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Iran's National Unity Shatters Mossad's Regime-Change Calculus

Pezeshkian: Iran's active role in regional blocs reflects a strong commitment to economic development

TEHRAN- Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has said that the country's active participation in major regional organizations, particularly the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), reflects Tehran's serious determination to expand economic cooperation and promote sustainable development.

In a message delivered on Friday to a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, Pezeshkian described the past year as a productive period for the expansion of trade and economic relations between Iran and the member states of the EAEU. ▶ Page 2

Iranian strike on US Base in Kuwait injures American military personnel: Bloomberg

TEHRAN - An Iranian missile strike on the US-operated Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait injured five American military personnel and contractors and damaged two MQ-9 Reaper drones, according to Bloomberg.

The report said Kuwaiti air defenses intercepted a Fateh-110 missile launched by Iran, but debris from the intercepted projectile fell on the base, causing minor injuries and significant damage. One MQ-9 drone was reportedly destroyed, while another was heavily damaged. ▶ Page 3

Government's immediate measures to support production; from support packages to war damage compensation fund

TEHRAN- Simultaneously with the third US-Zionist war of aggression, which caused damage to the country's industries, the responsible bodies quickly entered a supportive management phase, prioritizing industries, designing support packages, and establishing a damage compensation fund.

According to IRNA, the third war of aggression targeted a number of the country's mother industries as well as small and medium-sized enterprises. In this regard, the responsible bodies, especially the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, took immediate action.

The primary priority in rebuilding industries is focused on mother and key industries that supply raw materials to many other industries. Due to their high employment share and role in completing the downstream industrial chain, these industries play a crucial part in reconstruction and revival. ▶ Page 4

Global bodies warn: US-Israeli aggression threatens world fuel security

TEHRAN - In a stark warning issued Friday, the heads of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the International Energy Agency (IEA) declared that continued disruption to oil shipping through the Strait of Hormuz - a direct consequence of the ongoing US-Israeli military aggression against Iran - is rapidly pushing the world toward a severe fuel crisis.

The three institutions stated that global oil inventories are being drawn down at a record pace due to major supply disruptions through the strategic waterway. With peak summer demand approaching, the continued closure poses "increasing risks to fuel security," potentially triggering widespread shortages and destabilizing international energy markets.

Poor nations pay the heaviest price

The statement highlighted that the aggression-driven surge in energy and fertilizer prices is having a disproportionate effect on lower-income countries. ▶ Page 4

Hezbollah wages heroic resistance against Israeli aggression

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - Hezbollah has detailed a wide range of operations against Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF), installations, and vehicles across occupied southern Lebanon and northern settlements.

In the face of the heinous Zionist regime's war crimes that have killed and injured a growing number of civilians, Hezbollah has demonstrated once again its capability of resisting the heinous aggression.

The resistance movement has reiterated that the operations were carried out "in defense of Lebanon and its people, ▶ Page 5

American-Israeli 'ceasefires' are a trap; Gaza is the proof

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN - On May 28, at the Ein Prat Leadership Academy inside an Israeli settlement in the occupied West Bank, Benjamin Netanyahu dropped the final pretense of Washington's diplomatic framework.

Addressing a sick crowd intoxicated by the prospect of more ethnic cleansing, the Israeli prime minister openly stated that the military had pushed well past the boundaries of the October 2025 ceasefire. "We are fully in control of 60 percent of the Gaza Strip," he announced, outlining an explicit directive to "incrementally advance to 70%."

When the audience interrupted with macabre chants of "One hundred! One hundred!", ▶ Page 5

Deflection and denial: What Israel's furious reaction to the UN sexual violence report reveals

TEHRAN - If a state's record is entirely clean, it usually welcomes independent scrutiny to vindicate its name. Yet, Israel's explosive reaction to the United Nations' latest report on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence suggests an entirely different strategy: aggressive deflection.

The report, released publicly by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, formally adds Israel to a blacklist of countries whose military and security forces exhibit a documented pattern of using sexual violence and rape against detainees. The fallout was immediate. Upon viewing an advance copy, ▶ Page 5

Exclusive

'Cuba will fight if we must fight'

Cuban ambassador to Iran discusses US sanctions, potential war, and international inaction with the Tehran Times

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TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Stabilizing Iran's sovereignty over the world's energy artery

Kayhan analyzed Iran's creation of a new paradigm in the region. According to Kayhan, by proposing an exit from the military deadlock through imposing a "navigation cost," Tehran is reshaping energy-security equations in favor of its territorial sovereignty. Amid the United States' final attempts to pressure Iran—and as peace negotiations reach 95% progress—a new paradigm has emerged in the region's political discourse. The introduction of environmental and service fees is not only a pressure tool but also a redefinition of Iran's role as the guarantor of waterway security in exchange for logistical and protective payments. Although Western governments resist the term "fees," economic realities and the costs of preserving the marine environment strengthen Iran's right to collect navigation charges. Ultimately, a peace agreement that recognizes Iran's sovereign and economic rights over the Strait of Hormuz is the only path for global markets to escape the current instability and achieve lasting stability in the energy sector.

Iran: Keeping the path of dialogue open; a positive development

The Iran newspaper reflected on recent regional developments. It wrote that the crisis has entered a complex but manageable phase, making diplomacy and negotiations more important than ever. The key point is that the ceasefire has held—indicating no current intention to expand the war. Recent developments, especially after Donald Trump's trip to Beijing, seem to have shifted the dynamics into a new stage. Events following the Beijing visit showed that a new atmosphere is emerging. Pakistan's activation as a mediator—immediately after the trip—signaled that the United States also approves of this channel, since Islamabad's serious involvement would have been unlikely without Washington's green light. Now, messages between Tehran and Washington are being exchanged indirectly through Pakistan. This, in itself, is a positive development because it shows that both sides are keeping the path of dialogue open.

Farhikhtegan: Strengthening economic cooperation with China

Farhikhtegan interviewed economist Ahmad Salehi about improving Iran's economy. Salehi argues that two simultaneous shifts have occurred in Iran's foreign-trade structure: A decline in foreign-currency resources due to wartime damage to parts of the steel and petrochemical industries. The removal of the UAE from its central role in Iran's trade (both currency and logistics). Under these conditions, replacing trade and currency routes to compensate for the UAE's role is essential. One proposed solution is strengthening economic and financial coop-

eration with China. China should be included in the economic benefits related to the Strait of Hormuz and reconstruction projects so that it becomes an active partner in Iran's rebuilding and financing, rather than remaining passive. Developing alternative trade corridors is also crucial. Additionally, allocating rail capacity for oil exports could shift some cargo to land routes, reducing pressure on other transportation channels. Now is the time to fully activate Iran's transit capacities to reduce dependence on limited routes and make foreign trade more flexible.

Ettelaat: Iran before and after the Ramadan War

In an interview with Ettelaat, international-affairs analyst Foad Izadi examined the uncertain atmosphere between Iran and the United States. Izadi argued that while agreements are important in the international system and help reduce problems, the events of the past year show that the United States is not a country Iran can trust in negotiations. When two countries sit at the negotiating table, both must inevitably make concessions. But Iran before the Ramadan War is not the same as Iran after it in terms of independence and credibility. Iran's defensive capability disrupted America's sense of dominance. This demonstrates the Islamic Republic's stronger position in international relations. Therefore, negotiations must take place under conditions in which the other side accepts Iran's positions. Now Iran must strengthen its relations with political and economic partners so that, with military power already established, economic problems can gradually decrease and people can be relieved of livelihood pressures.

Javan: The agreement will anger Netanyahu

Javan, in an article on Israel's disruption of Iran-US negotiations, wrote that Netanyahu is trying to obstruct regional dialogue by escalating tensions and continuing the war in Lebanon. According to many observers, Tel Aviv seeks to maintain a state of conflict to eliminate any chance of de-escalation or agreement, while simultaneously pushing forward its confrontational policies against Iran and the Axis of Resistance. Recent analyses in international media show that Tel Aviv is deeply worried about an agreement whose core, contrary to the initial promises of the war, has been reduced to a temporary ceasefire and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, with Iran's nuclear issues postponed to later negotiations. In the two most recent regional crises, Trump also demonstrated that, in the Iran file, his decisions are influenced less by US national interests and more by the direct political considerations of Benjamin Netanyahu.

Iran says no final agreement reached with US as indirect contacts continue

TEHRAN—Iran and the United States continue to exchange messages through indirect channels, but no final understanding has been reached yet, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei said.

Speaking by telephone on Iran's state television program "Be Vaqt-e Iran" on Friday evening, Baqaei addressed the latest developments in indirect contacts between Tehran and Washington, as well as recent remarks by the US president.

"We said goodbye to the language of 'must' 47 years ago," Baqaei said, referring to the victory of the Islamic Revolution, which overthrew the US-backed Pahlavi regime in Iran.

"No Western party can use the language of 'must' when dealing with the Islamic Republic of Iran. We make our own decisions based on the interests and rights of the Iranian people," he added.

Commenting on US claims regarding a naval blockade, Baqaei described the measure as unlawful from the outset, arguing that it violated the ceasefire agreement and undermined freedom of international navigation.

"We must see in practice whether they will truly act on what they are saying or whether it is merely a propaganda claim," he said. "If they do so, it would effectively mean ending a wrongful action that they initiated several weeks ago and should never have undertaken in the first place."

Regarding negotiations, the Foreign Ministry spokesman said that exchanges of messages between the two sides remain ongoing, but stressed that "a final understanding has not been reached."

Baqaei also stated that the Strait of Hormuz remains closed to hostile military vessels, while commercial shipping continues to pass through the strategic waterway in coordination with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Addressing the future management of the Strait of Hormuz, he said the issue falls within the jurisdiction of its littoral states, namely Iran and Oman.

Asked about nuclear-related issues, Baqaei said Tehran's current priority is bringing an end to the war, adding that he had no comment on matters related to uranium enrichment or Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Pezeshkian: Iran's active role in regional blocs reflects a strong commitment to economic development

From page 1 ▶ The president emphasized that the existing trade potential among the participating countries far exceeds current levels of economic exchange. He noted that unlocking this potential requires the establishment of modern financial infrastructure, including mechanisms for transactions in national currencies and independent payment systems that can facilitate regional trade.

Pezeshkian stressed that despite facing unjust sanctions and external pressures, Iran has remained committed to strengthening regional cooperation and contributing to the development of a powerful and integrated region founded on the principles of national sovereignty, economic resilience, and energy security. He highlighted Iran's active participation in EAEU summits and council meetings as evidence of its commitment.



Calling on regional partners to transform solidarity into shared prosperity, the Iranian president said the future belongs to nations that build progress, stability, and public welfare through mutual trust, cooperation, and collective action.

Addressing recent developments involving Tehran and Washington, Pezeshkian stat-

ed that while diplomatic negotiations were underway, the United States undermined the negotiation process by launching attacks against Iran and targeting critical infrastructure. He said such actions constitute a violation of international law and pose a threat to regional economic stability and development.

The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is a regional economic bloc established in 2015 to promote the free movement of goods, services, capital, and labor among its member states. The union's full members are Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan.

Iran is not a full member of the EAEU but has significantly deepened its economic integration with the bloc. Following several years of cooperation under a preferential trade arrangement, a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement between Iran and the EAEU entered into force, substantially reducing tariffs on thousands of goods and facilitating greater trade and investment flows between Iran and EAEU member states. Iran also participates in high-level EAEU meetings as an observer and strategic economic partner, reflecting its growing role in Eurasian economic cooperation and regional connectivity initiatives.

'Cuba will fight if we must fight'

Cuban ambassador to Iran discusses US sanctions, potential war, and international inaction with the Tehran Times

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – Cuba has faced a fate remarkably similar to Iran's in its encounters with the United States. Both nations are being punished simply for creating and preserving political and governing systems of their own choosing. Both have suffered heavy losses as a result of illegal U.S. sanctions and blockades. Now, it appears the two countries may once again face the same kind of U.S. behavior—this time on the battlefield.

After failing to topple the Iranian government in an illegal war that, in Donald Trump's own words, was supposed to last only a few days, concerns are mounting that Washington may launch another war, this time against Cuba. The goal would be to manufacture the image of victory it has failed to secure after more than 90 days of fighting in West Asia.

The Tehran Times sat down with Cuba's Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jorge Fernando Lefebre Nicolas, for an interview that was largely overshadowed by the long-standing U.S. sanctions against Cuba, as well as the looming threat of aggression against the Latin American island. The ambassador told the Tehran Times that if Cubans come under attack by the United States, they will do exactly what they have done since the 1960s: resist, and rally around their nation's flag.

Below is the full text of the interview, edited for clarity and conciseness:

Could you please give us a picture of what life in Cuba has become like for the people under the ever-tightening U.S. siege?

First, I want to thank the Tehran Times for giving me the opportunity to speak about these issues, which are among the most important of our time—what is happening now in Iran and Cuba. Both of our nations are under threat from the United States.

Everyone knows that for many years, ever since the beginning of our revolution in

1959, America has been targeting Cuba. They want to change Cuba's political system and subjugate our population. They imposed a blockade, the first measures of which were issued in 1962. So, for more than 60 years, we have lived under U.S. sanctions. Today, those sanctions are worse than ever. In his first term in office, President Trump applied more than 200 sanctions on Cuba, making life extremely difficult for Cubans. Now, in his second term, he has continued along the same path. He has been in office for just one year, and he has already imposed nearly 20 to 30 additional sanctions.

But there are two sanctions that are the harshest. The first is related to Venezuela. After the U.S. administration effectively kidnapped the president of Venezuela—everyone knows Venezuela was a very close partner of Cuba and its oil supplier—the U.S. intervened in Venezuela. Then, the U.S. imposed a sanction threatening the entire world if any country sells oil to Cuba, even friendly nations. In other words, the U.S. will impose sanctions, punishments, and tariffs on any country that sells oil to Cuba. Can you imagine how a country can survive without any oil supply? This has been enforced for more than three months. Cuba has received no oil shipments except for one ship from Russia. Because of this, the situation in Cuba is extremely dire. Hospital generators are running out of fuel. Agriculture is paralyzed. Transportation across the country has ground to a halt. We are making every effort to keep the country alive and provide essential services, but it is true that this has created a terrible humanitarian situation in Cuba.

But the Trump administration was not satisfied with that. He applied another measure: sanctioning all countries and all companies that do business with Cuba. So, if you have a company in Cuba, or if you sell goods to Cuba, you will face sanctions in your own country. As a result, it has now become clear to the public that the blockade is not simply a matter of the United States against Cuba—it is no longer about just two countries, as



the U.S. used to claim every year at the United Nations. The blockade now involves the entire world.

The Trump administration seems to be on a spree to create itself the image of a big victory through illegal acts. It abducted the Venezuelan president early this year, then seemingly emboldened by that illegal act, launched an all-out war against Iran to topple the government here. Are you worried that with his lack of success in bringing Iran to its knees, he would decide to launch a military aggression against Cuba?

The Iran war has been a complete political and strategic disaster for the United States. Because of that, the Trump administration now needs to make the world forget what happened in Iran—the humiliation that Iran has inflicted on the United States. So, he may try to divert the world's attention away from Iran and toward Cuba. The fact that he attacked Venezuela and found it relatively easy to intervene and kidnap its president may have made him think he can repeat that tactic anytime he wants.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

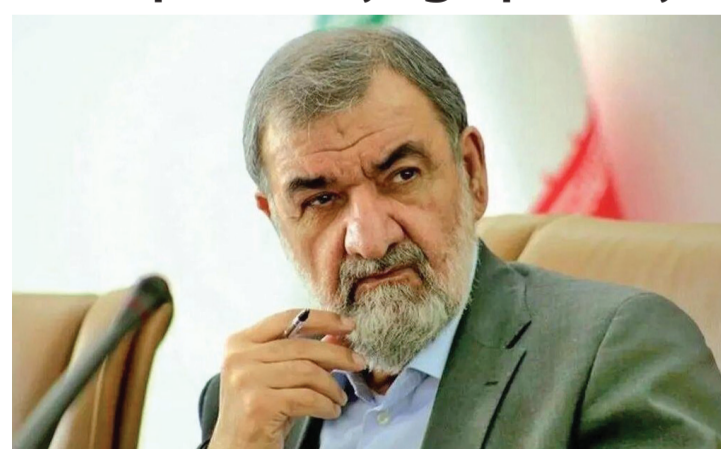
Leader's advisor: Trump is 'betraying diplomacy' for the third time

TEHRAN – A senior advisor to Iran's Leader has warned that President Donald Trump is "betraying" diplomacy for the third time in less than a year.

Mohsen Rezaei, a former chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), also cast doubt on Trump's professed commitment to diplomacy with Iran.

"As expected, the US president is betraying diplomacy for the third time. By maintaining the naval blockade and insisting on excessive demands in the negotiations, he has once again shown that he is not (genuinely) interested in talks and is pursuing other objectives," Rezaei said.

The United States and Israel launched a war on Iran on February 28. The US and Israeli



strikes targeted Iranian civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, and residential buildings, in addition to military sites, killing thousands of people. Iran's strong retaliatory military strikes against Israel and American military bases in the Persian Gulf region forced

Washington to accept a Pakistani-mediated ceasefire after 39 days of war on April 8.

However, diplomatic efforts, mainly led by Pakistan, have so far failed to bring about a permanent end to the war. The aggression was carried out while

Tehran and Washington were engaged in talks.

A similar scenario was repeated in June 2025. Tehran and Washington were engaged in negotiations when Israel launched a war on Iran, with the United States later joining the conflict.

Now, amid efforts by mediators, including Pakistan, to end the latest war, Trump and members of his cabinet have threatened to take new military action against Iran if Tehran does not give in to US demands.

One of Iran's conditions for ending the war is the lifting of the US naval blockade. Washington imposed the blockade after Tehran-Washington talks in Islamabad on April 11 failed over what Iran described as Washington's "excessive" demands.

Iran's national unity shatters Mossad's regime-change calculus

TEHRAN – A recent revelation in Israeli media leaves little doubt that Mossad has been directly involved in fueling unrest in Iran, alongside military actions since June last year, in an effort to topple the Islamic Republic.

According to Israel Hayom, soon after David (Dadi) Barnea became Mossad chief in June 2021 (he assumed full operational duties by September 2021), the spy agency launched its “influence operations branch” as part of its campaign against Iran.

The report said that since then, regime change has become one of Mossad's core missions, and this was expressed in full force in the military operation (the so-called “Roaring Lion”) that Israel jointly launched with the US against Iran on February 28.

Digital warfare

It said one of the infrastructures prepared in advance by the influence branch ahead of that operation was a “poison machine” that the Mossad operates on social media, based on fictitious accounts and spreading information intended to undermine Iran's stability. It also points to the destructive role of the London-based Iran International TV channel—which is believed to be funded by Israel to trigger unrest in Iran—and speeches by President Donald Trump, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Reza Pahlavi, the son of Iran's deposed Shah, encouraging Iranian masses to take to the streets.

It said Mossad agents were activated on Iranian soil and, among other things, worked to strike missile launchers and that agents also engaged in influence operations such as photographing strikes on military facilities and institutions and distributing the images to provoke chaos in Iran.

Operational expansion

The report added that before the recent aggression, Mossad already believed that the combination of influence operations together with military pressure would lead to a dramatic outcome: regime change. That, at least, is what Barnea promised Trump in a video call held in the days preceding the attack. Citing sources, it also said Barnea was convinced that if Trump refuses to sign an agreement with Iran and continues pressure on Iranian ports, regime change could happen by the end of 2026.



The report said Barnea established three new branches in Mossad. One of them was an operational branch used to deploy non-Israeli agents to replace Israeli Mossad agents, whose access to enemy countries had been blocked by the development of facial-recognition technology. It said that during the escalation, these foreign agents on Iranian soil carried out military operations inside Iran.

“This is a branch that managed to recruit and train foreign agents at a very high level, including training in Israel. When Dadi began the reform, he did not know its products would be expressed so quickly,” a source well acquainted with Mossad's work told Israel Hayom.

The report said Barnea recently defined the capabilities of the influence operations branch as an “unconventional weapon.” The man responsible for this unconventional weapon is O., who is 51, served in the Israeli military in Unit 8200, and has served in the Mossad since 2003. He spent most of his career as a collection officer, recruiting and running agents abroad.

Influence operations

O.'s first step, after being appointed to establish and head the influence branch, was to meet advertising and marketing professionals, journalists, and political campaigners. In the next stage, he established a new intelligence department designed to understand public moods and media trends in Iran.

Months after the June 2025 war, the branch accelerated the establishment of its infrastructure inside Iran. Beyond the “poison machine,” the influence branch also established ties with online influencers, some of them inside Iran, so they could help

lead to collapse, the US and Israel launched war on Iran in late February, but their assessment proved to be completely wrong.

Iran's response and unity

After weeks of war, despite attacks on Iranian military and civilian infrastructure and the killing of thousands of people, Iranians showed remarkable resilience. In addition to strong retaliatory operations against Israel and American bases in the Persian Gulf region that forced Trump to accept a ceasefire, people demonstrated unwavering support for the Islamic Republic. Three months after the escalation, people are still holding nightly rallies to support the Islamic Republic and denounce the US-Israeli aggression.

This is not accidental, because Iranians, despite their grievances over economic problems, have historically shown resilience and become united against foreign aggression. This unity has been emphasized by Iran's Leader.

In his recent statement, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei said this unity gives Iran the upper hand against its enemies. “Among the manifestations of piety is the observance of the great blessing of national unity, and the unparalleled cohesion that has been granted to the Iranian nation gathered under the banner of the Islamic Republic. This unity is among the most important factors of victory against the ‘Great Satan (the United States).’”

He further stressed: “Pay attention to preserving this unity and avoid futile political disputes and the exaggeration of social differences.”

Social differences are what the US and Israel are trying to highlight to accomplish what they failed to achieve on the military battlefield.

“The enemy's blind plan, after the imposed war, economic pressure, and propaganda and political siege, is to create division and social fragmentation to compensate for its military defeats and bring the nation to its knees,” Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei pointed out in his message.

From this perspective, national unity remains a central factor that neutralizes efforts aimed at fragmentation and strengthens the country's position against external adversaries.

spread messages on social media. In other cases, the Mossad itself created online influencers using AI. “All of this kept intensifying out of an understanding that when the military move arrived, it would provide another push,” O. said.

According to the report, after the January protests in Iran, the Mossad's program included a package of operational missions, as well as the training and arming of Kurdish forces inside Iran and on its borders.

Strategic miscalculation

The report said the Israeli June 2025 war against Iran, the so-called “Operation Rising Lion”, was aimed at attacking nuclear sites and surface-to-surface missiles. And the February 28 war sought regime change.

It said the US Central Intelligence Agency was already aware of the Mossad's plan and supported it, and that the CIA helped Barnea persuade Trump as well.

According to the report, the influence branch believed that just days before the February 28 war, there was a peak period of tension between the Iranian public and the government, and that there was a real opportunity to exploit this rift. The second assumption was that Mossad had tools capable of widening that rift, and that combining them with kinetic operations would amplify the effect.

“We tell the Americans that we have the ability to speak to the public and create influence moves that can greatly amplify the military strikes and call for an uprising, and that there are also potential ties with elements that may be able to challenge the leadership and perhaps create a kind of alternative.”

Under the illusion that widespread dissatisfaction would

LATES NEWS

Iranian parliament determined to enact Hormuz management law: MP

The Iranian lawmakers are firmly determined to turn a proposal on managing the Strait of Hormuz into law, an MP said, stressing that decisions regarding the strategic waterway fall solely within the jurisdiction of Iran and Oman.

Alireza Salimi said the Parliament has made a definitive decision to legislate the management of the Strait of Hormuz and that the proposal would be finalized and enacted into law.

He stated that the Strait of Hormuz lies within the shared territorial domain of Iran and Oman, adding that Tehran would not allow any other country to make decisions concerning its territorial sphere.

According to Salimi, Iran's decisions on managing the Strait of Hormuz are neither tactical nor temporary, but rather permanent and definitive.

Sistan and Baluchestan symbol of loyalty to Islamic Revolution: Leader's envoy

Sistan and Baluchestan's people have demonstrated deep political insight and unwavering loyalty to the Islamic Republic and the ideals of the Islamic Revolution, says the Leader's special representative.

Army downs Israeli Orbiter drone over southern Iran

The Iranian Army says it has shot down an Israeli Orbiter drone over Qeshm Island in the south of the country.

According to a statement released by the Army on Saturday, the Air Defense Force intercepted and downed the drone over Qeshm early in the morning.

Iran, Russia explore deepening academic, humanitarian ties

Iran and Russia have held consultations to strengthen academic and humanitarian cooperation, with the Iranian Ambassador to Moscow, Kazem Jalali, meeting the Head of Russia's Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Igor Chaika.

During the Friday meeting, Jalali and Chaika exchanged views on academic and humanitarian ties between the two countries and explored practical avenues for further cooperation.

Iran-US deal closer than ever before: Turkey FM

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan has declared that a deal between the United States and Iran is closer than ever.

Speaking in an interview with Japan's Nikkei Asia newspaper, Fidan said the interna-

tional consequences of the Hormuz closure are enormous, affecting energy markets and food security in particular. He characterized the scale of the fallout as justification for Turkey's stated priority order.

Iran FM: Solidarity, coop. among regional will countries, guarantee peace

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi says that the solidarity and cooperation among the regional countries are of paramount importance in the current situation, which can guarantee peace and security.

In a post on his X account on Saturday, Iran's top diplomat emphasized that peace-loving Muslim leaders are standing shoulder to shoulder at a very sensitive time to pave the way for peace.

Iran calls for an end to Israeli impunity

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs, Kazem Gharibabadi, has urged international bodies to hold Israel accountable for its actions in Gaza and Lebanon.

In a post on X, he criticized what he described as attacks on international institutions and called for investigations into alleged war crimes, crimes against humanity, ceasefire violations, and conflict-related sexual violence, stressing that “the occupying regime's impunity must end.”

Revisiting US-Iran role projection: An emerging “self” vs. a tarnished “image”

By Dr. Sajjad Farokhipour

The new war imposed on Iran by the U.S. and Israel has changed the international role of the countries to a great extent. In this analysis we are going to revisit this new role projection from a scientific point of view in the light of role theory in international relations. A role is formed and then projected based on the following components:

A. Role taking: National leaders interpret their state's position in the international system by looking at historical legacies, geographical position, material capabilities, and institutional memberships such as UN, NATO and BRICS. Amid the war, Iran established its historical legacy by saving territorial integrity, controlling the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf, and preserving its regional and international membership by cooperating with Russia and China in BRICS, while staying in the NPT. But the U.S. weakened its own obedience to the UN, NPT, etc., lost its NATO support through extending threats to Europe and other spots of the world, and lost its military bases as its Cold War legacies in the region while threatening security alliances with Arab states. In other words, Iran consolidated a defensive and sovereign role through tangible geostrategic assets, whereas the U.S. progressively dismantled its own institutional credibility and alliance structures.

B. Role conception: This is the self-image of the state revealing the way policymakers believe their state should act. Unlike the U.S., which projected itself as a great power against China and Russia, the war proved the reverse because its military campaign totally failed. Also, its conception as an honest broker to Arab states has faded away. On the other hand, Iran - formed through political discourse, national identity, ideology, and past foreign policy traditions of resistance - proved itself a faithful ally to the Axis of Resistance and a mighty confrontation to arrogance's hegemony, and thus expanded and enriched its conception of self. Others also recognized this conception as well. This internal role conception, therefore, did not emerge in a vacuum; it was actively reinforced by consistent behavior under extreme external pressure, turning a narrative of resistance into a demonstrable strategic reality.

C. Role expectation: Other states' expectations about what a given state should or should not do are communicated through diplomacy, multilateral institutions, alliance commitments, economic interdependence, and even public statements. While Iran could predict U.S. expectations and prepared for them, the U.S., due to Israel's misinformation, could not predict Iran's behavior, and this turned into a tragic failure for it both in military, economic, and political arenas. This asymmetry in expectation management explains much of the divergent outcomes: Iran operated within a predictable retaliatory framework it had signaled over years, while Washington remained captive to miscalculated intelligence and unexamined assumptions about Iranian passivity.

In sum, if we consider that role formation is added to external expectations, this conclusion results in Iran's expanded conception of “self” as an emerging regional power which is at the threshold of becoming a great power, while the U.S. has descended to the verge of losing its superpower image. The recent positions of the EU and regional countries are proof of this fact. Just the reverse, Iran, amid this war, is projecting its new norms of the international system (sovereignty in the Persian Gulf and Hormuz Strait, while at the same time keeping diplomacy and peace negotiations) through interaction with others. Besides, powerful states such as EU countries and international organizations have assigned a new role to Iran as a legitimate actor for controlling its vicinity (the Strait of Hormuz more specifically). Accordingly, the state behaves in ways consistent with its role conception; feedback from others reinforces its position. For instance, Pakistan and Turkey's views regarding Iran's role and stability have drastically changed. Of course, future events such as the continuation of the war might modify Iran's new role, but evidence suggests that even future events might strengthen this role to a more legitimate and established extent. Thus, what we are witnessing is not merely a tactical shift in foreign policy but a structural reordering of role relations in the Persian Gulf and beyond - one where an emerging “self” replaces a tarnished image at the core of regional order.

Lawmaker reaffirms Tehran's sovereign authority over Strait of Hormuz

TEHRAN - Ebrahim Azizi, Chairman of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, has reaffirmed Iran's sovereign authority over the Strait of Hormuz, describing the strategic waterway as an integral part of the country's territorial domain and stressing Tehran's exclusive right to determine policies governing its use.

In an exclusive interview with Russia's RIA Novosti news agency, Azizi said the Strait of Hormuz occupies a unique geopolitical position within Iran's sovereign geography and territorial waters. He emphasized that decisions regarding transit through the strait fall solely within Iran's jurisdiction and cannot be challenged by foreign governments or international actors.

“Any decision concerning the Strait of Hormuz is Iran's sovereign right,” Azizi said, underscoring the waterway's strategic significance to the country's national security and regional interests.

His remarks come amid heightened tensions in the region following military actions by the United States and Israel against Iran in late February 2026. In response to those developments, Iranian authorities imposed strict restrictions on the passage of hostile military vessels through the Strait of Hormuz. Transit by vessels from other countries has continued under regulations requiring prior coordination with Iranian authorities.

Iranian strike on US Base in Kuwait injures American military personnel: Bloomberg

From Page 1 ▶ The incident comes amid continued tensions between Tehran and Washington. On Thursday, US Central Command (CENTCOM) accused Iran of violating a ceasefire by launching a missile toward Kuwait.

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), however, said the strike deliberately targeted the US base because it had been used to facilitate an earlier American attack. The IRGC stated that US forces had launched aerial projectiles against an area near Bandar Abbas airport that same day and described its response as a warning against further aggression.

The IRGC also stressed that any future hostile actions by the United States would be met with a stronger response, placing responsibility for any escalation on the party initiating aggression.

The latest developments unfold against the backdrop of the US-Israeli war on Iran, which began on February 28. Iran responded by launching missile and drone operations against Israeli targets and US military facilities in the region. Although a Pakistan-mediated ceasefire took effect on April 8 and negotiations followed in Islamabad, talks have yet to produce a lasting agreement amid Washington's insistence on maximalist demands.

First shipment of Russian fuel transits from Caspian Port to Afghanistan

TEHRAN- The managing director of the Anzali Free Zone Organization announced the start of rail transit of Russian fuel from Caspian Port to Afghanistan.

According to Tasnim News Agency, Mostafa Taati-Moqaddam, managing director of Anzali Free Zone Organization, explaining the details of this operation, stated: The first 5,000-ton shipment of fuel originating from Russia has entered Caspian Port via the Caspian Sea and will be transited to Afghanistan using the rail fleet.

Referring to the development plans of Caspian Port, he added: Soon, the possibility of "continuous shipment" of cargo from ship to train wagons will be operationalized at this port – a measure which, along with legal incentives and the advantages of the Anzali Free Zone, will reduce fuel transit costs and increase Iran's competitive advantage in international corridors.

He reminded: With the full operation of this rail route, the annual fuel transit capacity from Caspian Port will follow an increasing trend; an issue that, in addition to the eco-



economic development of Anzali Free Zone, will help strengthen Iran's position as a regional logistics hub.

Taati-Moqaddam stated that the development of this route facilitates trade with Central Asian and Eurasian countries and provides grounds for expanding combined sea-rail transport for other goods, including petrochemical products and grains.

He emphasized: Connecting this route to the rail networks of neighboring countries will provide economic activists with access to wider markets.

Billet, bloom production increases 3.8% in a year

TEHRAN- According to the statistics of the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA), production of billet and bloom in Iran increased by 3.8 percent during the past Iranian calendar year 1404 (ended on March 20), as compared to the preceding year.

Based on the ISIPA data, 19.784 million tons of billet and bloom was produced in 1404, while the figure was 19.052 million tons in 1403.

In steelmaking, billets and blooms are semi-finished products cast from a continuous caster.

Blooms have a square or rectangular cross-section, typically over 6x6 inches, and are rolled into structural shapes like beams, rails, and large pipes.

Billets are smaller, usually under 6x6 inches, and serve as feedstock for bars, rods, and wire products.

After casting, both undergo reheating and rolling to achieve final dimensions. Their quality directly influences finished steel properties—surface defects, internal soundness, and chemical uniformity must be tightly controlled.

Together, they bridge molten steel to construction, automotive, and machinery applications, making them vital intermediate forms.

It is worth mentioning that according to the statistics of the Iranian Steel Producers Association, steel production in Iran during the past Iranian calendar year 1404 has recorded a growth of over six percent.

The association has published the statistics for the year 1404 of the country's steel chain. Accordingly, despite intensified energy restrictions, due to optimal management and the introduction of new capacities—both in production and in energy self-sufficiency by steelmakers—Iran's steel production increased by 6.2 percent. Thus, Iran's steel production in 1404 reached 32.1 million tons, equaling the production level of 1402.

The total production volume of steel products in the country in 1404, however, experienced a reverse trend, declining by 1.8 percent. Meanwhile, sponge iron recorded the highest production growth among steel chain products, with a 16-percent increase. However, in the upstream of the steel chain, production of pellets and iron ore concentrate remained at the same levels as the previous year.

According to this report, the significant growth in sponge iron production—due to new capacities coming online on one hand—and the stabilization of pellet and iron ore concentrate production on the other hand, indicates a worsening shortage of raw materials for direct reduction units. However, with the shutdown of more than 14 million tons of sponge iron production capacity due to damages caused by the third imposed war, this shortage will be temporarily absent.

A 3.8-percent increase in steel ingot production against a 1.1-percent decrease in long steel product production indicates the need to



develop steel ingot exports. It is noteworthy that the shutdown of more than two million tons of steel ingot capacity due to the third imposed war can be compensated by activating idle capacities for producing this product.

Production of various steel sheets in 1404 remained almost at the level of the previous year. Meanwhile, slab production saw a double-digit growth of 10.2 percent. Unfortunately, due to the damages inflicted on slab-producing companies during the imposed war, the balance of the flat steel products chain has been disrupted, making the import of slabs and hot-rolled sheets necessary and urgent.

Iran's steel industry is a cornerstone of its non-oil economy, having grown into a significant global player. In 2025, the country produced approximately 32 million tons of crude steel, securing its position as the world's 10th-largest producer.

Beyond crude steel, Iran is a major force in the global direct reduced iron (DRI) market. The nation produced roughly 37 million tons of DRI in 2025, accounting for about a quarter of the world's total supply. This DRI is used by its modern electric arc furnace (EAF) mills, which form the backbone of its steelmaking capacity. However, the industry has faced severe headwinds. In early 2026, military strikes on key facilities, including the country's two largest steel plants, caused major disruptions. This came on top of long-standing challenges like international sanctions, domestic inflation, and energy shortages from power and gas cuts.

Despite these obstacles, the sector remains a vital export earner. It exports a significant portion of its output, with semi-finished steel products being a primary driver. While its immediate outlook is clouded by conflict, Iran's steel industry is a testament to resilience and strategic industrial development on the global stage.

Iran's steel industry produces a comprehensive range of products, from semi-finished materials to value-added goods, supporting construction, automotive, infrastructure, and manufacturing. The sector can be broken down into several key categories:

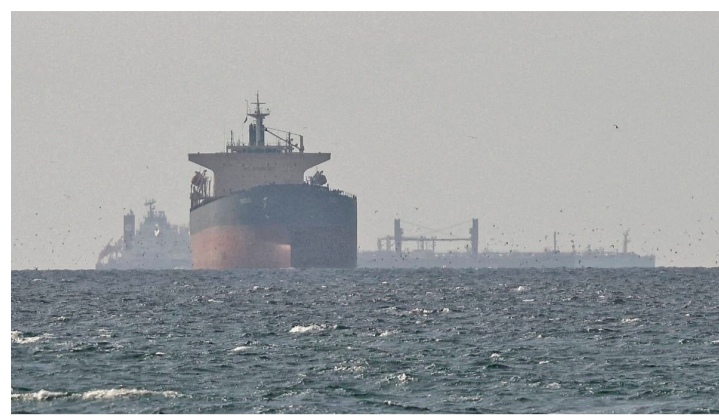
Semi-Finished Steel

The industry's backbone consists of products like billet, bloom, and slab, with Iran producing over 20 million tons of these in an eight-month period alone.

Global bodies warn: US-Israeli aggression threatens world fuel security

From Page 1 ▶ Already struggling with debt and food insecurity, these nations face skyrocketing import bills and looming agricultural shortfalls as fertilizer costs spiral out of control.

While Iran has repeatedly stated it acts in self-defense against foreign attacks on its territory and infrastructure, the US-Israeli campaign has directly targeted Iranian industrial and energy facilities, prompting reciprocal measures that now endanger



global energy flows.

The IMF, World Bank, and IEA jointly urged an urgent return to normal shipping through the Strait – a condition that can only be met if the aggression ceases.

Without immediate de-escalation, the world faces not only summer fuel shortages but also a deeper global economic shock, with the most vulnerable nations bearing the brunt of a crisis they did not create.

Government's immediate measures to support production; from support packages to war damage compensation fund

From Page 1 ▶ In the area of reconstruction and revival of industries, particularly steel producers, the country's technical and engineering capabilities, follow-up on foreign currency allocation, and meetings with managers of damaged units have been reviewed.

To maintain market stability and meet major economic needs, the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade has emphasized the rapid return of large and strategic industries such as Mobarakeh Steel and Khuzestan Steel to the production cycle. These units, due to their wide-ranging impact on various economic sectors and value chains, have high priority in reconstruction and support programs.

Alongside the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, other bodies including the Ministries of Economy, and Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare have entered the implementation phase. It was decided that the Ministry of Welfare would make the necessary arrangements for paying unemployment benefits to workers of damaged units.

On the other hand, the Trade Promotion Organization and the Customs Administration have coordinated to accelerate the clearance of raw materials for factories, ensuring uninterrupted production.

Another major decision by the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade is designating one of its subsidiary funds as the "War Damage Compensation Fund". This measure aims to expedite compensation payments and support production units damaged during the conflicts.

Accelerating support and compensation payments to industrial units

Ezatollah Zarei, spokesperson for the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, told IRNA: "One of the funds under this ministry has been designated as the 'War Damage Compensation Fund' to speed up the process of supporting and paying compensation to production units damaged during the conflicts."

He emphasized: "Maintaining production

and employment is a priority for the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade; therefore, we are rapidly pursuing the reconstruction and return of industrial units to the production cycle in coordination with other responsible bodies."

The ministry's spokesperson noted that about three thousand small, medium, and large industrial units have been damaged during the war, adding that the damage assessment process and self-declaration by units have been completed.

He stated: "To accelerate support and compensation payments to damaged units, one of the subsidiary funds of the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade has been designated as the war damage compensation fund."

Zarei, referring to the process of following up on the support package, emphasized: "The ministry will monitor how the facilities are disbursed to ensure that resources reach vulnerable units."

Tehran, Dushanbe emphasize on cooperation in economic, energy fields



TEHRAN- Iran's Deputy Minister of Economy and head of the Investment Organization met with Tajikistan's Finance Minister on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Development Bank meeting. The two sides, while examining solutions to strengthen economic relations, emphasized the need to remove banking obstacles and develop cooperation in various fields including agriculture, health, and energy production.

According to IRNA's Saturday report from the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, on the sidelines of the third consultative meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Development Bank held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, Mehdi Heidari, Deputy Minister of Economy and head of Iran's Organization for Investment, Economic and Technical Assistance, met and held talks with Faiziddin Qahhorzoda, Tajikistan's Finance Minister.

In this meeting, Heidari, while thanking Tajikistan for its support during the recent war, emphasized the sustainable expansion of Iran's international cooperation and invited the Tajik minister to visit Iran.

He also reported on the follow-up of problems facing Iranian companies active in Tajikistan and pointed to the request to resolve issues related to Iranian banks.

Tajikistan's Finance Minister, noting the activity of 160 Iranian companies in his country, reported on the participation of these companies in the construction of a very large hydroelectric power

plant and said: Iranian engineers play an active role in implementing projects through international tenders.

He also referred to the signing of a cooperation agreement during Dr. Pezeshkian's recent visit to Tajikistan and expressed hope that existing problems would soon be resolved.

The Tajik minister informed about his contact with the head of the Islamic Development Bank to resolve the financial issues of an Iranian company, emphasized Iran's strength in simultaneously confronting several countries in the recent war, and called for the war to end as soon as possible.

Subsequently, areas of bilateral cooperation in the fields of agriculture, banking, health and treatment, and hydroelectric energy production were discussed and it was decided to continue following up on these matters in writing.

The closing ceremony of the 18th meeting of the Iran-Tajikistan Joint Economic Committee was held in Dushanbe on May 26. Addressing the meeting, Tajikistan's Minister of Energy and Water Resources, noting a significant increase in trade between Iran and Tajikistan in the first quarter of 2026, called Iran Tajikistan's most important partner in the region and emphasized the development of technological and energy cooperation based on historical commonalities.

Dalir Juma referred to Iran as a friendly and brotherly country and said: "We consider the role of Iran important for peace and sta-

bility in the region and the world. Tajikistan evaluates cooperation between the two friendly and brotherly countries, i.e. Iran and Tajikistan, as beneficial, and relying on the principle of good faith, considers Iran one of its most important partners in the region and the world."

He added: "Deep historical, cultural and linguistic commonalities have provided the ground for beneficial cooperation in technology, industry, energy and many other fields between the two countries."

Tajikistan's energy minister, referring to official statistics, noted: "Trade between Iran and Tajikistan in the first quarter of 2026 has increased significantly compared to the same period last year, and the expansion of this trade will lead to economic security and further development for both countries."

Iran's Minister of Energy, pointing to the favorable political relations between the two countries, called upgrading trade and economic relations a primary duty and said: "The end of this session is not the end of the work, but the beginning of a heavy responsibility on the path to realizing the agreements."

Abbas Aliabadi, referring to the deep bonds between the two nations, said: "As discussed during this session and as President Emomali Rahmon also noted, today, relying on the deep linguistic, cultural, religious and social bonds between the two brotherly nations, we stand on a new path of cooperation."

He added: "Developing relations with neighboring countries and Muslim countries has always been at the top of the strategic priorities of our country's officials, and among these, Tajikistan has a special place."

Aliabadi, pointing to the favorable political relations between the two countries, stated: "Today we see that political relations between Iran and Tajikistan are at an excellent level, but our main challenge and duty is to raise this level of political intimacy to

a similar level in trade and economic relations. Enemies should know that this 6,000-year culture of the two nations is unbreakable."

The Minister of Energy emphasized: "The end of this session is not the end of the work, but the beginning of a heavy responsibility on the path to realizing the agreements. The document resulting from this session is not just a collection of words, but a covenant for action. For these agreements to become a turning point in relations between the two countries, we need to operationalize the executive mechanisms in a timely manner. Here I must express my gratitude to the people and government of Tajikistan for accompanying us on this path."

Aliabadi, stressing the formation of joint technical committees, noted: "I emphasize that the formation of joint technical committees and a followup committee for the session must not be delayed. I sincerely thank all the expert delegations and especially my colleagues in the international department of the Ministry of Energy who played a role in advancing these clauses with precision and speed. I hope all the proposed suggestions reach the implementation stage with the same speed and precision."

The Minister of Energy, referring to the capacities for cooperation between the two countries, said: "Increasing capacities and potentials to expand trade and economic relations between the two countries, especially in the field of exporting technical and engineering services, using transit capacities, and selling oil and oil products to Tajikistan, are among the important axes of cooperation."

Aliabadi expressed hope at the end: "I hope the implementation of the agreements reached at this session will be a turning point in the relations and interactions between the two countries, and that the proposed clauses in the joint committee will all proceed with precision and speed."

American-Israeli 'ceasefires' are a trap; Gaza is the proof

From page 1 ▶ Netanyahu did not dispute the endgame, replying simply: "First 70%. Let's start with that."

This exchange formalized a reality that the reality on the ground and leaked maps had already exposed: the U.S.-brokered truce is being treated not as a constraint, but as a staging ground for deeper territorial control.

The moving lines of impunity

Under the original terms of the ceasefire, Israeli forces were restricted to a demarcation boundary known as the "yellow line," which covered roughly 53 percent of Gaza.

By March, however, maps shared with humanitarian organizations revealed that forces had unilaterally drawn a new "orange line," pushing into 64 percent of the territory and effectively rewriting the borders through sheer force.

Condemnations have been swift but materially toothless. The United Nations reiterated that the entirety of Gaza belongs to the Palestinian people, while French and German officials opposed any permanent division of the enclave.

Yet, the UN has continued to document extensive killings and infrastructure destruction even after the truce began, demonstrating that a diplomatic pause is not translating into compliance on the ground.

With over 2,400 documented ceasefire violations and more than 920 Palestinians killed since the truce took effect, the gap between Western diplomatic rhetoric and the reality on the ground is vast.

The ruins of Gaza stand as accumulated proof that American guarantees function as an administrative screen for more aggression, while Israel uses the ceasefire to advance its own territorial footprint.

Engineered chaos

Simultaneously, the military strategy inside Gaza has shifted



from dynamic combat to a highly targeted campaign of institutional eradication. In Gaza City's Al-Rimal neighborhood, a sequence of apartment-block strikes reveals a doctrine designed to dismantle the territory's civil and internal security apparatus.

On May 15, Izz al-Din al-Haddad, a senior Hamas commander, was killed in an airstrike alongside his wife and daughter. Less than two weeks later, on May 27, his successor, Mohammad Awda, was struck and killed with his own wife and son in an identical manner.

These back-to-back assassinations extend beyond traditional battlefield tactics. By systematically wiping out veteran security leaders and civil police, Israeli forces are engineering a societal vacuum. The objective is to replace Hamas's administrative grip over humanitarian aid and local order with armed mercenary cliques and proxy gangs.

Assassination as political warfare

This violent attrition extends directly into the negotiating room. The timing of Israel's killing campaign aligns precisely with Hamas's most consequential leadership contest in years, as the movement held internal ballots to determine its political direction.

While multiple figures remain in contention, the succession balance currently centers on two primary leaders, namely Khalil al-Hayya, the steadfast Gaza-based leader who spearheads negotiations while fiercely safeguarding the resistance's right to retain its weapons, having recently survived an Israeli assassination attempt in Doha, and Khaled Meshal, a diaspora figure perceived by regional observers as more amenable to compromise.

Ahead of the Shura Council vote, an Israeli strike in the Al-Daraj neighborhood killed Azzam al-Hayya, the son of the chief negotiator. Eliminating al-Hayya's son and his closest military allies function as a coordinated pressure campaign.

It is widely interpreted as an attempt to shape Hamas's internal succession balance from the outside, disrupting the movement's cohesion and attempting to blackmail the leadership at the negotiating table.

The regional tug-of-war and the architecture of displacement

This multifaceted campaign unfolds under the shadow of a broader regional conflict. Following the recent U.S.-Israeli campaign of aggression against Iran, Israel has leveraged its multi-front military posture to prevent Palestinian re-

construction while demanding total disarmament.

Conversely, Iran's successful resilience has provided the resistance in Gaza with greater strategic flexibility, reinforcing the collective position of the entire Axis of Resistance.

Tehran has reportedly called for the rejection of any discussion regarding the disarmament of Hamas within the framework of negotiations. Iran has also reportedly informed Hamas of its intent to address all regional crises, including Gaza and Lebanon, at a single table, a backing that has directly bolstered the position of the Hamas political delegation during recent talks, enabling them to reject second-stage disarmament and firmly demand the execution of the first phase.

Meanwhile, the broader implications of Netanyahu's 70 percent directive were highlighted by war minister Israel Katz, who recently took to social media to promote a "voluntary emigration plan" to be implemented at a time of the government's choosing. Human rights organizations, such as the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, have accurately translated this rhetoric as a blueprint for forced evacuation and expulsion.

By compressing over two million people into less than 30 percent of a shattered, unlivable strip, the conditions necessary for basic survival are systematically being destroyed.

It has been clear that Israel has been attempting to use the cover of diplomacy to achieve what it could not through raw military force alone. The ruins of the enclave stand as a grim ledger of Western-brokered promises, a stark reminder that when the language of peace is divorced from accountability, a ceasefire does not halt the destruction; it merely dictates its pace.

Hezbollah wages heroic resistance against Israeli aggression



From page 1 ▶ and in response to the Israeli regime's violation of the ceasefire, its attacks against civilians, and the destruction of their homes and villages in southern Lebanon, resulting in fatalities and a number of wounded."

These operations are "based on the right to resist and expel the occupation (forces)," it added.

Hezbollah attacked the Meron Base for surveillance and air operations management with a qualitative rocket barrage. The base is an IOF surveillance and command facility located approximately 8 kilometers from the Lebanese border.

Shortly before this, resistance fighters ambushed a composite IOF force attempting to advance toward the eastern outskirts of the town of Ghendourieh. Hezbollah detonated explosive devices against the force while simultaneously striking it with artillery shells and rocket salvos. The resistance movement said the IOF evacuated casualties under heavy smoke cover, before responding with airstrikes and artillery shelling in the surrounding area.

The resistance movement replicated these operations a second time, stating: "After careful monitoring of the enemy's movements, the resistance fighters ambushed a composite force of the enemy army that attempted to advance toward the eastern outskirts of the town of Ghendourieh. They detonated explosive devices against them, simultaneously targeting them with artillery shells and rocket salvos. As a result, the enemy evacuated its casualties under heavy smoke cover, and then targeted the surrounding area with airstrikes and artillery shelling."

Hezbollah attacked the Kiryat Shmona settlement with rocket barrages on two separate occasions. Footage from the settlement, which resembles a modern-day city, shows extensive damage in the area. Despite air raid sirens being activated the footage highlights how Hezbollah's rocket barrages continue to evade the Israeli regime's air defense systems.

Hezbollah fighters also confronted an IOF drone of the type Hermes 450-Zik in the skies over Zawtar al-Sharqiyah using a surface-to-air missile, in its ongoing measures to counter aerial surveillance activity over southern Lebanon.

According to the Israeli army radio, a booby-trapped drone exploded in a military area in the Shomera region in the Western Galilee.

Palestinian 'lives are not valuable', say Israeli soldiers after Gaza 'jungle'

Israeli soldiers have described a climate of dehumanization, permissive rules of engagement and the routine killing of Palestinians during what was officially supposed to be a ceasefire in Gaza.

In testimonies to The Associated Press news agency, reservists who served in Gaza between last October and January said Israeli troops frequently opened fire on Palestinians approaching or crossing the so-called "Yellow Line," an often poorly marked boundary separating Israeli-occupied areas from the rest of the enclave.

One soldier recalled fellow troops cele-

brating after striking a vehicle carrying Palestinians, killing everyone inside. "It was a jungle," the soldier said. "After the ceasefire, the order was: If someone crosses the line, you shoot them."

Soldiers told The AP that troops often fired on people without knowing who they were. Another reservist said commanders repeatedly emphasized holding territory at all costs. "There was a general feeling that human lives are not valuable," he said.

One soldier dismissed the notion that a ceasefire existed at all. "To call it a ceasefire is a joke," he said.

Deflection and denial: What Israel's furious reaction to the UN sexual violence report reveals

From page 1 ▶ Israel's UN mission announced it would sever all ties with Guterres's office. Israel's permanent representative, Danny Danon, took to X to declare, "WE'RE DONE WITH YOU!" before telling news outlet i24 that listing Israeli soldiers alongside Hamas was a line that had been crossed.

But this fiery indignation avoids the central question: If Israel has nothing to hide, why is it so terrified of an independent investigation?

A documented pattern of abuse

The latest UN findings do not exist in a vacuum. They are part of a long, deeply disturbing timeline of documented abuses by Israelis against Palestinians in Gaza and the occupied West Bank.

* March 2025: The UN released a comprehensive report detailing the "systematic" use of physical and psychological force against Palestinian captives.

* July 2025: A subsequent UN update highlighted a horrific pattern of torture, including targeted genital beatings and severe burns inflicted during interrogations.

The latest report examines cases from 2023 onward and cites 31 explicitly verified cases of sexual violence used as a form of torture by Israeli forces. Shockingly, 10 of these victims were minors. According to Guterres, the violations spanned a horrific spectrum:

"Violations consisted of rape, including with objects, gang rape, attempted rape, physical violence to the genitals, instances of targeted shooting of the genitals, touching of breasts and genitals, strip and cavity searches conducted without apparent security justification, forced nudity, and threats of rape."

The report explicitly names the entities involved, proving that

these are not the actions of a few "bad apples" but involve a broad swath of the state apparatus, including the Israeli army, the Israel Prison Service, the Keter special forces, and the Yamam unit. The abuse occurred across a network of facilities, including the notorious Sde Teiman military camp, the Etzion and Majnunah bases, and prisons such as Megiddo, Ofer, and Damon. Victims included ordinary citizens, journalists, and human rights defenders.

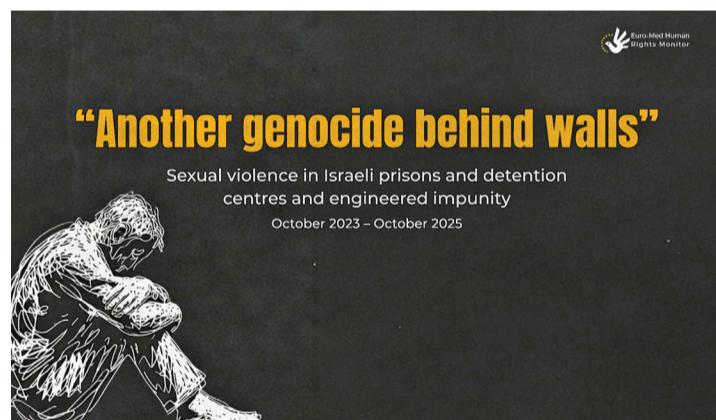
When confronted with these heavy charges, Israel's diplomatic defense relies on an angry counter-attack. Ambassador Danon's emotional pivot—asking how anyone could place his "son or daughter" on the same list as the perpetrators of the October 7 attacks—is a classic rhetorical distraction.

The existence of crimes committed on October 7 does not grant a blanket moral immunity to Israel, nor does it justify the systematic degradation of Palestinian prisoners. By focusing entirely on the crimes of its adversary, Israel attempts to shift the global gaze away from its own documented offenses.

Furthermore, Guterres noted a "continued denial of access by the Government of Israel to competent United Nations bodies to carry out investigations." For years, Israel has similarly barred the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) from inspecting the conditions of Palestinian detainees. This systematic obstruction reveals a glaring contradiction: you cannot claim an accusation is "shameful and absurd" while simultaneously locking the door to the investigators who can prove your innocence.

The myth of democratic accountability

The defense of Israel often relies



on a geopolitical shield provided by Washington. U.S. Ambassador to the UN Mike Waltz quickly slammed the UN report, calling it "ridiculous" to place "a democracy like Israel—with a robust rule of law that conducts investigations and holds criminals accountable—on the same level as terrorist organizations."

This defense, however, rings entirely hollow to the international community. The "robust rule of law" that Israel boasts of vanishes completely when applied to Palestinians.

This systemic failure was laid bare in a landmark disclosure by New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof. He detailed stomach-churning accounts of Palestinian detainees being subjected to horrific violations, including being terrorized by dogs and penetrated with batons, resulting in severe internal trauma.

Kristof correctly added a layer of political accountability that Washington desperately wishes to ignore: "American tax dollars subsidize the Israeli security establishment, so this is sexual violence in which the United States is complicit."

The response from the Israeli Foreign Ministry to Kristof's piece



"Another genocide behind walls"

Sexual violence in Israeli prisons and detention centres and engineered impunity
October 2023 - October 2025



Quri Qaleh: Discover one of Asia's longest water caves in western Iran



TEHRAN - Nestled in the foothills of the Shaho mountain range in western Iran, Quri Qaleh Cave stands as one of the country's most remarkable natural attractions. Located near the village of Quri Qaleh, approximately 86 to 90 kilometers northwest of the city of Kermanshah and about 10 kilometers from Pavah, the cave is a geological masterpiece that combines natural beauty, ancient history, and ecological significance.

Believed to have formed around 65 million years ago, Quri Qaleh is recognized as the longest water cave in Asia. Stretching for nearly 12 kilometers, the cave remains largely unexplored by ordinary visitors, with only a small section accessible to the public. Nevertheless, the parts open to tourists reveal an extraordinary underground world shaped over millions of years by water and limestone.

The name "Quri Qaleh" is derived from an ancient fortress located near the cave. Historians believe the original name was "Gureh Qaleh," meaning "Great Fortress" in the local Kurdish language. Over time, the pronunciation evolved into Quri Qaleh. The nearby ruins of the fortress, dating back to the Sassanid era, add a historical dimension to the site and suggest that the area has been inhabited and valued for centuries.

Although local people had long known about the cave, systematic exploration began in the twentieth century. Early investigations took place in the 1950s, while more extensive surveys were carried out during the 1970s by teams of British and French speleologists. These explorers mapped hundreds of meters of the cave before encountering sections where the water rose to the ceiling, preventing further progress without specialized diving equipment. Today, large portions of the cave remain accessible only to expert cavers and underwater explorers.

One of the most fascinating aspects of Quri Qaleh is its spectacular geological formations. Visitors enter a world of towering chambers decorated with countless stalactites hanging from the ceiling and stalagmites rising from the floor. Over millions of years, mineral-rich water has sculpted these formations into shapes that resemble columns, curtains, and natural sculptures. The cave's underground river, crystal-clear pools, and massive halls create an atmosphere that feels both mysterious and enchanting.

The climate inside the cave remains remarkably stable throughout the year. Tem-

peratures generally range between 7 and 11 degrees Celsius, providing a cool refuge even during the hottest summer months. High humidity levels and the constant flow of underground water contribute to the cave's unique environment. In some sections, the water reaches depths of up to 14 meters, highlighting the scale and complexity of the subterranean system.

Beyond its geological importance, Quri Qaleh is also a valuable archaeological site. Excavations have uncovered evidence of human activity dating back thousands of years. Researchers have discovered silver plates, pottery fragments, and coins from the Sassanid period (224–651 CE), including coins minted during the reign of Yazdgerd III, the last Sassanid king. Some artifacts bear inscriptions written in Pahlavi, the language used during the Sassanid era, IRNA news agency reported on Thursday.

Archaeological studies have also suggested that the cave may have served as a hunting shelter during the Stone Age. These discoveries indicate that the region has been significant to human communities since prehistoric times, making Quri Qaleh not only a natural wonder but also an important cultural heritage site.

The cave's ecological value is equally noteworthy. It provides a habitat for rare species of bats, particularly mouse-eared bats, which are seldom found elsewhere in Iran. The presence of these animals underscores the need for environmental protection and responsible tourism management to preserve the cave's delicate ecosystem.

Today, Quri Qaleh is one of the most visited natural attractions in western Iran. More than half a million people are estimated to visit the site each year, including domestic travelers and visitors from neighboring countries, particularly Iraq. Tourism associated with the cave has become an important source of income for local communities, creating employment opportunities and supporting businesses in the surrounding villages.

Registered as one of Iran's significant natural heritage sites, Quri Qaleh represents the extraordinary geological diversity of Kermanshah province. Together with other renowned attractions in the region, such as Taq-e Bostan and UNESCO-listed Bisotun, the cave strengthens the province's reputation as a premier destination for nature lovers, history enthusiasts, and adventure travelers.

point of the Medina during the Zirid era, today applies to the ensemble of the old town of El Djazair, within the boundaries marked by the ramparts and built at the end of the 16th century, dating back to the Ottoman period.

In this living environment where nearly 50,000 people reside, very interesting traditional houses, palaces, hammams, mosques and various souks are still conserved, the urban form of which bears witness to an effect of stratification of several styles in a complex and original system that has adapted remarkably well to a very hilly and uneven site.

(Source: UNESCO)

Qaleh Bala: Where community-based governance aligns with wildlife conservation



TEHRAN - The village of Qaleh Bala, located at the "Golden Gate" of Touran National Park, has become a shining model of participatory governance and community-based environmental conservation in Iran.

Introduced as one of the country's nominees for the UN World Tourism Organization's "Best Tourism Villages 2026" program, the village has shown how a local community can manage its own development path while also serving as a guardian of the environment and wildlife.

At the heart of Qaleh Bala's achievement lies a strong local governance structure—where the village head (dehfar), members of the village council, and influential local figures work together to manage human and natural resources. This governance model is most evident in the village's commitment to protecting wildlife. Given Qaleh Bala's proximity to Touran National Park and residents' affection for wildlife, villagers transferred the grazing-use permits for their rangelands, within a conservation management framework, to institutions affiliated with the Department of Environment, so that habitat protection would take priority over

traditional exploitation.

This local governance is coupled with social responsibility. One of the village's most distinctive initiatives is "forage vows" (nazer-e alafeh)—a program in which villagers, especially women, allocate ten percent of the profits from selling their products and handicrafts to purchasing forage. During cold seasons and drought periods, this forage is distributed along the movement routes of species such as the wild goat (ibex/"kal"), the urial sheep (qooch-e urial), and the goitered gazelle (jeyran/jabir)—a collective action reflecting the village's deeply rooted culture of wildlife conservation. This forage vow is held annually with the participation of villagers and local notables, and has become an established tradition in Qaleh Bala's environmental governance.

Cultural governance also holds a special place in the village. For 14 consecutive years, the Zaghbor Festival—celebrating the region's emblematic endemic bird—has been organized in Qaleh Bala by villagers, the dehfar, and the village council. Each year the festival draws over a thousand visitors, serving both as an environmental education

event and an economic stimulus. Alongside the festival, villagers set up handicraft booths, and all products offered are made by local women and men.

This cultural and tourism vitality has been accompanied by informed local decision-making. Many residents have restored their old houses—located in the village's historic, stepped (terraced) fabric—and converted them into eco-lodges, an action that both helps preserve traditional architecture and provides a sustainable source of income. The dehfar, council members, and local influencers have made notable efforts to protect cultural heritage, restore the historic fabric, and stabilize the village's terraced structure. The village's ancient plane tree has also been registered on the national list as a natural heritage asset, and the village qanat is dredged each year through collective community cooperation—evidence of the continuity of participatory water management traditions.

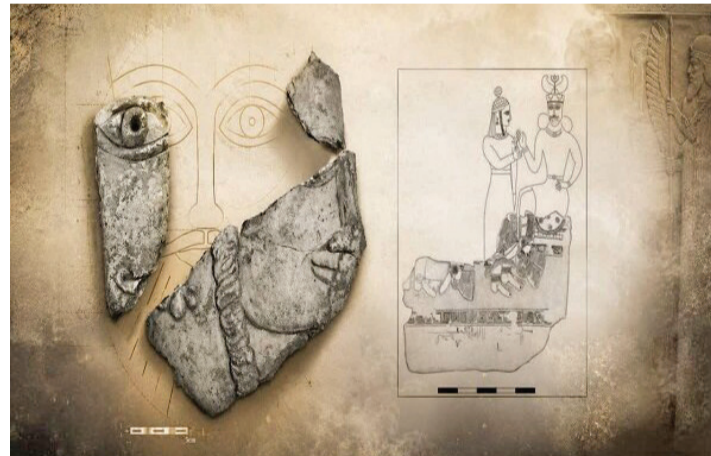
Empowering women and children is another key pillar of local governance in Qaleh Bala. The "Borina Women's Creative House for Tourism and Handicrafts" serves as a place for women to gather, produce and

package goods and handicrafts, and plan their marketing. The village's children are also trained as "young tourism ambassadors" to convey the village's environmental, cultural, and tourism values.

In another step, local officials established a "Rural Tourism Information Center," where one of the village's young people provides visitors with information about Qaleh Bala's natural, historical, and cultural attractions. Community participation—especially by women and children—is recognized as one of the main reasons for the village's growing reputation in tourism and sustainable development.

Because of its emphasis on sustainable development, community-based tourism, and environmental conservation, the village has become an important destination for wildlife tours. Hosting the National Eco-lodge Festival of Iran in Qaleh Bala has further solidified the village's national standing—an event in which more than 200 people from different Iranian ethnic groups and eco-lodge operators from across the country came to Qaleh Bala and exchanged experiences and ideas with local residents and lodge managers.

Iranian researchers uncover likely image of last Sasanian king



TEHRAN - Researchers from University of Tehran have identified what they believe may be the last known portrait of Yazdgerd III, the final king of the Sasanian Empire, following archaeological excavations at the ancient Baze Hur fire temple in northeastern Iran, according to a study published in the Italian academic journal *East and West*.

The findings emerged from excavations led by Meysam Labbaf-Khaniki, a faculty member in the archaeology department at the University of Tehran, at the Baze Hur complex located around 70 km south of Mashhad. The site lies along one of ancient Iran's principal trade routes linking Khorasan with Sistan, Kerman and the central Iranian plateau.

According to researchers, archaeologists uncovered a late-Sasanian stucco panel por-

traying four figures, including a seated individual facing three standing figures. Although only the lower portion of the panel survived, the seated figure appears distinct because of elaborate footwear, ceremonial trousers and decorative elements associated with Sasanian royal iconography.

Labbaf-Khaniki said archaeological and historical evidence suggests the enthroned figure may represent Yazdgerd III, who ruled during the Arab conquest of the Sasanian Empire in the seventh century, Mehr reported.

Researchers said excavations also uncovered fragments believed to belong to a Sasanian royal crown. They added that the unfinished nature of the stucco relief and its concealment behind a mud-brick wall indicate the artwork may have been hidden during a period of political

turmoil near the collapse of the empire.

The study also draws on historical references, including accounts in the medieval text *Futuh al-Buldan*, which describe Yazdgerd III seeking refuge in Khorasan during the final years of his reign. Researchers suggested the fire temple may correspond to the ancient Adur Burzen-Mihr sanctuary, one of the most important Zoroastrian religious centers in eastern Iran.

Excavations at Baze Hur have been conducted over eight archaeological seasons since 2013 under the supervision of the University of Tehran team. Archaeologists uncovered a large Sasanian-era fire temple richly decorated with stucco ornamentation and wall paintings, reflecting the artistic and religious importance of the complex.

Findings from the site indicate the architectural complex was founded in the late Parthian period and remained active into the early Islamic centuries. Researchers also discovered numerous Middle Persian inscriptions inside the structure, suggesting the sanctuary attracted visitors from different regions over several centuries.

Archaeologists believe a major earthquake between the late ninth and early tenth centuries likely caused the destruction and abandonment of the site.

The study, titled "The Last Image of the Last King: A Sasanian Scene from the Baze Hur Fire Temple," was published in the 65th issue of *East and West*, a peer-reviewed journal specializing in Asian archaeology and Eastern studies founded in 1950 by Italian scholar Giuseppe Tucci.

According to sources, Baze Hur had been studied by architect/archaeologist Ernst Herzfeld (1879–1948) and art historian/archaeologist Andre Godard (1881–1965) who wrote articles about the monument.

The Sassanid era (224 CE–651) is of very high importance in the history of Iran. Under Sassanids, Persian art and architecture experienced a general renaissance. Architecture often took grandiose proportions, such as palaces at Ctesiphon, Firuzabad, and Sarvestan, which are amongst the highlights of the ensemble.

Crafts such as metalwork and gem engraving grew highly sophisticated, yet scholarship was encouraged by the state. In those years, works from both the East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the language of the Sassanians.

In 2018, UNESCO added an ensemble of Sassanian historical cities in southern Iran — titled "Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region"—to its World Heritage list.

Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Kasbah of Algiers

The Kasbah is a unique kind of Medina or Islamic city. It stands in one of the finest coastal sites on the Mediterranean, overlooking the islands where a Carthaginian trading post was established in the 4th century BC.

The Kasbah of Algiers is an outstanding example of a historic Maghreb city having had extensive influence on town planning in the western part of the Mediterranean and sub-Saharan Africa.

Indeed, located on the Mediterranean coast, the site was inhabited at least from the 6th century BC when a Phoenician trading post was established there. The term Kasbah, which originally designated the highest

Medical journal warns of implications of Pasteur Institute of Iran's destruction across EMR

TEHRAN – In a new article published in the International Journal of Health Policy and Management (IJHPM), scholars from eight countries have warned that the physical destruction of the Pasteur Institute of Iran by the US-Israeli strikes on April 2 could disrupt key public health functions across the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR).

The paper highlights that sanctions and platform exclusion block its surviving researchers from accessing the databases and networks they would need to rebuild, and research programs that took decades to build cannot be reconstituted in years.

Titled Scholasticide, and Population Health in the Eastern Mediterranean, the article is written by 16 institutions across eight countries, including the University of Toronto, Stanford University School of Medicine, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, the University of Geneva, the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, the University of Ottawa, the University of California San Diego, the American University of Beirut, and Keran University of Medical Sciences.

The paper highlights that systematic destruction of academic infrastructure, termed scholasticide, has been normalized across the EMR over more than two decades.

"The doctrine has operated through two coexisting modalities: the targeted assassination of individual scholars and the physical destruction of institutions, escalating in scale from selective killings and partial looting to the dismantling of entire academic systems."

Referring to the recent imposed war against Iran, it says that over 30 Iranian universities have been directly attacked by the United States and Israel since the war began in late February.

Founded in 1920, the Pasteur Institute of Iran is a longstanding member of the Pasteur Network. The Institute contributes to national, regional, and global public health through its national reference laboratories, WHO Collaborating Centers, disease surveillance and diagnostics, biobanks, and the production of essential medical countermeasures.

"The doctrine of academic expendability has operated through two modalities: the tar-



geted assassination of individual academics and scientists, and the physical destruction or occupation of institutions, both of which have coexisted across the EMR.

What has escalated is their scale and completeness; from the selective killing of individual knowledge holders and the partial looting of campuses, to the systematic dismantling of entire institutional systems, including the equipment, samples, knowledge resources, and organizational capacity that sustain them."

The paper warns that targeting universities, institutions, and laboratories does not merely lead to physical destruction.

"It eliminates ongoing research programs, specimen collections, institutional knowledge, supervisory capacity, organizational memory, and cumulative routines that cannot be reconstructed from publications alone."

The paper urges the global community to take actions and stop attacks on academic infrastructure as a legal obligation, underlining that "if the global health community does not interrupt this cycle now, through standing international mechanisms rather than one-off crisis responses, we risk forfeiting the moral authority to invoke these protections in any future conflicts, for any people.

Human rights, including the rights to education, science, and health, are not negotiable. Safeguarding them is our collective

responsibility.

That responsibility demands not only condemnation, but specificity, consistency, and concrete action."

Moreover, in an article published in The Lancet – one of the most prestigious peer-reviewed publications among international general medical journals – on May 16, prominent Iranian and foreign scholars called on global health communities to deploy their full capacity to protect health-care infrastructures and to foster the full restoration of the Pasteur Institute of Iran's essential laboratory and its diagnostic, surveillance, and vaccine capabilities, which were damaged during the US-Israeli strikes against the country's scientific facilities.

"We urgently call on the international health communities to deploy their full capacity to protect health-care infrastructures and to foster the full restoration of the Pasteur Institute of Iran's essential laboratory and its diagnostic, surveillance, and vaccine capabilities. This is not solely a national issue; regional health security is also at risk," they wrote.

Following the attack on April 2, Mario Moreira, President of the Pasteur Network, expressed concern over the destruction of the Pasteur Institute of Iran, and warned of the potential regional impacts as it disrupts the major role of this century-old pillar of global health in prevention and control of existing and rising health threats in the region.

"The reported damage to the Pasteur Institute of Iran is deeply concerning. This institution plays an important role in supporting the health of populations in Iran and the region. When such capacities are disrupted, diagnostics, surveillance, and response to ongoing and emerging threats may be affected, with potential implications for health security beyond national borders," Moreira highlighted.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the director-general of the World Health Organization, warned that the conflict in Iran and the region is impacting the delivery of health services and the safety of health workers, patients, and civilians present at health facilities.

"Multiple attacks on health have been reported in the Iranian capital, Tehran, in recent days amid the escalating conflict in the Middle East.

The Pasteur Institute in Iran sustained significant damage and was rendered unable to continue delivering health services," he wrote on X on April 3.

"The Institute was established in 1920 and has been operating for over a century in multiple areas of medical research. It plays an important role in protecting and promoting population health, including in emergencies. Two of its departments have been working with WHO as collaborating centres."

World No Tobacco Day: unmasking the appeal – countering nicotine and tobacco addiction

TEHRAN – Observed on May 31 annually, World No Tobacco Day aims to raise awareness of the threats of tobacco use and the tactics used by the tobacco industry, and to promote effective measures to end nicotine and tobacco addiction.

Themed 'unmasking the appeal – countering nicotine and tobacco addiction', the day highlights how the tobacco and nicotine industry continues to repackage and rebrand its products to attract a new generation – particularly children and adolescents – while attempting to evade stronger tobacco control measures worldwide.

In light of decades of progress in reducing tobacco use, the tobacco industry's tactics remain relentless.

Companies are aggressively marketing new and emerging nicotine products such as e-cigarettes, nicotine pouches, and synthetic nicotine devices – often disguised as "innovation" – to sustain addiction and recruit new users. These strategies threaten to reverse hard-won gains in tobacco control and public health.

Use of nicotine products such as e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches is increasing rapidly among youth.

Startling new data reveal the scale of the crisis: at least 40 million children aged 13–15 globally report current use of at least one tobacco product. Of these, 20 million smoke cigarettes and 10 million use smokeless (oral/nasal) tobacco. Also, at least 15 million adolescents aged 13–15 years are already using e-cigarettes, and in countries with data, children are on average nine times more



likely than adults to vape, WHO website reported.

Despite these concerning trends, significant policy gaps remain. World Health Organization's data for 2024 show that only 7 countries in the Region ban all e-cigarette flavours, while 5 do not apply age restrictions on sales. Eight countries have no restrictions on advertising, promotion and sponsorship; 19 have partial bans; and 10 do not regulate e-cigarette use in public places. These gaps leave young people particularly vulnerable to targeted marketing and product designs intended to sustain nicotine addiction.

Building on the momentum of the 2025 campaign, World No Tobacco Day 2026 reaffirms the WHO's commitment to exposing the evolving strategies of the tobacco and nicotine industry and to advancing policies that protect young people

and communities from addiction.

This year's campaign aims to expose the industry's strategies – including the use of synthetic nicotine, nicotine salts and analogues designed to enhance addiction potential while being marketed as innovative or even less harmful; promote stronger policy action – through bans on flavours, advertising and promotion (including digital and social media), and through stricter regulation of packaging and product design that increase youth appeal; and empower youth and the public – by providing knowledge and tools to recognize and resist industry influence and by ensuring access to evidence-based cessation support.

The National No Tobacco Week was held from May 25-31 with the theme of "Exposing the allure and false advertising for a tobacco-free generation."

Monday, May 25, "tobacco-free families for a tobacco-free generation"; Tuesday, May 26, "tobacco-free generation with self-care and mental health"; Wednesday, May 27, "tobacco-free generation by promoting religious teachings"; Thursday, May 28, "commitment and participation of trade unions for a tobacco-free generation"; Friday, May 29, "tobacco-free generation by healthy sports and recreation"; Saturday, May 30, "educating teenagers and youth for a tobacco-free generation"; and Sunday, May 31, "commitment and participation of media to expose the tricks of the tobacco industry" were the weekdays of the event.

OCHA lauds IRCS for 'effective and valuable' management of human crises



TEHRAN – Gemma Connell, the Officer-in-Charge of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)'s Humanitarian Sector Division, has appreciated the Iranian Red Crescent Society for its 'effective and valuable' role in human crises management.

While appreciating the provision of documentation, reports, and information related to humanitarian rights, she announced that the narrative of relief efforts provided by the Iranian Red Crescent Society had a significant impact on the OCHA officials.

She also praised the performance, sacrifice, and dedication of the aid workers of the Iranian Red Crescent Society, describing the role of the IRCS in providing relief to the affected people and managing humanitarian crises as effective and valuable, ILNA reported.

Connell emphasized the importance of developing cooperation, continuing specialized interactions, and strengthening coordination between the United Nations and the Iranian Red Crescent Society.

She made the remarks in a meeting with Pirhossein Kolivand, the president of the Iranian Red Crescent Society, in Geneva, during which Kolivand explained the extensive relief and operational capacities of the Iranian Red Crescent Society.

The IRCS head emphasized the need to develop humanitarian cooperation, strengthen international coordination in the field of crisis management, and promote the principles of humanitarian law.

In continuation, cooperation within the framework of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) was also stressed, and the effective role and operational

capacity of the IRCS rescue and relief teams in international missions were emphasized.

Previously, Kolivand held meetings with Jagan Chapagain, the Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Kolivand called on the IFRC to support the IRCS in providing rescue vehicles and ambulances. The IFRC pledged to facilitate legal, financial, and administrative channels for the IRCS's access to up-to-date, standard, specialized equipment and the direct purchase of rescue vehicles.

Highlighting the extensive capacity of the federation's logistics centers in different countries around the world, the officials affiliated with the IFRC announced readiness to provide relief items, vital equipment, and operational support to the IRCS, to partially compensate for destruction and depreciation resulting from war conditions and sanctions pressures.

For his part, Kolivand elaborated on the manufacturing capability of the IRCS, including the capacity of the textile company in producing mass production of disaster relief tents, blankets, carpets, essential tools, and emergency relief shelters, which play a pivotal role in saving human lives during crises, natural hazards, and conflicts.

The ICRC president described the IRCS as one of the most powerful national societies in the world, emphasizing the distinguished and influential position of the IRCS in the global humanitarian arena.

She promised to follow up on the agreements made on her official visit to Iran and boost cooperation with the IRCS on humanitarian assistance, relief, and medical care.

DOE details measures to strengthen preservation of natural habitats

TEHRAN – To strengthen the preservation of natural habitats and protected areas, the Department of Environment (DOE) has taken different measures, such as inaugurating a national committee for the smart protection of the environment, revising protected areas management, combating drought impacts, and developing fire extinguishing infrastructure.

The national committee for smart protection of the environment consists of university professors and experts. It has so far held four sessions discussing plans for the smart protection of Golestan National Park, Tandooreh National Park, a protected area located northeast of Iran, the DOE monitoring center, and ecological drought, IRNA quoted Vahid Kheirabadi, an official with the DOE, as saying.

The inauguration of a knowledge-based 'satellite fire observations system (known as Sahn System) in the past Iranian year 1404 (March 2025 – March 2026) was one of the main achievements of the department, the official added.

Satellite data provided by the system has enhanced fire detection and monitoring, and made it possible to prepare specialized reports for areas under management.

The DOE has recently launched the Bushehr fire station, and has kicked off the construction of two new fire stations in Bemo National Park and the Miankaleh peninsula, Kheirabadi further noted.

Moreover, the department has developed a national drought and ecological monitoring system, which is planned to be unveiled in the near future.

To combat drought, some 150 billion rials (about 87,000 dollars) have been allocated to sensitive ecosystems. The fund will be spent on repairing springs, canals, water troughs, and reservoirs, as well as the purchase of modern equipment for storing water and transporting it to provinces affected by drought.

The official went on to say that over the past Iranian year, the DOE revised and prepared management plans in numerous areas, and the revised plans are being implemented in 30 key regions.

DOE underscores use of smart environmental protection systems

Environmental challenges have turned into crises. The rate of environmental damage, the population growth, the surge in natural hazards such as climate change, drought, sand and dust storms, and floods have made the use of smart and innovative technologies a necessity to save the planet.

The protected areas under the DOE's supervision now account for 12 per cent (19.8 million hectares) of the country's land area. To preserve these areas, the DOE has developed smart, specialized protection plans, IRNA quoted Hamid Zohrabi, an official with the DOE, as saying in January.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)



Managing Director: **Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati**
 Editor-in-Chief: **Mohammad Sarfi**

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 43051601
 Email: info@tehrantimes.com
 Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
 Advertisements Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051430
 Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 43051505
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No. 18, Moghadasi Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran P.o. Box: 14155-4843 Zip Code: 1599814713

MAY 31, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

God must be thanked for every blessing, and he who is thankful, receives more blessings, and he who neglects it, endangers that blessing and may soon lose it.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:02 Evening: 19:35 Dawn: 3:06 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:50 (tomorrow)

6th Iranian Contemporary Art Biennial concludes in London

TEHRAN- The 6th Iranian Contemporary Art Biennial, titled "With My Roots," concluded its landmark run at the prestigious Mall Galleries in London on Saturday.

The week-long exhibition transformed the entirety of the venue into a vibrant testament to the evolution of the Iranian contemporary perspective, IRNA reported.

The event served as a critical platform for cultural diplomacy, drawing a significant international audience alongside the Iranian diaspora, the report added.

The high turnout underscored the rising global prestige of Iranian contemporary art and its unique capacity to foster cross-cultural dialogue, even amidst a backdrop of heightened regional tensions and political complexities between Iran and the United States in recent months.

Organized by Capital Art London, the biennial was the result of a rigorous selection process. Out of more than 530 submissions received by the secretariat, 305 works by 127 artists reached the judging phase.

Ultimately, the exhibition featured 182 selected pieces from artists residing in 17 different countries, illustrating the deep-seated

connection the global Iranian artistic community maintains with its cultural heritage.

A major highlight of this edition—themed "Eternal Iran"—was the solo showcase in the North Gallery dedicated to the works of Master Hossein-Ali Machiani. A pioneer of Iranian painting, Machiani's collection of 15 pieces captivated visitors by seamlessly blending traditional Persian motifs with the intricate delicacy of classical miniature painting.

Other notable contributions included works by acclaimed figures such as Hojat Shakiba, Mehdi Fallah, and Ahmad Ariamaneh, alongside contemporary video installations and sculptures.

As the doors closed on Saturday, critics noted that the 6th edition of "With My Roots" successfully reaffirmed the continuity of Iranian identity. By bridging the gap between historical authenticity and modern expression, the biennial has solidified its position as the most significant recurring showcase of Iranian contemporary art outside the country, proving that the roots of Iranian creativity remain unshakable despite the winds of political tensions.

Cartoon of Day



Run, Run, Run!
 Cartoonist: Paulo Fernandes from Portugal

Iranian feature film "People's Child" participating in 66th Zlín Film Festival

TEHRAN – The Iranian feature film "People's Child" directed by Mahmoud Karimi is present at the 66th Zlín Film Festival - International Film Festival for Children and Youth – which is underway in Zlín, Czech Republic.

A 2025 production, the 117-minute movie is participating in the Beyond the Childhood Horizon Section, Honaronline reported.

After the Iranian Revolution in 1979, children from an orphanage are forced to face life on their own. While searching for their families, one of them named Abolfazl learns he was once found as a lost child and decides to trace his origins.

On his journey for answers, he encounters various people and stories that gradually change his view of the world and himself. His path leads him through friendship, love, loss, and war until he discovers where he truly belongs.

The cast includes Gohar Kheyran-dish, Reza Kianian, Hasan Ma'juni, Behrooz Shoeibi, Siamak Safari, Siavash Cheraghpour, Omid Rohani, Zahra Davoudnejad, Venus Kaneli, Javad Yahyavi, Mani-ya Aizi, and Mahbod Jahan Noush.



The film premiered at the 43rd Fajr Film Festival in 2025 and won three awards including the Crystal Simorgh for Best First-Time Filmmaker, the Crystal Simorgh for Best Screenplay, and the Crystal Simorgh for Best Editing.

International Film Festival for Children and Youth in Zlín belongs among the oldest and largest events of its kind worldwide.

Founded in 1961 in the Czechoslovak hotbed of filmmaking for

children and youth, the festival gradually acquired international attention. It is a non-profitable event with all screenings and supporting events free of charge. The audience consists mainly of children and youth from the Zlín region, but also university students and adult visitors.

The program structure of the festival focuses above all on films for children and youth. Its program scheme is very wide and apart from the main competitive

sections of feature films for children and youth includes a competition of short animations for children or competitive documentaries dealing with problems of young people.

Screenings are accompanied by a series of seminars, workshops, and entertainment events for children and teenagers.

Having launched on May 28, this year's edition of the Zlín Film Festival will run through June 3.

IAF to screen Michael Haneke's "The Seventh Continent"

TEHRAN – The cinematheque of the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran will screen the 1989 Austrian psychological drama film "The Seventh Continent," directed by Michael Haneke, on Sunday.

The screening is set for 6 p.m. at the Nasser Hall of the IAF. The 108-minute film will be presented with Persian subtitles as the first installment of the series "In Condemnation of Violence."

The film chronicles three years in the life of an Austrian family, which consists of Georg, an engineer; his wife Anna, an optometrist; and their young daughter, Eva. They lead a seemingly routine urban middle-class life, but are actually planning something sinister. The film was selected as the Austrian entry for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 62nd Academy Awards.

As Haneke's debut feature film, "The Seventh Continent" is notable for scenes that many crit-

ics consider among the most terrifying in modern cinema—not because of overt excitement, but because of their emotional restraint and absence of sensationalism.

Michael Haneke, 84, is a German-born Austrian film director and screenwriter. His work often examines social issues and depicts the feelings of estrangement experienced by individuals in modern society. Haneke has made films in French, German, and English and has worked in television and theatre. He also teaches film direction at the Film Academy Vienna.

Haneke's first films were a trilogy, consisting of "The Seventh Continent" (1989), "Benny's Video" (1992), and "71 Fragments of a Chronology of Chance" (1994), each of which depict a "coldly bureaucratic society in which genuine human relationships have been supplanted by a deep-seated collective malaise" and explore

"the relationship among consumerism, violence, mass media, and contemporary alienation".

He went on to win the Cannes Film Festival's Grand Prix for "The Piano Teacher" (2001) as well as its Palme d'Or twice, for "The White Ribbon" (2009) and "Amour" (2012), the latter of which received five Academy Award nominations and won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

Haneke also directed "Funny Games" (1997) and its 2007 remake, "Code Unknown" (2000), "Time of the Wolf" (2003), "Caché" (2005), and "Happy End" (2017).

As part of the "Selected Works of Michael Haneke" retrospective, four of Haneke's films will be screened for cinema enthusiasts from May 31 to June 3 at the Iranian Artists Forum, located at the Artists Park, North Mousavi Street, Taleqani Street.

"A Streetcar Named Desire" to go on stage in Tehran

TEHRAN- An adaptation of Tennessee Williams' classic play "A Streetcar Named Desire" is scheduled to go on stage at Tehran Theater Hall on June 6.

Mehdi Asgharian is the director of the play, which is based on a translation by Marjan Bakht-Mino.

Sahar Abdollahi, Masoumeh Rahimi, Hossein Ahmadi, Mehdi Jadari, Dorsa Shafiei and Ramin Fayyaz are the main members of the cast for the play, which will remain on stage until June 12.

"A Streetcar Named Desire" is a dramatic exploration of desire, mental illness, and the complexities of human relationships, set against the backdrop of post-World War II New Orleans. The play centers around the character of Blanche DuBois, a troubled woman who arrives in the vibrant city to stay with her younger sister, Stella Kowalski, and her brother-in-law, Stanley Kowalski.

Blanche's arrival marks a turning point in the lives of the Kowalski household. She is introduced as a fragile figure, haunted by her past and filled with delusions of grandeur. Her genteel heritage and refined manner starkly contrast

with the gritty reality of Stanley's working-class life. Blanche is fleeing Belle Reeve, the family estate in Mississippi, which she has lost due to debts and her family's decline, claiming it was due to her being the only surviving member who did not abandon her kin. Her arrival is laden with secrets and a troubled history, which she reluctantly reveals over the course of the play.

Stella, in contrast, is content in her marriage to the rough-and-tumble Stanley. She embodies a nurturing spirit, caught between her loyalty to her sister and her devotion to her husband. As Blanche becomes increasingly dependent on Stella for emotional support, Stanley grows suspicious of Blanche's intentions and troubled past. His instinctual, animalistic nature drives him to uncover the truth about her, leading to a clash between the old world that Blanche represents and the new, raw vitality embodied by Stanley.

As the narrative unfolds, Blanche's facade begins to crumble. Her flirtations with the charming young man, Mitch, instill a glimmer of hope in her—he represents a potential escape from her bleak reality. However, as Mitch learns of

Blanche's past, including the tragic loss of her young husband to suicide, he rejects her, leaving Blanche isolated and vulnerable. This rejection deepens her descent into madness, as she clings desperately to her illusions and flimsy aspirations of the past.

Stanley's brutality escalates throughout the play, culminating in a harrowing confrontation with Blanche. In a disturbing climax, he assaults her, shattering her already tenuous grip on reality. Following this traumatic event, Blanche's mental health deteriorates. Her final attempts to escape her circumstances are poignantly tragic as she seeks refuge in fantasy. The play culminates in a heartbreaking moment where she is taken away to a mental institution, repeating the phrase, "Whoever you are, I have always depended on the kindness of strangers." This line epitomizes not only her helplessness but also her misunderstanding of the world around her.

"A Streetcar Named Desire" ultimately serves as a powerful commentary on the fragility of human dignity in the face of harsh realities. Williams deftly weaves themes

of desire, decay, and the conflict between old-world gentility and modern brutality. The play remains a timeless exploration of the complexities of human emotions, societal expectations, and the devastating impact of trauma, resonating with audiences across generations. It stands out as one of the defining works in American theater, highlighting the struggles of individuals caught in the merciless grip of their pasts and desires.

The play has been critically acclaimed since its debut in 1947, earning a reputation as one of the greatest American plays. It won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1948, cementing its status as a landmark of American theater.

The play has inspired numerous adaptations, most notably the highly celebrated 1951 film directed by Elia Kazan, which starred Vivien Leigh as Blanche and Marlon Brando as Stanley. This adaptation garnered four Academy Awards and significantly elevated the play's prominence in popular culture. Additionally, "A Streetcar Named Desire" has been adapted into various stage productions, operas, and ballets, reflecting its enduring influence.

Ladies-only candle painting event for Palestine in Blackburn

Women from across the North West are set to come together in Blackburn next month for a charity candle painting event raising vital funds for humanitarian aid in Palestine.

The ladies-only evening, organized by The Palestine Project founders Hana Saith and Sasha Malik, will take place on June 10 from 4pm to 7pm at Stanley House Hotel and Spa, the Lancashire Telegraph reported.

Working in partnership with Islamic Relief, organizers say every penny raised during the event will go directly towards supporting people in Palestine through food aid, clean water, shelter, and emergency medical support.

The evening will include candle painting sessions, dinner, community stalls, homemade bakes, matcha drinks, and henna artists, while also giving local businesses the chance to support the fundraiser and connect with the community.

Children under 10 will also be able to attend free of charge to help make the event accessible for mothers.

The fundraiser follows the success of the group's first ladies-only Sip and Paint event during Ramadan earlier this year, which raised more than £1,640.

Since launching in 2025, The Palestine Project

says it has now raised £28,475 through online fundraising, outdoor collections and community events.

Organizer Sasha Malik said: "Hosting this event is deeply meaningful to me, as it reflects the heights The Palestine Project has reached and the true compassion of our communities.

"I am honored to welcome those who have supported our journey and helped us create meaningful impact for those suffering in Palestine.

"Through this event, we hope to create an empowering and memorable evening for our guests, whilst continuing to raise awareness and essential donations for Palestine."