



Berlin Clashes Expose Merz's 'Dirty Work' Policy

▶ Page 3

German police crackdown on demonstrators against crimes in Gaza and war against Iran, Berlin, May 16, 2026.

Qalibaf appointment elevates Iran-China coordination to highest political level

By staff writer

TEHRAN - The appointment of Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf as Iran's special representative for China affairs elevates bilateral coordination to the highest political level, underscoring Beijing's central role in Tehran's strategy amid shifting regional dynamics after the US-Israeli war.

Qalibaf took on the role on Sunday following a proposal by President Masoud Pezeshkian and its approval by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, according to Tasnim news agency. Tasnim said Qalibaf would "coordinate various sectors of relations between Iran and China." ▶ Page 3

Stronger Islamic unity reduces outside interference: Pezeshkian

TEHRAN - In a series of high-level meetings held in Tehran, senior Iranian and Pakistani officials have condemned the 'United States and Israeli military aggression against Iran,' while pledging to deepen bilateral cooperation in border trade, security, and parliamentary relations. The diplomatic engagements, which took place on May 16 and 17, underscored a growing alignment between the two neighboring countries amid escalating regional tensions.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, during a meeting with Pakistan's Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi, stated that unity and integration among Islamic countries would pave the way for sustainable peace and security in the region. "The stronger the unity of the Islamic Ummah becomes, the less room there will be for the interference and adventurism of trans-regional powers and the Zionist regime," Pezeshkian said. ▶ Page 2

When international law becomes a post-mortem archive

By Garsha Vazirain

TEHRAN - A report published by Haaretz on May 17 suggests that the International Criminal Court is moving quietly toward new arrest warrants for senior Israeli figures, including Bezalet Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir, alongside military officials tied to the genocidal war on Gaza and the wider campaign of destruction across the region.

It is an important development, but it is also a deeply sobering one: by the time international law begins to inch forward, Gaza has already been pulverized, its people starved and displaced, and the entire region dragged further into a widening fire.

A delayed reckoning

The indictments matter because they widen the legal frame beyond Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant, whose 2024 warrants marked the first real crack in the wall of impunity around Israel's leadership.

But the central fact remains unchanged: this is happening after the crime has already matured into catastrophe.

Addicted to imperialism: US targets Cuba despite a history of humiliating failures

TEHRAN - In a blatant display of gunboat diplomacy, CIA Director John Ratcliffe recently touched down in Havana. Arriving aboard an ostentatious, American-branded aircraft, the visit served as a stark reminder of Washington's ongoing obsession with subduing sovereign nations through intimidation.

As Cuba grapples with an energy crisis engineered by Washington's economic warfare, the chief of America's premier destabilization agency arrived to deliver an ultimatum. This is what political scientists call "submission diplomacy"—the signature playbook of a geopolitical bully that relies on coercion because its moral authority has long since evaporated.

For decades, the United States has maintained a suffocating chokehold on the Cuban population. Unable to achieve its political goals through legitimate diplomacy, Washington has resorted to a brutal oil blockade and hyper-aggressive sanctions designed to inflict maximum pain on innocent civilians.

Hezbollah warns Lebanese authorities on talks with Israel

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - On the anniversary of the 1983 "Agreement of Shame," Hezbollah warns that direct talks with the Israeli regime risk surrendering Lebanese sovereignty and dignity to the enemy.

Hezbollah issued a statement on the anniversary of the "Agreement of Shame and Disgrace" stating that this occasion comes "amid extremely dangerous Lebanese and regional circumstances caused by the escalating U.S.-Israeli regime aggression against our region and our country."

On May 17, 1983, Lebanon and the Israeli regime signed a U.S.-brokered agreement. It collapsed within a year after opponents, including the Amal movement, whose leader is the Lebanese parliament speaker Nabih Berri, strongly condemned it as an act of surrender to American and Israeli interests at a time when the Zionist regime was occupying large parts of Lebanese territory.

▶ Page 5

Poll shows 8 in 10 Americans blame Trump for high gasoline prices

TEHRAN - A recent Reuters poll reveals that nearly eight out of ten Americans hold Trump responsible for soaring gasoline prices, signaling a sharp decline in his political standing.

With fuel costs now exceeding \$4.50 per gallon nationwide following the administration's military confrontation with Iran, public frustration is mounting.

The poll found that approximately 77 percent of registered voters, including a majority of Republicans, blame the president for the price surge at the pump. ▶ Page 4

Trump's China visit and Washington's failure to bring Beijing into alignment on Iran

By Maedeh Zaman Fashami

TEHRAN - The recent visit of Donald Trump to China can be seen as one of the most complex moments in Washington-Beijing relations in recent years. On the surface, the trip was framed around recalibrating bilateral ties, managing strategic competition, and discussing global stability. However, in its deeper layers, it also carried a set of geopolitical objectives, one of the most important being Washington's effort to secure China's cooperation on the Iran file and the broader security architecture of the Middle East. Yet a careful reading of official Chinese statements and the broader tone of politically aligned commentary indicates that this objective was not only left unfulfilled but also fundamentally met with structural non-acceptance by Beijing. ▶ Page 2

Iran president cites ancient Abarkuh cypress in message aimed at Trump



▶ Page 6

Rasht hosts families of martyred students of Minab

On Saturday night, the city of Rasht, northern Gilan province, hosted the families of students who were martyred in a US missile attack on Shajareh Tayyebeh School in the city of Minab, southern Hormozgan province, on February 28.

While dozens of girls and boys aged between 7 and 12 were beginning their lessons, the school was targeted by a missile strike that caused the building to collapse, trapping children and teachers beneath the rubble. Iranian authorities confirmed a final death toll of 168 people, with at least 95 others wounded. A total of 241 students and teachers have been martyred, and 183 students and teachers have been injured during the US-Israeli aggression against the country.



© Mehr/Allyouhobhi

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

A war with a painful outcome for America

Kayhan, in an editorial, examined the goals of Israel and the United States in their war with Iran and the failure of those goals. The editorial wrote: launching the Ramadan War was essentially an admission by the US and the Israeli regime that they had failed to achieve their objectives in the 12-day war. The Israelis, who saw a decisive war as the only option for their survival against Iran, launched a heavier conflict nine months after they failed in the 12-day war in order to accomplish the goals they had missed earlier. This time, however, Israel entered the conflict from the outset under CENTCOM's military command. This meant the Ramadan War became an American project. America's involvement had a major reason: Trump and his party needed an action that would show the main issue for the United States was security beyond its borders, not domestic governance. The Ramadan War ended with a painful outcome for America; Iran, with two major achievements — national unity and taking control of the Strait of Hormuz — emerged as the major victor.

Shargh: The balance of power at the BRICS meeting shifted toward Iran

Shargh analyzed the BRICS foreign ministers' meeting and wrote: New Delhi hosted the meeting at a time when the gathering went far beyond a typical economic-political forum and turned into a stage for competing narratives, redefining power balances, and a real test of multilateralism. The 40-day war waged by the US and Israel against Iran, the controversial role of the UAE alongside the aggressors, and the unprecedented tension between Tehran and Abu Dhabi shaped the atmosphere of the meeting. In this context, the presence and positions of Araghchi were not just routine diplomatic participation but a deliberate effort to shift the playing field, expose the partners of the war, and solidify Iran's place in the emerging global order. Araghchi managed to tilt the balance of power at the meeting in Iran's favor.

Javan: The era of "either America or China" is over

Javan referred to Trump's trip to Beijing and its outcome. The US president attacked Iran with several goals and in hopes of several gains. One of them was to stare China in the eye after defeating Iran and gaining access to Iranian oil. When the war did not end, he postponed his meeting with Xi. When the war had passed seventy days, he finally agreed to the meeting. The Chinese are not Arab sheikhs

dependent on Zionism who would give him a gold-plated multimillion-dollar plane or hand over their territory to the US. China certainly has its own political and social flaws and costs, but the era of "either America or China" is over. The world is moving toward multi-polar and multi-layered networks, and anyone who locks themselves into one pole in advance will lose.

Iran: BRICS as a stage for showcasing Iran's new power

The presence of Foreign Minister Araghchi at the latest BRICS foreign ministers' meeting became a stage for displaying Iran's new position in regional and global dynamics — a position that, after extensive tensions and military confrontation in the Persian Gulf between Iran, the US, and Israel, is now being interpreted differently by many international observers. They describe Tehran as having emerged from one of the most complex conflicts of recent years with superior political and strategic leverage. In this environment, the BRICS meeting not only provided a platform for explaining Iran's stance toward the unjust, unilateral structure dominating the international system, but also created a rare opportunity to emphasize the need for this emerging bloc to move toward strategic synergy, deeper economic ties, integrated value chains, and joint investment in vital infrastructure; a process that, from Tehran's perspective, can shift the global balance of power away from the West's traditional monopoly.

Sobh-e-No: Trump no longer has many options left

Sobh-e-No analyzed Trump's challenges regarding Iran. What stands between Iran and the US is a bridge of mistrust. Iran trusted the US several times and came to the negotiating table, but after a 40-day war, America can no longer expect the same pre-war demands to be accepted. A realistic agreement, instead of fantasizing about destroying Iran's nuclear capability, could focus on oversight, transparency, and lifting sanctions so that the region can return to calm through a favorable deal. Trump no longer has many options: either he makes a reckless decision that sets the region and global economy on fire, or he reaches a realistic agreement that pulls him out of the quagmire of war with Iran and prevents further damage to the US and global economy. The choice is his — but as experience shows, continued contradictions and lack of strategy will lead only to frustration and failure.

Iran condemns Israeli assassination of senior Hamas commander

TEHRAN— Iran's Foreign Ministry has strongly condemned the Israeli assassination of Izz El-Din Al-Haddad, the head of Hamas's Qassam Brigades in Gaza, accusing Israel of pursuing the "colonial eradication" of Palestine.

In a statement issued on Saturday, the ministry denounced the "terrorist act" carried out by the "brutal Zionist regime" in killing Al-Haddad, along with his wife and child. It extended condolences over the "martyrdom of this great fighter" to the leadership of Hamas, the "patient and struggling" Palestinian people, and "all Muslims and freedom-seekers around the world."

The statement said the assassination and similar attacks formed "part of Israel's crimi-

nal scheme for the colonial eradication of Palestine," and added that the United States, as "the largest military, financial, and political supporter of the Zionist apartheid regime," was "complicit in every one of these crimes."

The Foreign Ministry further stated that the "cowardly assassination" of Palestinian leaders and intellectuals reflected the "desperation and helplessness" of a regime that, despite committing "the most horrific crimes" and killing "hundreds of thousands of innocent people" over the past eight decades, had failed to extinguish the spirit of resistance among Palestinians.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

US commentator urges regime change in Iran, backs armed unrest

TEHRAN - US conservative commentator Mark Levin has intensified anti-Iran rhetoric, calling for regime change and the overthrow of Iran's government in line with positions associated with President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

In a post on X on Saturday, Levin said the United States should "train," "arm" and "support" individuals opposed to the Iranian government.

"The regime must be destroyed. The time is now," he wrote, adding: "We must help

liberate the Iranian people, and we can do it without our troops on the ground. Without a forever war."

Levin has been a vocal supporter of maximum pressure policies against Iran. Since the US and Israel launched war against Iran on February 28, he has repeatedly defended the campaign, calling for intensified pressure and endorsing the overthrow of the Islamic Republic. He has framed the confrontation as necessary for US and Israeli security and has rejected diplomatic engagement with Tehran.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Stronger Islamic unity reduces outside interference: Pezeshkian

From page 1 ▶ The President expressed appreciation for the role of the Pakistani government, particularly Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the Army Chief, in establishing and stabilizing the recent ceasefire. He voiced hope that these diplomatic efforts would lead to sustainable peace, stability, and security across the region.

Pezeshkian described the military aggression by the United States and Israel against Iran, which resulted in the martyrdom of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, several high-ranking commanders, ministers, innocent students, and citizens, as a major crime contrary to all human, legal, and international standards. "These criminal acts are unacceptable to any awakened and free conscience in the world," he asserted.

According to the President, the primary objective of the United States and Israel in attacking Iran was to create internal instability and weaken the Islamic system. "They never imagined that the great, honorable, and aware nation of Iran would stand beside their country with such cohesion, authority, and loyalty," he added.



Pezeshkian also thanked the governments of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iraq for not allowing their soil to be used against the Islamic Republic. "The enemies attempted to transfer insecurity into the country by providing financial, intelligence, and weapons support to terrorist groups. However, the cooperation of Iran's neighbors in preventing any abuse of their territory was a valuable and commendable measure," he said.

Separately, Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf told Minister Naqvi that recent events had demonstrated that the United States military

presence in the region does not bring security but rather lays the groundwork for instability. Qalibaf emphasized that some regional governments had mistakenly believed that the United States would provide them with security, but recent developments had proven this assumption wrong.

The Parliament Speaker expressed gratitude for Pakistan's support during the imposed war against Iran. "The Iranian people and officials fully understand Pakistan's backing," Qalibaf said. "The Leader of the Revolution also paid special attention to Pakistan in his first message following the war."

While describing current Tehran-Islamabad relations as good, Qalibaf stressed that bilateral cooperation in political, economic, cultural, and security fields must accelerate. He added that the development of parliamentary cooperation is also on Iran's agenda.

Referring to the recent war, Qalibaf stated: "This war demonstrated that the United States and the Zionist regime bring nothing but evil and insecurity to all nations and countries in the region. The better solution is for regional countries to expand their economic, political, and security relations through mutual trust and cooperation."

In a separate meeting, Iran's Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni and his Pakistani counterpart, Syed Mohsin Naqvi, discussed joint measures to facilitate border trade, transit, and the exchange of goods. Momeni welcomed Naqvi's second visit to Iran in just over a month, expressing gratitude to the Pakistani government and people for their friendly and brotherly stance toward the Islamic Republic.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Trump's China visit and Washington's failure to bring Beijing into alignment on Iran

From page 1 ▶ At the first level of analysis, it is important to understand how China itself frames the visit. From Beijing's perspective, the meeting was neither a turning point for reshaping the global order nor a platform for bargaining over regional dossiers.

Rather, it was seen as part of an ongoing process of managing competition between major powers. In this framework, China-US relations are inherently dual in nature: on one hand, a long-term structural rivalry, and on the other, the necessity of maintaining stability and preventing escalation beyond controllable limits. Accordingly, any attempt to introduce third-party issues—particularly sensitive regional files such as Iran—into direct bilateral bargaining is inherently constrained.

At the second level, the political and diplomatic language used to describe international issues plays a crucial role. In this discourse, regional crises, including the situation surrounding Iran, are not framed as bilateral matters between Tehran and Washington, but rather as structural disruptions within the global order. These disruptions are linked to broader domains such as energy security, supply chain stabil-

ity, global trade, and international economic growth. Such framing effectively shifts the issue away from the realm of bilateral political alignment with the United States and elevates it into a multilateral and structurally complex domain that cannot be reduced to a single bilateral negotiation.

Within this framework, the logic of solutions also changes. Whereas the American approach is generally grounded in instruments such as political pressure, sanctions, or coalition-building, the Chinese perspective emphasizes dialogue, de-escalation, and the avoidance of military confrontation. This difference is not merely tactical; it reflects fundamentally different understandings of how the international order should be governed. On one side lies an approach centered on strategic alignment through targeted coalitions, while on the other lies an emphasis on multilateralism and opposition to unilateral action.

The natural outcome of this divergence is that China does not enter into coalition logic against Iran, as such a framework is seen as inconsistent with its core foreign policy principles.

At the third level, Iran's position within China's strategic calcula-



tions must be considered. Iran is not merely a negotiable foreign policy file at the bilateral level; rather, it is embedded within a broader network of geopolitical and economic considerations. These include energy security, international trade routes, regional balance in the Middle East, and the broader effort to consolidate a multipolar global order. Within this structure, relations with Iran are not a variable dependent on China-US relations, but rather a relatively independent component of China's foreign policy architecture. This relative autonomy ensures that even under conditions of high-level dialogue or external pressure, no fundamental

shift in this relationship is likely to occur.

From another perspective, although a significant portion of Trump's visit appeared to focus on economic, technological, and bilateral competition management issues, this emphasis does not imply that the Iran file was peripheral. On the contrary, Iran remained one of the key and determining elements of the broader agenda. From Washington's point of view, China is one of the few actors capable of exerting real influence over Iran, whether through energy channels, political leverage, or its regional role in the Middle East order.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran sets five non-negotiable prerequisites for nuclear talks with US

TEHRAN— As diplomatic efforts to resume negotiations between Iran and the United States remain stalled, conflicting reports have emerged regarding the terms each side is setting.

According to Iranian media outlets, Tehran has formally conditioned the start of any negotiations on a set of five confidence-building measures. These prerequisites include: An end to the war on all fronts with a particular emphasis on Lebanon; the lifting of anti-Iran sanctions; the release of Iran's frozen financial assets; compensation for war damages; formal recognition of Iran's sovereign rights over the Strait of Hormuz.

Citing informed sources, the Mehr news agency reported that Washington has responded with what it described as "excessive" and "unacceptable" demands. According to the agency, the U.S. is reportedly asking for: No reparations for war damages; transfer of approximately 400 kilograms of uranium from Iran to the United States; only a single nuclear facility is to remain operational in Iran; no release — not even 25 percent — of Iran's frozen assets; a cessation of hostilities on all fronts is to be contingent upon the completion of negotiations.

Mehr added that even if Iran were to meet these conditions, the threat of military ag-

gression from the United States and the Israeli regime would persist. According to experts cited by the news agency, the U.S. proposal attempts to achieve through diplomacy what Washington failed to secure on the battlefield.

However, a contrasting version of the U.S. position has emerged. Laurence Norman, a reporter for The Wall Street Journal, wrote on X that an alternative proposal is on the table. According to Norman, the U.S. offer would grant Iran access to over \$25 billion in frozen funds while allowing Tehran to keep its nuclear enrichment capability intact.

Senior Iranian MP warns US of total regional oil shutdown

TEHRAN— A senior Iranian lawmaker has warned that any attack on Iran's energy infrastructure will result in a total disruption of global oil supplies from the Persian Gulf region.

Hamidreza Hajibabaei, Deputy Speaker of the Iranian Parliament, made the remarks during an interview with IRIB on Sunday, outlining Iran's strategic

posture regarding potential strikes on its oil sectors.

"If Iran's oil is to be targeted, we will strike the region's oil," Hajibabaei stated. "If damage is inflicted on Iranian oil, Iran will act in a way that prevents the United States and the world from receiving oil from this region for a significant period of time."

Hajibabaei suggested that countries such as Saudi Arabia are attempting to insulate themselves from potential fallout.

The deputy speaker dismissed the notion that Washington would show restraint, specifically naming US President Donald Trump. He asserted that "it is impossible for the US, especially

Trump, to have the capability to do something and not do it. Anyone who thinks otherwise is naive."

To counter this threat, Hajibabaei emphasized that Iran would leverage its geopolitical position to impose its own economic costs, describing the Strait of Hormuz as Iran's ultimate strategic leverage.

TEHRAN - German police violently clashed with protesters in Berlin over the weekend after they gathered to express opposition to the US-Israeli war on Iran and to show solidarity with Palestinians, marking the 78th anniversary of the Nakba.

Video footage shows police using tear gas to disperse demonstrators. Protesters said they were demonstrating peacefully against the warmongering policies of the United States and Israel. The police response has drawn attention to Germany's approach toward both Iran and Palestine.

War on Iran

The US and Israel launched a war against Iran on February 28. The strikes claimed the lives of thousands of people in Iran. On the first day of the war, a single US missile strike on a primary school in the southern Iranian city of Minab killed nearly 170 people, most of them school children. The attacks targeted not only military and nuclear sites but also schools, hospitals, and residential areas.

Iran's retaliatory missile and drone strikes against Israel and US bases in the Persian Gulf region pushed Washington toward accepting a ceasefire with Tehran on April 8. However, Iranian officials say US demands remain "excessive, unrealistic, and unacceptable," hindering efforts to reach a permanent diplomatic settlement.

Germany condones aggression

The US-Israeli campaign has drawn widespread international criticism, but Germany is among



a small number of countries that have not issued a clear condemnation of the strikes. Instead, Germany, alongside France and the United Kingdom, issued a joint statement at the start of the conflict condemning Iranian attacks and calling for restraint, without explicitly condemning the US-Israeli strikes.

Chancellor Friedrich Merz has described the war as "completely unnecessary" and warned of its global economic and geopolitical consequences, but stopped short of formally denouncing the United States or Israel. Some German political figures, including the president in separate remarks, have described aspects of the conflict as a "breach of international law," though this has not been framed as an official government position against the US-Israeli aggression as a whole.

Merz has also said that Israel was "doing the dirty work for all of us" in reference to its strikes on Iran. The remarks drew criticism

from opposition politicians in Germany, who argued that the wording was inappropriate and risked escalating tensions. It also prompted criticism from legal and policy analysts. Iranian officials rejected the remarks and called for clarification through diplomatic channels.

On Friday, Merz attempted to appease President Donald Trump.

He said Iran must return to negotiations with the United States to end the conflict and urged Tehran to stop disrupting navigation in the Strait of Hormuz. In a social media statement, he said he had spoken with Trump and that both agreed Iran should return to the negotiating table and must not be allowed to obtain nuclear weapons.

Repression of Palestinian activists

German authorities have also taken a strict stance toward pro-Palestinian activism. The clashes on Saturday with

pro-Palestinian protesters, some of whom carried Palestinian symbols, have been seen by critics as reflecting this broader approach.

Germany's domestic intelligence agency, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV), has reportedly flagged certain symbols as potential indicators of extremism. These include the watermelon motif when used to depict Palestine, the slogan "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free," and imagery such as Handala in certain interpretations. Civil liberties groups and pro-Palestinian activists argue that such classifications risk securitizing cultural and political symbols and could restrict legitimate expression and peaceful protest.

Appeasing Israel

Germany has traditionally aligned itself closely with US and EU positions on Middle East security issues, particularly in relation to Israel's security and Western approaches toward Iran's nuclear program. Berlin's post-World War II doctrine of supporting Israel as a state principle continues to heavily shape its foreign policy, public diplomacy, and official reactions to regional conflicts. Critics argue that this framework has effectively translated into political cover for Israeli military actions, while limiting or delaying explicit condemnation even in cases involving large-scale civilian casualties in Gaza and Iran-related escalations.

Qalibaf appointment elevates Iran-China coordination to highest political level

From Page 1 ▶ Before this, the late Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Ali Larijani, had acted as the Leader's special representative for China affairs. Larijani was assassinated in a US-Israeli attack on March 17.

Iran's current ambassador to China, Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli, also serves as the president's representative for China affairs.

Since the start of the US-Israel war on February 28, China has taken a clear and firm diplomatic position, condemning the strikes as a violation of international law and Iran's sovereignty. Beijing has repeatedly called for an immediate ceasefire and an end to aggression, stressing respect for territorial integrity. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has held multiple urgent phone calls with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, reaffirming China's support for Iran.

Earlier this month, Araghchi made an official

visit to China and supported President Xi Jinping's four-point peace plan for the Middle East.

Following Araghchi's China trip, President Donald Trump held talks with his Chinese counterpart in Beijing during his three-day visit to the East Asian nation. But he failed to push China to change its policy toward Iran or take a position in favor of the US.

"China's position on the Iran situation is very clear. The conflict has inflicted severe losses on the people in Iran and other regional countries. Finding an early way to resolve the situation is in the interest of not only the US and Iran, but also regional countries and the rest of the world," a Chinese Foreign Ministry statement said while Trump was in Beijing.

An April 8 ceasefire between Iran and the US, following 39 days of war, has failed to permanently end the conflict due to what



Tehran calls Washington's excessive demands. Thousands of Iranian people lost their lives in the joint US-Israeli strikes. In response, Iran carried out 100 waves of military operations against Israel and American bases in the Persian Gulf region.

LATEST NEWS

Iran's Foreign Ministry: US, Israel fabricating 'grand lie' to justify 'war of choice'

In a post on X, Esmail Baqaei, the spokesperson for Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, accused the United States and Israel of manufacturing a false narrative to justify their "illegal war of choice" against Iran.

According to Baghaei, the latest "grand lie" being promoted is the claim that the US and Israel are acting to "preserve peace and stability in global energy markets."

He argued that, in reality, it was the "reckless warmongering" of the two regimes that shattered promising diplomatic processes. Through an unprovoked military aggression against Iran, Baqaei stated, Washington and Tel Aviv deliberately injected insecurity into vital energy routes—only to then blame Iran for destabilization.

The spokesperson described this as a cynical application of Joseph Goebbels' infamous dictum: "Accuse others of what you yourself are doing."

"They manufacture crisis and war, then escalate further under the noble banner of 'restoring stability' and 'defending peace,'" Baqaei wrote, quoting the Roman historian Tacitus: "They create a desolation and call it peace."

Iran's military warn US after Trump's rhetoric

A senior spokesman for the Iranian Armed Forces, Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi, reacted to US President Donald Trump's repeated threats, stating that any new aggression against

Iran would result in "more crushing and severe blows." He warned that Trump's policies would sink America into a "self-made quagmire."

Fate of Palestine to be decided by Palestinians: Qalibaf

Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf stated that the destiny of Palestine will be shaped by Palestinians themselves. His message followed the martyrdom of Qassam Brigades commander of Izz El-Din Al-Haddad, killed by Israel in an airstrike on Gaza City.

Iran, Qatar FMs hold talks on regional developments over phone

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi held a telephone conversation with his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani on Sunday evening.

During the phone call, Araghchi and Al Thani exchanged views on the latest regional developments.

Brazil's Lula: I oppose US war on Iran, and Trump knows it

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has declared his strong opposition to the United States' war against Iran, adding that US President Donald Trump is fully aware of his stance.

"Trump knows that I oppose the war against Iran and intervention in Venezuela, and that I condemn the genocide in Palestine," Lula said.

China reaffirms role as constructive peace partner in West Asia

A Chinese embassy spokesperson in India said

China will continue to be a constructive partner for peace in the Middle East.

Diplomat Yu Jing cited Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi's appreciation for China's role in restoring Iran-Saudi Arabia ties. "China will continue to be a constructive partner for peace," she wrote on X. China mediated the March 2023 Beijing Agreement, ending seven years of severed diplomatic relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Qatar backs Pakistan's Iran mediation efforts

Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani affirmed full support for Pakistan's mediation efforts to end the crisis in Iran through peaceful means during a phone call with Pakistani PM Shehbaz Sharif, Qatar's foreign ministry said.

US global power has 'collapsed' says Iran's Defense Ministry spokesperson

Iran's Defense Ministry spokesman Reza Talei-Nik said the US-Israeli war on Iran has shifted the global order. "America's global hegemony has collapsed," he stated, adding that the world is moving toward multilateralism to replace American unilateralism.

Trump, Netanyahu discuss Iran in phone call: Axios

Axios reported, citing an Israeli official, that US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu discussed the Iranian issue during a recent phone call.

SPORTS

Foolad Sirjan runners-up at 2026 AVC Volleyball Champions League

TEHRAN - Iran's Foolad Sirjan claimed the silver medal at the 2026 AVC Men's Volleyball Champions League after a 3-1 defeat to Indonesia's Jakarta Bhayangkara Presisi on Sunday's final.

The match, held at the Terpadu Gymnasium in Pontianak, saw the host side capitalize on the fervent home crowd support to secure the title with set scores of 25-20, 26-24, 23-25, and 23-25.

Earlier in the day, Japan's JTEKT Stings Aichi earned third place by sweeping South Korea's Hyundai Capital Skywalkers 3-0.

Foolad Sirjan's impressive run to the final included decisive victories over Jakarta Garuda Jaya and Japan's JTEKT Stings Aichi.

Iran's Yousefi wins silver at 2026 Asian Weightlifting Championships

TEHRAN - Iran's Alireza Yousefi secured a silver medal in the +110kg category at the 2026 Asian Weightlifting Championships on Sunday.

Yousefi delivered a strong performance, lifting 187kg in the snatch and 261kg in the clean and jerk for a combined total of 448kg, earning second place on the podium.

Bahrain's Gor Minasyan took gold with a total lift of 457kg (212kg snatch, 245kg clean and jerk), while South Korea's Son Yeongwan claimed bronze with 416kg (175kg snatch, 241kg clean and jerk).

The 2026 Asian Weightlifting Championships were held in Gandhinagar, India, from May 11 to 17.

Norouzi: My goal is to win Iran's first women's rowing gold in Nagoya

TEHRAN - Zeynab Norouzi, the women's national rowing team athlete, expressed his desire to win a gold medal at the 2026 Asian Games to be held in Nagoya, Japan.

Norouzi is one of the most decorated Iranian women rowers. She also aims to book a place in the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

"I am currently following intensive training at the Zanjan Dam and am putting all my effort into reaching the highest level of physical and technical readiness. My goal is to reach full preparedness for the Nagoya Asian Games so that I can deliver my best performance in this competition," she said.

"My ultimate goal at the Nagoya Asian Games is to win a gold medal. I want to be the first Iranian female athlete in the sport of rowing to stand on the top podium and win a gold medal at the Asian Games," Norouzi added.

Referring to her long-term vision for her professional future, she added: "Despite my focus on the Asian Games, my mind is also focused on the Olympic path from now on. Planning to qualify for the Los Angeles Olympics is on my agenda, and I will do my best to achieve an outstanding result at the Olympic level."

Iran volleyball to hold friendly matches in Brazil

TEHRAN - Iran's national volleyball team

will face Brazil in two preparatory friendly matches at the Brazilian national team training camp as part preparation for the 2026 Men's Volleyball Nations League (VNL).

The preliminary round will feature 18 teams: Iran, Italy, Argentina, Serbia, Cuba, Japan, Brazil, Turkey, Bulgaria, Germany, France, USA, Canada, Poland, Slovenia, Ukraine, China, and Belgium.

Team Mell have started their preparatory training on May 1 in Tehran.

The Brazilian Volleyball Federation has sent an official invitation to Iran's national team for a preparatory training camp.

With FIVB's support and follow-up, and with the approval of Roberto Piazza, the Iranian Volleyball Federation accepted the invitation. Iran's national team camp will be held from May 31 to June 7, including two friendly matches, at the special Brazilian national volleyball team training facility.

Iran will begin its preparatory camp in Brazil ahead of the first week of the VNL on June 1. After completing their final training sessions and two friendly matches against Brazil on June 3 and June 5, the team will travel to Brasilia on June 9 — the host city for the first week of competition — where they will face the tournament host, Brazil, in their opening match.

In the first week of the 2026 Men's VNL preliminary round (Group stage), Iran will compete in Brasilia, the capital of Brazil, from June 11 to 15 against: Brazil (June 12), Bulgaria (June 12), Argentina (June 14), and Belgium (June 15).

FIFA holds 'positive' talks with Iranian football officials on World Cup

TEHRAN - FIFA Secretary-General Mattias Grafstrom held a constructive and positive meeting with Iran's FA (FFIRI) President Mehdi Taj on Saturday, expressing confidence about the country's participation at this year's World Cup.

Iran are scheduled to play all three of their group matches in the United States but the team's participation in the June 11 to July 19 tournament has been in question since the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran in late February.

"We've had an excellent meeting and constructive meeting together with the Iran FA," Grafstrom said during a visit to Istanbul. "We're working closely together and looking very much forward to welcoming them in the FIFA World Cup."

More questions have arisen after FFIRI's Taj was refused entry to Canada for the FIFA Congress in Vancouver earlier this month.

Grafstrom declined to provide details on the visa situation for Iran's players, but said the two sides had the opportunity to discuss some of the operational matters and had a positive exchange.

Taj told Reuters that FFIRI had a very good meeting with Grafstrom and other FIFA officials.

"I am pleased they listened to Iran's points, all 10 points that we had raised, and they offered solutions for each of them. I hope, God willing, that our national team can go to the World Cup without any problems and achieve very good results there," he said.

Asked if FIFA had secured assurances on entry and visa arrangements for Iran's players, Grafstrom declined to elaborate.

"We've discussed all relevant matters, but I think it's not the place to discuss the details," he said. "Overall, a very positive meeting and we're looking forward to continuing the dialogue."

Iran had asked for their World Cup matches to be switched to Mexico but FIFA President Gianni Infantino insists that all games must be played at the grounds originally scheduled.

Iran are scheduled to get their World Cup campaign under way against New Zealand in Los Angeles on June 15. They are also due to play Belgium and Egypt in Group G.

Agriculture ministry's roadmap for price control; from supporting production to tackling overpricing

TEHRAN- Akbar Fathi, Deputy for Planning and Economy of the Ministry of Agriculture, wrote in a note about the ministry's roadmap for controlling prices, from supporting production to dealing with overpricing, which was published in IRNA and appears below.

Appreciating the clear, responsible, and hope-inspiring message of the respected President in supporting the staff of the Ministry of Agriculture, which acknowledged with a realistic view the round-the-clock efforts of the forces of this organization from the remotest border villages to the capital, it must be emphasized that these words for the great family of Agriculture Ministry are not merely an administrative appreciation, but a spiritual support and an additional responsibility to continue serving the people and protecting the country's food security.

The President's emphasis on the need to use all capacities to control prices and support people's livelihoods shows that the issue of food security and market stability is one of the government's main priorities, and the Ministry of Agriculture considers itself duty-bound to move in this direction with all its might.

The reality is that the market for agricultural products and basic commodities is an interconnected system of production, supply, transportation, distribution, storage, and supervision, and any disruption in one of these links can affect the final price of goods and people's livelihoods. Therefore, the solution for controlling prices is not limited to sporadic crackdowns or short-term measures, but requires comprehensive planning, inter-sectoral coordination, and continuous management of the chain from production to consumption.

On this basis, the first and most important priority of the Ministry of Agriculture is the sustainability and continuity of production; because as long as production does not continue steadily and economically in the country, market stability will not be sustainable either. Along this path, the timely supply of inputs needed for the agricultural, livestock, and poultry sectors is being seriously pursued so that producers do not face problems in supplying animal feed, fertilizer, seeds, pesticides, and other requirements. Also, removing production obstacles, facilitating administrative processes, reducing unnecessary bureaucracy, and supporting the working capital of activists in this sector are among the measures that can lead to a reduction in production costs and ultimately a lower final price for the consumer.

Today, farmers, herders, and producers are the front line of securing the country's food security, and it is essential that they have confidence that production is economically viable for them. If the producer operates in stable conditions, the market will also move towards calm. For this reason, targeted support for production is considered the most important tool for sustainable price control.

In the next step, smart market regulation and creating a balance between supply and demand will be pursued with greater precision. The Ministry of Agriculture, by utilizing strategic reserves, continuously monitoring the market, and carefully planning to manage the flow of goods, will try to prevent sudden fluctuations. In situations where some provinces, especially metropolitan areas like Tehran, due to high consumption volumes, depend on the supply of goods from other provinces, extensive coordination is underway for the timely transfer of products and continuous supply of market needs so that temporary shortages do not cause price increases or market turmoil.

Another important axis is reforming and strengthening the distribution network and shortening the distance between producer and consumer. In many cases, price increases are more the result of numerous intermediaries and non-transparent distribution than of production shortages. Accordingly, the development of direct supply networks, the use of monitorable platforms, the strengthening of production and distribution cooperatives, and increasing the direct supply of agricultural products have been placed on the agenda. The shorter and more transparent the distribution path, the smaller the share of intermediation will be, and goods will reach the people at a fairer price.

Simultaneously, field supervision of the market and dealing with violations are being



pursued more seriously. In this context, continuous cooperation and coordination have been established between the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, the State Disciplinary Organization, the Chamber of Guilds, and other supervisory bodies so that the market is monitored daily and any hoarding, overpricing, disruption of the distribution network, and abuse of market conditions are met with legal and decisive action. Market stability will be sustainable when law-abiding economic actors are supported and violators have no opportunity to create turmoil in the market.

Alongside executive measures, information transparency also plays an important role in market management. Part of the market turmoil is caused by the dissemination of incomplete news, false information, or rumors that lead to emotional behavior in purchasing and distribution. Accurate and continuous information about the production status, reserves, the process of supplying goods, and market regulation plans can help increase public trust and reduce concerns.

Within this framework, on Wednesday, May 13th (23 Ordibehesht), through a letter signed by the respected Minister of Agriculture, the directives and emphases of the respected President regarding the need to control prices, ensure the stable supply of basic commodities, and intensify market supervision were communicated in the form of a directive to all Provincial Agriculture Departments. This directive emphasizes the mobilization of all provincial capacities, coordination with executive and supervisory bodies, and continuous monitoring of the market situation across the country so that necessary measures are implemented with greater speed and coherence.

Today, the entire Ministry Agriculture team, from experts stationed in villages and production centers to managerial staff and the respected Minister of Agriculture, stand alongside the people and producers, striving with all their capacity to maintain market stability, ensure food security, and reduce pressure on household livelihoods. We believe that with empathy, inter-agency coordination, support for domestic production, and continuous market supervision, we can manage conditions in such a way that the dear people of Iran endure the least possible pressure, and greater stability and calm prevail in the market for basic goods.

Government's supportive policy for domestic production continues: agriculture minister

The Minister of Agriculture stated that the government's supportive policy for domestic production and producers continues.

According to the Mehr News Agency, quoting the Ministry of Agriculture, Gholamreza Nouri, Minister of Agriculture, spoke on Saturday (May 16) at a brainstorming session with members of the Government's Information Council held at the Ministry of Agriculture. Referring to the experience of managing the basic commodities market during crisis periods, he said: "In certain periods, including wartime conditions and tense times, a set of decisions and management methods were adopted that can also be used in non-wartime periods today."

Stating that during the recent war, the President supported executive bodies with appropriate authority and field presence, he added: "During that same period, several meetings and direct presence of officials in the ministry and among operational colleagues helped improve coordination in market management."

The Minister of Agriculture emphasized: "Of course, the strategic directives of the late Leader of the Revolution regarding the necessity of 'working twice as hard in the field of basic commodities' played an important role in planning and preparing the agricultural sector for crisis conditions."

Poll shows 8 in 10 Americans blame Trump for high gasoline prices

TEHRAN- A recent Reuters poll reveals that nearly eight out of ten Americans hold Trump responsible for soaring gasoline prices, signaling a sharp decline in his political standing.

With fuel costs now exceeding \$4.50 per gallon nationwide following the administration's military confrontation with Iran, public frustration is mounting.

The poll found that approximately 77 percent of registered voters, including a majority of Republicans, blame the president for the price surge at the pump.

Democrats were quick to seize on the findings, arguing that the White House has lost touch with struggling families. "This is clear evidence of an administration in denial," one party strategist said.



The political damage extends beyond fuel prices. A separate Reuters poll conducted in May found that only 30 percent of U.S. adults approve of Trump's handling of the

economy, an issue that had long been a cornerstone of his political strength. Just months ago, the president consistently polled higher on economic matters.

As midterm elections approach, analysts warn that rising living costs could become a decisive factor for voters who feel left behind by foreign policy decisions made in Washington. The White House did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

With midterm elections looming, the blame placed on Trump for rising fuel costs represents a significant political liability. What was once his strongest talking point, economic stewardship, has become a vulnerability.

Whether the president can regain public trust on kitchen-table issues remains uncertain, but the poll numbers leave little room for optimism inside his campaign headquarters.

Trump's trip to China had no economic achievements: expert



TEHRAN- An economic analyst, referring to Trump's recent trip to China, said: This trip had no strategic achievements, especially in the economic sphere, for the United States, and contrary to what was imagined, it was not useful for reopening the Strait of Hormuz.

Donald Trump's recent trip to China took place at a time when many international analysts had assessed, before it occurred, that this trip was an action to compensate for Washington's strategic failure in the tariff war against Beijing and to find a joint solution for reopening the Strait of Hormuz for the passage of commercial ships and oil tankers. However, evidence shows that the United States was unable to achieve its primary goals on this trip.

The tariff war, whose main goal was to curb China's economic growth and reduce its trade surplus with the United States, faced a smart reaction from Beijing, including the use of the rare earth metals lever, as well as legal challenges in the US Supreme Court. This failure has effectively changed the atmosphere of relations between the two countries. It seems that the United States, at least in the medium term, will not be able to use a direct aggressive tone against China and will be forced to adjust its approach.

On the other hand, the two countries also did not reach a common result or strategy on the issue of the Strait of Hormuz, and even the issue of persuading China to stop purchasing Iranian oil did not lead to the desired outcome for the White House.

China is winner of Trump's tariff war

Majid Shakeri, an economic analyst, stated in an interview with IRNA regarding Trump's trip to China and evaluating its results: The consensus among Western analysts is that Trump's relations with China in all aspects are influenced by his last year's failure in the tariff war against China. Although the tariff war was initially imposed on almost all countries in the world, its ultimate target was China, because China has the largest trade surplus compared to the rest of the world, especially the United States.

He added: The Chinese reaction through the use of the rare earth metals lever on one hand, and the questioning of the legal basis

of the tariff war by the US Supreme Court on the other, caused a significant failure for the United States. It seems the Americans, at least for a period of four to five years until they can somewhat address the rare earth metals issue, are forced to back down from a direct aggressive tone towards China. Although they maintain pressure through various means, they cannot overtly apply direct pressure on the Chinese side like in Trump's first term or Biden's term.

Blockade of Strait of Hormuz or action against China?

Regarding Iran, this economic analyst said: The Chinese consider the blockade as directly against themselves and view it within the framework of US naval pressure against their own navy. For this reason, they are reviewing and examining various scenarios about the meaning of the blockade, not only in the Iran case but throughout the region from the Sea of Oman to the Taiwan Strait.

Shakeri stated: Since it was announced that the Americans would gradually prepare an independent fleet to begin operations in the Indian Ocean in 2019, this issue has become very frequent for the Chinese side, to the extent that the Chinese fundamentally consider the blockade issue as a direct action against themselves, not just against Iran.

Insecurity in Persian Gulf by US is not in anyone's interest

Shakeri also said regarding China's oil supply: Given the worsening climate conditions in the world, the Chinese have taken the settlement of the energy program seriously, and regardless of economic variables, for security reasons, they try as much as possible not to disrupt the order and composition of their energy. This issue has become more serious and important than before after the fall of Venezuela, because the Americans are clearly using the tool of controlling China's oil input as a means to confront China.

This economic analyst added: In Tehran's expert circles, it was assumed that the Chinese side would not cooperate with the blockade. Now it has become clear in practice that the issue of the Strait of Hormuz is primarily resolved by the removal of the American blockade. As long as the blockade is not lifted or remains in place, it is obvious that Iran has no incentive to reopen the strait and help the passage of goods through it.

Shakeri continued: The Americans initially made the strait completely insecure and effectively turned it into a war zone; this very issue has conveyed to Iran the necessity that as long as the Americans continue the blockade, it must maintain security control over the strait? in its new concept, meaning from southern Iraq to the west of the UAE. The Chinese know this.

Controlling inflation, preserving employment, main priority of CBI

TEHRAN- The Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) identified controlling inflation as the main priority of monetary policy-making and said: All actions and programs of the Central Bank are carried out within the framework of this strategic goal.

According to IRNA reporting from the Central Bank, Abdolnaser Hemmati, emphasizing the control of the country's chronic inflation factors such as the monetization of the govern-

ment's budget deficit due to the effects of war and the continuation of sanctions, stated: While supporting the stability of the government's financing system, the Central Bank pursues the necessary measures to minimize its inflationary effects.

The head of the Central Bank's Supreme Council stated: In the area of monetary policy, the Central Bank seriously pursues controlling and reducing the pace of liquidity growth to prevent

the experience of high liquidity growth and the resulting inflation.

He added: This policy is doubly important especially in circumstances where the rial financing needs of the government have increased due to declining government revenues. Liquidity growth and the monetary base are under precise daily management, and liquidity absorption tools are employed to manage it.

Hemmati said: Preserving and

rebuilding the production and supply chain is also on the Central Bank's agenda. Accordingly, in the current circumstances, preventing commodity shortages and preserving employment have gained higher priority. The banking supervision duty is also completely focused on this axis so that credit resources are effectively placed at the service of producers, exporters, and employment preservation without creating systemic risk.

Hezbollah warns Lebanese authorities on talks with Israel

From page 1 ▶ The resistance movement pointed to the ongoing Israeli occupation of Lebanese territories, continued crimes of killing, destruction, and leveling of villages, especially in the south, along with the complete violation of Lebanese airspace and waters, and the targeted assassinations of civilians and resistance fighters.

Hezbollah warned against “attempts to reproduce something even more dangerous and deviant than the May 17 agreement” through talk of a “full and comprehensive peace agreement” between the Lebanese authorities and the Zionist entity as “the enemy of the land, the people, culture, and history.” The statement considered this a clear, blatant violation of the Lebanese constitution and laws, a renunciation of Lebanon’s history, the sacrifices of its people, their steadfastness, and the greatness of their resistance.

Hezbollah added that by such actions, the Lebanese authorities “have drifted far away, disregarded the lessons and examples of history, and absolved the enemy of its aggression and occupation,” treating it “as if it were a peaceful, recognized entity.”

In its statement, Hezbollah affirmed its rejection of “any external diktats, pressures, or guardianships, American or otherwise” that seek to impose a political path on Lebanon that “violates its sovereignty, independence, and dignity” and contradicts the most basic national principles that all Lebanese should agree upon.

The statement stressed that what the occupation regime’s leaders announce regarding their settlement projects in Lebanese lands confirms their persistent ambitions for land, water, and natural resources, seek-



U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Michel Issa, Lebanon’s Ambassador to the U.S. Nada Hamadeh Moawad, and Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Yechiel Leiter at the U.S. State Department

ing to strip Lebanon of its strengths and resources.

The resistance front affirmed that Lebanon’s acceptance of direct negotiations with the Zionist regime “serves to enhance and increase the enemy’s gains at the expense of Lebanon and its people.”

Hezbollah called on the Lebanese authorities “not to go too far with misguided options regarding the enemy,” warning of the consequences for Lebanon’s stability as a state and society. It also demanded that they “stop the series of concessions and the squandering of rights and national dignity,” commit to the national interest, and abandon “the illusion that a peace agreement can be reached with this usurping, covetous, occupying enemy.”

The resistance movement relayed the questions of the Lebanese people in general, and southerners in particular, to the Lebanese authorities: What has the concession-based path, adopted since the ceasefire agreement on November 27, 2024,

and then moving to direct negotiations, achieved for Lebanon’s benefit? It affirmed that the result has been “more pressure, more concessions, more aggression, and more destruction.”

Hezbollah emphasized that the authorities pursued this path under the pretext that it was “the only way to secure a ceasefire and stop Israeli attacks,” despite the “constitutional violations and lack of national consensus” surrounding this option. It asked: “Now, after a month of following this approach, what have you achieved for Lebanon?”

It criticized the Lebanese authorities for not retreating from this step, as they now prepare to move toward a political and security path that would “lengthen the chain of gratuitous concessions offered to the enemy,” who responds after every negotiation round by escalating its attacks, expanding its targeting of Lebanese villages and towns, continuing to kill Lebanese people, destroying their homes, and violating

Lebanese sovereignty.

According to the statement, many Lebanese today see extending the ceasefire through this path as extending their own killing and providing cover for aggression against them and their homeland.

Hezbollah called on the concerned authorities to cooperate through national consensus to achieve national principles: ensuring the enemy’s full withdrawal from all Lebanese territories, achieving a complete and final halt to the aggression, freeing prisoners, allowing immediate return of Lebanese people to their villages and towns with dignity and pride, and launching reconstruction without restrictions, conditions, or obstacles of any kind.

Hezbollah affirmed that the Zionist occupation regime will never find stability on Lebanese soil as long as the valiant resistance exists, with its heroic fighters, its self-sacrificing and courageous people, and all the national forces and honorable free people from every sect and region of this country.

The resistance movement concluded its statement by saying: “The dawn of liberation, freedom, and full independence will surely break, whether in the long-term or the short-term, and Lebanon will return as a free, sovereign, and independent master of itself.”

Hezbollah continues to confront the Israeli Occupation Forces, along the Lebanese border, targeting gatherings of soldiers and military vehicles. The regime’s military has confirmed the death of another officer who served as a platoon commander in the elite Golani Brigade, following the explosion of a bomb-laden drone launched by Lebanese resistance.

Addicted to imperialism: US targets Cuba despite a history of humiliating failures

From page 1 ▶ The human cost of this economic terrorism is devastatingly clear:

Hospitals are systematically starved of basic medicines and lifesaving equipment.

The intentional targeting of the island’s energy sector causes daily blackouts, leaving families to watch food rot in their refrigerators.

New American sanctions target independent international companies, halting maritime shipments and artificially spiking food prices.

Blockading a small island nation by threatening its global trading partners is not a demonstration of military prowess. It is an immoral, illegal violation of international law conducted by an empire addicted to economic bullying.

For Cubans, the head of the CIA is a figure synonymous with state-sponsored terror. The agency’s historical obsession with destroying the Cuban Revolution is well-documented in Havana’s museums, which chronicle decades of bizarre and nefarious plots—ranging from poisoned scuba suits to exploding cigars aimed at Fidel Castro.

Yet, for all its resources, Washington’s track record against the island is defined by utter failure. The infamous Bay of Pigs invasion remains a permanent monument to American military miscalculation, proving that imperial arrogance is no match for a population defend-

ing its sovereignty.

The pattern of reckless military adventures

Washington’s latest moves against Cuba fit into a broader, psychological pattern of behavior: an addiction to waging war on smaller nations to mask its own declining global power. When confronting powerful adversaries, the U.S. establishment frequently falters, but it routinely flexes its muscles against smaller states to maintain an illusion of dominance.

However, recent history shows that these reckless adventures inevitably end in disgrace:

The 20-year military occupation and nation-building experiment in Afghanistan failed. It was forced to flee the country in chaos and disgrace.

Its confrontational warfare orchestrated alongside Israel has led to severe loss of military prestige, leaving the U.S. pleading with global powers like China to de-escalate its humiliation.

“Submission diplomacy” against Cuba via economic starvation and threats of intervention has met with a unified population prepared for a grueling war of attrition.

“Ready to give our lives”

If Washington expects Havana to bend the knee to the “Venezuela model” of forced re-

gime change, it has severely miscalculated once again. Rumors of U.S. maneuvers against revolutionary leaders have only hardened Cuba’s resolve.

The island is actively preparing for what Fidel Castro termed the “war of the entire population”, a Vietnam-style guerrilla strategy designed to trap any foreign invader in a punishing war of attrition.

The Cuban Civil Defense has already distributed emergency protocols, and everyday citizens are receiving military training to defend their neighborhoods.

On May Day, Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel echoed the sentiment of the island, declaring a profound conviction to give his life for the revolution if Washington chooses the path of military aggression.

Though the Cuban armed forces may lack the bloated, high-tech budget of the Pentagon, military historians note that their capacity for mass mobilization and disciplined resistance makes them a formidable foe on the ground. Times have changed, and the world has evolved, but Washington remains trapped in its old, destructive habits—blind to the reality that its bullying tactics are no longer working.

The Trump-Xi summit in Beijing and the rise of corporate diplomacy

Who really rules the world today, the state or the market?

Or is it just a handful of people behind the scenes?

By Bobby Ciputra

JAKARTA — U.S. President Donald Trump paid a two-day state visit to Beijing on May 14 and 15, meeting Chinese President Xi Jinping. It was the first U.S. presidential visit to China in nearly a decade.

The state visit did not resemble mere state diplomacy. Instead, it increasingly resembled a global boardroom meeting. Trump deliberately blurred the lines between state authority and the penetrating power of private corporations. This marked a paradigm shift in aggressive business diplomacy, where corporate interests became instruments of diplomacy.

Trump brought a large entourage of the most influential corporate CEOs from the U.S. This entourage of CEOs was divided into two sectors: technology and finance. The



CEOs from the technology sector included: Elon Musk (Tesla & SpaceX), Tim Cook (Apple), Jensen Huang (Nvidia), Kelly Ortberg (Boeing), Cristiano Amon (Qualcomm), Sanjay Mehrotra (Micron Technology), Jim Anderson (Coherent), Jacob Thaysen (Illumina), and H. Lawrence Culp Jr. (GE Aerospace).

Meanwhile, the CEOs covering the financial

sector are: Larry Fink (BlackRock), Stephen Schwarzman (Blackstone), David Solomon (Goldman Sachs), Jane Fraser (Citigroup), Ryan McInerney (Visa), and Michael Miebach (Mastercard).

The message is quite clear. Trump is using the bargaining power of these corporations as both a shield and a bluff in bilateral negotiations. Diplomacy is no longer solely carried out by the state. Corporations have become instruments of foreign policy. All the technology, financial, and industrial giants he brought in have crucial business in China. They have direct interests in supply chains, manufacturing plants, investments, and even restrictions on artificial intelligence (AI) chips. Trump appears to be building a new model: the state and the market moving in tandem.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

When international law becomes a post-mortem archive



From page 1 ▶ Smotrich and Ben-Gvir are not incidental names, but the unapologetic standard-bearers and the purest expressions of an expansionist, eliminationist system built on siege, annexation, and the normalization of the dispossession and mass killing of Palestinians. The reported move against them is welcome, but it also reads like a legal history written after the bodies have already been counted.

International law as archive

Smotrich and Ben-Gvir symbolize the merger of ideology and exterminationist policy. Smotrich has openly defended the strangling of Gaza and treated starvation as a tool of policy, while Ben-Gvir has turned racial provocation, prison abuse, and settler militancy into a governing doctrine, vividly illustrated by his grotesque celebration of a birthday cake adorned with a hangman’s noose over a map of Gaza.

They are not fringe extremists hovering around power; they are the power. That is precisely why any legal action against them should have come much earlier, before the logic of ethnic cleansing had been given so much time to harden into practice.

The deeper failure is that international law has behaved less like prevention than like an archive. It records the abuse, names the abuse, and waits while the abuse continues.

That is not justice in any meaningful sense for the civilians buried under rubble, or for the families trying to survive under siege in a territory where hospitals, schools, water systems, and aid routes have all been pushed to the edge of collapse.

The war on ICC

The ICC itself has not been allowed to function normally. Its prosecutor, Karim Khan, has faced a sustained campaign of intimidation, leaks, and political pressure since he moved toward warrants against Israeli officials.

Middle East Eye has reported that threats, surveillance fears, and a stream of damaging allegations appeared precisely as Khan’s work became most dangerous to the powerful.

The United States has been central to that method. Republican senators reportedly warned Khan, “Target Israel and we will target you,” and the Trump administration escalated the campaign by sanctioning ICC officials and even Palestinian rights organizations linked to the court’s work.

The message to The Hague was blunt: pursue Israel, and your institution will pay. This is how

international law is strangled in practice, not by argument but by leverage.

Built to fail

That pressure exposes the real condition of the “rules-based international order.” It is not rules-based at all when the accused is a U.S.-backed ally.

When the ICC moved against Vladimir Putin, Western capitals praised the court as courageous. When it turns toward Israeli officials, the same governments suddenly discover concerns about politics, jurisdiction, and overreach. The hypocrisy is so routine that it has become structural.

And the consequences are visible far beyond the courtroom. Gaza continues to suffer under blockade, bombardment, and hunger, while the West Bank is carved up further by settlement expansion and settler violence.

Lebanon has been subjected to relentless, devastating strikes, while recent direct aggressions against Iran have shattered long-standing red lines and aggressively expanded the regional war map.

These relentless bloody escalations underscore the near-uselessness of international bodies, leaving global frameworks completely bypassed by the raw exercise of military force. The UN can issue condemnations, the ICC can investigate, but neither can compel the parties fueling the destruction to stop.

So yes, if these new warrants are confirmed, they will matter. They will matter because they name some of the people who helped design and defend an architecture of death. But they will not be enough.

That is the moral scandal at the center of this moment: the machinery of international justice is still alive enough to partly document atrocity, but too weak to interrupt it.

In Gaza, that weakness has meant starvation before scrutiny, annihilation before accountability, and impunity before anything resembling protection.

True accountability demands more than sealed warrants in The Hague. It requires dismantling the political and military lifelines that make such atrocities possible.

Without that, the ICC’s efforts will serve mainly as footnotes in the continuing story of a broken global order that functions as a post-mortem archive for the dead rather than a shield for the living.



Demonstrators pack the streets of London for the Nakba 78 March for Palestine on May 16, 2026, raising a massive wave of flags alongside prominent signs reading “Stop Arming Israel” and “Stop Bombing Gaza.” (AP)

Iran president cites ancient Abarkuh cypress in message aimed at Trump



TEHRAN - Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has invoked the 4,500-year-old Abarkuh cypress tree in central Iran in remarks directed at US President Donald Trump, using the ancient tree as a symbol of Iran's historical continuity and civilization.

On Sunday, Pezeshkian referred to the Sarv-e Abarkuh cypress as evidence of Iran's long-standing cultural and historical identity, contrasting the country's ancient roots with the comparatively of political history of the United States.

Pezeshkian supposed the tree had taken root in land known as Iran thousands of years ago, describing it as part of a civilization that existed long before the emergence of modern global powers.

"Aisa's oldest living organism, the ancient Abarkuh cypress tree - at least 4500 years old - is rooted on land that was already known as Iran at that time," the president wrote.

The United States has existed as an independent country for around 250 years, while Iran traces its historical and cultural heritage back several millennia through successive empires and dynasties. Iranian officials frequently refer to sites such as Persepolis, Pasargadae and Susa as examples of the country's ancient civilization and historical continuity.

The tree stands about 25 meters tall and has a trunk measuring approximately 11.5 meters in width and 18 meters in circum-

ference. Scientists estimate the age of the cypress at between 4,000 and 5,000 years, although some estimates suggest it could be older.

The tree has become one of Iran's most visited natural landmarks and attracts domestic and foreign tourists traveling through central Iran.

Iranian cultural narratives have long associated cypress trees with endurance, continuity and life. The tree is also linked to local legends and religious traditions. Some accounts attribute the planting of the tree to Japheth, son of Noah, while others connect it to Zoroaster, the ancient Iranian prophet.

Cypress trees have historically played a major role in Persian garden design and appear in Iranian poetry, art and architecture dating back to the Achaemenid era. Local legends state that this tree has a puzzling and mysterious soul that is living for thousands of years. When it comes to conservation and protection, it is obvious that naturally, all ancient and historical landmarks need care and protection, just like the case with Sarv-e Abarkuh, and several activities have been done to protect the straight and heavy Cypress.

The town of Abarkuh, located in Yazd province, lies along routes historically connected to the Silk Road and contains historical buildings and traditional houses dating back centuries.

Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Cueva de las Manos, Río Pinturas

The Cueva de las Manos, Río Pinturas, contains an exceptional assemblage of cave art, with many painted rock shelters, including a cave, with magnificent pictographies surrounded by an outstanding landscape, with the river running through a deep canyon, which were executed between 9,300 and 1,300 years ago.

The property takes its name (Cave of the Hands) from the stencilled outlines of human hands in the cave, but there are also many depictions of animals, such as guanacos (Lama guanicoe), still commonly found in the region, as well as hunting scenes that depict animals and human figures interacting in a dynamic and naturalistic manner.

The entrance to the Cueva is screened by a rock wall covered by many hand stencils. Within the rock shelter itself there are five concentrations of rock art, later figures and motifs often superimposed upon those from earlier periods. The paintings were executed with natural mineral pigments - iron oxides (red and purple), kaolin (white), and natrojarosite (yellow), manganese oxide (black) - ground and mixed with some form of binder.

The artistic sequence, which includes three main stylistic groups, began as early as the 10th millennium BP [Before Present]. The sequence is a long one: archaeological investigations have shown that the site was last inhabited around 700 CE by the possi-

ble ancestors of the first Tehuelche people of Patagonia. The Cueva is considered by the international scientific community to be one of the most important sites of the earliest hunter-gatherer groups in South America during Early Holocene that still maintains a good state of preservation and has a singular environment formation, unique at Santa Cruz province.

The rock art, its natural environment and the archaeological sites on this region are some of the very important reasons that made this area a focus for archaeological research for more than 25 years. They made an impact on the observer due not only the deep gorge walls surrounded by a privileged landscape, but also by the artistic compositions, variety of motifs and its polychromies.

These scenes represent a unique evidence to know about the first Patagonian hunters' behaviour and their hunting techniques. Cueva de las Manos, Río Pinturas contains an exceptional assemblage of cave art, unique in the world, for its age and continuity throughout time, the beauty and the preservation conditions of the paintings, the magnificence of the collection of stencilled outlines of human hands and the hunting scenes, as well as the environment that surrounds the place of exciting beauty and for being part of the cultural value of the site itself.

(Source: UNESCO)

Riab assessed against UN Tourism criteria for global recognition

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN - Officials in Iran's Khorasan Razavi province said the village of Riab in Gonabad County is being evaluated according to criteria set by the United Nations tourism body as part of its bid to be recognized among the world's best tourism villages.

Mohammad Rokni, deputy head of tourism at the Khorasan Razavi department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, said the assessment includes infrastructure, communications, health and safety, local community participation, protection of resources and attractions, environmental and social sustainability, and development of the village tourism economy.

Speaking on the sidelines of a training course on the management and operation of eco-lodges held in Riab village, Rokni said waste management, green tourism, accessible tourism and greater involvement of local communities were also among the evaluation indicators considered in the process.

Riab is one of Iran's candidates for the label of Best Tourism Villages awarded by the UN Tourism organization.

Rokni said the training workshops in Gonabad were aimed at strengthening the capabilities of people active in the tourism sector and improving the technical and managerial knowledge of operators of eco-lodges in the province.

"The goal of these courses is to improve the quality of services provided in eco-lodges, familiarize managers with the latest standards and approaches in the tourism industry, and promote the culture of sustainable tourism," he said.

He added that tourism had become one of the leading industries and an important source of income for many countries, while eco-lodges played a key role in providing visitors with experiences linked to local culture and traditions.

According to Rokni, the success of eco-lodges depends not



only on the natural and historical attractions of a destination, but also on management standards and the quality of services provided.

He said specialized training workshops such as those held in Gonabad were an important step toward improving the knowledge and skills of tourism operators.

"These courses help managers become familiar with digital marketing principles, human resource management, cost control, health and safety, and identification of target markets," Rokni said.

He described Riab as one of the villages selected among eight Iranian candidates for the UN Tourism recognition program.

The UN Tourism Best Tourism Villages initiative recognizes rural destinations that demonstrate sustainable tourism development, resilience and innovation. This year, 52 villages from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Middle East were selected from more than 270 applications submitted by 65 member states.

Iranian officials say the country's more than 60,000 villages represent a broad range of historical, cultural and environmental traditions and are part of efforts to expand rural tourism.

Rokni said social participation by residents had become one of the main elements in Riab's effort to gain international recognition.

He added that the village was not only notable for its historical and architectural features, but also for the role played by residents in restoring the historical fabric of the settlement and creating hospitality, accommodation and tourism facilities.

"In this village, people themselves have played an important role in reviving the historical texture and establishing reception, accommodation and tourism centers," he said.

Rokni said the nomination of Riab was the result of cooperation between local residents, provincial authorities and tourism officials.

"This is the result of the continuous efforts of officials, managers and especially the people of this village, who have preserved the heritage of previous generations and maintained it for the future," he said.

He described Riab as an example of the integration of history, culture and nature in tourism development.

Highlighting the role of eco-lodges in Riab's tourism strategy, Rokni said several eco-lodges had been established in recent years through cooperation between the provincial Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts department and local residents.

He added the accommodations had been restored in old houses while preserving traditional architecture.

"These eco-lodges provide visitors with an experience of rural life," Rokni said, adding that tourists could become familiar with local customs, traditions and cuisine during their stay.

Registered on Iran's national heritage list in 2008, Riab village is located about 275 kilometers from Mashhad in southeastern Gonabad County and lies close to the UNESCO-recognized Qasabeh qanat of Gonabad. The village is around 3 kilometers from the city of Gonabad.

Officials say Riab has preserved its traditional texture and architectural identity because of its long history in the region. Traditional houses with wooden roofs and mud-brick walls remain among the main features of the settlement. The structures reflect architectural patterns commonly associated with desert regions of Iran and include wind catchers, courtyards, basements, arches and domed roofs.

Iran has increased efforts in recent years to promote rural and sustainable tourism as part of broader initiatives to diversify tourism destinations beyond major urban and historical centers.

The UN Tourism recognition program has become one of the frameworks used by countries to promote rural destinations internationally and encourage investment in sustainable tourism infrastructure and local participation.

Echoes of the past: The Shahdad Standard



The Shahdad Standard consists of a square metal plate (made of arsenical copper) attached to a metal pole. At the top of the pole, above a conical stone base, sits a small metal bird of prey with its wings spread open. The plate bears a crowded scene of human, animal, plant, and geometric figures, first raised in relief through metal casting and then beautifully outlined and detailed with engraving. All

the people in this gathering hold their hands in a similar way, conveying a sense of mutual respect.

In the scene, a majestic man sits on a royal throne. His right hand is clenched at his waist, and his left hand is raised in front of him. Facing him, a lady with elegant hair and beautiful clothing is shown kneeling on her toes, accompanied by two maid-servants. All three have their right hands raised. At the lady's feet

stands an engraved jug. Behind the main male figure, a narrow, waisted, broad, chested man - probably bare from the waist up - stands with his right hand raised.

At the top of the composition, the sun appears prominently, with a small bull to its left. In the middle are a palm tree, two tamarisk trees, something like a game board or agricultural plots, and above them a stepped platform. At the bottom, two lions move toward a humped bull that stands between them, bellowing. Along the edges, intertwined ropes or serpents can be seen, together with a canopy above the head of the main figure.

The scene seems to show a relationship between the male and female protagonists and their attendants, expressed through the exchange of objects and ideas.

Discovered in Shahdad Cem-

etry of Kerman, southern Iran, the object dates from the Second half of the 3rd millennium BCE (Bronze Age). It measures 23.4 x 23.4 cm (flag plate); pole length approx. 120 cm and is being kept at the national Museum of Iran.

The Shahdad Standard is one of the most remarkable examples of the "intercultural style" from the Trans-Elamite cultural horizon on the Iranian Plateau. Based on its iconography, it was made shortly before the rise of the Akkadian dynasty in Mesopotamia. The object was discovered, along with a rich variety of funerary gifts, during Ali Hake-mi's 1969 excavations (Iranian calendar year 1348) in the western part of the Shahdad Cemetery, which is more than 4,000 years old. Recently, the National Museum of Iran documented this object using photogrammetry and produced a three-dimensional model of it.

Tourism figures up but business visits decline

The number of tourists travelling to Guernsey is up since three years ago - but business traveler influx has decreased in the same time period, new figures say.

A quarterly bulletin which outlines travel and accommodation figures has shown 5,676 leisure visitors to the island in the first quarter of 2026 - up 16% in three years.

However, there were 7,048 business visitors, down 21% in three years, and also down by 18% on last year.

Charlie Walker, co-chair of the States' Tourism Advisory Board, said the figures were

"encouraging", while a 60% jump in visitors from France showed Guernsey's appeal was "broadening".

The number of visitors traveling to Guernsey for leisure increased by more than 500 people compared to the first quarter of 2025.

Almost 1,200 visitors were from France in the first quarter of 2026 - a 60% increase compared with the same period last year, and an 82% increase compared with 2023.

Walker said: "For the tourism sector, rising bed nights and longer average stays translate directly into commercial opportunity.

"The challenge now is to sustain this momentum through peak summer season and beyond."

There were 169 visitors who arrived by yacht - 23% fewer than three years ago - while there were no cruise ship visits at it was out of season.

Of a total 26,631 visitors to Guernsey - up 2% compared to the first quarter of 2023 - 9,623 visitors said they were seeing friends or family.

(Source: BBC)

DOE, UNDP study impact of SDSs on biodiversity

TEHRAN – The Department of Environment (DOE), in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), has conducted studies on the impact of sand and dust storms (SDSs) on the country's biodiversity.

The studies have been carried out in Shahroud and Mehriz protected areas in Semnan and Yazd provinces, respectively, IRNA reported.

Dust storms are significant environmental challenges that adversely affect food security, human health, and the sustainable development process at national and regional levels.

Being located in an arid and semi-arid area, Iran has been negatively impacted by climate change. The rise in temperatures, drop in precipitation, intensified droughts, and frequent SDSs have not only threatened the ecosystem and biodiversity but also jeopardized the country's food security by exacerbating soil erosion, expanding desertification, and declining agricultural productivity.

The 30-month initiative aims to mitigate the impact of SDSs through enhancing environmental sustainability, climatic resilience, and public participation, which will help strengthen cooperation and attract financial assistance from the international community.

The scientific project also intends to identify dust hotspots, biodiversity, and the effects on local communities and their livelihoods, and offer proposals for policy making based on the findings.

Protected areas in Semnan province stretch to 2.3 million hectares, out of which some 15 to 20 thousand hectares of natural areas are under the DOE's supervision.

Turan Protected Area stands as the second-largest biosphere reserve in the world, surpassed only by the Serengeti in Tanzania. Spanning 1,470,640 hectares, it is also the second-largest protected area in Iran, after the Naybandan Wildlife Refuge in Tabas.

Being the only breeding habitat of the critically endangered Persian cheetah in the world, Touran protected area, in the east of Semnan province, is of great importance.

The animal is listed as one of the most critically endangered big cats in the world, so saving the Asiatic cheetah from extinction has turned into a shared responsibility.

According to the last report by



the 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.

Comprehensive plan for combating SDSs

In August 2025, the national specialized working group on sand and dust storms (SDSs), in cooperation with other governmental bodies, approved a comprehensive plan to address SDSs, which will be used as a national reference document to enhance the country's resilience against one of the most acute environmental threats.

At the 29th meeting of the national specialized working group on SDSs management, the 150-page comprehensive plan was developed with cross-sectoral collaboration of 15 executive agencies and government bodies, including the DOE, the ministries of agriculture, health, energy, and transport, as well as the Natural Resources Organization, Crisis Management Organization, and Meteorological Organization, IRNA reported.

The plan involves ten key strategies, hundreds of specific actions, performance indicators, an implementation timeline, and institutional labor division among responsible agencies.

In July 2025, President Masoud Pezeshkian issued an order calling for the establishment of a specialized working group to address SDSs, which have turned into a significant public health concern in the country.

In this line, the DOE presented a report on the hazards of SDSs as a comprehensive and growing threat, and enumerated the national plans and strategies to mitigate the impacts of SDSs, IRNA

reported.

Highlighting the significance of preserving the environment, as a critical issue of the country, the president ordered the establishment of a working group, consisting of experts, academics, representatives of ministries and executive agencies, to prepare and implement operational plans to combat the dust phenomenon, drawing on successful international experiences.

Dust storms are major environmental challenges that adversely impact food security, human health, and the sustainable development process at national and regional levels.

Kunming Biodiversity Fund to support Iran

The Kunming Biodiversity Fund (KBF) in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has allocated financial resources to Iran to help the country mitigate sand and dust storms' (SDSs) impacts.

According to the secretary of the national policymaking headquarters for dealing with SDSs, Behzad Rayegani, it is for the first time that the KBF has approved a project, proposed by the national headquarters, to manage SDSs, doe.ir reported.

The initiative is part of the 'environmental diplomacy and regional cooperation in combating dust' within the framework of the comprehensive dust combating program under the seventh National Development Plan (2023-2027), which has been developed in close collaboration with the UNDP country and regional offices, Rayegani noted.

Iran's proposal represents the

first example of a multifaceted approach to sandstorm control at the international level with a focus on protecting both plant and animal biodiversity, the official said.

This project includes three key areas: enhancing institutional and technical capacities to protect biodiversity in areas affected by dust; developing and implementing innovative measures to protect plant and animal species in sensitive ecosystems; and raising public and specialist awareness about the link between dust, ecosystem health, and biodiversity, he further noted.

The national headquarters for dealing with SDSs will use the funding to connect plans for combating SDSs and enhancing resilience against SDSs at the regional and global levels.

This achievement is an effective step towards realizing resilient land and biodiversity protection against dust, the official added.

In 2024, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and China launched the KBF, which provides financial and technical support to developing countries for the implementation of the biodiversity plan.

Since then, the KBF has been rapidly developing as a full-fledged fund. The Fund aims to support countries to accelerate the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (the KMGBF).

The Fund prioritizes implementing a whole-of-society approach to address nature and biodiversity loss, improving policies for biodiversity across all national and subnational levels, strengthening capacities and cooperation, and mobilizing additional resources.

equity and universal health coverage.

Iran will rise stronger to serve global health

Despite the destruction of scientific centers in Iran by the US-Israeli aggression, the country will turn into a more influential player in the global arena, Zafarqandi said in April.

The bombardment of scientific centers would not deter the country from making scientific progress, IRNA quoted the official as saying.

"Attacking scientific centers like the Pasteur Institute of Iran makes our job harder," Zafarqandi wrote in his X account on April 23.

"But the missile launchers don't know: knowledge lives in the minds of our scientists! With this knowledge, we will rise stronger than ever to serve global health," the official added.

According to Hossein Kermanpour, the deputy health minister, the United States and the Zionist regime jointly attacked global public health by launching strikes on the Pasteur Institute of Iran.

"Several facilities severely damaged or decimated by the US and Israeli bombardments are not merely national assets, but global heritage," he wrote on his X account.

"These countries have attacked global public health by targeting institutions such as the Pasteur Institute of Iran – a key member of the Pasteur Network and a WHO Collaborating Centre.

The international community has a collective responsibility to rebuild it; we will rebuild it better than before, provided that the aggressors stop violating international law."

Health minister to attend 79th World Health Assembly

TEHRAN – An Iranian delegation led by Health Minister Mohammad-Reza Zafarqandi will participate in the 79th World Health Assembly (WHA), which is scheduled for May 18 to June 23 in Geneva, Switzerland.

The minister plans to deliver a speech and hold meetings with WHO officials and his counterparts from other countries, IRNA reported.

Following up on technical and specialized collaborations, expanding health diplomacy, and exploring ways to boost cooperation to improve health indicators are among the main objectives of the trip.

WHA79 is bringing together delegations from WHO Member States to set global health policy and advance the Organization's strategic priorities.

It is built upon the momentum of last year's 78th World Health Assembly, which adopted the Global Action Plan on Climate Change and Health, an updated road map for an enhanced global response to the adverse health effects of air pollution, and the elevation of climate change as the first strategic objective of WHO's Fourteenth General Program of Work.

This year's Assembly theme is "Reshaping Global Health: A Shared Responsibility". The key discussions cover Global Health Architecture Reform, Universal Health Coverage and Traditional Medicine, prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, antimicrobial resistance, health emergency preparedness and response, mental health and social connection, health, and climate change.

Strategic Roundtables bring together delegates, experts from WHO, partner agencies, and



civil society to discuss current priorities and next solutions on vital issues for global public health.

The 79th WHA marks over six years since the WHO declared COVID-19 as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), and a decade since the establishment of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme.

This Roundtable provides a timely opportunity to take stock of the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and how they have been translated into broader institutional reforms and commitments across the WHO.

The Strategic Roundtable will examine how countries can strengthen integrated responses to NCDs and mental health conditions, which are increasingly shaped by shared social, commercial, environmental, and demographic factors.

The Roundtable aims to identify practical policy and financing solutions, reinforce political commitment, and promote more resilient, people-centred health systems that advance

Iranian, Malaysian officials discuss ways to foster scientific ties

TEHRAN – Iran's scientific counselor in East Asia, Australia, and New Zealand, Alireza Tavakolpour, and scientific officials of the University of Malaya (UM) have explored the opportunities to expand scientific and academic ties between Iranian universities and UM.

The meeting was attended by UM officials, including Zuliana Razali, the director of the international relations centre; Mohd Faizul Mohd Sabri, the deputy dean of research and innovation at the faculty of engineering; and Fazliana binti Ismail from the faculty of medicine.

During the meeting, Malaysian officials elaborated on the scientific and research capabilities of the UM as one of the oldest and best universities in Malaysia.

For his part, Tavakolpour expounded on Iran's perspectives on the expansion of science diplomacy, presenting the capacities of Iranian elites and scientists, and shared the research fields that are a top priority for the country.

The two sides agreed to follow up on strategic cooperation within a framework of a joint action plan.

Boosting scientific co-op

In February, Tavakolpour met the Director for the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Center for Shaping Advanced and Professional Education (UKMSHAPE), Lohman Hakim Osman, in Malaysia, IRNA reported.

The meeting was centered around exploring the potential to develop scientific and research collaborations between the UKM and the Iranian universities.

During the meeting, Tavakolpour proposed allocating scholarships to post-graduate students, organizing joint meetings, holding dual/joint degree courses, signing a memorandum of understanding with top Iranian universities, conducting collaborative research projects, and exchanging professors and students.

For his part, Hakim Osman highlighted the UKM international rankings and capacities, announcing the university's readiness to attract more Iranian Students, saying that 90 Iranian students are majoring in the university now.

In December 2025, Tavakolpour held a meeting with Norazah Mohd Nordin, the director of the Centre for International Strategic Negotiation and Sustainable Development Goals at the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, in Kuala Lumpur, IRNA reported.

Iran receives humanitarian aid from Kazakhstan

TEHRAN – Kazakhstan has delivered a consignment of humanitarian aid, including 30 wagons of flour, medicine, canned food, and sugar, to Iran.

The shipment entered the country through the Sarakhs border in the northeastern Khorasan Razavi province, IRNA reported.

The Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Iran, Ontalap Onalbayev, officially delivered the consignment to the Iranian Red Crescent Society on Saturday.

Following the outbreak of the US-Israel war against Iran on February 28, humanitarian shipments from different countries like China, Tajikistan, Iraq, Turkey, India, Russia, Azerbaijan, Dagestan, and Uzbekistan have been sent to Iran.

Iran had also received the first consignment of humanitarian relief items from the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (ICRC).

In April, the head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), Pirhossein Kolivand, lauded humanitarian aid from friendly countries to support Iran during the U.S.-Israeli war, noting that their empathy reflects deep human, cultural, and historical bonds with the Iranian nation.

The fourth humanitarian consignment from the Iraqi Red Cross Society included 28 equipped ambulances and 65 trucks carrying medical and construction equipment, IRNA reported.

The shipment also involved 11 loaders, backhoes, motorcycles, wheelchairs, tents, air-conditioning systems, and heaters. In return for their help, Iran dispatched 11 tankers of drinkable water, chlorine for disinfection, and a mobile laboratory to Wasit province in Iraq, where water distribution facilities had been destroyed.

The first consignment of the Chinese Red Cross included five Toyota rescue vehicles, 20 motorcy-



The meeting focused on developing new memoranda of understanding, following up on the situation of Iranian students in Malaysia, and resolving barriers to the accreditation and recognition of Iranian medical universities by Malaysia.

Referring to the fact that 570 Iranian students are majoring in Malaysia now, T proposed offering new intergovernmental scholarships in priority fields of study. He also elaborated on the ways Malaysian universities are assessed in Iran, highlighting the need to expand effective cooperation between the two countries.

In November 2025, Tavakolpour held a meeting with the managers of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) to discuss ways to foster scientific and academic cooperation between Iran and Malaysia.

Tavakolpour met with Nur Azaliah Abu Bakar, the head of the UTM department for international affairs; Nor Ruwaida Jamian, the head of Malaysia-Japan International Institute of Technology; Hafiza Binti Abas, the head of the UTM department for artificial intelligence, and Basheer Al-haimi, a senior lecturer at the Azman Hashim International Business School (AHIBS), ISNA reported.

During the meeting, the two sides explored the potential for enhancing international collaborations and expanding interactions between universities of the two countries.

Highlighting the significance of conducting joint scientific and research projects, Tavakolpour suggested developing relations via establishing a collaborative research center, exchanging students and professors, granting reciprocal scholarships, publishing joint scientific articles, holding short-term professional scientific courses, industrializing products of knowledge-based companies, cooperating with technology parks, and providing sabbatical leaves.

AI, robotics, smart automation, renewable energies, and nanotechnology were among the other discussed issues.

cles, and the second shipment involved a loader, a backhoe, a mini-loader (bobcat), and 5,000 blankets. The third aid shipment contained 11 bobcats, two cranes, a backhoe, and eight motorcycles.

Azerbaijan also sent the third consignment of relief items via 10 trucks. The consignment included 200 tons of essential goods like flour, food and medical items, rice, sugar, drinkable water, oil, tea, and medical equipment, which were delivered through the land border in Astara, Gilan province, ISNA reported.

Russia was another country that sent relief items to the country. The shipment included 313 tons of medicines, Mehr news agency reported. Russia had formerly sent a shipment of 30 tons of medicine to the IRCS.

The Dagestan Republic also dispatched its first humanitarian aid to the country. Seven trucks transported 140 tons of relief items, including flour, rice, sugar, pasta, legumes, and oil.

To express their solidarity with Iran, Tajikistan also prepared a shipment comprising 110 trucks carrying a total of 3,610 tons of humanitarian aid, including 45 tons of medicine, hygiene, and medical supplies, along with children's clothing, food supplies, household appliances, bedding, tents, construction materials, and other essential items.

Turkmenistan has sent four trucks of humanitarian aid. The 50-ton shipment included medicines, food, and children's clothing.

A five-ton shipment of humanitarian aid was sent by India. The aid involved medicines and medical equipment.

Commending the neighboring countries' support of Iran during this critical situation, the ICRC described it as a symbol of unity, brotherhood, and solidarity among nations.



Managing Director: **Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati**

Editor-in-Chief: **Mohammad Sarfi**

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 43051601

Email: info@tehrantimes.com

Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000

Advertisements Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051430

Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 43051505

Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051430



No. 18, Moghadasi Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran P.O. Box: 14155-4843 Zip Code: 1599814713

MAY 18, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

A person who analyzes himself receives a benefit, and he who neglects it, is a loser. He who learns a lesson from others, finds insight, and with such insight comes understanding and avoiding ignorance, and he who understands, will be well aware.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:01 Evening: 19:25 Dawn: 03:17 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 04:57 (tomorrow)

Iran dedicates Cannes pavilion to martyred children of Minab



TEHRAN- The Farabi Cinema Foundation (FCF) has set up the Iranian Cinema Umbrella at the 79th Cannes Film Market (Marché du Film), representing the country's film industry at the prestigious global event, which is running from May 12 to 23.

Reflecting the current atmosphere in Iran following the Ramadan War in recent months, the Iranian pavilion has been dedicated to the memory of the martyred children of Minab. A memorial book has also been placed at the booth, allowing visitors to pay their respects to the young victims of the conflict, Honaronline reported.

The pavilion features a diverse range of productions, including classic films from the Farabi archives and selected works by the late legendary director Dariush Mehrjui. Additionally, new productions from the FCF, as well as the latest offerings from the Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC) and the Iranian Youth Cinema Society (IYCS), are being presented to international buyers and festival programmers.

During this edition of the Cannes Market, FCF officials are scheduled to hold a series of meetings with representatives from international film festivals, distribution companies, and cultural centers. The discussions aim to explore potential collaborations with national film centers and offi-

cial cultural delegates from various nations.

A primary objective for the Farabi Cinema Foundation this year is to initiate negotiations for international co-productions. A special highlight of these talks will be a cinematic project dedicated to the martyred students of the Shajareh Tayyebeh School in. The project seeks to immortalize the story of these students through a collaborative international lens.

The tragedy at the Shajareh Tayyebeh elementary school in Minab, Hormozgan province, occurred on February 28, 2026, marking a catastrophic loss of life during the initial strikes launched by the United States and Israel against Iran.

As dozens of young students aged between 7 and 12 were beginning their morning lessons, the facility was targeted by a series of deliberate missile strikes that caused the entire building to collapse. This incident, which resulted in the confirmed deaths of over 168 civilians—the majority of whom were schoolchildren—has since become a focal point of international forensic investigations and a primary evidence case for those demanding accountability for the targeting of civilian infrastructure during the conflict.

Cartoon of Day



Fundamental Differences

Cartoonist: Nancy Ohanian from the US

Indonesian remake of “Children of Heaven” hits silver screens

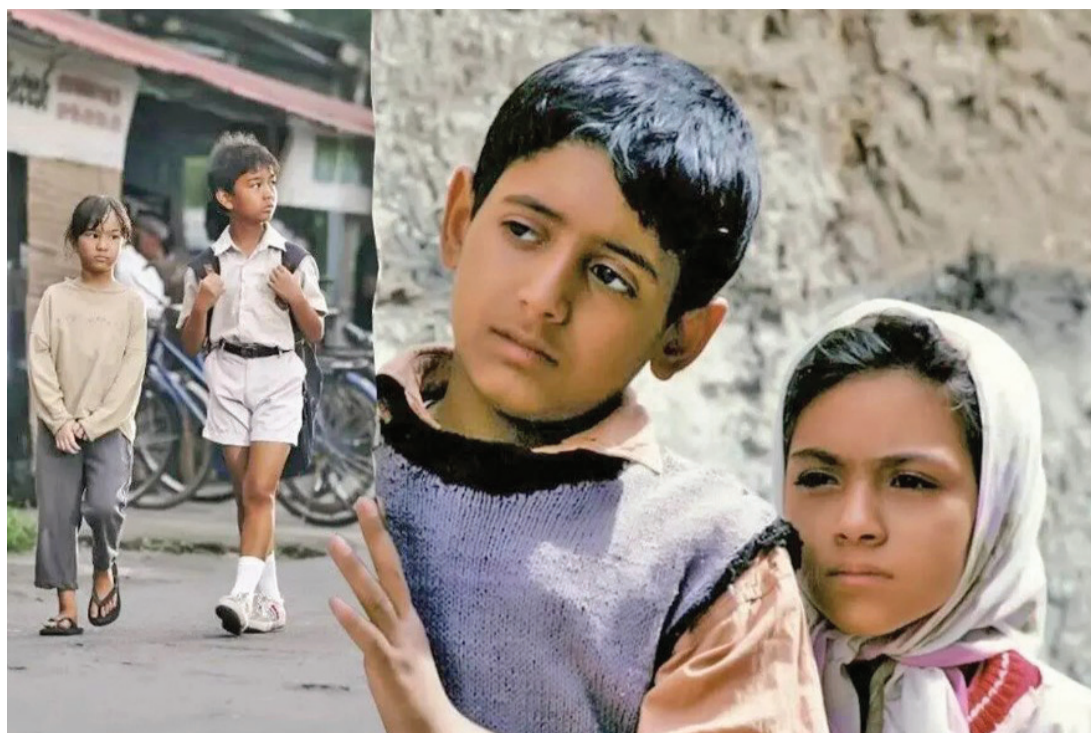
TEHRAN- The Indonesian adaptation of Majid Majidi's acclaimed 1997 film “Children of Heaven” officially premiered in Indonesia on Saturday.

The private screening of the film was held at the Epicentrum XXI complex in Setiabudi, South Jakarta, attended by the cast and crew, the Public Relations of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) announced.

Simultaneous with the gala event, the general release of the new version, directed by renowned filmmaker Hanung Bramantyo and titled “Children of Heaven,” began across theaters in Indonesia, a nation of 280 million people, the report added.

“Children of Heaven” is an internationally celebrated film directed by Majid Majidi, which tells the story of a young brother and sister who share a single pair of shoes after losing their own. The film explores themes of poverty, innocence, and hope through the lens of a simple yet powerful narrative. Majidi's classic family film received a nomination for the best foreign-language film in 1999, becoming the first Iranian film ever nominated for an Oscar.

The Indonesian adaptation retains the emotional core of the original, focusing on the siblings' struggles and their unwavering bond, but relocates the story to Semarang, a city known for its rich cultural tapestry and vibrant urban life. The film follows the journey of a poor brother and sister, Ali and Zahra, who live on the outskirts of Semarang. When their shoes go missing, they must conceal the truth from their parents, leading to a series of covert efforts to navigate daily life. The boy's desperate hope to win a third-place prize in a local race becomes a pivotal point in



the story, symbolizing his desire to restore dignity and happiness for his family.

Produced by MD Pictures, one of Indonesia's leading production companies, the film stars young Indonesian actors Jared Ali and Humaira Jahra in the iconic roles of Ali and Zahra. Both actors are making their debut in significant roles, bringing fresh energy and authenticity to the beloved characters. Slamet Rahardjo, a veteran actor and respected figure in Indonesian cinema, joins the cast, adding depth and gravitas to the project.

Director Hanung Bramantyo is known for his versatility and successful films. He recently led a session titled “Children of Heaven: The Art of Film Adaptation” at the MD Pictures booth during the Jakarta Asian Film Festival (JAFF) market, where he discussed the challenges and creative process

involved in adapting a foreign masterpiece for Indonesian audiences.

Produced by Manoj Punjabi under the banner of MD Pictures, the film is part of the company's ambitious lineup for 2026. MD Pictures is betting heavily on remakes and franchise productions, aiming to strengthen its position both domestically and internationally. The company's slate includes diverse projects ranging from literary adaptations to genre films and franchise extensions, reflecting Indonesia's growing influence in regional cinema.

“Children of Heaven” joins a roster of projects that showcase Indonesia's cinematic versatility and growing confidence in producing films with international appeal.

The remake meticulously preserves the emotional and hu-

manistic atmosphere of Majidi's original work, narrating the world of children and the hope that flourishes amidst hardship.

Beyond its direct and indirect influences on global filmmakers, the screenplay of “Children of Heaven” holds a prestigious place in educational curricula due to its narrative structure and texture. In addition to being featured in Iranian middle and high school textbooks, the simple yet captivating story was previously selected for inclusion in high school English language textbooks in Japan.

The late renowned American critic Roger Ebert highly praised the film at the time of its release. Since then, many cinema scholars have frequently compared Majidi's work to Vittorio De Sica's “Bicycle Thieves” for its universal themes and compelling simplicity.

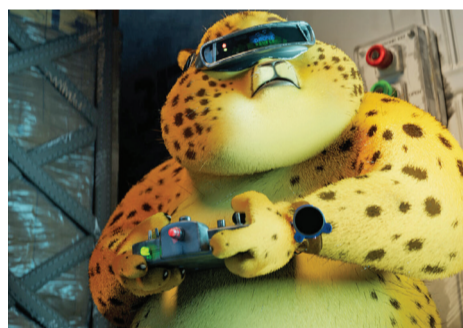
Iranian animation “Yooz” welcomed in Russia

TEHRAN – The Iranian 3D animated feature film “Yooz” written and directed by Reza Arzhanghi has attracted nearly 50,000 viewers in less than a month of release in Russia.

A joint production of Sooreh Animation Center and VistaMedia, it was released internationally and in Russia last month and has grossed \$255,761, Honaronline reported.

“Yooz” is the third Iranian animated film to be released in Russia following “Dolphin Boy 1” and “Dolphin Boy 2,” and it has achieved notable box office success there.

The film tells an adventurous story about an Iranian cheetah striving to return to his homeland. In Iran, it grossed 970 billion rials (about \$500,000) and attracted 1.58 million viewers, earning the titles of the highest-grossing animated film in Iranian cinema



history and the second most-watched animation after “Bacheh Zerang” (Smart Kid).

The story follows an Iranian cheetah that has been raised in New York City and has grown accustomed to an urban lifestyle. Over time, it feels a profound sense of alienation and begins to yearn for its homeland. The

cheetah embarks on a journey back to Iran in search of its roots and true identity. During this adventurous journey, the cheetah faces numerous obstacles and challenges, both in nature and within itself. Ultimately, it realizes that returning to its homeland is not merely a physical journey, but also a spiritual and cultural one.

The narrative highlights themes of environmental awareness, the preservation of endangered species, and the importance of cultural identity.

Having been released in Iranian cinemas since last September, “Yooz” has set a new record for the highest single-day audience for a children's film in Iran's cinema history, attracting 70,000 viewers on October 8, concurrent with the National Children's Day.

Tehran Theater Complex to host Neil Simon's “The Dinner Party”

TEHRAN – The Tehran Theater Complex will host the one-act comedy play “The Dinner Party,” written by Neil Simon, about marriage and divorce, for three nights.

The 80-minute play will be performed from May 20 to 22, every night at 9 p.m. at the Medea Hall of the complex.

Amir Masoud Rajabi has directed and produced the play and also performs in it along with Mohammad Moradi, Mehdi Samimi, Timah Kalateh, Haniyeh Aramideh, Heliya Ghasemi Jahan, and Rana Rahmani.

This is Simon's 31st play. In an interview in The New York Times, Simon said that he was trying to write a play very different from anything he had done before, and that he had the concept of creating a farce up to a certain point, and then, instead of continuing the farce, to make a turn to where it becomes quite serious. He wanted to break the concept that farces can never get real, even for a minute.

Here is a decidedly French dinner party served up in a chaotic mode that only a master of

comedy could create: Five people are invited to dine at a first-rate restaurant in Paris. They do not know who the other guests will be or why they have been invited.

Tossed together in a private dining room, they have a sneaking suspicion that this unorthodox dinner party will forever change their lives.

Playwright Neil Simon, himself married five times, mines his own experience to create the thematic material for this unique farce-turned-dramedy. Six unknowing guests have RSVP'd to a dinner at a private dining room in a first-rate restaurant in Paris. Arriving in a staggered manner, they eventually realize they are three divorced couples, providing the makings of the farce that Simon intends the first half of the play to be. Five of them were mistaken into thinking a man they hold in high regard (who happens to be the divorce lawyer) is hosting the party, but he never shows up, and appearances prove to be deceiving.

Claude Pichon and Albert Donay are the first to arrive, and Claude asks what the party is for, but Albert does not know either.



As the three male guests arrive first and the female guests later, it only gradually unfolds that they are three divorced couples and that somebody has designs for them to be together.

After the shock wears off, the characters inevitably begin to analyze and emotionally process their past marriages, and the play ends on a hopeful note.

Neil Simon (1927 – 2018) was an American playwright, screenwriter, and author. He wrote more than 30 plays and nearly the same number of movie screenplays, mostly film adaptations of his plays. He received three

Tony Awards and a Golden Globe Award, as well as nominations for four Academy Awards and four Primetime Emmy Awards. He was awarded a Special Tony Award in 1975, the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1991, the Kennedy Center Honors in 1995, and the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor in 2006.

He was one of the most reliable hitmakers in Broadway history, as well as one of the most performed playwrights in the world.

The Tehran Theater Complex is located at No. 3, Farhang Alley, Vesal Shirazi St., Enghelab Ave.