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100 Days of War: Iran's Epic Resistance

Retaliatory strikes on US bases reflect Iran's firm response to continued aggression

TEHRAN - Iran's latest retaliatory attacks against American bases in the Persian Gulf region have highlighted the country's seriousness and preparedness to counter aggression.

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) carried out strikes against two US air bases in Kuwait and Bahrain in the early hours of Saturday.

In a statement, the IRGC said four violating oil tankers, acting under the aggressive American military without coordination or regard for repeated warnings from the Iranian naval forces, attempted to illegally exit the strategic waterway of the Strait of Hormuz. **▶ Page 2**

Iran rejects President Aoun's accusations as Israel intensifies indiscriminate strikes in Lebanon

TEHRAN - Iran has rejected accusations by Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, who claimed that Tehran uses Lebanon as a "bargaining chip" in negotiations with Washington.

In an interview with CNN, Aoun accused Iran of hindering efforts to establish peace between Lebanon and Israel, stating: "It's not your country, it's our country," in reference to Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC). He further alleged that Iran is "using Lebanon as a bargaining chip in its negotiations with the US." **▶ Page 3**

The rise of the Unified China: A new world order emerging from the ashes of hegemony

By Dr. Ahmed Moustafa

CAIRO - In the grand chessboard of international geopolitics, the board has been flipped. The era of unipolar hegemony, long dominated by the United States and its allies, is not just waning; it is being actively dismantled by the emergence of a "Unified China." This is no longer a prediction of the distant future but a reality of the present. We are witnessing the consolidation of a nation that has weathered the storm of containment, emerged victorious in the technological war, and restructured the global financial architecture to serve the Global South. The recent, highly anticipated official visit of Donald Trump to Beijing was meant to be a show of force,

Iran: A civilization that refuses to bow

By Syeda Farheen Naqi Mossavi

HAFIZABAD, Pakistan - Iran is often discussed through the language of sanctions, nuclear negotiations, and regional tensions. Yet those headlines tell only a small part of the story. Behind the politics stands a civilization that has survived for thousands of years and has repeatedly outlived the forces that sought to dominate it. Few countries carry a historical memory as deep as Iran's. Long before the modern world took shape, Persia was already one of the great centers of human civilization. Under Cyrus the Great, the Persian Empire stretched across vast territories and governed diverse peoples. Historians still debate many aspects of that era, but there is little disagreement about its importance. What followed was not a history of uninterrupted glory.

Inside the structural collapse of Israel's global legitimacy

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN - Something fundamental has broken in the architecture of global opinion, and no amount of propaganda from Tel Aviv or cover from Washington can piece it back together. According to Pew Research Center's Spring 2026 Global Attitudes Survey, a median of 67 percent of adults across the 36 countries surveyed now hold an unfavorable view of Israel, compared with just 25 percent who see it favorably. Drawing on interviews with over 44,000 individuals, this extensive study records a sea change in global public opinion. Crucially, most interviews were completed in the shadow of February 28, when the United States and Israel launched their joint campaign of aggression against Iran, a date marking over two years from the start of Israel's live-streamed genocidal campaign against Gaza.

Lebanese government's reliance on US leaves it exposed

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - Lebanon's government continues to insist that proximity with the United States grants it absolute protection, or that it can shield Lebanon from Israeli aggression. Senior officials are drowning in the illusion that an alliance with the U.S. and reliance on its guarantees can restrain the Israeli regime or hold it to its commitments in the ceasefire agreement announced by Washington in a joint trilateral statement (U.S.-Israeli-Lebanese) several days ago. But the America that the people of this region know and have experienced in Gaza, the West Bank, Syria, and elsewhere behaves exactly as it always has: Tel Aviv's interests come first, while the interests of its Arab allies, if they matter at all, are postponed and expected to wait. **▶ Page 5**

The beautiful game, the ugly politics: U.S. visa row hits World Cup credibility

By Farrokh Hesabi

TEHRAN - For decades, international sports governing bodies have promoted a simple principle: sport should unite people beyond politics, ideology, and diplomatic disputes. FIFA has repeatedly championed the idea that football belongs to everyone and that all participating nations must enjoy equal conditions at the World Cup. Yet, as the 2026 FIFA World Cup approaches, events surrounding Iran's national team once again expose the uncomfortable reality that this principle often remains little more than a slogan. The latest controversy stems from the U.S. government's refusal to issue visas for several administrative and executive members of Iran's World Cup delegation. The decision has created an entirely avoidable disruption just days before the tournament begins and has raised serious questions about whether the host nation is fulfilling its responsibilities toward all qualified participants. **▶ Page 6**

Nanotech progress in Iran beyond just a scientific achievement

TEHRAN - With over 430 companies operating in the nanotechnology sector, and more than 1,960 nanotech products receiving nanoscale certificates, the advancement of the nanotechnology sector in the country proves to be more than just a scientific achievement. Relying on domestic capacity, nanotechnology in Iran is not merely measured by scientific rankings and published articles, but products that have been manufactured and entered the industry and the market, IRNA reported. The total sale of these products amounts to over 970 trillion rials (about 554 million dollars), indicating that the scientific achievement has become an economic and industrial capacity. **▶ Page 7**

Snowman festival in Tochal



The festival of snowman in the Tochal international ski resort in north of Tehran attracts families and others.

Rezaei warns of wider conflict if diplomacy fails

TEHRAN - Senior Iranian official Mohsen Rezaei has called for the release of billions of dollars in frozen Iranian assets as a key confidence-building measure in negotiations with the United States, while warning that any renewed military confrontation could expand far beyond the Persian Gulf and threaten broader regional stability. Speaking in separate interviews this week, Rezaei, a member of Iran's Expediency Council and an adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, argued that Washington has repeatedly undermined diplomatic efforts and bears responsibility for the current impasse in talks between Tehran and Washington. In an interview with CNN's Fred Pleitgen, Rezaei said, US President Donald Trump had effectively brought negotiations to a standstill, stressing that the future of diplomacy now depends on decisions made in Washington. **▶ Page 3**

War on Iran drives maritime transport costs up by 80%

TEHRAN - According to a report by Anadolu News Agency, container freight spot rates have skyrocketed by 80% since the outbreak of the US-Israel attack on Iran at the end of February. Trade flows in the Strait of Hormuz remain 90% below normal levels amid ongoing geopolitical uncertainties in West Asia. Following the start of the war on 28 February, massive disruptions to trade flows through this strategic chokepoint continue to drive up freight rates in the spot market. At the same time, rising bunker fuel costs and associated fuel surcharges are adding further upward pressure on freight rates. The rerouting of maritime trade in the Red Sea - a direct consequence of the conflict - is extending transit and delivery times worldwide. In response, importers are placing orders earlier than usual to compensate for the latency. **▶ Page 4**

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

Restlessness of the Americans over reopening the Strait of Hormuz

Hamshahri, in an editorial, examined the growing impatience of American officials regarding the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz. The continued closure of the Strait of Hormuz has become the central point of contention between senators and Marco Rubio, and the patience of US political elites with the economic, security, and strategic consequences of the Trump administration's military adventurism is wearing thin. Marco Rubio, in his first appearance before senators after the US-Israeli war against Iran, attempted to defend the Trump administration's military approach. The sharp criticisms voiced by lawmakers about the Iran war, the Strait of Hormuz, the costs of the conflict, and the failures of diplomacy not only exposed deep rifts in Washington's foreign policy but also signaled the end of patience among segments of the American political elite regarding the economic, security, and strategic fallout of Trump's military adventurism.

Resalat: A three-layer strategy for the Strait of Hormuz

Resalat highlighted Iran's position on the Strait of Hormuz and the reasons why maintaining this stance benefits Iran and the Resistance Axis. Tehran has gradually made clear in recent months that its approach to the Strait of Hormuz is a three-layer strategy, not a simple reactive measure. First layer: separating the nuclear issue from Hormuz. Iran understood that if the US lost its energy-pressure leverage, it would also lose its main tool for extracting nuclear concessions. Second layer: asserting sovereignty over Hormuz as a long-standing historical claim. Third layer: maintaining the current conditions through mine-laying. Iran's position has a clear logic: as long as Hormuz remains closed, energy pressure on the US economy continues, Trump comes under domestic pressure to reach an agreement, Iran sets a ceasefire in Lebanon as a condition, Israel is forced to withdraw from southern Lebanon, and Hezbollah gains the opportunity to rebuild. Iran successfully linked the ceasefire with the US to a ceasefire in Lebanon—showing how central Hezbollah's fate is to Tehran.

Shargh: We need serious, direct, and genuine negotiations

In an interview with Shargh, senior international-affairs analyst Mehdi Zakerian assessed Iran's current approach to negotiations. According to Zakerian, what is needed more than anything today is serious, direct, and genuine dialogue. A model in which a third country merely exchanges messages between the two sides cannot replace real negotiations. Real negotiation means that representatives with broad public legitima-

cy in Iran sit directly across from the opposing parties, list all points of disagreement transparently, and discuss them openly. Therefore, the current negotiation method is far from what could be called a real negotiation. One cannot even expect this process to yield an outcome comparable to the JCPOA because Trump is seeking a form of submission, not a balanced agreement. Under current conditions, what is being discussed is less a comprehensive, balanced deal and more a limited transaction in which some restrictions are eased in exchange for the lifting of certain pressures.

Arman-e-Melli: A new knot in Iran-US negotiations

Arman-e-Melli analyzed a new complication in Iran-US negotiations. Financial compensation has become one of the most important points of contention between Iran and the United States—an issue that, according to informed sources, is particularly sensitive for Trump. Trump wants any potential agreement with Iran to be perceived as far stronger than the 2015 nuclear deal under Obama, and he seeks to avoid anything that might resemble that agreement. US officials worry that releasing Iranian assets at this stage would eliminate—or at least weaken—one of Washington's most important leverage points over Tehran. They argue that maintaining this pressure is essential for entering the second phase of negotiations. Given that Iran is unlikely to accept any agreement lacking financial compensation, US officials acknowledge that the issue is not only financial and operational, but also tied to how it is presented and communicated publicly.

Siasat-e-Rooz: IAEA's double standard

Siasat-e-Rooz evaluated Rafael Grossi's recent remarks against Iran, writing that the IAEA and Grossi have once again shown they lack independence and continue to whitewash attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities while producing reports that justify future hostile actions by the US and Israel. Therefore, maintaining intelligent management of the Strait of Hormuz and continuing certain inspection restrictions can be part of Iran's response to such behavior. The IAEA and its director general—who have twice paved the way for military aggression against Iran, including attacks on nuclear sites—have again refrained from condemning these violations, effectively enabling their repetition. The agency's biased double standard becomes clear when Grossi, after visiting the Barakah nuclear plant in the UAE, described attacks on nuclear facilities as completely unacceptable and a serious threat to international security, while he has consistently refused to condemn attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities.

arguing that such policies undermine trust, weaken security, and contribute to greater regional and global instability.

Referring to recent military actions by the United States and Israel against Iran, Momeni said the attacks took place while diplomatic negotiations were underway and resulted in extensive damage to civilian infrastructure, and historical sites.

Marking the SCO's 25th anniversary, Momeni said the organization now faces a critical test following 'an attack on one of its member states.' He called on the bloc to demonstrate its commitment to defending member countries by taking a stronger and more visible stance against violations of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

"The voice of the SCO in opposing such violations must be heard clearly and decisively across the world," he said.

He proposed a series of measures to strengthen the organization's anti-terrorism framework, including preventing the financing, arming, and sheltering of terrorist groups, expanding intelligence and judicial cooperation, and reinforcing border-security mechanisms.

100 days of war: Iran's epic resistance

By Maedeh Zaman Fashami

TEHRAN - One hundred days in politics and war is not just a number; it is a unit of judgment. Not so short that everything can be dismissed as chance or momentum, and not so long that history has had time to fully sediment the narrative. Within this relatively brief span, it becomes possible to discern whether a war is merely an "event" or a "process," whether a crisis is heading toward quick closure or hardening into a prolonged, grinding condition.

From this perspective, the first hundred days of the US-Israeli campaign against Iran do not produce a clearer picture so much as a more complicated one. This war, unlike many conventional conflicts, was never defined by a single front line, a single objective, or even a clearly imaginable end-state in its early phase. From the outset, multiple narratives coexisted: a narrative of rapid deterrence, a narrative of regional rebalancing, and at more explicitly political levels, a narrative of potential regime change. What unfolded in practice, however, looked less like the realization of these narratives and more like their collision with reality.

What stands out most in this 100-day period is the widening gap between the stated objectives of the US-Israeli coalition and the observable outcomes. Officially, the war was framed around ambitious goals: halting or rolling back Iran's nuclear program, weakening its military structure, reducing Tehran's regional influence, and applying internal political pressure. Yet in reality, none of these objectives have been fully or decisively achieved. This does not mean there was no impact; rather, it means the impact has taken a form different from what was originally anticipated.

On the military level, what was initially assumed to be a technological and intelligence advantage translated into a limited but persistent war of attrition. Strikes did inflict damage on infrastructure and certain military capabilities, but this damage did not reach a threshold of structural collapse. In many cases, what was described externally as "destruction" or "paralysis" was in fact a combination of reduced capacity and rapid reconstruction. In modern warfare, this distinction is decisive, because it determines whether the adversary retains the ability to reorganize and reconstitute its forces.

Iran, during this period, demonstrated that its military structure, even under sustained pressure, tends to shift toward dispersion and flexibility rather than collapse. Instead of concentrating all capabilities in a few critical nodes, its systems were either designed or adapted to be more distributed and resilient to shocks. As a result, despite significant losses, Iran retained the ability to continue military action and respond in a coordinated manner.

At the level of domestic politics, one of the stated objectives attributed to the United States was to generate internal instability within Iran. However, initial expectations of rapid social or political fragmentation did not materialize. A society that was assumed to be vulnerable to external pressure in



ways that could trigger immediate internal rupture instead entered a different phase: one characterized more by consolidation than fragmentation.

This consolidation does not necessarily imply political approval or satisfaction. Rather, it reflects a familiar dynamic in contexts of external threat: a shift from demands for change to priorities of preservation. Under such conditions, even groups that are normally critical or oppositional tend to adjust their behavior toward a form of situational cohesion, where the immediate concern becomes stability rather than transformation.

Over the course of these 100 days, this dynamic contributed to reducing the likelihood of rapid internal political breakdown. Instead of opening up, the political structure appears to have tightened under pressure, becoming more centralized in its response to external confrontation.

On the opposing side, the United States and Israel encountered a recurring strategic contradiction: the ability to deliver significant tactical blows without being able to translate them into a stable political outcome. While certain operational objectives were achieved, they did not consolidate into a broader strategic gain. Iran's nuclear program, according to various assessments, was damaged but not eliminated. Its missile and defense infrastructure suffered disruption but remained functional. Most importantly, the political structure of the state remained intact.

This condition is often described in strategic theory as a gap between military victory and political success. In other words, a party may succeed in battlefield operations while still failing to achieve its ultimate political objectives, because those objectives depend not only on destruction but on transformation of behavior or structure.

One of the key variables in this conflict has been the global economic dimension, particularly energy flows. The Strait of Hormuz, during this period, effectively became an instrument of mutual pressure. Any disruption in this corridor quickly translated into global energy market volatility. Rising oil prices, increased transportation costs, and supply chain disruptions transformed what began as a regional conflict into a global economic event.

This highlights an important feature of modern warfare: geography no longer limits impact. A geographically narrow chokepoint can generate systemic effects across the global economy. As a

result, economic pressure became as strategically relevant as military pressure, with a significant portion of the conflict effectively migrating into financial and commodity markets.

At the same time, a second important shift occurred: a redefinition of deterrence. Iran demonstrated that even under direct military pressure, it retained the capacity to disrupt critical energy routes. Deterrence, in this sense, is not merely about preventing attacks but about sustaining the ability to impose costs in response. This altered the calculations of all parties involved, as military superiority alone no longer guaranteed strategic security.

On the social level, contrary to some early expectations, the war did not trigger widespread systemic collapse or large-scale uncontrolled unrest. This does not imply the absence of dissatisfaction, but rather that dissatisfaction did not translate into organized political rupture. The gap between grievance and collective political action tends to widen under wartime conditions due to increased risks and uncertainties.

In Iran's case, this gap remained stable rather than collapsing. While public presence in the streets did occur, it was largely framed not in terms of internal destabilization but in response to external pressure and national defense narratives.

Internationally, one of the notable outcomes of the conflict was the absence of consolidated alignment among major actors. Instead of producing unity within traditional alliances, the war generated economic and strategic divergence. European and Asian partners of the United States found themselves increasingly focused on managing economic fallout rather than advancing a unified political strategy.

Rising energy costs, recession risks, and industrial vulnerabilities shifted priorities from political alignment to damage control. This is significant because coalition strength in modern conflicts depends not only on shared objectives but also on shared tolerance for economic cost. As those costs rise unevenly, cohesion tends to erode gradually.

When viewed in aggregate, the first hundred days of the war do not present a classical outcome of victory or defeat. Instead, they reflect a shift in equilibrium. At the outset, one of the core assumptions of the US-Israeli strategy was that combined military, economic, and security pressure could rapidly destabilize Iran's political and military structure, creating conditions for strategic re-

ordering. What actually emerged was different: neither collapse, nor surrender, nor decisive strategic shift, but the stabilization of a new and more complex status quo.

Militarily, Iran managed to preserve what is most critical in modern conflict: the capacity for continued action. Despite damage and costs, its security and military systems did not disintegrate and retained the ability to respond and reorganize.

In analytical terms, this distinction between "being hit" and "being neutralized" is fundamental. Within this framework, strategic advantage is less about absolute superiority and more about maintaining initiative and preventing externally imposed outcomes. In this period, that initiative has largely remained on the Iranian side.

Regionally, the balance has also not shifted decisively in favor of any single actor. Military pressure did not eliminate Iran's deterrent capacity, while Iran continued to retain tools of indirect influence across the region. The result is a form of unstable mutual deterrence rather than unilateral dominance.

In the media and narrative sphere, a similar evolution is visible. Early phases of the war were marked by expectations of rapid structural breakdown within Iran. Over time, as these expectations failed to materialize, narratives shifted toward describing a protracted conflict without a clear endpoint.

Meanwhile, Iran's counter-narrative consolidated around themes of structural endurance, sustained response capability, and resistance to forced transformation. In modern conflict, narrative positioning directly affects perceptions of power, which in turn influence diplomatic and strategic calculations.

Taken together military dynamics, regional balance, and narrative competition, the overall picture of this 100-day period suggests that Iran has not only remained intact as a political and military structure, but in several respects has maintained or even consolidated its position. Meanwhile, the opposing coalition, despite inflicting damage, has not achieved its primary strategic objective of altering the fundamental equation.

For this reason, if one avoids both exaggeration and propagandistic framing, the conclusion of this period can be described in relatively clear terms: in both operational and narrative domains, the balance of advantage in this phase has leaned more toward Iran. Not as a final outcome, and not as a definitive resolution of the conflict, but as an indication that attempts to impose a rapid external transformation have met sustained structural resistance.

In such conditions, power is no longer defined solely by destructive capability or intensity of strikes, but also by endurance, adaptability, and narrative control. Across all three dimensions, the first hundred days suggest that Iran has not only withstood pressure, but has positioned itself in a way that allows it to remain an active and influential actor in shaping the trajectory of the crisis going forward.

Retaliatory strikes on US bases reflect Iran's firm response to continued aggression

From page 1 ▶ It said following warnings, one of the tankers was targeted and stopped, while the other violating vessels turned back.

American drones then hit a telecommunications masts on Qeshm Island and Goruk with two projectiles.

In response to the aggression, the IRGC's Aerospace Force immediately launched ballistic missiles at Ali Al Salem Air Base, a US airbase in Kuwait, as well as the US Fifth Fleet in Bahrain.

The IRGC also warned that it will not hesitate to respond to any act of aggression by

the US against Iranian territory.

The US and Israel launched a joint war on Iran on February 28.

Iran's strong retaliatory military response forced President Donald Trump to agree to a ceasefire with Iran on April 8.

During the war, Iran carried out 100 waves of missile and drone strikes against Israel and US bases in the Persian Gulf region.

Trump has claimed that the US military destroyed Iran's military capabilities. Such claims have been rejected by American officials speaking to US media.



The latest Iranian retaliatory strikes against American bases in the Persian Gulf make it clear that any new act of aggression will be met with a crushing response.

TEHRAN- Iran has made the release of its frozen financial assets a central condition for any future understanding with the United States, with a senior Iranian diplomat insisting that at least half of the funds must be made available at once upon the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the two countries.

Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs, said Tehran would only consider any proposed agreement acceptable if Iran's interests and concerns are fully addressed. He stressed that a minimum of 50 percent of Iran's frozen assets should be released as soon as an agreement is signed, while the rest should be unblocked within one to two months under a clearly defined implementation framework.

According to Gharibabadi, the assets belong to Iran and have been unlawfully frozen by the United States, making their release a fundamental requirement in any prospective arrangement. He noted that technical and financial mechanisms governing access to the funds could be completed during a 60-day implementation period following the signing of the memorandum.

The deputy foreign minister outlined a broader set of Iranian demands that extend beyond the case of frozen assets. These include the lifting of 'the US na-



val blockade on Iranian ports, the removal of all unilateral American sanctions, including both primary and secondary sanctions, and the normalization of Iran's status within international institutions such as the United Nations Security Council and the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Gharibabadi also said Iran expects any agreement to include a permanent end to hostilities across regional fronts and full compensation for material and moral damages resulting from US and Israeli military actions against the country. He added that Tehran has sought reparations from several Arab states that eased or supported military operations against Iranian territory.

His remarks came as negotiations aimed at ending months of

confrontation between Iran and the United States reportedly move closer to a potential framework agreement. However, Gharibabadi warned that Tehran would respond forcefully to any future military aggression and reiterated that Iranian measures related to strategic maritime routes should not be viewed as part of a simple reciprocal arrangement with Washington.

Separately, the Iranian diplomat sharply criticized the latest report issued by the IAEA and comments made by Director General Rafael Grossi on Iran's nuclear program.

In a statement published on social media, Gharibabadi argued that concerns raised by the IAEA over limited access to certain nuclear facilities, uranium stockpiles, and what it describes as a "loss of continuity of knowledge" stem

directly from military attacks carried out by the United States and Israel against Iranian nuclear sites operating under IAEA safeguards.

He accused the agency's leadership of not condemning those attacks and said it was unacceptable to ignore the source of the disruption while holding Iran responsible for its consequences. According to Gharibabadi, attacks on safeguarded nuclear facilities are violations of Iran's sovereignty and undermine nuclear safety, the safeguards system, and the broader international non-proliferation regime.

The deputy foreign minister further rejected repeated references to Iran's 60-percent uranium enrichment level as evidence of potential weaponization, arguing that such claims are political rather than technical when presented outside a clear legal framework. He emphasized that the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) does not establish a specific numerical limit on enrichment and maintained that Iran's nuclear activities stay peaceful and within its legal obligations.

Gharibabadi warned that the IAEA risks damaging its credibility if technical reports are used as instruments of political pressure. He said effective safeguards depend on impartiality, respect for international law, and the explicit condemnation of attacks on facilities monitored by the agency.

Iran rejects President Aoun's accusations as Israel intensifies indiscriminate strikes in Lebanon



From Page 1 ▶ Responding on X, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi dismissed the claims, writing: "Had Lebanon been a bargaining chip for Iran, we'd have a deal long ago." He added that "based on Mr. Aoun's comments, one would think it is Iran that has occupied one-fifth of Lebanon, displaced one-quarter of Lebanese, and bombed his country on a daily basis."

Araghchi's remarks refer to Israel's continued military actions in Lebanon and the ongoing displacement of civilians despite ceasefire arrangements.

Fresh fighting between Israel and Hezbollah erupted on March 2. Since then, Israel has killed more than 3,500 people, while continuing air and ground operations in Lebanon.

On Saturday, an Israeli airstrike in southern Lebanon killed several members of the Lebanese military, including a brigadier general,

according to the Lebanese army.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei strongly condemned the attack. He said the repeated targeting of Lebanese Army personnel demonstrates that Israel makes no distinction between soldiers, resistance fighters, and civilians. He described the strike as a "heinous crime" and a clear indication that Israel seeks neither stability nor security for Lebanon. Baghaei extended condolences to the families of the victims and the Lebanese military, calling the attack a violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and a continuation of Israeli aggression.

Tehran has stressed that halting Israeli strikes in Lebanon is among its conditions for reaching a deal with Washington to bring a permanent end to the US-Israeli aggression on Iran, which initially began in late February and led to a ceasefire nearly 40 days later.

Rezaei warns of wider conflict if diplomacy fails

From Page 1 ▶ "The ball is in Trump's court," Rezaei said, describing the talks as being at a deadlock and arguing that the United States must take practical steps to restore trust if it seeks a lasting agreement with Iran.

Central to those measures, he said, is the release of approximately \$24 billion in frozen Iranian assets.

"If he (Trump) wants to reach an agreement with Iran, this \$24 billion is a test of trust," Rezaei said. "This is our own money, not America's money."

The former commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) maintained that the cost of negotiations is significantly lower than the consequences of renewed conflict, warning that a return to war would carry serious regional repercussions.

According to Rezaei, any future military confrontation would not remain confined to the Persian Gulf. He said Iran would expand its response beyond the Strait of Hormuz to include broader strategic waterways stretching from the Indian Ocean and the Bab al-Mandab Strait to the Red Sea and the Mediterranean.

He also emphasized that Iran's military capabilities extend beyond its missile and drone arsenal, arguing that the country possesses substantial land-based military strength capable of responding to a wide range of threats.

In separate remarks to Iran's national broadcaster (IRIB), Rezaei described the Strait of Hormuz as one of Tehran's most effective deterrence tools, linking its future status to the lifting of 'an unlawful US naval



blockade' against Iranian ports and vessels.

"The Strait of Hormuz is a powerful arm of deterrence for us," he said, adding that Washington must either accept Iran's conditions through diplomacy or face escalating pressure.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

LATEST NEWS

■ Pakistan interior minister heads to Tehran, carries special message to the Leader

Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsen Naqvi will travel to Tehran on Saturday carrying a special message for Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, according to a statement by the Pakistani embassy in Tehran.

Naqvi returned to Pakistan from Kyrgyzstan, where he held two meetings with his Iranian counterpart Eskandar Momeni on the sidelines of the SCO Interior Ministers' gathering in Bishkek. After briefing Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and senior officials, he departed for Tehran.

The minister also received special directives from the Prime Minister regarding ongoing Iran-US talks, as Pakistan continues its mediation efforts between the two sides.

■ Six terrorists killed in clash with Iranian border guards

Six terrorists were killed in a clash with Iranian border guards in Sistan and Baluchestan province, Iran's Border Police commander announced. Brigadier General Ali Akbar Javidan said a terrorist team attempted to infiltrate the country and attack border posts on Friday night. Guards repelled the assault with overwhelming firepower, seizing two handguns and ammunition.

■ US-Israeli attacks cause over \$40 million in damage to Tehran University

Iran's Shahid Beheshti University has suffered an estimated \$42.75 million in damage from recent US-Israeli bombings, President Mahmoud Reza Aghamiri announced Saturday. Speaking on the anniversary of scientific elites lost in last year's Ramadan War, he confirmed the strikes destroyed medical research facilities. The university awaits government funding for reconstruction. Aghamiri praised Iran's scientific community for enduring a "technological war with the enemy." The US and Israel have

bombed over 30 Iranian universities since February 28, 2026, in violation of international law.

■ US-made Hormuz crisis harms all nations, says Rosneft CEO

The US-made crisis in the Strait of Hormuz has ultimately harmed nations worldwide, according to Igor Sechin, CEO of Russian energy giant Rosneft. Speaking at the SPIEF forum, Sechin warned that disruptions in the strait aim to reshape global energy markets in favor of Washington, but the consequences were severely underestimated. He noted that Western nations now face a dual price shock, with US fuel prices surging over 50 percent and European markets seeing hikes above 20 percent, adding that ordinary consumers will bear the brunt.

■ Baku rejects CNN claims of Israeli operations against Iran from Azerbaijan

Republic of Azerbaijan has strongly rejected a CNN report alleging Israeli military presence and operations against Iran from its territory. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Aykhan Hajizada called the report "entirely baseless," stating Baku never allows its soil for hostile actions against any state. He criticized CNN for relying on anonymous sources and ignoring Azerbaijan's official response, urging the network to retract the article.

■ Russia offers to rebuild Iran's war-damaged infrastructure

Russia has expressed readiness to help reconstruct Iranian infrastructure damaged during the recent US-Israeli war. Mohammad-Vali Alaedini, head of the Iranian Energy Ministry's international affairs center, said Russian Deputy Energy Minister Pavel Marshavin offered cooperation in damage compensation and rebuilding efforts. He noted Russia's technical expertise in energy and electricity is highly valuable. Iran welcomes the offer as part of bilateral electricity coop-

eration roadmap.

■ Iran condemns US strikes on nuclear sites under IAEA safeguards

Iran's delegation to the IAEA Board of Governors has condemned US and Israeli attacks on nuclear facilities protected by Safeguards Agreements. Iran called the strikes—17 waves during recent years—the "most extensive and unprecedented" since the IAEA's founding. Tehran urged a "zero tolerance" policy, warning that normalizing such attacks endangers the non-proliferation regime and international security.

■ Professor: Iran will be Trump's Vietnam

A prominent political science professor at the University of Chicago believes that "Iran will turn into a Vietnam for Trump."

Robert Pape, a prominent professor of political science at the University of Chicago and an analyst of war and security issues, wrote in a message on X, reposting an interview with Mohsen Rezaei, Senior Advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution: "Everyone watched the CNN interview with Mohsen Rezaei, the advisor to Iran's Leader. He made it explicitly clear: Iran demands a \$24 billion down payment, controls the Strait of Hormuz, and charges a fee for it."

Pape further wrote: "Iran is Trump's Vietnam. The US President must choose 'capitulation or escalation.'

■ Western nightmare of powerful Iran has come true: Velayati

Ali Akbar Velayati, senior advisor to Iran's Leader, says Western media reports on Trump seeking a temporary deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz prove the failure of the Iran-threat doctrine. He wrote on X that the "long-standing nightmare" of a powerful Iran has become reality, warning that regional actors hoping for compromise are making a strategic blunder.

Why Iranians stand with the Islamic Republic of Iran

By Dr. Hossein Rafiei Renani

VANCOUVER—Most Iranians see their government as the guardian of national sovereignty, security, territory and resources, and choose to move forward by building on the achievements of the 1979 Revolution, rather than regressing to a foreign-controlled puppet regime or falling into the abyss of a collapsed state.

As an Iranian who was born, raised, and educated in Iran — with no government affiliation and now living in the West — I write for readers who are willing to unlearn the mainstream anti-Iran propaganda and understand Iran through the lens of ordinary Iranians. As Julian Assange observed, "Nearly every war that has started in the past 50 years has been a result of media lies" and "If wars can be started by lies, peace can be started by truth."

Iran is a nation of 92 million proud and patriotic people with a rich civilization and a land mass larger than Britain, France, Germany and Italy combined. It is endowed with abundant natural resources and a critical geostrategic position. Iranians carried out one of the most consequential popular revolutions of the modern era in 1979 and have since weathered Western-backed sanctions, hybrid warfare, and military aggressions, emerging as an increasingly influential nation on the global stage.

Yet the mainstream Western narrative portrays a dystopian caricature of Iran with an unpopular government perpetually on the verge of collapse and a powerless people desperate to be "liberated" by foreign intervention and "regime change." In this framing, protests over economic or social grievances — often caused or hijacked by foreign adversaries — are amplified and recast as a national cry to overthrow the government, while nationwide demonstrations that draw millions in celebration of the 1979 Revolution or in support of the government against foreign aggression are erased.

Unfortunately, some people fall for the "humanitarian intervention" and "liberation" pretexts for war. These dishonest narratives have paved the way for the recent US-Israeli war on Iran, causing the killing and injuring of thousands of Iranians, destruction of Iran's civilian infrastructure, casualties among US forces, loss of American assets, disrupting global supply chains, and soaring oil and gas prices.

Iranian public opinion towards Western

governments has been shaped by their actions regarding the invasion of the country during World War I and World War II despite Iran's declarations of neutrality, Great Persian Famine and genocide of 1917-1919, coup d'état of 1953 against Iran's democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh, supporting the Pahlavi dictatorship until 1979, ever expanding sanctions since the 1979 Revolution, supporting Iraq's invasion of Iran in the 1980s, shooting down of Iran Air passenger flight 655 in 1988, invasions of and atrocities in Afghanistan and Iraq, violating the Iran nuclear deal in 2018, assassination of General Qasem Soleimani in 2020, and enabling Israeli atrocities particularly since 2023.

Public sentiment seems to have reached an unprecedented low following the US-Israeli wars on Iran during diplomatic negotiations in 2025 and 2026, assassination of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei at age 86 along with several family members including his daughter and 14-months-old granddaughter in his official residence, killing and injuring of thousands of Iranians, double-tap bombing of Minab's elementary school in southern Iran, sinking of Iran's Frigate Dena and its crew in international waters, and attacks on Iranian schools, hospitals, heritage sites, stadiums, universities, religious centers, and civilian infrastructure.

Statements from the current US President and leader of the Western imperial alliance — such as "A whole civilization will die tonight," "Bring them back to the Stone Age," "Tuesday will be Power Plant Day, and Bridge Day, all wrapped up in one, in Iran," "no deal with Iran except UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER," "Everyone should immediately evacuate Tehran," and "my favorite thing is to take the oil in Iran," — have further exposed the nature and intentions of the imperial forces.

Recent events have strengthened the resolve of many Iranians who already supported their government and have offered a sobering realization to others who were under the illusion that Western governments cared about Iranian lives and freedoms. A recent survey shows that most diaspora Iranians oppose foreign military aggression and "regime change" intervention against Iran. This sentiment is even stronger and more widespread inside Iran where the devastating consequences of the recent aggressions have been felt the most.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran, Uzbekistan stress expansion of trade exchanges



TEHRAN- The Iranian Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade met and held talks with the Minister of Investment, Industry and Trade of Uzbekistan on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's Industry Ministers' Meeting.

According to IRNA from the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, Seyed Mohammad Atabak met and talked with "Laziz Kudratov", the Minister of Investment, Industry and Trade of Uzbekistan, on Friday on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's Industry Ministers' Meeting.

In this meeting, the two sides emphasized increasing the volume of trade and economic exchanges by facilitating customs processes and operationalizing existing agreements between Tehran and Tashkent.

Strengthening trade and customs processes, mining and mineral industries cooperation, and utilizing new and knowledge-based technologies given the capabilities of Iran and Uzbekistan were among the key issues of this meeting.

The two sides also emphasized the expansion of industrial and trade cooperation within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization during this meeting.

The three-day visit of Iran's Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade Seyed Mohammad Atabak to Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan in last November, was a significant step towards achieving the goals of the outlook for trade and commercial relations with this country.

It paved the way for important agreements that are soon to be formalized in a comprehensive document to be signed by officials of the two nations.

As stated by Atabak, Iran and Uzbekistan have reached new agreements to strengthen trade and investment cooperation, particularly in mining and mineral industries.

During a meeting in Tashkent, the minister held talks with Uzbekistan's Minister of Mining and Geology and the Minister of Investment, In-

dustry and Trade. Both sides underlined the importance of expanding industrial collaboration and mutual investment.

He said the new agreements "pave the way for a major leap in the level of trade and business relations between the two countries," adding that despite the upward trend in cooperation, both nations must achieve the ambitious targets set by their presidents.

The Iranian delegation, including senior officials from the trade and mining sectors, traveled to Uzbekistan on November 9, 2025 to pursue new tariff arrangements, ease customs procedures, and promote industrial partnerships.

Iran Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Head Mohammad-Ali Dehghan Dehnavi, who accompanied Atabak, said Iran and Uzbekistan must overcome existing obstacles to realize the true potential of their bilateral trade.

"Expanding commercial relations requires addressing transportation and customs barriers," he said, urging both sides to finalize a preferential trade agreement as soon as possible to stimulate growth.

Dehnavi noted that one of the primary goals of the delegation's visit was to facilitate rail and road freight connections and remove logistical bottlenecks that hinder trade.

The discussions also focused on opportunities for cooperation in mining and mineral industries, given the complementary strengths of both nations.

Atabak highlighted Iran's experience in exploration, steel production, and mining technology, proposing joint ventures to boost investment and technology exchange in these fields.

Accompanying the minister were senior figures such as the head of the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), the TPO head, and several members of parliament and major industrial companies.

Iran, Belarus negotiate development of cooperation in agricultural sector

TEHRAN- The Deputy Minister of Agriculture and head of the Agricultural Research, Education and Extension Organization, during a trip to Minsk, met with the Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Belarus and discussed the development of relations between the two countries.

According to a report by IRNA on Friday from the Iranian Embassy in Belarus, Gholamreza Golmohammadi and Yuri Gorlov exchanged views on common areas of cooperation between the two countries in agriculture, applied research, modern technologies, and development of scientific and technical interactions.

In this meeting, which was held in the presence of Alireza Sanei, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Belarus, the two sides emphasized the need to utilize existing capacities to enhance the level of bilateral cooperation and develop agricultural relations between Iran and Belarus.

The Deputy Minister of Agriculture, who traveled to Minsk to participate in the Agriculture Summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organization member states (AgroSCO-2026) and the 36th International Specialized Agricultural Exhibition Belagro-2026, also met

with some other senior scientific and agricultural officials of this country during the trip.

Golmohammadi met and held talks with Piotr Kazakevich, Deputy Chairman of the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus (NASB), at the academy's premises.

In this meeting, the two sides examined the scientific and research capacities and capabilities of Iran and Belarus in agriculture and emphasized the expansion of joint cooperation in various fields.

Soil mechanization and development of smart agriculture, utilization of modern technologies and equipment to increase crop productivity, exchange of genetic resources and seeds, introduction and development of climateresistant varieties, restoration of damaged and degraded soils, and implementation of joint research projects were among the most important topics discussed in this meeting.

According to another report, visiting the international specialized exhibition "Belagro 2026" of Belarus at the BELEXPO international exhibition center in Minsk was another item on the Deputy Minister of Jihad Agriculture's agenda.

War on Iran drives maritime transport costs up by 80%

TEHRAN- According to a report by Anadolu News Agency, container freight spot rates have skyrocketed by 80% since the outbreak of the US-Israel attack on Iran at the end of February. Trade flows in the Strait of Hormuz remain 90% below normal levels amid ongoing geopolitical uncertainties in West Asia.

Following the start of the war on 28 February, massive disruptions to trade flows through this strategic chokepoint continue to drive up freight rates in the spot market. At the same time, rising bunker fuel costs and associated fuel surcharges are adding further upward pressure on freight rates.

The rerouting of maritime trade in the Red Sea – a direct consequence of the conflict – is extending transit and delivery times worldwide. In response, importers are placing orders earlier than usual to compensate for the latency. Maritime research firm Drewry reported that its benchmark World Container Index (WCI) for a 40foot container surged to \$3,344 as of 4 June, compared to \$1,899 on 26 February – a stark difference. As the 100th day of the conflict draws near, container freight rates are approaching the highest levels of last year, when they reached as high as \$3,543 on 12 June 2025.

The rise follows increases in freight rates on TransPacific and AsiaEurope trade routes, as well as a reduction in available capacity because container ships remain stranded in the strait. The spot freight rate for a 40foot container on the ShanghaiNew York route has risen 98% since the war began, to \$5,505. On the ShanghaiLos Angeles route, prices increased 108% to \$4,565 over the same period. Shippers bringing their orders forward ahead of expected US tariffs (scheduled to take effect in July), together with increased cargo demand driven by the 2026 FIFA World Cup, continue to contribute to the upward trend in prices, in addition to the Strait of Hormuz disruptions. The spot freight rate on the Shanghai-



Rotterdam route rose 71% since the start of the war, reaching \$3,570. Moreover, some bookings on the AsiaEurope route have been moved to June ahead of bunker fuel price adjustments expected on 1 July, further pushing up prices.

Global economic consequences of a US-Israel attack on Iran

A fullscale US-Israel attack on Iran would have severe and lasting consequences for the global economy, far beyond the immediate disruption to container freight. Based on the trends reported by Anadolu, the following major impacts can be anticipated:

1. Soaring energy prices – Iran is a major oil and natural gas producer, and the Strait of Hormuz is the transit point for roughly 20% of globally traded oil. A military attack would likely lead to Iran blocking the strait or targeting tanker traffic. Oil prices could spike to 200 per barrel, triggering a global energy crisis. Natural gas prices (already volatile) would follow suit, especially affecting Europe and Asia.

2. Global inflation surge – Higher freight and energy costs would feed directly into consumer prices. The 80-108% increases in shipping rates already observed would multiply into higher costs for manufactured goods, electronics, clothing, and food. Many economies, still recovering from previous inflation-

ary episodes, would face renewed doubledigit inflation, forcing central banks to raise interest rates further and slowing growth.

3. Supply chain disintegration – The Red Sea rerouting and nearclosure of the Strait of Hormuz would fragment global supply chains. Automotive, semiconductor, and pharmaceutical industries – heavily reliant on justintime delivery – would face production stoppages. Extended lead times (from 30-40 days to 60-90 days) would force companies to hold larger inventories, tying up capital and reducing efficiency.

4. Recession risks in Europe and Asia – The EuropeAsia trade lane is the world's busiest. With 90% of normal flows through Hormuz halted, European manufacturers would struggle to receive components from China, South Korea, and Japan. Germany's exportdriven economy, already fragile, could slip into a deep recession. Similarly, Japan and South Korea, which import almost all their oil via the strait, would face energy shortages and trade deficits.

5. US economic fallout – While the US is less directly dependent on Hormuz for oil, higher global energy prices would still raise gasoline and heating costs for American consumers. The US is also a major exporter of agricultural and industrial goods; disruptions to global shipping would hurt American farmers and manufacturers. Additionally, the expected

July tariffs mentioned in the Anadolu report would compound these pressures, making imports from Asia even more expensive.

6. Financial market turmoil – Geopolitical shocks of this magnitude would trigger a flight to safety. Stock markets would fall sharply, while gold, the Swiss franc, and US Treasuries would rally. The dollar could strengthen further, causing emerging market currencies to collapse, especially in countries that rely on food and fuel imports (e.g., Egypt, Turkey, Pakistan, Bangladesh).

7. Food security risks – Iran, Iraq, and Persian Gulf states are major importers of wheat, rice, and vegetable oils. With shipping insurance premiums skyrocketing (or coverage disappearing) for vessels entering the Persian Gulf, food imports would become prohibitively expensive or simply unavailable. This could lead to hunger and social unrest across West Asia and parts of East Africa.

8. Longterm restructuring of trade – The crisis would accelerate efforts to find alternative trade routes, such as the International NorthSouth Transport Corridor (via Central Asia and the Caucasus) or Arctic shipping lanes. It would also boost investment in regional manufacturing hubs (e.g., Vietnam, India, Turkey) to bypass the strait. However, such shifts take years, meaning nearterm pain is inevitable.

In summary, the Anadolu News Agency's report on freight rate spikes is only the first symptom of a much larger economic storm. A US-Israel attack on Iran would not only raise shipping costs but also trigger energy shocks, global inflation, supply chain breakdowns, recessionary pressures, and financial instability. Policymakers worldwide should prepare contingency measures, including releasing strategic petroleum reserves, accelerating diversification of trade corridors, and pursuing diplomatic deescalation in West Asia.

Reconstruction of damaged refineries in South Pars accelerated

TEHRAN- The CEO of the South Pars Gas Complex, highlighting the role of coherent planning, targeted management, and roundtheclock efforts of the staff, announced the continued sustainable gas production in the refineries of this complex and said: "The process of reconstructing facilities and implementing strategic projects is proceeding with favorable speed and quality."

According to Shana news agency, Gholamabbas Hosseini, speaking at a meeting reviewing the strategic plans of this complex and referring to the successful performance of South Pars refineries under exceptional operational conditions, stated: "The continuation of sustainable gas production in this massive industrial complex is the result of meticulous planning, continuous coordination among various operational and technical departments, and the dedicated efforts of the expert and committed staff of the South Pars Gas Complex."

He added: "In recent months, all refineries of the complex, by focusing on maintaining production sustainability, enhancing equipment reliability, and implementing structured maintenance and operational plans, have been able to play their effective role in the country's sustainable energy supply in the best possible manner."

The CEO of the South Pars Gas Complex, referring to the actions taken in the field of reconstructing refinery facilities, said: "The process of rebuilding and upgrading damaged units began from the first days after the enemy's attack, relying on domestic capabilities, and today, with the efforts of gas industry specialists and staff, the implementation of these projects is progressing favorably and ahead of planned schedules."

Hosseini cited the localization of technical processes and maximum use of domestically manufactured equipment and goods as among the most important success factors for these projects, and clarified: "Utilizing domestic capacities and the technical knowledge of Iranian specialists, while increasing the speed of project implementation, has played a significant role in enhancing production sustainability and reducing dependence on foreign sources."

He further referred to the development plans of the South Pars Gas Complex and add-

ed: "The strategic projects of this complex, aimed at improving productivity, increasing facility reliability, and strengthening production sustainability, are being pursued with greater seriousness and speed, and a bright horizon has been drawn for the continued role of South Pars in the country's energy supply."

The CEO of the South Pars Gas Complex announced: "With the continuation of a program-oriented approach, use of local knowledge, and capable human capital, all available capacities will be employed to maintain and strengthen sustainable gas production, so that this complex, as the beating heart of the country's gas industry, continues to play its strategic role in meeting Iran's energy needs."

Hosseini emphasized the importance of energy consumption management and said: "Alongside the continuous efforts of gas industry staff to maintain production sustainability and energy supply, the cooperation of the people and adherence to consumption patterns can play an effective role in maintaining the balance of the country's energy network and continuing optimal service delivery to all sectors."

Debris removal at South Pars' damaged refineries reaches 60% progress

Also, the CEO of Pars Oil and Gas Company, referring to 60% progress in debris removal operations at two damaged gas refineries of South Pars during the 40day war, announced the readiness of part of these facilities to enter the reconstruction phase and emphasized: "What is being done today in South Pars is a rare example of mobilizing the country's specialized capacities to revive strategic gas industry infrastructure."

According to Shana news agency, quoting Pars Oil and Gas Company, Touraj Dehghani, at a joint meeting with the Director of Protection of the National Iranian Oil Company, referred to the actions taken regarding the reconstruction of facilities damaged by the third imposed war and stated: "Debris removal operations at two South Pars refineries have reached 60% progress; an achievement that, given the environmental conditions, operational risks, stringent safety requirements, and unknown hazards, seemed unimaginable at first glance."

Noting that the staff of Pars Oil and Gas Company in various operational, executive, and contracting sectors were deployed to the damaged areas immediately after the attacks, he added: "According to the latest reports, the complete clearing of three main damaged areas has been completed, and as of today, it is possible to begin reconstruction operations in these sections."

The CEO of Pars Oil and Gas Company, stating that debris removal operations are expected to be fully completed in less than a month, clarified: "The volume of damage and complexity of the work were such that under normal circumstances, such an operation would have required at least 6 to 7 months, but our hardworking colleagues have managed to achieve this level of progress in less than two months, which is a rare record in the country's oil industry and promises that in the reconstruction phase, with the same spirit and cohesion, the process of restoring damaged facilities can be followed at an appropriate speed."

Dehghani, referring to the effects of enemy attacks on the country's energy facilities, said: "Today, all facilities, capacities, and management approaches have been mobilized to compensate for the damages and restore production capacity as quickly as possible, and we hope that with the cooperation of all relevant stakeholders, we can bring the valuable lost gas production capacity back online."

Emphasizing the necessity of supporting managers and implementers of national projects, he added: "Achieving major goals under such conditions requires trust, collective belief, and support from all colleagues in related sectors, and today decisionmaking on national projects must be viewed as an important issue in the country."

In another part of his remarks, the CEO of Pars Oil and Gas Company expressed gratitude for the effective cooperation and support of the Protection Department of the National Iranian Oil Company and said: "In critical situations, some organizational pillars, including the Basij and Protection, do not merely have organizational duties, but also bear national and strategic responsibilities and are considered part of the country's national security supply chain."

Inside the structural collapse of Israel's global legitimacy

From page 1 ▶

The cracking of the Western firewall

The results indicate that the long-standing assumption that Western elite protection could indefinitely override popular discontent has run out of time.

The United States itself now sits at 60 percent unfavorable, a staggering historical reversal. In 2013, Israel enjoyed a positive 30 net favorability rating in America; today, it languishes at negative 23, a fifty-point swing in barely a generation.

This deep ideological fracture is concentrated, with 83 percent of American liberals holding an unfavorable view compared to 37 percent of conservatives.

Across the Atlantic, Europe's unconditional defense has collapsed, with every surveyed nation registering a clear majority opposition to Israel.

Disapproval has reached 78 percent in Spain and Sweden, 76 percent in the Netherlands, and 69 percent in the United Kingdom.

The most politically loaded metric belongs to Germany. Berlin's postwar political culture converted the defense of Israel into an institutional obligation, yet 73 percent of Germans now hold an unfavorable view, a sharp nine-point surge in negativity since 2025 alone. When public consensus shifts this drastically, official diplomatic immunity cracks.

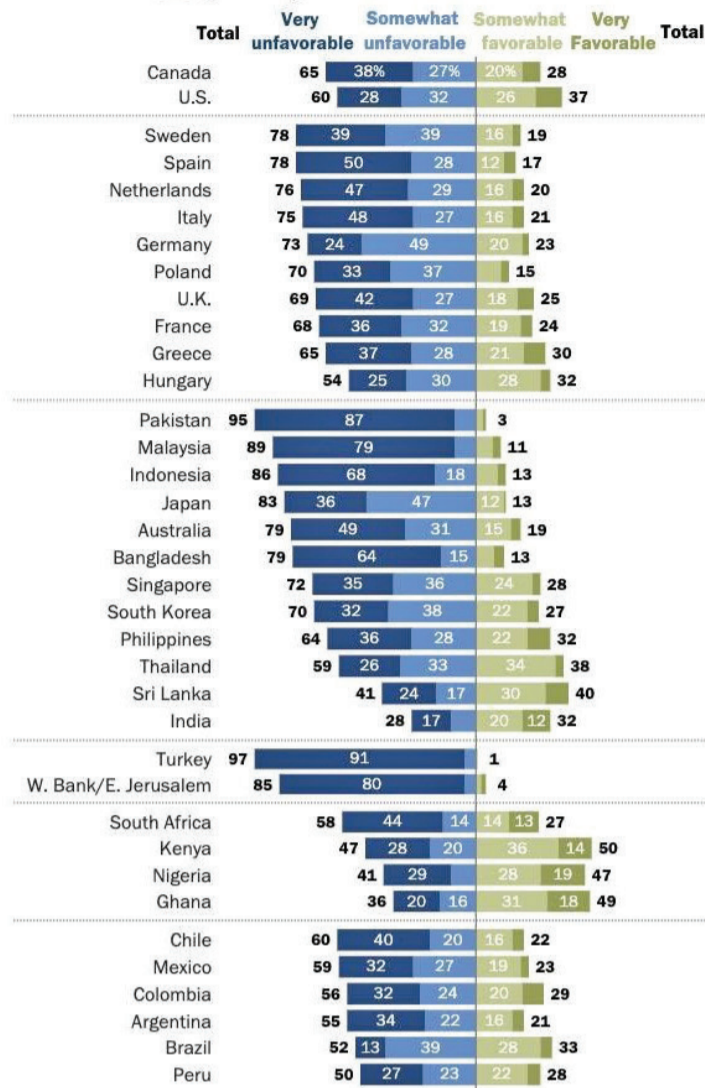
A cross-spectrum global consensus

The geographic breadth of the data completely subverts the narrative that this pushback is isolated to traditional ideological adversaries.

While disapproval is near-universal across the surveyed Muslim-majority nations, led by Turkey at 97 percent, Pakistan at 95 percent, and Indonesia at 86 percent, the backlash in nations with no specific religious axis against

Large majorities in most countries have negative views of Israel

% who have a ___ opinion of Israel



Israel is equally severe.

Japan now records a striking 83 percent unfavorable rating, while Australia reaches 79 percent. In South Korea, negativity spiked by 10 points in a single year to hit 70 percent. Furthermore, this rejection has migrated past traditional partisan boundaries.

In Spain, while 96 percent of the left disapproves, 66 percent of conservatives also hold an unfavorable view. When a right-wing European demographic rejects Israeli policy by a two-to-one margin, it proves that

the critique has solidified into a broad moral consensus.

Losing the future

The most serious long-term existential threat to Israeli propaganda is a widening, irreversible generational divide.

Among young adults aged 18 to 34 across wealthy democracies, alignment with Israel has vanished.

Unfavorable views among the youth have skyrocketed to 87 percent in Australia, 78 percent in the United Kingdom, and 74 percent in the United States.

Even in Hungary, the data reveals a massive 27-point generational gap, with 72 percent of young adults viewing Israel negatively compared to 45 percent of those aged 50 and older. Support for Zionism has entirely dried up among the next generation.

This generational rot tracks perfectly with the total global repudiation of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Majorities in nearly every surveyed country express zero confidence in his ability to handle world affairs. Only Kenya and the Philippines maintain majority confidence in his leadership.

Meanwhile, Italy's share expressing total lack of confidence jumped from 45 percent to 62 percent in a year, and South Korea witnessed a 12-point drop in confidence.

Netanyahu now stands completely isolated, an ICC-indicted leader reviled by 83 percent of Germans and 59 percent of Americans alike.

The unmasking of impunity

Public sentiment is driven by undeniable material realities on the ground.

The international public is looking directly at a Palestinian death toll in Gaza that has exceeded 72,000, alongside ongoing settlement expansions and a systematic campaign of displacement.

The 2026 war on Iran has been overwhelmingly rejected by the global public, who have seen it as an unprovoked escalation against a sovereign nation.

By relying strictly on military violence and elite inertia while operating under active international legal scrutiny, Israel has transformed itself into a structural liability for its allies and a pariah in the eyes of the world.

The verdict has settled into the global conscience, and no military campaign can silence it.

The rise of the Unified China: A new world order emerging from the ashes of hegemony

From page 1 ▶ a desperate attempt to renegotiate terms of engagement. Instead, it served as the funeral pyre for American coercive diplomacy. The mission failed not because of a lack of American bravado, but because China has fundamentally changed the rules of the game. While the American delegation arrived with a list of demands regarding Taiwan and trade balances, they were met with a polite but

firm reality check: China is no longer dependent on the Western markets for its ascension, nor is it susceptible to Western intimidation.

The failure of this summit underscores a seismic shift in Chinese priorities. Beijing is no longer looking West for validation; it is looking South, East, and to the developing world. By prioritizing the Global South and establishing parallel financial and monetary systems—an-

chored in the digital yuan and independent of the SWIFT system—China has effectively inoculated itself against the sanctions-based warfare that Washington has wielded like a blunt instrument for decades. The BRICS expansion and the new financial corridors mean that the U.S. dollar's stranglehold on the global economy is loosening by the day.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran: A civilization that refuses to bow

From page 1 ▶ The Persian Empire fell to Alexander the Great. Centuries later, Mongol armies swept across the region, leaving destruction that changed the course of Iranian history. Cities were burned, libraries vanished, and countless lives were lost. Looking back, it would have been reasonable to assume that such blows might permanently break a civilization.

They did not.

Iran's history is marked by a remarkable ability to absorb shocks and reinvent itself. Dynasties rose and fell. Foreign powers arrived with armies, trade agreements, and political ambitions. Borders shifted. Governments changed. Yet something deeper endured.

That resilience was tested again in the modern era. The 1953 overthrow of Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh became a defining event in Iran's political consciousness and strengthened suspicions of foreign interference that continue to influence public debate today.

The 1979 Revolution then transformed the country's political order and altered its relationship with much of the world. Almost immedi-

ately afterward came the Iran-Iraq War, a conflict that lasted eight years and left scars that are still visible. Hundreds of thousands were killed or wounded. Families lost fathers, sons, and brothers. Entire communities carried the weight of that sacrifice.

For many nations, such experiences become turning points from which recovery is slow and uncertain.

Iran recovered.

That does not mean the country emerged without problems. Modern Iran faces harsh economic sanctions and Western-led pressure in various forms. But history suggests that reducing Iran to today's disputes misses the larger picture.

The country has spent much of its existence confronting challenges larger and stronger than itself. Some arrived on horseback, some arrived in military uniforms, and others arrived through international politics. Each era brought predictions of decline. Yet Iran remained.

Perhaps that is what makes its history worth studying.

Civilizations are often remembered for the power they once pos-

sessed. Iran's story is equally about endurance. It is about a society that continued after empires collapsed, after wars ended, and after generations were forced to rebuild from loss.

The lesson is not that Iran was never defeated. History clearly shows otherwise.

The lesson is that defeat was never the end of the story.

Again and again, Iranians buried their dead, rebuilt their cities, preserved their culture, and moved forward. That persistence helps explain why a civilization born thousands of years ago remains a living presence in the modern world.

Today, Iran is standing and fighting. Salute to its people who are not afraid of any kind of threat in order to protect their civilization. Trump is psychologically unstable and is himself worried about how he can protect himself from Iranians now. If Trump had studied history, he would have thought twice before approaching a civilization whose crown jewel is education. But history repeats itself. Today Iran still stands strong, neither bowed nor exhausted.

Many powerful empires survive only in museums and history books. Iran is still here.

Empires that once seemed unstoppable have vanished into history. Their monuments remain, but their civilizations are gone. Iran remains alive, still arguing, adapting, creating, and shaping its future. For thousands of years, Iranians have shown that survival is not simply about strength, but about endurance, memory, and the determination to stand again after every fall.

Across millennia, one truth keeps rising from its past: civilizations do not endure by avoiding destruction. They endure by refusing to be defined by it. Iran is one of those rare civilizations that bends under pressure yet never breaks into silence. A civilization forged by fire, tested by invasion, and still refusing to bow.

That is why Iran's story continues. Not because it was never defeated, but because, despite everything it has endured.

The ultimate lesson of Iran is this: a civilization willing to sacrifice everything for its independence may bend under pressure, but it will never be erased, and it will never bow.

Lebanese government's reliance on US leaves it exposed

From page 1 ▶ Such an argument by the Lebanese government used to justify direct negotiations with the Zionist regime. Yet the painful truth demonstrated repeatedly by experience is the exact opposite: those who shelter under America soon discover, through blood and suffering, how fragile the security promised by a biased and unpredictable American patron really is.



While Lebanon places its faith in "American guarantees" to protect Lebanese citizens from U.S.-backed Israeli aggression, the Israeli war minister, Yisrael Katz, wasted no time after the ceasefire announcement in boasting that "the Lebanese will not return to the south, and we will continue destroying infrastructure."

He further declared that the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) would remain in southern Lebanon up to the so-called Yellow Line, including the Sheqif area, while continuing indiscriminate attacks and maintaining freedom of action alongside the illegal occupation with American backing. Hebrew media reported on Friday that Netanyahu echoed the same remarks.

Critics argue that after such statements, there can be no excuses. The truth will out. You can't sweep it under the rug forever. The United States is neither a friend of Lebanon nor of the Arab world as a whole, nor a faithful guardian of them or their lives and souls.

Rather, it is a bullying power that operates according to its own interests and those of its closest ally, the Zionist occupation regime. It's claimed that support for Lebanon quickly becomes a tool of pressure and coercion, and it abandons its partners when convenient. Has Lebanon's government forgotten, or chosen to ignore, the countless times Washington overlooked IOF violations and atrocities committed against Arabs and their interests?

Does the IOF differentiate between Hezbollah, children, women, the elderly or even Lebanese Army personnel (two officers and a soldier) were killed on Saturday? The Lebanese government doesn't need to look too far. Its neighbor, Syria, is a case example.

The U.S. calls Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharee's government a friendly partner, offers sanctions relief, a White House handshake, and a photo op with Trump. Yet when Israel seizes more Syrian land and launches attacks, Washington says nothing and does nothing. America grants the new rulers in Damascus diplomatic legitimacy but refuses to restrain Israel, which is actively expanding its illegal occupation of Syria.

The more Damascus reaches out to Washington, the more emboldened Israel becomes. Each gesture of Syrian friendship toward the U.S. has convinced Israel that it has a free hand to grab land while America looks the other way. There is a deafening absence of U.S. action, pressure, or even public rebuke. The U.S. rewards Syria with smiles while allowing Israel to take its soil.

America is the same nation that neglected its closest Arab allies in the Persian Gulf when they most needed it. The same U.S. formula

applies to all regional nations. It's Israel first, and when the time comes, they will be abandoned too.

The illusion of protection through American power and military bases quickly becomes a heavy burden on a nation rather than a source of support.

How can America protect Lebanon when it unconditionally embraces the narrative of its favored ally, Israel, and only takes care of Israeli ambitions?

It pushes the country toward internal conflict and civil strife that could devastate everything in its path, all in the name of safeguarding a genocidal regime.

The bitter reality that the Lebanese government refuses to acknowledge today is that dependence on America, as in previous Arab experiences, will only leave Lebanon weaker and more vulnerable.

Popular wisdom is not mistaken: Whoever shelters under America is left exposed. No external cover, however powerful it may appear, can substitute national strength and genuine sovereignty. Real sovereignty must begin from within, investing in the nation's sources of strength, including resistance efforts, to build a defensive strategy capable of enduring and securing Lebanon's rights and dignity through diplomatic and political means.

Lebanon must learn this lesson before it is too late. Its security does not lie in repeatedly tested American guarantees that have already cost immense Arab bloodshed in Gaza, Syria, the West Bank, and elsewhere. Security lies in Lebanon's own ability to manage its interests, protect its people, and preserve national unity.

These are the only reliable guarantees of security, dignity, and stability, not shifting promises from a powerful imperial force that exploits Arabs to serve its own interests and those of its protégé, Israel.

Lebanon's rulers seek to shelter beneath the American umbrella even though they know the White House will not truly protect them. Instead, it manipulates their fears, their illusions, and their inherited sense of weakness and dependency, luring them into complacency beneath the security umbrella America promises.

More importantly, it seeks to impose a systematic normalization with the Zionists and transform them into accepted allies to secure the illegal borders and safety of the Israeli regime.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)



The grieving father and brother of seven-month-old Sam Abu Haykal tenderly carry the small, flag-shrouded body of the slain infant during his funeral procession in Al-Khalil (Hebron) in occupied West Bank on June 6, 2026. The Palestinian baby was killed, and both of his parents were wounded the previous day when Israeli forces opened fire on their family car.

The beautiful game, the ugly politics: U.S. visa row hits World Cup credibility

From Page 1 ▶ What makes the situation particularly troubling is that FIFA officials had previously assured Iranian authorities that visa-related obstacles would not prevent the country's full participation in the competition.

Those assurances now appear increasingly difficult to reconcile with reality.

The issue is not merely bureaucratic. Modern international football teams rely on a complex network of support personnel, including administrators, analysts, medical staff, logistics coordinators, and technical assistants. Their presence is often essential to a team's preparation and performance. Denying access to key members of a delegation inevitably creates competitive disadvantages and unnecessary uncertainty.

The consequences have already been felt. Concerns over the visa process forced Iran to abandon its original training plans in Arizona and relocate its World Cup preparation camp to Tijuana, Mexico.

A major logistical adjustment of this scale, so close to the tournament, is hardly the type of disruption that any qualified nation should be expected to endure before the world's biggest sporting event.

Iran's Football Federation has condemned the decision as a violation of international sporting principles and announced that it will pursue the matter through FIFA.

The federation argues that the host nation has created an unequal and discriminatory environment that directly contradicts the spirit of global competition.

The irony is impossible to ignore. Every major sporting event is accompanied by speeches about inclusion, fairness, and the separation of politics from sport.

Yet when political tensions arise, those ideals often disappear. Football is repeatedly told to stay above politics, but politics continues to find its way onto the pitch through travel restrictions, diplomatic barriers, and selective treatment of athletes and officials.

To be clear, this issue extends beyond Iran. It concerns the credibility of the World Cup itself.

If a host country can limit or delay access for members of a qualified national delegation, then the principle of equal participation becomes conditional rather than universal. That is a dangerous precedent for a tournament that claims to represent the entire football world.

Although reports indicate that visas for players and some essential personnel have now been approved, the broader controversy remains unresolved.

The fact that FIFA has been forced into last-minute negotiations to secure the participation of members of a World Cup delegation should concern anyone who believes sport must remain independent from political disputes.

The 2026 World Cup was supposed to be a celebration of football. Instead, before a ball has even been kicked, it has already become another reminder that the promise of keeping politics out of sport is too often honored in rhetoric and ignored in practice.

When access to the world's biggest football tournament becomes subject to political calculations, the integrity of the competition itself is placed under unnecessary scrutiny.

Iran lose to Indonesia at 2026 AVC Women's Volleyball Cup

TEHRAN – Iran lost to Indonesia 3-1 (25-15, 21-25, 25-21, 25-22) at the 2026 AVC Women's Volleyball Cup on Saturday.

The 2026 AVC Women's Nations Cup, featuring the 12 best Asian women's national teams, outside those competing in the Volleyball Nations League, started on Saturday at the Candon City Arena, an 8,000-seater in the northern Filipino city of Candon, and will finish on June 14.

Formerly known as the AVC Women's Challenge Cup, the annual international tournament was rebranded last year and will now hold its second edition as the AVC Women's Nations Cup.

In addition to vying for a prestigious continental trophy, the participating teams will aim at gaining valuable FIVB Volleyball World Ranking points and potentially at securing entry to the VNL and other top-tier competitions.

The 12 teams in the 2026 AVC Women's Nations Cup are divided into two single round-robin pools of six.

Hosts Philippines, who made the podiums at the previous two editions – with bronze in 2024 and silver in 2025 – lead the lineup in Pool A.

The pool also features the bronze medalists of the 2023 and 2025 editions Chinese Taipei, Australia, who reached the semifinals in 2024, Uzbekistan, who finished fourth in 2022, as well as competition rookies Korea and Kyrgyzstan.

Defending three-time back-to-back champions Vietnam headline Pool B as well as Iran, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Indonesia and Hong Kong.

Team Melli will play Kazakhstan on Monday.

Iran wheelchair basketball head to Thailand for 2026 IWBF Repechage

TEHRAN – The Iran men's national wheelchair basketball team have traveled to Suphanburi, Thailand, to compete in the 2026 IWBF Men's Repechage.

Led by head coach Behrouz Soltani, Iran have been drawn into Group B alongside Senegal, Brazil, and Poland.

The World Championship Repechage Tournament will be held from June 8 to June 12 in Thailand.

The first-placed team in Group B will automatically qualify for Ottawa 2026 IWBF World Championships. The remaining qualification games on 11 June will determine the other teams advancing from the tournament.

Team Melli will start the campaign on Monday with a match against Senegal and face Brazil and Poland in following days.

The Iranian team first held a training camp in Turkey, where they play Galatasaray and Fenerbahce teams.

Iran's football team granted visas to enter U.S.

TEHRAN – Iran's football team have been granted visas to enter the U.S. ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

The approval comes just 10 days before the team's opening fixture against New Zealand, which will be held in Los Angeles on 15 June.

"The visas necessary for Iran to compete in the World Cup, including for athletes and necessary support staff, have been issued," an official said.

The Iranian football federation is yet to publicly comment on the visa approvals.

The FIFA World Cup 2026 is set to kick off on 11 June, and will be hosted by the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

In late May, Iran moved its training base to Mexico from Tucson, Arizona, which Mehdi Taj, president of Iran's soccer federation, said was due to visa problems.

The Iranian media have reported that some members of the Iran team's technical and administrative staff had not received a visa to enter the U.S.

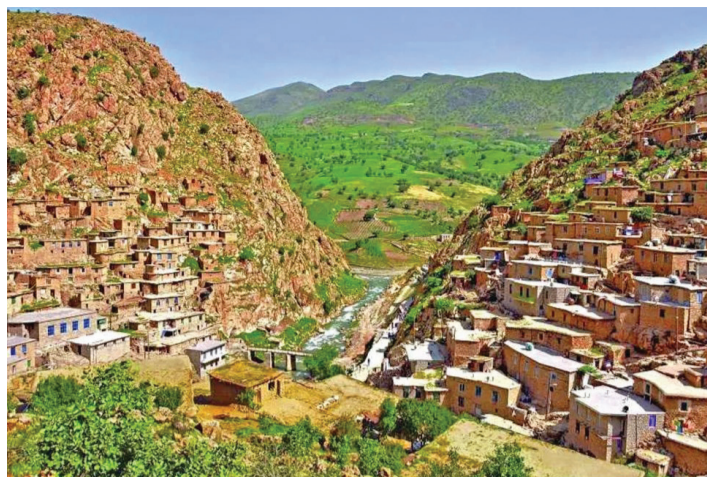
Joint initiative planned to revive rural economy through tourism, digital connectivity

TEHRAN – Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts said on Saturday that his ministry and the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology are preparing a joint program aimed at creating jobs, expanding tourism and encouraging reverse migration to rural areas.

Speaking at a joint meeting with Communications Minister Sattar Hashemi and senior officials from both ministries in Tehran, Cultural Heritage Minister Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri said cooperation between the two ministries would support balanced national development by linking local economies, tourism, handicrafts and communication technologies.

Salehi-Amiri said access to reliable Internet services had become an essential part of daily life and played a key role in economic development and business activity. He also welcomed recent measures by the communications ministry to reopen international Internet access, saying the move had contributed to public satisfaction and social capital.

Salehi-Amiri added his ministry had begun efforts to reactivate tourism projects and infrastructure that had faced interruptions during the recent war period. He added



that discussions with 50 major investors had been launched to revive tourism-related projects and stimulate investment in the sector.

He described rural areas as one of Iran's main strategic assets for sustainable development, citing their role in preserving cultural identity, supporting national production and maintaining traditional ways of life.

The minister said demographic trends over recent decades had shown a decline in the share of the rural population alongside rising urbanization, highlighting the need for new policies to strengthen the economic and social appeal of villages.

As part of the ministry's rural

development strategy, Salehi-Amiri announced two initiatives: "One Village, One Eco-Lodge" and "One Village, One Family Handicraft Workshop."

According to the minister, the programs are designed to create sustainable employment, increase household incomes, support local production and promote Iranian culture and lifestyles through tourism and handicrafts.

He said government financial support for these sectors had been expanded, with higher loan ceilings intended to help establish new businesses and develop tourism and handicraft activities in rural communities.

Salehi-Amiri also pointed to

growing interest in rural tourism, saying approximately 4.7 million people visited villages across Iran during the Nowruz holidays this year, according to data from the ministry's tourism deputy.

He said the figures reflected increasing demand for rural experiences, nature tourism and stays in eco-lodges, adding that many travelers were seeking cultural experiences and local lifestyles.

The minister identified digital connectivity as a key requirement for the success of rural development programs.

"Employment and communication are the two wings of rural development," Salehi-Amiri said. "If eco-lodges are to prosper and handicrafts are to reach national and international markets, villages must have access to quality communication infrastructure."

He said tourists increasingly rely on online reservation services before traveling, while handicraft producers need high-speed Internet to access digital sales platforms and electronic commerce opportunities.

Salehi-Amiri said cooperation between the two ministries could serve as a model for strengthening employment, increasing rural household incomes and supporting reverse migration.

Pamnar's landscape highlights potential for sustainable tourism and scientific research

TEHRAN – The mountainous region of Pamnar in Iran's Khuzestan province is gaining attention for its geological significance, ecological diversity and potential for sustainable tourism development, according to geologist and tour guide Ali Habibnejad.

Pamnar lies along the southern foothills of the Zagros mountain range and adjacent to the Dez dam reservoir. The area is regarded as one of the most valuable natural landscapes in southwest Iran, where geological, climatic and human factors have combined over time to shape a distinctive environment.

According to Habibnejad, Pamnar's location at the boundary between the Khuzestan plain and the Zagros highlands has created a landscape marked by rugged mountains, deep valleys, seasonal and permanent waterways and the expansive waters of the Dez dam lake.

The region occupies a transitional zone between the hot lowlands of Khuzestan and the cooler mountainous climate of the Zagros. This position has contributed to a wide variety of ecosystems and natural scenery, giving Pamnar environmental conditions that differ from many other parts of the province.

Geologically, the area forms part of the Zagros fold belt, a vast zone created by the collision of the Arabian and Eurasian tectonic plates over millions of years. The process produced the Zagros Mountains and a complex network of folds, faults and elevated terrain that continue to define the region's physical character.

The dominant rock formations consist of limestone, marl and dolomite sedimentary deposits

dating largely to the Mesozoic and Cenozoic eras. Long-term erosion by water and wind has carved a range of landforms, including cliffs, steep valleys, karst surfaces and exposed rock faces.

One of the area's most striking geological features is the Dez river valley, which has been cut through layers of Zagros rock over thousands of years. The construction of the Dez dam in the 1960s transformed the landscape by creating a large reservoir that flooded parts of the valley and formed numerous peninsulas, small islands and sheltered inlets.

Today, these landforms are among Pamnar's most recognizable natural attractions and contribute to the area's growing reputation as a destination for nature tourism.

Habibnejad said the region also possesses significant potential for geotourism and could eventually qualify as a natural geopark due to its geological diversity and educational value.

Despite being located within Khuzestan province, Pamnar experiences a relatively moderate climate. Its elevation, proximity to the reservoir and the influence of air masses from the Zagros Mountains help reduce summer temperatures and increase humidity compared with lower-lying areas of the province.

The area receives higher annual rainfall than many parts of northern Khuzestan because of Mediterranean weather systems that reach the region. These conditions have supported the growth of semi-forested vegetation, including oak, jujube, wild almond and wild pistachio species, as well as diverse rangeland plants.

The combination of climatic and biological di-

versity has made Pamnar an important ecological zone in northern Khuzestan.

The Dez river and the reservoir created by the dam remain central to the area's development. In addition to providing water for agriculture and generating hydroelectric power, the lake helps regulate local climate conditions and supports habitats for numerous plant and animal species.

The reservoir serves as a habitat for native fish, migratory birds and other wildlife, while also providing opportunities for recreational fishing, boating and water-based tourism activities.

Pamnar's local population is largely made up of Bakhtiari families whose livelihoods have traditionally depended on livestock breeding, small-scale farming, orchards and the use of water resources.

In recent years, nature-based tourism has emerged as an increasingly important source of income. Attractions such as the Dez dam lake, the historical Shadab fortress, hiking routes and local cultural traditions have drawn growing numbers of domestic visitors.

Experts say that future tourism growth will require careful planning and sustainable management to ensure that economic development does not come at the expense of the region's sensitive ecosystems.

Habibnejad described Pamnar as more than a tourist destination, calling it a natural laboratory for studying geological, climatic and environmental processes. He said protecting the area's natural heritage while promoting responsible development could provide a model for balanced growth in rural and mountainous regions across Iran.

How Persian carpets weave time into art

By Hanie Shahrabi

TEHRAN – Persian carpets are often introduced through familiar ideas: tradition, craftsmanship, heritage, and identity. While these remain essential, they do not fully explain why these objects continue to resonate, specifically with contemporary global audience increasingly attentive to timeless art.

What distinguishes handwoven Persian carpet is not simply the time required to produce it, but the way time becomes integral to its structure. Unlike industrial production, each knot registers a moment of attention. These carpets are where time is captured. This condition is not unique to Iran. Textile traditions across the world, from Ottoman court carpets to Chinese silk weaving and European tapestry, also embody extended artists. Yet Persian carpets offer a particularly legible range of ways in which time can be visually organized.

Persian carpets do not exist

outside time; it is not about singular notion of timelessness, but a set of distinct temporal experiences: spiral, continuous, and rhythmic. rather, they engage with it through multiple visual strategies.

Different carpets operate through a different mindset. Consider the 16th century Ardabil Carpet. Its central medallion draws the eye inward, creating a moment of visual pause. The composition feels concentrated and composed, not unlike large-scale European tapestries produced in workshops such as "Gobelins" where attention is similarly directed and sustained. Time, in this instance, appears static. In Arabesque designs, there is no fixed beginning or end. Lines extend, return, and continue, allowing the eyes to move over without destination, just like cloud or wave patterns in East Asia; Surfaces resist linear reading.

Different carpets narrate different stories. "Hunting 16th century's carpet" introduces



eternal movements. Riders and animals appear in a scene, with repetitive, continuous and unresolved activity. A similar cyclical quality can be observed in certain Central Asian textiles, where figurative elements circulate without a fixed endpoint. Re-known "Polonaise carpets", which also in fact belongs to Safavid dynasty, woven with silk and metallic threads, interact with light in ways that shift throughout the day. Another material, another dimension. Related effects can be found in Italian Renaissance textiles. On the

other hand, "Geometric carpets" and "Tribal carpets" present more measured rhythms. Repeated motifs suggest order, still subtle variations prevent complete uniformity. Time here is structured, though never rigid.

In a cultural moment shaped by speed, optimization, and repetition, Persian carpets do not simply represent the past. They propose an alternative relationship to time. Timelessness, in this sense, is not defined by permanence, but by the ways in which time is held and experienced.

UNESCO designates Dalankuh–Qamishlou as Iran’s 14th biosphere reserve

TEHRAN – On World Environment Day (June 5), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated Dalankuh – Qamishlou as Iran’s 14th biosphere reserve.

Qamishlou National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary is located northwest of Isfahan, central Iran.

The national park covers some 29,829 hectares, and the wildlife sanctuary covers around 84,107 hectares.

Aras Global Geopark, Arasbaran Biosphere Reserve, Arjan Biosphere Reserve, Dalankuh–Qamishlou Biosphere Reserve, Dena Biosphere Reserve, Geno Biosphere Reserve, Golestan Biosphere Reserve, Hamoun Biosphere Reserve, Hara Biosphere Reserve, Kavir Biosphere Reserve, Kopet Dag Biosphere Reserve, Lake Urmeh Biosphere Reserve, Miankaleh Biosphere Reserve, Qeshm Island Global Geopark, Tabas Global Geopark, Tang-e-Sayad & Sabzkuh Biosphere Reserve, and Touran Biosphere Reserve are currently on the UNESCO World Heritage List of biospheres and geoparks.

New biosphere reserves have been designated in Albania, Algeria, Aruba, Azerbaijan, Cameroon, Canada, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mongolia, Montenegro, Paraguay, the Philippines, Portugal, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam. Territorial extensions were also approved for five existing biosphere reserves in China, Italy, and Spain.

This year, for the first time, a whole city has been designated as a biosphere reserve: Québec City. Three countries welcome their first biosphere reserves: Montenegro, Timor-Leste, and Aruba, which becomes the second country to have its entire territory designated as such.

About the biosphere reserves

UNESCO biosphere reserves are territories of outstanding ecological value where people and nature grow harmoniously alongside each other, conserving biological and cultural diversity, advancing sustainable development, and connecting communi-



ties across a global network.

Since 1971, biosphere reserves have played a central role in UNESCO’s environmental mission. Alongside natural World Heritage sites and Global Geoparks, they contribute to protecting more than 13 million km² of terrestrial and marine ecosystems under UNESCO’s umbrella, advancing the global Kunming-Montreal target of conserving 30% of land and sea by 2030.

Iran’s precious biodiversity

Iran ranks among the top 20 countries in the world for biodiversity and is home to a variety of plant and animal species. However, in recent years, certain actions have destroyed habitats and pushed many species to the brink of extinction.

Biosphere reserves are territories of outstanding ecological value where people and nature grow harmoniously alongside each other.

So far, more than two million plant and animal species have been identified in the world, of which 43,000 exist in Iran. In fact, there are 11 types of ecosystems in the world, including aquatic, terrestrial, natural, and artificial ecosystems. Iran has 9 of these 11 ecosystems. Also, out

of the 42 types of wetlands in the world, 41 types have been identified in Iran.

According to the Department of Environment, some 2,000 animal species, including mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and inland fish, and about 1,200 fish species have been identified in the country’s ecosystems. Of these species, 210 mammal species, 640 bird species, 300 reptile species, 23 amphibian species, and 350 inland fish species can be mentioned.

According to statistics, Iran can be considered the cradle of genetic diversity in the world. Even in international classifications, it is considered among the countries with high biodiversity. However, Iran’s biodiversity, like the rest of the world, faces many challenges such as habitat destruction, overhunting, drought, and climate change.

Twinning between biosphere reserves

The head of the Department of Environment (DOE), Shina Ansari, has voiced the country’s readiness to foster cooperation with other countries, in line with Hangzhou Action Plan, to promote twinning between biosphere reserve sites.

“We are ready to develop a twinning mechanism between biosphere reserves in Iran and other countries worldwide to further promote collaboration on research projects, sharing expertise and knowledge, as well as boosting scientific visits,” IRNA quoted Ansari as saying.

The official made the remarks while addressing the fifth World Congress of Biosphere Reserves (WCBR), being held from September 22 to 26 in Hangzhou, China.

“We highlight ecosystem-based and community-centered approaches in managing biosphere reserves so that these areas can expand their impacts beyond their borders and inspire surrounding areas,” she added.

Unfortunately, “biosphere reserves in Iran are adversely affected by heat waves, water scarcity, and climate change. We need solidarity, experience exchange, and support from the World Networks of Biosphere Reserves to strengthen their resilience.

We believe that the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) member states have the needed capacity to counter unilateralism and expand multilateralism to strengthen World Networks of Biosphere Reserves,” Ansari underlined.

Preserving the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, our common home, is a shared responsibility. These areas are not only sanctuaries for nature, but also symbols of the peaceful coexistence of humans and nature, and a bridge between modern science and traditional knowledge. They should become a center of hope and a sustainable future for our children, she said.

The official also elaborated on biosphere reserves in the country, saying, “Iran, with 13 biosphere reserves, including three wetland sites, two marine and coastal sites, two deserts and arid sites, and six mountainous areas, has always been among pioneering member states in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Biosphere reserves cover less than four percent of our national territory, which is not enough, so we are committed to expanding the network by the establishment of four more biosphere reserves.”

Nanotech progress in Iran beyond just a scientific achievement

From page 1 ▶ Nanotechnology in the country is a typical example of a successful development of a tech ecosystem. From the very beginning, a long-term roadmap was developed to strengthen all aspects of the technology development chain, from education and research to commercialization and market development.

Over the past years, the role of Nano headquarters has not been limited to macro-policy-making, but has included fostering coordination among universities, research institutes, industries, knowledge-based companies, and supporting institutions.

Establishing a strategic technological laboratory network, developing standards for the evaluation of Nano products, supporting start-up companies, and designing industrial programs are among the factors that help transfer nanotechnology from laboratories to the country’s industries.

Products with nano-scale certificates rise despite war

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

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

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

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

Out of 230 products, Industrial supplies had the largest share with 72 products. Energy, oil, and

related industries accounted for 41, Chemicals for 36, and Pharmaceutical and Health for 26 products.

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

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

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

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

The total sale of these products amounted to 973 trillion rials (almost 556 million dollars) in the Iranian year 1403, indicating a 57 percent increase compared to a year earlier, and 72 percent in comparison to 200 trillion rials (114 million dollars) in the past four years. This growth is about 31 percent higher than the country’s average annual inflation rate, IRNA quoted Emad Ahmadvand, the secretary of the headquarters for the Iran Nanotechnology Innovation Council, as saying.

The official made the remarks in a meeting with reporters on the sidelines of the 16th Iran Nanotechnology Exhibition held in Tehran from November 2 to 5, 2025.

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

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

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

National Environment Week underway

TEHRAN – The Department of Environment (DOE) is marking the National Environment Week from June 6 to 12 under the theme ‘preserving environment, preserving national security’.

The theme highlights that protecting the environment is not a choice anymore, but a strategic necessity to ensure sustainable development, improve life quality, and protect national interests, doe.ir quoted Shina Ansari, the head of the Department of Environment (DOE), as saying.

Today, more than ever, close collaborations are needed among the government, the private sector, civil society organizations, universities, the media, and the public to conserve natural resources, reduce pollution, sustainably manage water resources, combat climate change, and preserve biodiversity.

The official went on to say that the fulfillment of these goals would be impossible without public participation and social responsibility.

The National Environment Week aims to enhance environmental awareness, promote public participation, improve environmental literacy, mitigate pollution, and advance sustainability.

Each day of the week focuses on a specific theme as follows.

Saturday, June 6, ‘Climate warning; Awareness, Resilience’; Raising awareness and coping with climate change consequences, and extreme weather phenomena.

Sunday, June 7, ‘Clean air; officials’ commitments, citizens’ responsibility’; Reducing air pollution through modernizing the transportation fleet and monitoring industrial pollutants.

Monday, June 8, ‘Climate, water and sustainable security’; Sustainable water resources management, land subsidence control, and getting through drought.

Tuesday, June 9, ‘From wetlands to seas; national assets, intergenerational heritage’; Restoring wetlands, preserving biodiversity and aquatic ecosystems.

Wednesday, June 10, ‘It’s not waste, but a valuable asset’; Circular economy in practice, national movement to reduce plastic pollution, expand recycling, and establish a circular economy.

Thursday, June 11, ‘Clean energy, green industry, sustainable production’; Expanding renewable en-

ergies, improving energy efficiency, and an environmentally friendly industry.

Friday, June 12, ‘Environmental culture, national participation, healthy environment’; Institutionalizing environmental literacy in families, public education for a sustainable future.

World Environment Day, observed on June 5, is one of the biggest international days for environmental advocacy. Led by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and marked annually since 1973, the event has grown to be the largest global platform for environmental outreach, with millions of people from across the world engaging to protect the planet.

With global temperatures at near-record levels and El Niño set to return, governments, businesses, communities, and individuals across the world marked World Environment Day, sounding the alarm on the need to urgently address climate change. This year, Azerbaijan hosted the official commemoration of World Environment Day.

Extreme heat is one of the deadliest and fastest-growing climate threats to lives, livelihoods, and economies. With overshoot of the Paris Agreement goal of 1.5°C now almost inevitable and impacts escalating, the world must act #NowForClimate, cutting emissions and adapting to rising risks.

“This World Environment Day, warning signals are everywhere. The past eleven years have been the eleven hottest on record. The world is heading for a temporary overshoot above 1.5 degrees,” UN Secretary-General António Guterres said in his message for World Environment Day 2026. “Our task is to make that overshoot as small, as short, and as safe as possible – and rapidly bring temperatures back down.”

“That means slashing emissions. Accelerating a just transition away from fossil fuels and towards renewables – the only sustainable path to lower costs and to real energy security. Cutting methane – one of the fastest, cheapest ways to limit near-term warming. Protecting forests, land, and seas. Helping communities adapt to the devastating impacts already here. And it means fulfilling climate finance promises to developing countries – to save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen economies,” he added. “This is the moment to act – for our environment and for our future.”

Tehran moves up in Global Startup Ecosystem Index

TEHRAN – In a recent global ranking by StartupBlink 2026, Tehran’s position has advanced by 20 spots, ranking 348 among the world’s most innovative cities.

Tehran is home to 96 startups, making up 81 percent of all startups in the country. Tehran has approximately 1 startup per 100,000 people. In 2025, the ecosystem recorded an annual growth rate of over 36 percent. The city is currently ranked as the 1st strongest startup ecosystem in Iran, having remained stable since 2025. At the regional level, Tehran ranks 11th in West Asia, having moved up 2 spots since 2025.

According to Iran Innovation Zone, the achievement is the result of strengthening innovation infrastructure and developing interactions among different sectors operating in the knowledge-based economy, Mehr news agency reported.

The report by StartupBlink has highlighted the role of Pardis Technology Park, the country’s largest technology and innovation hub, as one of the driving forces of Iran’s knowledge-based economy. The park hosts hundreds of knowledge-based and technology companies, creating business development infrastructure and providing a platform for enhancing cooperation among startups, investors, large industries, and institutions.

Moreover, hosting the International Innovation and Technology Exhibition (INOTEX) every year, Pardis Technology Park plays a key role in networking and connecting experts in the innovation ecosystem. According to the report, thanks to the capacities of Pardis Technology Parks, Iran’s startup ecosystem ranks 95 globally.

The Innovation and Prosperity Fund and MCI (Hamrah Aval – Iran’s first mobile operator) Ventures are the two other key agents that have developed Iran’s innovation ecosystem by facilitating the growth of technology

and knowledge-based companies.

Iran ranks 58th globally in ‘Corporate Engagement’, an indicator that reflects the effective interactions between large industries and innovative and technological companies.

Fintech, the leading industry in Iran, ranks 72nd globally, 5th in the Middle East, indicating the country’s high capacity in the development of financial technologies. Iran Fintech Industry has 23 startups, representing 19 percent of all startups in Iran.

In the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2026, Iran’s startup ecosystem is ranked 103 worldwide, holding steady compared to the previous year. The Iranian startup ecosystem ranks 10th in West Asia, having remained stable since 2025. It ranks right after Oman and is followed by Iraq.

The country has 118 startups, representing one percent of all startups in the Middle East. This equals approximately one startup per 100,000 people. The ecosystem grew by +54.4 percent over the past year.

Startup ecosystem flourishing despite sanctions

Despite unilateral sanctions, Iran’s startup ecosystem has successfully thrived since the 2010s, with the country being home to more than 6,000 startups across diverse sectors, ranging from financial services to agricultural technology.

In the shadow of sanctions and economic headwinds, Iran is building one of West Asia’s most structured national innovation ecosystems, banking on a science- and technology-led economy to drive long-term resilience and self-reliance, Press TV reported.

At the heart of this ecosystem are Iran’s knowledge-based companies aimed at reducing the country’s reliance on oil and imported technology. With over 4,500 officially registered, these entities function as strategic policy tools.



They aim to close the persistent divide between Iran’s impressive academic output—ranked among the world’s top 15 in scientific publications—and real-world commercial innovation.

These companies focus on critical and strategic technologies, from pharmaceuticals and nanotechnology to aerospace and information and communication technology (ICT), often developing indigenous alternatives to foreign tech.

Iran’s Vice-Presidency for Science and Technology has led this shift by providing financial, legal, and research support to build a local tech economy. Over the past decade, it has introduced policies like tax breaks, venture capital, IP protection, and export support to help entrepreneurs grow.

The country hosts more than 45 Science and Technology Parks, 600 Innovation and Growth Centers, and numerous Innovation Factories—dynamic hubs where startups, investors, accelerators, and R&D labs come together to fuel innovation and growth.

The Pardis Technology Park, east of Tehran, is the crown jewel, billing itself as the ‘Silicon Valley of the Islamic World.’ These parks offer infrastructure, legal support, and preferential taxation for high-tech firms, often co-located with universities.



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JUNE 7, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Time wears out bodies, renews hopes, brings death nearer and takes away aspirations. Whoever gets anything from the world lives in anxiety for holding it and whoever loses anything passes his days grieving over the loss.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:03 Evening: 19:39 Dawn: 3:03 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:48 (tomorrow)

“Rusalka” on stage at Nofel Loshato Theater

TEHRAN – Nofel Loshato Theater in Tehran is hosting “Rusalka,” an opera in four acts, six tableaux, by Alexander Dargomyzhsky, composed during 1848-1855, adapted from Aleksandr Pushkin’s incomplete dramatic poem of the same name.

Hamed Chabok has directed the 60-minute play, which has Ghorban Najafi, Parmis Hubakhsh, Mohammad Mehdi Mansouri Mehr, Reyhaneh Hatami, Yasaman Khansari, Mobina Keshavarz, Romina Hafezi, Mohammad Matin Bigdelou, and Roshia Sedighian, IRNA reported.

The action takes place by the Dnieper River. The plot tells of a maiden who, after being jilted by a prince, drowns herself (hence the designation

“rusalka,” or “drowned maiden”).

In Slavic folklore, the rusalka is a female entity, often malicious toward mankind and frequently associated with water. It has counterparts in other parts of Europe, such as the French Melusine and the Germanic Nixie. Folklorists have proposed a variety of origins for the entity, including that they may originally stem from Slavic paganism, where they may have been seen as benevolent spirits. Rusalki appear in a variety of media in modern popular culture, particularly in Slavic language-speaking countries, where they frequently resemble the concept of the mermaid.

Nofel Loshato Theater is located at No. 18, Razi St., Nofel Loshato St., Hafez Ave.

“Pulse of the Land” exhibition showcases Palestinian art and identity in Damascus

Nearly 50 artists from Syria, Palestine, and other Arab countries are displaying works inspired by Palestinian heritage, identity, and resilience at the “Pulse of the Land” exhibition, which opened on Wednesday in Damascus.

Held at al-Shaab Hall (People’s Hall), the exhibition features 55 paintings, sculptures and photographs exploring themes of belonging, memory, culture and connection to the land, SANA reported.

Several artworks depict prominent Palestinian landmarks, including the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque, while others incorporate olive branches, traditional Palestinian embroidery, and the keffiyeh as symbols of identity and heritage.

The exhibition presents a wide range of artistic styles, from abstract and realist works to surrealist compositions. Among the sculptures on display is a piece bearing the phrase “Gaza Welcomes You,” while another explores themes of freedom, resilience, and renewal.

Arabic calligraphy features prominently in several works, alongside pieces inspired by the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish, one of Palestine’s most celebrated literary figures.

In the photography section, photographer Lin Mohammad exhibits two images highlighting aspects of Palestinian life and memory, including a portrait of an elderly woman and a photograph of

Palestinian children in Damascus.

Mohammad Yasser Omar, founder of the “Lamma” platform, said the initiative seeks to support young Arab and Palestinian creatives working in literature and the arts.

Speaking to SANA, Omar said artistic expression, whether through visual art, poetry or music, plays an important role in communicating ideas and preserving cultural identity.

Mohammad Al-Rakoui, head of the Palestinian Fine Artists Union in Syria, said artists from Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, and Jordan participated in the exhibition using a variety of artistic techniques and approaches.

Despite their different styles, the works share a common focus on Palestinian identity and cultural heritage, he said, adding that such events provide opportunities for artists to exchange experiences and strengthen cultural ties.

Artist Hanan Mohammad said her two contributions, “Longing of the Nay Flutes” and “Pulse of the Land,” draw inspiration from Palestinian history, traditional embroidered dress, and symbols of belonging.

The exhibition follows a “Land Day” art event held in Damascus in May, where dozens of artists presented works highlighting themes of Palestinian steadfastness and cultural identity.

Cartoon of Day

‘PRISONER OF WAR!’



Trapped

Cartoonist: Sajith Kumar from India

General Hollywood: Pentagon’s propaganda operation on silver screen

Part 2

By Ali Hamedin

TEHRAN—Sci-Fi cinema, and especially the superhero genre, presents an opportunity that the Pentagon would never pass up. Since these stories often contain military themes and are heavily dependent on action sequences, many superhero genre films have relied on military production assistance. Among these films are the first two installments of the “Iron Man” trilogy, the “Hulk,” “Captain Marvel,” and others.

Superheroes as Pentagon’s PR

In the book “Superheroes, Movies, and the State: How the US Government Shapes Cinematic Universes”, it is noted:

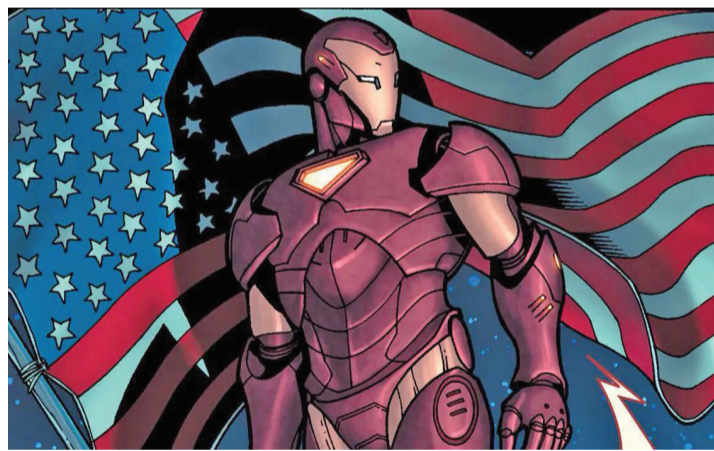
“The reliance of superhero filmmakers on this assistance is a particular boon to the armed forces, as the genre is one of the best PR and propaganda vehicles available.”

Tom Secker and Tricia Jenkins explain in the book that superheroes are almost always exceptional individuals with powers beyond what any ordinary person can manifest or experience, and thus these protagonists function as individual metaphors not just for the DOD but for US exceptionalism more broadly.

In these narratives, superheroes have not only the responsibility but also the right to visit large-scale, lethal violence on their opponents because someone special has to police a world that is full of threats, which is often how the DOD aims to position itself in global affairs.

That’s what Roger Stahl, professor of communication studies and the director of “Theaters of War” (2022) had mentioned in his interview with Tehran Times:

“On a grand scale, Hollywood narratives embrace US exceptionalism – that the US military is exempt from international law and that it is normal for it to routinely bomb others, violate sovereignty, and spread a web of bases everywhere. That principle is sacred, and it is hard to think of a film that seriously challenges it.”



“Iron Man” fights for the War on Terror

The “Iron Man” franchise was aligned with Pentagon preferences in many ways, and perhaps no superhero franchise has been customized to such an extent. The character of Tony Stark — a billionaire weapons manufacturer who fights terrorism in Afghanistan using an advanced armored suit — became a full-fledged promotional symbol for the US Air Force.

The book “Superheroes, Movies, and the State” reveals that, for the production of “Iron Man” (2008), the Air Force provided extensive support, including filming access at Edwards Air Force Base and the use of F-22 and C-17 aircraft, as well as HH-60 helicopters.

Stahl explained that during the research for the documentary “Theaters of War”, one of the most surprising things he discovered was the depth of the script review process:



“Sometimes it’s pages and pages of detailed script notes that excise sections and add whole characters.”

This was precisely the price that the “Iron Man 1” project paid in exchange for the Pentagon’s support: the producers were required to submit the screenplay to the Pentagon for final approval.

The result was that the final film became a neutered version of the original concept. Tom Secker and Matthew Alford note in the book “National Security Cinema” that the original 2004 screenplay for “Iron Man” was explicitly anti-war and anti-military-industrial complex.

In that version, Tony Stark was unwilling to allow his inventions to contribute to the killing of civilians. Howard Stark (Tony’s father) and Justin Hammer were portrayed as two corrupt industrial-military tycoons who stole technologies and sold them to North Korea and other governments opposed to the US. However, through its exertion of influence, the Pentagon transformed Tony into a kind-hearted weapons manufacturer who merely removes a few “bad apples” from the system while leaving the broader structure untouched.

mission in the country. He says: “I thought we were doing good here... I can’t say that anymore. The system is broken, there’s no accountability whatsoever.”

However, on set, this line was replaced with: “I saw young Americans killed by the very weapons I created to defend them and protect them.”

As a result, the scene was transformed into a one-sided reminder of the necessity of protecting Americans and safeguarding US interests.

Bad Arabs with AK-47

Many reviews described “Iron Man 1” as containing “a sprinkle of anti-war and redemption themes,” being a “pacifist statement,” or portraying a “militantly anti-war profiteer.” “National Security Cinema” notes that However, these interpretations overlooked one crucial point: that “Iron Man” continues to manufacture increasingly sophisticated weapons and deploys them for the exact same purposes as the Pentagon — namely, killing generic Muslim terrorists.

Aside from a handful of corrupt American “bad apples,” the film’s remaining antagonists are nameless Muslim terrorists who do little more than shout and fire AK-47s, “in the proud Hollywood tradition of Reel Bad Arabs.”

Afghanistan is also portrayed in the film as a land populated by innocent people whose lives are threatened by technologically equipped Arab terrorists — not by American attacks.

In effect, the first “Iron Man,” despite all its advanced technology, became a two-hour advertisement for the necessity of the US military presence in Afghanistan. Director Jon Favreau stated that, in the scenes where the Ten Rings group attacks villagers, he deliberately emphasized the terrorists’ ability to use advanced weaponry.

Much like the Bush administration’s approach, the film also argues that the appropriate response to the terrorist threat is military-centered violence rather than diplomacy, thereby lending greater legitimacy to American intervention in the Middle East.

“Iron Man” fights against the War on Terror

However, by the third installment, the situation had completely reversed, and an unambiguous critique of the “War on Terror” appeared on screen. “Iron Man 3” (2013) was produced without any military involvement. In the film, a new threat emerges: the mastermind of a terrorist organization known as the “Mandarin” begins hijacking live television broadcasts to criticize the US for its cultural and military imperialism while claiming responsibility for a wave of recent retaliatory bombings.

At first, Stark assumes that

the Mandarin is from the Middle East, and when his AI assistant traces the source of the latest broadcast, Stark asks: “What are we talking? Far East, Europe, North Africa, Iran, Pakistan, Syria?” These assumptions are clearly intended to remind the audience of the atmosphere of the first “Iron Man” movie — but the reality turns out to be something entirely different.

It is ultimately revealed that the Mandarin is nothing more than a British actor hired by Killian — an arms dealer — to create a “custom-made terror threat.” This allows Killian to intensify public fear in order to sell his highly advanced technologies to the Pentagon. In Killian’s words, “I’ll own the War on Terror. Create supply and demand.”

“Superheroes, Movies, and the State” describes this plot twist as a cinematic attack on the close relationship between the Pentagon, industrial corporations, and the “War on Terror.”

In other words, the film plays with the idea that the War on Terror is hollow, theatrical, and manufactured through media representations so that war profiteers, technology companies, and politicians can remain in power.

In the real world, the performative nature of this guiding slogan was also reflected by former US National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski in 2007, when he wrote that the phrase “War on Terror” was essentially meaningless, because it defined neither a specific geographical context nor a clearly identifiable enemy.

He argued that this ambiguity was intentional, as it fueled a culture of fear and made it easier for demagogic politicians to mobilize public opinion in support of whatever policies they wished to pursue. Accordingly, the idea that politicians and corporations may manufacture fear in order to gain power or profit lies clearly at the heart of the narrative of “Iron Man 3.”

Although such narratives criticizing the war-driven policies of the United States do exist, as Roger Stahl also noted, there are only a limited number of works in Hollywood that move against the dominant current.

Perhaps that is why Mark McKinnon, a senior adviser to George W. Bush at the White House, stated in 2001 during a panel discussion titled “The Role of the Entertainment Industry in the War on Terrorism” regarding the occupation of Afghanistan:

“Hollywood was way out ahead of us in trying to do what it could to aid the effort. All we’re trying to do right now is say, ‘Fantastic. Thank you.’”

To be continued.