

## Fresh data exposes scale of Iranian missile success against U.S.-Israeli air defenses

TEHRAN — New analyses by Western think tanks and Hebrew-language media have unveiled more details of Iran's missile campaign against the Zionist regime during the 12-day June war, confirming at least 60 successful strikes—including direct hits on Israel's Ministry of War headquarters—while exposing systemic censorship of military losses and \$1.47 billion in unreported infrastructure damage.

It has been widely suspected that the true scale of damage in the occupied territories dramatically surpasses the regime's acknowledged figures, and that pervasive censorship has deliberately hidden the extent of military site impacts. ▶ Page 3

## Anatomy of a strike

By Fatemeh Torkashvand

TEHRAN – Several days have passed since the release of the video depicting Israel's attack on Tajrish Square in Tehran. Yet, news networks affiliated with the U.S., U.K., and Israel—particularly their Persian-language branches—are still struggling to frame the brutal second strike on public water infrastructure, vehicles halted at red lights, and ordinary pedestrians as merely a projectile that “accidentally” struck the wrong target during an assault on the same initial location

To fact-check and assess the plausibility of this claim, I head to Tajrish. From Qods Square, I walk eastward until I reach the intersection of Shariati and Bahonar streets. Ali Shariati was an Iranian intellectual who died under suspicious circumstances a year before the 1979 Revolution. ▶ Page 2

## Muharram in Iran: An onto-political ritual of unity and resistance against oppression

By Xavier Villar

MADRID – The ritual of Muharram in Iran, traditionally understood in the West as a strictly religious ceremony, in fact holds a much deeper and more complex significance. It is not merely a spiritual commemoration, but an onto-political act that weaves together identity, historical memory, and resistance.

To fully grasp this dimension, one must first interrogate the very category of “religion” — understood as a modern, colonial construction — and recognize that Muharram is embedded in a discourse that transcends conventional boundaries between secular nationalism and the Islamic Republic, shaping a shared project of sovereignty and autonomy. ▶ Page 2

## Bin Farhan precedes Barrack to Beirut to stir up Sunnis in pressure campaign against Hezbollah

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT— Not to mention the progress of U.S. envoy Thomas Barrack's proposal aimed at disarming Hezbollah, it goes without saying that in the coming weeks Lebanon will be automatically affected by the Gaza negotiations and leaks about Syria's intention to normalize relations with Israel

While consultations between President of the Republic, Prime Minister and Speaker of the Parliament – Joseph Aoun, Nawaf Salam, and Nabih Berri – intensifies, Saudi envoy Prince Yazid bin Farhan arrived in Beirut on Wednesday on an unannounced visit to continue pressuring Hezbollah. ▶ Page 5

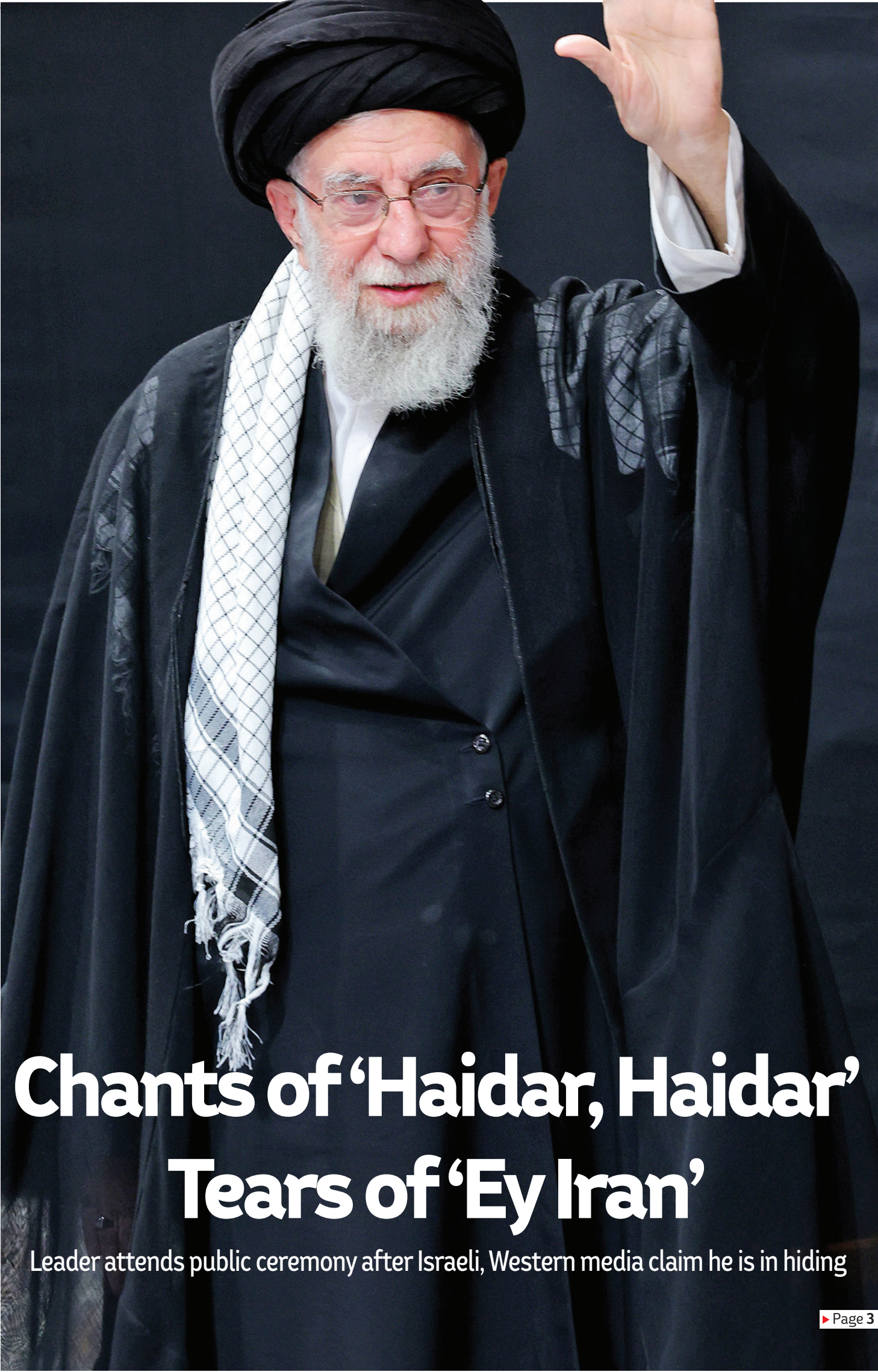
## Nizar Banat Award highlights struggle of Gaza medical workers

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN- In the ongoing brutal and relentless war in Gaza, healthcare workers are experiencing multileveled unprecedented threats that go beyond the obvious threats of being in a war zone.

The tragic experience of Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya, director of Kamal Adwan Hospital, and the killing of Dr. Marwan Al Sultan and family, in an Israeli airstrike, capture not only the human cost but also demonstrate systematic violations of international humanitarian law and the total dismantling of safeguards that have historically been provided for healthcare workers in conflicts.

Dr. Abu Safiya's nightmare illustrates the extreme dangers faced by Gaza's medical staff. ▶ Page 5



## Israeli-US attack on Iran violated UN charter: Araghchi at BRICS

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi strongly condemned the recent Israeli-American military assault against Iran during his remarks at the 17th BRICS Summit, describing it as a blatant violation of the United Nations Charter and an unlawful act of aggression.

Speaking on Sunday, Araghchi stated: “The Israeli regime's aggression, fully supported by the United States, constitutes a flagrant breach of international law. Over 6,000 civilians were killed or wounded, and Iran's peaceful nuclear facilities and vital infrastructure suffered considerable damage.” ▶ Page 3

## ‘No red lines if Israel strikes again’, warns IRGC spokesman

TEHRAN – A senior spokesman for Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) has warned that any renewed military aggression by the Israeli regime will be met with a response “without any red lines.”

Speaking to Lebanon's Al Mayadeen news network on Friday, IRGC spokesman General Ali Mohammad Naeini said that the swift and forceful Iranian response to Israel's attack on June 13 shocked the enemy and upended its calculations.

“To understand who won or lost, we must look at the objectives of the war. Israel failed to achieve any of its declared goals,” he stated. ▶ Page 2

## Solar power plants to be built next to dams

TEHRAN- Referring to the government's policy of developing solar power plants in the country, the director of the engineering office of the Iranian Water and Power Resources Development Management Company said: “Based on this, the construction of solar power plants next to dams has been put on the agenda.”

Hassan Ahmadi added in an interview with IRNA's economic correspondent: “A memorandum of understanding was recently signed with the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) to develop a solar power plant at the site of the dams that have been built, given the availability of ready land, the existence of the electricity grid, and other advantages.” ▶ Page 4

## Hamas sends unified truce response

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Hamas has responded to a ceasefire proposal in a “positive” manner reflective of a unified stance among all Gaza resistance forces.

The Palestinian resistance movement has revealed that its response to the framework proposal for a ceasefire in Gaza was prepared with national consensus and a constructive approach.

The response followed broad consultations with Gaza-based Palestinian factions to support the resistance and end the genocidal war on the besieged enclave. ▶ Page 5

## “Iran” and “homeland” in Muharram mourning spotlight

TEHRAN - This year, the month of Muharram began as the martyrdom of a large number of people during the Zionist regime's aggression against the country gave a special atmosphere to the mourning ceremonies.

A number of eulogists have used explicit themes of “Iran,” “homeland,” and the martyrs of the recent war in their ceremonies.

Mahmoud Karimi's performance titled “O Iran, Iran,” Meysam Motiei's performance titled “Iran Became Karbala,” and Mojtaba Ramezani's performance titled “Here is Iran” are among the most prominent of these works that can have a significant impact on social cohesion and solidarity. ▶ Page 7



## Muharram in Iran: An onto-political ritual of unity and resistance against oppression



*A mourning ceremony taking place in Tehran on June 5, 2025*

From page 1 ►

### Religion as a colonial category

In contemporary studies on religion and politics, thinkers such as Talal Asad, Saba Mahmood, Gil Anidjar, and Jasbir Puar have challenged the notion of religion as an autonomous, universal sphere detached from the political.

Asad, in particular, argues that “religion” is a modern European invention, imposed upon non-Western traditions as a form of epistemic and disciplinary fragmentation.

This process has served to depoliticize certain practices by relegating them to the private or spiritual sphere, stripped of collective agency.

Saba Mahmood expands this critique by showing how religious practices can embody complex forms of ethical and political agency, often outside liberal or secular frameworks.

Gil Anidjar emphasizes that the division between “religion” and “secularism” is a central mechanism of modern Christian governance, while Jasbir Puar has demonstrated how the category of religion has been instrumentalized to justify both colonial domination and national hierarchies in postcolonial states.

From these perspectives, Muharram must not be read as a mere religious observance, but rather as a form of political ontology — a mode of being-in-the-world that mobilizes affects, bodies, memories, and symbols in a praxis of resistance and sovereignty.

### Muharram as onto-political remembrance

Muharram commemorates the martyrdom of Imam Hossein at Karbala, an event that symbolizes the perpetual struggle between justice and tyranny, between the oppressed and the oppressor. Far from being a purely devotional narrative, the Karbala paradigm is a foundational narrative for Iran’s collective memory.

It operates as an ontological framework through which the political identity of the people is shaped, giving meaning to a historical trajectory marked by resistance to domination. Each year, the ritual of Muharram reactivates this paradigm — not through ritualistic repetition, but through a symbolic renewal of the struggle against injustice.

The performativity of mourning, elegiac chants, processions, and communal gatherings projects a shared horizon of dignity, sovereignty, and sacrifice. The past is inscribed in the present as a living historical continuity that legitimizes current forms of resistance and anticipates future ones.

### Nationalism and the Islamic Republic: False oppositions, real convergences

In the Iranian context, Muharram also plays a central role as a site of national cohesion.

However, this unity should not be understood as a mere meeting point between two oppositional poles — nationalism and Islamism — but rather as a deeper articulation in which both traditions meet, contend, and intertwine around a shared objective: the defense of Iranian sovereignty.

The supposed opposition between nationalism and Islamism has largely been an ideological construction, useful at certain historical junctures but inadequate in capturing the complexity of Iran’s political landscape.

Both cultural nationalism and revolutionary Islamism share a common matrix of resistance against foreign interference, colo-

nialism, and dispossession.

In Muharram, this convergence finds expression in a shared symbolic language that integrates the religious, historical, and political.

During the Pahlavi monarchy, for instance, nationalism was instrumentalized by the regime as a tool to legitimize its authority, often at the expense of Shia Islam as a source of popular legitimacy.

However, following the Islamic Revolution of 1979, and especially during the imposed eight-year war between Iran and Iraq, religion regained a central role. The Karbala narrative provided an ethical and affective framework that gave meaning to national defense.

The war was interpreted as a continuation of Imam Hossein’s struggle, and the use of religious symbols was not only accepted but also embraced by fighters and citizens alike.

### Muharram 2025: Between memory and present struggle

The Muharram of 2025 holds particular significance in the aftermath of the recent 12-day war between Iran and Israel.

This conflict, widely perceived across Iranian society as an act of foreign aggression, has catalyzed a renewed moment of national cohesion.

The massive mobilizations during Muharram have not been mere acts of devotion, but politically charged expressions through which unity, sovereignty, and national dignity have been reaffirmed.

The mourning ceremonies, public speeches, and grassroots demonstrations have projected a narrative of historical continuity: from Karbala to Qods, from Imam Hossein to contemporary martyrs.

The Iranian people are not simply commemorating a sacred past — they are reactivating it as political practice in the face of present-day threats. Muharram thus becomes a site of articulation between memory, resistance, and collective action.

Muharram in Iran cannot be adequately understood through the reductionist lens of religion as a modern category.

Rather, it must be seen as an onto-political ritual that embodies a particular mode of being and resisting — a collective practice that articulates memory, affect, identity, and sovereignty.

In times of external aggression, such as the recent confrontation with Israel, Muharram functions as a catalyst for national unity, reinforcing the internal coherence of a people that has combined Islamism with an emancipatory political project.

Beyond the superficial tensions between nationalism and the Islamic Republic, the ritual becomes a space of convergence and affirmation. History and theology, culture and politics, meet in a shared praxis of defending autonomy.

In this sense, Muharram is not merely a commemoration — it is an act of sovereignty in itself: a declaration that Iran will not bow, that its memory remains alive, and that its future will be shaped by its own people.

Understanding this dimension is key not only to grasping the specificity of Shia Islam in Iran, but also to appreciating the non-Western forms of articulating the religious and the political.

Ultimately, Muharram is the living expression of a nation that resists through its memory and asserts itself through its faith.

# ‘No red lines if Israel strikes again’, warns IRGC spokesman

From page 1 ► Naeini said the main objective of the Zionist regime was to dismantle the defense capabilities of the Islamic Republic, bring about Iran’s surrender, and trigger internal destabilization.

“This war was launched with the stated aim of forcing Iran to collapse and disintegrate. But the enemy miscalculated Iran’s will and underestimated our strength,” he said.

The IRGC official noted that Iran responded rapidly to the assassination of its senior commanders and scientists, firing more than 2,000 missiles and drones at military, intelligence, and strategic economic targets across the occupied territories during the 12-day conflict.

“Despite their claims and censorship, footage from inside occupied cities reveals the scale of destruction. Israel has concealed the real toll,” he added.

Although Israeli and U.S. officials claimed that up to 84% of Iranian projectiles were intercepted, a detailed report by the Telegraph indicated that a growing number of Iranian missiles successfully penetrated Israel’s much-touted air defense systems in the early days of the war.

Defense analysts cited several factors behind this development: a shortage of interceptor mis-



siles, advances in Iranian missile technology, and the deliberate use of combined drone and missile strikes to overwhelm Israeli defenses.

### Iran deployed a relatively small number of missiles during the 12-day war with Israel

Iran’s use of coordinated barrages involving suicide drones, ballistic missiles, and cruise missiles allowed it to inflict heavy blows on Israel’s strategic depth.

The IRGC confirmed that a significant portion of its missiles successfully struck military bases, intelligence facilities, and

even symbols of economic power within Israel.

Despite Israel’s efforts to tightly control information, satellite imagery and social media footage exposed extensive damage in Tel Aviv, Haifa, and several other cities in the occupied territories.

General Naeini emphasized that the recent war demonstrated Iran’s capability to launch rapid, large-scale strikes and maintain strategic deterrence across the region.

He warned that if the Zionist regime dares to launch another attack, “there will be no red lines left.

The next phase will be something they cannot contain.”

Iran is also believed to possess a vast and varied arsenal of missiles, ranging from medium- and

long-range ballistic missiles to precision-guided cruise missiles and hypersonic systems.

Many of these are domestically produced and capable of reaching targets throughout the region, including U.S. bases and Israeli installations.

The war began on June 13, when Israel launched an unprovoked attack targeting Iran’s civilian nuclear sites and assassinating senior military and scientific figures.

Tehran responded within hours with a barrage of missile and drone attacks, initiating the True Promise III retaliatory campaign.

On June 22, the United States formally entered the conflict by bombing three of Iran’s nuclear sites—Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan—using bunker-buster munitions, in a blatant breach of international law.

Iran’s retaliatory response included a missile strike on Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, the largest U.S. military base in West Asia, signaling its intent and ability to expand the scope of the confrontation if provoked.

Ultimately, facing mounting losses, internal panic, and fears of further Iranian escalation, the Israeli regime accepted a unilateral ceasefire on June 24.

## Anatomy of a strike

### A look at civilian impact and strategic doubts in Israel’s Tajrish missile attack



*An Israeli missile hit the Tajrish Square on June 15, 2025*

From page 1 ► I raise my head, scanning the square in search of the city surveillance camera’s position.

I finally spotted it just past the entrance to the metro, on the north side of Shariati Street. But it’s the Ashura banners on nearby buildings that grab my attention. I turn my head and notice that most passersby are dressed in black for Muharram.

I replay the video of the attack on my phone to determine the camera’s angle, facing northeast.

The targeted building should be roughly 200 meters ahead of the camera, on the north side of the street.

I begin walking from the south side for a clear view, but soon get distracted by a taxi stand.

The yellow cars and their drivers catch my eye. Three of them are chatting nearby. I approach and ask, “Were any of you here on the day of the attack?”

None were present, but one of them, who had left around noon, says someone named Hamid had been there. The others confirm it.

They don’t know his full name—he’s not a regular colleague but a freelance driver with a Pride sedan, which he no longer owns after the attack. They say he was injured in the hand and can no longer work.

One of the drivers also points to a spot where bloodstains are still visible on the wall, saying an elderly vegetable seller who used to sit there was martyred in the incident.

I check the video again. The

mentioned Pride car is visible on the south side of the street, picking up passengers when a large piece of asphalt lands on it.

To pinpoint the exact location, I need to identify the struck building. About 50 meters ahead, across from a juice shop, I find it: a five-story apartment where the top three floors have completely collapsed. In the video, the projectile is clearly fired head-on from south to north.

As I stand in the middle of the street, gazing up to verify how short the buildings opposite the target were, a car honks loudly to pull me out of my reverie.

Across from the destroyed building are three structures: an old two-story juice shop, a small elementary and preschool named after Ali Akbar Motazedi with a sign on its door announcing new student registration, and another low two-story building—its ground floor is a now-closed coffee shop, and its upper floor was a doctor’s office, shut due to the damage.

Only the young juice vendor remains open, cheerfully answering curious passersby.

Locals know him well. They come in by name to buy carrot juice, orange juice, and ice cream. One customer jokingly asks, “How are you still alive?”

He says, “I was inside the shop. It broke and ruined everything, but two days later, we cleaned it all up.” Noticing my inquisitive look, he continues without being asked: “The building hit was the Mosque Affairs office.”

I ask if he knows who was in-

side at the time; he shakes his head but says angrily, “What difference does it make? Civilians were hurt.

I saw with my own eyes, two seconds after they hit the intersection, a pregnant woman trying to cross the street was killed.”

I step outside to check the video again.

A woman in white, her dress billowing slightly ahead of her, is seen crossing the intersection.

After that, how can I ever forget that white-clad woman fleeing the falling asphalt shards—yet unable to escape?

The targeted building is sealed off, but nearby structures all show visible damage. I circle around to a side alley to check the rear.

A tall apartment complex with a beautiful tailor’s shop backs directly onto it. The alley is a dead end from both sides. So, residents of the rear buildings must have had serious difficulty escaping during the attack.

The decorative trees in the yard are still lush with summer greenery, but their roots are no longer in the ground. Workers are clearing rubble from the courtyard.

Shattered floor tiles catch my eye, and my mind quickly asks: Why was there no sign of explosion or debris at the intersection itself? If repairs were done, the asphalt should at least look new.

I walk northward from the middle of the street. Stuck at a red light among the cars, I finally spot the fresh strip of asphalt—right where the usual white lines are missing, about 20 meters from the intersection, and there’s no pedestrian crossing either.

I check the video again; when the intersection clears, the surface water drainage covers become visible.

BBC Persian’s video confirms the footage is genuine and not AI-generated. But when paused and enhanced, the moment of missile impact and its angle become crystal clear—even the white body and fins of the missile can be seen.

Unlike the first projectile, this missile enters the intersection from the northwest and strikes cars waiting at the red light.

Three vehicles are hurled violently into the air; another is crushed under a massive piece of asphalt. At least four more vehicles are seen behind the impact point, though their fate is obscured by smoke.

What’s clear, however, is that there is no way the second missile was aimed at the same target as the first. The angle of impact differs drastically in all spatial dimensions—latitude, longitude, and altitude. Even if the missile’s trajectory had continued, it would have hit the municipal administrative building on the south side of the street.

Based on explanations from military experts and journalists I’ve consulted, the pattern of Israel’s strikes during the 12-day war shows a deliberate strategy: in targeting one individual, all potential locations of their presence were hit, regardless of whether families, civilians, or children were in the vicinity.

That’s why not only many scientists and commanders’ families, but also their neighbors and random bystanders were killed or injured.

Even so, other strong hypotheses exist—especially among the Iranian public and some analysts—claiming that Israel’s second strike directly targeted Tehran’s water infrastructure to provoke public discontent, while also potentially disrupting emergency response to the first attack.

But the common thread among all these interpretations is summed up in what two pedestrians tell me as I cross the street.

When I say I’m a journalist, they ask me to make sure my report emphasizes this: that contrary to its claims, Israel targeted many ordinary civilians, women, children, and men.

They say even if the goal was to assassinate a military figure, the martyrdom of nearly a thousand civilians is, for us Iranians, an unforgivable and barbaric crime.



# Chants of ‘Haidar, Haidar’ Tears of ‘Ey Iran’

## Leader attends public ceremony after Israeli, Western media claim he is in hiding

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN – The Israeli regime’s war against Iran started suddenly and unexpectedly. The regime assassinated top military generals, nuclear scientists, and civilians in airstrikes, a move that prompted a response within 12 hours, much to their dismay.

This response wasn’t just a one-time attack on June 13. It was the first wave of at least 21 missile attacks that decimated Israeli cities, took out some of the regime’s strategic and military sites, and crushed the spirit of the settlers who had been basking in the success of the tactical victory they had gained on the first day, unaware that the tables were soon going to turn.

When the war ended as suddenly as it began on June 24, all Israelis were left with was destruction and disappointment. None of their objectives, whether the supposed aim of “obliterating” Iran’s nuclear program or toppling the government, had been fulfilled.

Under these circumstances, recognizing its military limitations, at least for the moment, the regime opted to continue its psychological war against Iran. A huge part of that psychological war failed during the military confrontation, as the Iranian people refused to leave the side of their political and military leaders no matter how many



times Benjamin Netanyahu tried to tell them, either directly or through the stenographers that run Persian news channels in the West, that his fight was not “with the people.” Iranians saw right through that lie, so Netanyahu needed a new one. With that, and after the halt in fighting, Israel shifted towards disparaging the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, asserting that he had “gone into hiding” and that he was no longer “ruling” the country. The regime’s affiliated media outlets told their audiences that Ayatollah Khamenei was “scared” of assassination, and that he had left his followers behind.

This new campaign of lies also faltered in a short period of time. On June 5, the Leader took part in a mourning ceremony for Imam Hussein taking place in the Imam Khomeini Hussainie. He entered the room as the crowd

was focused on an elegy reciter. Attendees turned their heads as Ayatollah Khamenei walked in, quickly rose to their feet, and began to chant slogans.

A prominent slogan was “Haidar, Haidar,” a reference to a nickname for Imam Ali (AS) – the son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the first Shia Imam – whom Ayatollah Khamenei shares a name with. Shortly after entering, the Leader took a seat, signaling the crowd to follow suit, though they continued chanting for at least a minute after his arrival.

The rest of the ceremony went on without any notable events. By the end of the mourning, Ayatollah Khamenei called on the elegy reciter and spoke to him for a few seconds. He had a faint smile on his face, and his demeanor looked somewhat relaxed. The reciter then returned to his seat, placed in front of the crowd, say-

ing the Leader had asked him to recite “Ey Iran”, a patriotic song multiple generations of Iranians know by heart.

“In my soul and life, you shall remain, O my land,” the reciter sang, as several people in the crowd began to shed tears with a solemn expression. Ayatollah Khamenei was also seen listening intently.

The June 5 ceremony in Imam Khomeini Husseinie marked the first time a patriotic song had been featured during a mourning ceremony for Imam Hossein, which is inherently a religious ritual. Analysts suggest this was a message from the Leader to Israel and the U.S.: regardless of the number of propaganda campaigns or attempted airstrikes, the Iranian nation remains united and determined to pursue its legitimate rights.

The message resonated quickly, at least within Iran. Even those who hadn’t attended the mourning session, or who rarely participated in religious ceremonies, turned to social media to commend the Leader’s “courage” and “warmth”. “Ayatollah Khamenei’s recent appearance has brought me a sense of relief and pride, just like his video message at the beginning of the war did,” wrote a young Tehrani woman on X. Her profile picture and prior activities on the platform suggested she wasn’t particularly religious.

## Israeli-US attack on Iran violated UN charter: Araghchi at BRICS



*Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (L) shakes hand with Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on the sidelines of the 17th BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro on July 6, 2025.*

From Page 1 ► The foreign minister emphasized that there is no legal justification under international law for targeting nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards, and warned that such actions undermine the entire non-proliferation regime.

Araghchi hailed the resilience of the Iranian people, who, he said, forced the aggressors to cease their attacks. He reiterated that the Islamic Republic would continue to defend its sovereignty and national interests with full determination.

Calling for urgent international accountability, Araghchi added:

“The international community must act to end the impunity of the Israeli regime and hold both the regime and the United States accountable for their crimes and repeated violations of international law.”

In conclusion, the Iranian foreign minister called on BRICS member states to play a more active role in upholding multilateralism and promoting a just international order. “BRICS must assert its role as a defender of international law and the collective voice of the Global South,” he stated.

The 17th BRICS Summit, host-

ed by Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, opened in Rio de Janeiro under the theme “Strengthening Global South Cooperation for More Inclusive and Sustainable Governance.” The gathering brings together leaders from 11 member states and strategic partner countries for high-level discussions on global economic reform, collective security, and cooperation among emerging powers.

Araghchi was formally welcomed by Brazilian President at the summit venue in Rio de Janeiro and was seen briefly conferring with his Brazilian counterpart ahead of the opening session.

Chaired by Brazil, this year’s summit—held on July 6–7—comes at a pivotal moment as the BRICS bloc intensifies its campaign for a more balanced international system and greater autonomy for emerging economies.

The summit is also overshadowed by growing dissatisfaction with unilateral U.S. trade policies, especially the tariff regime pushed by the United States President Donald Trump, which BRICS leaders say undermines

global economic stability and violates multilateral norms.

Originally formed in 2009 by Brazil, Russia, India, and China, and joined by South Africa in 2010, BRICS is now a bloc of 11 full member countries following a major expansion in 2024. The new members—Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Indonesia—reflect the group’s widening reach into the Global South.

The group now represents nearly half of the world’s population, 36% of the Earth’s land-mass, and around 25% of global GDP.

Over the two-day summit, leaders are discussing pressing issues such as global trade justice, reform of international institutions, artificial intelligence governance, climate change, and global public health. The summit also serves as a platform for member states to advocate for a more balanced, inclusive global order, less reliant on Western-dominated systems.

The summit comes just days before a scheduled announcement by Washington of new tariff hikes, expected to take effect on July 9.

that most devastation in civilian areas stemmed from interceptor debris in civilian zones—a consequence of Israel’s overwhelmed defenses.

### Censored strikes exposed

Despite Israeli military censorship, new evidence reveals Iran’s strategic successes:

- Kirya Complex (“Israel’s Pentagon”): Fox News confirmed a direct missile strike on the regime’s military command center in Tel Aviv, which authorities had suppressed.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](https://tehrantimes.com))

## SPORTS

### Esteghlal eye Rustam Ashurmatov: report

TEHRAN – Esteghlal football team have reportedly set their sight on signing Rubin Kazan defender Rustam Ashurmatov.

Iranian media reports suggest that the Iranian club have reached an agreement with the Uzbek player.

The 28-year-old player has been a member of Uzbekistan national team since 2017.

Russian team Rubin Kazan has reportedly reached an agreement with a Honduran defender as Ashurmatov’s replacement.

### Iran, Chile friendly match canceled

TEHRAN – The friendly match between Iran and Chile national football teams has been canceled.

The match has been scheduled for October 14.

Iran and Chile’s last friendly dates back to 2015, when Team Melli defeated the South American side 2-0 in Austria. The Iranian football federation had previously announced that Team Melli would also face Russia on October 6.

The friendlies serve as preparation for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

### Habib Far Abbasi joins Esteghlal

TEHRAN – Habib Far Abbasi joined Esteghlal football team.

The 27-year-old custodian has joined Esteghlal from Malavan.

Far Abbasi replaced Mohammad Reza Khaled Abadi, who left Esteghlal to join Malavan.

Esteghlal will have to represent Iran at the 2025-26 AFC Champions League Two.

### Iran’s women’s basketball team beat Guangdong

TEHRAN – Iran’s women’s basketball team defeated Guangdong Vermilion Birds 69-63 on Saturday.

The friendly match served as part of preparation for the FIBA Women’s Asia Cup 2025 Division B.

The competition will be held in Shenzhen, China from July 13 to 20.

Groups:

Group A: Chinese Taipei, Kazakhstan, India, Tahiti  
Group B: Iran, Thailand, Mongolia, Cook Islands  
The winner will qualify for Division A.

### Sotiris Manolopoulos returns to Iran

TEHRAN – The National Basketball team Greek head coach Sotiris Manolopoulos returned to Tehran on Saturday.

The Greek coach will participate in the team’s training camp for the FIBA Asia Cup 2025.

Iran are pitted in Group B along with Japan, Syria, and Guam.

The 2025 FIBA Asia Cup will be the 31st edition of the FIBA Asia Cup, the continental basketball championship in Asia. The tournament will be organized by FIBA Asia. The tournament will be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia from Aug. 5 to 17. Australia are the tournament’s defending champions.

### Alipour advances to 2025 IFSC Climbing World Cup final

TEHRAN – Reza Alipour booked a place in the final round of the 2025 IFSC Climbing World Cup.

Alipour finished in 13th place and advanced to

the final.

The Krakow World Cup is the ninth stop in the 2025 IFSC World Cup Series.

The event takes place in the Market Grand Square in Krakow, Poland.

The competition is being held on Saturday, and Sunday.

### Ndong to extend deal with Esteghlal

TEHRAN – Didier Ibrahim Ndong will extend his deal with Esteghlal football team.

The 30-year-old Gabonese midfielder, who joined Esteghlal from Saudi Arabian club Al-Riyadh in August 2024, will pen a new deal.

Ndong has been a member of the Gabon national football team since 2012.

He started his playing career in Tunisian club CS Sfaxien in 2011 and has also played for English sides Sunderland and Watford.

Esteghlal will represent Iran at the 2025-26 AFC Champions League Two.

### Maziar Zare pens new deal with Malavan

TEHRAN – Maziar Zare has penned a new deal with Malavan Bandar Anzali football team.

He has penned a one-year extension.

Under Zare’s leadership, Malavan finished in seventh place in 2024-25 Iran Professional League (IPL).

Malavan also booked a place in the Hazfi Cup final, where it lost to Esteghlal 1-0.

### Esteghlal goalkeeper Hosseini on Foolad’s radar

TEHRAN – Foolad has set its sight on signing Esteghlal football team Hossein Hosseini.

Hosseini has not yet extended his deal with Esteghlal.

Foolad, headed by Yahya Golmohammadi, finished in fourth place last season.

Esteghlal have recently signed Habib Far Abbasi from Malavan.

Esteghlal will represent Iran at the 2025-26 AFC Champions League Two.

### American sprinter Kerley converts to Islam

TEHRAN – Fred Kerley, the American sprinter, recently converted to Islam.

He shared the news on his Instagram account, stating, “They tried to break me, Allah rebuilt me. Took my Shahada today. I’m chosen. I’m covered. I’m home.”

He also included the hashtags #FaithFoundMe and an emoji of a mosque and hands in prayer.

He is the Olympic silver medalist in 100m at the 2020 Olympics and bronze medalist at the 2024 Olympics in the same event.

### Manavinezhad joins Emma Villas Aubay Siena

TEHRAN – Iranian volleyball player Mohammad Javad Manavinezhad has joined Italian side Manavinezhad Emma Villas Codyeco Lupi Siena.

The 29-year-old outside spiker has joined the Italian team from Indonesia’s Jakarta Bhayangkara Presisi.

Emma Villas Aubay Siena are a volleyball club from Siena, Italy founded in 2013.

Manavinezhad was a member of Iran volleyball team, who won the title in the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta–Palembang.



## Solar power plants to be built next to dams

TEHRAN- Referring to the government's policy of developing solar power plants in the country, the director of the engineering office of the Iranian Water and Power Resources Development Management Company said: "Based on this, the construction of solar power plants next to dams has been put on the agenda."

Hassan Ahmadi added in an interview with IRNA's economic correspondent: "A memorandum of understanding was recently signed with the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) to develop a solar power plant at the site of the dams that have been built, given the availability of ready land, the existence of the electricity grid, and other advantages."

Stating that within the framework of this memorandum, 500 megawatts of electricity can be produced in this way, he noted: "Given the country's capacity in terms of sunny hours, the development of solar power plants is a good source of electricity supply."

Meanwhile, Iranian energy minister has announced that three new packages, one conventional and two more technical models, will be unveiled for the construction of household solar power plants in the coming week.

Abbas Aliabadi said that according to plans, by the end of this year, about 3,800 megawatts will be added to the capacity of renewable power plants in the country, adding, "In the previous period, as a result of previous years, the capacity of our renewable power plants was about 1,200 megawatts, which has now exceeded 2,000 megawatts, which is a significant figure. God willing, by the end of this month, this number will reach about 3,000 megawatts, and by the end of the government, the goal is for this figure to reach 30,000 megawatts."

The minister has said that the government fully supports private sector investment in renewable energy, as the country continues expanding its solar power infrastructure to address long-standing imbalances in the



electricity sector.

Speaking at the inauguration of 316 megawatts of new solar capacity across 40 sites nationwide, Aliabadi praised local authorities, particularly in Mahallat County in Markazi Province, for their commitment to solar development. "This is not a time to recount past achievements — it is a time to create them," he said, highlighting efforts such as cutting energy and water consumption and fostering a culture of solidarity.

Aliabadi pointed to a historic imbalance in Iran's electricity sector, where demand had long outpaced supply, at times by over 20,000 megawatts. He said the situation has improved significantly, with power consumption falling by 4,700 megawatts compared to the same period last year, while production capacity has grown by over 4,500 megawatts. Forced outages at power plants have dropped to just two percent.

He added that household blackouts have become virtually nonexistent this year, thanks in part to timely maintenance and improved performance of the Bushehr nuclear power plant, which was temporarily taken offline in spring to prepare for peak summer demand.

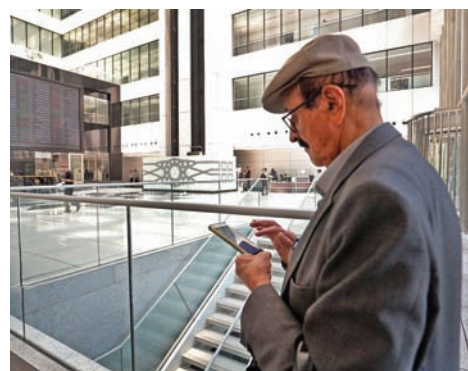
Aliabadi said the government will honor its financial commitments to solar power investors and reiterated its full backing for private players in the renewable energy sector. "With reliance on domestic capabilities and continued investment, we are determined to overcome challenges and demonstrate national resilience," he said.

## Banking network supports capital market, shareholders

TEHRAN- The deputy governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) for monetary policy said the banking network supports the capital market and shareholders through the stock market management, and the use of monetary and credit policy tools.

Regarding the Central Bank and banking network's program to support the capital market, Mohammad Shirijian said: "The Central Bank and the Stock Exchange Organization (SEO) have made important decisions to support the capital market during continuous meetings over the past two weeks at the expert and management levels, as well as joint meetings between the Governor of the Central Bank, the Minister of Economic and Financial Affairs, and the Head of the Stock Exchange Organization."

Regarding the banking system's methods of supporting the capital market, she said: "Part of this support is provided in the form of direct support for the capital market and in the form of market management of the shares of banks and banking network subsidiaries, especially banks under Article 44 of the Constitution."



the Constitution."

In terms of the banking system's methods of supporting the capital market, he said: "Part of this support is provided in the form of direct support for the capital market and in the form of market management of the shares of banks and banking network subsidiaries, especially banks under Article 44 of the Constitution."

Shirijian added: "Part of this support is also provided indirectly."

## Implementation of 36 electricity consumption management packages successful

TEHRAN- Head of Iran's Power Generation, Distribution, and Transmission Company (known as Tavanir) announced the successful implementation of 36 electricity consumption management packages nationwide, saying: "These packages were developed with the aim of reducing electricity consumption, and their implementation has been accompanied by a reduction in electricity consumption."

Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi said that the reduction in electricity consumption in recent days has been the result of a series of different measures, including the regulation of unauthorized electricity, discoveries related to cryptocurrency mining centers, the use of



smart limiters in the administrative sector, and consumption management in the commercial and domestic sectors, IRNA reported.

# Iran-UAE quarterly non-oil trade stands at \$5.478b

TEHRAN- The value of non-oil trade between Iran and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) stood at \$5.478 billion during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), according to the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Foroud Asgari said that Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$1.592 billion to the United Arab Emirates in the said time span.

He also announced that the UAE was Iran's third top non-oil export destination in the mentioned three-month period.

Exporting commodities valued at \$3.886 billion to Iran, the United Arab Emirates was Iran's top source of non-oil import in the first quarter, the IRICA head added.

As previously announced by Abolfazl Akbarpour, the deputy head of IRICA for planning and international affairs, Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$7.2 billion to the United Arab Emirates in the past Iranian calendar year, which ended on March 20, 2025.

Akbarpour said that the UAE was Iran's third top export destination in the previous year.

Exporting commodities valued at \$21.9 billion to Iran, the United Arab Emirates was Iran's top source of non-oil import in the previous year, the official further added.

Iran and the United Arab Emirates signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for expanding economic cooperation in a variety of areas at the end of the two countries' third Joint Economic Committee meeting in May 1, 2024.

The MOU was signed by former Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash and UAE's Economy Minister Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri, who co-chaired the joint meeting.

During the mentioned committee meeting, the two sides stressed the need for further expansion of economic cooperation



between Tehran and Abu Dhabi.

Speaking at the end of the meeting, Bazrpash said: "We have held the joint committee between the two countries after 10 years, which is an opportunity to develop the commercial and economic relations between the two countries."

"The UAE, as Iran's second biggest trade partner, has great strategic importance for us", the minister said.

Referring to the location of Iran and the UAE in the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC), Bazarpash said: "Access to the markets of the north and south can create an opportunity for the two countries to cooperate."

In the end, the minister emphasized solving the banking and monetary problems between the two countries to facilitate bilateral trade relations.

Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri for his part underlined the importance of the meeting, saying: "Holding today's meeting shows the development and expansion of economic relations between the two countries. After China, the UAE has the largest amount of trade relations with Iran. The trade value of the two countries has reached 27 billion dollars and many Iranian companies are established in the UAE."

"Creating new opportunities for transportation and banking cooperation is one of the achievements of this mission," the official said.

Referring to the performance of the UAE government in the field of investment, the official

## Iran exports non-oil products valued at \$437m to Oman in a quarter

TEHRAN- Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$437 million to Oman during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), according to the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Foroud Asgari said that Oman was Iran's sixth top non-oil export destination in the first quarter.

Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) has proposed the creation of a joint investment fund between Iran and Oman to support industrial projects, as part of broader efforts to deepen bilateral trade and private-sector collaboration.

During a meeting in Muscat, in late May, with Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Oman's Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, ICCIMA Head Samad Hassanzadeh welcomed the growth in bilateral trade, which has surpassed \$2.0 billion. He emphasized that the trade volume could potentially reach between \$20 billion and \$30 billion, given the countries' untapped economic potential.

Hassanzadeh stressed the need for a clear financial framework to facilitate transactions between private enterprises in both countries. He proposed the establishment of licensed exchange houses under central bank supervision and the implementation of a barter mechanism to ease payment challenges.

The Iran Chamber head also advocated for re-exporting Iranian goods to African and East Asian markets through Oman; cooperation in supplying key industrial inputs to Iran; joint ventures in petrochemicals, hospitality, power generation, fisheries, and agriculture.

He further called for the formation of an industrial and investment committee involving the industry ministries and chambers of commerce from both countries. The aim would be to evaluate and coordinate development projects, particularly those utilizing Iran's tech-savvy startups and industrial base.

Hassanzadeh also proposed joint investment in the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC) to enhance rail and road connectivity with Central Asia and Europe, as well as the Makran coast, specifically Jask and Chabahar ports, as strategic logistics hubs providing access to the Caucasus and Eurasian markets.

The visit was part of an Iranian business delegation mission to Oman, seeking to capitalize on growing economic ties and the imminent activation of the first interbank transfer mechanism between the two countries.

Also, during an Iran-Oman Business Forum in Muscat on Wednesday (May 28), Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said that the value of trade between Iran and Oman can reach \$20 billion-\$30 billion.

Emphasizing the position of Iran and Oman in connecting regional markets, the president said: "We can jointly establish strategic ties with important markets in the region and the world by using our geopolitical capacity."

Referring to his talks with Sultan Haitham bin Tariq the previous day and the agreements reached in these talks, the president stated: "What is most important today is to create infrastructure to strengthen the connection of land, sea and air routes between the two countries, because only in such a context can commercial, scientific, industrial

time.

Highlighting the need to improve Iranian traders' access to UAE business networks, he called for the official introduction of a UAE Chamber representative in Iran and reiterated Iran's interest in opening an ICCIMA office in the Emirates. "We have already formed a joint Iran-UAE chamber in Iran, but its counterpart in the UAE is essential for advancing private sector collaboration," he said.

Ghiafeh also emphasized the potential of B2B meetings between Iranian trade delegations—many of whom travel to the UAE annually—and their Emirati counterparts, urging the UAE Chamber to facilitate such events.

He further called for the implementation of existing trade agreements through coordinated action between the two chambers, and said the proposed working committee could help ensure Iranian goods meet international standards with UAE support. "There is ample room for joint investment, and we should actively tap into it," he added.

Hamid Mohammed bin Salem, Secretary General of the UAE Chambers Federation, welcomed the proposal and confirmed he would convey Iran's request to establish a chamber office in the Emirates. "We are ready to facilitate B2B events and support the development of bilateral trade relations," he said.

He noted that private sector players in both countries are highly capable but require structured support through their respective chambers to maximize potential. Bin Salem added that there is significant room for co-operation in sectors such as logistics, customs, transport, and food products.

He concluded by expressing readiness to share the UAE's private sector experience with Iran and emphasized that re-exporting Iranian goods through the UAE is a viable opportunity—provided Iranian traders adhere to international standards.

and economic cooperation be deepened."

Iran and Oman discussed ways to boost banking ties during a meeting between the Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and Oman's Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion.

According to Oman's state news agency, Qais bin Mohammed al-Yousef held talks on May 27 with Mohammadreza Farzin in Muscat. The meeting took place as part of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's official visit to Oman aimed at strengthening bilateral economic and financial relations.

The two sides reviewed measures to enhance cooperation in trade and investment, ease financial transactions, and streamline trade procedures between the two countries. Discussions also focused on initiatives to support joint economic projects, stimulate bilateral trade, and facilitate private sector exchanges.

Both parties reaffirmed their commitment to continued coordination and cooperation in areas of mutual interest, with a shared goal of strengthening bilateral relations and promoting sustainable economic growth.

The official visit to Oman marks a significant step in the Iranian government's ongoing efforts to strengthen regional ties and deepen bilateral relations with Muscat.

Meanwhile, the ICCIMA head, who had traveled to Muscat at the head of a trade delegation at that time, attended a conference to review trade opportunities between Iran and Oman and presented seven proposals to deepen Iran-Oman relations in the economic field. He believed that moving towards defining joint investment projects is a suitable solution in this direction.



# Nizar Banat Award highlights struggle of Gaza medical workers

## Physicians in Gaza fight on despite brutal attacks

From page 1 ► In an Israeli military raid on Kamal Adwan Hospital, the last operating hospital in northern Gaza in December 2024, Abu Safiya was arrested.

He was taken literally at gunpoint. Abu Safiya experienced torture, incommunicado detention, and interrogations in several Israeli detention sites: Sde Teiman, Ofer Prison, and others.

Although he was suffering from serious medical conditions (enlarged heart, high blood pressure), Abu Safiya, like many prisoners, was given inadequate treatment and suffered abuse.

Abu Safiya's detention under Israel's controversial "unlawful combatant" laws defined by incomplete rights and fair trial standards illustrates how the law works to silence and erase medical professionals.

This personal suffering is compounded by profound family losses. Abu Safiya's son had been killed by an earlier Israeli airstrike on the hospital – and he was still not aware when he was imprisoned and tortured that his mother had died.

However, even with all of this tragedy and suffering, he remained a faithful caregiver, treating injured civilians during the every-day shelling and aerial bombardments, until he too was ordered to stand still.

His resilience represents the immense bravery of Gaza's medical staff working under siege, under threat, and without adequate supplies.

In a similar instance to Abu Safi-



ya's family tragedy, Dr. Marwan Al-Sultan, the hospital manager, was brutally murdered along with his wife and five family members on Wednesday (July 2, 2025) during an Israeli airstrike on their house in the al-Tel Hawwa neighborhood.

This assault not only killed a person committed to healing but also completely devastated an entire family, demonstrating the indiscriminate and brutal violence imposed on medical personnel in Gaza.

### Systematic targeting and legal impunity

These narratives are not isolated acts but constitute a broader and systematic targeting of medical personnel and health facilities in Gaza.

The bombing of Kamal Adwan Hospital and the detention of Dr. Abu Safiya along with other medical staff, wiped out the last big hospital in northern Gaza, depriving thousands of much-needed medical services.

Disregarding international humanitarian laws, which protect

medical workers and facilities during conflict, is a matter of grave concern from the standpoint of legal compliance.

Terming Dr. Abu Safiya and others as "unlawful combatants" strips them of minimum guarantees such as due process, medical assistance, and contact with their families—a disquieting rollback of the very legal protections extended to healthcare workers.

Such labels aid in arbitrarily detaining, torturing, and forcefully disappearing them, contravening human rights and norms of international law that acknowledge medical personnel as neutral actors.

### Symbolism and global implications

The awarding of the Nizar Banat Human Rights Defenders Award to Dr. Abu Safiya is a powerful symbol of international recognition for the courage and sacrifice of Gaza's medical staff.

It highlights the crucial role these individuals play in defend-

ing human dignity amid conflict and calls global attention to their plight.

Such recognition can galvanize international advocacy, increase pressure on Israeli authorities to respect humanitarian norms, and mobilize support for detained and endangered medical workers.

Yet the stories of Abu Safiya and Al-Sultan highlight the urgent need for action at an international level.

Beyond symbolic prizes, there is an essential need for enforcement of international law, accountability for violations, and protection mechanisms for healthcare providers in conflict zones.



Without these, the cycle of violence and impunity will continue to erode the underpinnings of Gaza's medical community and the civilian population that relies on them.

## Bin Farhan precedes Barrack to Beirut to stir up Sunnis in pressure campaign against Hezbollah



Yazid bin Farhan

From page 1 ► Informed sources revealed that the heads of the three branches of government believe Barrack's proposal fully favors Israel, hence, they are seeking to establish a formula that will not drag Lebanon into chaos, which in itself is Israel's best wish.

Reportedly, Barrack's step-for-step move is pushing Lebanon to enforce Hezbollah to evacuate a large area between the Litani River and the Awali River (the Resistance's rear base) as well as Greater Beirut, the southern suburbs of Beirut, and the districts of Mount Lebanon.

Lebanese officials are also seeking to formulate a response that does not—as Barrack hinted—lead to a military escalation amid leaks that Israel is preparing a major operation in Lebanon to complete the destruction of Hezbollah facilities.

This was also hinted by the French ambassador to Beirut, Hervé Magro. Hezbollah MP Ibrahim al-Moussawi responded to him that Resolution 1701 specifically addresses the south of the river, and that Hezbollah has not violated it and has implemented its provisions while Israel continues its attacks.

In an interview with the New York Times, Barrack stated that the ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel was a "complete failure," noting that disarming Hezbollah would require a carrot strategy.

Barrack proposed that this would require the Lebanese army to raid homes, warning that this step could face pushback from the Shiite community, who have long viewed Hezbollah as their best defender both against marginalization within Lebanon and against aggression from Israel.

Barrack revealed that Washington is seeking financial support from Saudi Arabia and Qatar to rebuild areas affected by the war, claiming that "if the Shiites of Lebanon are getting something from this, they will cooperate with it."

Bin Farhan's visit coincided with a meeting of

the five-member committee concerned with the Lebanese file (the U.S., France, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Egypt), which had frozen its meetings since before the election of the president. This comes amid Washington's clear threat that Lebanon must disarm Hezbollah within a timetable not exceeding two months, and that this mechanism must be approved within the cabinet.

Analysts believe that the primary goal of bin Farhan's visit was to arouse the pro-Resistance Sunni figures to be part of the siege on Hezbollah as he held meetings with some of them to promote the narrative that the Shebaa Farms are not Lebanese (although most of its residents are Sunni and possess real estate documents registered with the Sunni Endowment in Lebanon).

Besides, this coincides with a visit arranged by Riyadh by Sunni mufti Abdul Latif Derian to Syria.

Barrack also revealed to the New York Times that Washington seriously objects the Lebanese government's ineffectiveness approach toward Hezbollah, which could expose it to new sanctions as well as the suspension of World Bank loans or grants.

Informed sources reported that Banque du Liban Governor Karim Soueid, who recently visited the U.S., was asked about the measures the bank should take to combat the cash economy and shut down Hezbollah's banking institution, Al-Qard al-Hassan.

ian resistance forces have killed dozens of IOF soldiers and injured many more, using guerrilla warfare tactics.

Almost daily footage has been published of Palestinian resistance fighters targeting IOF gatherings and vehicles, including tanks being blown up in sophisticated operations and ambushes.

The rising death toll among IOF troops has put pressure on the occupation government. On Sunday the regime's media announced another "serious security incident" in Gaza with reports of several IOF casualties by an anti-tank missile.

Daily IOF massacre of starving Palestinian civilians, most of them women and children, have outraged the international community.

## Dozens of Iranian-German citizens file complaint against Merz for backing Israeli war on Iran

Dozens of Iranian-German citizens have signed an online petition and filed a complaint with Germany's Federal Court against Chancellor Friedrich Merz, following his statements regarding Israeli attacks on Iran, according to DW.

The complaint relates to remarks by Chancellor Merz on the sidelines of the Group of Seven (G7) summit and during an interview with Germany's ZDF television channel. In these statements, Merz described Israel's actions in attacking Iran as a "dirty work for all of us."

He also expressed "great respect" for the Israeli military and government responsible for the operation.

In a press release issued by the complainants, Merz's statements were characterized as "public endorsement of a military attack contrary to international law." They further emphasized that the chancellor's choice of words led to "insult and disrespect" toward Iranian-German citizens.

The statement also highlighted the chancellor's responsibility to uphold the German constitution, noting that "his remarks contribute to shaping a collective image of the enemy that could disrupt public peace and create an atmosphere of exclusion and stigmatization."

## Retired Israeli general says Hamas fighters back to pre-war numbers

Israeli (reserve) Major-General Yitzhak Brik says Hamas has regained its pre-war strength, contradicting the Israeli army's accounts of progress in Gaza, calling the reality on the ground "grim."

Writing an opinion article published by Israeli news outlet Maariv, Brik claimed that Hamas now numbers about 40,000 fighters, similar to its strength before the war began in Gaza, with many operatives stationed in tunnels.

"They continue to fight as guerrillas as they have been fighting since the beginning of the war," Brik wrote, Al Jazeera reported.

"They were never an army, and therefore they have not lost their military capabilities as the Chief of Staff [of the Israeli Army] claims."

## Hezbollah chief says won't disarm until Israel leaves southern Lebanon

The Hezbollah chief says the Lebanese group remains open to peace, but it will not disarm or back down from confronting Israel until it ends its air raids and withdraws from southern Lebanon, according to Al Jazeera.

"We cannot be asked to soften our stance or lay down arms while [Israeli] aggression continues," Naim Qassem told thousands of supporters gathered in Beirut's southern suburbs on Sunday for Ashura, an important day in the Shia Muslim calendar. The Beirut area, a Hezbollah stronghold, was draped in yellow banners and echoed with chants of resistance as Qassem delivered his speech, flanked by portraits of his predecessor, Hassan Nasrallah, who was assassinated by Israel in September last year.

## Ansarallah leader: We are 'obligated' to confront US, Israeli crimes

Yemen's Ansarallah leader Abdel-Malik al-Houthi said on Sunday that Israel, the U.S. and their allies are considered a "serious threat for the Muslim ummah" who are trying to erase the religious identity of nations and belittle them through undermining their values and taking their resources.

"What the enemy is committing, including what it is doing in Palestine through genocide and all

forms of injustice and crime, obligates us, as a matter of faith-based responsibility, to confront American and Israeli tyranny," al-Houthi said, according to Al Jazeera.

Ansarallah had also organized another large rally on Friday, as part of weekly demonstrations to protest the war on Gaza and attacks on Yemen.

## UK re-establishes relations with Syria after 14 years

The UK has fully re-established relations with Syria 14 years after severing ties with the former government of Bashar al-Assad, MEE reported.

Foreign Secretary David Lammy was photographed shaking hands with the country's new leader Ahmed al-Sharaa in Damascus.

"The UK is re-establishing diplomatic relations because it is in our interests to support the new government to deliver their commitment to build a stable, more secure and prosperous future for all Syrians," Lammy said in a statement.

Photos released by Sharaa's office also showed Lammy meeting Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani.

The presidency said they discussed "bilateral ties... and ways of strengthening cooperation, as well as regional and international developments".

Lammy said the UK wanted to back a stable Syria as a means of "reducing the risk of irregular migration, ensuring the destruction of chemical weapons" and "tackling the threat of terrorism".

## UK court rejects Palestine Action's bid to pause govt ban as 'terrorist group'

The UK government will, for the first time, legally redefine a non-violent protest group, Palestine Action, as a "terrorist organisation" after a last-minute legal challenge to suspend the group's ban under anti-terrorism laws failed at a high court. As of Saturday, membership in, or showing support for, Palestine Action will become a criminal offence, TRT Global reported.

The group, known for its direct-action campaigns targeting Israeli weapons factories and their UK supply chains, is the first protest organization to be banned under the UK Terrorism Act.

Lawyers acting on behalf of Huda Ammori, the group's co-founder, had sought to prevent the ban from taking effect, arguing for interim relief ahead of a scheduled judicial review.

However, following a hearing at the high court on Friday, Justice Martin Chamberlain declined to grant the application. He said that an assessment on whether to ban the group had been made as early as March.

"This is the first time in our history that a direct action civil disobedience group, which does not advocate for violence, has been sought to be proscribed as terrorists," Raza Husain KC, representing Ammori, told the court.

He said his client has been "inspired" by a long tradition of nonviolent protest in the UK, "from the suffragettes to anti-apartheid activists to Iraq War activists." Four Palestine Action activists were remanded in custody on Thursday after appearing in court.

## Texas flood death toll hits 50 as search intensifies

Twenty-seven girls remained missing from a riverside summer camp in the US state of Texas on Sunday, almost two days after the area was hit by devastating floods, DW reported.

As the death toll from the disaster reached at least 50, multiple heavy rain and flash flood warnings remained in place across central Texas.

"We have recovered 43 deceased individuals in Kerr County," said Larry Leitha, the sheriff of the flood-ravaged region. "Among these who are deceased, we have 28 adults and 15 children."

At least 7 others died from the floods in other Texas counties, news agencies reported, and at least 13 others were missing from those areas.

Leitha added that the remains of 17 other people were still to be identified.



## Early Islamic metallurgical complex discovered at Masouleh; strengthens revised World Heritage file



TEHRAN – A joint Iranian-Chinese archaeological team has uncovered a significant early Islamic-era settlement and a sponge iron smelting workshop at the Khanbaji Sara site within the Cultural Landscape of Masouleh in northern Iran.

The discovery directly supports urgent efforts to strengthen Masouleh's UNESCO World Heritage nomination following its 2023 deferral by the World Heritage Committee in Riyadh. The deferral resulted primarily from ambiguities regarding the site's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), particularly inadequate documentation of its unique metallurgical heritage.

The collaboration involves Chinese archaeologists from the Academy of Archaeology partnering with Iran's Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism (RICHT), formalizing ties based on historical Silk Road connections between Hyrcanian area (Gilan & ...) and East Asia.

During two fieldwork seasons, the team revisited metallurgical sites originally documented by Fereidoun Biglari of the National Museum of Iran. Six sites were selected for geophysical surveys by Shahid Beheshti University experts. These revealed substantial subsurface evidence of iron production, establishing that Masouleh's landscape was shaped by complex industrial activity evolving from Parthian and early Islamic times through the Qajar era, forming a network of satellite sites around the historic city. In addition to the previously mentioned iron smelting sites, a large complex of workshops was recently documented at Gilevand Rud. This discovery further reinforces the industrial scale of Masouleh's metallurgical landscape and necessitates a revision of the proposed core zone for world heritage by Iranian cultural heritage authorities to incorporate this significant site complex.

The second season focused on Khanbaji Sara, confirming its significance as an early Islamic to Seljuk-period industrial settlement. Excavations demonstrated continuous technological evolution within a regional smelting network centered on Kohneh Masouleh. A key trench revealed evidence of all four iron smelting stages alongside silica glass and copper residues in a centralized waste depot. Substantial iron slag volumes

and ceramic equipment indicate centuries of workshop operation. These findings illuminate the evolutionary process of multi-stage furnaces within Masouleh's cultural landscape, with Khanbaji Sara's early forms preceding the more advanced designs later employed in Kohneh Masouleh and the historic town center. Crucially, they address the nomination's original deficiency by demonstrating Masouleh's technological significance through its multi-stage sponge iron furnaces—a core component of its revised OUV argument.

The nomination of the Cultural Landscape of Masouleh was deferred at the 2023 session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The decision was mainly due to ambiguities regarding the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the site. While there had been significant support among committee members for a “referral” decision, the lack of evidence in the initial and main file made a procedural change of decision challenging.

The initial preparation of the file coincided with a change in the Iranian government and leadership within the Ministry of Cultural Heritage. As a result, the dossier lacked coherence, with essential documentation missing and multiple, sometimes conflicting narratives presented. Most critically, the technological and historical significance of Masouleh's multi-stage sponge iron smelting furnaces — a core component of its potential OUV — was underrepresented.

In response, Iran's Cultural Heritage Deputy formed a dedicated revision team. Heeding ICOMOS recommendations for international collaboration, Iran secured a partnership with China's Academy of Archaeology for archaeological investigations, with Iran's National Museum and Center for Archaeological Research leading domestic efforts. The revised strategy leverages the Khanbaji Sara findings and ongoing interdisciplinary research to articulate the region's technological significance and how this industrial legacy shaped Masouleh's cultural landscape.

With continued research and international collaboration, the revised file aims for successful inscription at a future World Heritage Committee session.

## Blue Shield! Does it shield Iran’s cultural heritage in wartime?

TEHRAN—Wars destroy not only people but also culture, historical memory, and identity of nations, and in the meantime, the “Blue Shield” can be a kind of shield against the cultural heritage of any country.

According to Mehr news agency, the destruction of cultural heritage during armed conflict goes beyond physical damage to buildings and objects. This action directly affects the identity, dignity and spirit of a society.

Wars not only kill people, they also destroy culture, historical memory, and the identity of nations. In the midst of armed crises, it is this “Blue Shield” that protects cultural heritage from destruction.

But Iran, with dozens of World Heritage sites and thousands of national monuments, has not yet been placed under this shield as it should be, even though its committee was formed in Iran a few years ago.

The Blue Shield network, often referred to

as the cultural equivalent of the Red Cross, was formed in response to the changes in international law and today works globally to protect cultural heritage in emergency situations. “We are a non-governmental, non-profit, international organization committed to the protection of heritage across the world.”

This reportedly includes museums, monuments, archaeological sites, archives, libraries and audio-visual material, and significant natural areas, as well as intangible heritage.

The work of the Blue Shield is underpinned by international law – in particular, the 1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols of 1954 and 1999, which are considered to be part of international humanitarian law (IHL).

Was Blue Shield used in Iran during the Zionist regime's 12-day war on Iran?

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

# Muharram rituals across Iran blend faith with culture, devotion, and heritage

Iran, with its deep-rooted history and vibrant cultural landscape, becomes a living canvas of grief, remembrance, and unity during the month of Muharram -- the first month of the Islamic calendar.

For travelers interested in religious culture, intangible heritage, and dramatic expressions of collective memory, Muharram offers a rare opportunity to witness some of the most powerful and symbolic rituals performed across the ancient country.

Mourning ceremonies dedicated to the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (PBUH), the beloved grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), take on unique forms shaped by regional customs, local traditions, and heartfelt expressions of faith. These ceremonies reach their emotional peak during the ninth and tenth days of Muharram, known respectively as Tasu'a and Ashura, commemorating the Battle of Karbala in 680 CE.

Here are some of the most significant and visually arresting Muharram rituals to explore:

### Mud-rubbing ceremony in Khorramabad

Perhaps one of the most visually intense mourning rituals takes place in Khorramabad, the capital of Lorestan province, where mourners partake in the symbolic act of “Gel Mali” -- mud rubbing.

This emotionally charged ceremony begins on the seventh day of Muharram and sees men donning clean white clothing after ritual grooming, only to cover themselves entirely with mud mixed in pools near the local Tekyehs (mourning halls). Some immerse themselves completely as an act of extreme devotion and sorrow. Fires are often lit in the cold seasons to warm the mourners as they chant, beat their chests, and form circles around the flames.

This ritual, symbolic of complete humility and mourning, extends beyond Khorramabad to other cities in Lorestan, and even parts of Kermanshah and Ilam provinces.

TEHRAN—Shush, which embraces UNESCO-listed Susa in southwestern Iran, is considered one of history's beating hearts and one of the most ancient human settlements not only for Khuzestan people but also for all Iranians, wrote a Shush lawmaker in Majlis.

Mohammad Ka'b-Amir also said that it is the dynamic identity of originality and civilization, IRIB wrote.

He added that in today's world, what establishes and sustains the capabilities of nations is not simply the size of the economy and the extent of geographical borders; rather, it is the depth of civilization and historical values and narratives that a nation can present itself on a global level.

In this regard, registration of Susa as a UNESCO World Heritage site is a cultural achievement and an opportunity for redefining Iran's status in cultural equations and relations of the new century.

Susa, which served as the capital city of the Elamites, Achaemenids, and Sassanids, can play a fundamental role in the line of balanced development, cultural diplomacy, and production of soft power.

## Babol’s historical dome to undergo restoration, minister says

TEHRAN—The dome of Imamzadeh Qasem, which surmounts a 600-year-old holy shrine in Babol, northern Mazandaran province, should undergo restoration, said Cultural Heritage Minister Raza Salehi-Amiri on Friday.

Speaking on the sidelines of his visit to the shrine, the minister said the Archaeological Research Institute had been tasked with preparing a renovation plan for this monument, IRNA reported.

He explained that the Babol governor has pursued renovation



Mourners honor the memory of Imam Hussein (AS), the third Shia Imam, during a traditional Nakhl-Bardari ritual in Yazd, central Iran.

### ‘Shah Hussein’ chant of Tabriz

In the northwestern city of Tabriz, the “Shah Hussein” ritual is a deeply symbolic procession that begins days before Muharram and culminates on Ashura.

Dressed in black, mourners link together by placing their hands behind one another's backs, forming human chains that move rhythmically while chanting “Shah Hussein” and “Woe Hussein.” Each mourner also rhythmically moves a small wooden piece from the top of their head down to their feet, symbolizing the journey to Karbala in solidarity with Imam Hussein's followers.

Accompanied in recent years by drums and cymbals, the ceremony still preserves its heartfelt soul through the resonant voices of the mourners—a sight both solemn and mesmerizing for any visitor.

### Grand processions in Zanjan

Zanjan, in Iran's central west, is often referred to as the “Capital of Husayni Passion” due to its large-scale and spiritually immersive Muharram events.

The focal points of mourning are the Husayniyya-e A'zam and Zainabiyya-e A'zam, where ceremonies commence from the beginning of Muharram but dramatically intensify on Tasu'a night.

The processions spill into the city's streets, as thousands of mourners chant in Azarbaijani language, beat their chests, and

form a moving sea of black-clad devotees. The blend of music, poetry, and collective emotion creates an unforgettable spiritual and cultural experience.

### Nakhl-Bardari ritual in Yazd

In the desert city of Yazd, the Nakhl-Bardari (literary Palm-bearing), stands out for its symbolic richness and visual splendor.

The “palm” is a massive wooden structure adorned with mirrors, fabrics, and religious symbols. It is ceremonially carried through the streets on Tasu'a and Ashura, symbolizing the transportation of Imam Hussein's body after martyrdom.

Yazd's mourning also includes other unique traditions such as passion plays (Ta'ziyeh), rattle-playing, and water-carrier processions. The city's historic Husayniyyas serve as dramatic backdrops for ceremonies filled with poetry, devotion, and ancient pageantry.

### Passion plays in Tafresh

In Tafresh, a city known as the cradle of Iranian passion plays, the art of Ta'ziyeh -- a religious dramatic performance recounting the martyrdom of Imam Hussein -- is taken to its highest level.

These theatrical renditions, performed in local Takkiyas and Husayniyyas, captivate audiences with their poetic dialogues, rich symbolism, and powerful emo-

tions.

Despite the story's familiarity, the emotional intensity draws audiences year after year. The city's long history with Ta'ziyeh has helped nurture skilled performers, turning each play into a living tradition and cultural landmark.

### Mourning traditions in Abyaneh

In the picturesque village of Abyaneh, nestled in the central highlands, Muharram mourning rituals are imbued with timeless elegance. Residents, known for preserving their unique traditional clothing, carry out ceremonies in the same garments they've worn for generations.

The ceremony involves villagers walking through the town, visiting homes of the recently bereaved, offering condolences, and sharing in grief. Surrounded by mud-brick architecture and narrow ancient alleys, these ceremonies offer a poetic union of history, architecture, and spiritual reverence.

### Mourning rituals united by devotion

Although the forms of expression vary --from mud-smeared bodies to stylized chants, from mirror-adorned palm structures to heartfelt lamentations -- the core spirit of Muharram in Iran is one of unity, sacrifice, and remembrance. Every region brings its distinct color and custom, yet all echo the same heartfelt devotion to Imam Hussein and his companions.

Whether in the alleyways of Yazd, the plains of Lorestan, the Takkiyas of Tafresh, or the historic streets of Tabriz, Muharram in Iran is not merely a series of ceremonies -- it is a national epic told in countless local dialects of devotion.

For cultural tourists, photographers, scholars, or spiritual seekers, traveling through Iran during Muharram offers an unparalleled opportunity to witness a living heritage that continues to inspire resilience, faith, and community.

ness for multilateral cooperation with a focus on the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts in unified management, wise exploitation, and future-oriented protection of Shush and Tchogha Zanbil sites.

“This readiness includes supporting the infrastructural projects, attracting domestic and international investment, promoting the world heritage sites, launching specialized museums, promoting cultural events with participation of nongovernmental organizations, and compiling comprehensive programs for training and employment.”

“Today, we should move toward global streaming. If we know Shush correctly, the world will know us through Shush.”

Shush is overlapped with the ancient city of Susa, which is now a UNESCO World Heritage site. Situated between the Karkheh and Dez rivers in southwest Iran, Susa was once one of the most important and glamorous cities of the ancient world. Susa, which has been inhabited for thousands of years, embraces several layers of superimposed urban settlements from around the late 5th millennium BC until the 13th century CE.

used to materialize this goal.

He elaborated that sections of this brick dome have been destroyed, and water penetration to the dome's body is obvious.

The delay in renovation of this monument has led to penetration of humidity inside the dome and growing of various plants on the dome, he warned. As a result, a number of mirrorworks and tiles have been separated and collapsed, he added.

This historical structure in the city of Babol dates back to



# Iran submits proposals at ECO forum for women’s empowerment

TEHRAN – The Vice-President for Women and Family Affairs has made several proposals at the Economic Cooperation Organization’s first forum on women, held in Lachin city, Azerbaijan, for strengthening regional cooperation to empower women.

Addressing the event, which was held on July 2, Behzad Azarsa elaborated on Iran’s policies and measures, as well as noticeable achievements in empowering women, ISNA reported.

Increasing the share of women in government management positions, their growing presence in science and technology, developing women’s cooperatives and businesses in rural regions, and providing financial facilities and training programs to improve their skills were among the country’s comprehensive approaches to foster women’s active participation in economic and social development.

To promote women’s empowerment, the official put forward strategies such as developing a regional ECO Women’s Platform for sustainable development; launching a virtual network to connect women-owned businesses, holding educational workshops on digital skills and green development; allocating the ECO Green Credit Fund to women to support their projects; providing financial support to women’s initiatives in the fields of renewable energy, smart agriculture, and sustainable tourism; as well as holding annual high-level meetings of women in



ECO member states.

Highlighting the need for solidarity and cooperation among member states to address regional challenges, Azarsa voiced Iran’s readiness to host the first annual high-level meeting of ECO Women next year.

The current administration focuses on empowering women in social and economic areas, as well as improving their access to social services and facilities through implementing certain national programs.

“Iran has always focused on programs that empower women, particularly those who are heads of household, economically and socially. Actions taken by the country have always aimed to promote women’s status by observing the principles of the constitution and Islamic teachings,” Mehr news agency quoted Zahra Behrouz-Azar, the Vice President for Women and Family Affairs, said while addressing the

Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference in Thailand last year.

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) convened the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing +30 review in collaboration with UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, in Bangkok, from November 19 to 21, 2024.

Referring to Iran’s remarkable achievements in education, health, science, technology, and entrepreneurship, she underscored the prominent role of Iranian women in these fields.

Presently, more than 70 women are acting as vice president, minister, spokesperson, and other key positions in the government.

## ECO Women Forum

The first ECO Women Forum was held under the theme “Enhancing the Role of Women for Building a Sustainable and

Climate-Resilient Future.” The event brought together women leaders from across the ECO region and international organizations to foster dialogue, cooperation, and knowledge exchange.

ECO Secretary General Asad M. Khan highlighted the critical role of women in sustainable development, climate resilience, and economic growth, while also calling for integrating women’s voices into policy-making and enhancing their leadership to address global challenges.

He further noted the importance of women’s perspectives in shaping the Strategic Objectives of ECO Vision 2035, which will serve as a roadmap for inclusive and sustainable development for the ECO region.

The Forum featured three thematic panel sessions that emphasized the transformative role of women in climate resilience, urban development, and sustainable growth. Discussions highlighted the need for women’s leadership in environmental governance, gender-responsive climate policies, and access to green finance.

As the Forum concluded, participants reaffirmed the importance of translating dialogue into action through coordinated policies, regional cooperation, and accountable implementation. Key discussions included equipping women with green skills, enhancing their leadership in community planning, and improving access to education, health, and governance roles.

open spaces, although they have been tested in limited places.

Despite international sanctions and restrictions, Iran has been able to take steps in areas such as satellite monitoring, bio-mulches, and scientific desertification. However, to be able to pursue the path, sustained financial support, widespread implementation, and regional cooperation with neighboring countries are required.

## ‘Sharing expertise, regional co-op helps mitigate SDSs’

Sand and dust storms are frequent in the region, affecting almost all the regional countries. Independent studies by these countries show that while the sources of the SDSs are scattered in the region, there are potential dust sources in each nation with transboundary implications, Mehr news agency quoted Sediqeh Torabi, an official with the Department of Environment (DOE), as saying.

Exchanging information and promoting regional collaborations will contribute to reducing the adverse impacts of sand and dust storms (SDSs), Torabi added.

She made the remarks following the first regional dialogue on enhancing inter-regional co-op on SDSs, which was held on February 18 and 19 in Doha, Qatar.

During the 38th meeting of the Regional Organization for the Protection of Marine Environment (ROPME) executive committee (EXCOME 38), Iran put forward a proposal to incorporate combating sand and dust storms (SDSs) in the Organization’s strategic plan.



nization (WMO) to upgrade these systems.

Air Pollution Warning Apps: Several native apps, like “Iran Meteorology” software, “Zarin Meteorology” software, or the web-based systems of the Department of Environment, have been developed in the country to display data from air quality monitoring stations.

Restoring water resources and wetlands employing new technologies: Restoring Hour al-Azim, Bakhtegan, and Jazmourian wetlands, implementing smart water use projects with drainage control and wastewater treatment, and recycling urban water to re-enter the wetland bed have been applied as solutions to combat fine dust.

Green belt plan: the strategy focuses on planting low-water and drought-resistant plants, such as ash trees or bitter olives, to establish green belts around Tehran and industrial cities to control SDS hazards.

Urban air purifiers: Iranian knowledge-based companies have developed air filters for public places, schools, and even

## واکسن نورا مرحله پایانی فاز اول تست انسانی را طی می کند

تهران - رئیس دانشگاه علوم پزشکی بقیه الله گفت: تزریق دز اول واکسن نورا به تمام داوطلبان انجام شد و دز دوم هم به نیمه تزریق رسیده است. دکتر حسن ابوالقاسمی روز شنبه در گفت و گو با ایرنا، روند فعالیت کارآزمایی بالینی واکسن نورا را مطلوب ارزیابی کرد و افزود: این واکسن به نحو مطلوبی درحال طی کردن فاز اول تست انسانی است. وی با یادآوری اینکه طبق برنامه ریزی انجام شده طول دوره مرحله اول تست انسانی ۲ ماه است، ادامه داد: تاکنون بیش از یک ماه از این دوره سپری شده است.

## “Noora” vaccine successfully passing first phase of clinical trial

“Noora” coronavirus vaccine, domestically made by Baqiayatallah University of Medical Sciences affiliated to the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), is successfully passing the first phase of the clinical trial.

The vaccine is well undergoing the first phase of human testing, he noted, adding, the first phase of human testing lasts 2 months, so far more than a month has passed, IRNA reported on Saturday.

## ENGLISH IN USE LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## World Rural Development Day highlights role of communities

TEHRAN – Declared by the UN General Assembly as World Rural Development Day, July 6 highlights the vital roles of rural communities in agricultural development, food security, and ecological stewardship, and calls for their empowerment through access to land, decent work, and inclusion in decision-making.

It reaffirms the General Assembly’s unwavering commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This declaration, steeped in the spirit of international solidarity, acknowledges the deep-rooted challenge of rural poverty and the necessity of addressing it as a precondition for achieving the broader goals of economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

Drawing from a lineage of global declarations and resolutions—from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda—the resolution seeks to shine a sustained light on the lives and struggles of those who till the soil, harvest the seas, and nurture the land in rural corners of the world.

At its heart, the resolution confronts the disproportionate burden of poverty, hunger, and exclusion borne by rural communities—especially by women, Indigenous Peoples, and youth—whose resilience is too often overlooked.

By endorsing an integrated approach to rural development that embraces traditional knowledge, gender equity, and digital inclusion, the resolution envisions a future in which rural prosperity is no longer an elusive ideal but a shared global achievement.

The observance of World Rural Development Day, as outlined, is not intended as a mere ceremonial gesture but as a catalyst for meaningful action. Governments, civil society, international organizations, and academic institutions are invited to partake in the annual commemoration through concrete activities, policy dialogue, and grassroots initiatives.

Rural Empowerment – Global Impact is a motto that highlights that empowering and strengthening rural communities will contribute to global goals like economic growth, sustainability, food security, and the eradication of poverty.

With a clear emphasis on voluntary contributions and locally driven strategies, the resolution entrusts this Day with the power to elevate rural voices, galvanize development efforts, and renew the world’s collective promise: to leave no one behind, not even in the most remote and forgotten places of the

earth.

Rural development isn’t just about geography—it’s about poverty, equity, food security, and sustainability. Here’s why it matters: 80 percent of the world’s poorest people live in rural areas, earning less than \$2.15/day.

More than one billion people face acute multidimensional poverty—over half are children (UNDP 2024).

Half of rural populations lack health coverage (vs 22 percent in urban areas).

Family farms produce 80 percent of the world’s food (FAO).

Women make up 43 percent of the agricultural workforce, yet face barriers to land, credit, and tech.

Rural areas sit on the climate front line, enduring droughts, floods, and extreme heat.

In 2024, 83 percent of urban residents used the internet versus 50 percent in rural areas

With fewer than five years remaining to realize the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals, the path ahead remains uncertain and fraught with fragility. In this narrowing window of opportunity, World Rural Development Day emerges as more than a date on the calendar—it is a global reckoning, a solemn pause to reflect and reorient. It calls upon the international community to ensure that rural communities, so often overlooked and underserved, are not merely remembered but placed firmly at the center of sustainable progress.

## Empowering rural communities essential

In February, the Vice President for Women and Family Affairs, Zahra Behrouz-Azar, said empowering rural communities is a prerequisite for the economic and cultural development of the country.

Referring to the difference between the concept of village and local community, the official said, “The rural areas’ economic activities involve agriculture, animal husbandry, crafts, and natural resources.

However, the local community has a broader concept and includes different groups of people, not only in rural areas, but also in urban neighborhoods, nomadic areas, and even digital communities. Local communities rely on social interactions, traditions, beliefs, and shared human relationships.”

The official made the remarks via a video conference while addressing an event called “university, social responsibility, and empowering local areas”, Mehr news agency reported.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](https://tehrantimes.com))

## “Iran” and “homeland” in Muharram mourning spotlight

TEHRAN – This year, the month of Muharram began as the martyrdom of a large number of people during the Zionist regime’s aggression against the country gave a special atmosphere to the mourning ceremonies.

A number of eulogists have used explicit themes of “Iran,” “homeland,” and the martyrs of the recent war in their ceremonies.

Mahmoud Karimi’s performance titled “O Iran, Iran”, Meysam Motiei’s performance titled “Iran Became Karbala”, and Mojtaba Ramezani’s performance titled “Here is Iran” are among the most prominent of these works that can have a significant impact on social cohesion and solidarity.

Many social media users, social activists, and even politicians have welcomed this approach and have considered the more serious introduction of patriotic themes into Ashura rituals as a positive step for boosting the society’s unity.

A latest survey conducted by the research division of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) shows that at least 77 percent of Iranians say they felt proud of the country’s response to the recent Israeli aggression.

The countrywide survey, carried out in late June 2025 across Tehran and 32 other cities, included a sample size of 4,943 individuals aged 15 and older.

Of those surveyed, 51.6 percent were male and 48.4 percent female respondents, Press

TV reported.

On the extent of pride they felt on Iran’s retaliatory missile and drone strikes in response to the Zionist regime’s unprovoked and unlawful aggression, 77 percent of respondents said they felt “very proud.”

It shows national support for Operation True Promise III, launched by the Iranian armed forces led by the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), which united the country against the aggressor.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei attended an Ashura night ritual in the Imam Khomeini Husseiniyeh in Tehran.

The mourning ceremony was attended by a large gathering of people from various walks of life and senior officials.

The Leader did not address the ceremony, but, according to attendees, he called prominent eulogist Mahmoud Karimi over and whispered something in his ear.

As he began his eulogy, Karimi shared with the audience, “His Eminence told me to recite this: ‘You will remain in my soul and heart, O homeland...’”

Israel killed some 935 people during its 12-day war against Iran. High-ranking military officials, nuclear scientists, and civilians are among the victims. Tel Aviv asked for a halt in fighting on June 24 after Iran pounded large swathes of Israeli cities.





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

**Editorial Dept.:** Fax: (+98 21) 43051601  
**Email:** info@tehrantimes.com  
**Switchboard Operator:** Tel: (+98 21) 43051000  
**Advertisements Dept.:** Tel: (+98 21) 43051430  
**Public Relations Office:** Tel: (+98 21) 43051505  
**Subscription & Distribution Dept.:** Tel: (+98 21) 43051430

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

JULY 7, 2025

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*Success is the result of foresight and resolution, foresight depends upon deep thinking and planning and the most important factor of planning is to keep your secrets to yourself.*

**Imam Ali (AS)**

**Prayer Times** › Noon:12:08    Evening: 19:45    Dawn: 3:07 (tomorrow)    Sunrise: 4:53 (tomorrow)

## BRICS Literary Award to promote cultural exchange, traditional values

TEHRAN – The call for the inaugural BRICS Literary Award has been officially announced, marking a significant new development in the realm of global literature.

The award aims to strengthen cultural exchanges among BRICS member countries and highlight the importance of literature in fostering mutual understanding, the organizers have announced.

The announcement was made during an official press conference in Moscow last week, where Masoud Ahmadvand, the Cultural Attaché of Iran in Russia, participated as a member of the judging panel, IRNA reported.

The award aims to foster peaceful dialogue through literature and will be granted to authors whose works reflect the traditions and values of the BRICS nations, including both original books and recent translated works, the report added.

The judging panel comprises distinguished literary experts from all member states, with each country allowed to nominate up to three authors.

As part of the award process, three writers from each country will be nominated. The selection process for the winner will unfold in three stages throughout 2025: the initial longlist will be announced in September in Brazil, followed by the shortlist in October in Shanghai, and the ultimate winners will be announced in November at a ceremony in Moscow, with a special prize to be awarded at the BRICS Artistic Festival in Khabarovsk, Russia.

The laureate will receive a prize of one million rubles, financed by the Eurasian Book Agency. The idea for the BRICS Literary Award was first proposed in November 2024, during

Russia’s presidency of the group, at the BRICS Summit held in Moscow under the theme of Traditional Values.

At that time, it was emphasized that this literary initiative symbolizes the member countries’ commitment to cultural exchange and highlights the vital role of literature in promoting humanitarian cooperation among nations.

Iran’s Cultural Attaché in Russia, Masoud Ahmadvand, highlighted the importance of literature in promoting peace and mutual understanding, stating, “A writer’s pen is sharper than a sword. Literature can foster peaceful dialogue, support nations, and give voice to new perspectives.”

The award also aims to combat prejudice, build empathy, and deepen mutual respect among nations, as emphasized by Sergei Stepashin, Head of the Russian Book Union. He noted that the award seeks to expand intercultural dialogue and promote traditional values, with a focus on fostering common ground.

Dmitry Kuznetsov, Chairman of the BRICS research group on shared values, announced that the list of values—mutual respect, solidarity, peace-seeking, kindness, and development—will be unveiled at the next BRICS summit in Brazil in September. Additionally, he announced the creation of the BRICS Literature Network, an international association of writers and publishers from member states.

This initiative underscores BRICS’s commitment to using literature as a means of fostering solidarity, understanding, and shared cultural values among its member nations.

## Ruholamin unveils new Ashura paintings depicting key moments of mourning, sacrifice

TEHRAN – Iranian artist Hasan Ruholamin has unveiled three new paintings commemorating the events of Ashura, marking the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS), the third Imam and grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), along with his 72 loyal companions.

These artworks aim to deepen the emotional connection and reflection on the sacrifices made during this sacred occasion, Mehr reported on Sunday.

One of the artworks is dedicated to the farewell of Imam Hussein (AS) with his elder son, Ali Akbar (AS), the report added.

The painting captures the profound moment of farewell of Imam Hussein (AS) with Ali Akbar (AS). Accompanying the painting, Ruholamin composed a poetic verse that captures a segment of the mourning recitation for Ali Akbar (AS). Penned by Mohammad Sohrabi, the verse reads: “I ran behind you, lost my dignity and pride / Your gaze overlooks my tears, see my age and my plight.” This piece highlights the intense emotional suffering endured by Imam Hussein (AS) and his family.

Renowned for his mastery in depicting visual lamentations of the Battle of Karbala, Ruholamin also released another painting depicting of the mourning scene for Imam Hussein (AS)’s six-month-old son, Ali Asghar (AS).

Titled “Sanad” (Pledge), the painting commemorates the martyrdom of Ali Asghar (AS). This painting is illustrating the sorrowful scene of Imam Hussein (AS) holding his thirsty infant, Ali Asghar (AS), in his arms, emphasizing the innocence and tragedy of that moment.

Ruholamin explained this oil painting as: “The ‘Sanad’ portrays the return of Imam Hussein (AS) and Ali Asghar (AS) to the tents,



with Sakina, Imam Hussein’s daughter, welcoming them— ‘Peace be upon the infant who was struck with grief...’” This scene reflects the profound grief and resilience of the family of the Prophet, emphasizing themes of sacrifice and love.

Another painting, titled “Amanat” (Trust), illustrates the return of the body of Imam Hussein’s nephew Qasim ibn Hasan (AS) by Imam Hussein (AS) to the tents on the Day of Ashura. This painting captures the somber moment of mourning, conveying the immense loss experienced by the family and followers of Imam Hussein (AS). Through these artworks, Ruholamin continues to honor the memory of Ashura, inspiring reflection on faith, sacrifice, and resilience.

Ruholamin, who is best known for his paintings on early Islamic historical events, has created a captivating collection of artworks dedicated to the theme of Ashura over the years.

One of the works of the collection is “Daddy” depicting the Imam in his final farewell to his three-year-old daughter Roqayyeh (SA).

The 110 X 130-centimeter oil painting shows the Imam embracing Roqayyeh before going to the battlefield while his horse, named “Zuljinah”, and the enemy forces can be seen in the background.

The collection also includes “The Sky Fell Down”, “The Farewell”, “After Abbas (AS)”, “Are You My Brother?”, “Monastery of the Monk” and “Beginning of Silence”.

“The Sky Fell Down”, featuring the last moments of the life of Imam Hussein (AS), is a highlight of the collection.

The painting depicts the Imam on his horse, severely injured by arrows, while the enemy is waiting to bring down the Imam.

Ruholamin spent nine months doing the painting, which was unveiled at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art in November 2018.



“Monastery of the Monk” is another artwork from his Ashura collection.

The painting depicts the meeting of a monk with Khawli ibn Yazid al-Asbahi, a member of Umar ibn Sad’s army, when he was taking the head of Imam Hussein (AS) to Yazid ibn Muawiya, the second caliph of the Umayyad dynasty, after the Ashura event.

Another work of artist on Ashura is a digital painting entitled “The Bravery of Hussein”, which portrays Imam Hussein (AS)’s courageous battle with the army of Yazid ibn Muawiya on the 10th day of the month of Muharram in the year 61 AH of the Islamic calendar (680 CE).

The painting depicts the remarkable battle of Imam Hussein (AS) on the day of Ashura amidst a sea of arrows, spears, and swords and this awe-inspiring display of courage has since become an enduring symbol of bravery.

The artist has also blended modern events and with stories from Islamic history in some of his works.

## Culture minister issues message on Pen Day

TEHRAN – The Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi issued a message on the occasion of the National Pen Day in Iran, which is celebrated on Tir 14 in the Iranian calendar, usually falling on July 5.

Salehi started the message by describing the Pen Day as “a day to honor thought, meaning, and creation; a day that offers an opportunity to pause and reflect once again on the lofty station of the writers, poets, thinkers, and bearers of the pen in this land”.

“The pen is not merely a tool for writing, but the trustee of truth, the awakened conscience of society, and the eloquent voice of our culture and identity. When the ink of the pen is blended with the people’s pain and hope for the future, it writes history and illuminates the horizon,”

Mehr quoted the minister as saying.

“In these days, when Iran is witnessing national solidarity and the social maturity of its people, I salute all those pens that have written about Iran and for Iran — those who, with responsibility, courage, and honesty, have narrated the truth and safeguarded hope,” the minister stressed.

“On Pen Day, I bow in respect to all those who, on this sacred path, quietly and with dedication, have kept the torch of knowledge alight — those who use words not to adorn, but to elucidate the truth,” Salehi noted.

“I honor this blessed day and ask the Almighty for ever-growing success for all the people of the pen, culture, art, and media

in safeguarding the truth and enlightening minds,” he concluded.

The Pen Day was first marked on the Persian calendar in 2002 by the Iran Pen Society and the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution.

However, the occasion is rooted in the ancient era of Hooshang, the second king of the Pishdadian Dynasty, who gathered the writers and honored them in the Tirgan Festival celebrated on July 4. This historical connection is why the Iran Pen Society chose this date to commemorate the day.

The Iran Pen Society views this day as an opportunity to recognize the dedication of writers who promote the culture and art of Iran.

## 19 films from Iran participating in 20th International Festival of Family and Children’s Films in Russia

TEHRAN – A total of 19 films from Iran are present in the 20th Within the Family International Festival of Family and Children’s Films that is underway in Moscow, Russia.

The Iranian participants include one feature film and 18 short films. “In the Arms of Tree” written and directed by Babak Khajehpasha is the only feature film from Iran selected for the main program of the festival, ILNA reported.

“In the Arms of Tree” tells the story of Kimia and Farid, a couple married for 12 years, whose life crisis shatters their children’s world, children who know nothing but simplicity and kindness in life.

The film explores themes of familial relationships and emotional reconnections between parents and children. At the heart of the story is Kimia, a northern mother grappling with the trauma of past abuse and a debilitating fear of distance. Her husband, Farid, an Azeri father with a passion for travel and medicinal plants, adds to the tension as the couple prepares for a separation exercise.

The film captures the impact of marital discord on children, illustrating how their lives can be disturbed by their parents’ struggles. Ultimately, it underscores the importance of love, connection, and the delicate balance needed to preserve a family in crisis.

Maral Baniadam, Javad Ghamati, Rouhollah Zamani, Ahoura Lotfi, and Rayan Lotfi are in the cast among others.

A production of 2023, the film won two Crystal Simorgh awards for Best First Film and Best Screenplay upon its premiere at the 41st Fajr Film Festival. Moreover, it was named the best film in the international section of the first edition of Iran’s Havva International Film Festival in 2023.

It also received the Special Jury Prize at the 10th Asian World Film Festival in California, the U.S., in November 2024, and won the Best World Cinema Feature Film Award at the 22nd Chennai International Film Festival in Chennai, India, in December 2024.

The movie has been screened in several international festivals in

countries such as China, Switzerland, and the UAE. It also opened the Kazan International Film Festival Altyn Minbar in Russia last September.

The Iranian short films selected for the Russian festival include the fantasy animation “Irreplaceable” directed by Abdullah Alimorad, the drama “The Last Look” by Omid Esmaili, the fiction “Alfan Extract” by Mahyar Gezel-Soflu, the drama “Silence Left Behind” by Nazir Mirzaei, the narrative fantasy drama “Nietzschean End” by Payam Kordestani, the drama “Tears of Rain” by Esmail Abbasi, the social documentary “Mozafar” by Amirali Mirderikvand, the social drama “TV” by Mostafa Tashakori, the drama “Boycott” by Amin Rafi, the social drama “Scene” by Ramina Rezaei, the animated movie “Bat Daddy” by Mustafa Ghorbanbar, the fiction “Baby” by Mahsa Shakeri, the sci-fi drama “Stratosphere” by Mahmoud Pouyandeh, the children’s movie “The Debt” by Sarah Mullan, the sci-fi thriller “Liberation” by Amen Sahrai, the social drama “Vera” by Amir Malamiri, the narrative “Every-

thing Is Wrong” by Nima Tabandeh, and the social drama “Bordeaux” by Aseman Tousi.

Within the Family International Festival of Family and Children’s Films presents the best movies from around the world – more than 20 participating countries annually - for family audiences.

The main goal is the popularization of films, which talk about love and faithfulness and keep the rebirth of family values as their general idea. The program of the festival includes three competitions – features (main), features and animation (for children) and shorts, as well as business and social events. This is the largest family film festival in Russia.

Throughout the years, the festival has been a friendly meeting point for film industry professionals from all over the world, who come to watch, evaluate, and present their films.

Having started on July 5, the 20th edition of the Within the Family International Festival of Family and Children’s Films will conclude on July 9.

### Cartoon of Day



Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei  
**Cartoonist:** Kamal Sharaf from Yemen