



BRICS FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING

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UAE From Iran War to BRICS: 'the Lady Doth Protest Too Much'

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Iranian FM Abbas Araghchi poses with fellow BRICS diplomats for a family photo at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, India, May 14, 2026.

Araghchi says Iran has 'no trust' in US, talks depend on seriousness

TEHRAN - Iran's foreign minister said on Friday that Tehran has "no trust" in Washington and would only consider talks with the administration of President Donald Trump if it demonstrated seriousness.

Abbas Araghchi made the remarks in New Delhi, where he attended a two-day BRICS foreign ministers' meeting that began on Thursday.

He said Iran has received messages from the Trump administration indicating that Washington is open to new talks aimed at ending the joint US-Israel conflict that initially began on February 28. A ceasefire in early April paused the 39-day war. However, diplomatic efforts to bring a lasting end to the conflict have so far proven unsuccessful. ▶ Page 3

Russia pledges close cooperation with Iran to resolve crisis in West Asia

TEHRAN - Russia is committed to working closely with Iran to find peaceful solutions to West Asia crisis within the framework of international law, a senior Russian security official announced on Thursday, during a meeting with his Iranian counterpart on the sidelines of a Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Kyrgyzstan's capital.

Alexander Venediktov, deputy secretary of Russia's Security Council, stated to Ali Bagheri, deputy secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, that Moscow and Tehran maintain a high level of foreign policy coordination amid the current challenging circumstances and remain in regular contact at the highest levels. ▶ Page 2

Hezbollah inflicts more casualties on IOF

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) admit another soldier has been killed by the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah.

According to the Hebrew media, the soldier, identified as a Staff Sergeant, was killed in southern Lebanon by a Hezbollah mortar shell. It marks the sixth IOF fatality "killed during combat" on the northern front that the Zionist regime has announced since the so-called "ceasefire" began.

There is strict media censorship on IOF casualty numbers, which experts argue is higher than what is being announced.

Hebrew media also noted that the incident "does not involve a loitering munition" (in reference to Hezbollah's FPV drones or guided projectiles).

Earlier, the regime's military radio reported that four IOF soldiers sustained injuries, with one of them in critical condition. The casualties were caused by an explosive drone launched by Hezbollah towards Ras Naqoura, in southern Lebanon.

The rape factories Israel can no longer bury

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN - The New York Times report on the sexual abuse of Palestinian prisoners did not reveal a mystery so much as force open a door that had been held shut by fear, propaganda, and Western cowardice.

What emerged was the outline of a detention system where humiliation, sexual violence, starvation, and medical neglect have been allowed to harden into routine. Israel's response, predictably, was denial, legal threats, and the old smear that anyone exposing Palestinian suffering is somehow trafficking in "antisemitic blood libel."

A system built for cruelty

The fundamental reality, one that Israel's propagandists work tirelessly to obscure, is that this brutality was never an anomaly. Even the Israeli B'Tselem had long since categorized the regime's carceral system as a "network of torture camps," a description mirrored by UN reports detailing horrific accounts of rape, forced nudity, and the recording of detainees for humiliation.

Nakba continuing unstopably

TEHRAN - In 1917, British Foreign Minister Arthur Balfour set the stage for a tragedy that is still bleeding, and there is no light at the end of the tunnel.

"Balfour, a Christian Zionist, supported the creation of a Zionist regime on Palestinian lands at a time when Britain, at the height of its colonial power, occupied and controlled Palestine under its mandate."

The fire that Balfour triggered is still burning with much greater flames. It did not remain confined to Palestine. Its flames immediately spread to neighboring states, including Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. In fact, it affected the entire Arab world.

The vicious colonial plan, which led to establishment of Israel in May 1948, 18 years after the death of Balfour, is known as the Nakba (Catastrophe) in Arabic language. It is commemorated every year as Nakba Day.

Following the establishment of Israel, of the 1.4 million-strong Palestinian population at the time, 800,000 were displaced and were never allowed to return to their homes.

In fact, Balfour exported evil and tragedy to the West Asia region.

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The night vigil: How feminine culture is reshaping Iran's streets

By Kurosh Alyani

TEHRAN - Just as Iranian women were being framed by global hegemonic propaganda through the lens of the burqa—a garment that has never fundamentally belonged to Iran—the most feminine social movement of the century was emerging. On the streets of Iran, this movement was giving rise to a new kind of nocturnal life.

We often simplistically label a movement as "feminine" based on demographics or the volume of rights-based demands. Yet femininity is a culture that transcends sex and gender; it depends neither on numerical presence nor on legalistic frameworks.

There are two opposing behavioral models: masculine domination and feminine nurturing. Feminine culture does not mirror Genghis Khan; its goals are not murder, plunder, conquest, and domination. Its goals are nurturing, care, allowing, and coexistence. ▶ Page 2

Zionist attacks aimed at avenging Iranian Jews' national loyalty, tourism minister says

TEHRAN - In a gathering titled "Melody in the Wounded Synagogue of Tehran," Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, emphasized that national solidarity remains the primary shield against external threats. Speaking at the Rafi-Nia Synagogue, located near Palestine Square in central Tehran on Thursday, the minister described the Iranian Jewish community as an inseparable part of the nation's historical fabric, Mehr reported.

"The presence of the Jewish community in Iran is not a matter of recent centuries; they possess a long lineage, history, and identity rooted in this land," Salehi-Amiri stated, adding that Jews have lived in harmony and intimacy with their fellow citizens throughout history, the report added. ▶ Page 6



People from all walks of life gathered in Ferdowsi Square in Tehran, waving flags of Iran, as in the past 77 days and everywhere across Iran, to show unity and solidarity in reaction to the joint US-Israeli aggression that began on February 28.

Leader emphasizes potential of Persian language, literature for promoting Islamic-Iranian civilization

TEHRAN - In a message issued on the occasion of the Persian Language Day and in commemoration of the great Iranian poet Ferdowsi (May 15), Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, emphasized the vast potential of the Persian language and literature for promoting the rich culture and civilization of Islamic Iran on a global scale.

According to Mehr, the text of the Leader's message reads as follows:

"Beyond being a tool for speech and writing, the Persian language constitutes the medium of understanding and the bond that connects the thoughts and identity boundaries of Iranians. ▶ Page 8

Iran and the limits of American power

By Xavier Villar

MADRID - Empires rarely collapse all at once. In his monumental study of Rome, Edward Gibbon argued that decline is usually gradual, shaped by long-term structural transformations. Yet history occasionally records moments when a strategic miscalculation accelerates the process. The question worth asking is whether the United States may have reached one of those moments. The joint American-Israeli war against Iran, launched on February 28, is not simply another conflict in West Asia. It may represent a geopolitical turning point comparable to the 1956 Suez Crisis, when Britain and France succeeded militarily but collapsed politically, revealing that Britain could no longer act as an independent imperial power. ▶ Page 2

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Shipping security or the return of Western interventionism?

Shargh analyzed the coalition-building by London and Paris against Iran. Shargh writes that at a time when insecurity caused by the US-Israeli-imposed war on Iran — and the resulting escalation of tensions in the Persian Gulf — has placed Europe's economy under greater pressure, the UK and France have launched a new effort to form a coalition in the Strait of Hormuz. Critics argue that this move, rather than being a defensive measure, represents a gradual return of the West to an interventionist model of regional security. Although London and Paris have tried to portray this initiative as “defensive, independent, and limited,” the very act of forming a coalition to operate in one of the world's most sensitive waterways is seen by Tehran as nothing more than an attempt to legitimize extra-regional presence. The Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly emphasized that the security of the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz must be ensured by regional countries themselves, and that the involvement of external actors not only fails to contribute to stability but is itself a major driver of crisis escalation.

Farhikhtegan: A weapons festival featuring Pahlavi!

Farhikhtegan commented on Reza Pahlavi's presence as a guest at Lockheed Martin, the world's largest arms manufacturer. Until recently, Reza Pahlavi only verbally supported military attacks on Iran — even thanking Donald Trump for them. But now he has become a guest of the world's biggest weapons manufacturer. Pahlavi is pleading for renewed and expanded US strikes on Iran. The US, in turn, buys more weapons for more war, and as always, its first choice is Lockheed Martin. More people in Iran are killed, and more money flows into the company's accounts. Pahlavi's special role is to act as a catalyst, accelerating the start of war in the region and against Iran, so that arms manufacturers can profit more. His share of this marketing effort is the promise of a return to the throne — a dream that, no matter how hard he tries, will never materialize.

Russia pledges close cooperation with Iran to resolve crisis in West Asia

From page 1 ► Venediktov also strongly condemned recent US-Israeli aggression against Iran, expressing condolences for the irreparable losses suffered by Iranian officials and military commanders during attacks attributed to Washington and Tel Aviv.

Bagheri, who leads the Iranian delegation at the SCO security council secretaries' meeting in Bishkek, responded by asserting that US actions on the international stage demonstrated Washington's intent to turn the world into a sort of jungle where law has no place.

He commended Russia's firm stance against US and Israeli aggression, emphasizing that Moscow's actions have shown it will not allow the world to become a lawless jungle.

Specifically, Bagheri highlighted Russia's veto of a draft anti-Iranian resolution at the UN Security Council, stating that Russia's position demonstrated it is a guarantor of regional security. He noted that the veto

Russia calls for immediate end to war against Iran

TEHRAN — Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov stated on Friday during his visit to India that the primary task at present regarding Iran is to immediately end the war and achieve a sustainable agreement.

Sergey Lavrov also added, “India can mediate between Iran and the Persian Gulf countries.”

Quoting the Novosti news agency, the Russian Foreign Minister noted during a meeting with his Indian counterpart, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, that addressing the crisis involving Iran requires understanding its root causes—namely, the unjustified ag-

Sobh-e-No: Why negotiation is the continuation of struggle

Sobh-e-No analyzed misunderstandings during wartime and negotiation. The paper wrote: In wartime, suffering is not only the result of fire and siege; sometimes it stems from misunderstanding the situation. When the battlefield and diplomacy are simultaneously generating power, some domestic voices, instead of accurately reading the balance of forces, either reduce politics to surrender or mask prudence with performative radicalism. Today, Iran's negotiating team faces two internal groups that — despite speaking different languages — reach the same dangerous conclusion: discrediting national rationality. One group says, “Let's give in and finish it,” as if politics were a marketplace for concessions. The other sees every negotiation text as betrayal and every act of prudence as capitulation. Both fail to understand politics. Our suffering comes not from negotiation itself, but from failing to understand its meaning under current conditions.

Ettelaat: Is Saudi Arabia seeking a security pact with Iran?!

Ettelaat commented on claims of a potential security agreement between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Saudi Arabia is reportedly consulting with its allies about signing a “non-aggression pact” between regional countries and Iran. The idea — proposed by Riyadh — aims to manage regional tensions after the end of the US-Israeli war with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Persian Gulf states, especially since the start of the war, have been concerned that once the conflict ends and the US reduces its large military presence, they may face an Iran that is wounded yet more assertive. Diplomats say many European capitals and EU institutions support Saudi Arabia's proposal and are encouraging other Persian Gulf Arab states to back it as well. From their perspective, this plan is the best way to prevent future conflicts and to offer Tehran assurances that it will not be targeted.

prevented the adoption of a resolution that could have increased regional instability.

This situation, Bagheri argued, underscores Russia's strategic vision to prevent the United States from using the UN Security Council to legitimize its aggressive actions. He added that any US adventurism within that international mechanism would face a Russian response.

“The Americans and Israelis have created threats to our country's security and national sovereignty,” Bagheri stated. “They have not only threatened Iran's security and sovereignty but also posed risks to international law, stability, and security at regional and global levels.”

The SCO security council secretaries' meeting, which commenced on Thursday in Bishkek, aims to enhance cooperation among member states in combating terrorism, extremism, illegal arms and drug trafficking, human smuggling, and other organized crimes.

gression by the United States and Israel.

The senior Russian diplomat also commented on the trade agreements between China and the United States on Iran during US President Donald Trump's visit to China and his meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

“It is difficult to precisely understand what the United States expects from China regarding the Iran conflict. He described US demands for China to pressure Iran into opening the Strait of Hormuz as a “transparent game,” Lavrov added.

Busy day for Iran's top diplomat; Araghchi holds diplomatic blitz in New Delhi

TEHRAN— Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi engaged in an intensive diplomatic round in New Delhi this week, holding separate meetings with his counterparts from South Africa, India, Russia, Malaysia, and Thailand, as well as India's National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on the sidelines of the BRICS Foreign Ministers' meeting.

In meeting with South African Foreign Minister Ronald Lamola, Araghchi warned that Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of the Israeli regime, is a “war criminal” responsible for the killing of tens of thousands in Gaza and thousands more in Lebanon and is actively seeking to plunge the region into a new war.

Araghchi recalled that during the 40-day war of aggression imposed by the US and the Zionist regime against Iran, the adversary declared its objective as the “unconditional surrender” of the Islamic Republic — a goal that was not achieved. The enemy was forced to request a ceasefire from the second week of the war, he added.

Lamola, in turn, highlighted the global economic fallout from the conflict, particularly for African nations in energy and fertilizer supplies, and reaffirmed South Africa's firm support for a diplomatic resolution in West Asia.

Araghchi and Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar discussed the latest situation in the Strait of Hormuz, maritime security, and regional stability. Araghchi expressed hope that greater coordination among BRICS members would be achieved during India's presidency. Jaishankar stressed India's support for diplomatic solutions.

Later, Araghchi met with Indian National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Both Indian leaders expressed concern over continued tensions, with Modi announcing India's readiness to help establish security in the re-

The night vigil: How feminine culture is reshaping Iran's streets

From page 1 ► For two and a half months, Iran witnessed nightly gatherings that participants simply called a “vigil.” These gatherings—defined by waving flags, singing hymns, chanting, mourning the fallen, and sharing tea—developed their own distinct art, language, and music.

The characteristics of this movement include:

* Networked organization: The gatherings are decentralized and non-hierarchical.

* Service as power: There are no commanders; “care” for others is the only recognized source of authority.

* Reclaiming space: Everyday streets and squares have been transformed into sites of resistance.

* Cultural presence: Symbols and cultural signs are reclaimed without relying on nudity.

* Ethic of solidarity: A participatory ethic based on lived experience keeps the movement alive.

From page 1 ► What is at stake goes beyond military calculations. The issue concerns the architecture of the contemporary global order and the racial structures of power that sustain it. For seven decades, the United States has anchored that order not only through force but through institutions and economic arrangements. The legitimacy of American leadership rested on the perception that its system produced stability and prosperity. Yet that legitimacy also depended on something more fundamental: the assumption that certain peoples — white, Western, liberal — possessed the natural right to govern the world, to decide which political forms were legitimate, and to determine which forms of violence were permissible.

This racial assumption has structured American policy in West Asia since 1948. Washington positioned itself as a neutral arbiter, but that neutrality always rested on an implicit racial hierarchy. The United States offered security guarantees to the Persian Gulf monarchies in exchange for pricing oil in US dollars — the petrodollar system. Iran, however, stood outside this system. After 1979, Iran positioned itself in opposition to American influence.

For decades, American strategy rested on three pillars: containing Iran, preserving the petrodollar system, and guaranteeing Persian Gulf security. Yet it also reproduced a racial geography of power. America's allies — monarchies willing to integrate into the liberal order — were treated as legitimate partners. Iran, which rejected that integra-



tion and end the war.

In his meeting with Malaysian Foreign Minister Mohamad Hasan, Araghchi said regional countries have now realized more than ever that “regional security is an interconnected whole” and that “one cannot rely on the US and the Israeli regime to ensure regional security.” He noted that the Strait of Hormuz had remained completely open and secure until the illegal US-Israeli aggression forced a review of new mechanisms.

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within everyday life.

* New kinship: Non-blood bonds and new forms of family are being forged.

* Redefined roles: Gender identities are shifting as women remain active in the streets until late at night.

* Media representation: The high volume of cultural imagery is driven by the significant presence

US must abandon its maximalist demands and realize that “the goals it failed to achieve through war will not be attainable through negotiations either.” He pointed to Washington's record of violating nuclear commitments and betraying diplomacy twice over the past year by launching military attacks in the middle of negotiations.

The Thai minister noted the economic consequences of the war on energy and essential goods, affirming Thailand's support for any initiative that reduces regional tensions.

Araghchi and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov emphasized the constructive role of BRICS in reducing regional disputes and promoting collective security mechanisms in the Persian Gulf. They reviewed bilateral cooperation in political, energy, transportation, and regional fields, as well as the latest developments in West Asia and negotiations on Iran's nuclear issue.

The Iranian top diplomat's meetings in New Delhi underscore Tehran's active diplomatic push to consolidate regional and international support, counter ‘US-Israeli aggression,’ and explore both diplomatic solutions and military readiness as the crisis continues to unfold.

of women, moving from citizen media to global outlets.

This is a movement of feminine culture flowing through the streets of Iran. Surveys suggest that over 50% of the population has participated at least once, with 25% maintaining a constant presence.

Iran is creating a brilliant culture—in silence, in calm, and without fanfare.

Iran and the limits of American power

tion and organized politics differently, was marked instead as irrational, fanatical, and premodern.

Recent events suggest this system is weakening. The war has raised doubts about American credibility. It is worth recalling that negotiations were still underway in Oman when the first attack took place. Launching a military operation during diplomacy undermines confidence in negotiation itself. The operation is clearly illegal under international law. But something deeper is at stake. Washington's willingness to violate its own legal frameworks reveals the racial structure of the liberal order: norms are applied selectively. The United States may violate Iranian sovereignty without consequence, while Iran cannot do the same without being branded a terrorist state.

Iranian retaliatory actions have targeted infrastructure associated with Persian Gulf states. For these governments, a fundamental question arises: if the United States cannot protect them from regional escalation, can it still function as a reliable security guarantor? These concerns have been developing gradually. Persian Gulf states have diversified their strategic relationships. China's expanding economic presence has created alternative partnerships. The 2023 agreement restoring Saudi-Iranian relations, brokered by Beijing, demonstrated that alternative diplomatic actors are emerging. States that for decades had little choice but to align with Washington can now pursue alternatives.

Wars are also fought in the realm of perception. And it is precisely on this terrain that Iran has achieved its most decisive victory. By confronting both the United States and Israel without capitulating, Iran has transformed resistance into regional political capital. This is not a conventional military victory but something deeper: the consolidation of an image of a state capable of imposing limits on imperial power. Even the debate within the United States reveals a growing discomfort with the erosion of the myth of American military superiority — a superiority that no longer guarantees strategic victory. Destroying targets does not resolve the central problem: the inability to translate force into durable political control.

From Vietnam to Afghanistan, American firepower has repeatedly proved insufficient to secure submission. What is different now is that Iran is not merely resisting: it is reorganizing the battlefield, shifting the conflict into an asymmetric, politically exhausting struggle for its adversaries. By avoiding confrontation, Iran operates through regional allies, low-cost technologies, and indirect control over strategic chokepoints. The issue is no longer who possesses greater military power, but who can sustain confrontation without political collapse. Prolonged war exacts a heavy price within the United States — inflation, energy pressures, and political fatigue. The ability to sustain long-term conflict, once a pillar of American hegemony, is eroding.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

UAE from Iran war to BRICS: 'The lady doth protest too much'

TEHRAN - The United Arab Emirates' "direct involvement" in the US-Israeli aggression against Iran has come to light against the backdrop of a BRICS foreign ministers' meeting in India, alongside revelations that senior Israeli officials travelled to the small Persian Gulf state during the conflict.

A two-day meeting of BRICS foreign ministers in New Delhi ended on Friday without a common position on the US-Israeli war on Iran, which initially began on February 28. Despite an April 8 ceasefire, diplomatic efforts to secure a permanent end to the conflict have so far failed due to what Tehran describes as Washington's "excessive, unacceptable and unrealistic" demands.

Speaking at the BRICS meeting, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi called on member states to explicitly condemn the US and Israeli "violations of international law" and to take concrete action to halt warmongering and end impunity for those violating the UN Charter.

Despite Iran's criticism of the UAE over its involvement in the US-Israeli war—including allowing the United States to use its territory to launch attacks on Iran during the 39-day conflict—Araghchi did not initially mention Abu Dhabi in his formal address "for the sake of maintaining unity."

However, Khalifa bin Shaheen Al Marar, the UAE minister of state for foreign affairs, who represented his country at the BRICS meeting instead of the foreign minister, singled out Iran in his statement and called for condemnation of Iranian actions during the war. Iran maintains it did not attack the UAE itself, but only US military bases located on Emirati territory.



UAE 'directly involved' in aggression

Araghchi later requested the floor again after all member states had spoken.

"The UAE was directly involved in the aggression against my country... When the attacks started, they did not even issue a condemnation," the Iranian foreign minister said.

He added that the UAE is "an active partner" in the US-Israeli aggression against Iran, citing reports that Emirati fighter jets participated in operations against Iran.

Araghchi further blamed the UAE for blocking the BRICS ministerial final statement. "The only reason they stopped the final statement was their support for Israel and the United States in their aggression against Iran, which is very, very unfortunate."

Netanyahu's secret UAE visit

Recent revelations about the visit of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to the UAE have intensified speculation over Abu Dhabi's role in enabling the conflict.

Netanyahu said he made a secret visit to the UAE and met President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, during the US-Israeli war

on Iran. The meeting, according to his office, resulted in a "historic breakthrough" in relations between Tel Aviv and Abu Dhabi.

A source cited by the Times of Israel said Netanyahu and bin Zayed met in Al-Ain, an oasis city near the Oman border, on March 26, and that the meeting lasted several hours. It would have been Netanyahu's first visit to the UAE since normalization under the 2020 Abraham Accords.

The UAE, however, denied the visit, calling the revelation "entirely unfounded." Ziv Agmon, Netanyahu's then-spokesman insisted the account was accurate.

Iran's foreign minister wrote on X that "Netanyahu has now publicly revealed what Iran's security services long ago conveyed to our leadership."

He added, "Enmity with the great people of Iran is a foolish gamble. Collusion with Israel in doing so: unforgivable."

Israeli spy chief visits UAE

Earlier the same week, the Wall Street Journal reported that Mossad director David Barnea had made at least two visits to the Persian Gulf state during the war to coordinate military actions.

Separately, David Zini, head of

the Shin Bet domestic security agency, was also reported by Israel's Kan public broadcaster to have visited the UAE to deepen coordination between the two countries' intelligence and security agencies.

Growing concerns over covert coordination

Israel's Channel 12 reported that Abu Dhabi fears escalation with Tehran if its behind-the-scenes coordination with the Tel Aviv becomes public.

According to the report, Emirati officials are increasingly concerned that exposure of intelligence and security cooperation with Israel would reinforce perceptions that the UAE is directly involved in the military assault against Iran.

Recent disclosures have further fueled these concerns. Senior US officials confirmed that Israel deployed an Iron Dome battery, along with personnel to operate it, in the UAE during the war on Iran.

As disclosures continue to surface, the UAE's forceful denials increasingly echo Shakespeare's line in Hamlet: "the lady doth protest too much." The more Abu Dhabi rejects claims of involvement, the more the growing body of reports and acknowledgments from Israeli and Western sources fuels skepticism about its proclaimed neutrality.

Taken together, these revelations deepen questions over the extent of UAE alignment with Israeli and US military operations against Iran. While Abu Dhabi continues to publicly deny direct involvement, reports from Israeli media, Western outlets, and US officials point to a widening web of military and intelligence coordination.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Araghchi: Iran has 'no trust' in US, talks depend on seriousness

From Page 1 ▶ Araghchi further said Iran and the United States have nearly reached an impasse over the "very complicated" issue of uranium enrichment, which is not currently on the agenda of talks.

"We thank Russia, but the issue of enrichment is very complicated for us, and we have come to the conclusion that, given the great difficulty of this issue in negotiations with the Americans, it has almost reached a stalemate. Therefore, we must postpone it to the next stages of negotiations," he said.

He noted that a few days ago, Trump reacted to Tehran's formal response to the American side, calling it "completely unacceptable."

Earlier this month, Iran submitted a 14-point counterproposal to the United States. Tehran's plan includes guarantees of non-aggression, lifting of US sanctions and unfreezing of Iranian assets, an end to the US naval blockade, recognition of Iran's proposed mechanism for the Strait of Hormuz, war reparations, withdrawal of US forces from the region, and the cessation of all hostilities, including Israeli operations in Lebanon.

Hours before Araghchi's comment about the talks with the US, the Tehran Times reported that Washington had rejected Iran's 14-point proposal, saying Washington had "once again reiterated its coercive stance," particularly on the nuclear issue.

Iran had proposed a two-stage negotiation pro-

cess. The first stage would focus on ending hostilities on all fronts, and if Iran's conditions were met, the second stage—addressing the nuclear issue—would begin.

Iran and the United States have exchanged multiple proposals, but disagreements remain entrenched. Iranian officials say Washington continues to insist on excessive demands, while Tehran maintains that any negotiations must be based on mutual respect for Iran's sovereignty.

Iran has also stated that the Strait of Hormuz will not be reopened unless hostilities are permanently brought to an end. The US military action, including a naval blockade on Iranian ports, has failed to reopen the waterway.

LATEST NEWS

■ Pezeshkian: Iran will stand alongside Iraq on path to security

President Masoud Pezeshkian reaffirmed Iran's commitment to standing alongside Iraq on the path to prosperity and consolidating security.

In an Arabic message on X congratulating new Iraqi Prime Minister Ali Faleh al-Zaidi on securing parliament's vote of confidence, Pezeshkian expressed hope for a new chapter of strategic cooperation between the two nations.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran, as in the past, will stand alongside the government and nation of Iraq," he emphasized.

■ Qalibaf mocks US funding 'failed TV host' Hegseth

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf has mocked the US for paying record-high interest rates to fund Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, calling him a "failed TV host" playing "war minister" near the Strait of Hormuz.

In a post on his X account on Friday, Qalibaf said, "So you're funding Hegseth the failed TV host at rates unheard of since 2007, so he can cosplay as Secretary of War in our backyard in Hormuz?"

He emphasized, "You know what's crazier than \$39 trillion in debt? Paying a pre-GFC premium to fund a LARP and all you'll get is a brand new GFC."

■ Baqaei: Kurds are guardians of borders, backbone of Iran's power

Tehran, Iran - Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei described the Kurdish people as guardians of Iran's borders and a backbone of the nation's power.

Speaking exclusively to IRNA in Sanandaj, Baqaei dismissed repeated US statements about Kurds, saying Iran pays no attention to foreign comments about its citizens.

He stressed that Iranians—Kurds, Lors, Turks, Baloch, and Persians—all love their homeland, calling US claims a sign of desperation and misunderstanding.

■ Gharibabadi: UAE betrayed Iran

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi delivered a sharp response to UAE claims at the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting, stating that the UAE acted as an aggressor by facilitating military attacks against Iran.

Gharibabadi cited a 1974 UN resolution, arguing that providing services to aggressors equates to aggression itself.

"We have no war with our neighbors," he stressed, adding that Iran warned regional countries before the attack.

He accused the UAE of betraying both Iran and the Palestinian cause, noting that over 500 pages of evidence documenting UAE involvement have been submitted to the UN Security Council.

■ Iran embassy in UK dismisses fresh British sanctions as baseless

Iran's embassy has strongly rejected the UK's new sanctions on several individuals and entities, calling the allegations "entirely unfounded and unsupported by any credible evidence."

In a statement, the embassy said the politically motivated measures aim to heighten tensions and justify hostile policies against Iran.

The embassy also objected to British officials linking domestic UK incidents to Iran without verifiable evidence, warning such irresponsible allegations undermine diplomatic norms.

Iran called on the UK government to reverse the sanctions and pursue dialogue based on mutual respect and sovereign equality.

■ Pakistan secures safe return of 31 citizens from US custody

Pakistan has facilitated the safe repatriation of 11 Pakistani and 20 Iranian citizens previously held in US custody. The individuals were transported from Singapore to Bangkok and onward to Islamabad.

Deputy PM Ishaq Dar confirmed all are safe, thanking Singapore, Thailand, Iran, and the US for their cooperation. Dar praised the diplomatic coordination, stating that protecting citizens abroad remains Pakistan's top priority.

■ Trump will decide on lifting sanctions on Chinese firms buying Iranian oil

US President Donald Trump announced Friday that he will decide within days on whether to lift sanctions on Chinese oil companies that purchase Iranian crude.

Speaking aboard Air Force One following his visit to China, Trump said: "We talked about that, and I'm going to make a decision over the next few days."

Earlier this year, Washington sanctioned several Chinese independent refineries for importing Iranian oil as part of a maximum pressure campaign.

SPORTS

Iran junior and youth teams learn fate at 2026 Asian Handball Championships

TEHEAN - The Asian Handball Federation (AHF) has announced the results of the draw ceremonies for the 19th AHF Asian Men's Junior Handball Championship and the 11th AHF Asian Men's Youth Handball Championship.

The 19th AHF Asian Men's Junior Handball Championship will be held from 15 to 26 July 2026 in Chuzhou, China, and will serve as the qualification event for the 26th IHF Men's Junior (U21) Handball World Championship to be held from 23 June to 4 July 2027 in North Macedonia, with the top four teams qualifying for the world championship.

Meanwhile, the 11th AHF Asian Men's Youth Handball Championship will take place from 10 to 21 Aug. 2026 in Andijan, Uzbekistan, serving as the qualification event for the 12th IHF Men's Youth (U19) Handball World Championship scheduled to be held from 29 July to 9 August 2027, where the top four teams from Asia will qualify.

The draw results for both championships are as follows:

19th AHF Asian Men's Junior Handball Championship:

Group A: China, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong

Group B: Japan, Republic of Korea, Iran, Kuwait, Qatar, India, UAE

11th AHF Asian Men's Youth Handball Championship:

Group A: Uzbekistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Chinese Taipei, China

Group B: Japan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Hong Kong

Limouchi becomes first Iranian to chair ITTF committee

TEHRAN - Sima Limouchi was officially confirmed as head of the Para Table Tennis Committee of the International Table Tennis Federation after receiving overwhelming support from members of the federation's general assembly.

According to IRNA, the decision was finalized during the ITTF General Assembly, held alongside the World Table Tennis Championships in London. During the meeting, members reviewed the status of the federation's specialized committees and their interim heads before unanimously approving Limouchi's continued leadership of the Para Table Tennis Committee.

Limouchi had initially been appointed interim chair of the committee during an ITTF Executive Board meeting in Chengdu in October last year.

Following approximately six months in the role, she has now officially secured the position on a permanent basis, Iran Daily reported.

Currently serving as head coach of Iran's women's national table tennis team, Limouchi has become the first Iranian representative in the country's table tennis history to chair one of the International Table Tennis Federation's official committees.

The Para Table Tennis Committee is considered one of the ITTF's most important specialized bodies and is responsible for policymaking, development and oversight of international programs for athletes with disabilities.

Abbas Avarsaji re-elected as President of Iran's kabaddi federation

TEHRAN - Abbas Avarsaji has been re-elected as the President of the Kabaddi Federation of Iran for a third consecutive term.

The electoral assembly was held on Wednes-

day at the Farsi Hall of the National Olympic Academy, chaired by Mohammad Shervin Asbaghian, Deputy for the Development of Championship and Professional Sports.

Avarsaji secured 43 votes out of 54, earning another four-year term at the helm.

His rivals, Majid Bahrami and Reza Kamali Moghadam, received 8 and 3 votes respectively.

The final list of eight candidates included: Abbas Avarsaji, Majid Bahrami, Naser Roumiani, Nazari, Naser Shokri Kallehsar, Hossein Ansari, Reza Kamali Moghadam, Gholamreza Mazandarani, and Saeed Moghadam Bagha.

However, Shokri withdrew before voting began, while Moghadam Bagha and Mazandarani did not attend, which counted as withdrawal.

After the voting, Deputy Minister Manaf Hashemi emphasized the importance of the election's integrity, adding:

"The health of the election was essential. We must support the federation president, who holds both domestic and international standing. Kabaddi may have originated in India, but we must use all our internal and external capacities. I ask the president to make use of all the candidates who participated in today's election."

Foolad Sirjan into AVC Men's Champions League 2026 final four

TEHRAN - Foolad Sirjan eased past Jakarta Garuda Jaya of Indonesia 3-0 (25-14, 25-12, 25-12) in their opening match of the AVC Men's Champions League 2026 on Thursday.

The Iranian powerhouse secures the last semifinal spot at the competition underway in Pontianak, Indonesia.

Foolad will play JTEKT Stings Aichi of Japan on Saturday to book their place in the final match.

The 2026 AVC Men's Volleyball Champions League is the second edition of the AVC Men's Volleyball Champions League and the 26th overall edition of the formerly named Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship, an annual international men's volleyball club tournament organized by the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC).

Unlike the 2025 edition which featured 12 teams in a pool-play format, the 2026 edition features eight teams competing in a direct knockout format, starting from the quarter-finals. Both finalists will qualify for the 2026 FIVB Volleyball Men's Club World Championship.

Iran set to meet Puerto Rico in U.S. in friendly

TEHRAN - The Iranian national football team are scheduled to play Puerto Rico as part of preparation for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

The schedule for the team's preparatory matches is also being finalized. According to the plans made, a friendly match against the Gambia national team has been confirmed, and before the start of the World Cup, the national team will also play another match against Puerto Rico — a match that will be held behind closed doors without spectators.

In addition, negotiations are ongoing for several other matches, and it is likely that the national team will play two more official friendly matches during their preparation camp in Turkey, giving the coaching staff more time to evaluate the players before the start of the World Cup.

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

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

Sarakhs Special Economic Zone begins operations

TEHRAN- The acting secretary of the Supreme Council of Iran's Free Trade, Industrial and Special Economic Zones has announced the start of the operational phase of the Sarakhs Economic Zone, in Khorasan Razavi province, following the establishment of customs and registration infrastructure in the region.

According to IRNA reporting from the Secretariat of the Supreme Council of Free Trade, Industrial and Special Economic Zones, following an order from Hossein Ferdowsi, Deputy for Development Management and Resources of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance and acting head of this secretariat, members of the working group for establishing and developing new free zones were dispatched to the Sarakhs and Dogharoon free zones to field-evaluate and operationalize the process of setting up executive, customs, and organizational infrastructure in these zones.

During this mission, with the presence of working group members, deputies and directors of the Supreme Council of Free Zones Secretariat, board members and managers of the Sarakhs Free Zone, the process of establishing customs systems, company registrations, and activating commercial services in this zone entered the implementation phase.

* Creating capacity for unloading, loading of 10m tons of goods in Sarakhs Free Zone

Iran's Trade Promotion Organization held a specialized meeting with senior national officials in trade and transportation sectors to maximize use of the cargo and logistics capacity of the Sarakhs Free Zone and to plan for the rapid activation of the China-Sarakhs corridor.

A specialized meeting on the rapid activation of the Sarakhs-to-China rail corridor was held with the participation of the CEO of the Railway Company, the head of the Trade Promotion Organization, CEOs of companies exporting lead and zinc mineral inputs as well as bitumen and fuels, deputies and experts from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Transport, the representative of Sarakhs parliament, and the CEO and board members of the Sarakhs Free Zone Organization, with priority and focus on the free zone as the main actor of this corridor.

The CEO of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways stated at this meeting, highlighting the importance and position of the Sarakhs Free Zone in international transport exchanges: "Currently, 2.8 million tons of goods are transported annually through Sarakhs, while the region's capacity is 10 million tons."

Jabar Ali Zakeri expressed hope that with the establishment of the free zone, this full capacity would be utilized.

Zakeri continued: "Currently, Sarakhs possesses the highest and most complete necessary facilities in rail transport and logistics, which can play a significant role in the country's trade."

The CEO of the Sarakhs Free Zone Organization also said at the meeting: "One of the reasons for reduced traffic on this route was the lack of return cargo from Sarakhs to China. However, with the foresight of the respected head of the Trade Promotion Organization, a major development will occur in the near future. Exporting zinc and copper concentrate from the Aprin dry port in Eslamshahr to China via Sarakhs could be the first step in providing return cargo from the Sarakhs-to-China route."

Rasoul Rais Jafari clarified: "Reducing distance, adjusting tariffs, and providing quality services will make freight costs on the China-Iran rail route far more economical compared to sea routes."

Rais Jafari concluded: "Given the favorable infrastructure and existing rail capacity for transport, unloading, and loading — including the ability to exchange 400 pairs of bogies and several kilometers of broad and standard gauge tracks in the free zone — rail logistics operations, with the participation of the Chinese International Logistics Park company and a current capacity of over 600 wagons per day, will increase Sarakhs' current capacity to 1,000 wagons daily."

The establishment of free trade zones (FTZs) in Iran dates back to the Iranian calendar year 1368 (March 1989 - March 1990) following the fall in the country's oil income in the preceding year which prompted the government to promote non-oil exports.

The first two free trade zones of Iran were established in the south of the country. The first one was Kish Free Trade Zone established in 1368 on Kish Island in the Persian Gulf and the second one was Qeshm Free Trade Zone established the year after on Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz.

Some five other free trade zones have been



also established in the country since then, including Chabahar in southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province, Arvand in southwestern Khuzestan Province, Anzali in northern Gilan Province, Aras in East-Azərbayjan Province and Maku in West-Azərbayjan Province, both in the northwest of the country.

The development of existing free trade zones and the establishment of new FTZs has become one of the major economic approaches of the Iranian government.

In early April, the previous secretary of the Iranian Free Zones High Council, emphasizing support for entrepreneurs amid war conditions, stressed the design and formulation of support packages for them in free zones.

Reza Masrouf made the remarks in a meeting of the Free Trade and Special Economic Zones High Council, which was held to review the implementation of national missions in these zones.

During the meeting, Masrouf, highlighting the need to provide adequate services to the people and entrepreneurs in free zones, stated: "Following the recent attacks by the United States and Israel against our country, the issue of accelerating the provision of legal facilities, especially for entrepreneurs, has been communicated to the free zones organizations."

He added: "According to this directive, the boards of directors of commercial-industrial free zones organizations, within the framework of the powers provided for in laws and regulations—including articles of association and by-laws—shall take the necessary actions to assist in determining and collecting duties, such as entry fees, issuance and renewal of construction permits, and other similar cases. Additionally, applying the maximum legal period for the installment payment of debts owed by entrepreneurs and supporting the import of essential goods needed by the country are also on the agenda."

Masrouf clarified: "These measures are being taken with the aim of facilitating business conditions, supporting producers and traders, and strengthening the economic capacity of the country's free trade and special economic zones, so that entrepreneurs can continue their activities with greater peace of mind and efficiency under the current circumstances."

Diversifying entry points for goods and expanding alternative corridors is the first step towards neutralizing the economic siege and pressure on the main arteries of the national economy. Free zones, by utilizing legal exemptions, play a vital role in this regard, according to an article published by IRNA in early March.

The article reads:

"During the unjust aggression of the American and Zionist enemy against the country and the turning of a golden page in national resilience, the trade-industrial free zones and special economic zones of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in addition to their conventional functions in economic development and facilitating production and commercial exchanges, are playing a historical role as strong bastions of a "resistance economy" and the front lines of the economic warfront.

Today, when the ill-wishers of this land have targeted the nation's existence by imposing a comprehensive war in military and economic dimensions, these zones have become symbols of "resilience" and "continuity of service."

By the graces of God Almighty, strategic intelligence, and a specialized approach to crisis prediction, management, and passive defense within the Secretariat and the Free Zones Organization, conditions have been provided for these functions to transform, through an intelligent change in nature, into tools for "survival and dynamism."

Diversifying entry points for goods and expanding alternative corridors is the first step towards neutralizing the economic siege and pressure on the main arteries of the national economy.

In this regard, free zones, by utilizing legal exemptions and streamlined customs procedures, play a vital role in "reducing transaction costs" and "accelerating the supply chain."

Europe faces summer travel chaos as jet fuel crisis deepens

TEHRAN- Europe is bracing for a devastating summer travel crisis as a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz sends jet fuel prices skyrocketing, threatening mass flight cancellations and airline bankruptcies, according to a report by Deutsche Welle.

The crisis began following US and Israeli strikes on Iran in February. In retaliation, Iranian forces blocked the strategic waterway, through which one-fifth of the world's oil and gas tankers pass, while Western naval operations have further restricted traffic. The resulting supply shock has more than doubled jet fuel prices, forcing carriers into a desperate struggle for survival.



Industry analysts warn that European holidaymakers may be forced to scrap their travel plans altogether as airlines pass on soaring costs through significantly higher ticket prices. Smaller and mid-sized carriers are particularly vulnerable, with several already on the brink of insolvency.

"Without immediate intervention, we will see a wave of bankruptcies before summer even begins," an aviation source told this newspaper. The crisis could leave millions stranded or grounded, dealing a heavy blow to southern Europe's tourism-dependent economies. Passengers are urged to book early, or reconsider flying altogether.

Iran, Japan discuss expansion of economic cooperation

TEHRAN- During a meeting between Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Seyed Ali Madanizadeh and Japanese Ambassador to Tehran Tamaki Tsukada, the two sides discussed the ways to expand economic cooperation between the two countries.

The meeting, which took place at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, addressed the development of cooperation and economic relations, including the activities of private companies, as well as collaboration in the field of economic activities between the two nations.

During the meeting, both sides emphasized the serious determination of senior officials of Iran and Japan to develop joint cooperation between the two countries.

Back in December, Iran's private sector has stepped up efforts to expand economic cooperation with Japan, as the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) signed a cooperation agreement with the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO).

The memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed at a meeting attended by senior Iranian and Japanese economic and political figures, including the head of the Tehran chamber, Japan's ambassador to Iran and Iran's deputy foreign minister for economic diplomacy.

The two sides stressed the importance of preserving ties under sanctions while preparing the groundwork for a rapid expansion of relations in a post-sanctions environment.

Under the agreement, the TCCIMA and Japanese economic institutions committed to cooperation on trade missions, joint training programs and business matchmaking events to expand commercial exchanges between Iranian and Japanese companies.

Mahmoud Najafi-Arab, head of the Tehran chamber, described the agreement as a significant step in strengthening long-standing economic relations between the two countries. He said sanctions would not be permanent and urged Japanese companies to maintain and deepen their presence in Iran to secure their position in the future market.

Japan's Ambassador to Iran Tamaki Tsukada, said the economic section of the Japanese embassy in Tehran had been reactivated, adding that the agreement with the Tehran chamber would provide a practical framework for reinforcing bilateral business cooperation. He noted that Japanese firms had maintained a presence in Iran despite sanctions pressure.

JETRO vice president Takafumi Suzuki said

the organization was fully prepared to implement the agreement, with plans for reciprocal trade delegations, market-focused training courses and business matching initiatives.

Hamid Ghanbari, Iran's deputy foreign minister for economic diplomacy, voiced the government's full support for private-sector initiatives led by the Tehran chamber, saying sanctions had failed to halt trade flows. He advised Japanese firms not to overlook Iran's economic potential, adding that post-sanctions cooperation would prioritize partners that remained engaged during difficult periods.

The meeting also explored new areas of cooperation, including proposals by Masahiro Yamada, head of the Japan Business Association in Iran, for joint projects in electronic sports education platforms and animated film production.

Saeed Tajik, head of the Tehran chamber's energy and environment commission, called for renewed cooperation on air pollution monitoring and environmental studies, citing past collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). He also highlighted opportunities for joint efforts on greenhouse gas reduction and carbon certification.

Fereydoun Vardi-Nejad, secretary general of the Tehran chamber, pointed to non-sanctioned sectors with immediate cooperation potential, including pharmaceuticals, healthcare, education, food, agriculture and technology, and said the chamber was ready to engage directly with the Tokyo Chamber of Commerce.

Also, in late October, 2025, Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Head Samad Hassanzadeh met with Japan's Ambassador to Tehran Tamaki Tsukada, to explore new avenues for trade cooperation between the two nations, emphasizing non-sanctioned sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, and food industries.

Hassanzadeh said Iran and Japan share a long history of collaboration and can sustain economic engagement by concentrating on areas unaffected by international restrictions. Highlighting Japan's extensive experience in environmental health and medical technologies, he proposed cooperation in pharmaceuticals, hospital construction, and food production, noting that ICCIMA has conducted research studies supporting deeper bilateral relations in these fields.

He pointed to joint investment and exports in the food, aquaculture, and agricultural sectors as promising areas for growth.

Road quality improved by securing 8,000km of country's road arteries

TEHRAN- The Director General of the Office for Sign Maintenance, Equipment, and Road Safety Development of the Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization announced that in line with the implementation of the Seventh National Development Plan and following studies conducted in the first year of the plan, with the aim of adopting a preventive approach, improving the safety of 8,000 kilometers of the country's arterial roads is being carried out between 2025 and 2028.

According to IRNA, Mohammad Rashed Modarres Gorji reported that the target of improving safety on 2,000 kilometers of arterial roads has been 100% achieved in 2025, with another 2,000 kilometers targeted by the end of this year.

Referring to the target of improving safety on 2,000 kilometers of main road arteries in 2026, he stated that preventive measures

such as organizing and securing access points and intersections, installing barriers, providing clear zones, and implementing slope embankments are being carried out to enhance roadside safety and reduce accidents.

The Director General added that installing median barriers on unprotected routes, creating rumble strips, and installing cat's eyes to improve median safety on two-way roads and prevent head-on collisions are among other safety measures on the country's road arteries.

Modarres Gorji continued that by organizing intersections, correcting curves, and increasing driver sight distance, safety measures are being implemented with a preventive approach to traffic accidents.

He also cited securing travel on roads adjacent to schools as another preventive ap-

Hassanzadeh also mentioned Iran's renowned handwoven carpets as a potential export avenue, stressing their authenticity and craftsmanship, unlike imitations produced in other countries.

Additionally, he noted Iranians' strong interest in Japanese automobiles and suggested direct cooperation on supplying original car parts, which are currently imported from third countries under Japanese branding.

The ICCIMA chief underscored Iran's need for modern agricultural technology and medical equipment, adding that Japanese products enjoy high trust among Iranian consumers.

He also proposed that Japanese companies take part in dredging the Arvand River, a major waterway shared between Iran and Iraq, as part of infrastructure cooperation.

Ambassador Tamaki welcomed these ideas, calling the meeting's timing "a positive signal" despite regional and international challenges.

He emphasized that Japan remains interested in expanding non-sanctioned collaborations and sees potential in technology and human resource development.

The envoy noted that Iran has achieved remarkable progress in nanotechnology and artificial intelligence, and expressed Japan's willingness to host Iranian engineers and specialists in these areas, saying there are promising opportunities for them to work and innovate in Japan.

In addition, a meeting was held between representatives of the Japanese Embassy in Tehran and the Road, Housing and Urban Development Research Center of Iran, in late September, at the Research Center with the attendance of the Center's President, the First Secretary and Head of the Economic Section of the Japanese Embassy in Iran, and their accompanying delegation, aiming to enhance the level and quality of bilateral cooperation.

According to a report from the news portal of the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, citing the Public Relations of the Road, Housing and Urban Development Research Center, the meeting was held at the Research Center, and at the beginning of the meeting, Atefeh Jahan Mohammadi, Head of the Structure and Technical Buildings Department of the Research Center, presented a comprehensive report on the history of scientific and research cooperation between the two parties, particularly regarding the "Iran-Japan Knowledge Transfer Program on Seismic Design of Steel Structures."

proach, stating that in this regard, by making areas conspicuous through speed bumps, signs, and road markings, measures are taken to reduce speed and improve travel safety in these sections.

The official further stated that widening and increasing road capacity on certain sections of the country's arterial routes is another safety approach under the Seventh National Development Plan. In this context, last year, with 220% achievement of the annual target, widening and lane expansion operations were carried out on 480 kilometers of roads.

Modarres Gorji noted that in line with the organization's policy to increase the productivity of road maintenance machinery and implement certain construction projects through in-house forces, many of the aforementioned preventive measures to increase the road safety coefficient are being executed by in-house resources.

The rape factories Israel can no longer bury

From page 1 ▶ This is the architecture of a prison regime that treats Palestinian bodies as a site for systematic sadistic domination. When similar testimony keeps surfacing across facilities, across years, and across different institutions, the word “systematic” is simply accurate.

Nicholas Kristof’s column in the New York Times, grounded in the testimonies of 14 survivors, dragged Israel’s systematic sexual barbarism into the mainstream in a way that even its most devoted Western cheerleaders could no longer comfortably ignore.

Survivors described forced stripping, genital beatings, electric shocks, object penetration, dog attacks, and filmed humiliation used as a weapon of fear.

Israel’s favorite torture laboratory

Sde Teiman is now the symbol of this whole system because it captured the moment Israel’s mask slipped. Leaked footage, medical evidence, and later reporting all pointed to the brutal assault of a Palestinian detainee, yet in March, the charges against five soldiers were dropped.

The internal reaction in Israel amplified the ugliness of the crime. Far from feeling shame, significant portions of the public and the political class chose to venerate the abusers, recasting them as national heroes under siege.

When a collective consciousness prioritizes the protection of torturers over the sanctity of human life, it suggests that its institutions have been engineered to serve this pathology.

The cover-up tells on itself

Israel’s fury at the Times is as revealing as the report itself. Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Sa’ar responded by threatening a defamation suit and labeling



the reporting a “blood libel.”

Such overused rhetoric is not intended to prove innocence; it is designed to silence dissent. The goal is to terrorize those who report the truth and to engineer a narrative where the exposure of violence is treated as more scandalous than the violence being exposed.

The whistleblower angle matters just as much. The former military legal chief linked to the leak of abuse footage was arrested and vilified, while the perpetrators were wrapped in nationalist protection and public sympathy. In a healthy legal system, the person exposing rape and torture would be protected. In Israel’s system, exposure is treated like betrayal. The inversion is by design.

Washington’s fingerprints and the double standard

None of this horror survives without American backing. Billions in weapons and unconditional diplomatic cover continue flowing from Washington despite mountains of evidence.

The Leahy Law, supposedly meant to bar aid to gross human rights violators, is treated

as a joke. Internal U.S. debates show the atrocities have translated into zero tangible change.

This prison system is not separate from the wider genocidal U.S.-Israeli war on the Axis of Resistance, including repeated aggression against Iran.

The same dehumanizing logic, the same contempt for international law, the same drive for maniacal domination runs through the torture chambers of Sde Teiman and the regional battlefield. Prisons also serve as testing grounds for the exterminationist tactics applied across Gaza and beyond.

Furthermore, the hypocrisy burns with a stench that no amount of Western rhetoric can mask.

While outrage over the events of October 7 was immediate, absolute, and endlessly amplified across every mainstream platform, the suffering of Palestinians, Lebanese, Yemenis, and Iranians is met with reflexive skepticism, deliberate minimization, or outright silence.

This grotesque hierarchy of victimhood exposes the fraud at the heart of the West’s so-

called universal values: some blood is sacred, while other blood barely registers as human.

What the world is seeing

An ugly truth in this entire affair is that the evidence was there long before the Times column forced a new round of attention. Palestinian prisoners, Israeli rights groups, medical professionals, and UN bodies have been warning for years that the detention system was collapsing into organized cruelty.

Therefore, another scandal is how long powerful institutions worked to keep the already public facts from mattering.

A regime that commits systemic sexual violence, protects the perpetrators, punishes the whistleblower, and threatens the press is defending a structure of maniacal domination that has rotted from within. And once that structure is seen clearly, no lawsuit can put the darkness back inside the walls.

The dungeons of Israeli depravity must fall, and with them the entire rotten structure that built and defended them.

Nakba continuing unstopably



Arab refugees, mostly women and children, from a village near Haifa begin a three mile hike carrying large bundles of personal possessions to the Arab lines in Tulkarim, West Bank, on June 26, 1948. Bettmann Archive/Getty Images

TEHRAN – In 1917, British Foreign Minister Arthur Balfour set the stage for a tragedy that is still bleeding, and there is no light at the end of the tunnel.

Balfour, a Christian Zionist, supported the creation of a Zionist regime on Palestinian lands at a time when Britain, at the height of its colonial power, occupied and controlled Palestine under its mandate.

The fire that Balfour triggered is still burning with much greater flames. It did not remain confined to Palestine. Its flames immediately spread to neighboring states, including Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. In fact, it affected the entire Arab world.

The vicious colonial plan, which led to establishment of Israel in May 1948, 18 years after the death of Balfour, is known as the Nakba (catastrophe) in Arabic language. It is commemorated every year as Nakba Day.

Following the establishment of Israel, of the 1.4 million-strong Palestinian population at the time, 800,000 were displaced and never allowed to return to their homes.

In fact, Balfour exported evil and tragedy to the West Asia region.

In modern history, such a plan in which one nation is replaced by settlers from hundreds of miles away is unprecedented. Today, after more than 500 years, we have Natives Americans, but Israel is planning to erase what remains of the Palestinian descendants.

Before the creation of Israel, the native inhabitants of Palestine – Jews and Arabs – were living in peace. According to history books and famous scholars, including Jewish researchers, it was the Europeans who did not treat Jews well and the term anti-Semitism originates from Europe.

Despite the passage of 78 years, the tragedy of creating Israel in West Asia is getting more complicated and more horrific. No conflict in the 20th century lasted for entire two decades. Even the famous Vietnam War lasted 19 years, 5 months and 29 days.

Following the October 7 attack, Israel has expedited the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians both in Gaza and the West Bank. It is purging Palestinians in different ways, either through appropriating the remaining Palestinian lands in the West Bank, or killing them on masse in the Gaza Strip.

“This year, with more than 450,000 people—nearly a quarter of Gaza’s population—newly displaced in just the past week, the commemoration of the Nakba takes on new significance,” the Time magazine wrote in January 2026.

The dimensions of the Nakba is getting wider and wider. In addition, to Gaza and the West Bank, Lebanon is bleeding. Israeli rulers, including Prime Minister Netanyahu, are openly speaking of “Greater Israel,” a plan for the conquest of not just Palestine but also parts of Egypt, Jordan, and potentially other countries.

In August 2025, Netanyahu said he feels “very” attached to the vision of “Greater Israel”. In an interview with Israeli outlet i24, Netanyahu said in Hebrew that he is on a “historic and spiritual” mission, to extend the borders of Israel.

When the leader of the regime talks and behaves in this way, imagine what the extremists do.

According to the Institute for National Se-

curity Studies, a think tank affiliated with Tel Aviv University, the scope of Jewish terrorism against Palestinians living in the West Bank “has evolved from marginal, localized incidents into a widespread phenomenon occurring within the broader struggle for control of the area and a growing effort to uproot the Palestinian presence.

Similarities of atrocities from 1948 until this date

“They (Palestinians) witnessed rapes, imprisonment of men and boys, and almost all of them witnessed the destruction of major cultural sites,” Professor Abdel Razzaq Takriti, who teaches modern Palestinian and Arabic History at Rice University, says of the start of Nakba.

“There were attacks on water sources; Akka [also known as Acre], for example, was subjected to biological warfare. Their water was poisoned to try to force the populations out,” Takriti says. “The idea was to have as much land appropriated with the fewest Palestinian population remaining as possible.” Further attempts to poison water supplies in Gaza were thwarted when Egyptian officials found out, says Takriti.

In the beginning of attack on Gaza after the October 7 attack, then Israeli war minister Yoav Gallant ordered the closure of water, food and other essential items to Gaza and called its inhabitant human “animals”.

On May 11, the New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof also recounted the brutal rape of Palestinians described to him on a trip to the occupied West Bank.

Middle East Eye also revealed similar testimonies last month. In a report titled “Sexual violence and forcible transfer in the West Bank”, MEE laid bare the spiteful plan to dispirit the Palestinians to force them to leave their homeland.

It should be born in mind that after the collapse of the British empire that is responsible for planting Israel in the heart of the Middle East, it has been the United States which has been a complicit in enabling Israel to go on with the Nakba by providing advanced weapons to it and protecting it at the United Nations Security Council.

“The Nakba never ended,” U.S. Rep. Rashida Tlaib said in a statement on Thursday as she reintroduced a resolution recognizing the 78th anniversary of the Nakba and reaffirming the right of return for Palestinian refugees.

“Today, the Israeli apartheid regime is committing genocide in Gaza, violently erasing entire communities across the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem, and bombing Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. It is a campaign to erase Palestinians from existence.”

Tlaib said Netanyahu and his regime are seeking to permanently displace Palestinians from the Gaza Strip, and expand military threats into southern Lebanon.

History is repeating itself in the occupied territories, as if the Nakba is beginning anew—only now, it is even more depraved. The atrocities committed against Palestinians in those early years mirror the current violence in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Despite the passage of decades and a global shift toward prioritizing human rights, the Zionist movement in Israel has only grown more extremist.

Hezbollah inflicts more casualties on IOF

From page 1 ▶ Broadcaster Kan quoted military sources as saying that Hezbollah “crossed a red line” in the Ras Naqoura attack.

Channel 15 reported that “preliminary military investigations show the explosive drone that detonated in Ras Naqoura was launched from a long distance.”

Kan also stated that drones launched by Hezbollah cannot be reliably detected, noting that one of them struck its target in the Rosh HaNikra settlement on Thursday without any prior warning.

Channel i24 News also mentioned that a drone attack targeting Rosh HaNikra, which wounded at least three people, was launched from a distance and went undetected.

There has been an escalation of attacks by Hezbollah against the IOF. The Lebanese resistance announced that it had detonated an explosive device targeting an IOF force spotted infiltrating towards a water pump station north of the town of Taybeh.

Following the detonation, the force was shelled with artillery, causing confirmed casualties and forcing it to withdraw under heavy fire and a dense smoke screen, which helicopters used to evacuate the wounded.

The Lebanese resistance front also announced that it had targeted an IOF unit near the newly established Bayyada post with rocket barrages and artillery fire, and then struck a Merkava tank attempting to support the unit with a guided missile, achieving a direct hit.

Hezbollah further announced a series of operations targeting IOF equipment and vehicles inside Lebanese territory, as well as engaging the regime’s warplanes and drones in southern Lebanese airspace.

In consecutive statements, Hezbollah said it targeted an IOF unit that had moved into the Bidr al-Faq’ani area of Taybeh with a rocket barrage.

Moving from Taybeh to Hadata, resistance fighters spotted two IOF D9 bulldozers advancing from the town of Rashaaf. They detonated an explosive device against the first bulldozer on the road between the



two towns. The second bulldozer was then hit with another device as it attempted to continue its advance towards the pond area in Hadata.

The resistance movement said that an IOF aircraft carried out an airstrike on the second bulldozer, destroying it and setting it on fire.

Hezbollah also announced it had targeted an IOF unit near the newly established Bayyada post with rocket barrages and artillery fire. It then struck a Merkava tank attempting to support the unit with a guided missile, achieving a direct hit.

Shortly after, resistance fighters renewed their targeting of the same force with a rocket barrage.

On the ground and in the air, the Lebanese resistance said it engaged IOF aircraft and drones in southern Lebanese airspace, using surface-to-air missiles.

These operations are part of Hezbollah’s response to IOF violations of the temporary truce announced by the United States between Lebanon and the occupation regime, the attacks on villages in southern Lebanon that have killed and wounded civilians, and the violation of Lebanese airspace.

The regime’s Channel 15 said the IOF has begun distributing “protective netting” to

its forces in Lebanon to counter drones, adding that about 158,000 square meters of netting have been deployed, with procurement advancing for an additional 188,000 square meters.

Meanwhile, the regime’s Channel 13 admitted that the IOF has made no progress in finding a solution to the drone threat, acknowledging that protective netting cannot cover all of southern Lebanon. It added that Hezbollah exploits this vulnerability by deploying drone swarms that overwhelm detection and interception systems, noting that the drone used in the Ras Naqoura attack was not detected in advance.

The Hebrew language newspaper Maariv had earlier admitted that “the current situation on the Lebanese border is extremely dangerous,” noting that Hezbollah has intensified its operations against the (occupation) military in southern Lebanon. This is coupled with an escalation in “psychological warfare” through documenting operations and releasing footage of the attacks.

The newspaper noted that Hezbollah is readopting tactics similar to those used during the 1990s against the IOF in south Lebanon, affirming that recent operations have increased pressure along the Lebanese border and northern settlements.

39 handicraft workshops launched for nomadic youth in Khoy

TEHRAN – A total of 39 handicrafts workshops have been established for nomadic youth in the city of Khoy, West Azarbaijan province to boost economic empowerment and create sustainable jobs.

The project aims to strengthen the financial independence of nomadic families while preserving traditional arts, Reza Qolivaseghi, the head of the Nomadic Affairs Department in Khoy, said on Thursday, CHTN reported.

“These workshops provide a platform for the nomadic youth of the region to engage in professional activities across various fields, including carpet weaving, Kilim weaving, and woodcrafts,” the official stated.

He emphasized that the primary goal behind launching these centers is to foster sustainable employment within nomadic communities, ensuring that the younger generation can thrive economically without abandoning their traditional way of life.

Khoy is home to a significant nomadic population, whose handmade products—particularly their intricate carpets and rugs—are highly regarded for their quality and authentic designs. Experts believe that providing structured training and dedicated workspaces will help these traditional crafts reach wider mar-



kets both domestically and internationally.

Nomads in Iran are often referred to as the “guardians of the borderlands,” and their handicrafts are considered a vital part of the country’s intangible cultural heritage.

Iranian handicrafts are a timeless reflection of the nation’s artistic soul, ranging from the world-famous patterns of Persian carpets to the delicate beauty of Minakari and metalwork. These crafts are more than decorative items; they represent a vital cultural heritage passed down through generations. Today, they remain a proud symbol of Iran’s identity, blending ancient techniques with natural beauty to captivate the world.

Arg-e Karim Khan hosts masterclass in portrait sculpture

TEHRAN – Arg-e Karim Khan, the iconic citadel in Shiraz, became a center of contemporary art on Friday as it played host to a specialized scientific and technical workshop on portrait sculpture.

The event, which took place in the citadel’s exquisite Shah-neshin (Royal Hall), featured live sculpting sessions by master artist Ali Qasrdashti. The workshop was aimed at revitalizing Shiraz’s historical monuments through cultural activity and bridging the gap between heritage and modern artistic expression.

Sediqeh Oji, the director of the Zandieh historical-cultural complex, stated on the sidelines of the event that the world-renowned Zand-era site has always been more than just an architectural marvel. “The Zandieh complex has historically been a hub for authentic arts. Hosting such specialized workshops is part of our broader strategy to restore cultural vitality to the physical body of these valuable monuments,” she noted.

Oji emphasized that holding the workshop in the Shah-neshin provided a unique opportunity for tourists and art enthusiasts. “While visitors marveled at the grandeur of Zand-era architecture, they were also able to witness the intricacies of contemporary sculpture firsthand, creating a profound connection between our history and the art of today,” she added.

Master Ali Qasrdashti, a prominent Iranian sculptor and the lead instructor of the workshop, highlighted that the primary objective of the gathering was to identify and support elite talent in the visual arts.

“After a two-year hiatus, and following the immense enthusiasm shown by students despite current economic challenges, we decided to hold this specialized course for a selected

group of talented individuals,” Qasrdashti said.

He further explained that the workshop covered the entire process of sculpture making, from specialized theories of portraiture to practical execution. “Our team worked diligently to provide all necessary tools and workshop facilities, ensuring a focused environment where students could concentrate entirely on their workbenches and the act of creation.”

The event drew a significant crowd of spectators, further showcasing Shiraz’s potential as a global center for both historical preservation and artistic innovation.

Arg-e Karim Khan is an immense brick fortress that has dominated the southern city of Shiraz since the 18th century. Part of a historical complex, the Arg is named after the founder of Zand Dynasty Mohammad Karim Khan Zand who ruled Iran from 1751 to 1779 and selected Shiraz as his capital.

The massive walls of the citadel feature ornamental brickwork designs in particular on the four circular tower-like structures punctuating each of its corners.

However, the southeastern tower generally catches the eyes of the passersby due to its noticeable lean, having subsided into a concealed cistern which once supplied the bathhouse of the Arg.

Walking inside, one encounters a typical design of the Persian garden that interweaves different fields of knowledge such as water management and engineering, architecture, botany and agriculture.

The citadel was used to be a prison for a while in the 20th century, however the then Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization turned it into a museum showcasing aspects of Zand-era Iran.

Beit Sahour, Beit Jala” to leave.

Yesterday, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza marked the 78th anniversary of the Nakba, the catastrophe that saw hundreds of thousands of them become refugees, losing their homes and lands; now, Sabella said by phone from Jerusalem, there is a sense of “unease, feeling you are not sure where things are going to go,” and this makes “some families pack and leave.”

“Some more religious elements within Israeli society” are moved by an extremist ideology, especially “Jewish Yeshiva students, who are taught by rabbis, who do not recognize Christianity, who say it’s okay to spit on Christians, it’s okay to” destroy crosses, desecrate statues of the Virgin Mary, like in Lebanon.

(Source: Asia News)

Zionist attacks aimed at avenging Iranian Jews’ national loyalty, tourism minister says

TEHRAN – In a gathering titled “Melody in the Wounded Synagogue of Tehran,” Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, emphasized that national solidarity remains the primary shield against external threats.

Speaking at the Rafi-Nia Synagogue, located near Palestine Square in central Tehran on Thursday, the minister described the Iranian Jewish community as an inseparable part of the nation’s historical fabric, Mehr reported.

“The presence of the Jewish community in Iran is not a matter of recent centuries; they possess a long lineage, history, and identity rooted in this land,” Salehi-Amiri stated, adding that Jews have lived in harmony and intimacy with their fellow citizens throughout history, the report added.

Addressing the recent aggression by the Zionist regime against religious sites, the minister argued that the attacks were motivated by vengeance against Iranian Jews for their unwavering loyalty to their homeland.

“I believe the Zionist regime’s animosity stems from the presence of Iranian Jews within this geography. The attack on this synagogue was an act of retaliation against them,” he noted. He further condemned US strikes on educational centers, referring to the attack on Minab school that



claimed the lives of 168 children and teachers, as a calculated move to “spread terror and demonstrate a lack of mercy toward both the young and old.”

The minister emphasized that the Rafi-Nia Synagogue transcends its religious function. “This site is more than just a synagogue or a place for the Jewish community; it belongs to all Iranians and the world. Only those who have distanced themselves from humanity could target a mosque, a church, or a synagogue.”

Salehi-Amiri attributed the failures of foreign powers in the region to the spirit of empathy. “This solidarity is why the world’s

largest military, with a budget of \$1.1 trillion, has failed in Iran and is now exiting the region. We have witnessed that a resisting nation forced the Zionist regime to accept a ceasefire.”

During the ceremony, Salehi-Amiri conveyed a message of health and honor from President Masoud Pezeshkian to the Jewish community, praising their “noble and passionate love for Iran.”

To preserve the memory of recent events, the minister proposed that a section of the reconstructed synagogue be converted into a museum. This space would house artifacts from the Iranian Jewish community and serve as a docu-

mented record of the Zionist regime’s crimes, ensuring that the history of resilience is never forgotten, he suggested.

US-Israeli strikes in central Tehran completely destroyed the historical Rafi-Nia Synagogue after an adjacent residential building was targeted. Footage from the scene showed sacred Torah scrolls and Hebrew books buried under the rubble, marking a devastating loss for Iran’s recognized Jewish minority. Homayoun Sameh, a Jewish representative in the Parliament, condemned the attack, noting that the aggressors showed “no mercy” by leveling the ancient holy site during the Jewish holidays.

Historical cisterns in Bandar-e Khamir to be repurposed into tourism hubs

TEHRAN – A restoration and revival project has been launched for four historical cisterns (Ab-Anbars) in Bandar-e Khamir, a coastal city in southern Hormozgan province, aimed at bolstering cultural tourism, a local tourism official has said.

The initiative is being carried out in close collaboration with the private sector to ensure the preservation of these monuments while finding modern, sustainable uses for them, CHTN quoted Abbas Darkhor as saying on Thursday.

“The restoration plan for these four ancient structures is currently underway with the dual goal of protecting our historical identity and promoting tourism,” he added.

He further noted that one of the cisterns has already been fully restored and revived, while the remaining three are in various stages of preparation and executive operations.

Regarding the future use of these sites, the official highlighted a creative shift toward cultural spaces. “According to our strategic planning, these historical cisterns will be converted into book cafés after their restoration. This approach not only preserves the architectural integrity of the buildings but also encourages a vibrant presence of tourists and citizens within the historical fabric of Bandar-e Khamir.”

Darkhor emphasized that the project is being executed under the direct supervision of

the province’s cultural heritage department, utilizing private sector investment as a model for sustainable urban development.

Located in the south of Iran, Bandar-e Khamir is known for its rich maritime history and traditional architecture. Experts believe that repurposing such structures as cultural centers can breathe new life into historical districts while providing a unique experience for visitors.

Bandar-e Khamir, located along the coastline of the Persian Gulf in Hormozgan province, is a distinguished maritime town celebrated as Iran’s first “National Wetland City” and a proud member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. This coastal enclave serves as a vital gateway to the vast Hara (Mangrove) forests, which host a rich biodiversity of migratory birds and marine life, reflecting the community’s deep-rooted commitment to ecological preservation. Renowned for its unique blend of traditional architecture—such as its historic cisterns and wind towers—and a vibrant heritage of seafaring and local crafts, Bandar-e Khamir offers a tranquil yet culturally rich atmosphere where sustainable tourism and ancient Persian Gulf traditions harmoniously coexist.

Iranian cisterns, known as Ab-Anbars, are architectural masterpieces of traditional Persian engineering designed to store and supply water in the arid and semi-arid re-

gions of the plateau. These subterranean structures are characterized by a massive, domed roof that minimizes evaporation and a deep, sunken tank capable of keeping water remarkably cool even in the scorching heat of summer. A defining feature of the Ab-Anbar is its integration with Badgirs (windcatchers), which channel ambient breezes down into the reservoir to circulate air and prevent the water from stagnating or becoming tainted. This sophisticated passive cooling system allowed ancient communities to thrive in some of the harshest environments on Earth, turning the simple necessity of water storage into a monumental form of architecture.

Beyond their technical utility, Ab-Anbars served as vital social hubs and symbols of philanthropic devotion within Iranian urban and rural life. Access to the water was typically gained through a long, steep staircase (the Pashir) that led visitors deep into the earth, providing a refreshing retreat from the outside heat. Many of these structures were built as waqf (charitable endowments) by wealthy benefactors, adorned with intricate brickwork and tiled portals that reflected the community’s prestige. Today, while modern plumbing has largely replaced their original function, these cisterns stand as evocative monuments to Iranian resilience and ingenuity, increasingly being repurposed as museums, galleries, or cafes to preserve their historic presence within the modern landscape.

280 ancient stone burial monuments found in Sudan reveal lost cattle-herding culture in the Sahara

Archaeologists studying the Atbai Desert in Sudan have identified hundreds of large stone burial monuments linked to an ancient cattle-herding society that lived between the Nile Valley and the Red Sea thousands of years ago.

The findings, published in the journal *African Archaeological Review*, offer one of the clearest pictures so far of a pastoral culture that occupied the region during a period of major climate change in northeastern Africa.

The research team used satellite remote sensing as part of the Atbai Survey Project and recorded 280 stone structures scattered across the desert. Earlier fieldwork had documented about 20 of these monuments, though archaeologists had never examined them as part of a single regional tradition. The new study grouped the structures under the name Atbai Enclosure Burials, or AEBs.

The monuments stretch across a large area from Upper Egypt to the Eritrean borderlands. Most

consist of circular stone walls with burials placed inside. Their diameters range from 5 meters to 82 meters. Some were fully enclosed circles, while others included a single entrance. A few contained compound circles or central graves surrounded by animal burials.

Researchers believe the monuments required organized communal labor. Based on estimates from an average burial enclosure measuring roughly 60 meters in circumference, construction would have demanded more than 160 eight-hour workdays for one person. A group of 50 workers could complete the same task in a little over three days.

The placement of the monuments also appears deliberate. Many stand near locations that once offered reliable access to water. Instead of being spread evenly across the desert, the burial sites cluster in areas suitable for grazing and watering livestock. This pattern points to mobile pastoral communities

that moved cattle across seasonal landscapes.

Excavations inside some AEBs uncovered both human and animal remains. Cattle burials appeared frequently and one of the largest monuments held about 18 cattle graves. Sheep remains were also present in several sites, though cattle dominated the funerary record. Archaeologists describe the society as strongly cattle-centered, part of a wider tradition seen across the Eastern Sahara during the Middle and Late Holocene.

Rock art from the region supports this interpretation. Many engravings and paintings depict cattle, reinforcing the importance of livestock in daily life and ritual activity. Similar links between humans and cattle in burial settings have appeared elsewhere in northeastern Africa dating back to at least the sixth millennium BCE.

Radiocarbon dates and earlier excavations suggest the Atbai monuments were built between

4500 BCE and 2500 BCE. The structures emerged during the decline of the African Humid Period, when northeastern Africa shifted from wetter conditions toward increasing aridity. At the time, the Atbai Desert contained more vegetation and seasonal water sources than today.

The study connects the rise of the burial tradition with changing climate patterns, including the southward movement of the Intertropical Convergence Zone, which altered monsoon rainfall across the Sahara. Even as conditions became drier, pastoral groups continued occupying the region for centuries.

Researchers suggest the Atbai may have served as a refuge during the desertification process, allowing cattle herders to survive longer there than in other parts of the Sahara. Eventually, shrinking water supplies and environmental stress forced communities to abandon the area.

(Source: Archaeologymag)

The West Bank’s archaeological heritage under settlers’ attack

This year has seen a record number of new Jewish settlements, sectarian-motivated physical attacks against Christians and new laws to boost control over Palestinian lands. For Prof Bernard Sabella, “what is happening is unacceptable.” Israelis “unilaterally take over communities, kick out people of their homes, terrorize them in the night.”

A former Fatah representative and executive secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches’ Palestinian Refugee Service, Sabella is blunt in condemning the escalation of violence by Israeli settlers and extremists, which is being “tolerated” by Israeli authorities.

The land is “ours too,” insisted the Palestinian Christian leader speaking to AsiaNews, but today “unchecked settler attacks drive some people, even in Jerusalem, Bethlehem,

From accelerated extinction to successful revival of species

TEHRAN – Despite worrisome facts about the speed at which species are disappearing, there has been good news of endangered species making a comeback, highlighting the role of conservation efforts in preventing extinction and helping vulnerable wildlife recover.

Iran is a rich country in terms of biodiversity, with about 37,500 animal species and more than 8,000 plant species. The country is home to 579 bird species, 214 mammal species, 284 reptile species, 23 amphibian species, 309 freshwater fish species, and 763 marine fish species in the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman, and the Caspian Sea.

According to the latest report by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, about 154 vertebrate animal species, and around 25 percent of plant species in the country are at risk of extinction, with 117 species being classified as critically endangered in the national list. Persian zebra, Asiatic cheetah, black bear, great bustard, and yellow deer are among animals that are in danger of extinction.

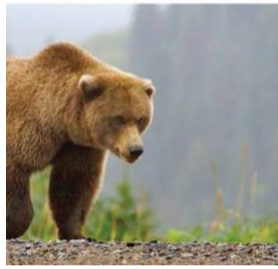
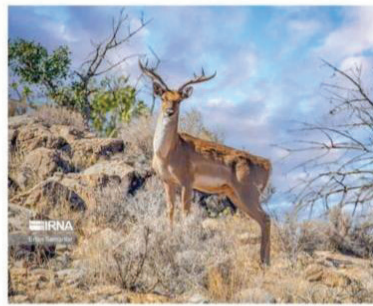
Among extinct animals, the Hyrcanian tiger and Persian lion are the two feline species that have disappeared forever in the country. Fortunately, Persian zebra and Persian cheetah are examples of successful conservation efforts where scientific measures and local community participation have resulted in the species recovery, *doe.ir* quoted Hamid Zohrabi, an official with the Department of Environment (DOE), as saying.

The official made the remarks on the occasion of World Endangered Species Day, which is observed on the third Friday of May.

In the past, the rate of species lost was measured per million years. Now, every 20 minutes, a species is estimated to become extinct. While extinction is a natural part of the life cycle on the earth, the current unprecedented rate of species loss has turned into a serious biological crisis.

Each year, World Endangered Species Day raises awareness about the gradual disappearance of many animal species in the world. The pressures exerted on biodiversity are numerous, including deforestation, pollution, urbanization, destruction of natural habitats or climate change.

This year's theme, 'Celebrating Wildlife Comeback Stories', highlights the life-saving role of conservation efforts and laws protecting endangered species.



Referring to successful recovery stories of species in Iran, Zohrabi noted that for years, it was thought that the yellow deer species was extinct in the world. However, about 65 years ago, some yellow deer were observed in Dez and Karkheh forests, the primary habitats of the Persian yellow deer.

Their conservation program commenced immediately by breeding them in captivity and transferring them to natural habitats for better reproduction, Zohrabi noted.

The birth of the first Persian yellow deer in the current Iranian year, which started on March 21, in Karkheh National Park, southwestern Khuzestan province, has raised hopes for the revival of this unique animal species.

The Persian zebra is a subspecies of onager, which is critically in danger of extinction. Onagers used to have a large population in West Asia, Central Asia, and China, but now it has become extinct in most areas.

With the birth of a foal in Yazd province, the current population of Persian zebra is estimated to be more than 50, indicating the improved habitat condition and effective conservation management of the endangered animal.

The conservation efforts include a field program that encompasses strengthening natural infrastructures and promoting environmental sustainability, such as monitoring

water resources. According to DOE, the total number of Asiatic cheetahs in the country's protected areas amounts to 27, with five other cheetahs living in breeding sites, and six in captivity.

In September 2025, the DOE resumed the implementation of the national project to protect Asiatic cheetahs after a six-year hiatus.

Expounding on the DOE achievements and measures, the official said that for each endangered species, a specific action plan has been developed, and a specialized committee, in collaboration with universities and scientific organizations, is working to protect and restore species based on scientific data and studies.

There are over 337 protected areas under the supervision of the DOE; the country has 13 biosphere reserves, and 226 wetlands nationwide, out of which 26 are inscribed on the Ramsar List as wetlands of international importance.

The country has so far prepared plans for the preservation of 25 endangered species, such as the Persian cheetah, zebra, Asiatic black bear, yellow deer, lesser white-fronted geese, white-headed duck, Persian salamander, blind cave fish, and *Luristanica sorbus* (a rare plant species that is native to Iran). The DOE is preparing thirteen more plans.

The population of prominent her-

bivorous mammals in the protected areas has increased from 227,000 to more than 240,000, and the number of managed invasive species has grown by 400 percent, covering five species, including crucian carp, nutria, raccoon, and rainbow trout.

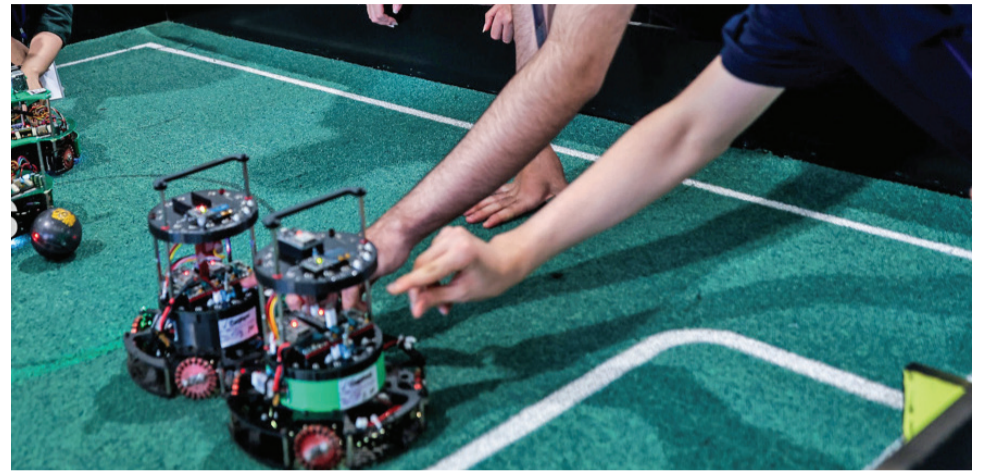
Monitoring pests and diseases, and fire outbreaks in Zagros habitats is another measure taken by the DOE, which has led to the identification of the Hyrcanian boxwood pest, the awkward silkworm moth in Gilan province, and the wood-eating pest of Aras in Khorasan Razavi province.

Given the importance of protecting biodiversity and genetic resources, the DOE is planning to prepare a plan to combat plant pests and pathogens as the main threat to the country's unique ecosystem.

To protect caves, the DOE has developed cave classification guidelines and plans for the conservation and sustainable use of the caves in the country. The number of caves with a conservation grade has increased from 7 to 41, indicating an increase of 490 percent.

There are also plans to raise individuals, local communities, and tourists' awareness of the importance of preserving caves' biodiversity and water resources. The DOE is planning to utilize the capacity of collaborative conservation to protect sensitive and important cave ecosystems.

56 teams attend RoboCup Iran 2026



TEHRAN – A total of 56 teams of Iranian students, aged 14 – 18, competed in six leagues of RoboCup Iran 2026, held from May 13 to 15, showcasing their scientific, technical, and creative capabilities.

Over the past three days, students took part in different leagues such as Junior Soccer (open), Junior Soccer (Light Weight), Junior Rescue (Line), Junior Rescue (maze), Junior Rescue Stimulation, and Onstage Leagues, Mehr news agency reported.

Teams that had excelled in the competition will be selected to represent Iran in RoboCup 2026 INCHEON, which is scheduled to take place from June 30 to July 6 in Incheon, South Korea.

Soccer leagues are among the most popular competitions. By the end of the first two days, 16 competitions in Junior Soccer (open), and 45 in Junior Soccer (Light Weight) were held. Teams use their own designed robots to hold humanoid football matches.

Six competitions were held in Junior Rescue (Line) in which robots should follow specific routes and complete missions defined for them. The accuracy in moving, recognizing the path, and completing tasks properly are among the main criteria, here.

Students competed in six Junior Rescue (maze) and Simulation League events, as well. In Junior Rescue (maze), robots should navigate through challenging terrains; recognizing signs, making quick decisions, and navigating in an unfamiliar environment are among the main features of the league.

In Junior Rescue Simulation, students design simulated environments utilizing specialized programming platforms like Python to test the performance of robots. This part plays an important role in developing programming skills, algorithm design, and robot performance analysis.

RoboCup Onstage League is one of the most creative sections of the competition. Teams design, build, and program to act on stage.

RoboCup 2026 will take place at Songdo Convensia in Incheon, and is expected to bring together more than 3,000 competitors, researchers, students, and professionals from dozens of countries, as well as 15,000 visitors interested in robotics, to South Korea. The previous edition of the event was hosted in Salvador, Brazil, in 2025.

Often referred to as the "World Cup of Robotics", RoboCup is a global benchmark for robotics research and innovation. Since 1997, the competition has brought together leading universities, research institutions, and emerging talent, challenging teams to design and program autonomous robots capable of performing complex tasks inspired by real-world scenarios — from robot soccer to domestic service simulations — with no human intervention.

Recent achievements

Attending the Rayan 2025 international artificial intelligence and programming competition, known as World Finals, Iranian students showcased a great performance in both AI and programming sections. In the programming section, Ali Safari was placed first. China secured second and third place, followed by India, Vietnam, Armenia, Serbia, and Pakistan, respectively, ISNA reported.

In the AI section, Iranian teams, namely, No Trust issues here, Pileh, AI Guardians of Trust, Al-UoK, red-serotonin, Persistence, and GGWP were placed first to seventh.

The final round of the Rayan international artificial intelligence and programming contest was held on Friday at Sharif University of Technology in Tehran, with participants from 25 countries.

Supported by the Vice Presidency for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy, the event kicked off on November 25, attracting hundreds of contestants from the U.S., Russia, China, India, Italy, Chile, Australia, Armenia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Tai-

wan, Romania, Singapore, Poland, Slovakia, Vietnam, Serbia, Argentina, Colombia, Kazakhstan, and Ethiopia, as well as the host, Iran.

The solo programming section was held with 60 Iranian and foreign participants who worked individually to solve nine complicated algorithmic problems within a duration of three to four hours.

The scientific competition aimed to promote knowledge, foster international networking, and establish scientific authority in AI and programming.

Enhancing algorithmic thinking, problem-solving skills, teamwork, developing innovative ideas, starting new businesses, and expanding AI engineering and programming were among the other objectives of the contest.

The Iranian robotics team, called Mositto, managed to win a gold medal at the 8th edition of RoboCup Asia-Pacific (RCAP) 2025.

The competition was held in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates, from November 10 to 15. Hosted by Khalifa University of Science and Technology, it brought together over 160 teams and more than 700 participants with nearly 2,000 researchers, industry professionals, students, and visitors from around the globe to witness the competition in AI-driven autonomous robotics challenges, with eight leagues and 15 sub-leagues, including soccer and rescue.

The event highlighted themes like smart mobility, AI for sustainability, and technologies addressing regional challenges.

The team, comprising eight students, secured first place at RoboCup Junior Rescue, Rescue Line, and Secondary League, showcasing Iranian students' talents and creativity to the world.

A three-member team of Iranian students won two silver medals at the ninth edition of the First Global Challenge (FGC), an Olympics-style international robotics competition held in Panama from October 29 to November 1.

The First Global Challenge takes place in a different country each year. FIRST Global invites each nation to send a team to build and program a robot for competition.

Iranian students secured first and second places in the inventions and innovative technologies area in the TEKNOFEST competition, showcasing new Iranian youths' capabilities in robotics, artificial intelligence, and technological innovations.

Hosted by Istanbul, Turkey, from September 17 to 21, the competition aimed for individuals to improve themselves in the field of robotics — electronics — coding, and to design robots suitable for specified tasks.

The Iranian team, composed of Kian Karbalei, Mehrtash Razgordani, Artin Islampannah, Seyyed Amir-Homan Tabatabaei-nejad, Samyar Reza-Soltani, Ardin Khanalizadeh, Mohammad Reivandi, and Mehdi Reivandi, Mehr news agency reported.

Competitors with 980 projects from 56 countries, including Germany, South Korea, Uzbekistan, Russia, the Netherlands, India, Iran, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Paraguay, participated in the event.

The robotics and earth science teams of Iran won different awards at the Federation of International RoboSports Association (FIRA) and the International Earth Science Olympiad (IESO) competitions, which were held in South Korea and China, respectively.

FIRA RoboWorld Cup and Summit 2025 was held from August 11 to 15. The Iranian delegations won five championships in the Air League and Sport League (students under the age of 19), as well as Challenge and Youth League. They secured four runner-up positions and two third-places in autonomous vehicles, youth creative task, and the Sport League.

Iranian students secured three gold medals and a special award in the International Science and Invention Fair (ISIF) 2025, ranking them among the top innovators worldwide.

Hundreds of thousands of youth volunteers join IRCS projects

TEHRAN – The Iranian Red Crescent Society has engaged hundreds of thousands of teenagers and young adults in education, relief, and volunteer activities through a series of educational and social projects over the past year.

In recent years, the IRCS has sought not to limit its vision of the future to relief operations alone, so that an important part of this vision focuses on building a generation trained and prepared to play an effective role in difficult situations and moments of crisis.

This path begins in school, where teenagers are first introduced to the basic concepts of relief, first aid, and social responsibility.

This training then goes beyond the initial level of familiarity and leads to the formation of student and youth volunteer teams in the form of various projects.

Ultimately, these programs strive to create a network of prepared and informed forces who, in addition to the Red Crescent's main missions, also play an active role in society.

According to the latest statistics, there are currently 4,974,111 volunteers in the IRCS, of whom 3,257,455 are young people under the age of 35.

Providing first aid training in schools in the form of the "Skilled Trainer" plan was one of the most extensive areas of the Red Crescent's activity last year. The plan has been implemented in 9,000 schools and about 350,000 students have been trained in these programs.

Rather than being purely technical, these trainings focus on recognizing dangerous situations, correct behavior in the event of an acci-



dent, and learning simple but vital skills.

The goal is to ensure that students are not tied down when faced with unexpected situations and are able to make the right initial decisions.

Another part of these activities is related to attracting young people under the age of 35 to attend relief bases. These forces help provide services as active volunteers alongside relief and rescue teams in various situations.

In addition, various social and cultural projects have also been implemented for young people. These activities are not only educational in nature, but also try to strengthen the sense of social responsibility among the younger generation and involve them in collective and voluntary work.

In addition to relief training, the Red Crescent

Society has also paid attention to the field of psychological support.

Projects in this section focus on times of crisis and various incidents and try to help the affected people spiritually and socially.

In the field of cultural activities, events combine ritual and religious activities in the form of collective programs. In addition, participation in blood donation continues to be an important part of voluntary activities, so that last year, more than 8,000 people participated in this humanitarian action.

These activities show that the Red Crescent is not only active in times of crisis, but also focuses on building the next generation that is introduced to the concepts of relief from primary schools, will gain experience in volunteer projects, and will ultimately be able to play an effective role in real situations.



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MAY 16, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

A sinner who confesses to his sin is better than an obedient man who brags about his deed.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:01 Evening: 18:23 Dawn: 03:19 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 04:58 (tomorrow)

Hojjatolislam Imanipour addresses 15th General Conference of ICESCO in Russia

TEHRAN – The 15th session of the General Conference of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) opened on Wednesday in Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan of the Russian Federation, on the sidelines of the 17th Russia-Islamic World International Economic Forum: KazanForum, with the participation of a number of ministers, heads of national commissions, member states' delegations, and representatives of international and regional organizations from more than 35 countries.

Representing Iran at the session, Hojjatolislam Mohammad-Mehdi Imanipour, head of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO), delivered a speech on Friday morning, ILNA reported.

"For many years, the Islamic world has been a victim of inhumane crimes and genocides. Unfortunately, international institutions that were expected to prevent or stop such crimes have revealed their ineffectiveness to the world. This continuous wave of aggression and massacre stems from various causes — from the plot of 'Greater Israel' to the plundering of independent nations' wealth — but the main reason seems to be the fear of justice-seeking movements, spiritual revival, and adherence to principles in the face of extremism and excess."

He emphasized that the main concern of arrogant powers is the emergence of a new discourse that challenges the immoral values of liberal democracy and heralds the formation of a new civilization.

Referring to the crimes committed by the United States and the Zionist regime against Iran, Imanipour stated: "The war imposed on Iran under false pretexts was a clear example of war and rebellion against humanity and freedom. The assassination of a spiritual and justice-seeking leader who was followed by people of all faiths and freedom-loving societies; the massacre of 168 innocent students at the Shajareh Tayyebah School in Minab; overt threats to destroy one of the world's oldest civilizations; damage to ancient and global heritage sites; insults to religious leaders — including the leader of the Catholic Church — for opposing war and supporting peace; and hundreds of other crimes have unmasked the true face of the false claimants of freedom."

"The war imposed on us today is the third one

since the victory of the Islamic Revolution. We deeply believe that this assault goes far beyond national and territorial boundaries. The Islamic Republic of Iran stands on the front line of resistance against the expansionism of the Zionist regime on behalf of the free nations and the entire Islamic world," he added.

During his meeting with Olga Lyubimova, the Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation, Imanipour emphasized the importance of cultural cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation.

He expressed gratitude to the people and government of Russia for their support of Iran during the third imposed war launched by the United States and the Zionist regime against the country, highlighting the historical bonds and the prominent role of cultural exchanges between the two nations.

"Today, Russia is playing a constructive role in the Islamic world, and the meeting of the cultural ministers of OIC member states hosted in Kazan is one example of that," he said.

For her part, Lyubimova underlined the significance of cultural relations between Russia and Iran and, while expressing appreciation for the presence of Iranian filmmaker Majid Majidi in Russia and the screening of his films, voiced interest in expanding cinematic diplomacy between the two nations.

The KazanForum, which was held in Kazan from May 13 to 15, was an opportunity for the Islamic Republic of Iran to once again demonstrate its civilizational and cultural position in the international sphere amid regional and global developments.

The city of Kazan, which recently celebrated the 1,100th anniversary of the arrival of Islam in Russia, was selected and introduced at last year's summit of the Ministers of Culture of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation as the cultural capital of the Islamic world in 2026.

This year's summit was attended by officials and cultural figures from the Islamic world, including the culture ministers of Turkmenistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Sudan, Djibouti, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Kyrgyzstan, Somalia, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Gabon, Guinea, Uzbekistan, and Libya, the director general of ISESCO, and the deputy secretary general of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Cartoon of Day



Ceasefire

In Lebanon, more than 400 people have been killed since the ceasefire.

Cartoonist: Anne Derenne from France

Leader emphasizes potential of Persian language, literature for promoting Islamic-Iranian civilization

TEHRAN – In a message issued on the occasion of the Persian Language Day and in commemoration of the great Iranian poet Ferdowsi (May 15), Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, emphasized the vast potential of the Persian language and literature for promoting the rich culture and civilization of Islamic Iran on a global scale.

According to Mehr, the text of the Leader's message reads as follows:

"Beyond being a tool for speech and writing, the Persian language constitutes the medium of understanding and the bond that connects the thoughts and identity boundaries of Iranians. Persian language and literature represent one of the greatest capacities for promoting the rich culture and civilization of Islamic Iran throughout the world. The recommendation of our wise and martyred Leader to empower the Persian language remains a guiding light for strengthening the authority of the Iranian-Islamic civilization."

"The dear people of Iran, during the third Sacred Defense, as in the two previous imposed wars, have once again proven that Ferdowsi's mythological stories are reflections of their real lives and heroic spirit. The humanistic, valiant, and Qur'anic concepts of the Shahnameh unite all ethnic and social groups of Iran in preserving their identity, authenticity, and independence, and in resisting aggressors."

"This epic of presence, defense, and victory imposes a great duty upon the community of culture, literature, and art — to rise, as Ferdowsi did, to bring forth the renaissance of artists in continuation of the renaissance of the people; to merge intellect, pen, and language with art; and to make the narrative of the nation's great uprising an enduring part of history."

Also on this occasion, a ceremony titled "The Shahnameh and Iranian Identity" was held on Wednesday at Tehran's Vahdat Hall, attended by Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi, along with cultural officials, literary figures, and artists.

Also in attendance were the ambassadors of South Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Belar-



"The Shahnameh and Iranian Identity" ceremony was held at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on May 13, 2026.

us, Uruguay, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Nicaragua, Tajikistan, Venezuela, and Lebanon, as well as representatives from Russia, Oman, Sri Lanka, Chile, Pakistan, Afghanistan, the UNDP, FAO, the UN, and the ECO.

At the ceremony, Salehi described Ferdowsi and the Shahnameh as the historical memory of Iran and said: "Our national genealogy is recorded in Shahnameh. Many nations lack such a clear cultural and historical identity card, but thanks to Ferdowsi and his Shahnameh, Iranians possess a written lineage and historical identity."

Speaking about Ferdowsi's legacy and the significance of the Shahnameh in Iran, said: "Throughout history, the land of Iran has always been home to diverse languages, dialects, and accents, yet the Persian language has been the guarantor of Iran's unity and territorial integrity — and continues to play that role today. Among those who helped preserve and safeguard Persian, Ferdowsi holds a fundamental place."

Salehi emphasized that the Shahnameh has left Iranians with an invaluable historical memory, enabling the nation to preserve its identity and pass it on to future generations.

"The Shahnameh is the architect of the Iranian heroic spirit," he added. "Across its three sections —

mythological, heroic, and historical — it presents an epic narrative of Iran's history and identity. The heroic spirit embodied in Ferdowsi's verses has imbued the Iranian soul with a lasting sense of courage and grandeur."

"The reason Iran and Iranians have shown resilience at critical historical moments, such as during the imposed wars, and have stood firm against the world's great powers, stems from that same heroic spirit formed in our collective unconscious through the Shahnameh and the legacy of Ferdowsi," the minister noted.

Salehi also referred to the views of the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, who regarded Ferdowsi as "the pinnacle of Iranian poetry," a phrase that reflects his deep understanding of Iranian literature and culture.

The event also featured a performance by the Tehran Symphony Orchestra and recitations of the Shahnameh by child and teenage storytellers (naqals).

In addition, a number of prominent and active figures in the fields of Shahnameh recitation and research, who in recent years have contributed to promoting and preserving this monumental literary work and the Persian language, were honored during the ceremony.

Abolqasem Mansour bin Hassan Tusi (940 – 1025), better known by his pen name Ferdowsi, was a Persian poet and the author of Shahnameh (literally meaning "Book of Kings"), which is one of the world's longest epic poems created by a single poet, and the greatest epic of Persian-speaking countries. Ferdowsi is celebrated as one of the most influential figures of Persian literature and one of the greatest in the history of literature.

In the Shahnameh, Ferdowsi links the culture of pre-Islamic Iran with the culture of post-Islamic Iran. What Ferdowsi was dealing with was not only poetic, but also intellectual; he did not write fiction. Ferdowsi considers wisdom as the source and capital of all goodness. He believes that a person with wisdom recognizes good and evil from each other, and in this way, he reaches the happiness of this world and the salvation of the other world.

The Shahnameh tells of the mainly mythical but to some extent historical past of Iran from the creation of the world until the Muslim conquest in the seventh century. Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, and the greater region influenced by Persian culture such as Armenia, Dagestan, Georgia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan celebrate this national epic.

Painter Hassan Ruholamin creates new work live in Tajrish Square

TEHRAN – In an artistic event on Thursday night, simultaneously with the enthusiastic presence of people in Tajrish Square in north of Tehran, Iranian artist Hassan Ruholamin created a new painting.

The painter, who has always been present in important historical events, created the new work in three hours, depicting the presence of people in the streets, waving flags of Iran, Art Bureau reported.

Iranians across the country continue holding nightly rallies for more than 70 consecutive days, forming a sustained nationwide expression of public unity and a historic moment of cohesion and solidarity.

The gatherings, held in cities, towns, and smaller communities throughout Iran, have become a regular feature of public life in the aftermath of the joint US-Israeli aggression that began on February 28 and lasted for 40 days.



Farhadi's new film "Parallel Tales" receives seven-minute ovation at Cannes

TEHRAN – Iranian filmmaker Asghar Farhadi's new movie "Parallel Tales" had its world premiere at the 79th Cannes Film Festival on Thursday and received a warm welcome from the enthusiastic audience, who gave it a seven-minute ovation after its screening at the Grand Théâtre Lumière.

Farhadi attended the film screening with his stellar cast, including Isabelle Huppert, Virginie Efira, Catherine Deneuve, Vincent Cassel, Pierre Niney, and Adam Bessa. Speaking afterwards, he said: "I'm very happy that we watched this film together with this wonderful team. Working with this team was like receiving a perfect gift," IRNA quoted him as saying.

"Something happened today. The first person who suggested this project to me, and the reason I started thinking about it, was a Polish writer named Krzysztof Piesiewicz, who had collaborated on many of Kieslowski's films. In our first conversation, when he tried to encourage me to make this film, he told me: 'I would love for you to make this film and for me to see it,'" Farhadi added.

"But just before the red carpet, we received the news that he had just passed away (on May 14 at the age of 80). I think we should dedicate tonight's screening to this great writer in the history of cinema," he noted.

Taking its cue from an episode

in Krzysztof Kieslowski's television series "Dekalog," Farhadi's film stars Huppert as a reclusive writer who spies incessantly on her neighbors (Cassel, Efira, and Niney) across the street and weaves imaginary stories around its occupants. Fact and fiction collide when a young homeless man (Bessa) hired as home-help unleashes these stories into the real world.

Speaking about his film before its premiere, the two-time Oscar-winning director said that he allowed himself to go outside his cinematic red lines and play with structure in his Paris-set drama "Parallel Tales".

"There is a more formal playfulness and things that I hadn't done

in my other films ... Things that were previously a red line for me. I wouldn't do them at all," he underlined. "But here, in the structure of the film, I did them. From this perspective, it was a very valuable experience."

Admiring his filmmaking, Niney said: "We were expecting a master, and he was really impressive the way he was able to pay so much attention to every detail. And that was like this during the whole process. He had such a precise idea of what he wanted."

"Parallel Tales" was released in French theaters concurrently with its Cannes unveiling.