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A woman walks next to a mural on a street in Tehran, Iran, May 18, 2026.

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Trump's Iran Brinkmanship: The Secret Behind Six Retreats

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The army spokesperson also praised the "magnificent achievements" of Iran's military, noting that the armed forces are treating the current ceasefire period as a continuation of wartime conditions to maintain and enhance their combat readiness.

Addressing Iran's adversaries, Akraminia asserted that the Islamic Republic cannot be isolated or defeated. ▶ Page 2

Iran's Leader advisor: US will surrender

TEHRAN- A senior advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei has stated that the iron fist of Iran's armed forces and the resolute Iranian nation will compel the United States to retreat and surrender.

Former IRGC commander Mohsen Rezaei mocked Washington's inconsistent and cowardly approach in a Monday night post on X.

Rezaei wrote that US President Donald Trump "sets a deadline for a military strike and then cancels it himself, to force the Iranian nation and officials to surrender!"

"The iron fist of the powerful armed forces and the great Iranian nation will force them to retreat and surrender," he added. ▶ Page 2

Health minister discusses boosting health ties with BRICS counterparts

TEHRAN - Health Minister Mohammad-Reza Zafarqandi has explored avenues to expand cooperation with his counterparts from BRICS member states in different fields of the health sector.

Zafarqandi held several meetings on the sidelines of the 79th World Health Assembly (WHA), which is being held from May 18 to June 23 in Geneva, Switzerland, IRNA reported.

An Iranian delegation led by the health minister is participating in the event. ▶ Page 7

Global oil reserves depleting rapidly amid Hormuz crisis

TEHRAN- The world is facing an "energy countdown" as global oil reserves decline at an unprecedented pace, driven by IEA warnings and the ongoing crisis in the Strait of Hormuz. The International Energy Agency (IEA) has cautioned that commercial oil inventories may only last a few weeks, urging markets to recognize the severity of the situation.

According to IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol, strategic reserves—though recently tapped to add 2.5 million barrels per day—are not endless. These reserves are being drained faster than expected, especially as spring planting and summer travel in the northern hemisphere boost demand for diesel, jet fuel, and gasoline.

The crisis follows the US-Israeli aggression against Iran, which began on February 28. Iran has since closed the Strait of Hormuz—a chokepoint for one-fifth of global oil and gas supplies—to its enemies and allies, vowing not to reopen it unless the illegal blockade is lifted and the war ends permanently. ▶ Page 4

UAE spent \$6m on Epstein-linked reputation firm to suppress ambassador report

The United Arab Emirates paid more than \$6 million to a secretive U.S. reputation management firm tied to whitewashing a client's link to convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, to manipulate Google search results and suppress damaging reporting about its ambassador to Washington, Yousef Al-Otaiba, according to a New York Times investigation.

The revelation appears in a wider investigation into Terakeet, a Syracuse-based firm that specializes in search engine optimization and online reputation management for powerful clients facing public scrutiny, Middle East Monitor reported.

While the New York Times investigation focuses mainly on Terakeet's failed attempt to repair the reputation of Goldman Sachs general counsel and supporter of Israel, Kathryn Ruemmler, over her links to Epstein, one of its most striking revelations concerns the firm's work for the UAE and its long-serving ambassador in Washington, Yousef Al-Otaiba.

Shadows in the desert: How US treachery facilitated Israeli outposts on Iraqi soil

TEHRAN - A profound geopolitical scandal is unraveling in Baghdad following revelations that the United States weaponized its military presence to deceive Iraqi authorities, directly facilitating the establishment of at least two clandestine Israeli military outposts within Iraq's borders.

The disclosures, brought to light by Maen al-Jubouri, a former adviser to the Iraqi Defense Ministry, expose a calculated breach of Iraq's national sovereignty. By exploiting bilateral security agreements and Baghdad's technical vulnerabilities, Washington effectively provided a "Trojan Horse" for Israeli military operations deep within Iraqi territory.

According to al-Jubouri, the recent discovery of a second alleged Israeli military base in Iraq's vast desert regions has confirmed what many security analysts long feared: the first discovery was not an isolated incident, but part of a systemic, state-sanctioned deception by the United States.

Sumud activists demand safe passage, accountability amid Israel's illegal abductions

TEHRAN - Battered but entirely unbowed, a defiant contingent of the Global Sumud Flotilla continues its perilous voyage toward the Gaza Strip, surviving a harrowing, day-long assault by Israeli naval forces in the Mediterranean.

As Israeli vessels illegally board and hijack portions of the civilian convoy in international waters, the remaining humanitarian boats are pushing eastward, determined to shatter a genocidal blockade that has starved millions.

Organizers confirmed that a core group of vessels successfully escaped an exhausting assault by Israeli commandos and remains steadfast on its approach to the besieged enclave.

In a statement released Tuesday afternoon, activists reported they were over a hundred nautical miles from Gaza's devastated coastline.

In a powerful tribute, these remaining boats proudly carry the names of Palestinian villages destroyed during the Nakba,

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"Ayatollah Ali Khamenei: From Cradle to Eternity" published in Indonesia

TEHRAN- Following the growing interest in the influential figures of the Islamic world within the Indonesian intellectual sphere, a new comprehensive book titled "Ayatollah Ali Khamenei: Dari Haribaan Hingga Keabadian" ("Ayatollah Ali Khamenei: From Cradle to Eternity") has been released across Indonesia.

The 304-page work is authored by Ren Muhammad, a prominent Indonesian writer and researcher recognized for his deep explorations of spiritual history and the biographies of transformative Islamic figures.

Published by Penerbit Imania and distributed through the extensive Mizan Group network, the book offers a narrative and analytical deep dive into the life, struggles, and leadership of the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution. ▶ Page 8



Mass gathering of Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari residents on 'Keshvardoost Street'

People from Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province held a gathering near the office of Iran's martyred Leader to express allegiance to the ideals of the Islamic Revolution.

Participants from all walks of life, including members of the Bakhtiari tribes, assembled on "Keshvardoost Street" and called for continuing the path of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, who was assassinated on the first day of the US-Israeli war on February 28.

They pledged allegiance to Iran's new Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei. The crowd condemned US-Israeli crimes and called for the preservation of national unity.

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

The world is compelled to accept a new global order

Siasate-Rooz: The world today is inevitably moving toward a new global order — one in which the expulsion of the US from West Asia, unified confrontation with Israel, an end to foreign interventions, the cessation of warmongering and domination, and the genuine revival of international law and national sovereignty become fundamental principles. Iran's initiatives — from smart management of the Strait of Hormuz to multilayered deterrence against the US-Israeli axis and Tehran's principled conditions for any negotiation — can form the basis of this new approach, especially since Iran has repeatedly proven itself a responsible actor for regional and global security. Regional and extra-regional countries, along with international organizations, by standing with Iran to end what the article calls the terrorist and criminal nature of Washington-Tel Aviv, can play an important role. Otherwise, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and its consequences will be the minimum price they pay.

Donya-e-Eqtasad: Israel in limbo

Donya-e-Eqtasad wrote in an article about the impact of Israel's war and economic recession, especially in the military sphere. Alongside the economic pressures caused by the war, Israel's military dependence on the United States has once again become a prominent topic in its political and security circles. Netanyahu has emphasized in recent weeks that Israel must reduce its long-term reliance on Washington's military aid — a stance reflecting growing concern in Tel Aviv about shifts in the American political landscape and the gradual decline of US public support for Israel. The recent conflict with Iran made this dependence visible once again. At the same time, the gradual change in U.S. politics could affect the future of this aid. Recent polls show that negative public opinion toward Israel in the U.S. has increased compared to previous years, and some political groups are calling for a reassessment of financial and military support.

Vatan-e-Emrooz: Power is not only the ability to start a war

Vatan-e-Emrooz examined the logic of global power. What is happening around Iran today is not merely a military confrontation but a sign of a shift in the logic of global power. The United States still counts as a power in terms of technology and military capability, but recent experience showed that this superiority does not necessarily translate into the ability to endure long, exhausting wars. In contrast, Iran — relying on geography, a multilayered defense network, domestic production, underground infra-

structure, and a culture of resistance — has turned itself into an actor whose defeat is neither quick, nor cheap, nor easy. Perhaps the most important outcome of this conflict is precisely this: power is not only the ability to start a war, but also the ability to continue, endure, and wear down the opponent. In this arena, Iran showed that contrary to many initial assumptions, it not only has the capacity to stand firm but can impose high costs on the world's largest military power — costs that make continuing the war increasingly difficult, expensive, and politically complicated for Washington.

Sobh-e-No: America is pursuing unattainable demands

Sobh-e-No analyzed what it described as an unreasonable US proposal. The American draft was such that even if Iran fulfilled all its conditions, the threat of US or Israeli aggression would remain. Iran, however, seeks an end to the war on all fronts, lifting of anti-Iran sanctions, the release of frozen funds, compensation for war damages, and recognition of its sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz. Despite Trump's harsh rhetoric against Iran, Laurence Norman, a Wall Street Journal reporter, claimed that the US has offered Iran a new alternative proposal that gives Iran access to more than \$25 billion and preserves its nuclear enrichment capability. Trump must understand that Iran is prepared for all scenarios and that the US cannot impose its preferred agreement on Iran after failing in the imposed war.

Khorasan: Rebuilding Iran's defensive shield through eastern partnerships

Khorasan analyzed Iran-China security and technological cooperation. One of the most important areas of cooperation with China is in security and technology, where Tehran's and Beijing's interests are more intertwined than ever. Recent wars showed that Iran has reached a level in missile, drone, and hybrid warfare where it is no longer merely a consumer of military technology and has even become an exporter of operational experience in some fields. However, Iran still faces serious weaknesses in air defense, integrated radar networks, stealth-target detection, and advanced electronic warfare. This is precisely where China becomes a key partner capable of filling part of Iran's strategic gaps. The presence of a figure with command and security management experience like Ghalibaf could elevate this cooperation from negotiations to joint security projects and technology transfer — projects that, for Tehran, are not merely economic or political, but part of rebuilding Iran's defensive balance in the post-war era.

Lawmaker: Strait of Hormuz will remain under Iran's control forever

A senior Iranian lawmaker has announced that Iran will continue to assert control over the Strait of Hormuz as a strategic lever.

"This strait is a comprehensive economic, political, and military lever that will forever remain under the authority and management of the resilient and powerful Iranian nation," Ebrahim Azizi, chairman of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, told ISNA news agency on Tuesday.

He said the Strait of Hormuz is not merely a maritime passage but a "strategic achievement" for Iran.

The lawmaker added that the control and management of this vital waterway is part of Iran's legitimate rights, and that no foreign power can deprive the Iranian nation of this right.

On Monday, Iran's Supreme National Security Council announced the formation of a new body to oversee and manage issues related to the Strait of Hormuz.

Separately, the Foreign Ministry spokesperson said Iran is engaged in consultations with Oman to design a new mechanism governing transit through the strait.

He described the Strait of Hormuz as a "vital" maritime passage whose importance

extends far beyond Iran, Oman, and regional states to the global economy.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has always made tremendous efforts to safeguard safe and secure transit through this route and continues to insist that passage through the Strait of Hormuz must take place in the best possible manner with complete safety," he added.

He emphasized that both Iran and Oman consider themselves duty-bound to ensure secure transit through the strait, as it lies within the territorial waters of the two coastal states.

Under international maritime law, coastal states are recognized as having sovereign jurisdiction over their territorial waters and security arrangements, a principle that Iran applies to the Strait of Hormuz.

The strait is widely regarded as one of the world's most important energy transit routes, and its stability is seen as essential to global trade and energy security. From this standpoint, the governance of the passage is viewed as a matter of regional sovereignty, with an emphasis on ensuring safe navigation through cooperation between coastal states rather than external military involvement.

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The army spokesperson also praised the "magnificent achievements" of Iran's military, noting that the armed forces are

treating the current ceasefire period as a continuation of wartime conditions to maintain and enhance their combat readiness.

Addressing Iran's adversaries, Akraminia asserted that the Islamic Republic cannot be isolated or defeated. "If the enemy acts foolishly again and falls into the trap set by the Zionists by, once more, launching aggression against Iran, we will open new fronts against them using innovative methods and capabilities," he warned.

He further highlighted Iran's control over the Strait of Hormuz, asserting that the situation in this strategic waterway cannot revert to its previous state. He added that the only path forward for Iran's enemies is to respect the Iranian nation and uphold the legitimate rights of the Islamic Republic.

Iran's Leader advisor: US will surrender

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Former IRGC commander Mohsen Rezaei mocked Washington's inconsistent and cowardly approach in a Monday night post on X.

Rezaei wrote that US President Donald Trump "sets a deadline for a military strike and then cancels it himself, to force the Iranian nation and officials to surrender!"

"The iron fist of the powerful armed forc-

es and the great Iranian nation will force them to retreat and surrender," he added.

Rezaei's remarks came after Trump announced on Monday the postponement of a planned large-scale military assault on the Islamic Republic, which had been scheduled for Tuesday.

Trump cited personal appeals from the leaders of Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, who urged restraint to allow negotiations to proceed. He nevertheless kept American forces on high alert for a possible "full, large-scale assault" if no "acceptable deal" is reached, a deal he claimed must in-



clude "NO NUCLEAR WEAPONS FOR IRAN."

As General Rezaei emphasized, the era of US gunboat diplomacy is over. The Islamic Republic stands firm, proving once again that resistance defeats arrogance.

Pakistani defense minister says renewed war on Iran unlikely

TEHRAN — Pakistani Defense Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif said he believes the war against Iran is unlikely to resume, citing growing opposition within the United States to another military conflict in West Asia.

Speaking on Geo News 'Capital Talk' program on Monday, Asif said Israel is seeking to reignite the conflict and draw Washington deeper into direct military involvement. Still, the US public opinion appears unwilling to support another regional war.

"Israel deeply desires the resumption of the war and wants America to fight alongside it," Asif said. "I am not a diplomat, but my gut feeling says this war will not happen again."

His remarks came amid ongoing indirect negotiations between Tehran and Washington, with Pakistan playing a mediating role during the current ceasefire between Iran and the United States.

According to reports, the first round of talks — held on April 12 and aimed at ending the conflict — failed to produce a breakthrough. However, diplomatic contacts have continued through Pakistani mediation, with both sides exchanging pro-



posals to establish a framework for future negotiations.

Iran has insisted that any preliminary agreement must include a comprehensive end to hostilities, the lifting of sanctions, compensation for war damages, and a resolution regarding the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz. Tehran has also maintained that discussions surrounding its nuclear program must recognize 'Iran's legitimate right to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes' under an agreed negotiating timetable.

Rejecting President Donald Trump's claims on resuming the war, Asif stressed that sustained military action would be

difficult without broad domestic support in the United States.

"Wars happen when the public supports them. When the public does not support it, a war does not happen," he said.

The recent US military campaign against Iran and the resulting tensions surrounding the Strait of Hormuz have already sent shockwaves through global energy markets, driving up fuel and household costs in multiple countries, including the United States.

According to the latest polls, Donald Trump's popularity has reached an all-time high due to rising fuel prices in the United States.

China backs political solutions, plays role in Islamabad mediation: Iranian envoy

TEHRAN — Iran's ambassador to China, Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli, says Beijing has played a significant role in the ongoing mediation efforts between Tehran and Washington in Islamabad, while continuing to advocate political solutions and regional stability amid escalating tensions in West Asia.

In an interview with ISNA, Rahmani Fazli said China's traditional foreign policy approach is rooted in avoiding confrontation, opposing unilateral pressure, and promoting diplomacy over military escalation.

"The current mediation process is the result of cooperation among Iran, Pakistan, and China," the ambassador said, adding that Beijing and Islamabad were the only major actors to present a peace initiative during the recent conflict involving Iran, the United States, and Israel.

According to Rahmani Fazli, China views instability in West Asia as a direct threat to global trade, energy markets, and the broader international economy. He stressed that Beijing does not support rising tensions in strategic waterways and has consistently emphasized the importance of maritime security and regional stability.

"China, in principle, does not welcome US tension-raising in international waterways," he said. "Beijing has always stressed the preservation of shipping security and stability in the region."

The ambassador noted that China's response to the recent conflict reflects its broader diplomatic culture, which prioritizes caution, balance, and long-term strategic calculations rather than overt political alignment.

He explained that Beijing opposes the use of force outside international legal frameworks and without consensus within the United Nations Security Council. China also believes that prolonged instability in West Asia could intensify global geopolitical rivalries and disrupt international supply chains.

Rahmani Fazli emphasized that although Iran-China relations are strategic and expanding, Beijing does not pursue direct military involvement in regional conflicts.

"China seeks to act as a stabilizing and balancing power," he said, adding that Iran's foreign policy remains independent and is not based on reliance on any foreign state.

The envoy emphasized China's increas-



ing focus on energy security and geopolitical risk mitigation, noting the expansion of strategic oil and gas reserves, diversification of energy imports, strengthening of de-dollarization efforts, and reduction of vulnerability to sanctions.

The ambassador further stated that China approaches anti-Iran initiatives at the UN Security Council with caution and generally opposes measures that could escalate regional tensions.

Trump's Iran brinkmanship: The secret behind six retreats

US media citing American military officials report Iran's "successful resistance" and "enormous resilience" have strengthened its position and complicated US objectives

TEHRAN - President Donald Trump has once again backed down from his threat of military action against Iran, as US officials cited by The New York Times acknowledged that Iran's "successful resistance" and "enormous resilience" have complicated Washington's war aims and strengthened Tehran's position on the battlefield.

The US president said on Monday that he was postponing a military strike on Iran planned for Tuesday. Trump said he made the decision at the request of Persian Gulf Arab states because "serious negotiations are now taking place."

Before his announcement, he had warned over the weekend that, "For Iran, the Clock is Ticking, and they better get moving, FAST, or there won't be anything left of them."

Against the backdrop of the joint war that the US and Israel launched against Iran on February 28, Trump has repeatedly set deadlines for Tehran at least six times and then backed off.

Before a ceasefire between Tehran and Washington on April 8, which paused the war, he had warned that "a whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again." But he withdrew his threat of military action by accepting Iran's condition for the truce.

US 'strategic mistake'

In response to Trump's latest threat, the commander of the Khatam al-Anbiya Headquarters, which coordinates military operations between the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) and the Army, warned the US against "another strategic mistake or miscalculation."

"They must know that any renewed aggression or invasion by the enemies of our land and our proud nation will be met with a swift, decisive, powerful, and extensive response," Major General Ali Abdollahi said.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman also reacted to Trump's threat in his weekly press briefing on Monday.

"If any reckless action is taken, we will respond with full force. I assure you that our armed forces will certainly unveil 'new surprises' for the enemy," Esmail Baghaei said.

The US and Israel waged war on Iran to destroy the country's military capabilities and change the political leadership in their favor.

But after 39 days of war, the Trump administration had to strike a ceasefire deal after its goals remained unachieved.

At least according to multiple US media reports, Iran's retaliatory strikes dealt severe blows to American military bases and military equipment in the region.

A week ago, Democratic Congressman Ed Case said the United States has lost 39 aircraft since the start of the war with Iran.



He made the remarks during a special Senate committee hearing while questioning Pentagon Chief Financial Officer Jay Hurst about the extent of damage suffered during the conflict. This includes an American F-35 fighter jet and an F-15E jet that Iran struck.

Iran's resistance and resilience

On Tuesday, a New York Times report, citing the US military, said Iran "has demonstrated enormous resilience and the ability to inflict significant damage to the region and on the global economy."

Citing a US military official, the report said Iran has adjusted its tactics for any resumption of strikes.

The officials added, "Iranian commanders, possibly with Russian help, studied the flight patterns of American fighter jets and bombers" and warned that Iran's downing of the F-15E jet and F-35 jets "revealed that American flight tactics had become too predictable in ways that allowed Iran to defend against them more capably."

The officials further said the Iranians "instilled a belief that Iran can successfully resist the United States."

"Many of Iran's ballistic missiles were deployed from deep underground caves and other facilities carved out of granite mountains that are difficult for American attack aircraft to destroy," the official said. "As a result, the United States largely bombed the portals of the sites, collapsing and burying them, but not destroying them. Iran has now dug out a significant number of those sites," the NY Times report added.

Iran's demands

Iran says it is open to dialogue to bring a permanent end to the war, but will not give in

to bullying and pressure.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi presented a report on negotiations with the US to the Parliament. The report emphasized ending the war on all fronts, including Israeli strikes in Lebanon, lifting the US naval blockade, releasing Iran's property and assets, compensation for the damages caused by the war, and ending all unilateral sanctions.

Since the start of the war, Iran has asserted full control over the Strait of Hormuz. It has not allowed vessels affiliated with the country's adversaries to transit the strategic waterway. The move has sent shockwaves across the globe and has led to rising inflation and fuel prices in the United States.

Trump's whoppers

The war remains deeply unpopular in the US. A poll found that 64 percent of voters said Trump's decision to go to war with Iran was the wrong one, with a majority of voters registering discontent about the economic costs associated with the conflict.

This growing distrust echoes a familiar pattern from history.

The Hill wrote last week: "President Lyndon Johnson's lies about the Vietnam War created what came to be called a 'credibility gap' when millions of people stopped believing him. Today, a credibility gap plagues President Trump because of his whoppers about the war with Iran and much more."

For now, it has become more evident that Trump seeks a face-saving exit from the quagmire of war with Iran, but he tries to keep up the bravado. His repeated threats of renewed war and rhetoric are aimed at creating a fabricated sense of victory in the Iran war.

LATEST NEWS

Turkey: There is no obstacle for Iran and US to find solutions

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said on Monday that Ankara believes nothing is preventing the United States and Iran from reaching common ground through negotiations, adding that Ankara's priority is to contribute to Pakistani mediation efforts and maintain the ceasefire.

Fidan further stated at a press conference held in Berlin that Turkey wants to confirm that both Iran and the United States recognize the risks of resuming conflict.

He pointed out that he sees no fundamental barriers to an agreement between Washington and Tehran on terms related to the Iranian nuclear program, but other issues will influence this decision.

Pakistan denies Reuters report on Saudi troop deployment

Pakistan has rejected Western media claims, including a Reuters report, about deploying 8,000 troops and jets to Saudi Arabia. Security sources told Pakistan Today the reports are "false and distorted."

Pakistan emphasized that its military ties with Riyadh are institutional, based on long-standing religious and economic bonds, and vital for Islamabad's security, cautioning against misrepresenting their enduring defense partnership as merely reaction to regional tensions.

President urges faster reconstruction of war-damaged areas in Tehran

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian,

in a meeting with Tehran Mayor Alireza Zakani, called for accelerating the reconstruction of damaged areas and organizing temporary housing for families affected by recent attacks.

Leader will be briefed by Expediency Council on economy

The head of the Expediency Council's economic commission announced that a report analyzing Iran's economic situation and executive solutions will soon be sent to the Leader.

Mohammadreza Pourebrahimi stated that after military failures, the US is intensifying economic warfare through naval blockades and sanctions to create social unrests. He noted that joint meetings with former central bank governors and economy ministers have been held to develop a comprehensive plan. The report, based on optimistic, pessimistic, and current scenario analyses, aims to help Iran navigate the economic war.

Assets of 52 'traitors' seized in Zanjan Province

A senior Iranian judge said assets of 52 individuals linked to enemy networks were seized in Zanjan province for public benefit. The property includes bank funds, real estate, and gold.

Seven suspects are detained; others are abroad. Funds will aid the reconstruction of war-damaged areas.

Iran 'prepared to confront any military aggression': deputy foreign minister

The deputy minister, Kazem Gharibaba-

di, commented on Trump's post yesterday, saying he postponed a planned attack against Tehran to give negotiations a chance.

"But at the same time, it speaks of readiness for a massive assault at any moment," Gharibabadi, Iran's deputy foreign minister for legal and international affairs, wrote on X. "This means calling 'threat' under the name of 'opportunity for peace!'"

He continued: "Iran, united and resolutely, is prepared to confront any military aggression. For us, surrender holds no meaning; we either triumph or become martyrs."

Russia plans to return staff to Bushehr nuclear power plant

Russian state nuclear corporation Rosatom is confident it will be able to return its staff to the Bushehr nuclear power plant in Iran in the coming weeks, RIA state news agency reports.

Rosatom, which is building two new units at the Bushehr site, pulled out hundreds of staff after the start of the war in Iran at the end of February.

Qatar says US-Iran negotiations need 'more time'

"We are supportive of the diplomatic effort by Pakistan that has shown seriousness in bringing parties together and finding a solution, and we do believe it needs more time," Qatar's Foreign Ministry spokesperson al-Ansari says.

SPORTS

Naderi: resilience and grit propel Iran to victory, World Cup dreams ignite

TEHRAN - Iran's beach soccer national team has once again hoisted a championship trophy, but head coach Ali Naderi reveals the true narrative behind their latest triumph: a saga of unwavering resilience, disrupted preparations, and the sheer determination of extraordinary players aiming to make waves on the global stage.

Fresh off their victory at the 2026 Asian Beach Games in Sanya, China, Naderi shared the behind-the-scenes battles that forged their championship spirit.

"Just before the war erupted, 'Team Melli' was in peak form, executing regular training sessions in complete calm," Naderi explained. "But as the situation shifted, our preparations ground to a halt. In that challenging period, our only recourse was to maintain constant contact with the players and guide them through individual training programs, striving to keep them sharp and match-fit."

He continued, "Fortunately, thanks to arrangements meticulously coordinated by the National Olympic Committee, we arrived at the competition venue a crucial 14 days ahead of schedule. This provided a vital window for the team to regain a semblance of readiness. However, it's crucial to state that we didn't enter the tournament at our absolute peak - I estimate the team reached, at best, 70% of its full potential. Despite these significant hurdles, the innate quality of our players, their immense motivation, and the burning desire to achieve something truly special for our nation were the ultimate catalysts for success. Our players were driven by a powerful urge to serve the people, especially under such trying circumstances."

Naderi underscored the pivotal role of a robust domestic league in sustaining this level of performance. "Our next major objective is the World Cup qualifiers - a tournament that will undoubtedly present a far greater challenge than our recent competition, both in terms of technical intensity and team readiness. Every nation will be geared up, armed with extensive preparation matches, and operating at peak condition to secure a coveted World Cup berth."

"A cornerstone of Iran's success in beach soccer is the consistent staging of our league," he asserted. "I can confidently state that a significant portion of Iran's progress and its competitive edge over many other teams stems directly from our league structure. Our players are engaged in league competitions for at least seven months annually, a commitment that has proven immensely beneficial for maintaining their fitness and fostering their development. Ensuring the league kicks off is paramount; it empowers our players and keeps Iranian beach soccer firmly on its growth trajectory."

Looking beyond the immediate celebration, Naderi emphasized the need for sustained planning. "We all understand that after achieving a championship, the challenge is amplified - we must strive even harder to replicate that success."

This victory intensifies the responsibilities resting on our shoulders - from the coaching staff and players to the management and all stakeholders. We cannot afford to become complacent. Instead, we must channel 100% of our focus and energy towards the next tournament, leveraging even greater effort to cultivate superior conditions."

The national team coach reiterated the critical importance of international friendlies. "Regrettably, due to unforeseen circumstances, all our scheduled friendly matches were canceled, leaving us unable to secure any practice games. Yet, our ultimate vision, our primary objective, is to make a formidable impact at the World Cup. To achieve this, consistent high-level international competition is non-negotiable. To conquer the World Cup stage, optimal preparation is key. We aim to invite strong international teams to Iran for friendlies and also travel abroad ourselves to engage in top-tier preparatory matches."

Concluding his remarks, Naderi dedicated the hard-won championship to the nation. "I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the dear people of Iran on our national beach soccer team's championship."

I sincerely hope that, amidst these challenging times, this victory brings them a measure of joy and pride. We gave our all, fulfilling our duty

to lift their spirits, even if only slightly."

Aida Arab named best line player at Asian U16 Handball Championship

TEHRAN - Iranian line player Aida Arab has earned the distinction of being recognized as the tournament's top line player at the Asian Girls' U16 Handball Championship, which recently concluded in Kazakhstan.

Arab - a key player for Iran's U16 girls' handball squad - was chosen for the competition's all-star team following the conclusion of the Asian Championship in Kazakhstan. Her performances throughout the event secured her the award for best line player of the championship.

Iran's U16 girls' handball team delivered a series of strong performances across the tournament, resulting in several Iranian athletes being recognized among the event's standout players.

Among them, Aida Arab distinguished herself through her influential play, ultimately earning her place in the all-star lineup as the finest line player of the competition.

Iran finished in fourth place in the event. The young Persians lost to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and China, while recording wins over Hong Kong and Kyrgyzstan.

Iran's NPC chief Kargari to attend Russia Paralympic anniversary

TEHRAN - Ghafour Kargari, head of Iran's National Paralympic Committee (NPC), will attend the 30th anniversary of the Russian Paralympic Committee's establishment.

He has accepted an official invitation from his Russian counterpart Pavel Rozhkov.

The ceremony, scheduled for May 21-22, will feature an international conference titled "Development of International Sports Cooperation" alongside the 20th edition of the Russian Paralympic Committee's "Return to Life" awards ceremony.

The conference agenda includes discussions on expanding cross-border collaboration, supporting athletes with disabilities, and launching joint projects aimed at promoting Paralympic values worldwide.

The "Return to Life" ceremony will honor elite Russian Paralympic athletes, coaches, and technical staff who have made significant contributions to the growth of the Paralympic movement in the country.

During his visit, Kargari is also set to hold official bilateral meetings with his counterparts to strengthen ties and explore potential cooperation agreements between the two nations' Paralympic committees.

Gholizadeh extends contract with Lech Poznan

TEHRAN - The Iranian winger of Lech Poznan football team, Ali Gholizadeh, has extended his contract with Polish club for another season.

Lech Poznan football team, which is at the top of the Polish Ekstraklasa league table, is on the verge of winning its second consecutive championship in the Poland's league. Gholizadeh delivered great performance in the Polish league and was repeatedly praised by the Polish media.

The player suffered a cruciate ligament injury in recent weeks and in addition to missing the current Polish league season, he also missed the Iranian national football team in the 2026 World Cup.

After this, Polish media reported that Lech Poznan club intended to extend the player's contract for another season, but Gholizadeh had rejected this request before the injury. Polish media announced that Lech Poznan club managers have once again entered into negotiations with the player to extend his contract, and the two sides have reached an agreement.

The Iranian international has been playing for Lech Poznan since July 2023 and has played in 75 matches for the team so far, scoring 14 goals and recording 10 assists.

Power grid ready for summer with focus on consumption management

TEHRAN- The managing director of Iran's Power Generation and Distribution Company (known as TAVANIR) has announced the power grid's readiness for the summer peak load, the development of renewable energy sources, and the implementation of a restriction program for high-consumption subscribers.

According to Mehr News Agency, Mohammad Allahdad stated during the inauguration of the Summer 2026 Peak Load Management programs and the unveiling of the "25 Degrees; A Pact of Empathy" campaign that despite damages inflicted on the grid at over 2,000 points, reconstruction and repair operations have been completed, and main transmission lines and key substations are ready to get through the summer.

He noted that extensive measures are being implemented in both the generation and consumption management sectors, adding that the capacity of renewable power plants has quadrupled since the beginning of the current administration, and development in this sector continues to ensure a share of the country's electricity supply comes from clean energy.

Allahdad further stated that in the first weeks of the current year, more electricity has been delivered to the industrial sector compared to the same period last year, and key production chains, particularly petrochemical plants, have been prioritized for supply.

Referring to electricity supply for the agricultural sector, the Tavanir managing director clarified that the operating permits are the criterion for action, and no restrictions beyond the permit have been imposed on authorized subscribers. However, unauthorized extraction and consumption are being seriously addressed.

He put the total electricity consumption of the agricultural sector at approximately 5,534 megawatts, stating that out of this amount, 4,000 megawatts are covered by valid permits, and the remaining roughly 1,434 megawatts — which have not been verified in the two-way system — are being organized.

Allahdad pointed out certain abuses in this sector, adding that using agricultural tariffs for purposes such as villas, gardens, and banquet halls is illegal. In cooperation with the Prosecutor's Office, legal action against unauthorized water and electricity extraction is on the agenda.

He announced the notification of a demand reduction program during summer peak hours, stating that Tavanir's target is a 5% reduction in demand, which would keep the peak load below 73,700 megawatts.

The Tavanir managing director also announced the installation of 7 million smart meters, adding that by the end of this summer, that number will increase to 9 million units. The installation of 100,000 consumption limiters has also been scheduled for the next month.

He highlighted consumption inequality, noting that 2% of household subscribers consume about 10% of the electricity. Over 500,000 high-consumption subscribers have been identified, of which 170,000 — those consuming more than 2.5 times the standard pattern — are prioritized for limiter installation.

He announced the launch of the "Mahtab" system to consolidate actions against unconventional consumption, adding that crackdowns on unauthorized cryptocurrency mining, loss reduction, and the removal of illegal connections are being pursued through this system. By the end of Khordad, the target has been set to identify and eliminate 1,800 megawatts of unauthorized consumption.

The Tavanir managing director continued that nearly 700 megawatts of this program have already been achieved, and by removing over 130 transformers, approximately 12.5 megawatts of load have been eliminated from the grid.

In conclusion, he said that in the Summer 2026 program, the use of distributed generation and small-scale generators holds particular importance, and the target is to supply 1,635 megawatts of electricity from this source.

Energy ministry's plan to curb electricity consumption and develop alternative energy sources

The Minister of Energy has announced the implementation of new electricity consumption management programs, the development of electric vehicles, and the restriction of high-consumption subscribers to get through the summer peak.

According to Mehr News Agency, Abbas Aliabadi, on Monday, at the inauguration ceremony



of the Summer Electricity Peak Consumption Management programs and the unveiling of the "25 Degrees; A Pact of Empathy" campaign held at Tavanir's parent company, emphasized the key role of the expert body in the country's development.

The Minister of Energy stated that ministerial structures and senior officials are transient, adding that the bureaucratic and expert structure is the foundation of sustainable development and is permanent. Therefore, senior managers should be selected from within this very expert body, from among specialized and lasting individuals.

Focus on reducing consumption and increasing generation capacity

Aliabadi, referring to the increasing trend of electricity consumption in recent years, stated that the approach in this period is to prevent excessive consumption growth and, if possible, reverse this trend. He added that the Ministry of Energy's goal is to not only manage consumption but also to move toward resolving the imbalance and achieving a positive energy balance by making the business environment more attractive and increasing generation capacity.

Oil: A commodity and raw material, not just fuel

The Minister of Energy emphasized that oil should not be viewed solely as fuel, stating that oil is a commodity and a raw material for a vast chain of valuable products. However, we are currently burning this national wealth and gasoline — a trend that will certainly change in the future.

Electric vehicles: A solution to reduce fuel consumption

Aliabadi, noting the advantages of electrifying transportation, pointed out that the electrical power needed for one million electric vehicles is very negligible compared to the enormous volume of gasoline and diesel it would replace. He added that we must move toward meeting people's needs through secondary energy sources such as electricity, and in this regard, the development of renewable resources tailored to the country's climate is a priority.

Restriction instead of cut-off for high-consumption subscribers

Finally, the Minister of Energy explained the approach toward subscribers who consume more than the permitted pattern, stating that for this group, a "restriction" program has replaced full power cut-offs. He also noted that fortunately, 70% of subscribers correctly observe consumption patterns.

NDF allocates \$300m to boost renewable energy by 15,000 MW

A member of the National Development Fund's Executive Board announced the allocation of \$300 million in new credit to SATBA (Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization), a significant reduction in collateral requirements for the private sector, and plans to bring 15,000 megawatts of renewable electricity into the national grid by 2027.

According to IRNA from the National Development Fund, Seyed Alireza Mir-Mohammad Sadeghi, detailing the support for renewable energy, stated: With the aim of accelerating power plant projects, the Executive Board has approved the allocation of \$300 million in new credit to SATBA, so that in addition to the previous \$1 billion, all projects under the 7,000 MW plan will be completed and their administrative files closed.

Referring to a new resolution to reduce the financial burden on applicants, he said: The collateral requirement outside the project (Group 3) for power plants ready for transfer has been reduced from 30% to 15%. Additionally, applicants can begin the financial process by submitting a letter of undertaking.

Mir-Mohammad Sadeghi added: The private sector's interest in this field has increased so much that the applicants' equity contribution has risen from 20% to over 35%.

Global oil reserves depleting rapidly amid Hormuz crisis

TEHRAN- The world is facing an "energy countdown" as global oil reserves decline at an unprecedented pace, driven by IEA warnings and the ongoing crisis in the Strait of Hormuz. The International Energy Agency (IEA) has cautioned that commercial oil inventories may only last a few weeks, urging markets to recognize the severity of the situation.

According to IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol, strategic reserves—though recently tapped to add 2.5 million barrels per day—are not endless. These reserves are being drained faster than expected, especially as spring planting and summer travel in the northern hemisphere boost demand for diesel, jet fuel, and gasoline.



The crisis follows the US-Israeli aggression against Iran, which began on February 28. Iran has since closed the Strait of Hormuz—a chokepoint for one-fifth of global oil and gas supplies—to its ene-

mies and allies, vowing not to reopen it unless the illegal blockade is lifted and the war ends permanently.

Economic consequences are se-

vere. J.P. Morgan estimates that every \$10 rise in oil prices could increase global inflation by 0.35% and reduce GDP growth by 0.2%. A stronger US dollar is also hurting emerging economies by raising their dollar-denominated debt. Global oil demand is now forecast to fall by 2.4 million barrels per day, while supply is projected to drop by 3.9 million barrels per day in 2026.

The IEA confirmed that global observed oil inventories fell by a record 246 million barrels in March and April. A coordinated release of 400 million barrels from strategic reserves has provided temporary relief, but analysts warn that without a diplomatic resolution, energy security and global economic stability remain under serious threat.

Iran-China rail corridor has annual transit capacity of 1m tons of cargo

TEHRAN- A railway expert said that Iran-China commercial train frequency to one daily train would enable cargo movement of one million tons per year.

Mohammad Javad Shahjouei, a rail industry expert, in an interview with Mehr News Agency, detailed the potential of rail trade between Iran and China. He stated that regarding rail connectivity between Iran and China, routes such as Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran and China-Pakistan-Iran have been defined. Additionally, the China-Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Iran route could become operational if Afghanistan's rail infrastructure is completed.

He added that currently, the first two routes — the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran corridor and the China-Pakistan-Iran route — exist in terms of infrastructure connectivity and are operable. Although the Pakistan route has not yet been fully utilized, the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan route has been active so far.

Completing Afghanistan's rail lines could reshape Iran-China trade dynamics

Shahjouei explained that the Afghanistan route

could take two forms: first, a direct connection from China to Afghanistan, and then the connection of Afghanistan's rail network to Iran, in which case the main challenge lies in the China-Afghanistan link. The second form is connecting China to Uzbekistan and then linking Termez in Uzbekistan to Mazar-i-Sharif in Afghanistan — a section that currently exists. However, to complete the chain, the Herat-to-Mazar-i-Sharif route inside Afghanistan needs to be finished.

Regarding the capacity of these corridors, he continued that no exact figure can be given for total capacity, because the rail line's capacity along this route is not dedicated solely to transit through Iran. Part of it is allocated to East-West transport, and another part to domestic transport in the intermediary countries. Nevertheless, the capacity of these routes can be increased through rate adjustments and transport scheduling.

China-Iran freight train capacity can be increased to one train daily

The rail industry expert noted that currently, according to the Railway Administration, trains on the China-Iran route run once every three to four

days. However, this capacity can be upgraded to one daily train. If this level is achieved, the route could move approximately one million tons of cargo annually.

He emphasized that if the Pakistan and Afghanistan routes become operational, a significant portion of trade between Iran and China could be conducted via the rail network.

Shahjouei stated that an important point is that because rail transport is more expensive than sea transport, the goods using this route are mainly those that are in the middle or end of the value chain and possess higher added value.

The rail industry expert concluded by noting another crucial issue: making the cargo flow bidirectional. That is, imported containers must be filled with Iranian export cargo and returned to China so that this trade chain can be established sustainably. Finally, he stressed that rail cannot cover the entire volume of Iran-China trade, but it can play a significant role in moving trade priorities.

From Caspian borders to international waters: Real scenarios of gas corridor

TEHRAN- The idea of transferring Russian gas through Iran to the Persian Gulf is one of the important geopolitical energy scenarios that could change the gas trade map in Eurasia and the West Asia.

According to Mehr News Agency, energy corridors in the world are not only physical routes for transferring resources but also tools for shaping geopolitical and economic balances. In recent decades, competition over oil and gas transit routes has become a key element of countries' foreign policies. In such an environment, the plan to create a north-south gas corridor, which aims to transfer Russian gas through Iran to the Persian Gulf, has been proposed as one of the important scenarios in Eurasia's energy sector. This idea is based on Russia's vast gas production capacity, Iran's geographical position, and the Persian Gulf states' access to global markets. If such a corridor materializes, it could transform gas supply dynamics in the region and lead to the creation of a new energy axis among Russia, Iran, and southern markets.

Iran lies at the geographical center of this scenario. Iran's transit position between the Caspian Sea, Central Asia, and the Persian Gulf has made it a focus of many energy transit plans. On the other hand, Russia, as one of the world's largest gas producers, seeks to diversify its export routes. The combination of these two factors has led to the idea of transferring Russian gas through Iran to the south being repeatedly discussed at expert and political levels. If realized, this corridor could not only create a new export route for Russia but also turn Iran into one of the main nodes of regional gas trade.

First scenario: Gas swap in Iran's network

One of the most practical scenarios for transferring Russian gas through Iran is using the gas swap mechanism. In this model, Russian gas is delivered at Iran's northern borders, and Iran exports an equivalent amount from its gas network in the south to the intended destination. In this case, the imported gas is not necessarily physically transferred to the Persian Gulf but is consumed within Iran's domestic network, with its equivalent delivered elsewhere.

This method has been previously tested in regional energy interactions. In recent years, Iran has executed gas swaps from Turkmenistan to Azerbaijan. Such a pattern shows that Iran's gas network is technically capable of swap operations. In the swap model, Russia can deliver its gas in northern Iran, while Iran provides gas to customers at locations like Assaluyeh or Bandar Abbas.

The main advantage of this method is less need for heavy investment in new infrastructure. Iran's extensive gas pipeline network stretches from north to south, and a significant portion of ener-

gy transfer can be done using this existing infrastructure. However, some points of the network may require pressure boosting and increased transfer capacity, but this cost will be much lower compared to building an entirely new pipeline.

Economically, the swap is a flexible model. Iran can receive a transit fee or take a portion of the gas as transit rights. This also benefits Russia because it provides indirect access to southern markets. In such a case, buyer countries in the Persian Gulf or even beyond can receive gas delivered in southern Iran without necessarily entering into a direct contract with Russia's transmission network.

Despite the advantages, this scenario faces challenges. The most important issue is Iran's seasonal gas imbalance. Gas consumption in Iran rises sharply in winter, and in some years, the domestic network faces supply restrictions. For a sustainable swap, careful planning for domestic consumption management, gas storage, and seasonal contract adjustments is necessary.

Second scenario: Physical gas transit from northern Iran to Persian Gulf

Another scenario is the direct or physical transfer of Russian gas through Iran's pipelines to the Persian Gulf coast. In this model, after entering Iran, gas is transferred through the national grid or new pipelines to the south and delivered there to export terminals or regional networks.

Iran has one of the most extensive gas pipeline networks in the region. The national gas pipelines, crossing northern and central regions, form a major part of the country's energy transmission infrastructure. However, transferring high volumes of Russian gas to the south would require increasing this network's capacity. This can be done by building pressure boosting stations, adding parallel pipelines, and optimizing gas flow management.

If such development occurs, Iran could become a significant transit route for gas. In this case, Russian gas could be transferred to energy facilities on the Gulf coast. These facilities may include petrochemical complexes or even gas-to-LNG projects. Since the Gulf countries have maritime energy export infrastructure, such a route could lead to a new link in global gas trade.

The advantage of this scenario is the creation of a real and sustainable energy corridor. Unlike the swap model, which is mostly a contractual solution, this involves a physical gas transfer route that can move significant volumes over the long term. This is also important for Russia as it diversifies export routes and reduces dependence on limited routes.

However, this scenario requires significant investment. Upgrading Iran's gas transmission

network, building new stations, and possibly constructing complementary pipelines entail considerable costs. Additionally, issues related to financing, technology transfer, and the region's geopolitical conditions could affect the speed of such a project.

Third scenario: Creating a gas hub in southern Iran and connecting to global markets

In the third scenario, the north-south corridor is not just a simple transit route but part of a larger plan to create a gas hub in southern Iran. In this model, Russian gas, upon entering Iran, is combined with regional gas resources, including Iran's own production or even gas from Central Asian countries, and managed as a commercial hub in southern Iran.

Creating a gas hub means forming an energy pricing and trading center where various suppliers can offer their gas to regional or global buyers. If southern Iran becomes such a hub, Russian gas could also be present in this market and sold through diverse contracts.

The geographical location of Iran's southern coast is suitable for forming such a hub. This area is close to major energy shipping routes and has relatively short access to Asian markets. Moreover, the presence of large gas fields in Iran concentrates a significant supply volume in the same region.

In such a structure, the north-south corridor becomes a key infrastructure transferring gas from northern sources to the southern hub. This hub could be complemented by facilities such as gas liquefaction plants, regional pipeline networks, or long-term export contracts. As a result, Iran could play a more active role in global gas trade and become a link between Eurasian producers and consumer markets.

Of course, realizing this scenario requires long-term planning, infrastructure investment, and the creation of transparent legal and commercial frameworks. Global energy markets are highly competitive, and a gas hub's success depends on factors like regulatory stability, open access to infrastructure, and investor confidence.

Overall, the idea of transferring Russian gas through Iran to the Persian Gulf, although facing challenges, has significant geographic and economic logic. Iran is positioned to connect northern Eurasia's gas resources to international waters and global markets. Depending on political, economic, and investment conditions, one of the scenarios—swap, physical transit, or gas hub creation—may materialize. Each of these scenarios will have different implications for the region's energy trade structure, but a common point is Iran's central role in forming a new energy corridor between north and south.

Shadows in the desert: How US treachery facilitated Israeli outposts on Iraqi soil

From page 1 ▶ While al-Jubouri noted that the second outpost was “less shocking” than the first, its existence underscores a deliberate pattern. These bases were strategically imposed on Iraq, capitalizing on the turbulent regional climate and leveraging Iraq’s complex military geography to grant Israeli forces unprecedented, unauthorized access to the heart of the Middle East.

The core of the scandal lies in the sophisticated cover provided by the U.S. military. Iraqi officials were led to believe that the personnel, hardware, and infrastructure in these desert zones belonged exclusively to American forces operating under the mandate of the international coalition.

“Those bases operated under American cover,” al-Jubouri revealed. “The equipment, weapons, and cover were clearly American.”

Washington systematically exploited its official channels with Baghdad to mask these violations:

Any U.S. military movements were permitted under the guise of specialized, high-level missions coordinated with the General Command of the Armed Forces.

Because these operations were



classified as sensitive, top-tier U.S.-Iraqi joint ventures, lower and mid-level Iraqi security and military agencies were entirely locked out of the loop, preventing internal whistleblowers from raising early alarms.

Washington used the broader regional conflict between the U.S.-Israeli axis and Iran to justify high-intensity military movements, misleading Iraqi authorities into believing the operations were standard American defensive measures.

A flagrant breach of Iraqi sovereignty

The establishment of Israeli bases

left the country blind to what was actually being transported into its western deserts. Washington took full advantage of this blind spot, smuggling Israeli assets, weapons, and personnel into the country under the star-spangled banner.

The revelation has sent shockwaves through the political establishment in Baghdad, creating an acute crisis of confidence. Al-Jubouri did not mince words regarding the domestic fallout, stating that the situation has caused severe embarrassment across every tier of the Iraqi state.

It exposes Baghdad as seemingly incapable of policing its own territory or holding its strategic partners accountable, severely weakening its diplomatic standing in the region.

It reveals a critical intelligence failure, showing that the military command structure was effectively blindsided and manipulated by its primary international ally.

By using its military agreements as a shield to establish Israeli outposts, the United States has not only violated the trust of the Iraqi government but has also turned Iraq’s desert geography into a launchpad for unauthorized regional shadow warfare.

Hezbollah pounds IOF with FPV drones

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – The Lebanese resistance movement has announced more operations targeting the Israeli regime’s military positions and equipment inside Lebanese territory.

In consecutive statements, the resistance movement said its fighters struck an Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) position inside a tent in the town of Dibl, southern Lebanon, using a precision drone, achieving a direct hit.

Following this operation, Hezbollah targeted a gathering of IOF vehicles and soldiers “west of the Arab al-Aramshe village in northern occupied Palestine” with a swarm of loitering drones.

Among other notable operations, the resistance movement targeted an IOF naval site at Rosh HaNikra with attack drones.

The Upper Galilee Regional Council reported a “security incident” in the settlement of Misgav Am near the Lebanese border. The newspaper “Israel Hayom” reported that two people were injured, one of them seriously, after a Hezbollah drone struck Misgav Am in the Galilee.

The IOF stated that an explosive-laden drone launched by Hezbollah detonated inside a settlement where soldiers had gathered near the Lebanese border, noting that shrapnel was spotted in the Shomera settlement in the western Galilee.

Hezbollah revealed that it had carried out two additional operations targeting IOF positions and equipment inside Lebanese territory.

In further statements, the Lebanese resistance front said its fighters targeted an IOF communications vehicle in the town of Taybeh with another attack drone, the vehicle was seen burning after the strike.

These operations come as part of Hezbollah’s powerful resistance in confronting IOF attempts to illegally advance and establish positions inside Lebanese territory. They are also a response to ongoing violations of the so-called ceasefire agreement between Lebanon and the Zionist regime, which have resulted in the deaths and injuries of hundreds of Lebanese civilians since it went into effect on April 16.

Casualty numbers among the IOF are rising at

a time when the Lebanese resistance movement continues its operations in response to the occupation regime’s daily ceasefire violations and its attacks on Lebanese areas, particularly in the south.

This is where IOF has been issuing regular forced evacuation orders to regions before bombarding entire towns and villages as it struggles to defeat Hezbollah in combat on the ground. International law experts argue the warnings are inconsistent and often broad and open-ended. Sometimes there is no warning at all before the indiscriminate airstrikes begin.

Last week, the Israeli health ministry published an update on the number of injuries since the start of the illegal war on Iran. The ministry is reported to have raised the total number of casualties since the aggression on the Islamic Republic began on February 28, 2026, until May 18, to 8,752 injuries.

In an update to its data, the ministry confirmed that the number of injured soldiers admitted to hospitals from the northern front with Hezbollah during the period following the ceasefire with Iran (on April 8) reached 851.

The number of IOF soldiers that have been recorded in hospitals from the northern front since the so-called ceasefire with Lebanon (on April 17) reached 433.

According to military experts, and alluded to by Hebrew media, the Zionist regime is downplaying the number of IOF casualties in a bid to boost morale among soldiers and the general public. This, after aggression on Lebanon is not going to plan.

Israeli media and officials have again admitted the effectiveness of Hezbollah’s explosive-laden drones, which are hitting their targets precisely and inflicting losses on the IOF in the ongoing confrontations.

The commander of the “Technology and Maintenance” company (TNA) in the IOF’s Sayarat Givat unit spoke about being injured in Lebanon by a Hezbollah explosive drone, acknowledging that the technology is highly advanced and dangerous.

Hezbollah’s First-Person View (FPV) drones are small, low-cost, explosive-laden “kamikaze” drones controlled by an operator wearing goggles. Their most critical feature is a physical fiber-optic

cable (10–30 km long) that connects the drone to the controller. Because this cable transmits video and commands without any wireless signal, the drones are effectively resistant to jamming by electronic warfare systems, allowing Hezbollah to bypass the IOF’s advanced and very expensive defense technologies.

These drones have caused significant casualties among IOF soldiers by accurately targeting troop gatherings, tanks, and other military assets while evading radar and heat detection.

The combination of extremely low cost and high effectiveness represents a major tactical shift for Hezbollah, moving away from sole reliance on anti-tank guided missiles while consistently inflicting losses on the occupation regime’s military.

Elsewhere, Mohammad Raad, head of the Loyalty to the Resistance parliamentary bloc in Lebanon, accused the Lebanese ruling authorities of “effectively adopting the occupation regime’s narrative against the resistance.”

Raad said the ruling camp in Beirut portrays the core problem as Hezbollah’s refusal to surrender to the Zionist regime or accept the state’s proposal of limiting weapons exclusively to government control while the Israeli occupation regime continues with its illegal activities.

According to Raad, the authorities believe their only path to gaining American approval, European support, and regional acceptance is through engaging directly with the Zionist regime and opening negotiations that would ultimately dismantle the resistance front.

Meanwhile, issues such as a ceasefire and the IOF’s withdrawal from occupied Lebanese territory are being postponed until that objective is achieved.

He added that this approach is not the result of ignorance, but rather a firm political conviction that such a course could save Lebanon from war and collapse, even at the expense of sovereignty and national dignity.

Raad stressed that the resistance movement’s position is rooted in defending Lebanon’s sovereignty and rejecting any occupation of Lebanese land, regardless of the size of the occupation.

Sumud activists demand safe passage, accountability amid Israel’s illegal abductions

From page 1 ▶ The violence at sea began roughly seventy nautical miles off the coast of Cyprus, drawing immediate comparisons to previous acts of Israeli piracy.

The Israeli regime’s forces stormed civilian ships, forcefully abducting peaceful international participants. Among those kidnapped is Dr. Margaret Connolly, a veteran physician and the sister of Irish President Catherine Connolly.

Anticipating the brutal crackdown, Dr. Connolly pre-recorded a video that circulated across social media. In the footage, she stated that if her message was being viewed, it meant she had been kidnapped from her boat by occupying forces and was being held illegally in an Israeli prison.

She said she was speaking not only as a



medical professional but as a mother and a human being, and expressed fierce pride in joining the largest civilian maritime mission to date, aimed at delivering life-saving supplies to a traumatized population.

The abduction of an Irish head of state’s

sister, alongside hundreds of other global citizens, has ignited widespread political anger.

Human rights advocates and international legal observers have condemned the raids as a blatant violation of maritime law. The seizure of civilian vessels far beyond territorial waters highlights Israel’s absolute determination to weaponize famine and forcefully prevent civilian aid.

Despite the ongoing threat of military violence, the coalition, representing activists from dozens of nations, refuses to be intimidated.

Communications with the fleet have repeatedly been jammed, but distress messages broadcast earlier showed activists in life jackets holding their ground.

Three killed as gunmen target California mosque in hate-fueled attack



TEHRAN — Three people were killed in a brutal Islamophobic terror attack at the Islamic Center of San Diego, California, on Monday, when two teenage gunmen opened fire before dying by apparent suicide, leaving a community reeling and sparking urgent warnings about rising anti-Muslim hatred in the United States.

The assailants, identified as 17-year-old Cain Clark and 18-year-old Caleb Vasquez, began firing near midday outside the mosque complex, which also houses a school.

Their rampage could have claimed far more lives thanks to Amin Abdullah, a heroic security guard who sacrificed his own life shielding children and staff inside.

Anti-Islamic writings recovered from the scene confirm the attack was driven by hate, and police have officially launched a hate-crime investigation.

This massacre is the lethal culmination of years of surging Islamophobia fueled by inflammatory political rhetoric, online radicalization, and persistent systemic neglect.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations has documented record-high discrimination complaints, warning that Muslim Americans are increasingly targeted as existential threats rather than recognized as fellow citizens. The U.S.’ failure to decisively confront anti-Muslim bigotry continues to endanger innocent lives.

The grief was deepened by the cruelty of some public figures. Trump-aligned Zionist activist Laura Loomer, long known for her anti-Muslim rhetoric, intensified the horror by posting: “The mosque that was ‘supposedly’ shot up today. Just remember the people who attend this mosque want us all to be killed.” She also called for the mosque to be raided by the FBI and immigration authorities.

Many condemned Loomer’s remarks as dehumanizing and dangerous, pointing out that she echoes the very hatred that drove the shooters.

Imam Taha Hassane of the Islamic Center reminded the nation that the mosque remains a sanctuary of peace, not a target.

UAE spent \$6m on Epstein-linked reputation firm to suppress ambassador report

From page 1 ▶ An advocate of Israel, Ruemmler’s Washington legal career saw her make the case for legislation to combat the anti-BDS (Boycott Divestment and Sanctions) campaign. In 2019, she and former U.S. solicitor general Paul Clement were cited as having written legal opinions arguing that legislation linked to President Donald Trump executive order on anti-Semitism did not violate the First Amendment, even though critics warned that such measures could be used to suppress campus criticism of Israel and support for BDS.

Terakeet’s work for the UAE is said to have begun in July 2019 and continues to this day. Much of its formal work focused on promoting tourism in the Emirates. However, former employees told the paper that Al-Otaiba was concerned about a 2017 article published by The Intercept, written by Ryan Grim, now co-founder of Drop Site News, which reported that the ambassador had once had ties to sex workers and traffickers.

Rather than challenge the report directly, Terakeet allegedly worked to bury it.

The Times reported that a small team at Terakeet was tasked with pushing Grim’s article off the first page of Google search results. The account manager, Kenneth Schiefer, reportedly relocated from Syracuse to Washington for more than a year to work in person with Al-Otaiba at the UAE embassy, avoiding a digital trail of emails and text messages between them.

Terakeet then established a personal webpage for Al-Otaiba and generated flattering online profiles emphasizing his leadership and diplomatic credentials. The firm supplied these profiles to institutions linked to the ambassador, including the Milken Institute, the Special Olympics and Harvard’s Kennedy School, as well as to The Marque, a paid digital profile directory.

The Times also reported that Terakeet used an anonymous editor handle, VentureKit, to create what it described as a fraudulent “sock puppet” account, Quorum816, to add positive information about Al-Otaiba to his Wikipedia page in 2020. Wikipedia later reversed the edits and suspended both accounts.



The purpose of the operation was clear: to create enough favorable and “differentiated” content about the UAE ambassador to force damaging reporting lower down in Google search results. According to the Times, the effort succeeded. By 2023, The Intercept article had dropped to page two of Google results. Today, for most users, it appears on page five.

The UAE is said to have paid Terakeet more than \$6 million between 2020 and 2022 for the work.

The wider New York Times investigation centres on Terakeet’s work for Goldman Sachs and Ruemmler, a former White House counsel under President Barack Obama. Terakeet reportedly sought to address what an internal memo described as her “association risk problem” over her ties to Epstein.

Senior Terakeet figures reportedly discussed how to promote favorable material about Ruemmler so that at least 80 percent of the first 30 Google results would be positive. The firm created or planned personal websites, LinkedIn pages and multiple biographical profiles intended to appear above stories about her meetings and correspondence with Epstein.

But the effort ultimately failed. New documents released by the U.S. House Oversight Committee and later by the Justice Department reportedly revealed extensive references to Ruemmler in Epstein-related records, including emails in which she used affectionate terms for him and discussed travel, gifts and legal advice. Ruemmler announced in February that she would resign from Goldman Sachs.

Riab cited as model for community-based tourism



TEHRAN - The village of Riab in eastern Iran has emerged as a model for community-based tourism development and has been nominated as one of Iran's candidates for the Best Tourism Villages program organized by the UN Tourism.

Located in Gonabad county, Riab has gained attention for involving local residents directly in tourism planning and management. Villagers have established groups focused on policymaking, content production, festivals and events, as well as accommodation and hospitality services, assigning specific roles to residents and encouraging participation in all stages of tourism development.

Local participation has been cited as one of the main reasons behind the village's growing reputation. Residents have a long history of cooperation in development projects, including the restoration of the village's qanat system, a 19-kilometer underground water channel regarded as one of the longest qanats in Iran.

Authorities and local residents have also

worked together to preserve Riab's cultural heritage. According to local officials, 21 historical, cultural, and tourism-related sites in the village have been added to Iran's national heritage list, a figure considered rare among Iranian villages.

Efforts have also focused on preserving the village's traditional architecture. Restoration and revitalization projects have been carried out in line with the region's climatic conditions, transforming Riab into what local authorities describe as a "living museum" of architecture.

The village has become a destination for historical, cultural, and educational tours, including programs for children, due to its emphasis on sustainable development and community-based tourism.

Iranian tourism officials recently introduced Riab as one of the country's representatives for the 2026 Best Tourism Villages initiative, a global program that recognizes rural destinations for sustainable tourism and cultural preservation.

Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Nubian Monuments from Abu Simbel to Philae

The Nubian Monuments from Abu Simbel to Philae lie in the Governorate of Aswan. It is a serial property of ten component parts covering 374.48 ha: Abu Simbel, Amada, Wadi Sebua, Kalabsha, Philae (Island of Agilkia), Old and Middle Kingdom Tombs, Ruins of town of Elephantine, Stone quarries and obelisk, Monastery of St. Simeon, and the Islamic Cemetery.

The first five component parts contain temples moved during the UNESCO International Campaign from 1960 to 1980 to save them from flooding by the Nile and Lake Nasser because they were recognized as internationally significant by the international community. The remaining five cover antiquities of the Aswan area.

This stretch of the Nile from Aswan in the north to the Sudanese border in the south is an archaeological haven. Home to temples ranging from the New Kingdom to the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, as well as early Coptic sites and villages, the region's monuments represent the breadth of Nubian cultural articulations, and the various influences shaping the culture over time.

Aswan, north of the first cataract, was the border town of ancient Egypt, an essential strategic point in ancient Egypt, and base for Egyptian activities to the south, whether trade or military raids. From prehistoric times onwards, expeditions were mounted to dominate Nubia. In each of the great periods of Egyptian history, there was, if only partially, a seizure of Nubia, which became a natural annex to the Kingdom and later a colony whose fiscal and commercial income was transferred to Aswan.

The monuments of the property include exceptional architecture, such as the Great Temple at Abu Simbel, carved out of an escarpment of solid rock. Its design and layout allow rays of the sun to penetrate to the innermost chamber twice annually on the equinoxes.

Philae above the first cataract was the great Ptolemaic sanctuary of the goddess Isis - renowned since Greco-Roman antiquity for its temples and their annexes. The final bastion of ancient Egyptian religion, the rites of the cult of Isis persisted there until the 9th century CE.

Other than Abu Simbel and Philae, the property includes the temples of Amada, constructed by Tuthmosis III and by Amenophis II, of Derr (also at Amada), those of Wadi Sebua, Dakka and Maharraqa (at Wadi Sebua), the temple of Talmis (removed to Kalabsha), the kiosk of Kartassi, and the temple of Beit el Wali.

At Aswan, numerous monuments testify to the importance of this commercial, military and practical centre. Officials in charge of Nubian affairs in the Old and Middle Kingdoms constructed richly decorated tombs in the Qubbet el Hawa Mountain, while the town of Elephantine yields an overwhelming quantity of interesting finds. The stone quarries, with an unfinished obelisk left behind, are the basis of knowledge of ancient Egyptian quarrying technology. The well preserved ruins of the monastery of St Simeon on the west bank are one of the biggest monasteries in Egypt.

The region of the first cataract is distinguished by its complex theology, promulgated by the priesthoods of the region competing for the attention of their Ptolemaic rulers in Alexandria. Despite, or perhaps due to this complexity, ancient belief lasted long in the region. The myth of Osiris is represented with a high degree of symbolism throughout the region, the most refined depiction of which lies within Hadrian's gate on the west side of the island of Philae. The scenes depicted at Philae survive in contemporary cultural manifestations in the Egyptian feast of "Sham al-Neseem".

(Source: UNESCO)

Attacks on heritage sites show US, Israel 'civilizational hostility', minister says

TEHRAN - Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, said on Monday that attacks on Iranian historical monuments by the United States and Israel reflected what he described as "civilizational hostility" toward Iran, adding that damage to 149 historical sites would remain "a stain" on their faces.

Salehi-Amiri made the remarks during a ceremony marking International Museum Day and the start of Iran's Cultural Heritage Week, attended by museum officials, researchers, restorers, academics and cultural heritage professionals, as well as relatives of the late Omidvar brothers, Iranian travel pioneers.

Consecutive airstrikes carried out by the United States and the Zionist regime of Israel from late February through late March damaged or destroyed 149 historical monuments and sites across several Iranian provinces.

The reported damage included sites listed as World Heritage properties, nationally registered monuments and historic urban areas in cities including Tehran, Isfahan, Sanandaj, Kermanshah and Khorramabad.

The incidents have raised concerns among Iranian officials and heritage experts over the vulnerability of cultural heritage during military conflict, particularly because many of the affected sites predate the establishment of the states involved in the strikes.

Salehi-Amiri described cul-



tural heritage, national identity and what he called the Iranian nation's "historical resistance" as deeply interconnected. He said Iran remained resilient due to its "cultural capital, national cohesion and culture of sacrifice."

"If Iran stands powerful and proud in the world today, it is because of the sacrifices of generations who gave their lives for the survival, dignity and honor of this land," he said.

The minister also commemorated those who martyred in what he referred to as the "Ramadan war" and children killed in Minab school, saying those responsible would eventually face accountability before international courts and global public opinion.

Referring to what he called "the third major crime of the United States in contemporary history," Salehi-Amiri said the world had not forgotten Hiroshima or Vietnam and that Minab would likewise remain in Iran's historical memory.

During his speech, Salehi-Amiri said Cultural Heritage Week aimed to "revisit Iran's civilizational grandeur" and to emphasize the country's historical and cultural significance.

"We hold Cultural Heritage Week so that Iranians and the world know that Iran is a land of narratives, mysteries, civilizations and the historical memory of humanity," he said.

He added that the event was intended to educate younger generations about Iran's historical identity and to encourage the preservation of cultural heritage as a "strategic asset."

Salehi-Amiri also called on artists, writers, architects, musicians and restorers to contribute to preserving and promoting Iranian identity and culture.

He said attacks on Iran's historical monuments reflected hostility by countries "without history, lineage or civilization," adding that such actions demonstrated anger toward what he described as "the oldest living civilization in the world."

Iran, he said, had emerged from the attacks "more united and cohesive than before."

The minister then thanked museum officials, experts, researchers and restorers across the country for their work in preserving Iran's historical heritage. He also praised Iran's armed forces, the families of those killed in recent conflicts and the government for supporting the country during difficult periods.

Salehi-Amiri said Iran possessed more than one million historical artifacts and 43,000 nationally registered heritage sites, describing the country as "one of the world's greatest soft powers" in the cultural sphere.

"Iran is a sun from whose light, warmth, culture and civilization the world benefits," he said. "This nation will continue its historical path stronger than ever."

A look at Iran's treasure trove in Russia



Among the oldest Iranian artifacts in the Hermitage collection are 55 painted Elamite pottery vessels dating back to the late fourth and third millennia BCE (approximately 5,000 to 6,000 years ago). These were donated to the museum in the early twentieth century by the French archaeological mission excavating in Iran.

The collection also includes Luristan artifacts dating from the 13th to the 8th centuries BCE, including bracelets, pins, bronze figurines, and pottery. Several Iron Age pottery vessels of the Hasanlu type and a red-glazed vessel from Amlash — donated to the Hermitage by Arthur Upham Pope — are also preserved in the museum.

Achaemenid artifacts

The Hermitage's Achaemenid collection, dating from the sixth to the fourth centuries BCE, includes a fragment of the reliefs from Persepolis depicting the head of one of the "Immortals," the royal guard soldiers. The artifact was presented to the museum by the Iranian government in 1935 during the International Exhibition of Persian Art.

Other notable works from this period include a gold cup with lion-shaped handles, golden jewelry, gold necklaces adorned with semi-precious stones, a plaque depicting a winged man — regarded by some as a symbol of Ahura Mazda — and animal figurines.

The Hermitage's collection of Achaemenid seals also includes a cylinder seal from the late fifth century BCE depicting the victory of a Persian king over Egypt, as well as several agate and carnelian seals produced in a Greco-Iranian style.

A Parthian collection: finds from the ancient city of Nisa

The Parthian period at the Hermitage is primarily represented by artifacts discovered in the ancient city of Nisa, located in present-day Turkmenistan, which was home to one of the earliest palaces of the Parthian kings. Excavations there were conducted between 1947 and 1963.

The government of Turkmenistan donated four ivory rhytons dating to the second century BCE, along with several decorative clay plaques from the palace, to the Hermitage. In addition, the museum houses more than 2,600 administrative documents related to the royal Parthian wine warehouses — documents considered among the most important sources for understanding the Parthian economy and history.

In 1996, the Hermitage acquired a rare example of Parthian metalwork: a gilded silver plate decorated with the image of an ibex and bearing a long inscription in the Parthian lan-

guage. The inscription indicates that the vessel belonged in the mid-third century CE to Narseh, son of Artashir and Sasanian viceroy of the Caucasus.

The world's largest collection of Sasanian silverware

The Hermitage possesses the world's largest collection of Iranian and Central Asian silver vessels dating from the third to the ninth centuries CE. Most of these objects were discovered in treasure hoards and accidental finds near the Kama and Ob rivers in Russia.

The collection contains three gold vessels and 35 or 36 Sasanian silver vessels, the most famous of which depict royal hunting scenes. Some of these works likely date to the late Sasanian period and even the eighth century CE.

The museum also houses more than 1,200 Sasanian seals, including an amethyst seal belonging to Queen Ding, wife of Yazdegerd II, as well as seals bearing lengthy Middle Persian inscriptions.

An exceptional collection of Iranian coins

With more than 3,000 pieces, the Hermitage's collection of Parthian coins is considered one of the most significant in the world. Among them are rare coins of Mithridates II and coins from subsidiary branches of the Parthian dynasty in Sistan.

The museum's Sasanian coin collection includes more than 6,000 pieces and ranks among the richest collections worldwide. It includes rare coins of Hormizd II and Khosrow I and II, as well as imitation coins and coins minted in Central Asia.

In addition to artifacts from historical Iran, the Hermitage preserves a broad collection of Iranian-related art and culture from Central Asia, including Bactrian and Khwarazmian vessels, Sogdian works, wall paintings, clay sculptures, and Buddhist artifacts.

Sogdian art holds a special place in the museum. Murals, wooden and clay statues, and artifacts discovered at Panjakent — an important city in present-day Tajikistan — are among the highlights of the collection. Some of these paintings depict scenes from the Panchatantra, the Mahabharata, and the epic tales of Rostam.

Many of these works have been restored by Hermitage specialists, and some have been returned after restoration to museums and scientific institutions in Tajikistan.

Today, the Iranian collection of the Hermitage Museum is regarded not only as one of the most important repositories of ancient Iranian art outside Iran, but also as a major foundation for scholarly research on pre-Islamic Iranian art and metalwork.

Health minister discusses boosting health ties with BRICS counterparts

TEHRAN – Health Minister Mohammad-Reza Zafarqandi has explored avenues to expand cooperation with his counterparts from BRICS member states in different fields of the health sector.

Zafarqandi held several meetings on the sidelines of the 79th World Health Assembly (WHA), which is being held from May 18 to June 23 in Geneva, Switzerland, IRNA reported.

An Iranian delegation led by the health minister is participating in the event.

Holding a meeting with the Indian Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Jagat Prakash Nadda, Zafarqandi highlighted the role of India in the pharmaceutical industry and emphasized the need for the enhancement of ties in the field of health.

For his part, Prakash Nadda expounded on India's capacity in the health sector and announced the country's readiness to maintain and promote cooperation with Iran.

The two sides agreed to form a joint committee to follow up on the development of academic, medical, and pharmaceutical ties.

Also, Zafarqandi held meetings with his Russian, Brazilian, Chinese, South African, Egyptian, and Ethiopian counterparts, elaborating on the impacts of the US-Israeli war on the country's civilian and health infrastructures, while discussing ways to enhance collaboration among the BRICS member states in the health sector.

The health minister also held a meeting with Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (ICRC).

During the meeting, Zafarqandi highlighted the recent war's impacts on healthcare facilities and medical centers, stressing that attacks on health infrastructures have severely damaged the health system and medical staff.

Referring to the destruction of the Pasteur Institute of Iran, he warned about the consequences and health risks.

The official said that since the beginning of the imposed war against Iran on February 28, medical staff, in cooperation with the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), emergency teams, and firefighters, were among the first to be present in the fields to



provide medical services.

Lauding the ICRC for dispatching aid consignments to the country, Zafarqandi called for expanding humanitarian cooperation.

For her part, Spoljaric Egger censured the attacks on civilian and medical infrastructures, while commending the unprecedented operational capabilities of the health ministry and the IRCS, noting that the ICRC has nothing to add to strengthen the high capacity of the two organizations.

The official noted that the ICRC is exploring new avenues to raise funds and receive contributions from international donor states to address humanitarian needs.

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 re-

sponse, 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 equity and universal health coverage.

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

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.

In 2025, the health ministry said it was following up on establishing a joint insurance system with neighboring countries, as well as organizations such as the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and BRICS, to facilitate the treatment of foreign patients in the country.

There are international and health tourism insurances, but an acceptable insurance to be used by tourists in Iran is one of the main challenges in the health tourism sector, IRNA quoted Sajad Razavi, an official with the health ministry, as saying.

Since the country is not working directly with these organizations due to sanctions, insurance issued in the country is not accepted overseas, and international insurances are not accepted by medical centers in Iran, he added.

"We want the patients to be able to pay for their health costs using an international card or using an insurance that is reliable in the region. Therefore, the issue of creating a joint insurance system with neighboring countries or member states of organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), BRICS, and ECO has been raised in the ECO meeting held in Hamedan to define a framework for that," Razavi noted.

Now Iran is pursuing the issue to help health tourists cover their health expenditures, it will not be an easy task to do, though, he said.

Products with nano-scale certificates rise despite war

TEHRAN – Despite the 12-day war in June 2025 and the recent 40-day war, 230 products have received nanoscale certificates in the past Iranian calendar year (March 2025-March 2026), surpassing the targeted number.

Last year, the Vice Presidency for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy and the headquarters for nanotechnology had planned to obtain nanoscale certificates for 190 products (one product per working day). Still, the figure increased by 40, reaching 230. Currently, the total number of nanotechnology products with a nanoscale certificate has increased to 1965, IRNA reported.

Over the past year, products of 61 companies received nanoscale certificates. Tehran, with 27 companies, is placed first, followed by Isfahan, Yazd, and Fars provinces with 5, 4, and 3 companies, respectively.

The highest number of products that received nanoscale certificates was recorded respectively in the provinces of Tehran, Fars, and Mazandaran, with 64, 48, and 24 products, respectively.

The provinces of Zanjan (32 products), Qom (17), Markazi (16), Qazvin (11), and Isfahan (7) are placed next.

Out of 230 products, Industrial supplies had the largest share with 72 products. Energy, oil, and related industries accounted for 41, Chemicals for 36, and Pharmaceutical and Health for 26 products.

Nanotech constitutes 19% of Iran's inventions

The headquarters for nanotechnology has supported the promotion of 20 nanotechnology inventions in the country, which constitute 19 percent of the total inventions registered in 2024.

In the past year, 33 nanotechnology plans have been approved, for 23 of which contracts

have been concluded, ISNA reported.

The headquarters has decided to identify, assess, and support innovative ideas to empower nanotechnology businesses.

Over the Iranian year, which ended in March 2025, a total of 1,735 nanotechnology products received nanoscale certificates from the Iran Nanotechnology Innovation Council and were commercialized by 201 companies.

The total sale of these products amounted to 973 trillion rials (equal to 700 million dollars) in the Iranian year 1403, indicating a 57 percent increase compared to a year earlier, and 72 percent in comparison to 200 trillion rials (140 million dollars) in the past four years. This growth is about 31 percent higher than the country's average annual inflation rate, IRNA quoted Emad Ahmadvand, the secretary of the headquarters for the Iran Nanotechnology Innovation Council, as saying.

The official made the remarks in a meeting with reporters on the sidelines of the 16th Iran Nanotechnology Exhibition held in Tehran from November 2 to 5.

The export of these nano-products constitutes 10 percent of the sales, about 183 million dollars, the official added.

The sales value of domestically-manufactured nano-tech products over the past year is estimated to be around 1.8 million dollars based on the average daily dollar exchange rate, Ahmadvand further noted.

The official went on to say that the three main industrial sectors, including transportation, civil engineering, and nanomaterials, had the highest share of the market, respectively.

More than a quarter of the country's secondary market for nanotechnology products is related to the automotive and transportation sectors, he added.

DOE supports ecotourism projects in Zarivar wetland

TEHRAN – The Department of Environment (DOE) has announced it will support ecotourism and nature-based projects around Zarivar, designated as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention.

Located at the foot of the Zagros mountains in the western province of Kordestan, Zarivar is a freshwater wetland. Recent heavy rainfalls have replenished Zarivar after years of drought.

The DOE head, Shina Ansari, highlighted the implementation of a comprehensive management plan in this regard in cooperation with governmental bodies and local communities.

Referring to the importance of the wetland's ecosystem and its natural and economic capacities, she said the wetland is one of the essential stopover sites for migratory birds, and plays an effective role in climate regulation and the development of nature tourism.

The official noted that the comprehensive management program provides a framework for all organizations to prevent the entry of pollutants into the wetland and allow local communities to benefit from the wetland's potential as incentives for further protection.

Ansari noted that the DOE supports tourism initiatives that are sustainable and environmentally conscious. She went on to say that designating Marivan as a wetland city will help showcase the environmental values of the wetland and develop sustainable tourism in the area.

Wetlands conservation projects

Iran's geography is distinct, teeming with diverse landscapes. In Iran, 141 wetlands with ecological value, with an area of over 3 million hectares, have been identified, 27 of which were listed in the International Ramsar Convention.

The DOE has announced the beginning of a new phase of the wetlands conservation project (2025 –2028) to strengthen sustainable livelihoods and alleviate pressure on the wetlands ecosystem.

Backed by successful experiences in Lake Urmia, the basins in Gilan, Fars, Parishan, and those in East and West Azerbaijan prov-



inces, the project has provided the basis for promoting wetland protection and improving sustainable resource utilization, IRIB quoted Fereshteh Jadori, an official with DOE, as saying on November 25.

The pilot implementation of the project in Shadegan and Behbahan in the previous phase yielded significant results, and these achievements led the project to enter a new phase with the support of international institutions and domestic agencies, she added.

The official went on to highlight the role of technical and vocational education and training in empowering local people to protect wetlands and improve their income.

The most recent strategies taken for the conservation of the wetlands are as follows. In June 2025, the DOE and the Ministry of Agriculture signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to launch a national plan for empowering local communities to protect and promote the sustainable use of wetlands.

In February 2025, the DOE and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) extended their partnership by signing a three-year memorandum of understanding (MOU) to conserve Iranian wetlands projects in the country.

The MOU was signed by the head of DOE, Shina Ansari, and Resident Representative ad interim for UNDP in Iran, Ayshanie Medagangoda-Labé, in a meeting in Bushehr province, ISNA reported.

Compassionate care in a digital world: family doctors matter more than ever

By Dr. Ebrahim Noori-Goushki

TEHRAN – Somewhere in the world tonight, a family doctor will answer a worried mother's phone call, comfort an elderly patient living alone, or quietly detect the early signs of a serious illness before it becomes a tragedy.

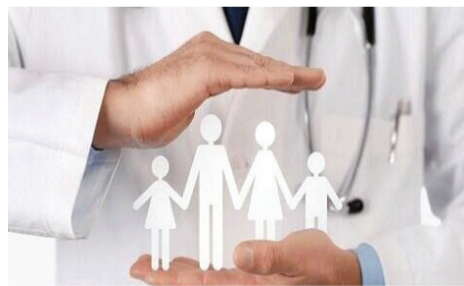
In an era increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence, digital health technologies, and fragmented healthcare systems, the human connection between doctor and patient remains one of the most irreplaceable pillars of medicine.

On May 19, as the world marks World Family Doctor Day 2026 under the theme "Compassionate Care in a Digital World," we are reminded that technological advancement alone cannot heal societies.

Healthcare systems still depend on trust, continuity, empathy, and human presence — values that family physicians embody every day.

Across the globe, family doctors remain the first point of contact for millions of people. They care not only for diseases, but for people, families, and communities.

They accompany patients through childhood, aging, chronic illness, emotional distress, and social hardship. In many places, especially during times of crisis, war, economic



instability, and public health emergencies, family physicians are often the most accessible and trusted healthcare professionals.

Yet paradoxically, while the need for primary care is growing, many healthcare systems are witnessing a gradual erosion of family medicine. Burnout, workforce shortages, increasing administrative burdens, and the commercialization of healthcare threaten the sustainability of compassionate, community-based care.

Digital transformation undoubtedly offers extraordinary opportunities. Telemedicine, electronic health records, artificial intelligence, and remote monitoring can improve efficiency and access to care.

But technology should never replace the human dimension of medicine. Its true value lies in strengthening the relationship between physicians and patients — not weak-

ening it.

Compassionate care is not an outdated ideal. It is a clinical necessity. Patients do not merely seek prescriptions or algorithms; they seek understanding, reassurance, trust, and dignity.

No digital platform, regardless of sophistication, can fully replace the healing power of empathy and continuity of care.

In countries like Iran, where valuable primary healthcare infrastructures already exist, there remains significant potential to further strengthen family medicine through thoughtful policymaking, investment in human resources, and integration of modern technologies with people-centered care.

The future of healthcare should not become a choice between innovation and humanity; it must be a balance of both.

World Family Doctor Day 2026 is, therefore, more than a symbolic occasion. It is a global reminder that healthcare systems cannot remain sustainable, equitable, or resilient without strong family medicine at their foundation.

As we move deeper into the digital age, the world must not lose sight of one timeless truth: medicine is, and always will be, a profoundly human profession.



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MAY 20, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Value of a man depends upon his courage; his veracity depends upon his self-respect and his chastity depends upon his sense of honor.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:01 Evening: 19:27 Dawn: 03:15 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 04:55 (tomorrow)

Spain's ambassador to Iran visits "Art & War" exhibition at TMOCA

TEHRAN – Concurrent with the International Museum Day, May 18, the Spanish Ambassador to Iran visited the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMOCA) to view the second part of the "Art & War," showcasing 11 works by four Spanish modernist painters from its treasured collection.

The exhibition provided an opportunity for the Spanish Ambassador to emphasize the importance of cultural diplomacy and the peace-seeking message of art in times of crisis, IRNA reported.

After viewing the works on display, Antonio Sánchez-Benedito Gaspar, Spain's ambassador to Iran, expressed his pleasure at the event being held in Tehran and said: "Spain has a long tradition of anti-war art, and our positions have always been based on peace and respect for human rights."

"I am very pleased that at this moment, 11 works by distinguished Spanish artists are on display here. This is exactly the meaning of 'uniting a divided world,' which the International Council of Museums (ICOM) has emphasized this year," he added.

"I will remain in Iran and am committed, as an ambassador, to strengthening the ties between Spain's cultural institutions and this museum. We also welcome joint projects such as publishing art books in Persian and Spanish and holding review sessions in the fields of cinema and music," the ambassador noted.

At the conclusion of his visit, the Spanish Ambassador described the "Art & War" exhibition as a successful example of the role of art in fostering dialogue among cultures, expressing hope that such events might connect the hearts of nations where politics fails to bring peace.

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

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

The exhibition has been planned as an artistic reaction to the 40-day American-Zionist assault on Iran (from February 28 to April 8), which mar-



tyred about 3,500 people, including the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, several officials and military commanders, as well as numerous civilians, including women and children.

During the 40-day war (also known as the Ramadan War), besides some military targets, the US and Israel launched organized attacks against civilian infrastructure, including residential homes, hospitals, refineries, power plants, schools, universities, art and cultural spaces, bookstores, museums, and ancient sites in several cities, causing total or partial damage and injuring innocent people.

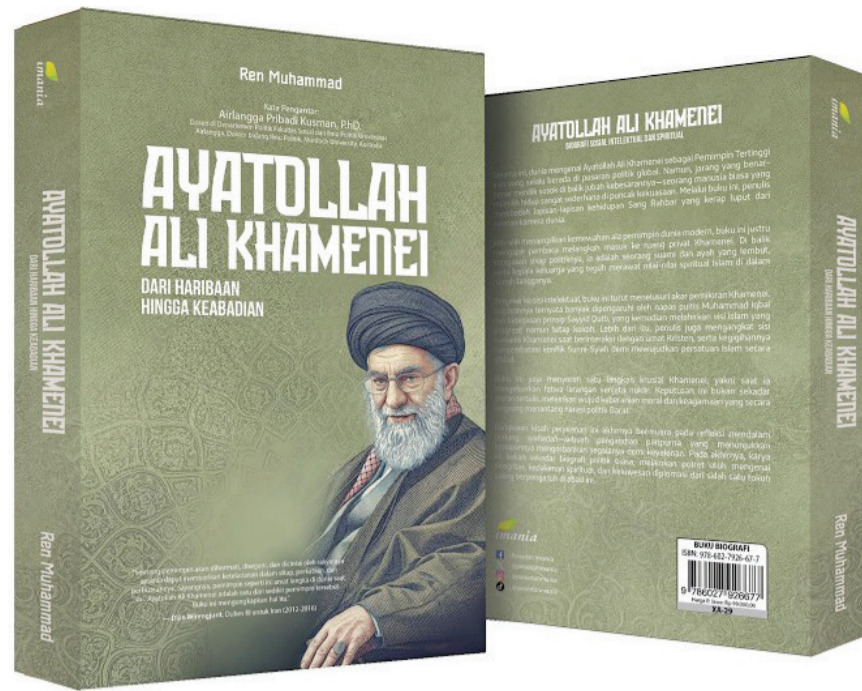
The TMOCA plans to gradually make more works available to audiences, so that with each visit, they can gain deeper insight into the impact of art when confronting historical and contemporary crises.

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

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

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

"Ayatollah Ali Khamenei: From Cradle to Eternity" published in Indonesia



TEHRAN- Following the growing interest in the influential figures of the Islamic world within the Indonesian intellectual sphere, a new comprehensive book titled "Ayatollah Ali Khamenei: Dari Haribaan Hingga Keabadian" ("Ayatollah Ali Khamenei: From Cradle to Eternity") has been released across Indonesia.

The 304-page work is authored by Ren Muhammad, a prominent Indonesian writer and researcher recognized for his deep explorations of spiritual history and the biographies of transformative Islamic figures.

Published by Penerbit Imania and distributed through the extensive Mizan Group network, the book offers a narrative and analytical deep dive into the life, struggles, and leadership of the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

This marks the second independent publication regarding the thoughts and legacy of Ayatollah Khamenei to be released in Indonesia following his martyrdom, receiving significant demand through pre-

order sales.

The author seeks to reveal the man behind the official title, inviting readers into the private sphere of a leader who consciously chose a life of profound simplicity at the pinnacle of power. Behind the firm public persona, the author portrays a gentle husband and father who prioritized Islamic spiritual values within his household.

The work meticulously traces the intellectual roots of Ayatollah Khamenei's vision, noting the influence of Muhammad Iqbal's poetic philosophy and Sayyid Qutb's principled stance. Muhammad highlights how this combination birthed a unique vision of Islam—one that is progressive and modern yet remains rooted in steadfast tradition.

A significant portion of the book is dedicated to the late Leader's humanistic outreach, particularly his respectful interactions with the Christian community and his lifelong commitment to bridging the Sunni-Shia divide in pursuit of global Is-

lamic unity. Furthermore, the writer highlights the historic fatwa against nuclear weapons, framing it as an act of moral courage that challenged prevailing Western narratives.

The biography culminates in a reflection on martyrdom, which the author describes as the ultimate expression of a life defined by total devotion and a readiness to sacrifice all for one's convictions.

The publication has garnered support from prominent Indonesian academics, including Professor Yon Mahmudi, a Middle East expert at the University of Indonesia, who praised the book as a profound exploration of ideological consistency. The release underscores the strengthening cultural and intellectual ties between Iran and Indonesia, providing a scholarly lens through which to examine one of the most influential figures of the century.

Following the coordinated US-Israeli attack on February 28, which targeted key national facilities in Iran, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei,

the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, was martyred. Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei has since been appointed as the new Leader by the Assembly of Experts.

Having served for decades as the preeminent symbol of resistance against global hegemony, his loss in a targeted US strike sparked a wave of unprecedented grief and spiritual awakening across the Islamic world. Far from demoralizing the public, his martyrdom has been viewed by millions as the ultimate sacrifice for the country's sovereignty, further delegitimizing the actions of the aggressors and solidifying the national identity around the principles of steadfastness.

This transition of leadership has acted as a catalyst for national mobilization. The Iranian people have transformed their collective mourning into a powerful movement of national resolve, signaling to the international community that the revolutionary framework remains unshakable.

Seoul in heart of Tehran: Korean embassy celebrates International Museum Day with rich cultural showcase

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN – On Monday, May 18, the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Iran hosted a remarkably engaging, fruitful, and richly informative cultural event at its premises in Tehran in commemoration of International Museum Day. The gathering brought together Iranian museum and art gallery officials, diplomats, and cultural enthusiasts for a celebration of shared heritage and future cooperation.

Opening with poetry and warmth

The event began with an opening speech delivered by Dr. Ohk Nara, First Secretary of the embassy and Director of the King Sejong Institute Tehran. In a moving gesture of cultural harmony, Dr. Ohk opened the proceedings by reciting a Korean poem translated into Farsi, setting a tone of mutual respect and artistic appreciation.

Following this, His Excellency Mr. Kim Junpyo, the South Korean Ambassador to Iran, delivered his welcoming speech. The full text follows:

"I consider it very meaningful to be here with the officials of Iran's museums and art galleries today on the occasion of International Museum Day. I believe that museums and art galleries are not merely spaces for preserving artifacts from the past, but rather spaces that connect the wisdom of the past with today's lives and where new ideas for the future are born.

In 2022, the International Council of Museums redefined the role of museums, expanding it beyond collection, preservation, and exhibition to include service to society, communication with the public, and diversity and inclusion. Amidst this trend, our Embassy has been carrying out various cultural activities to bring culture closer to more people. In particular, the Embassy's mobile mini-museum, the 'Korean Culture Box,' originated from the idea that museums should no longer remain confined to specific spaces but can go directly to where people are.

Korea and Iran have already been cooperating in the field of cultural heritage, such as through the signing of a cooperation MOU between the National Museums of Korea and Iran. However, we look forward to further expanding exchanges and cooperation between the museums and art galleries of both countries. In particular, we hope that the National Art Collection of Iran and the National Folk Museum of Korea, who have graced this occasion with their presence, will serve as new links in Korea-Iran cultural exchange.

I hope that today's gathering will be a meaningful time to share stories of Korean and Ira-



nian culture and museums, enjoy the harmony of K-Food, Shishlik, and Juje Kebab, and explore new possibilities for cultural exchange between the two nations. Thank you."

A museum's gift to Iran: Korean Culture Box

A video congratulatory message was then played from Dr. Jang Sanghoon, Director of the National Folk Museum of Korea. The text of his speech read:

"I extend my deepest gratitude to the citizens of Tehran for visiting this special event introducing Korean culture in celebration of International Museum Day. I am Jang Sang-hoon, Director of the National Folk Museum of Korea in Seoul. The 'Korean Culture Box' that our museum sent to Tehran in 2024 is a 'small museum.' It consists of four boxes: one introducing the Sarangbang (a men's space) and Anbang (a women's space) in traditional Korean society, and another introducing Hanbok (traditional Korean clothing) and Hangeul (Korea's unique writing system).

Prepared to comprehensively introduce the representative aspects of traditional Korean culture, this box demonstrates the unique characteristics of Korean culture while simultaneously showcasing the universality of human culture. I believe that the recent attention Korean culture has garnered from the people of Iran and around the world is the result of the shared appreciation for both the individuality and universality of Korean culture.

This small museum is a modest gift to the people of Iran who love Korean culture. I believe that the path to leading human society toward

shared prosperity begins with understanding and respecting each other's cultures. I sincerely hope that this small gift will foster curiosity and affection for each other's cultures among the people of both Korea and Iran.

The National Folk Museum of Korea aims to be a window open to the world, demonstrating interest in and understanding of universal cultures based on an understanding of Korean culture. Through this, we hope that the National Folk Museum will serve as a window for Koreans to look into world culture and for foreigners to look into Korean culture. We hope it will become a venue that promotes mutual understanding by allowing various global cultures to harmonize and communicate. It is clear that understanding the culture of Iran, which possesses a long historical and cultural tradition, is an important task for our museum. I sincerely hope that today's event will contribute to the journey of active exchange and understanding that Korea and Iran will embark upon."

Museums as bridges in a divided world

Next, a congratulatory message was delivered from Dr. Park Mee-Jung, Chairperson of ICOM Korea. The text follows:

"Distinguished officials from the National Museums and Art Galleries of Iran, and Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Iran and all officials from the Cultural Attaché,

Today, May 18, 2026. I am delighted to be here to mark the 45th anniversary of International Museum Day. I send my heartfelt greetings from Seoul.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Cartoon of Day



Israeli Settlements
Cartoonist: Alaa Allagta from Palestine