the military arena," the spokesman stated.

Talaei Nik also noted that the repeated withdrawal of American vessels from the conflict zone reflects the strength and readiness of Iran's Armed Forces, including the IRGC and the Army, to deliver a regret-inducing response to any hostile act.

China will not jeopardize Iran ties to help Trump, Iranians 'not going to surrender': analyst

TEHRAN—The United States should not expect China to help end its war with Iran, according to a Qatari-based analyst.

Mohamad Elmasry, a media studies professor at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, told Al Jazeera that while China is being hurt to some extent by disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, it has found "workarounds" and remains in a much better position than many other global players.

"More importantly, I don't think the Chinese are willing to jeopardize the relationship that they have with Iran," Elmasry said, noting that while the two countries are not formal allies, they share a strategic partnership that serves as "an important counterbalance to US hegemony in the region."

"I don't think they (Iranians) are willing to surrender the region to the US and Israel," he added.

On the Iranian front, Elmasry argued that Trump has overestimated his leverage. "This is an existential battle for the Iranians," he said. "There's really no military solution to Hormuz. It's going to have to be a negotiated settlement."

The professor criticized Trump's approach, saying the president continues to believe he has significant leverage and treats the conflict as a fight. "He's a fighter who thinks his opponent is about to tap out, about to surrender. And the Iranians are not going to surrender. They believe they have more leverage in this situation."

"There's no easy way out for Trump," Elmasry concluded.

Foreign Ministry urges humanity to oppose US-Israeli aggression

TEHRAN – The Iranian Foreign Ministry's spokesman called on people across the world to stand against the US-Israeli war of aggression on Iran, saying the conflict would determine the future meaning of good and evil, as well as the fate of human rights, justice, and international law.

In a post published on his X account, Esmaeil Baqaei said:

"To every decent human being—regardless of religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, or any other distinction;

To Muslims, Jews, Christians, Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists, and all others of faith;

And to those who follow no formal religion but hold deeply to the universal values of peace, justice, and human dignity:

The US and Israel launched this war of aggression on 28 February 2026, for a second time in less than a year, while Iran and the US were engaged in diplomatic negotiations.

This is not merely a war over land, resources, or geopolitics. This is a war that will determine



the very meaning of 'good' and 'evil' in our time and for the future.

What has been unleashed upon our peace-loving nation is not just another conflict. On one side stand those who delight in violating every law of war and basic human decency, those who murder for sport, who slaughter children to torment their families, who fire their newest missiles at women's sports halls simply to test their destructive power.

This is a war between those who boast of torpedoing unarmed vessels 'for more fun' and those who go to extraordinary lengths to protect innocent lives.

This is a war between professional liars who fabricate justifications for atrocity and proud people who defend their homeland and human dignity relying solely on their own strength and resolve.

This is a war between those whose decisions are shadowed

by moral compromise and those who act with a clear conscience.

This is a defining struggle for the future of humankind. It will decide whether civilization's hard-won achievements—human rights, the rule of law, and basic morality—will survive or be swept away.

We must choose:

Do we accept a world ruled by modern slave masters—arrogant, domineering, and unaccountable—who govern through coercion, lies, and extortion?

Or do we stand for a world grounded in respect, justice, peace, and human dignity?

Humanity's conscience is not yet dead. But in times like these, silence is complicity with evil.

If you reject the path of barbarism and domination, then find the moral courage to speak, to act, and to stand on the right side of history—before the world descends into an abyss of lawlessness and subjugation.

The choice is yours. And history will remember."

MEP Milan Uhrík: EU credibility eroded by double standards after US strike on Minab schoolchildren



By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN - More than two months have passed since a US Tomahawk missile struck the Shajareh Tayyebah primary school in the southern Iranian city of Minab. The strike occurred on February 28, during the opening phase of the US-Israeli war, and claimed the lives of 168 people, most of them schoolchildren. The attack has been widely condemned as one of the deadliest incidents involving children in modern warfare and has intensified calls for accountability.

Last week in Brussels, dozens of activists and protesters gathered outside the Iranian Embassy to commemorate the victims, holding placards reading "The Angels of Minab — Children Who Never Returned Home from School" and "Europe Mourns with Iran," while calling for an end to the killing of children and greater respect for international humanitarian law.

Speaking outside the embassy, Slovak Member of the European Parliament Milan Uhrík denounced the attack.

In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, Uhrík reiterated his condemnation of the tragedy. The European parliamentarian said attacks on innocent schoolchildren must be unequivocally condemned and that civilian deaths demand international attention. He also stressed that the European Union's credibility depends on the consistent and non-selective application of international humanitarian law, particularly in the protection of children. The full interview follows below.

At the memorial outside the Iranian Embassy in Brussels, you strongly condemned the Minab school attack. What

did you observe at that gathering that shaped your understanding of the tragedy and its emotional impact on Europe?

The memorial was marked by deep grief, solidarity, and a strong sense of urgency. There were families, activists, and members of the diaspora standing together in silence, many visibly shaken by the attack on innocent schoolchildren. It was a powerful reminder of the need to condemn terror and defend human dignity. Regardless of any politics or geopolitics, such attacks need to be condemned, and the lives of children need to be protected all around the world.

Dozens of activists attended the memorial with messages such as "Europe Mourns with Iran." How do you assess the role of these activists in exposing the Minab tragedy and pushing European institutions to take the issue seriously?

The tragedy in Minab should not be ignored or reduced just to headlines. The presence of these people, testimonies, and symbolic gestures gave a human face to the suffering of the victims. It reminded European institutions that civilian deaths, especially those of children, demand international attention.

What message do you hope the memorial sends to the families of the victims in Iran, especially the parents of the schoolgirls who never returned home?

No parent should ever have to bury a daughter who left for school and never returned home. Beyond politics, this is a human tragedy, and every victim deserves remembrance, dignity, and a credible search for truth and accountability.

Field reports mention missile debris with American markings. What obligations would this place on the European Union regarding accountability and transparency?

If credible investigations confirm the presence of missile debris with these markings, it would raise questions about the chain of supply, oversight, and compliance with international law. If weapons linked to this production were used in an unlawful strike against civilians, institutions should demand clarity, ensure proper scrutiny of arms transfers, and reaffirm that humanitarian law applies equally to everyone.

You have compared the Minab attack to patterns of civilian targeting in Gaza, Lebanon, and Beirut. How does this incident fit into that broader pattern of military behavior?

The tragedy reflects a deeply troubling pattern we have witnessed in several recent conflicts, where civilian areas, including schools, hospitals, residential neighborhoods, and crit-

has the upper hand.

"I suspect Trump will take the wrong lesson out of this experience," DePetris wrote, predicting that the president will choose yet again to increase military and economic pressure on Iran rather than re-evaluate his own negotiating stance.

Iran believes it is winning the war, Trump failing to read the situation: columnist

TEHRAN— Iran perceives itself as winning the ongoing conflict with the United States, and President Trump's failure to recognize this reality suggests he is "more clueless than I thought," according to Daniel DePetris, a foreign affairs columnist for the Chicago Tribune.

In a post on X, DePetris argued that negotiating positions are largely shaped by facts on the ground. Having survived weeks of US airstrikes, successfully leveraging the Strait of Hormuz as a strategic card, and witnessing Trump's approval ratings plummet, Tehran firmly believes it

The columnist noted that every additional crank of the pressure valve has so far failed to move Tehran significantly.

"This war is a disaster in more ways than one," he concluded. "And the powers-that-be don't know what they don't know."

Is China Willing and Able to Pull US Out of the Quagmire of Iran War?

Trump in Beijing

TEHRAN — President Donald Trump's three-day state visit to China begins under the heavy shadow of the ongoing crisis in the Persian Gulf. More than 70 days into the joint US-Israeli military campaign against Iran, the conflict has settled into a precarious stalemate, thrusting Beijing into the role of a critical diplomatic actor.

Upon his arrival in Beijing on Wednesday night, Trump was received by Chinese Vice President Han Zheng and other senior officials—a clear signal of Beijing's adherence to diplomatic protocol, even as the two powers remain sharply divided over the path to regional stability.

Shortly before departing Washington, Trump signaled his desire for a "long talk" with President Xi Jinping on the Iran conflict, while simultaneously asserting that the United States does not need outside help. This public posture contrasts with signals from his own cabinet. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has urged China to use its influence to pressure Iran into reopening the Strait of Hormuz, while Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent confirmed that Iran tops the agenda at this summit—the first of its kind since 2017.

Against this backdrop, the May 6 visit of Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi to Beijing—his first since hostilities began on February 28—carries significant weight. Following high-level talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, it is evident that Tehran is reinforcing its strategic alignment with Beijing. Araghchi endorsed China's four-point peace



proposal for the Middle East, which emphasizes peaceful coexistence, respect for sovereignty, adherence to international law, and the coordination of development and security.

Wang, while stressing the urgent need for dialogue and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, resisted US calls to isolate Tehran. Instead, he underscored the necessity of a permanent, negotiated end to the conflict.

The war itself has evolved from the initial kinetic strikes of March and early April into a high-pressure phase characterized by blockade diplomacy. Shipping through the Strait of Hormuz remains severely disrupted, with Iran expanding operational oversight across a broader maritime zone. The April 8 ceasefire, brokered by Pakistan, has failed to secure a lasting peace. The conflict now resembles a sustained game of brinkmanship, as Iran refuses negotiations until Washington meets five core demands: ending hostilities on all fronts, particularly Israel's war on

Lebanon; lifting sanctions; releasing frozen Iranian assets; compensating Iran for war damage; and recognizing Iran's sovereign rights over the Strait of Hormuz.

Beyond the battlefield, the economic repercussions are mounting. Instability in the Persian Gulf has pushed oil prices above \$100 per barrel, fueling renewed inflationary pressures worldwide. For Trump, this surge poses domestic political risks, as energy-driven inflation threatens economic growth and complicates his administration's broader policy agenda.

At the strategic level, the implications extend far beyond the Middle East. Despite initial US assumptions that the conflict would trigger a Venezuela-style collapse of Iranian state structures, Iran's military resilience has derailed any rapid regime-change scenario. A decisive US victory over Iran would free Washington to redirect its strategic focus toward China—particularly Taiwan, which Beijing considers a core red

line. This concern is reinforced by a broader pattern of US strategic rhetoric, including references to Venezuela, Greenland, and Canada in discussions of American geopolitical ambitions. From this perspective, any American upper hand in Iran could directly reshape the broader balance of power in Asia. In this context, China should continue to support Iran at the UN Security Council and firmly reject calls to weaken or abandon its position, while maintaining a clear stance in favor of Iran's sovereignty and the need for a negotiated end to the conflict.

Yet this interpretation is not universally shared. Some analysts contend that prolonged US entanglement in the Middle East may actually serve China's interests. A draw-out conflict forces Washington to expend substantial military and financial resources, limiting its ability to intensify pressure in the Indo-Pacific. In this view, a protracted stalemate buys Beijing valuable strategic time while allowing it to maintain diplomatic distance from the fighting.

In the end, for China, the main question is not only whether the United States wins or loses in Iran, but whether the war ends quickly or turns into a prolonged conflict. In either case, China is in a position to play a constructive mediation role and support efforts toward a negotiated political solution. This would help stabilize the region while also strengthening China's role as a responsible global power. The outcome will also shape China's position in the world and the future balance of major-power relations.

Iran, Azerbaijan discuss regional ties as Tehran drafts new rules for Strait of Hormuz

From Page 1 ▶ The foreign minister made the remarks during a meeting in Tehran on Tuesday with Andreas Motzfeldt Kravik, Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister, who led a diplomatic delegation to the Iranian capital for talks with officials.

During the meeting, Araghchi and Kravik discussed Iran-Norway bilateral relations, the ongoing US-Israeli war of aggression against Iran, and the security and economic consequences of the conflict. They also reviewed the latest status of the Islamabad negotiation process.

Araghchi described excessive demands, threatening and provocative rhetoric from the American side, along with Washington's lack of goodwill and honesty, as the primary obstacles to ending the war definitively and reaching a possible agreement.

He further stated that the root cause of the current situation in the Strait of Hormuz is the military aggression by the United States and the Israeli regime against Iran.

Referring to Iran's consultations on drafting

executive arrangements to strengthen and facilitate safe passage through the strait, Araghchi reaffirmed Tehran's commitment to formulating regulations consistent with international law.

The Norwegian diplomat, for his part, stressed the need to establish lasting peace and stability in the region and to safeguard international law. He also expressed Norway's readiness to assist in strengthening diplomacy and to provide consultations on maritime safety and environmental protection.

LATEST NEWS

■ Araghchi leaves Tehran for New Delhi to attend BRICS meeting

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi left Tehran for India's capital of New Delhi on Wednesday afternoon to attend the BRICS Foreign Ministers' meeting.

■ Gharibabadi urges BRICS action against US aggression

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi has urged the BRICS group members to take actions against the recent military aggression.

Gharibabadi, held a series of high-level meetings with counterparts from Indonesia, South Africa, Brazil, India, and Egypt on the sidelines of BRICS Special Representatives and National Coordinators Meeting underway in Brazil on Wednesday.

Gharibabadi detailed Iran's stance regarding recent military aggression against the Islamic Republic, labeling such actions a violation of international law and the UN Charter. He urged BRICS members to confront unilateralism and hold aggressors accountable for illegal strikes against member states.

■ Pope awards Vatican's highest diplomatic honor to Iran's ambassador

Pope Leo XIV has awarded the Order of Pius IX, the Vatican's highest diplomatic distinction, to Iran's ambassador to the Holy See, Mohammad-Hossein Mokhtari, in recognition of his efforts to promote peace, dialogue, and bilateral relations.

The ceremony took place on Tuesday in the presence of senior Vatican officials and accredited ambassadors. Established in 1847, the Order of Pius IX is typically granted to diplomats and prominent figures who contribute to international understanding.

In the official decree, the Pope expressed appreciation for Ambassador Mokhtari's

services in strengthening ties with the Holy See. The award comes amid ongoing global conflicts and rising extremism challenging international peace and stability.

■ Iranian border guards defuse 3 bombs, seize 667 kg of drugs at Mirjaveh border

Iranian border forces have thwarted a terrorist team at the Mirjaveh border, discovering three explosive devices, according to Brigadier General Ali Akbar Javidan, Commander of the Border Guard.

In separate operations over the past 48 hours, forces also seized 667 kilograms of narcotics, four firearms, and arrested three suspects following armed clashes.

■ Iran confirms services to 15 stranded ships in Strait of Hormuz

Port authorities in Iran's Hormozgan Province have confirmed that they are providing daily services to 15 ships stranded in the Strait of Hormuz.

According to Fars News Agency, Iranian officials are facilitating essential supplies and logistical support to the vessels amid ongoing regional tensions.

■ Iran will not allow US arms transport through Strait of Hormuz

The Iranian Army announced it will not allow any country to transfer American weapons through the Strait of Hormuz. Brigadier General Mohammad Akraminia said the waterway is under full strategic control of Iran's Armed Forces, warning that most US weapons previously stationed at regional bases have now been destroyed.

■ Iran refutes baseless Kuwaiti claims over four Iranian citizens

The Foreign Ministry of Iran rejected as "completely baseless and unacceptable" allegations made in statements by the Kuwaiti Foreign and Interior Ministries claiming that Iran had planned hostile actions against the Arab country.

In a statement released on Tuesday night, the ministry strongly condemned Kuwait's "improper political and propaganda exploitation" of the case involving four Iranian agents who had been carrying out a routine maritime patrol mission.

According to the statement, the Iranian individuals entered Kuwaiti territorial waters after a disruption in their navigation system.

■ Lebanese media: Iran has become a world power

A Lebanese media outlet has undermined the US president's lies about Iran, saying that the country has become a regional power and has also changed the balance of power in the world.

Iran has become a global power and stands resolutely against forces that once believed they could dominate the world, Al-Ahed wrote in its latest article about the position of the US in the Strait of Hormuz.

■ Former Qatari PM: US war harmed its allies in region

Former Qatari Prime Minister Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber Al Thani has said the United States' military action against Iran ultimately benefited no one in the region, adding that Washington harmed its own allies through the war. He said the conflict served only the interests of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and advanced his agenda.

■ US cannot use Spain's air bases for unilateral war on Iran: Spanish FM

Spain's Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares says the United States cannot use Spanish air bases for a military campaign against Iran, reiterating Madrid's opposition to a "unilateral war."

In an interview with Politico, Albares stressed that Spain remains committed to transatlantic relations but will not abandon its principles under pressure from Washington.

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Straight Truth
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SPORTS

Tucson prepares to welcome Iran football team

TEHRAN — In Tucson, the football officials are getting ready to welcome the Iranian football team as if nothing were amiss.

The city, an oasis of civilization in the Arizona desert, is set to be the base camp for "Team Melli" when the world's biggest sporting spectacle opens in the U.S., Mexico and Canada next month.

"We're just excited to host them here, and we're going to give them a positive experience," Sarah Hanna, director of the Kino Sports Complex, where the team will train, told AFP.

Grass is being watered and cut to FIFA-regulation height to ensure that players don't get any surprises when they take to the field in Los Angeles and Seattle, the venues for their group-stage games.

Hotel rooms and meeting spaces are locked in, and security is tight.

"Right now, I'm probably averaging about 12 to 20 meetings regarding this training facility a week," said Hanna.

"From our concessionaire for food and beverage... to lots of grounds meetings with FIFA coming out to check."

The flurry of activity in Tucson comes against the backdrop of a war between the U.S. and Israel on one side and Iran on the other that is now in its 11th week.

Despite a shaky ceasefire in place for a month, hostilities are stubbornly unresolved, with Iran having virtually shut the Strait of Hormuz.

Organizers FIFA have insisted the team will take part in the tournament as planned, so Tucson has pressed ahead with its preparations.

"As far as we're concerned, it's 100 percent on, and it's never been off," said Hanna.

"Since they've been identified as the team, we've been moving forward as them as our team, until we hear something different from FIFA."

Despite the official position, there's plenty of uncertainty.

On Friday, Iran's football federation president announced the team would participate, but laid down a list of requirements, including around the granting of visas and the treatment of staff.

In March, Trump cast doubt on their presence, saying that while the team was "welcome" to participate, it might not be a good idea.

"I really don't believe it is appropriate that they be there, for their own life and safety," he wrote on social media.

Locals in Tucson dismiss the implied threat.

"Our president is known to be a bit bombastic in his use of social media," said Jon Pearlman, president of FC Tucson.

"I don't think President Trump or any part of our government will make it their business to make them feel unwelcome or unsafe. I think it will do the opposite."

At the Kino Sports Complex, Iranian players will have access to the club's weight training facilities, ice baths, and massage tables.

"We welcome them with open arms," said Pearlman.

"We are part of the world soccer community. We are part of what FIFA is trying to do, and we believe the game is something that brings nations together, not drives them apart."

It is a sentiment widely echoed throughout this multicultural city of 540,000, which leans Democratic.

"I hope that they still feel welcome here," said Rob McLane, who plays indoor soccer.

Gagliardi parts ways with Iran: report

TEHRAN — Antonio Gagliardi has reportedly terminated his contract with the Iran national team and will not be on the bench for Iran at the 2026 World Cup.

The Italian coach — who previously worked as an assistant to Cristian Chivu at Parma and

Roberto Mancini — has decided to leave Iran ahead of the upcoming World Cup.

Italian journalist Nicolò Schira has claimed that Gagliardi, now set to miss out on the World Cup with Iran, is preparing for a return to club football. According to the report, several Serie B clubs as well as a number of foreign teams are closely monitoring his situation.

If confirmed, Gagliardi's departure means Rahman Rezaei, Andranik Teymourian, Alin Dinka, Saeid Alhoei, and Hooman Afazeli will make up Iran's coaching staff alongside head coach Amir Ghalenoei on the Team Melli bench.

So far, however, the Iran Football Federation has yet to make an official statement on the matter.

Pezeshkian presented with Iran No. 12 shirt

TEHRAN — Iran President Masoud Pezeshkian was presented with the No. 12 jersey of the Iran national football team during a visit to the team's training camp ahead of the country's 2026 World Cup campaign.

The shirt was officially handed to Pezeshkian by Minister of Sport and Youth Ahmad Donyamali, in a ceremony held during the president's appearance at the national team complex.

As Team Melli step up preparations for the upcoming FIFA World Cup, Pezeshkian visited the camp to meet players, coaching staff and Football Federation officials, while emphasizing the importance of hard work, national unity, and representing the dignity and strength of the Iranian people on the world stage.

During the visit, the president was briefed on the squad's latest preparations, including training plans, players' physical condition, upcoming camps and the technical roadmap leading into the tournament.

In a warm and well-received appearance, Pezeshkian spoke directly to the players and staff, praising their role beyond football itself.

"Today, you are not just a sports team," he told the squad. "You are the representatives of the hope, determination, pride and unity of the Iranian nation on a global stage. People feel proud when they see their sons fighting for Iran's name with full commitment, passion, discipline and honesty."

He added that while victory is always valuable, the team's fighting spirit and honor matter just as much.

"Winning is sweet and important, but even in defeat, what endures is the spirit of battle, fairness in competition, and preserving national pride. A loss in sport is not the end of the road; it is the beginning of a new experience, a chance to rise again, become stronger and continue the journey."

The president's presence was warmly welcomed by the players and coaching staff, as he toured different sections of the camp and reviewed the facilities and final stages of preparation.

The visit concluded with the symbolic presentation of the Iran national team's No. 12 shirt to President Pezeshkian — a gesture marking support for Team Melli as they prepare to carry the nation's hopes into world football's biggest stage.

Uzbekistan beat Iran at 2026 Asian Women's U16

TEHRAN — Iran were defeated against Uzbekistan 34-21 in the 1st AHF Asian Women's U16 Handball Championship on Wednesday.

Iran, who had defeated Hong Kong 33-29 in their opening match and lost to Kazakhstan 38-33, will face China in Group A on Thursday.

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.

From Assaluyeh to Lavan: Resilience of Iran's energy industry in shadow of sanctions, war

TEHRAN- Iran's energy industry has experienced an unprecedented period in recent years, including economic pressures from sanctions, increased geopolitical tensions, and continuous fluctuations in the global energy market. It has reached a level of development where, according to an oil and gas industry manager, the indigenization of a significant portion of this industry in recent years has led to increased resilience against recent threats and damages.

The third imposed war, which began on the 9th of Esfand (28th of February) with the martyrdom of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, a number of military commanders, and the massacre of 168 children at the Shajareh Minab school by the American-Zionist enemy coalition, also brought damages to the country's energy sector. Targeting Iran's two energy hubs in Assaluyeh and Mahshahr, as well as attacking the Lavan oil region just hours after a ceasefire announcement, demonstrated the depth of the enemy's strategy to destroy vital infrastructure of the country's industry and production. However, the armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran did not leave these acts of aggression unanswered and targeted enemy-related energy infrastructure in the region.

Although the extent of damage to energy units has not been officially announced, with more than a month having passed since the start of the ceasefire, Esmail Saghab Esfahani, head of the Energy Optimization Organization, recently stated on the matter: "Contrary to some narratives, not all refineries have been shut down, nor can it be said that the damages were insignificant. The reality is that part of the country's gas and fuel network has been damaged, and compensating for it requires time and significant financial resources. The return of some damaged capacities will take between 18 months to 2 years and requires the provision of specialized equipment, safety tests, and substantial costs. At the same time, responsible authorities have been working with all their might since the first days to restore capacities."

Regarding the capability and resilience of Iran's oil and gas industry and an analysis of the current situation, Meysam Jafarzadeh, a manager in the oil and gas industry, told IRNA: "Iran's oil and gas industry operates in one of the most difficult investment environments in the world — an environment simultaneously affected by financial and technological sanctions, limited access to international capital, and geopolitical tensions in the sensitive Persian Gulf region. Nevertheless, this industry has been able to maintain its development path by relying on domestic capabilities and developing indigenous engineering capacities, and has even achieved significant accomplishments in some areas."

Stating that Iran's energy industry has been influenced by three main variables in recent years, he added: "International pressures in the financial and technological spheres, increased geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, and continuous fluctuations in the global energy market are among the most important factors that have affected the development process of this industry."

According to Jafarzadeh, intelligent management of these conditions has allowed the country's oil and gas industry to continue its infrastructure development path by relying on domestic engineering capabilities and the active presence of Iranian and knowledge-based companies.

Persian Gulf and paradox of risk and security

Referring to the strategic importance of the Persian Gulf region in global energy equations, this oil and gas industry manager stated: "The Persian Gulf is considered one of the most important energy supply hubs in the world, with about one-fifth of global oil trade passing through the Strait of Hormuz. Therefore, any tension or uncertainty in this region can quickly affect global energy markets and increase risk-related costs."

He continued: "In such conditions, countries that can guarantee sustainable energy production and security of transit will have a more important position in global energy equations. Although



regional risks may lead to investor caution in the short term, in the long term, the importance of major energy producers for global economic stability will increase."

Jafarzadeh, emphasizing the role of indigenization in increasing the resilience of the country's oil and gas industry, noted: "In recent years, a significant portion of specialized activities in this industry, including drilling operations, field development, construction of transmission lines, and manufacturing refinery equipment, have been carried out by domestic experts and companies. This process has strengthened the domestic supply chain and reduced dependence on foreign equipment and services."

Operational priorities: Joint fields and value chain

He cited the South Pars gas field as one of the most important successful examples of indigenization in the country's energy industry and reminded: "The development of this massive field was carried out under conditions of international restrictions and relying on the capabilities of engineering companies and domestic manufacturers, and it represents a valuable experience in managing large energy projects."

The CEO of Lavan Oil, Gas and Energy Development Group pointed to the need for serious attention to the development of joint fields and said: "In joint fields, time is a very important factor, and any delay in the development of these fields can lead to a reduction in Iran's share of shared resources. Therefore, it is necessary to accelerate the development process of these fields by utilizing modern technologies and precise reservoir management."

He also emphasized the necessity of developing downstream industries in the oil and gas sector and added: "Moving towards the development of refineries and petrochemical complexes and reducing dependence on crude oil exports is considered one of the most important economic strategies of the country. The development of the value chain in downstream industries can, in addition to increasing added value, provide the basis for job creation and diversification of energy exports."

Jafarzadeh referred to the issue of financing large energy projects and said: "Given the restrictions caused by sanctions on attracting foreign capital, utilizing the capacities of the domestic capital market has become more important. In this context, instruments such as project funds, issuing specialized bonds in the energy sector, as well as public-private partnership models can play an important role in financing large oil and gas projects."

Referring to the future outlook of Iran's energy industry, he stated: "Although sanctions have created many challenges for this industry, at the same time, they have increased domestic experience and capability in managing complex conditions. In today's world, the power of countries in the energy sector is not limited merely to the volume of oil and gas reserves, but the ability to manage risk, develop indigenous technologies, and turn challenges into economic opportunities are also determining factors in the position of countries in the global energy market."

According to this oil industry manager, Iran, by strengthening its knowledge-based capacity and utilizing its unique geographical position, can consolidate its position not only as an exporter but also as a strategic and sustainable energy hub in the heart of the Persian Gulf.

Over 2.5m tons of cold-rolled steel sheet produced in a year

TEHRAN- According to the statistics of the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA), 2.582 million tons of cold-rolled steel sheet was produced in Iran during the past Iranian calendar year 1404 (ended on March 20, 2026).

Based on the ISIPA data, the country's cold-rolled steel sheet output in the year 1404 fell 0.04 percent from the production figure in the year 1403, which was 2.529 million tons.

Diesel crisis deepens as Hormuz conflict bites

TEHRAN- Global energy markets are reeling from a new and dangerous shock. According to an article published on Tuesday by Foreign Policy, titled "Iran War Chokes 'Major Driver' of Global Economy," the ongoing crisis in the Strait of Hormuz is inflicting severe damage on diesel supplies, an impact even more acute than the disruption to crude oil.

The article notes that among the many areas of the economy fouled up by U.S. military action, diesel fuel has been hit hardest.

The Strait of Hormuz, a key chokepoint for oil and refined products, is now threatened by conflict and escalation with Iran, directly imperiling tanker traffic. Unlike crude oil, diesel is far more vulnerable. Refined products have fewer alternative routes and less spare global refining capacity, causing prices to spike more sharply.

The ripple effects are already spreading. Diesel is the lifeblood of shipping, freight, agriculture, and heating.

As prices surge, so does inflation across entire economies. Compounding the problem are limited strategic reserves. While nations maintain large stockpiles of crude oil, diesel reserves are smaller, more expensive, and harder to replace quickly.



Furthermore, markets are pricing in a sustained "geopolitical risk premium." Even without actual supply cuts, the mere threat of a Hormuz blockade or attack is driving prices higher.

Analysts warn that unless diplomatic channels reopen, the world faces a prolonged and painful squeeze on one of its most essential fuels—threatening to choke the major driver of the global economy just as recovery remains fragile.

Support package for industrial units, projects damaged by war approved

TEHRAN- A comprehensive support package for projects and industrial units damaged during the recent wars (the 12-Day War and the Ramadan War), proposed by the Small Industries Deputy of the Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization of Iran (ISIPO) and approved by the organization's Board of Directors (General Assembly of Provincial Companies), has been issued.

According to IRNA reporting from the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, this package has been issued in line with the implementation of support policies within the framework of assigned missions, aligned with the Cabinet's support package, the approvals of the Headquarters for Facilitating and Removing Production Barriers, and aimed at supporting production and employment in the country.

Granting extensions for debt payments, settling remaining debts of damaged projects and units located in industrial towns and zones, and accelerating the possibility of operation and commencement of production for damaged projects are among the provisions approved in this support package.

Additionally, damaged units, in order to return to the production cycle and preserve employment, can benefit from facilities and incentives in the area of land allocation or land relocation within the country's industrial towns and zones.

Allocation of land exploitation rights in industrial towns and zones outside of auction with grace periods and long-term installments is another measure allocated to damaged units within the framework of this support package.

Special incentives, including leasing existing ready-made workshops at minimum cost for damaged units producing basic household goods such as food, medicine, hygiene products, and medical equipment, have also been included in this package to help sustain production.

Businesses that do not lay off workers will receive government facilities

Seyyed Ali Madanizadeh, Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, stated that businesses which do not lay off workers will receive government facilities, adding that the government will provide 100% support to these production units.

According to an IRNA report, Madanizadeh said in an interview, referring to the fact that during the days of the imposed war we were able to pay employees' salaries: Many businesses and wholesalers conduct their

bulk sales in Esfand (late winter), and most of the country's tax revenues are also realized in Esfand. However, since an economic shock had been inflicted on the people in Esfand of last year, we could not impose tax pressure, so measures were taken to forgive or defer tax payments for the general public above a certain income threshold.

The Minister of Economy continued: Many actions were taken in the tax organization and also in customs so that people would have peace during New Year's Eve and the month of Ramadan, which coincided with the days of the imposed war, while economic activities continued to operate.

He said: Although many bank employees were afraid to be present in branches, nevertheless, a large portion of bank employees showed up at their workplaces and bravely served the people.

Madanizadeh added: The same was true in the insurance sector; many truck drivers were worried about cargo insurance during those days, but with the cooperation of insurance companies, the truckers' goods were insured.

The Minister of Economy emphasized: All these actions happened with centralized planning that was managed.

Madanizadeh continued: In the 12-Day War, residential home insurance had been defined for wartime, but during the third imposed war, its promotion was done again so that households interested in insuring their homes could submit their insurance policies.

He said: The top priority of the government's economic team was to ensure that during the war, the goods and services that are basic needs of the people are delivered or provided.

Madanizadeh stated: Our people, with their magnanimity, prevented the kind of panic that occurs during wars in the world, which empties store shelves, from happening in our country.

Explanation of government's plans for reconstruction of large & medium industries

The Minister of Economy added: One of the aggressive actions by the American-Zionist enemy was the attack on the country's economic infrastructure and factories. A statistical report of the damages has been prepared showing how much damage was inflicted on each economic enterprise, how much money is needed for reconstruction, and what the loss of profit for each enterprise has been during this period.

Madanizadeh said: The plans prepared for the reconstruction

of damages to economic infrastructure are in several layers, the first layer of which is large industries. A plan has been prepared for the reconstruction of the steel and petrochemical industries, as well as the Assaluyeh complex in the gas sector. The relevant ministries will be responsible for implementing these plans.

Stating that part of the financing for the reconstruction of large industries has been delegated to the Ministry of Economy, he added: A meeting was held on this matter today at the Ministry of Economy.

The Minister of Economy continued: The most important support program for the reconstruction and renovation of large industries is the granting of fixed facilities at preferential rates. We will also use the capacity of Article 165 of the Direct Taxes Law — for industries that invest in the reconstruction of the steel and petrochemical industries, we will consider tax credits equal to the amount they spend.

Madanizadeh said: In the second layer, facilities will be granted to small and medium industries that have suffered direct damage; for these companies, in addition to fixed capital facilities and tax credits, tax and social security insurance deferrals have also been considered. We have submitted the proposal to the Cabinet for approval at the first government session.

Granting facilities to damaged economic enterprises conditional on maintaining workforce and no layoffs

He added: We have many industries and companies that were in the production chain and network that have been indirectly damaged due to damage inflicted on upstream industries such as steel and petrochemicals.

The Minister of Economy said: Also, in cities where the number of attacks was high and many people from those cities had traveled, we witnessed a sharp decline in sales, especially for service businesses; for these companies, we have also considered facilities, which are mainly working capital facilities at preferential rates, as well as tax and social security insurance deferrals.

Madanizadeh added: Implementation of these programs requires approval by the Cabinet, which I hope will be approved within the next week or two.

The Minister of Economy emphasized: The provision of all these facilities to companies and enterprises is conditional on no workforce reductions.

He added: In these war conditions, we expect that if production or service units and economic enterprises have the ability, they should not lay off workers so that we do not face the problem of worsening unemployment.

Madanizadeh said: One of the actions taken in the past week or two for micro businesses and those with fewer than 50 employees was the granting of salary payment facilities equivalent to 22 million toman per employee. Small and medium businesses could register on the Ministry of Economy's KAT system and receive these facilities.

The Minister of Economy added: For these businesses, the condition for granting facilities was maintaining up to 80% of the workforce — meaning an economic enterprise with 10 employees is allowed to reduce a maximum of two people.

Central Bank governor announces design of national economy reconstruction financing program

The Governor of the Central Bank announced the design of a national economy reconstruction financing program and said: We have developed a comprehensive program for financing the reconstruction of infrastructure and damaged units in the production chain and key sectors.

According to IRNA reporting from the Central Bank, at the first meeting of the special monetary and foreign exchange policy session in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21), Abdolnaser Hemmati, while explaining the bank's performance and plans for financing the national economy with inflation control considerations, announced the continuation of the policy of prioritizing credits and resources for leading economic sectors and production and supply chains, and full readiness for the reconstruction period.

The Governor of the Central Bank, referring to the critical situation of the war and the necessity of comprehensive support for the country's economy, said: The Central Bank acted with all its strength from the very first hours to manage the national economy and monetary policy.

He added: We have not stopped monetary, foreign exchange, and banking support for the national economy for a moment; while focusing our main efforts on financing production, employment, and people's livelihoods, we have simultaneously and carefully followed liquidity control considerations and managing the cost pressures caused by the war on the general price level.

How Hezbollah redefines the concept of asymmetric warfare

From page 1 ▶ Many Israeli research centers discussing the July 2006 war admitted that it exposed deep flaws in the core of the regime's security doctrine. It showed that the immunity of its settler society was very fragile, the infrastructure was substandard, the executive capability of Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) branches, especially the ground forces, was weak, and that political and military leadership lost command and control during long, critical stretches of the battle.

According to much intelligence information published in Hebrew newspapers and websites after the pager terror attack, the assassination of Hezbollah's top-tier leaders, especially Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, the Zionist regime worked during the eighteen years between the end of the July 2006 war and the start of Hezbollah's support front for Gaza to formulate a new strategy to confront the Lebanese resistance.

This strategy relied heavily on gathering detailed, accurate intelligence, depriving Hezbollah of key strengths like its command-and-control chain and land communication system, and preventing it from using its long-range rocket arsenal, which represented



the most significant challenge.

After the Gaza support front turned into a direct war, the IOF succeeded in inflicting losses on the Lebanese resistance front, impacting its military power and the cohesion of its units. This noticeably affected the effectiveness of Hezbollah's offensive operations. Although it maintained a moderate pace of operations until the first ceasefire agreement came into effect in November 2024, the momentum lost some of its expected pre-war intensity.

Hezbollah remained committed to the ceasefire for over 15 months, exercising maximum restraint while overlooking thousands of IOF violations. These violations led to the deaths of hundreds of its leaders and fighters and destroyed

much of its military infrastructure, especially in the villages and towns of South Lebanon, where the Zionist regime deepened its occupation of many areas during the truce.

During that period, doubt crept into the hearts of many Hezbollah supporters. This doubt even reached a portion of its popular base, which had always paid the heaviest price for supporting the resistance movement and its approach to confronting the IOF.

This continued until Hezbollah launched its latest battle on March 2, responding to ongoing IOF violations that intensified after the Zionist-American aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran. This battle is still ongoing, despite a U.S.-sponsored ceasefire agreement last April, which the Is-

raeli regime, as usual, brazenly violated. However, this time, the IOF found someone confronting it and inflicting heavy losses in lives and equipment.

In the current ongoing battle, Hezbollah has introduced many new combat tactics and used additional tools that appear to have been acquired during the truce. These tools, such as small kamikaze drones, have proven to be a shocking surprise for the IOF, which has so far failed to find adequate ways to counter them.

Some details of these tactics go beyond the principles of asymmetric warfare that the Israeli regime previously managed to partially counter. This necessitated updating and developing those principles to prevent the IOF from achieving absolute control or a decisive, significant victory that its prime minister and military and political leaders have long promised.

The evolution Hezbollah has brought to the concept of asymmetric warfare can be observed in several ways. Some relate to tools and capabilities, others to the supporting factors needed in an intense battle, which could have long-term repercussions, particularly on Lebanese geography.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Same bloody cloth, different vampiric cuts

Israel's electoral circus and its sick logic of permanent warmongering

From page 1 ▶ In reality, this is a false binary where voters choose between different shades of the same militaristic doctrine.

Gantz and Eisenkot are former military chiefs of staff who frame their critique of Netanyahu not around the morality of strikes on Lebanon, Gaza, or Iran, but around tactical competence.

This consensus is anchored in the Begin Doctrine, a mandate for pre-emptive strikes that remains a sacred cow across different parties.

The April merger between former PMs Naftali Bennett and Yair Lapid was marketed as a "secular" alternative, yet their platform remains strictly anchored in the same deranged war doctrine that has defined the last three years.

Whether the leadership is "center-right" or far-right, the commitment to continue the campaign of aggression against Iran and Lebanon in different arenas, as well as what they call "mowing the grass" and maintaining permanent security control over Palestinian territories is absolute.

Blood as campaign capital

In the cynical arithmetic of Israeli politics, military escalation often serves as a primary tool for domestic legitimization.

We have seen this rhythm before: from Operation "Pillar of Defense" in November 2012, launched just two months before the January 2013 elections, which killed 174 Palestinians, including 33 children and 13 women, to Operation "Breaking Dawn" in August 2022.

The latter occurred less than three months before the November vote and claimed at least 49 Palestinian lives, including 17 children and 4 women, while wounding over 360 others.

These strikes are frequently timed to boost "security credentials" and manufacture a rally-around-the-flag effect among a radicalized electorate, transforming the slaughter of civilians into a campaign advertisement for toughness.

The current cycle is no different. The campaign of aggression on Iran is viewed by analysts part-

ly as electoral props designed to show that the current leadership can act where others merely talk, especially considering the court cases of Netanyahu and people close to him.

For the Israeli political class, Palestinian, Lebanese, and Iranian lives are the raw material of campaign messaging, used to rally a frightened public and distract from internal crises.

Given that the regime has already pushed the region to the brink through its ongoing strikes, the approaching election guarantees even more escalation against Lebanon.

Candidates are currently engaged in a lethal competition to prove who can execute a more destructive offensive to "restore the north," essentially using the prospect of total war as a central pillar of their campaign strategy.

This makes Iran's red line of including Lebanon in a possible deal with the U.S. to end the war even more crucial.

A sick society structured for siege

This war regime rests on a deeply militarized culture that views its armed forces as its only legitimate representative.

While trust in the government has plummeted to under 25%, trust in the military remains above 80%. This explains why the political discourse has shifted to "decisive victory (Hachra'a)."

The numbers speak for themselves:

- 59% of Israelis believe that ending the current war on Iran without further escalation would fail to achieve security goals.

- 62% believe a return to wide-scale war with Iran is "highly likely."

- 82% of Jewish Israelis in a 2025 poll supported the mass expulsion of Palestinians from Gaza.

This is not deviation; it is the system becoming visible. A 2026 UN report highlighted that the line between the military and armed settlers in the West Bank has effectively vanished, with over 1,732 incidents of settler violence recorded



in 2025 alone, often with direct military participation.

Permanent warmongering

As Israel's 2026 electoral circus intensifies, three scenarios stand out. A generals' coalition led by Bennett, Lapid, and figures such as Gantz or Eisenkot might adopt a slicker approach, attempting to harm regional de-escalation efforts while escalating what has been deceptively marketed as "surgical" strikes against the Resistance, all backed by unwavering American support. They may also use the Netanyahu era as the punching bag for Israel's weakened position and structural problems.

Netanyahu's persistence, on the other hand, would likely double down on current aggressive projects and accelerate formal annexation of the West Bank to appease Ben-Gvir and Smotrich, dressed up as "political and security necessities."

Additionally, pre-election panic could ignite a major escalation, whether renewed heavy strikes on Iran or a full push into Lebanon, timed to clear the board before the September vote.

In every outcome, the U.S.-Israeli axis operates in practiced coordination.

Ultimately, the election may change the lunatic spokesman, but not the vampiric logic of this settler-colonial regime addicted to the blood of innocents.

Direct talks with Israel can't guarantee Lebanon's security: senior journalist

Al-Mayadeen's deputy chief says Israel is using the truce for normalizing selective violence

TEHRAN - Bahia Halawi, the deputy general manager at Al-Mayadeen, believe that direct negotiations between Lebanon and Israel with the mediation of the U.S. cannot guarantee Lebanon's long-term security as Israel maintains occupation, pressure, and repeated violations of ceasefire.

"When one side continues military operations while simultaneously demanding political concessions, the process risks becoming coercive rather than genuinely diplomatic," Halawi tells the Tehran Times.

She says, "Lebanon's long-term security depends not only on talks, but on enforceable guarantees."

Recently, the U.S. has hosted two rounds of ambassador-level talks between Israel and

Lebanon, with a third round scheduled for May 14-15 in Washington. The first round took place on April 14, and the second on April 23. Both were held in Washington and involved the U.S. facilitating direct discussions between the two countries.

Halawi says the U.S., which is Israel's closest ally, cannot serve as a neutral mediator, saying Washington "fails to address the structural causes of instability or to establish a genuinely balanced framework rooted in international law, sovereignty, and equal accountability."

The following is the full text of the interview:

In your assessment, how have Western and mainstream international media framed the recent Israeli attacks on Lebanon, particularly those that resulted in the deaths of hundreds

of civilians? What key elements of the story do you believe are underreported or systematically omitted?

Western and mainstream international media often frame Israeli attacks on Lebanon through a security-first lens: Israel "responds," "targets Hezbollah," or "acts against threats," while Lebanese civilian deaths appear as secondary consequences rather than the central story, often portrayed merely as collateral damage. It is also important to note the repeated emphasis on Israeli military "warnings" and "alerts," even though many attacks affecting civilians occurred without meaningful or effective warning mechanisms.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

'War crimes' shout rings through Senate as Hegseth asks for billions



TEHRAN — The practiced silence of a Senate subcommittee hearing was shattered Tuesday as anti-war activists confronted War Secretary Pete Hegseth, turning a high-stakes budget session into a visceral indictment of the U.S. military's war on Iran.

The disruption, which saw protesters removed in handcuffs, served as a stark reminder of the crumbling domestic support for a war that has left Washington in a strategic and economic bind.

The afternoon began with a haunting visual: a row of activists in "No War on Iran" shirts standing in stone-faced silence directly behind Hegseth as he presented a staggering \$1.5 trillion defense budget.

The quiet broke when Capitol Police moved in to clear the gallery, prompting a female demonstrator, reportedly an Iranian American activist affiliated with Code Pink, to level a direct charge of legal and moral culpability.

"If you approve this budget, you will be complicit in the war crimes of this administration," she shouted, her voice echoing through the marble chamber before she was marched out by security.

She also said that "the Iranian-American community is against this illegal war."

Hegseth, joined by Joint Chiefs Chairman General Dan Caine, attempted to maintain his com-

posure and focus on the administration's request, framing the massive windfall as essential for "deterrence" and restoring "readiness."

However, the war secretary faced sharp questioning from lawmakers who pressed for an exit strategy that remains conspicuously absent.

Despite a ceasefire announced over a month ago, the campaign of aggression, which began on February 28 as a joint operation with Israel, has reached a grueling standstill, with Iran refusing to yield to Washington's excessive demands and resisting the so-called American blockade of its ports.

The scene on Capitol Hill reflects a broader national fatigue. Recent polling indicates that over 60 percent of Americans now view the military action as a mistake, a level of disapproval that rivals the darkest periods of the Iraq War.

For many, the war is no longer a distant geopolitical chess match but a daily financial burden; with gas prices hovering at record highs, the blank check requested by the Pentagon is becoming a political impossibility.

Tuesday's hearing was less a routine legislative exercise and more a collision of two different Americas: one inside the room seeking billions to sustain a stalemate, and one outside, and increasingly inside the gallery, demanding an end to reckless warmongering.

Strategic shockwaves as Trump visits China

TEHRAN - The prospect of the confrontation between the United States and Iran has transformed global geopolitics from a regional security crisis into a wider test of American power, alliance cohesion, and economic leadership. Against this backdrop, the visit by Donald Trump to China carries significance far beyond bilateral diplomacy. Beijing would likely view such the visit not simply as a diplomatic engagement, but as evidence that Washington, after years of escalating military and economic confrontations around the world, now faces mounting strategic limits and failures.

From Beijing's perspective, the U.S. war with Iran could reinforce a long-standing Chinese assessment that the United States, despite its overwhelming military spending and global force projection, remains vulnerable when confronted with sustained regional resistance, economic disruption, and alliance fatigue. Chinese strategists have historically studied how major powers become overstretched, and a costly Middle Eastern conflict would likely be interpreted in Beijing as another sign that U.S. power has practical limitations.

In Chinese political discourse, the phrase "paper tiger" — popularized during the Mao era — refers to a power that appears intimidating but struggles to translate military superiority into durable political outcomes. While the United States reportedly retains unmatched conventional capabilities, a widening and prolonged conflict with Iran could fuel narratives inside China that Washington increasingly relies on coercion. Such perceptions would matter deeply in the context of tensions over Taiwan.

For years, Beijing has closely examined U.S. military operations in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and the Indo-Pacific to assess how Washington might respond in a possible future Taiwan contingency. The war on Iran, started on Feb. 28, has offered China several lessons.

First, China is observing how quickly U.S. military resources have become stretched across multiple theaters. The logistical burden of protecting shipping lanes, maintaining regional

bases, and defending allies in the Persian Gulf could reduce America's ability to concentrate forces in East Asia. Chinese planners may conclude that the United States cannot sustain simultaneous high-intensity crises in both the Middle East and the Pacific.

Second, Beijing is studying alliance behavior carefully. That major U.S. allies have declined to participate directly in military operations against Iran, Chinese officials could interpret this as evidence that Washington's coalition system is weaker than often portrayed. The reluctance of European governments, as well as countries such as Japan, South Korea, and Australia, to become deeply involved in another "endless" Middle Eastern war would signal that many allies prioritize economic stability and regional interests over alignment with every American military whims.

This is especially important for Beijing because China's strategy toward Taiwan depends heavily on assumptions about a possible intervention by a coalition of certain countries allied to Washington. Now that Washington has been unable to mobilize unified support in the Persian Gulf, Chinese analysts question whether the United States could build a stronger coalition over Taiwan.

The economic consequences of such a war would also be profound. The Trump administration's confrontational policies toward Iran, particularly if they contributed to military escalation around the Strait of Hormuz, could trigger severe disruptions in global energy markets and send energy prices sharply higher.

Higher oil prices is sending shockwaves through the global economy, increasing inflation, further disrupting manufacturing supply chains, and slowing growth in both developed and emerging markets. European and Asian economies — many of which remain heavily dependent on imported energy — are facing particularly acute pressure. Ironically, Washington's own allies are bearing much of the economic cost of the American-Israeli war of aggression on Iran.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Ramadan War inflicts \$160 Million blow to Iran's tourism sector



TEHRAN – The Iranian tourism industry has suffered a staggering financial blow totaling 285 trillion rials (approximately \$160 million) due to the recent Ramadan War, a senior tourism official announced on Tuesday, highlighting the deep economic and human scars left by the conflict on one of the country's most promising sectors.

Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpey, the Deputy Tourism Minister, provided a detailed breakdown of the devastation during a press conference on Tuesday. According to the official, the calculated losses specifically exclude the significant damages sustained by the national aviation industry and airlines, which are expected to be reported separately.

"The Ramadan War hit our hospitality and service infrastructure at a time when we were prepared for peak seasonal activity," Mohseni Bandpey stated. He noted that the hotel and accommodation sector bore the brunt of the crisis, facing a \$112.3 million deficit. Furthermore, travel agencies and tour operators lost approximately \$30.9 million, while the community of professional tour guides suffered a \$5.6 million hit to their livelihoods. Other war-impacted tourism activities accounted for an additional \$11.2 million in losses.

Beyond the balance sheets, the Deputy Minister revealed a somber human cost to the aggression. He announced that 64 activists from the private tourism sector were martyred at the world-renowned Pasargadae complex—the site of the Tomb of Cyrus the Great—during the hostilities. This loss of life among those dedicated to preserving and showcasing Iran's civilizational heritage has sent shockwaves through the industry.

"In terms of physical infrastructure, Mohseni Bandpey reported that approximately \$3.37 million in direct damage was inflicted across 13 provinces. Moreover, the industry faced a loss of profit or opportunity cost estimated at \$23.03 million, as bookings were canceled and international interest waned during the height of the conflict."

The Deputy Minister emphasized that the tim-

ing of the conflict was particularly damaging, as the 12-Day War and Ramadan War coincided with the golden season of Iranian tourism, which includes the Nowruz (Persian New Year) holidays. Historically, this period is the primary source of annual revenue for many local businesses.

"War brings hardship to every sector, but tourism is often the most vulnerable," Mohseni Bandpey remarked. "However, the resilience of the Iranian people remains unshakable. Despite the threats and the conflict, we recorded over 29 million domestic trips during the Nowruz period, demonstrating that the spirit of travel and cultural connection cannot be easily extinguished."

Concluding his remarks, the official underscored that the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts is committed to the recovery of the sector. "Protecting, safeguarding, and supporting our tourism activists is a fundamental principle for the government. We recognize that these individuals are the frontline ambassadors of our culture, and we will utilize all available national resources to compensate for these losses and revitalize the industry," he added.

War acts as a catastrophic disruptor for the global tourism industry, a sector that fundamentally relies on the perception of safety, stability, and openness. When conflict erupts, the immediate consequence is typically a total collapse of international arrivals as travel advisories are issued and fear supersedes curiosity. Beyond the tragic loss of human life and the physical destruction of historical landmarks or hospitality infrastructure, the economic ripple effects are profound; local businesses, from family-run guesthouses to large-scale tour operators, face sudden insolvency, leading to widespread unemployment and the erosion of local livelihoods. Furthermore, the brand of a destination often suffers long-term psychological damage, as the memory of conflict can linger in the global consciousness far longer than the actual duration of the hostilities, making the path to recovery long and arduous even after peace is restored.

Archaeologists find 8,000-year-old human remains hidden beneath English fields

Ancient remains dating back some 8,000 years have been discovered in a field in England during preparation to build a massive new link road.

The find, near Newark in Nottinghamshire, has been discovered during early groundwork before construction begins on the next stage of the A49 Newark Bypass.

A total of seven skeletons were discovered in the archaeological dig, alongside a Roman Empire well and two houses likely dated back to the Anglo-Saxon era.

Sharing their finds this week, some 30 archaeologists excavated five fields in Newark in 2025, covering more than 23 acres over 22 weeks with the finds dating back to 6,000 BC.

The burial site containing human remains were provisionally date to the Iron Age, Roman or Anglo-Saxon periods, with ongoing scientific post-excavation analysis of these items expected to more precisely determine their the exact era they come from.

Naziya Sheikh, National Highways project manager for the A46 Newark scheme, said: "The experts have done an amazing job to uncover these important pieces of history that have unknowingly remained buried under Newark until now."

She added: "We're excited to finally be able to share the details with residents in the town and beyond as part of our early pre-construction

work on the A46 scheme.

"We take great care to record and safeguard the country's heritage that can be uncovered by our projects.

"Archaeology belongs to the communities we serve, and by working alongside a team of archaeologists, we are delighted to be able to conserve and protect these incredible finds for future generations."

The discoveries didn't stop there. As well as the above, some 163 pieces of ceramic pottery were dug up, with many of them glazed and presenting very clear decorations dating from Roman and Iron Age periods.

As well as this several prehistoric finds including flint arrowheads and equipment used to grind flour to make bread in the Neolithic period were located. Items from the English Civil War in 1642 were also uncovered.

Sean Tiffin from Archaeological Management Solutions (AMS), which carried out the dig on behalf of National Highways, said: "Our excavations uncovered fascinating insights into life in this corner of Nottinghamshire during the prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods, and even up to the present day.

"The results will greatly help increase our understanding of the rich history of the area, shedding light and new insights on previously unknown settlements."

(Source: Ladbible)

Tourism identified as Iran's fastest path to national wealth creation

TEHRAN – Aladdin Rafizadeh, Iranian Vice President and Head of the Administrative and Recruitment Organization, has described the tourism sector as one of the most cost-effective, high-yielding, and rapid paths toward generating national wealth and bolstering social capital.

Rafizadeh emphasized that tourism plays a pivotal role in driving economic prosperity across various regions of the country, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Rafizadeh characterized the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts as much more than a mere cultural or executive body. "In the architecture of national governance, this ministry stands as a primary pillar of Iran's historical and cultural identity, a driver of balanced territorial development, and a generator of social hope," he stated.

Highlighting the ministry's role in international relations, the Vice President noted that the ministry is a fundamental organ for safeguarding Iran's civilizational identity and strengthening cultural diplomacy, while simultaneously fostering local economies and creating sustainable employment.

The official further pointed to the vast potential of handicrafts in the people-centered economy. He noted that rural and nomadic handicrafts represent significant economic assets for micro-employment and native entrepreneurship.

"Safeguarding our historical and cultural heritage is a national and civilizational responsibility," Rafizadeh said, adding that enhancing the ministry's managerial and executive capabilities



is an unavoidable necessity for the smart utilization of these vast national assets.

In a notable part of his speech, Rafizadeh praised the ministry's decision to keep museums and historical sites open to the public during the recent period of aggression and wartime conditions.

He described the move as a wise and responsible decision, stating: "The continuity of activities in cultural and historical centers under such circumstances is a symbol of cultural resilience, a means of maintaining social cohesion, and a boost to the public spirit of the society."

Concluding his remarks, the Vice President highlighted that administrative reform and enhancing public satisfaction are top priorities for the 14th government.

He stressed that transforming the country's administrative system requires rationality, expert analysis, process reform, and the

involvement of elites, affirming that the government is following a problem-oriented approach to achieve these structural evolutions.

Iran, often described as the cradle of civilization, offers a breathtaking tapestry of history and geography that few countries can match. Home to 28 UNESCO World Heritage sites, the nation boasts an architectural legacy spanning millennia—from the majestic ruins of Persepolis and the ancient mud-brick alleys of Yazd to the intricate, turquoise-domed mosques of Isfahan. Beyond its urban treasures, Iran's diverse topography transforms it into a four-season destination; travelers can experience skiing in the snow-capped Alborz Mountains while others simultaneously bask in the subtropical warmth of the Persian Gulf islands or trek through the surreal Kalut formations of the Lut Desert, one of the hottest places on Earth.

Beyond its physical landmarks, the true essence of Iranian tourism lies in its world-renowned tradition of hospitality and its vibrant living culture. For many international visitors, the genuine warmth of the Iranian people and the sophistication of Persian cuisine are the most memorable highlights of their journey, often bridging cultural divides and fostering a deeper understanding of the region. In recent years, the country has increasingly pivoted toward tourism as a vital non-oil economic sector, focusing on easing visa requirements and promoting specialized niches such as medical, religious, and eco-tourism. With its unique blend of ancient heritage, exquisite handicrafts, and a strategic position on the historic Silk Road, Iran continues to hold immense potential as one of the world's most compelling and authentic travel destinations.

Imam Khomeini International Airport sees steady growth in flight frequency, destinations

TEHRAN – Flight operations at Imam Khomeini International Airport (IKIA) are witnessing a significant upward trend, with 13 domestic airlines currently serving over 20 international destinations, a senior official has announced.

"The airport's global connectivity is expanding as part of a strategic plan to increase flight frequencies," ISNA quoted Ahoura Mohammadi as saying on Wednesday.

The airport currently facilitates travel to more than 20 key cities worldwide, he added. He noted that the highest volume of traf-

fic is directed toward destinations including Istanbul, Muscat, Najaf, Medina, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Baghdad, and Beijing.

"Thirteen Iranian carriers are actively managing these routes," the official stated, adding that major domestic airlines such as Mahan Air, Iran Air, Meraj, Iran Air Tour, Sepehran, and Caspian are leading the operations.

Addressing the current status of the airport's activity, Mohammadi emphasized that operations are proceeding normally despite regional developments. "On average, the airport handles between 35 and 40 inbound and

outbound flights daily," he said, highlighting that this figure is on a consistent growth trajectory.

In addition to the high-traffic hubs, Mohammadi listed several other active routes, including flights to Guangzhou, Beijing, Yerevan, Moscow, Erbil, Kabul, Ankara, Bangkok, and Baku.

The official also hinted at the further expansion of IKIA's international network. He revealed that several domestic airlines have submitted formal requests to launch scheduled flights to Delhi, India.

Rare Roman villa threatened by farming damage reveals rare mosaic and bathhouse remains in Devon

Archaeologists have launched a five-year excavation project at a Roman villa site near Halberton in Devon, where decades of plowing have damaged buried remains and raised concerns about further loss of archaeological evidence.

The project, called Saving Halberton's Ancient Roman Environment, or SHARE, focuses on recording and studying the site before more of the buried structures disappear beneath farmland. The work is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and brings together researchers from the University of Exeter, Tiverton Archaeological Group, Sampford Peverell Society, Devon County Council's Historic Environment Team, and Cotswold Archaeology.

Roman villas are rare in Devon, with only a small number confirmed through excavation. This makes the Halberton site especially important for understanding Roman settlement in southwest Britain.

The villa first came to attention in 2004 after a local metal detectorist found Roman material in the area. Since then, fieldwalking, metal detecting, and geophysical surveys have revealed several phases of buried archaeology. Investigations have identified at least three Roman buildings, including the villa itself, along with enclosures, land boundaries, walls, and floor surfaces.

Excavations have produced a range of

finds, including Roman coins, brooches, pottery fragments, ceramic building materials, worked slate, industrial waste, and tesserae, the small cubes used to create mosaics.

One of the most important discoveries came in 2021, when archaeologists uncovered part of a Roman mosaic floor during trial trenching. Although plowing had badly damaged the surface, parts of the design survived. The mosaic contains red, white, and black tesserae arranged in a polychrome pattern. Archaeologists say this is currently the westernmost example of a polychrome Roman mosaic identified in Britain.

Mosaics were expensive decorative features in Roman Britain and are usually linked to wealthy households. Combined with evidence for a possible hypocaust, the Roman underfloor heating system, the finds suggest the Halberton villa was a high-status residence occupied between the mid-2nd and 4th centuries CE.

The first year of the SHARE project has already included a two-week evaluation excavation supported by university researchers, professional archaeologists, students, and local volunteers. Two additional trenches uncovered substantial wall remains belonging to previously unknown buildings.

Some stone walls had been stripped in later periods, with building materials removed for reuse elsewhere, a process archaeolo-

gists call robbing out. Even so, enough remains survived to show the scale of the Roman complex.

Researchers also uncovered ditches and pits that may help reconstruct how the surrounding landscape was divided and managed during the Roman period.

Among the latest discoveries is a tank-like structure lined with opus signinum, a waterproof Roman concrete made from lime mortar mixed with crushed pottery, brick, or tile. Romans widely used this material in baths, aqueducts, cisterns, and other water-related structures.

Because of this waterproof lining, archaeologists believe the newly found feature may have formed part of a bathhouse connected to the villa. If confirmed, this would add another sign of wealth and domestic comfort at the settlement.

Further excavation is planned from May through July. University of Exeter archaeology students will work at the site for four weeks, followed by another month of excavation involving community volunteers.

Researchers hope the extended project will recover more evidence from the threatened site and provide a fuller picture of Roman life in this part of Devon before agricultural activity causes further damage.

(Source: Archaeologymag)

TEHRAN –The National Population Week is planned to be held from May 14 to 20 under the theme 'Iran is more alive than ever'.

Each day of the week is assigned a specific theme as follows: Thursday, May 14, 'Social participation, and neighborhood networking enhance population resilience'; Friday, May 15, 'Media and Culture, raising awareness and creating hope'; Saturday, May 16, 'Maternal and child health, maternal dignity'; Sunday, May 17, 'Marriage and family stability are driving force of youth population and national strength'; Monday, May 18, 'Family-friendly workplaces; shaping the future of Iran's population'; Tuesday, May 19, 'Security, economic justice, family well-being'; and Wednesday, May 20, (national population day), 'Population stability in rural, urban, and border areas; national unity for a strong Iran'.

According to the head of the Welfare Organization the rate of aging in Iran is growing faster than the global average, so that the country will be among the oldest countries in the world in 25 years,

Based on the World Health Organization (WHO) age classification in 2025, the elderly population constitutes those aged 60 and older. Accordingly, 14 percent



of the country's population is old now, ISNA quoted Seyed Javad Hosseini as saying.

A population is considered to be young, with seven percent of people being 60 or older; when seven to 14 percent of people are over 60, the country is said to be aging. Countries with 14 to 21 percent and 21 to 27 percent of people aged 60 or over are aged and super-aged, respectively, the official said.

In the Iranian year 1395 (2016 – 2017), only 9.5 percent of the population was aged over 60, and the global average aging rate was about 12 and 13 percent. In the Iranian year 1415 (2036 – 2037), the figure will rise to 15 percent in Iran and 16.5 percent

in the world. However, in 1430 (2051 – 2052), the figure will reach 31 percent in Iran, and 21.5 percent in the world, the official noted.

The life expectancy in Iran has increased, but the birth rate has lowered, Hosseini stressed.

The Vice-Presidency for Science and Technology and Knowledge-based Economy, in cooperation with the Innovation and Prosperity Fund, will support the implementation of projects in the family and youth population sectors.

To this end, the Vice-Presidency announced the second call to organize and fund innovations in line with achieving the country's demographic goals in January,

IRNA reported.

It focuses on three main areas namely infertility treatment, childbearing, maternal and child health, as well as seven key specialized areas including cell therapy, gene therapy, tissue engineering (advanced treatments and novel approaches to improve fertility and treat genetic disorders), assisted reproductive technologies (ART) and Artificial Intelligence, nanotechnologies to improve diagnosis, health monitoring, and assisted reproductive treatments.

It also includes drugs and diagnostic kits for the development of strategic medicines and the manufacture of diagnostic kits; photonics, laser, and optogenetics technologies, with a focus on low-power lasers, adaptive optics, and quantum photonics; and medicinal plants based on Persian medicine to develop products to increase fertility.

In the research sector, social research on field surveys of the causes of declining fertility in various provinces of the country, empowering women and mothers, supporting creative centers in the field of family, raising awareness, developing culture and preventive measures in infertility, and expanding search and production infrastructure for comprehensive centers are of particular importance.

Minsk seeks to boost educational ties with Tehran



TEHRAN – Belarusian Education Minister, Andrey Ivanets, in a talk with Minister of Science, Research and Technology Hossein Simaei-Sarraf has announced the Belarus willingness to promote scientific and educational ties with Iran.

During a phone call on Tuesday, Ivanets expressed solidarity with Iranians following the US-Israeli attacks on Iran, and voiced Belarus readiness to expand cooperation with Iran through conducting joint research projects and exchanging students, IRNA reported.

The official invited Simaei-Sarraf to participate in the tenth meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Education Ministers which is planned to be hosted by Belarus in June 2026.

The official went on to say that he will attend the two ministries joint commission on technology and science, planned to be held in the near future.

For his part, Simaei-Sarraf welcomed the idea, noting that the two nations had not collaborated effectively in education sector.

Science minister proposed that on the sidelines of Iranian delegation attendance in tenth meeting of SCO Education Ministers, the two countries to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to develop scientific and technological collaborations.

Highlighting Iran's scientific capacities, Simaei-Sarraf said Iran's higher education system primarily focuses on the development of technology and innovation, noting that 160 science and technology parks are operating in the country, currently.

The official invited Ivanet to pay a visit to Iran and become more familiar with science and technology parks as well as universities, which will contribute to the enhancement of ties.

Lauding Belarus expression of solidarity with Iran, Simaei-Sarraf said the aggressors did not only attack the country's geographical, but scientific borders targeting research centers, laboratories, and universities.

The official highlighted that attacks on scientific centers and educational institutions violate the International Humanitarian Law principle of distinction. He went on to propose the development of a joint document on safeguarding universities, higher education centers, and condemning any attack on science, scientists, and professors in the tenth meeting of SCO Science Ministers.

Joint scientific committee

In 2025, Farhad Yazdandoost, an official with the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, and Dmitry Koltsov, the Belarusian ambassador to Iran, agreed on establishing a joint scientific committee.

Highlighting cooperation opportunities in basic and applied sciences, including physics, chemistry, and advanced technologies, the Belarusian official welcomed the promotion of scientific collaborations with Iran.

He also pointed to the joint committee held in January 2024, which stressed fostering scientific and technological relations. The official went on to say that since 2016, the two countries have also agreed on mutually recognizing higher education degrees.

Referring to a memorandum of understanding on boosting technological cooperation signed by the two countries in 2023, the official further highlighted the need to expand scientific and technological collaborations.

For his part, Yazdandoost said the significant progress of the Iranian private sector in cooperation with Belarus in various fields underscores the importance of developing cooperation among knowledge-based companies, start-ups, and biotechnology.

The official expressed optimism that scientific and academic interactions as well as collaborative partnerships among scientists and universities of the two sides boost, as well.

During the meeting, held on February 26, the ministry of science announced readiness to act as an intermediary between the institutions of the two countries to facilitate their cooperation.

Underscoring the significance of coordination between various ministries of the two countries in fostering relations, the officials agreed on cooperation among universities and government organizations.

Meeting of Ministers of Education

The Meeting of Ministers of Education of the SCO Member States is a key mechanism for multilateral cooperation in education facilitating academic mobility, academic and educational exchanges, and joint educational initiatives.

Meetings of Ministers of Education of the SCO Member States have been held since 2012 at the initiative of the People's Republic of China.

The legal framework for cooperation in education within the SCO includes the Agreement between the Governments of the SCO Member States on Cooperation in Education dated 15 June 2006, as well as the Memorandum of Cooperation between educational institutions of higher and secondary vocational training in culture and arts of the SCO Member States signed in Dushanbe on 17 September 2021.

On May 13, 2025, the 9th Meeting of Ministers of Education of the SCO Member States was held in Urumqi chaired by the People's Republic of China. Following the meeting, a Protocol was signed; the document of the second meeting of the Coordination Council of the SCO University was approved; a decision was taken to expand the list of core universities and fields of study; the accession of Belarus and Iran to the Agreement on the Functioning of the SCO University was endorsed; the SCO University Digital Education Development Plan was approved; and the programme of the 15th Education Without Borders Week to be hosted by Chinese universities was endorsed.

WHO launches \$2m emergency project in Iran



TEHRAN – In response to the growing crises affecting public health infrastructures in Iran, the World Health Organization in cooperation with the Health Ministry has kicked off a two-million-dollar project to support urgent health responses in the country.

Supported by the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), the project, titled 'preventing the spread of diseases and maintaining essential health services during emergencies', aims to minimize the outbreaks of diseases, stabilize the process of providing health services, and safeguard health system from declining performance across the country, health ministry website reported.

Since the beginning of the imposed US-Israeli war against Iran, on February 28, airstrikes have lowered the country's capacities to provide vital health services.

The aggressors destroyed 229 health centers, 49 hospitals, 78 pharmaceutical facilities,

laboratories, and warehouses.

Moreover, 56 emergency bases were targeted, nine hospitals were evacuated, 47 ambulances and 10 emergency vehicles were severely damaged.

Attacks on pharmaceutical and diagnostic equipment manufacturing facilities and their surrounding areas have disrupted the domestic supply chain of medical equipment and challenged the process of providing critical care to those in need.

Climatic shocks in southern provinces of the country has exacerbated the situation. Irregular, above-normal rainfall, following prolonged periods of drought in the 2025-2026, has led to localized flooding and the accumulation of stagnant water.

High-risk provinces, including Sistan-Baluchestan, Hormozgan, Kerman, and Khuzestan, are at greater risk of exposure to contaminated water sources. The situation, coupled with conflicts in water and sanitation infrastructure, and disease surveillance has increased the risks of infectious disease outbreaks and water born diseases, particularly cholera, and acute water diarrhea.

According to John Jabbour, WHO Representative, "the ongoing conflicts, and severe climatic shocks have placed an unprecedented burden on Iran's health infrastructure, exposing vulnerable communities to serious hazards.

The allocated fund for emergency will play a critical role in managing health system

challenges. It allows us to take immediate measures to protect essential supply chains and ensure that life-saving care would be available to those most affected by crises.

Without urgent action, local transmission of diseases could quickly result in widespread outbreaks, and increase the cases and deaths from preventable disease."

To accelerate immediate action, the WHO is deploying a set of high-impact interventions. The strategy prioritizes strengthening surveillance and early warning systems, as well as deployment of essential equipment to respond to disease outbreaks, including rapid diagnostic tests for malaria, dengue fever, and cholera, the official noted.

The intervention also includes the distribution of insecticide-treated mosquito nets, insect-repellents, larvicide, along with rapid technical assistance to strengthen integrated vector management in high-risk provinces.

Over the next six months, the WHO project will directly serve an estimated 112,500 people by scaling up epidemic management and restoring access to health services. Some 272,550 people will be protected indirectly by strengthening rapid response capacities and reducing the risks of disease outbreaks.

Ultimately, the goal of this comprehensive effort is to manage the outbreak of preventable diseases and maintain essential health services at a time when they are needed more than ever.

IFRC official: IRCS efforts are outstanding, inspiring in crises

TEHRAN – Hossam Elsharkawi, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), has commended the efforts of Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) President, staff, volunteers, and aid workers as being outstanding and inspiring in addressing crises.

In a letter written on the occasion of the World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, the official also praised the head of the IRCS, Pirhossein Kolivand, for his profound commitment and managerial role, IRCS website reported.

The full text of his message reads as follows:

I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to you, as well as to the managers, staff, relief workers, volunteers, and the entire family of the Iranian Red Crescent Society, on the occasion of World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day. This day symbolizes the noble values of humanity, solidarity, sacrifice, and

selfless service to those who, in the most difficult and critical moments, place their hope in the dedicated hands of humanitarian and relief workers.

Undoubtedly, the Iranian Red Crescent Society has played an outstanding and inspiring role in recent years in responding to crises, natural disasters, humanitarian emergencies, and particularly during the recent conflict, through the provision of vital humanitarian and relief services. In this regard, I would like to express my deepest appreciation and respect for your strong leadership, wise management, and remarkable field presence. Your presence was not limited to managerial responsibilities; rather, you stood alongside relief workers and operational teams in the heart of crises, strengthening morale, hope, and unity among humanitarian personnel.

Standing and serving beside relief workers under the most difficult circumstances, especially when human lives are at risk, reflects your profound com-



mitment, sense of humanitarian responsibility, and unwavering belief in the noble principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. This admirable approach is a clear example of compassionate leadership, courage, and dedication in serving people and supporting those affected by crises.

On this honorable occasion, we also pay tribute, with deep respect and sorrow, to the brave and devoted relief workers who sacrificed their lives in the

of humanitarian duty and in saving the lives of others. Through their courage, selflessness, and extraordinary devotion, they demonstrated the highest values of humanity and selfless service. Their names and memories will forever remain alive in the hearts of the people and within the Red Crescent family. Without doubt, their path and legacy will continue to inspire future generations of relief workers and stand as a lasting symbol of humanitarian values and sacrifice.



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MAY 14, 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: 18:22 Dawn: 03:21 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 04:59 (tomorrow)

“Doctor Faustus” on stage at Tehran Theater Complex

TEHRAN – Tehran Theater Complex is hosting the performance of the play “Doctor Faustus” written by Christopher Marlowe at its Medea Hall.

Directed by Mehdi Asgharian, the 55-minute play has Ali Mahmoudi, Reyhaneh Kiamari, Saeideh Rohani, Yasamin Parsa, Dayan Alinia, Bahar Abdolrahimi, and Taha Mohammadi in the cast, among others.

“The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus,” commonly referred to simply as “Doctor Faustus,” is an Elizabethan tragedy, based on German stories about a scholar who sells his soul to the devil in exchange for magical power.

Written in the late 16th century and first performed around 1594, the play follows Faustus’s rise as a magician through his pact with Lucifer—facilitated by the demon Mephistopheles—and his ultimate downfall as

he fails to repent before his damnation.

“Doctor Faustus” blends classical tragedy with Elizabethan drama. Thematically, it explores ambition, the limits of knowledge, Christian theology, and Renaissance humanism. Critics have long debated its stance on Calvinist predestination and its reflection of Reformation-era anxieties.

The play has had a lasting influence, inspiring adaptations across stage, film, and other media. Performances have been associated with supernatural legends since the 17th century, and the characters of Faustus and Mephistopheles remain iconic figures in Western literature.

“Doctor Faustus” will remain on stage through May 20 at the Tehran Theater Complex, located at No. 3, Farhangi Alley, Vesal Shirazi St., Enghelab Ave.

Eram Amphitheater to screen 2026 animation “Hoppers”

TEHRAN – The amphitheater of Eram Amusement Park in Tehran will screen the 2026 animated science fiction comedy film “Hoppers” directed by Daniel Chong, on Thursday.

Produced by Pixar Animation Studios for Walt Disney Pictures, the film stars the voices of Piper Curda, Bobby Moynihan, Jon Hamm, Kathy Najimy, and Dave Franco.

The animation follows animal-loving col-

lege student Mabel (Curda), who transfers her mind into a lifelike robotic beaver to communicate with animals and save their habitat from human destruction, inadvertently sparking an uprising in the process.

Development on the film lasted six years. “Hoppers” received positive reviews from critics and was a box-office success, grossing \$383 million worldwide for a \$150 million budget, becoming the sixth-highest grossing film of 2026.

Cartoon of Day



Rapes
Cartoonist: Kamal Sharaf from Yemen

TMoCA examining impact of war on modern Spanish art

TEHRAN – The second part of the “Art & War” program is on display at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMoCA), showcasing 11 works by four Spanish modernist painters from its treasured collection.

Featuring pieces by prominent artists Pablo Picasso, Antoni Tàpies, Robert Motherwell, and Juan Gris, the exhibition offers an opportunity to revisit and reflect on the impact of war on modern Spanish art, IRNA reported.

The “Art & War” program provides a unique opportunity to revisit and analyze how contemporary wars influence the formation of different art movements.

The exhibition has been planned as an artistic reaction to the 40-day American-Zionist assault on Iran (from February 28 to April 8), which martyred about 3,500 people, including the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khomeini, several officials and military commanders, as well as numerous civilians, including women and children.

During the 40-day war (also known as the Ramadan War), besides some military targets, the US and Israel launched organized attacks against civilian infrastructure, including residential homes, hospitals, refineries, power plants, schools, uni-



versities, art and cultural spaces, bookstores, museums, and ancient sites in several cities, causing total or partial damage and injuring innocent people.

Since the beginning of the war, artists in various cities across the country began producing related artworks.

The TMoCA plans to gradually make more works available to audiences, so that with each visit, they can gain deeper insight into the impact of art when confronting historical and contemporary crises.

Established in 1977, the museum has more than 4,000 items that include 19th and 20th-century world-class Iranian, European, and American paintings, prints, drawings, and sculptures. Being the biggest collection of Western art in the eastern world, it includes works from almost all artistic periods and movements.

The museum was designed by Iranian architect Kamran Diba, who employed elements from traditional Persian architecture. The building itself can be regarded as an example of contemporary art, in the style of an underground Guggenheim Museum.

Most of the museum area is located underground with a circular walkway that spirals downwards with galleries branching outwards. Western sculptures by artists such as Ernst, Giacometti, Magritte, and Moore can be found in the museum’s gardens.

“Art & War” exhibition will be open to visitors through May 19, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, located next to Laleh Park on N. Kargar Street.

Iranian violinist to perform with TV BRICS International Symphony Orchestra in Russia

TEHRAN – Iranian violinist Amin Ghafari has been invited to join the TV BRICS International Symphony Orchestra for an upcoming concert in St. Petersburg, Russia.

“The concert is set for June and there will be other soloists from China in the orchestra as well,” he was quoted as saying by Mehr.

According to Ghafari, this is his seventh experience performing as a soloist with top-tier orchestras in Europe.

One of the prominent violinists in Iran, Ghafari has been a member of Iran’s National Orchestra and Tehran Symphony Orchestra. He is also proficient in playing the santur.

He has held concerts at the Allegro Vivo Academy in Austria and Kronberg in Germany where he also attended workshops with Professor Bijan Khadem Misagh, Prof. Boris Kushnir and his mentor, Prof. Igor Petrushevski, who has the main influence on his performance.

Ghafari has so far performed in the international arena as a soloist with the Suk Chamber Orchestra in the Masquerade Hall at the Krumlov Festival, the Russian Kaliningrad Orchestra and the Baku Philharmonic Orchestra. Last October, he performed with the North Czech Philharmonic Orchestra in Prague, Czech Republic.



Last year, the Iranian musician received a gold medal from Osaka International Music Competitions in Japan. He has also published a book titled “The Best Ways to Practice Khachaturian Concerto.”

The TV BRICS International Symphony Orchestra was established in 2023 on the basis of the TV BRICS International Media Network to promote the achievements of the BRICS countries in the field of culture, musical art, and classical

music in the global media space.

The orchestra’s musicians are a team with a renewable international composition, which includes the best musicians of the world.

The orchestra’s repertoire combines the traditions of Russian and foreign classics with the national music of the BRICS countries in various styles and genres. In its work, the orchestra pays tribute to the diversity of musical trends.

Gaza’s lost history on display in Turin

For years, Gaza has been reduced to images of war, destruction, and humanitarian catastrophe, while its historical and cultural depth has faded into the background. “Gaza, the Future Has an Ancient Heart, Materials, and Memories of the Mediterranean,” a major international exhibition, now open at Fondazione Merz in Turin until September 27, seeks to restore that lost dimension and present Gaza not only as a site of conflict, but as a place with a long and layered history.

The project is a collaboration between Fondazione Merz, Turin’s Museo Egizio, and Geneva’s Musée d’Art et d’Histoire (MAH), with the support of the State of Palestine. It brings together around eighty archaeological artifacts dating from the Bronze Age to the Ottoman period, placing them in dialogue with works by seven contemporary Palestinian and international artists. Together, the institutions frame the exhibition as both a scholarly undertaking and a public reflection on memory, identity, and responsibility, the Middle East Uncovered reported.

An important aspect of the exhibition concerns the history of the

artifacts themselves. The objects from Gaza shown in Turin are drawn from a wider collection of around five hundred pieces currently held in temporary custody at Geneva’s MAH on behalf of the State of Palestine. The collection had originally been intended as the foundation of a future archaeological museum in Palestine, a project left unfinished because of the conflicts that engulfed the region. Their display in Turin, therefore, also tells the story of a displaced heritage, preserved abroad while awaiting the possibility of return.

Beatrice Merz, president of Fondazione Merz and one of the exhibition’s curators, says the project inevitably carries political significance. “Art institutions do not operate in a neutral space: they are immersed in the present and must engage with what is happening in the world,” she says. “We believe it is important not to withdraw from this responsibility, especially in the face of complex and dramatic situations such as the Palestinian one.”

Yet Merz insists the role of culture differs from that of political campaigning. “Our intervention does not take the form of slogans or direct political positioning, but

through the tools of culture: research, storytelling, and the construction of meaning.”

For years, the name Gaza has been associated almost exclusively with bombardment, siege, hunger, and ruin. The Turin exhibition seeks to recover a much longer, nuanced history. Since antiquity, Gaza served as a strategic node linking Africa, Asia, and Europe—a gateway, trading center, and meeting place of cultures.

The artworks on display reveal that layered history. Ceramics, amphorae once used to carry coins, amulets, sarcophagi, and artifacts from Egypt, Greece, Babylon, and the Arabian Peninsula all testify to centuries of trade, cultural exchange, and overlapping identities.

The exhibition is organized into four thematic sections. The first, “Past, Present, and Future in Danger,” examines the destruction of cultural heritage. It considers not only ruined monuments and damaged archaeological sites, but also the disappearance of communities that inhabited, celebrated, and protected those places.

Further sections present Gaza as a bridge between Europe, Africa, and Asia, tracing the movement of

goods, ideas, and people across the Mediterranean and the Levant. Everyday objects, funerary remains, and religious artifacts show a territory shaped by coexistence, adaptation, and cultural mixing over nearly five thousand years. The exhibition also includes photographs from the UNRWA archive, offering rare glimpses of civic life, streets, and families in Gaza before the current destruction.

A parallel public program of talks, film screenings, workshops, and music performances extends these themes beyond the gallery itself, connecting archaeology to contemporary political debate. Turin’s National Cinema Museum also hosted a retrospective dedicated to Palestinian director Kamal Aljafari, expanding the citywide focus on Gaza’s cultural voices. In this sense, Gaza is presented not only as a local tragedy, but as part of a broader global pattern in which war threatens memory, heritage, and cultural life itself.

Alongside the ancient artifacts are works of art by Samaa Emad, Mirna Bamieh, Khalil Rabah, Vivien Sansour, Wael Shawky, Dima Srouji, and Akram Zaatari. Their presence is central to the curatorial concept.