

‘How many Iranian women did you kill with those bombs?’

TEHRAN – Israel likely believed it would rally the public support it failed to gain during the 12-day Iran-Israel war by sharing pictures of a female Israeli soldier writing “Mahsa Amini” on munitions destined for strikes against Iran. However, the move provoked mixed reactions—but not support—with many Iranians now questioning Israel’s role in the 2022 violence that shook Iran.

“A source provided me with photos showing a female Israeli flight technician who wrote a dedication to Mahsa Amini on a munition used in an airstrike against Iran,” wrote an individual affiliated with the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD) on X. ▶ Page 2

Mehr CEO calls for independent media narratives to counter global distortions at BRICS conference

TEHRAN – Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati, the CEO of Mehr Media Group (which consists of Mehr News Agency and English-language daily Tehran Times) emphasized the vital role of media in providing independent narratives to prevent distortion of the truth within mainstream outlets during the seventh BRICS Media and Think Tank Forum in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on Thursday.

In his keynote speech at the plenary session, Rahmati underscored the importance of multilateral media collaboration, supporting equitable content production and distribution, promoting authentic independent narratives, and the role of media in shaping a fair, multipolar global order. ▶ Page 8

Israel’s aggression in Syria fuels drive to ‘change the Middle East’

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN — The recent resurgence of violent clashes between Druze fighters and Bedouin tribes in Syria’s southern Suwayda province has once again been cynically exploited by Israel to justify its hostile interventions in the country.

Heavy fighting erupted anew on Friday as another fragile ceasefire quickly collapsed following the withdrawal of Syrian government forces from the region. Despite the Syrian Ministry of Interior’s firm denial of any government redeployment to the Druze-majority area, violence surged, leaving the local population caught in the crossfire.

The United Nations Human Rights Office has reported credible evidence of widespread human rights abuses committed by all parties involved in the fighting in Suwayda, including summary executions, kidnappings, and widespread destruction and looting of homes.

Syria’s bloody events: Dividing the divided

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT— Given the March horrific massacres on the Syrian coast and recently in Suwayda has it become legitimate to ask that partition is becoming a reality in Syria?

The mosaic of partition is leading to the construction of de facto authorities that are separate and isolated from each other.

The northeast is in the hands of the SDF; Suwayda is in the hands of the Druze; the coast demands international protection; while the center and peripheries are controlled by takfiri groups. Each region has its own political project and sectarian references.

The partition project in Syria is not merely a conspiracy theory; it is a cumulative process that is gradually crystallizing unless it is resisted by national forces and unifying and wise spiritual leaders.

However, if the state of division and sectarian rhetoric continues, this painful reality will turn into an inevitable fate that affects not only Syrians but the entire people of the region.

Gaza church attack reflects genocide

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – The Israeli occupation regime’s deadly shelling of Gaza’s Catholic church has sparked widespread condemnation.

Pope Leo has called for an immediate ceasefire following the occupation regime’s strike that damaged the only Catholic church in the Palestinian territory.

The attack killed three civilians and injured over a dozen others, including the parish priest, a two-year-old child and a person with disabilities. Among the dead were an 84-year-old woman receiving trauma care in a Caritas tent and a 60-year-old janitor who had worked at the church for decades.

The Holy Family Church, also known as the Church of the Latin Monastery, had been sheltering more than 600 displaced people, mostly women, children, and the elderly.

The Higher Presidential Committee for Church Affairs in Palestine denounced the strike as “a stark indication of a systematic policy of desecration, targeting both civilians and houses of worship without regard for international law, religious sanctity, or fundamental human values.” ▶ Page 5

Claudio Lefschitz’s interview on the AMIA case

Claudio Lefschitz, a former senior agent of Argentina’s intelligence agency (SIDE), served as deputy to former judge Juan José Galeano—the corrupt judge in charge of the AMIA case in Argentina’s judiciary.

In 2002, Lefschitz revealed a video recording of Judge Galeano’s meeting with Carlos Telleldin (the AMIA suspect accused of selling the vehicle carrying explosives used in the AMIA bombing). The footage proved that Judge Galeano offered Telleldin a \$400,000 bribe and asked him to accuse Buenos Aires police officers of collaborating with terrorists and to confess that he had sold the vehicle to Mohsen Rabbani, Iran’s cultural attaché in Argentina. ▶ Page 2

Iran’s military leadership declares full readiness for further strikes against Israel

TEHRAN – In a significant meeting between the highest echelons of Iran’s Armed Forces, senior commanders emphatically declared the nation’s preparedness to deliver further decisive blows against its adversaries.

Major General Amir Hatami, Commander of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army (Artesh), met with Major General Mohammad Pakpour, Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), on Thursday.

During this high-level consultation, General Pakpour underscored the exceptional morale of IRGC combatants and announced that the nation’s military forces stand in “full readiness and coordination to strike the enemy again.”

General Pakpour paid tribute to the martyrs of the Israeli regime’s 12-day aggression against Iran, specifically naming Martyred Major Generals Mohammad Bagheri, Hossein Salami, Gholamali Rashid, and Ali Shademani. ▶ Page 3

Independent journalist: Canada’s posture on Iran ‘serves US and Israeli interests’ ▶ Page 5

Exclusive



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Ayatollah Khamenei’s envoy conveys his condolences to General Salami’s family

TEHRAN – Hojatoleslam Mohammad Mohammadi-Golpayegani, Head of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution’s Office, and Armed Forces Chief of Staff Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi paid a visit on Thursday to the family of IRGC Chief Major General Hossein Salami, martyred on June 13 at the onset of the Israeli regime’s 12-day war on Iran.

Golpayegani conveyed Ayatollah Khamenei’s condolences, highlighting Salami’s “profound religious faith” and humility.

“God has granted Martyr Salami the right of intercession. He will not enter Heaven without his spouse and children,” he stated. Salami’s son pledged unwavering loyalty to the Leader: “We sacrifice our lives for him.”

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Goals that failed

In an analysis, Jam-e-Jam addressed Israel's goals that Israel sought in its start of war against Iran in June. It wrote: Israel was pursuing three major goals in its confrontation with Iran: Preventing Iran from acquiring what it claims nuclear weapons, weakening or destroying the axis of resistance and the network of forces loyal to Iran in the region, and severely limiting Iran's ballistic missile program. These three goals have been clearly stated in Israel's security doctrine in recent years and have been the driving force behind the decision to take direct military action against Iran. From domestic policy goals, the Zionist regime's cabinet sought to change the political atmosphere and public opinion in the short term in favor of the government and the regime's political leadership by attacking Iran. In regional arena, the regime expected that by attacking Iran and weakening its position, which was its main strategic rival, the regime would change the balance of power in the Middle East in its own favor, leading to a relative improvement in the geopolitical position of the Zionist regime, and forming a kind of practical but informal coalition with Arab governments against Iran. But it failed to achieve these goals, and the international community condemned the attack.

Ettelaat: What if the snapback mechanism is activated?

Ettelaat examined the consequences of the activation of the snapback mechanism in an interview with Abdolreza Faraji Rad, a senior geopolitical expert. He said: The fact cannot be hidden that the snapback mechanism and its activation are considered a good tool for the Europeans and Americans to put pressure on Iran. But the problem is that with the activation of this mechanism, Iran will also be removed from the control of the International Atomic Energy Agency. This means the possibility of increasing tension and conflict in the region. If Iran withdraws from the NPT, the interests of the Europeans will also be at risk. It is not desirable for the Europeans if Iran gets out the control of the Agency. It is necessary for the Iranian side to enter dialogue with the Europeans as soon as possible. Iran must clarify its policies to the Europeans and share important issues with China and Russia so that they can be active in the Security Council. China and Russia should not adopt passive positions. We must talk to Europe and the United States simultaneously, and even,

if necessary, we must begin direct negotiations. Europe and the United States are getting closer day by day in their opinions and reducing their differences on Iran, and postponing negotiations is not in our interest.

Etemad: Only power provides guarantees

In an interview with former MP Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh, Etemad discussed the issue of obtaining guarantees from the United States. He said: In the international arena, only power provides guarantees. If Iran had not emerged as the victorious and decisive party in the war with Israel, there would not have been even talk of negotiating with Iran now. Iran dealt the final blows to Israel in this war, and as the war drew nearer to its end, Iran unveiled more devastating weapons. This shows that power continues to provide guarantees. The 12-day war (June 13-24) brought lessons. Now, if the Iranian government observes these lessons in managing the country's affairs, it will come close to the same components of a guaranteeing power. The government must, in the current circumstances, make every effort to raise the morale, from the point of view of software, hardware, and military power. The message that these actions send to the United States and Israel is that if a war is started, Iran will use its latest destructive tools.

Iran: Tehran's move to align policies against the West's monopolistic policies

In an article, the Iran newspaper discussed the purpose of Foreign Minister Araghchi's visit to China and said: Araghchi's recent visit to China was in line with strengthening the performance of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and is only part of a series of measures by Tehran to transform this organization into a lever for confronting sanctions, threats, and cross-border pressures. In such an environment, Iran, by taking advantage of multilateralism and regional alliances such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, is trying to win the legal and political support of independent global actors to confront the policy of pressure, sanctions, and military threats. After the 12-day war, Beijing and Moscow are not only Iran's economic partners but also actors with important diplomatic and geopolitical role in consolidate Iran's legitimacy in the international system. This trip was an attempt to align policies against the West's exclusive strategies, which gave Iran the opportunity to expand its multilateral diplomacy from Central Asia to the Security Council.

tion with Israel.

"By backing the Israeli regime's criminal conduct, the U.S. has contributed directly to the suffering of people across the region and undermined peace and stability," Baghaei said.

Israel's aggression, he noted, has not been limited to Palestine. It has also carried out repeated attacks on Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, and even Iranian territory.

Shortly after the Gaza war began in October 2023, Ansarullah enforced a blockade on key maritime routes—the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and Arabian Sea—aimed at disrupting military shipments to Israel. The Red Sea, which borders Yemen's coast, is a critical waterway for oil and commodities

Yemeni forces have since stepped up drone and missile attacks on Israeli and commercial vessels, vowing that operations will not stop until Israel ends its devastating war on Gaza.

On Wednesday, US Central Command (CENTCOM) claimed that around 750 tons of alleged Iranian weapons was seized in the Red Sea which was bound for the Ansarullah Resistance group.

While the U.S. and the Israeli regime have been claiming that Iran arms the Ansarullah, Tehran has repeatedly denied the accusations, saying the Resistance group is using locally-made weapons.

CENTCOM said the shipment included naval and air missile systems, air defense systems, modern radars, drones, surveillance devices, anti-tank missiles, B10 artillery, sniper scopes, sniper rifles, ammunition, and advanced military equipment.

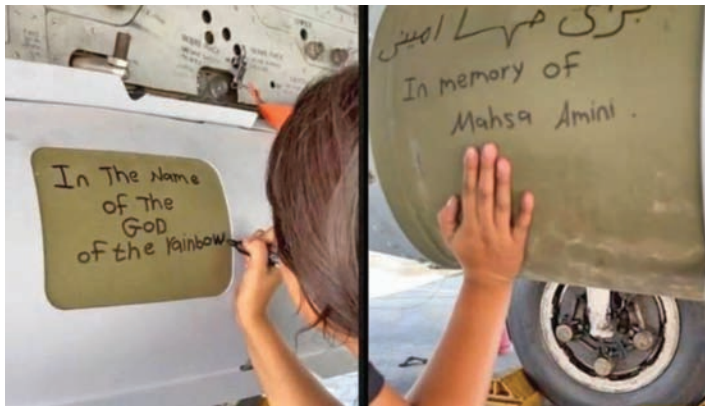
'How many Iranian women did you kill with those bombs?'

Outrage over Israeli munition bearing Mahsa Amini's name before strikes on Iran

From page 1 ► The FDD is a Washington-based pro-Israel lobby group that has long advocated for attacks on Iran and the overthrow of its government. It maintains close ties to the Israeli regime.

The post quickly went viral, with Iranians expressing outrage. Many questioned whether the FDD worker believed Iranians were "stupid." "You write Mahsa Amini's name on bombs that were used to kill us and expect us to thank Israel?" said one X user, seemingly a young woman from Tehran. "The audacity of you Israelis is unbelievable and disgusting."

On June 13, Israel launched an unprovoked and unprecedented war against Iran. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu released a video message claiming his "fight" was not against the Iranian people but their government, urging them to "rise up" for "freedom." Between June 13 and June



24, at least 1,060 Iranians were killed, most of them civilians, including women and children.

Analysts suggest Israel and its ally and partner in crime, the United States, believed they could turn the Iranian people against their government through propaganda and attacks on civilian infrastructure. However, this objective failed completely. Figures from both Iranian and Western

polls show the Iranian government gained more popularity during the war.

"We didn't fall for your deception during the war, and we certainly won't now," wrote an Iranian man on X. "Don't exploit Mahsa Amini for your sinister agendas."

Mahsa Amini was a 22-year-old woman who died days after being detained by Tehran police. A video showed her collapsing in a police

station while speaking with an officer. No physical altercation could be seen in the video, and hospital reports indicated she died from a pre-existing medical condition—one for which she had undergone brain surgery as a child.

Her death initially sparked protests, which later escalated into deadly riots. By the spring of 2022, at least 300 people had been killed, including scores of security personnel. At the time, the Iranian government accused Israel and the U.S. of orchestrating and fueling the unrest—a claim that has gained significant traction since the war and Israel's use of Mahsa Amini's name in its propaganda.

"These photos are the final nails in the coffin," said Mahsa, a 27-year-old from Esfahan, reacting to the images of the Israeli bombs. "Israelis are behind the violence in our country. We now know this better than ever."

Claudio Lefschitz's interview on the AMIA case



Claudio Lefschitz

From page 1 ► The disclosure of this video caused an earthquake in Argentina and eventually led to the dismissal and expulsion of Judge Galeano from the judiciary. After this revelation, Lefschitz wrote a book titled "AMIA: Why the Investigation Failed" (AMIA : por qué falló la investigación del atentado), addressing the deliberate deviations and manipulations of the AMIA case.

In 2007, he was kidnapped, tortured, and threatened by unknown individuals (likely members of SIDE), and because of this, he fled Argentina. In a recent interview, Lefschitz expressed notable points about the suspicious bombing of the Argentine Jewish Mutual Association (AMIA).

He said in the interview: "Now that almost 22 years have passed since the confidential investigation began, I can speak of truths that have never been said before. Mrs. Cristina [Kirchner], a week before handing over power to Mauricio Macri, in a letter to Oscar Parilli (then head of SIDE) addressed Federal Court No. 1, spoke of the greatest cover-up."

This was when the plaintiffs withdrew... They never allowed the truth to be told. Now that the case has been followed up for a long time and the judgment is nearly complete, I no longer have fear or hesitation to say that I have disclosed the confidential points of the case."

He added: "If Jaime Stiuso—the former head of SIDE's counter-intelligence section—wants to slander me, he can accuse me of lying and fraud in this regard; but he cannot accuse me of revealing military and security secrets."

Lefschitz said Judge Galeano's investigation caused a disaster and he was condemned. He was appointed by the court, with their support and decision to supervise the case's process, because they realized that the AMIA attack had been carried out by unknown cells linked to SIDE (the AMIA bombing was planned by Argentina's intelligence agency). This was Section 85, which handled counterintelligence under the leadership of Jaime Stiuso (head of SIDE's counterintelligence operations). Lefschitz entered the case to in-

vestigate how SIDE had acted and what activities it had carried out.

He reflected: "It is hard to understand that in a democratic country, parts of the intelligence agency and Stiuso personally led the AMIA operation. We must address how this operation was directed."

There were things he had never revealed before, but now he wants to talk about them. He anticipated that some might ask why he didn't react sooner. He was researching and had special skills. He had obtained information and was cross-checking it with received intelligence and had access to more news.

He explained: "What happened was that I was a security police officer and was active in investigations on drug trafficking. I had performed well in field operations and cooperation with the judiciary and gained judicial trust.



Ruben Beraja

Since I had attracted the attention of one judicial official, I had to resign and serve the judiciary regarding the AMIA case. I provided some information to a person named Palacios (likely the police chief at the time)."

When Carlos Telledin delivered the van (the suicide vehicle) to an unofficial SIDE agent, before Galeano paid the bribe to Telledin, Lefschitz had pressured Telledin.

While exchanging documents of the van (known as the suicide vehicle), a copy of the "Carbeni contract" was in hand, which proved the transfer of the van, but Telledin did not know the name of the person. However, he knew the buyer of the van was a SIDE agent.

This is not fabricated information—it is the truth. As his investigation progressed, Lefschitz realized that Judge Galeano kept some documents and evidence solely for himself, possibly to maintain his power.

During this turmoil, Lefschitz obtained documents and evidence, but both SIDE and the court were against him, so he decided to travel abroad for self-protection. For this reason, in 2002, he shared these matters with Mr. Grund Doma (a powerful TV presenter and head of Editio-

rial Planeta—a media outlet). He honestly presented the information to him.

When Lefschitz raised these issues with the head of SIDE, he was advised to also speak with officials from DAIA (Argentina's Jewish Association).



Alberto Nisman

Now, apart from the things he cannot say, the reality is that everything said against the Iranians is pure lies without any foundation because these accusations were created from the beginning. Mr. [Ibrahim Hussein Berro]'s hypothesis was created by Sala Patria (Sala Patria is an organization formed outside Argentina to find evidence of the AMIA incident). In a meeting attended by Beraja (Rubén Beraja, former head of Banco Mayo and DAIA president at the time of the AMIA bombing), Lefschitz revealed that Ibrahim Hussein Berro was fabricated to soften the pressure of exposure against the government's involvement. The Berro matter originally emerged at this time.

Beyond what has been said before or after or anything else, the truth is that Lefschitz proved there was no document or evidence implicating Iranian officials. He also told Alberto Nisman (the AMIA prosecutor—whom Lefschitz regarded as nothing more than a charlatan) that if Stiuso was wiretapping all communications of the Iranian cultural attaché and embassy before the AMIA bombing, without judicial authorization, and if Stiuso was confident Iran planned the assassination, he should have prevented it before it occurred.

According to Lefschitz's research, the conversations of the Iranian embassy and cultural attaché were wiretapped without judicial authorization. All phones of the cultural attaché and embassy were tapped. Three cassettes of recordings were made daily, amounting to thousands of hours of surveillance available to SIDE.

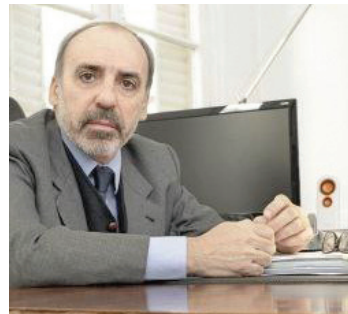
He asked: "Given that these wiretaps were conducted without judicial warrants, if you had information about Iran's involvement, why was it not handed to the judiciary? Clearly, because there

was nothing. This proves that no useful intelligence was obtained from the wiretaps. If they had evidence, they could have thwarted the attack. So, they had nothing."

He referred to important individuals: "The embassy wiretaps were done without judicial authorization. SIDE directly asked the telephone company to perform wiretapping and the telephone company did not request judicial permission from SIDE. If we talk about all these disasters, infiltration, distortion of facts, and other violations during the AMIA investigation, it is savagery. They changed everything (altered evidence) and now they intend to hold an in-absentia trial which is sheer madness and unacceptable."

Lefschitz told DAIA and AMIA officials that he was ready to reveal what really happened, and he told them: "Use your computers, and I will present my arguments without any assistance. If you can defeat me, destroy me." But they never agreed to listen and did not come.

He accused Nisman of signing off on accusations to cover up the truth. Lefschitz said: "This is not my claim... Nisman knew that all accusations against Iranian officials and diplomats were fabricated. Their arguments were very weak."



Juan Jose Galeano

He mentioned that Stiuso had made statements about the main perpetrator of the explosion that need to be found—apparently, he said the AMIA bombing was Mossad's work. These statements were conveyed to Lefschitz. Given the case's details, these remarks are very important. Unfortunately, this is how things operate in Argentina.

Lefschitz is planning to write a book about AMIA and is confident accusations were fabricated. He said: "I am ready to do something, even jointly with you. What I say is not from feelings but from experience. During the arrest of Soleimanpour (Iran's ambassador to the UK), the Argentine judiciary could not produce any evidence against him and he was released. I have no problem; I want the truth to be revealed to the whole world."

'US, Israel main sources of regional instability', Iran rejects claims of arming Yemen



TEHRAN — Iran has categorically rejected recent U.S. accusations that it is supplying military equipment to Yemen, describing the allegations as an attempt to divert public attention from the root causes of instability in West Asia—chiefly the Israeli regime's escalating crimes against regional nations.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei, in a statement on Thursday, dismissed the claims as "deceitful" and politically motivated.

Baghaei stressed that the United States bears full responsibility for enabling Israel's ongoing military offensives in occupied Palestine and across the region. He noted that Washington's unwavering political and military support has emboldened the Zionist regime to intensify its genocidal campaign in Gaza and the West Bank, and to violate the sovereignty of countries such as Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen.

He added that the U.S. is using these false accusations against Iran to justify its continued military presence and destructive operations throughout the region in close coordina-

No talks for now

Iran believes US not genuine about diplomacy as sources say war is Trump's ultimate choice

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – The prospects for new negotiations between Iran and the United States remain dim for the foreseeable future after President Donald Trump bombed Iran last month during ongoing talks that had begun in April, leading Tehran's leaders to conclude the Republican administration has no genuine interest in a deal.

Multiple officials and reports have made it clear in recent days that Iran can no longer trust the United States, which assisted Israel in launching airstrikes against Iranian nuclear, military, and civilian infrastructure from June 13 to June 24. As the war's mounting costs—particularly from devastating Iranian missile strikes on the occupied territories—became unbearable for Israel, Trump escalated U.S. involvement by personally ordering airstrikes on Iran's nuclear facilities at Natanz, Esfahan, and Fordow. The war claimed at least 1,060 Iranian lives, predominantly civilians.

“Negotiation is not on the table right now,” Ali Larijani, advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, said on Thursday. “Let us allow the Leader to utilize this tool when he deems it appropriate. There is no



rush. They have waged war against us—first, they must explain why.”

Iran and the U.S. had completed five rounds of indirect nuclear talks before the war and were scheduled for a sixth round just days before Israel launched its attacks. While Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed their goal was to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, Western intelligence reports and IAEA findings contradicted this justification. The IAEA's May report—which recycled previously debunked claims about Iran's nuclear program—appeared to lay the groundwork for the airstrikes. Analysts note that the assassinations of senior Iranian military commanders and failed attempts to kill President Masoud

Pezeshkian and Ayatollah Khamenei aligned with a broader strategy to overthrow Iran's government.

On Friday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said any new round of negotiations would depend on the other side's readiness to engage in a serious and balanced dialogue. “A new phase of talks with the U.S. will only happen when the opposing side is prepared to accept certain key realities,” Araghchi stated on X.

Speaking after a joint video conference with the foreign ministers of France, Germany, and the United Kingdom (E3), along with the European Union's foreign policy chief, Araghchi reiterated that it was the United States—not Iran—that abandoned the 2015 nuclear deal

known as the JCPOA and escalated to military confrontation. “It was the U.S. that walked away from an agreement crafted over two years with the support of the EU. It was the U.S. that left the negotiating table this June and opted for military aggression instead.”

Araghchi added that any resumption of negotiations would require a framework that ensures a “fair, balanced, and mutually beneficial agreement.”

Trump has repeatedly said in recent weeks that he wants to restart talks with Iran while asserting that Iranian nuclear sites were completely “obliterated” during the 12-day war. He has yet to explain what exactly he hopes to negotiate if he believes Iran's nuclear facilities no longer exist.

A senior Iranian official has told Press TV that the U.S. seeks negotiations as preparation for war rather than peace. “Our intelligence shows Washington wants talks to lay the groundwork for war. In that case, we see no point in wasting time and would prefer to focus on defensive preparations,” the official stated. Iran will not return to diplomacy, Press TV reported, without “serious, practical guarantees” that the process won't be used as cover for security threats.

Tehran offers condolences to flood-ravaged Pakistan

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Ministry's Director General for South Asia, Mohammad-Reza Bahrami, expressed profound grief Thursday over catastrophic flooding in Pakistan that has killed over 170 people, including 85 children.

“I am deeply saddened by the loss of lives due to heavy rains and floods in Punjab province of Pakistan,” Bahrami stated on X, extending Tehran's condolences to Islamabad. “I wish Allah's mercy upon those who lost their lives and extend our condolences to the government and people of Pakistan.”

Relentless monsoons have submerged vast areas of eastern Pakistan since June 26, collapsing homes and triggering flash floods that claimed 54 lives in just 24 hours.

Punjab province – Pakistan's

most populous region – remains under a state of emergency, with the military deployed for rescue operations as entire communities drown under record rainfall exceeding 100mm daily.

The National Disaster Management Authority reports over 124 weather-related deaths in the past three weeks, with house collapses accounting for two-thirds of fatalities. The calamity evokes traumatic memories of Pakistan's 2022 superfloods, which submerged one-third of the country, killed 1,700 people, and displaced 30 million.

UN officials now warn this year's monsoon could rival that devastation, with glacial melt from northern heatwaves accelerating flood risks.

Tehran's solidarity message continues a tradition of brotherly



A young boy navigates a waterlogged street in Lahore, Pakistan, clutching an umbrella to shield himself from the aftermath of heavy rainfall.

support between the neighboring Muslim nations.

Iran was among the first countries to send humanitarian aid during Pakistan's 2022 floods, dispatching 100 tons of relief supplies via the Iranian Red Crescent Society.

Pakistan's leadership has consistently acknowledged this kinship, with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif recently thanking Tehran for mediating regional tensions and affirming the nations' “very historical and brotherly relations.”

Iran's military leadership declares full readiness for further strikes against Israel



Army chief Major General Amir Hatami (L) meeting with IRGC chief Major General Mohammad Pakpour, on July 17, 2025.

He lauded the epic resistance of the Iranian nation during the recent 12-day War, describing the people's steadfastness as the most crucial asset and support for the Armed Forces.

“Unity in diversity,” Pakpour stated, “is Iran's most impregnable fortress.” He asserted that the Islamic Republic of Iran's Armed Forces, backed by the nation's epic support, had neutralized the most complex war and sedition in history waged against the country.

“The resolve and zeal of the Iranian people and the Armed Forces prevailed on the battlefield. We stand together, resolute,” Pakpour affirmed, adding that Iran has never been defeated in confronting its enemies.

Highlighting the shift in enemy calculations due to the na-

tion's resistance and the strategic guidance of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the IRGC Commander stressed that the Israelis “witnessed the promised hell with their own eyes in the final days of the war.”

He issued a stern warning: “We will not release the collars of the invaders and aggressors. We will resume the war and battle with the aggressors precisely from the point where it was halted.”

Speaking on the same day and echoing the commanders' assessment, Brigadier General Ahmad Vahidi, Advisor to the IRGC Commander-in-Chief, elaborated on the profound impact of Iran's recent military actions.

General Vahidi declared, “Under the heavy pressure of Iranian missiles, the Zionist enemy

was crushed to the extent that we are now witnessing a tsunami of leadership changes within their ranks.” He attributed this upheaval directly to the severe blows inflicted by Iran.

Vahidi pointed to the Islamic Republic's significant achievements in confronting the Israeli enemy, stating it had “brought to fruition a new scene of struggle by the nation and its combatants, which will be the source of major transformations.”

He highlighted admissions from within the Israeli regime itself, noting that “the commander of the Zionist regime's air defense explicitly stated that they had never witnessed such an unprecedented war and such unprecedented attacks before.”

These admissions underscore the power and effectiveness of the Islamic Republic's strikes and its combatants, Vahidi added.

The Iranian General further dismissed Israeli displays of strength as bluster, asserting, “The Zionist regime, with clamor and howling, tries to portray itself as strong, while it and its army well know that the real victor was the Iranian nation.”

He spoke of the recent developments in the confrontation field, citing the “moral, political, cultural, and social decline” of the Zionist regime as clear indicators of the monumental defeat inflicted upon it by the Islamic Republic

of Iran.

Unprecedented damage: Infrastructure crippled, morale shattered

The commanders' statements refer directly to the consequences of Operation True Promise III, Iran's large-scale missile and drone offensive against Israeli targets launched in lawful self-defense, responding to the Israeli regime's unprovoked aggression and launching of a 12-day war against Iran on June 13.

Fearing global exposure of its vulnerabilities, the Israeli regime imposed one of the most severe military censorship in its history, banning journalists, cameramen, and even settlers from documenting the catastrophic impact of Iranian ballistic missiles.

However, military analysts and international observers have detailed significant and lasting impacts:

– Infrastructure damage: Hundreds of indigenous Iranian ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and drones overwhelmed the much-touted Israeli and allied missile defenses, achieving an unprecedented penetration rate.

Key military nerve centers, notably the Nevatim airbase (critical for F-35 operations), the Mossad intelligence headquarters, and Aman's main logistical base, sustained multiple direct and substantial hits.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)



IRAN IN FOCUS

JULY 19, 2025

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

3

SPORTS

Iran into 2025 Asian U16 Volleyball Championship final

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Japan in straight sets (25-20, 25-22, 25-19) in the 2nd Asian U16 Men's Volleyball Championship on Friday.

Iran, who had secured their place in the FIVB Volleyball Boys' U17 World Championship, will meet the winners on India and Pakistan on Saturday in the final match.

This top-tier continental event is being held from July 12 to 19 in Nakhon Pathom and Ratchaburi, Thailand.

The top three teams of the tournament will qualify for the 2026 World Championship as the AVC representatives.

Women's football team to face Jordan in must-win match

TEHRAN – Iran's women's national team will aim to secure their qualification when they face Jordan in the final Group A match of the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026 Qualifiers on Saturday.

With six points already on the board, Iran must defeat Jordan to keep their hopes alive of securing a second consecutive appearance at the continental tournament.

The team enter the match coming off a challenging 3-1 defeat to Lebanon on Wednesday, a game in which Iran struggled to find their rhythm and trailed by two goals at halftime.

Head coach Marziyeh Jafari acknowledged that her team paid a heavy price for their mistakes but expressed optimism that Iran will bounce back against Jordan.

Jordan, the hosts nation, will approach the game with confidence after an impressive campaign that has seen them achieve three wins, score 12 goals, and concede none.

The match is scheduled to be played at the King Abdullah II Stadium in Amman.

Persepolis complete signing of Marko Bakic

TEHRAN – Montenegrin defender Marko Bakic joined Persepolis football club of Iran.

The 31-year-old midfielder, who has most recently played for Greek team OFI Crete, will have to pass his medical examination.

Persepolis have signed Bakic on a one-year deal for an undisclosed fee.

Bakic started his playing career in 2010 in Montenegrin side Mogren and has also played in Serie A teams Torino and Fiorentina.

Tractor signs for Sedlar

TEHRAN – Iranian football club Tractor have reportedly reached an agreement with Serbian midfielder Aleksandar Sedlar.

Sedlar can play as a wide or central midfielder, and in defense as a center or full-back.

The 29-year-old player was a member of La Liga side Alaves from 2022 to 2025.

Sedlar has also represented Serbia national football team. Tractor will compete in the 2025-26 AFC Champions League Elite.

Persepolis eye Shukurov

TEHRAN – Persepolis football club are reportedly eyeing a move to sign Uzbekistan international midfielder Otabek Shukurov.

The 29-year-old player is currently a free agent after parting ways with Saudi Arabian club Al Fayha last season. Shukurov has been a member of the Uzbekistan national football team since 2016.

Recently, Persepolis appointed Vahid Hashemian as their new head coach.

Persepolis beat Alanyaspor

TEHRAN – Persepolis football team defeated Süper Lig Side Alanyaspor 2-1 in a fribely match on Thursday. Ali Alipour gave Persepolis a lead in 27th minute but Güven Yalçın equalized the match in 38th minute. Thievy Bifouma scored the winner for Persepolis in 47th minute.

Persepolis will meet Trabzonspor next Wednesday. Persepolis have recently hired Vahid Hashemian as head coach.

Iran to play Thailand in FIBA Asia Cup 2025 Division B SF

TEHRAN – Iran to play Thailand on Saturday in the FIBA Women's Asia Cup 2025 Division B semi-finals.

Team Melli had previously defeated the team in preliminary round.

Iran had also defeated Cook Islands and Mongolia in their previous matches.

Team Melli are one of the most motivated squads in Shenzhen. They've already proven they can beat top-tier Division B teams - now they just need to go one step further.

The team that win the tournament will earn a promotion to Division A.

Iran lose to Japan in 2025 Asian Women's Youth Handball

TEHRAN – Iran lost to defending champions Japan 40-27 in 2025 Asian Women's Youth Handball Championship on Friday.

The Persian girls will play South Korea on Saturday.

Group A consists of China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong and Kazakhstan, while Republic of Korea, Iran, Japan and India are in Group B.

The Republic of Korea have won eight of the 10 editions of the competition, all between 2005 and 2019. The last two winners have been Iran, in 2022, when neither Japan, nor Korea took part, and Japan in 2023.

The preliminary round of the 11th AHF Asian Women's Youth Handball Championship is being held on 18, 19 and 21 July, with the semi-finals scheduled on 23 July.

The big final and the bronze medal match are due to take place on 26 July.

The 2025 Asian Women's Youth Handball Championship will be the 11th edition of the championship held from 18 to 26 July 2025 in Jinggangshan, China under the aegis of Asian Handball Federation. It was the first time in history that championship was organised by the Chinese Handball Association. It also will act as the qualification tournament for the 2026 Women's Youth World Handball Championship.

Iran's fixtures in Lebanon basketball tournament revealed

TEHRAN – Iran basketball team will face Egypt in the four-team tournament in Beirut.

Team Melli will face Egypt on July 21 and play Lebanon and Jordan on July 24 and July 25, respectively. The Persians take part in the event as part of their preparation for the 2025 FIBA Asia Cup. Led by Greek coach Sotiris Manolopoulos, Iran have been drawn into Group B, alongside Japan, Syria, and Guam.

Additionally, Iran will travel to Russia for several warm-up matches before heading to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Iran Squad:

Arsalan Kazemi, Mobin Sheikhi, Mehdi Jafari, Mohammadmehdi Heydari, Behnam Yakhchali, Sina Vahedi, Navid Rezaeifar, Amirhossein Azari, Matin Aghajanpour, Mohammad Amini, Mohammadmehdi Rahimi, Arman Zangeneh, Salar Monji, Salar Taheri, Hassan Aliakabri, and Meysam Mirzaei.

Tehran to launch capital's largest solar power plant amid national renewables push

TEHRAN – Iran's largest solar power plant located in central Tehran is nearing completion and will soon come online as part of a sweeping national push to expand renewable energy, a senior official said.

Farhad Shabihi, managing director of Tehran Regional Electricity Company, told IRNA that the solar plant—being built on the company's premises—is advancing at a “remarkable pace” and is designed to boost the stability of the capital's power grid.

The project is part of a larger government initiative to develop 1,000 solar plants, each with a three-megawatt capacity, across the country. According to Shabihi, construction of the 3.6-megawatt facility in Tehran began just one day after the official groundbreaking ceremony on Feb. 6 and has since moved swiftly into the operational phase.

Shabihi said the team completed land delivery to contractors, soil testing, and cable route design by the end of March 2025. The first shipment of solar panels arrived on April 12. “This marks a new record in solar plant execution,” he said.

The plant is equipped with bifacial dual-glass N-type solar modules with a capacity of 595 watts per panel. Shabihi emphasized that the panels are domestically produced, underscoring the project's contribution to local technology development.

“Over six full panel rows have already been installed. Excavation and foundation work across the entire site is finished, and concrete casting has been completed,” he said.

Work at the site is ongoing around the clock, with minimal disruption to the nearby administrative facilities in the Saadat Abad district. “The scale and speed of this operation have delivered peak efficiency in record time,” he added.



In a move to enhance energy efficiency, Shabihi said the company is in talks with a battery storage firm to install Tehran's first industrial solar energy storage unit as part of the plant. If implemented, the battery system would serve as a pilot for future solar-plus-storage developments in the capital.

Despite a brief interruption following Israel's attack on Iran earlier this year, which delayed panel installation for several days, “a major portion of the panels have now been installed, and equipment testing will commence shortly,” he noted.

The Tehran project is one of 1,000 distributed solar plants planned under Iran's national 3,000-megawatt renewable energy initiative. The projects are being executed as complete packages by the Power Development Organization of Iran in partnership with contractors.

“We're implementing this pilot in the heart of Tehran's distribution network with rapid, low-cost grid integration,” said Shabihi. “Our goal goes beyond power generation—it's about quickly reducing imbalances in the grid and easing pressure on the national electricity network. And we're seeing results in under six months.”

Petrochemical sector stays on track despite conflict, eyes annual targets

TEHRAN – Iran's petrochemical industry remains committed to achieving its development goals for the current year, despite disruptions caused by a 12-day conflict triggered by Israeli airstrikes, a senior official said.

Hossein Alimorad, director of planning and development at the National Petrochemical Company (NPC), told Shana that the industry quickly activated emergency response protocols to mitigate the impact of the conflict and maintain operational stability.

“In the first nine hours of the war, we formulated a strategic response to ensure industry readiness,” Alimorad said. “Through more than 14 focused crisis committee sessions, we managed to resolve all operational challenges and even provided support to other government entities.”

Israel launched a series of military strikes on June 12 (corresponding to Khordad 23 on the Iranian calendar), targeting sites in Tehran and other cities, including nuclear facilities, in what Iranian officials described as a violation of international law and national sovereignty. The attacks resulted in casualties among scientists, military personnel, and civilians.

Alimorad stressed that NPC remains on course to meet its strategic objectives for 2025 (Iranian year 1404), with several key projects advancing as planned. “The company is fully committed to its roadmap and continues executing programs with discipline,” he said.

Despite the recent hostilities, officials say the petrochemical sector's robust preparedness and adherence to defined contingency protocols allowed it to maintain momentum. The sector is a cornerstone of Iran's non-oil economy and a major source of hard currency revenue amid ongoing international sanctions.

In mid-May, the NPC head announced that 15 petrochemical projects worth \$6 billion will be put into operation in the country by the end of current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2026).

Speaking in a press conference on the sidelines of the 29th Iran International Oil,

Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition, Hassan Abbaszadeh said that these projects being operational, three first-produced products will be added to the basket of the country's petrochemical products.

Pointing out that the current capacity of the petrochemical industry is around 97 million tons, he stated: “Last year, around 42 million tons of final petrochemical products, excluding inter-complex feedstock, worth \$24 billion, were produced in the industry, of which 29 million tons worth \$13 billion were exported and 13 million tons worth about \$11 billion were sold domestically.”

As previously announced by the official, Iran's annual export of the petrochemicals is anticipated to reach about 34.8 million tons in the current Iranian year.

Abbaszadeh also said that the country's nominal production capacity of petrochemicals is expected to hit 105 million tons in this year.

He has emphasized the importance of institutionalizing unity and synergy across the sector to achieve sustainable development, noting that agile, dynamic organizations require efficient and skilled human resources to enhance productivity.

The deputy oil minister added that one of the key roles of development-oriented firms is to facilitate private sector investment in petrochemicals. He said the National Petrochemical Company stands ready to support investors in this regard.

He called on company managers to actively back the industry during the Year of “Investment for Production” by taking practical steps to address the challenges faced by petrochemical firms.

Highlighting the need to accelerate development projects through enhanced financing, Abbaszadeh said that collaboration with petrochemical holding companies could drive production growth this year.

He acknowledged last year's challenges in securing feedstock due to energy imbalances but expressed confidence that proper planning and measures could improve the sector's performance in 2025.

Iran boosts oil output by 38,000 bpd at South Azadegan field

TEHRAN – Iran has increased crude oil production by 38,000 barrels per day (bpd) at its South Azadegan oilfield over the past 10 months, following the successful drilling and completion of 17 wells, the head of Petropars, the company developing the field, said.

Hamidreza Taghavi told state media that the company carried out drilling operations across multiple reservoir layers—including Sarvak, Kazhdomi, Gadvan, and Fahliyan—using domestic resources and Iranian technical expertise.

“The highest daily production rate came from wells in the Fahliyan layer, averaging 4,800 barrels per day,” Taghavi said.

To further enhance output, acid stimulation operations were conducted on six wells, with carefully selected acids and additives. Two additional wells are also ready and expected to add



another 3,000 bpd once acidizing is completed.

Taghavi praised the technical commitment and round-the-clock efforts of Petropars staff, attributing the progress to strong organizational cohesion and a sense of responsibility within the team. “These results are the direct outcome of tireless work by our colleagues,” he said.

He also thanked the project's client, the Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC), for its support. Petropars is the general contractor for the first phase of the South Azadegan development, which is being implemented “with seriousness, transparency, and speed,” he added.

The South Azadegan field is

one of Iran's largest shared oilfields, located in the southwest near the border with Iraq.

Taghavi acknowledged the efforts of partner contractors—Oil Exploration Operations Company, Dana Drilling Company, and Tadbir Drilling Company. Dana's work packages are completed, and the other two companies are in the final stages of operations. Phase one of the project is expected to be finalized by September 2025.

He also highlighted a major step toward domestic self-sufficiency: Petropars has tendered the procurement of 50 electric submersible pumps (ESPs), using Iranian manufacturing capabilities and technology transfer from foreign partners. “These actions reflect Petropars' long-term commitment to advancing Iran's oil industry and supporting the Ministry of Oil's strategic policies,” Taghavi said.

Iran imports non-oil goods worth \$354m from Russia in a quarter

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN– Iran imported non-oil commodities valued at \$354 million from Russia 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 Russia was Iran's sixth top source of non-oil imports in the mentioned three-month period.

As previously announced by Abolfazl Akbarpour, the deputy head of IRICA for planning and international affairs, Iran imported non-oil commodities valued at \$1.3 billion from Russia in the past Iranian calendar year 1403, which ended on March 20, 2025.

He said that Russia was Iran's seventh top source of non-oil imports in the past year.

In late April, Iran and Russia signed the MOU of their 18th joint economic committee meeting at the end of the meeting in Moscow.

In a press conference after the mentioned meeting, Iranian oil minister explained the most important achievements of the meeting, and said: “The agreements reached have outlined the framework for long-term cooperation between the two countries, and the Ministry of Oil will seriously pursue the practical implementation of these agreements.”

He said that the meeting was held with the participation of specialized committees in the fields of trade, economy, finance, banking, transportation, customs, industry, mining, energy, health, agriculture, tourism, and technology, and the final memorandum of understanding of this meeting was signed by both sides.

Thanking the Russian side for hosting, he stated: “The decisions of the past months within the framework of specialized committees and the documents signed at this meeting have provided a suitable platform for the development of bilateral economic cooperation, especially in the new international conditions.”

Referring to the areas of focus for both parties, the minister of oil stated: “Developing cooperation in the upstream oil and gas sector and pursuing memorandums of understanding with Gazprom, establishing a gas hub in Iran, gas trade, cooperation in the petrochemical value chain, and oil product swaps were among the key issues discussed at the meeting.”

Paknejad referred to strategic cooperation in the field of nuclear energy and said that joint projects in the field of peaceful use of nuclear energy were also among the agreed issues.

He added that the activation of the North-South International Corridor, with emphasis on completing the Rasht-Astara railway

as the missing link of this transit route, has been put on the agenda.

The official also emphasized the expansion of banking cooperation and said: “Creating sustainable banking platforms to facilitate trade and investment, harmonizing standards with the aim of developing bilateral trade, strengthening trade centers, and developing cooperation in the fields of agriculture, health, and customs were among other topics discussed at the summit.”

According to the Iranian Oil Ministry, Kazem Jalali, Iran's ambassador to Russia, told Iranian delegates at the 18th Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee meeting in Moscow that relations between the two countries are expanding and entering what he described as a “golden era” of cooperation.

He said Tehran and Moscow are determined to deepen bilateral ties across several sectors, including the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC), transit projects, and gas transfers. He stressed the need to strengthen trade and complete joint initiatives to enhance Iran's international standing and security.

Jalali highlighted the recent approval of the Iran-Russia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty by Russia's Federation Council and State Duma, noting that both countries need each other in different areas. “We must take concrete steps based on a clear understanding of these mutual needs,” he said.

He added that Russia is actively seeking new routes for exports beyond the Black Sea and has allocated \$10 billion to develop the INSTC—a clear sign of its commitment to activating northern transit routes. According to Jalali, around 3.7 million tons of cargo moved through this corridor in 2022, increasing to approximately 33 million tons in 2023.

Referring to a statement by President Vladimir Putin that opening new transit routes is a strategic imperative beyond cost-benefit considerations, Jalali said Russia is determined to operationalize the INSTC—and Iran should seize the opportunity.

He explained that the corridor includes three branches, of which the eastern route is already operational. In 2023, 600,000 tons of cargo were transported via this route, rising to 1.8 million tons in 2024, just shy of the two-million-ton target. For early 2025, the goal is three million tons, while the route's total capacity is 15 million tons.

Jalali emphasized that while the INSTC is a strategic necessity for Russia, it is a valuable opportunity for Iran. “With trial operations already underway, and once the route is connected to Europe, Iran could emerge as the world's second Suez Canal—or even its most vital transit route,” he said. “Completing the corridor through Iranian territory will also

enhance our national security on the global stage.”

Also, Ali Mohammad Mousavi, Deputy Oil Minister for International and Commercial Affairs, described the Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee as a clear reflection of both governments' political will to expand collaboration and achieve shared success.

He noted that the Iranian delegation's strong presence at the Moscow summit signals Tehran's serious commitment to strengthening ties, especially after the signing and ratification of the strategic partnership agreement.

Mousavi referenced coordination meetings held in Tehran with Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad and said that during his recent talks in Moscow with his Russian counterpart, both sides reached consensus on key issues and emphasized the importance of positive outcomes from the commission.

“This committee is an important platform to record achievements and negotiate year-round,” Mousavi said. “Iran and Russia must remain strategic partners, and this joint body symbolizes our shared determination to expand cooperation.”

Expert-level talks at the 18th Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee meeting began on April 23, at Russia's Energy Agency in Moscow. On April 24, delegations prepared multiple cooperation documents for signature by Minister Paknejad and Russian Energy Minister Sergey Tsiviliev.

Meanwhile, on the sidelines of the visit to Moscow, Paknejad met with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak on Thursday evening.

The meeting was also attended by Ambassador Jalali, Russian Ambassador to Tehran Alexey Dedov, and senior members of both countries' economic teams. The two sides discussed implementation of the long-term strategic treaty, as well as joint energy, transport, and trade projects.

Paknejad noted that the treaty, signed by the presidents of both nations, has already been approved by both chambers of Russia's parliament and is currently under review by Iran's parliament.

He described the agreement as a foundation for more constructive engagement and said it adds significant weight to bilateral economic cooperation. “There is vast potential for collaboration between Iran and Russia, and we have only activated a small part of it,” he said.

Paknejad stressed that the 18th joint commission meeting in Moscow is crucial for opening new pathways of cooperation. “This summit is a chance to overcome challenges and implement structural reforms so our ties can reach a level that both sides desire.”

Home appliance industry eyes strategic export plan to revive sector

TEHRAN – Iran's National Home Appliance Manufacturers Association is drafting a strategic export plan as its top priority for the year, aiming to lift the industry out of prolonged stagnation, the association's secretary general said.

Nasrin Ojaghi told state broadcaster IRIB that addressing the home appliance sector's

core challenges—including foreign currency allocation, import registration delays, and weak domestic demand—requires unified action among industry stakeholders.

“In the current difficult climate, solidarity within the industry is essential to find joint solutions,” Ojaghi said.

She said the association is holding talks with relevant authorities to resolve the sector's bottlenecks. “We view export development as the key path out of the recession, and the strategic export roadmap will serve as our guide,” she added.

Ojaghi noted ongoing negotiations with Iran's customs office and the Ministry of Industry,

Mining and Trade to streamline export procedures.

“With policymakers now having a clearer understanding of the industry's situation, there is greater potential for effective cooperation,” she said, emphasizing that collective action is needed to overcome the barriers facing the domestic appliance sector.

Israel’s aggression in Syria fuels drive to ‘change the Middle East’

From page 1 ► Amidst the turmoil, Israel seized the opportunity to intensify its aggression. On Wednesday, Israeli airstrikes targeted Suwayda and Damascus, actions that violated Syrian sovereignty and further fueled chaos and division within the country. Israel had previously issued thinly veiled threats demanding the Syrian forces withdraw from the south, blatantly imposing its will on the nation.

While Israel claims it is acting to protect the Druze community, the reality is that these strikes form part of a broader, nefarious security policy aimed at preventing the Syrian military from maintaining any significant presence or heavy weaponry in the south. This heavy-handed approach is less about humanitarian concern and more about enforcing Israel's regional domination.



Israeli authorities justified their intervention as necessary to protect the Druze and ensure demilitarization of the south after deadly clashes erupted earlier in the week. However, leading analysts within Israel have exposed the true motivations behind these attacks: the personal political survival of Prime

Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is using regional conflict as a smokescreen to divert attention from his corruption scandals.

Israel's escalating military provocations in Syria are also in line with a dangerous campaign to solidify its dominance across the Middle East. Netanyahu's rhetoric

about “changing the Middle East,” exposed shortly after the devastating war on Gaza in October 2023, reveals a sinister vision of regional conquest fueled by military aggression.

This aggressive posture comes despite Israel already facing grave accusations of genocide and war crimes at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for its actions in Gaza, with Netanyahu himself wanted by the ICC for crimes against humanity. Yet, emboldened by unconditional backing from the United States, Israel continues to wage war, spreading instability and suffering throughout the region with impunity.

Israel's warmongering agenda shows no signs of abating, as it ruthlessly exploits conflicts like those in Suwayda to justify further incursions and maintain its oppressive grip over the Middle East.

Syria’s bloody events: Dividing the divided

From page 1 ► Today, Syrians, regardless of their backgrounds and sectarian and regional affiliations, are more in need of awareness of the gravity of the moment, just as they were during the French Mandate in the 1920s.

At that time, the French High Commissioner sought to divide Syria into four sectarian cantons with various privileges. However, the Syrians refused and revolted under the leadership of the Druze leader Sultan Pasha al-Atrash, Saleh al-Ali, Ibrahim Hanano, and other exceptional and distinguished leaders.

The calls for partition, self-administration, international protection, and other slogans (engineered in the laboratories of the Israeli Mossad) aim at annihilating the single, unified Syrian entity.

Obviously, the policies pursued by the self-appointed president, al-Julani (currently known as Ahmed al-Sharaa) demonstrate a contradiction between rhetoric and practice as it turns a blind eye to the escalation of hate speech and allows its media, security, and even military arms to further perpetuate sectarian division.

Indeed, al-Julani's failure to put an end to the prevailing security chaos in the country makes it appear as if he is fueling division rather than combating it, as he claims.

Undoubtedly, the primary and ultimate beneficiary is the Israeli enemy, as it has unfortunately succeeded in dismantling the only Arab state that supported the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance movements.

Its recent intervention under the pretext of “defending the Druze” is a prelude to the

formation of a demilitarized security belt on the borders of the occupied Syrian Golan Heights.

Israel has long employed this fabricated pretext of “protecting minorities” to portray itself as their protector, not to mention its regional conflict between it and Türkiye.

Despite all the worrying indicators and despite all the abhorrent sectarian mobilization and incitement that sow discord and hatred among the components of Syrian society, Syrians, especially the elites, remain unanimous in their rejection of partition.

Just as the failure of the French partition project in the 1920s demonstrates, such maps may be drawn on paper, but they will collapse in the face of the resilience and awareness of societies.

12 years ago, the martyred Hezbollah Secretary General, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, warned that if Syria were lost, Palestine would be lost and called for combating the project to partition Syria.

He said: “Be wary, oh Lebanese people, and all the peoples [...] there is a clear experience before you, so why are you blind to it? [...] What future does Syria have in light of this takfiri mindset and these groups? What future does Lebanon have? What future does Palestine have? What future does the peoples of the region have? For God's sake, let's speak logically.

Put the sectarian and religious issue aside, for this is a real danger! We are not approaching the issue from a Shiite and Sunni perspective, as some are trying to accuse us.

Rather, we are approaching the issue from the perspective that we see all Muslims and Christians threatened by this mindset, this movement, this ideology, and this takfiri project—funded and supported by the U.S.—that is creeping into the region because this is what remains for the U.S. to destroy the region and reassert its hegemony over it, in the face of the awakenings of the peoples, the uprisings of the peoples, and the wills of the peoples.”

He adds, “If the takfiri current takes control, the future of Syria, Lebanon, and the region will be a very harsh and dark future [...] We all know that the U.S. project in the region is entirely an Israeli project because Syria is clearly the backbone of the resistance and the support of the resistance [...] The fool is the one who stands and watches death, the siege, and the conspiracy creeping towards him without lifting a finger. I am the wise and responsible one who acts with full responsibility.

Beware, brothers and sisters, because if Syria falls into the hands of the Americans, Israelis, Takfiris, and the U.S. tools in the region who call themselves regional states, the resistance will be besieged and Israel will re-invade Lebanon to impose its conditions on Lebanon and to revive its ambitions and projects once again, and Lebanon will be brought back into the Israeli era.

If Syria falls, Palestine will be lost, the resistance in Palestine will be lost, and Gaza, the West Bank, and holy Jerusalem will be lost. If Syria falls into the hands of America, Israel, and the Takfiris, the peoples of our region and the countries of our region will face a harsh, bad, and dark era, and this is our diagnosis.”

Israel’s visa denials: A calculated strategy to undermine humanitarian oversight in Gaza



By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN- Israel's repeated refusal to renew visas for the heads of critical United Nations agencies operating in Gaza signals a disturbing and deliberate tactic to obstruct independent humanitarian oversight amid one of the world's most protracted conflicts.

Specifically, the agencies in question are the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), which are all frontline organizations delivering aid and documenting human rights violations in Gaza's difficult conditions. By shutting down visa renewals systematically, Israel restricts these organizations' ability to operate, which serves to limit the assistance and accountability.

Retaliation against accountability

These refusals for visas should not be slighted simply as routine administrative practices, but rather, as a systematic form of retaliation. UN humanitarian officials have practically linked the visa refusals to their agencies' advocacy and public statements on Israel's actions that harm

Palestinian civilians. Each public statement recording civilian suffering, and suggesting some type of violation of international law brings escalating restrictions that signal a conflict between Israel's political goals and the UN's commitment to protect human rights.

Israel tries to defend these actions by claiming that certain UN agencies have been compromised by ties to resistance groups like Hamas; however, UN leadership has repeatedly denied these claims and there is no proof to back them up. Instead of addressing any substantiated security threats, these narratives seem to be designed to undermine independent humanitarian actors and interfere with their missions.

The broader context of shrinking humanitarian space

This obstruction urges the stem of a larger trend aimed at oppressing international oversight in the occupied Palestinian territories. Just recently, the U.S. imposed sanctions on Francisca Albanese, the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations on the occupied Palestinian territories, placing further stresses on the volatile political environment.

Albanese was sanctioned for principally supporting investigations of the International Criminal Court into alleged war crimes by Israeli and US actors-interpreted widely by human rights advocates as a measure to intimidate UN officials and discourage them from holding actors accountable.

Humanitarian and legal consequences

The impact of these policies is not abstract—it is devastating on the ground. Denying visas to UN agency leaders restricts their ability to op-

erate effectively, resulting in delays, diminished coordination, and reduced access to vulnerable populations in Gaza.

With over two million Palestinians reliant on aid amid a backdrop of conflict and blockade, any impairment of UN operations magnifies the humanitarian crisis and leaves civilians increasingly exposed to harm.

Moreover, removing or undermining independent observers damages the fundamental principles of neutrality, impartiality, and transparency that underpin the international humanitarian system. Without credible and present actors witnessing and documenting events, violations of international humanitarian law may continue unabated, shielded from international scrutiny and justice.

Eroding norms and the risk to accountability

The calculated sidelining of UN personnel through visa refusals and sanctions sets a dangerous precedent for global governance. When states leverage bureaucratic mechanisms and political pressure to expel or intimidate humanitarian actors, the foundational norms that protect civilians during armed conflict are eroded. This not only impacts Gaza but signals a broader risk for conflict zones worldwide—where political interests may override the universal commitment to human rights.

The international community faces a crucial test: whether to uphold the integrity of humanitarian mandates and international law or acquiesce to state efforts that obstruct transparency and accountability. Without decisive action, Gaza risks becoming a “black hole” for justice, where suffering continues unseen and unaddressed.

Gaza church attack reflects genocide

From page 1 ► The Latin Patriarchate of occupied al-Quds (Jerusalem), which oversees the Gaza parish said, “This horrific war must come to a complete end,” adding the victims had turned to the church compound as a safe haven “after their homes, possessions, and dignity had already been stripped away.”

Monsignor Pascal Gollnisch, the head of the Catholic charity l'Oeuvre d'Orient, condemned the attack as “totally unacceptable.”

“It is a place of worship. It is a Catholic church known for its peaceful attitude, for being a peacemaker,” Gollnisch told AFP.

“These are people who are at the service of the population. There were families, there were civilians.” The church had long been a symbol of shelter. Before his death in April, Pope Francis personally called members of the congregation nightly to check on their safety.

Hamas denounced the strike as a “new crime committed against places of worship and innocent displaced persons,” calling it part of a “comprehensive war of extermination against the Palestinian people.”

This latest bombing is part of a broader pattern. Most of Gaza's mosques, many of which are

historic and still in daily use, have already been leveled by Israeli airstrikes. Minarets have fallen. Prayer halls have burned. Many were destroyed with entire families still inside.

Religious leaders say this is not just the destruction of buildings, but of a people's identity and faith. There are now no safe spaces in Gaza. Not churches, not mosques, not schools, or hospitals.

The United Nations and experts within international legal and human rights organizations warn that these ongoing attacks, especially on civilian shelters, places of worship, and the health sector, are not accidental.

They argue the strikes reflect a systematic campaign to eliminate not only Gaza's population, but also ensure the territory is uninhabitable for the Palestinian population.

On Friday, dozens of civilians were killed by “drone missiles packed with nails” in al-Mawasi, an allegedly designated safe zone where massacres have repeatedly taken place.

This is the process of a U.S.-backed Israeli regime's genocide in a deliberate manner that is being conducted with impunity.

Israeli combat veteran raises alarm over increasing suicide of soldiers since October 7

An Israeli combat veteran has urged Tel Aviv to quickly address concerns of soldiers returning from the war in Gaza, amid reports of increasing suicide rates. In an interview with the Israeli public broadcaster, Kan, Tzachi Atedagi, an advocate for the protection of the mental health of soldiers, noted that 10 soldiers recently took their own lives in a span of less than two weeks.

“We are crying out. Enough is enough,” Atedagi told Kan Network B's This Morning program.

“There are a lot of combat veterans roaming the streets, but it is very difficult for us [to get help] with all the bureaucracy around,” he said.

“Sometimes, a combat veteran doesn't have 24

hours to wait,” he added, citing several reports of soldiers who killed themselves while waiting for health intervention from the government.

Earlier this week, The Times of Israel reported that a soldier was seriously wounded in an apparent attempted suicide while in training in southern Israel. In January 2025, the Israeli army reported that 28 soldiers had taken their own lives since the start of the war, marking the highest toll in 13 years.

Since then, several more cases of suicide by soldiers have been reported, although an official tally will not be released by the Israeli military until the end of the year.

Hamas: Israel pursuing ‘policy of mass starvation’ in Gaza

Hamas has accused Israel of pursuing a “policy of mass starvation” against Palestinians in what it says is a “crime against humanity”, amid warnings from health officials in the territory about growing numbers of starving civilians seeking help, Al Jazeera reported.

“The famine imposed by the occupation on

the Gaza Strip represents a deliberate crime against humanity, in which food is used as a weapon of war to subjugate a resilient people,” said the Hamas statement.

“We call for urgent popular and official action to stop this heinous crime and save the hundreds of thousands of starving and besieged people.”

Commander: Israeli public ‘fed lies’ about defeating Hamas

The Israeli public is being “fed lies” about the progress made against Hamas, a senior military commander has said, warning the Palestinian movement will not be defeated for years.

In an interview with Ynet published on Friday, the unnamed officer stressed that dismantling Hamas is a “tedious” task that could take up to five years, with the military needing to return to Gaza to “mow the grass” constantly.

“In today's populist era, the public is being fed lies and spins, just like they were before 7 October and after every round of fighting with Hamas,” the commander said.

Hamas, he explained, still maintains “massive infrastructure” in Gaza. The fight against the group is far from over, he said.

“This is work that will need to continue for a year, for five years, to maintain the achievements. It doesn't matter if the enemy is called Hamas, Islamic Jihad, or any other name,” he added.

“It's a shame the public is being misled into thinking this will end soon and that we will defeat the enemy in the foreseeable future.”

“This is ongoing fighting, just like in Judea and Samaria [the occupied West Bank], where the battles continue.”

According to the report, while the army claims significant progress in killing Palestinian fighters, destroying tunnels and

targeting Hamas infrastructure, these results show that the group is far from defeated.

“These achievements mean that Hamas is still standing, its command and control capabilities may be limited and damaged, but it remains operational,” the report stated.

The Ynet report paints a picture of slow military progress since Israel broke the ceasefire and resumed the war on Gaza on 18 March, according to Middle East Eye.

Although the army stated that it had deployed four to five divisions, Ynet reported that only a limited number of soldiers are directly involved in combat.

The announcements were made to “create the impression that tens of thousands of soldiers” were fighting in Gaza.

In reality, the operation on the ground is “limited and restricted”, with only a few battalion-sized units in action.

The vast majority of the fighting is concentrated on the outskirts of major cities in the Gaza Strip.

“We are advancing too slowly, too transparently, and in a crooked manner,” two senior officers told Ynet.

“We are still tackling peripheral areas like Zaytoun and Shujaiya, waiting for the green light from political leadership to move into the city center and west.”

Sad news for the world of archaeology: Brian Fagan, father of public archaeology, passed away

By Dr. Fereidoun Biglari

The world of archaeology has lost one of its most influential figures: Brian Fagan, often hailed as the father of public archaeology, has passed away.

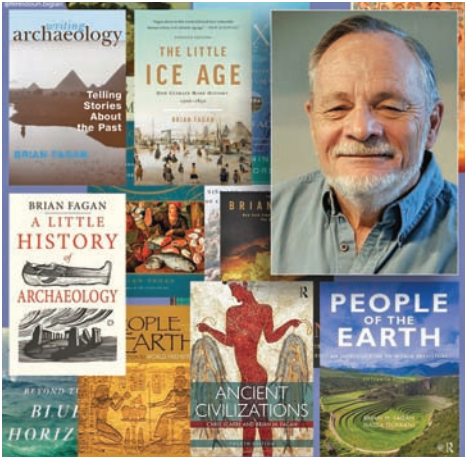
For more than five decades, Fagan bridged the gap between academia and the general public, making complex archaeological concepts both accessible and engaging through his writing.

My personal connection to Fagan's work stretches back nearly thirty-seven years to my high school days in Kermanshah. On a hot August day in 1988, a package arrived that would leave a lasting impression on me. Inside was "The Adventure of Archaeology", a beautifully illustrated book from the National Geographic Society. Fagan's storytelling captivated me from the very first page, taking readers on an exhilarating journey through some of archaeology's greatest discoveries—ranging from Nabonidus in the 6th century BCE to the groundbreaking finds of the 20th century. His eloquent and approachable language brought the discipline to life, enhanced by stunning photographs of ancient sites, artifacts, and reconstructed historical scenes.

As a newcomer to Paleolithic archaeology, I found Fagan's work on the Leakey family's excavations in East Africa and the exploration of Paleolithic caves particularly captivating. Unfortunately, in Iran, we've struggled to effectively educate the public about archaeology. Many still associate the field with treasure hunting, despite the tireless efforts of some colleagues on platforms like Instagram, who aim to share accurate reports of archaeological discoveries and emphasize the discipline's importance in understanding our shared history. There's still much to be done.

A recent success in this regard is the "Definitive Visual History of Ancient Iran" series, a four-volume set published with exceptional quality by Cyan Publication. To date, Fagan's "In the Beginning: An Introduction to Archaeology" is the only one of his works translated into Persian, in two volumes by Gh. Sh?mlu and published by SAMT. I remain hopeful that future translations of his remarkable writings will follow.

Brian Fagan was a pioneering archaeologist and a leading expert in prehistory. He began his academic career as a Visiting Professor at the University of Illinois before becoming a Full Professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara in the 1960s. Over his illustrious career, Fagan authored or edited 46 books, including seven best-selling textbooks such as "In the Beginning", "People of the Earth", and "Archaeology: A Brief Introduction". These works, frequently updated and revised, introduced generations of students to archaeology with clear, jargon-free language



that made complex topics accessible to all.

In addition to his prolific publications, which include more than 100 scholarly papers, Fagan served as editor for prestigious journals like "Archaeology Worldwide". He was also a regular contributor to public media, effectively bridging the gap between academic archaeology and the wider public.

Fagan's contributions to education were revolutionary. He was known for teaching large introductory classes, making archaeology approachable for thousands of students. His outreach extended far beyond the classroom, with consultations for institutions like the National Geographic Society, Microsoft Encarta, and the BBC. He also lectured at renowned institutions such as the Smithsonian and produced influential radio and TV programs, including the "Lost Civilizations" series. His work earned him numerous accolades, including the Society of Professional Archaeologists' Distinguished Service Award and the Society for American Archaeology's Public Education Award.

Fagan's scholarly approach was marked by his ability to blend cultural history with modern archaeological methods, using interdisciplinary sources to reconstruct historical narratives. A fierce advocate for cross-disciplinary research—especially regarding past climate change—he was also instrumental in reassessing archaeology's role in contemporary society.

Fagan's work has left an indelible mark on the field of archaeology. He made archaeology not just a discipline, but a shared adventure—one that continues to inspire and inform generations around the world.

(The author serves as the Deputy Director for Cultural Affairs and is the Head of the Paleolithic Department at the National Museum of Iran.)

Chahar Bagh Boulevard: historical memory of nation and mirror of Isfahan culture

TEHRAN – Iran's Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Maryam Jalali Dehkordi, has said Isfahan's Chahar Bagh Boulevard is a historical memory of the nation and a mirror of Isfahan culture.

Speaking at a cultural event themed "Isfahan, a narrative of love and culture," which was held in Chahar Bagh Boulevard on Thursday, with a focus on promoting spiritual tourism and enhancing cultural economy, she said Chahar Bagh Street is beyond an urban route, IRNA reported.

Chahar Bagh is symbol of devotion and love, she said, adding: "There are unique scenes from the funeral of the bodies of martyrs to mourning for Imam Hussein (AS) and the joys of the victories we experienced in Islamic Revolution and Sacred Defense, and this street is our historical memory."

Jalali Dehkordi appreciated the efforts of managers and artists in revival of cultural identity of this street, adding that this historical memory was kept alive with the help of a huge cultural structure, in which people work with love and dedication.

"The real structure means cohesion and love. I am content that in this blessed month of Muharram, when the call of Iranian strength has filled the entire world (following Israel's 12-day war on Iran), I am standing in Chahar Bagh, which itself is a huge and living entity."

"Chahar Bagh is not just a place of passage; it is a place of manifestation of worship, purity, trade and our skills, and the bathhouse, school, mosque and market have all found meaning in

the heart of Chahar Bagh."

She continued: The love of this street has captivated the world, and the world bows down to Isfahan, which is known as "Nesf-e Jahan" (Half of the World).

She said, "We have lived with the handicrafts. Our economy has been formed alongside our identity, and we grew up in the homes of goldsmiths."

Everyone is under the tent of Imam Hussein (AS) and no one is excluded, she added.

Jalali Dehkordi continued: "Isfahan has always been known for its art and love, and we have a duty to protect this great heritage in various rituals, from Nowruz to Ramadan and Muharram."

"I hope that we will establish an economy based on identity and Imam Hussain (AS) tent."

She conveyed the message of Cultural Heritage Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri to those present at the ceremony, saying: "He emphasizes harmony, rationality and consensus in the fields of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts."

The cultural event will continue in Chahar Bagh Boulevard for four days from 17 to 22.

Chahar Bagh Boulevard, constructed during the Safavid era, is one of Isfahan's most iconic landmarks. Often compared to Paris's Champs-Élysées, the avenue stretches approximately 6 kilometers, connecting the northern and southern parts of the city, with the historic Hasht Behshat and Chehel Sotoun gardens on its eastern side.

Iran considers extending ‘Land of Kindness’ exhibition in China following high demand

TEHRAN -- Iran is considering an extension of its highly acclaimed cultural exhibition, "Land of Kindness", currently on display in China, following a formal request from Chinese officials, according to Ali Darabi, Iran's Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage.

The exhibition, which showcases artifacts from several Tehran museums, including the renowned Moqaddam Museum of the University of Tehran, was originally scheduled to run through late September. However, Chinese organizers have requested an extension due to the event's popularity in both Chengdu and its current venue, the Guangdong Museum in Guangzhou.

"We have submitted the extension request to the Cabinet of Ministers," Darabi told Tehran Times. "If approved, the exhibition will continue beyond its initial closing date."

While the exhibition continues to foster strong cultural ties, Darabi acknowledged the absence of reciprocal Chinese exhibitions in Iran. "My understanding is that political considerations [due to a recent Israeli-imposed war on the Islamic Republic] are influ-



encing the Chinese side's hesitation to send artifacts to Iran," he said.

"However, they have expressed interest in organizing another exhibition, which we have conditioned on a mutual display of Chinese heritage in Iran."

Darabi emphasized that China has fully covered the exhibition's costs, including insurance of the artifacts.

Addressing concerns raised by some international media out-

lets regarding the return of Iranian artifacts [concerning previous loan exhibitions] from China, Darabi clarified, "Those claims are unfounded. Every item sent to China -- except for those currently part of "Land of Kindness" -- has been safely returned. The most recent batch came back in April and is now housed at the National Museum of Iran."

"Land of Kindness" is a joint initiative by Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and

Handicrafts and the China International Cultural Exchange Center. The exhibition features some 150 artifacts, including metalwork, ceramics, silk textiles, carpets, seals, and other artistic items that reflect the grandeur of Iran's Islamic-Iranian civilization.

Spanning from the third millennium BC to the later Islamic periods, the displayed items include intricately crafted metalworks, ceramics, glassware, textiles, and Persian carpets. These objects not only demonstrate Iran's artistic evolution but also narrate key stages in its cultural history—from the era of Mithraic rituals to the advent of Islam.

As mentioned by organizers, a key feature of the exhibition is its immersive design, inspired by iconic elements of Iranian art and architecture. Visitors enter through an area reminiscent of the Quranic tilework of Tehran's Golestan Palace, while the main exhibition hall features stained glass and geometric patterns evocative of the Nasir al-Mulk Mosque in Shiraz. This carefully curated ambiance invites visitors into the spiritual and artistic heart of Iranian heritage.

Medical tourism permits issued for 10 travel agencies in Tehran

TEHRAN — Reza Hemmati, Deputy Head of Tehran's Tourism Department, has announced the issuance of medical tourism permits to 10 travel agencies in Tehran.

He explained that the agencies are to offer health tourists comprehensive service packages including medical visas, accommodation reservations, translation services, airport transfers, and post-treatment support to ensure a safe, professional, and comfortable experience for foreign patients, IRIB reported.

Pointing to the unveiling of Tehran's comprehensive health tourism document, he said that today, the effects and results of this document is clearly visible in the development of the health tourism infrastructure of Tehran province.

He called issuing these permits a sign of trust to Tehran's medical potentials, adding, "We seek to turn Tehran into one of the pioneer destinations of the region in terms of health tourism with cooperation of the state sector, universities of medical sciences, and

active contribution of the private sector."

Given the sensitivity of the issue, the process of monitoring the activities of authorized agencies is carried out accurately, regularly, and continuously to ensure the quality of services, he mentioned.

Experts say Iran's medical tourism sector presents a win-win scenario: patients benefit from accessible, quality care, while the country earns valuable foreign currency and enhances its international reputation.

First spiritual tourism roadmap for Isfahan bazaar planned

TEHRAN — Isfahan Municipality is set to officially unveil the spiritual tourism routes of Isfahan, highlighting saqqakhanehs (traditional places providing water to the passers-by), seminaries, and mosques located within the city's ancient bazaar, said Alireza Massah, who presides over the municipality's tourism office.

Speaking at a press conference of a cultural event themed "Isfahan, a Narrative of Love and Art" with focus on spiritual tourism, handicrafts and Muharram rituals, he said all the facilities of Cultural Complex of Isfahan Municipality's District Four have been made available to the "Narrative of Love and Art" exhibition, Mehr news agency reported.

He said, "Our cultural colleagues have done their best to prepare the space in Chahar Bagh Boulevard in recent days."

Since the exhibition will continue until 22 at nights, the coordination has been made with Isfahan and Suburbs Bus Company for transferring the artisans and citizens until that time, he added.



Pointing to the special potentials of ritual tourism in Isfahan, he said Takht-e Foulad site is one of the important centers of Isfahan's spiritual and religious tourism.

This site is not only valuable in terms of architecture and history, the carvings on tombstones, the calligraphy lines, and the mystical concepts engraved on the tombstones are themselves a living museum of the religious beliefs of the people of this land, he mentioned.

He gave news of the role of Specialized

Office of National and Ritual Arts of Isfahan Municipality in this event, saying: "This office with cooperation of other cultural bodies, will launch stands in Chahar Bagh and also perform special artistic programs in public space. The event is an opportunity to showcase the artistic potentials associated with religious and spiritual rituals."

Massah also gave news of planning for revival of spiritual tourism in Isfahan's historical Bazaar, adding that Isfahan Bazar is full of religious spaces, which includes traditional saqqakhanehs, mosques, seminaries and Hosseinieh which are rooted in Muharram history and culture.

All of them are proper grounds for planning new tourism routes with spiritual approach, he pointed out.

He expressed the hope that these new routes can familiarize domestic and foreign tourists with rarely-seen manifestation of Isfahan cultural heritage, a heritage which has deep ties with Muharram rituals and public beliefs.

Tehran ceremony to honor devotees of manuscript culture

TEHRAN – A ceremony honoring supporters of handwritten manuscripts will be held in Tehran in February 2026 under the slogan "Yesterday's Heritage, Today's Thought."

According to the National Library and Archives of Iran, after a hiatus of several years, the event will be jointly organized by the National Library and Archives of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Library, Museum, and Document Center of the Iranian Parliament. The ceremony will recognize creators and contributors in the field of manuscripts.

Researchers, publishers, universities, cultural institutions, and other active organizations in the areas of text studies, manuscript collation, cataloging, and codicology are invited to submit their published works and major activities from 2018 to 2023 by September 22, 2025, to the conference secretariat.

According to organizers, the event will highlight the best promotional activities related to manuscripts, including policy-making, evaluation, binding, restoration, digitization, donation of private manuscript collections and documents to libraries, publication of journals on codicology and text research, teaching codicology and manuscript studies, distinguished publishers of corrected texts, manuscript and document collection, library services in the manuscript sector, and text editing across various fields such as history, geography, literature, science, Quranic studies, jurisprudence, philosophy, and bookbinding.

Additionally, the conference will review and select the best theoretical works on manuscripts and text correction, including books and theses on manuscript studies, text editing, librarianship, restoration, binding, preservation, and cataloging.



Queen Esther entertains the King in the presence of courtiers, Ardashirnama, late 17th century, Iran (The Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary)

Iran is considered the cradle of handwritten manuscripts dating back several historical centuries. These manuscripts range from copies of the Holy Quran to poetry, scientific books, governmental and political documents,

among many others. A significant number of these precious manuscripts are preserved in museums outside Iran, highlighting their global cultural and historical importance.

Independent journalist: Canada’s posture on Iran ‘serves US and Israeli interests’

Aidan Jonah reveals to the Tehran Times how Canadian media and intelligence amplify anti-Iran propaganda



By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN- In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, Aidan Jonah, editor-in-chief of The Canada Files, a leading independent news outlet focused on Canadian foreign policy, delivers an incisive critique of Canada's role in perpetuating Western imperialist agendas, particularly against Iran. Renowned for his investigative work and a report submitted to the 48th session of the UN Human Rights Council in September 2021, Jonah offers a compelling analysis of modern imperialism, which he defines as neocolonialism driven by proxy governance, financial warfare, and the manipulation of diaspora communities.

Jonah examines Canada's position as a subordinate ally to U.S. foreign policy, arguing that its alignment with American objectives shapes its hostile posture toward Iran. He exposes the contradictions of liberal democratic states like Canada, which project an image of human rights advocacy while endorsing policies that undermine Iranian sovereignty. Highlighting the role of Canada's intelligence community and mainstream media, Jonah critiques their complicity in amplifying anti-Iranian sentiments and marginalizing pro-sovereignty voices within the Iranian diaspora.

The interview also explores strategies Iran could employ—through media, diplomacy, and hard power—to counter Western narratives and strengthen its regional influence. Jonah emphasizes the importance of Iran's unity and strategic alliances, particularly with rising powers like China and BRICS, to bolster its resilience against external aggression. His insights serve as both a critical examination of global power dynamics and a call for greater awareness of the mechanisms sustaining Western imperialism.

The following is the text of the interview:

You frame Canada's Iran posture as part of a broader imperialist project. How do you define modern imperialism and where does Canada fit into this structure?

To me, modern imperialism can be broken down into a few sections, but in short, neocolonialism is the best way to put it.

Because no longer do we see the old style, say for example, the French breaking of Vietnam up into three parts in the past, and so forth. Nowadays, what we see, for example, like the situation in Ukraine after the 2014 Maidan coup that the U.S. instigated and led, you have had technically Ukrainian governments, quote-unquote, but really they were proxies for Washington. And so that,

over the many years, has been the main way that once a nation is conquered, that's how they're controlled, rather than, say, the old-style British governors in India, for example.

But in terms of how they get to that, that usually comes from a combination of mercenaries. The West doesn't really like drafts anymore after the Vietnam War. Fiasco for them.

They also use the comprador elites. They try to build up these elites that will benefit despite their nation's impoverishment and suffering under Western control, or build them up to be people who can govern. And then you have the collaborators, usually in the diaspora, and then you also have some of the lower-level collaborators that they will develop in a country.

And in that way, you end up having, really, an all-of-society attack on these countries. And, of course, I just mentioned the final step. That's the second step.

And then, obviously, the big thing overall is to maintain control via financial means. If they can't outright invade a country, or if they can't establish their proxies, they can use financial leverage, say, for example, SWIFT. They can use the U.S. currency, as we've seen it, using it as a weapon, using sanctions.

Financial warfare has been rampant. But it really has sparked up since Russia's special military operation has begun in 2022. But we're seeing it escalating now with this potential for secondary sanctions that are being put on anybody that buys from Russia in 50 days [September 3, 2025].

Trump says he wants a deal. I don't believe that at all. I don't think the U.S. wants a deal.

I don't think they ever have. So, we're going to see secondary sanctions come on as well. Venezuela has been hit with them before, too.

And, I mean, Iran has dealt with brutal, brutal sanctions. Iran knows sanctions very, very well, especially after 2012, after the coordinated push to punish Iran for this idea of a plan for nuclear weapons, even though Ayatollah Khomeini has repeatedly talked about, you know, not wanting those for Iran. And we'll have to see if that remains in the future.

But that's most certainly been a quite consistent state position. It's been ignored. And that's because you need a narrative.

You [the Western governments] need a justification to pursue imperialism against countries such as Iran.

To what extent do you think Canada's approach to Iran is influenced by its alignment with US and Israeli foreign policy objectives?

I most certainly think it's extremely influenced by its alignment with the US. Because I think Canada is very much a junior partner within the broader sphere of Western imperi-

alism.

Canada most certainly would aggressively target countries on its own, even if the US did not exist. But most certainly, it is servile to the Americans and has been for a long, long time. Now in terms of Israel, to me, Israel has always been a proxy of the United States.

I mean, I think about the murder of Sayyed Nasrallah, who has very clearly stated such a thing in the past. And it's quite obvious that Israel is nothing but a proxy for the Americans. And so, I would say Canada doesn't go to the beat of Israel's policy.

It goes to the beat of American policy, which is everything that Israel would need to try to control the region for America's benefit.

How do liberal democratic states like Canada maintain the image of human rights advocacy while at the same time support regimes and policies hostile to the Iranian sovereignty?

So, it's a campaign of blatant lies.

That's what it's always been. It's been a campaign of blatant lies, because colonialism and imperialism, whether it's been in the classical form or whether we see now more modern, more neocolonialism, you need a justification for the imperial core



population to support the butchering of nations, the butchering of people, the destruction and subversion of cultures. I mean, the religious sectarianism that the West has fostered for so many decades, you need the Westerners to support that.

So, they blatantly lie. They fund organizations, Canadian military. There's an author, Yves Engler, he's written about how Canadian military funds organizations in Canada.

The resistance is fighting a very just fight.

And the Canadian government has put in hundreds of millions, in almost the last decade, into media organizations in the country. So, the media atmosphere, well, in Canada, it's purportedly free.

And once you look at the overall structures and you look at where the money goes and you look at what Canada does, you realize, oh, they just brazenly lied to me. They just brazenly lied.

And that's what they do. And because Canada, the US, the Western powers, they came into more wealth in the past because they stole from peoples and nations around the world. That's how they got their own extreme wealth.

And then they used some of that to build up, build industry, and get advantages. That's why they could then claim that they were beacons of human rights, beacons of this and that, is because they stole their way to the top. And they just lied to the population.

They lied to the world. And regretfully, you see a lot of people in the global South that still are struggling

to fight these attempts to colonize their mind. They're struggling with it.

And the Global South is fighting a very hard battle. And I think it's working. But certainly in the West, in Canada, from my experience, it's still a long, long battle to go.

But it'll work for a while.

What role does Canada's military industrial complex and intelligence community play in sustaining anti-Iran sentiment domestically and internationally?

So, I think in terms of the demonization of Iran from these two factors you mentioned, I think the intelligence community would play the biggest role here, because through the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, the main intelligence service in Canada, they are the ones who will spread fear about supposed Iranian plots in Canada. I mean, a far bigger threat right now, the military is more so for assisting Israel, Canada's presence in the Middle East.

I think that has been explored by many other authors. But the target is more so people in the political class. I think of like an Irwin Cotler, for example.

An Irwin Cotler alone, in terms of rhetoric, is far more dangerous to the Iranian community in Canada than the entire Canadian defense ministry

helped get the MEK, which is a reprehensible terrorist organization, get off the list in Canada for terrorists.

Again, did Canada's media wage a big battle here? Not so much, no. I mean, further look at the abuse that Chinese Canadians have faced in the country, and I've covered this for years. Again, they are fueling it actively.

They actually, not only do they produce malpractice in terms of their coverage and lack of critical faculties, they absolutely fuel it. And so, they are extremely responsible. They are stenographers of empire, and they get paid to do a certain role, and as much as they might make noise about it and whine occasionally, they know what their role is, and people suffer for that.

How do you interpret the portrayal of Iranian diaspora communities as either tools or threats within Canadian national security discourse?

Oh, well, certainly, that is an absolute reality, and really, it's an absolute disgrace, and I think the CSIS, the organization who I mentioned, is a really crucial front in terms of this divide. Now, in terms of this divide of the diaspora communities, I actually spoke with a independent senator in Canada recently.

Israel is nothing but a proxy for the Americans.

Yuen Pao Woo is his name. Now, he's actually focused a lot on the situation of Chinese Canadians recently, but he spoke to me about this idea of 'Modern Exclusion'. Now, I would refer to it personally as McCarthyism, the tactic of anti-communist claims of other people being communist when they weren't, or they might have been, but it was supposed to be a bad thing in the Americas in the 1950s, beginning there. But now, with the proposal by Senator Woo, he's talking about the division.

You have two parts, or three sometimes, [even four] of the diaspora community, and right now, in the Ira-



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nian community, you have the ones who want neutrality with Iran, just basic diplomatic relations. Then you have the Iranian monarchists who want to put the son of Pahlavi back into power, really against the will of the Iranian people, and then you have the MEK supporters in Canada, so it's perhaps an extra level in terms of complexity, but what you have is both the MEK and probably more so the monarchists that are being played to in the Canadian sense, Canadian politics, Canadian media, politicians. I mean, in Ontario, for example, we had

a MPP.

She's no longer one. She's up in Ottawa area of Canada. That's the capital, that's the capital city, and her name's Goldie Ghamari, and she was a hard supporter of Israel, wants regime change for Iran, and she eventually got kicked out because she met a white nationalist, but her support for regime change in Iran was never a problem, and she got a positive attention, I think, early on.

The Iranian Canadian Congress is not pro-Islamic Republic, but they are supporters of Iran's sovereignty.

Again, the MEK speaks for itself. They just don't get enough scrutiny, and then you have a lot of these side that they're monarchists or they're MEK, or there's a smaller faction that just doesn't support either one but wants regime change in Iran, and they, on large, on large support Israel. You know, I think about an Iranian justice collective.

They have, one of these guys is a lawyer, Kaveh Shahrooz, and he actually is a senior fellow at the MacDonald-Laurier Institute. That organization has taken money from Latvian Defense Ministry before, and many others, but him and 'Iranian Justice Collective', this collective, they support this supposed Israeli narrative about an Iranian nuclear weapon program. First of all, the idea that Iran doesn't have the right to have them [is ridiculous], which Iran, very much, if it chose to, definitely has the right to.

Look at what happened to Japan when they didn't have nuclear weapons, when the US was alone in half of that, and look at what happened to Japan. Look at how Iraq got invaded when they supposedly had WMDs, but look at how, you can call them DPRK [preferable], or you can call them North Korea [more common for Westerners]. They've never gotten invaded.

Why? Because they have nukes.

So, you have this part of the, a very mixed part of the Iranian community, just to keep things on focus. And, of course, the key media and politicians very much take the side of the monarchists, MEK, and then this other grouping that just generally supports regime change in Iran.

They take their side very much, and the side that is pro-Islamic Republic are, you know, they're [supposedly] not loyal. They're serving the IRGC. They're serving Iranian governments.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

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JULY 19, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Be afraid of a gentleman when he is hungry, and of a mean person when his stomach is full.
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:11 Evening: 19:39 Dawn: 3:22 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:03 (tomorrow)

What’s in Tehran art galleries

Painting

* An exhibition of paintings by Mehdi Movahedi is underway at Kavin Gallery.

The exhibit named “Suspended Body” will be running until July 25 at the gallery located at No.24, Pesian St. Zaferanieh Neighborhood.

* An exhibition of paintings by Mahshid Shafiei is underway at Ebteda Gallery.

Entitled “Staircase Dance”, the exhibition will run until July 21 at the gallery located at 35 Farrokhi Alley, near Vali-e Asr Square.

* Paintings by Ali Soltani Tehrani are on display in an exhibition at Soo Gallery.

The exhibition named “Risk of Extinction” will continue until August 1 at the gallery located at 30 Purmusa St. off So-mayyeh St.

* An exhibition of paintings by Ghazaleh Tavakolmand is currently underway at Afrand Gallery.

The exhibit will continue until July 27 at the gallery located at 48 Jalal Hosseini St., Jahan Ara St., off Jalal Ale-Ahmad Highway.

* Paintings by Hamid Fam are currently on display in an exhibition at Etamad Gallery 1.

Titled “Clime”, the exhibition will be running until August 5 at the gallery located at 25 Shirudi Alley, Mofatteh St., near Haft-e Tir Square.

* Ech Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Ardeshtir Mohasses.

The exhibit runs until August 1 at the gallery that can be found at 10 Mirza Taraj opposite Dowlat St., Shariati Ave.

* A collection of paintings by Ali Faqih is on view in an exhibition at Adapa Gallery.

Titled “Weeping Perfume”, the exhibition will run until July 30 at the gallery located at No. 5, Sumesara Alley, Sazesh St., Vali-e Asr Square.

* Tehran’s CAMA – Contemporary and Modern Art Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Ali Beigiparast, Mahnaz Pasikhani, Ahmad Vakili, Jamshid Haqiqatshenas, and Ali Nedai.

The exhibit titled “Face to Face” will be running until July 22 at the gallery located at No. 44, 10th Golestan, Pasdaran St.

* 009821 Projects Gallery is showcasing a collection of paintings by Arman Shahmoradi, Leila Faghani and Hamideh Mohebbi.

The exhibition will run until July 29 at the gallery located at No. 25, 18th Alley, Kheradmand St., Karim Khan Ave.

Mehr CEO calls for independent media narratives to counter global distortions at BRICS conference

TEHRAN – Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati, the CEO of Mehr Media Group (which consists of Mehr News Agency and English-language daily Tehran Times) emphasized the vital role of media in providing independent narratives to prevent distortion of the truth within mainstream outlets during the seventh BRICS Media and Think Tank Forum in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on Thursday.

In his keynote speech at the plenary session, Rahmati underscored the importance of multilateral media collaboration, supporting equitable content production and distribution, promoting authentic independent narratives, and the role of media in shaping a fair, multipolar global order.

He further highlighted BRICS’ potential to redefine global governance and called for active participation by member media outlets in pursuing the aspirations of developing nations, reforming international economic institutions, clarifying the consequences of unilateral policies, and informing about joint economic projects.

Rahmati also addressed ongoing Israeli aggressions against Gaza, emphasizing the crucial role of independent media in portraying the humanitarian aspects of

conflicts and illegal acts by Western countries. He stressed that independent narratives could prevent the distortion of truth in dominant media landscapes.

The seventh gathering of media representatives from BRICS nations and several countries from the Global South took place in Rio de Janeiro from July 15 to 17. The event aimed to expand media cooperation, counter unilateral narratives, and strengthen communication channels among Global South nations.

Iran’s delegation was represented by Mehr News Agency.

During the session, Daria Ivan-kova, Director of the TV BRICS International Cooperation Department, stressed the importance

of expanding media ties to build a unified positive agenda and deepen cultural exchange.

She also highlighted the influence of media in shaping global public opinion and called for enhanced south-south media cooperation, development of joint projects in culture, education, tourism, and economy, multilingual content production, and leveraging new technologies like AI for content creation and dissemination. She also emphasized investing in the education of future journalists across BRICS countries and referenced collaborative projects with Mehr News Agency.

The opening segment featured speeches by notable figures such as Fu Hua, President of Xinhua News Agency; Mikhail Gousman,

First Deputy General Director of the Russian news agency TASS; Marida Fernandez Lopez from the Cuban Communist Party; and British thinker Martin Jacques.

Key topics discussed during the conference included the future of BRICS media cooperation, countering hegemonic and unilateral narratives, capacity-building in developing countries, establishing shared media infrastructure, and designing communication models for the Global South.

Additionally, the launch of the “South Global Media Union” was announced, aiming to foster media cohesion and synergy among developing nations. The union’s objectives include enhanced information exchange, professional capacity-building, and increasing the Global South’s influence in international communication frameworks.

BRICS currently comprises China, Russia, India, Brazil, South Africa, with new members such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, UAE, and Ethiopia. The BRICS Media Conference functions as an advisory and specialized body dedicated to promoting media collaboration and content synergy among member states, held annually to strengthen collective media efforts.

Works of Iranian artists at FMO PA International Photography Competition exhibition

TEHRAN-Each year, the Florida Museum of Photographic Arts (FMO PA) celebrates photographic excellence from around the world through its International Photography Competition. The winning works are featured in an exhibition, underway at the museum, with three photos by Iranian artists Majid Hojati and Armin Amirian among them.

Selected from 2,537 photographs submitted by 579 photographers from 55 countries, the works are on display at the exhibition that opened on July 8 and will run until September 7, Khabaronline reported.

Juried by an international panel of curators, educators, and photography professionals, the exhibition reflects FMO PA’s ongoing commitment to showcasing global photographic perspectives and fostering dialogue through the medium.

On display are two works by Majid Hojati, which has won the first place in the People/Portraits and Places/Landscape sections.

Hojati’s winning photo in the People/Portraits section is “Pray Eid al-Fitr”. It shows the Grand Mosque in Hamedan City. While Muslim women pray Eid al-Fitr facing the Qibla (towards the House of God) in the city’s mosque, a playful little boy, dressed in stylish new clothes, plays behind his mother.

His winning work in the Places/Landscape section is “The Flow of Life”, showing Khaju Bridge in Ifahan City. People sit on the steps of the 400-year-old Khaju Bridge,

“The Flow of Life” by Majid Hojati

in the historic city of Isfahan, enjoying themselves by the Zayandeh Rood River, which has flowed again after months of drought.

Majid Hojati is based in Tehran and began his artistic activities in 1999, when he entered the Isfahan Fine Arts Academy. He received his master’s degree in photography and is pursuing personal projects in the field of photography independently. He has received more than 300 awards from various photography festivals and has participated in many international exhibitions.

In the Conceptual section, Armin Amirian has won the first place for his photo titled “Rebel-01”.

Dublin artist Spicebag leads Irish-Palestinian art show in London

Dublin artist Spicebag is among a group of Irish and Palestinian artists leading a powerful new exhibition in London, showcasing work made in response to the war in Gaza and drawing parallels between Ireland’s colonial past and the ongoing occupation of Palestine.

A battered car door, three hundred bullet holes and a child’s final words — “I’m afraid of the dark” — scrawled across the metal in Arabic, Irish Independent reported.

This is the centerpiece of a striking new Irish-Palestinian art exhibition in London, where some of Ireland’s leading contemporary artists are joining forces with Palestinian creators to explore shared histories of resistance, loss and occupation.

“It’s a work memorializing some of the last words spoken by a terrified child to a Public

and Commercial Services operator in Gaza,” said Dublin artist Spicebag.

“Hind Rajab was killed by the IDF in a car with her family on 29 January 2024. She was six years old.

“The car was hit with 335 rounds from an Israeli tank, killing six members of her family.

“She lay among her family’s bodies, crying for help over the phone. Her body wasn’t recovered until 11 days later, alongside her family and the paramedics who had been sent to rescue her.

“I’m afraid of the dark’ is written in Arabic on the car door,” he added.

The piece, a collaboration between Spicebag and Scottish artist Council Baby, is a tribute to Hind Rajab, the six-year-old girl killed by Israeli forces in Gaza earlier this year after

being trapped for hours in a car with her dead family members.

Her desperate emergency call, and the discovery of her body days later, made global headlines. In this Hackney studio space, her memory becomes unmissable.

The exhibition, titled *Glúthpháirtíocht* — the Irish word for “solidarity” — is taking place at MetaMorphika Studio until July 19 and will travel to Dublin, Cork and Belfast in the months ahead.

It features over 50 works by artists from Ireland and Palestine, ranging from photography and painting to surrealist installations and print work.

All proceeds go to Dignity for Palestinians, a charity supporting families in Gaza with food, water and medical aid.