

Exclusive
Interview

Head of Iran's Martyrs and Veterans Affairs Foundation
Saeed Ohadi in exclusive interview with the Tehran Times:

Israel Aimed to Collapse Iran, But United Us Instead

© Tehran Times/ Bahman Vakhsheer



▶ Page 3

Fragments of hope, crumbs of bread

By staff writer

TEHRAN- Abdullah Jendeia, a nineteen-year-old with nothing to fill his stomach but a restless dream, left his mother's battered home in al-Sabra just as the afternoon heat settled in. The war had already stripped their lives down to the bone, leaving only a handful of lentils in the pot and hope rationed as strictly as flour. "Just eat what we have left," his sister Nadreen pleaded. But hunger is its own tyrant. For Abdullah and his brothers, need outweighed fear; they began the long trek north, passing through ruins and military checkpoints, heading toward the faint promise of an aid truck rumored to arrive once a week.

At the Netzarim Corridor—a militarized zone slicing Gaza in half—their gamble unraveled. As they waited with dozens of others, Israeli soldiers opened fire. By the time midnight fell, Nadreen's phone rang with catastrophic news: Abdullah was gone, his brothers wounded. "He was a joy to be around," she whispered later, holding onto memories of sunlit afternoons on Gaza's beaches, long before hunger replaced laughter and football. He once dreamed of running his own shop after the war, but even dreams have become a luxury.

Under US-French orders, no celebratory rituals for Georges Abdallah

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT— After 41 years of captivity in France, ordinary people welcomed Lebanese freedom fighter Georges Abdallah at Beirut International Airport, where he reaffirmed his commitment to the path of resistance.

While large groups of people were welcoming the hero returning from a country hypocritically praising slogans of freedom, the President of the Republic was busy eating a falafel sandwich at a Beirut restaurant. Ironically, the scene of him biting into the sandwich received denigrating media coverage, transforming him from a head of state into a food blogger.

"Our resistance is not weak, but strong," the international freedom icon emphasized, calling for greater support than ever before.

Georges Abdallah added that "it is a shame for history that Arabs watch the suffering of the people of Palestine and Gaza."

Prime Minister Nawaf Salam happened to be in Paris, which not only retaliated against Georges Abdallah, but also ordered a ban on any official reception for him.

U.S. obstructing Gaza ceasefire

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – The Hamas resistance movement has strongly condemned recent statements by the U.S. administration about the ceasefire negotiations, accusing it of shielding the Israeli occupation regime.

Hamas reiterated its commitment to negotiations and its serious desire to reach a comprehensive agreement on ending the Israeli war on Gaza.

The resistance movement expressed surprise at the remarks by U.S. President Donald Trump, as well as earlier comments by U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff.

The movement stated that these remarks contradict the assessments of mediators and do not reflect the reality of the negotiation process, which it said had made real progress.

It emphasized that mediating parties, especially Qatar and Egypt, have expressed their appreciation for Hamas's serious and constructive stance.

▶ Page 5

Petchem products worth over \$4.6b exported in Q1

TEHRAN- Iran exported petrochemical products valued at \$4.684 billion during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21- June 21), the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

Foroud Asgari said that 11.133 million tons of petrochemicals was exported during the three-month period, showing 28.7 percent fall in terms of weight, and 24.5 percent drop in terms of value, year on year.

As stated by the head of the National Petrochemical Company (NPC), Iran's annual export of the petrochemicals is anticipated to reach about 34.8 million tons in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 2026).

Hassan Abbaszadeh also said that the country's nominal production capacity of petrochemicals is expected to hit 105 million tons in this year. ▶ Page 4



© president.ir

Pezeshkian: Iran should pursue defense and diplomacy in tandem

TEHRAN – President Masoud Pezeshkian has stated that, in line with the recommendations of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, Iran must actively and effectively pursue both the defense-security and diplomatic tracks in the aftermath of the Israeli attack.

President Pezeshkian, during a visit to Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stressed the importance of improved relations with neighboring countries and called on diplomats to adopt a more proactive stance. He referenced Ayatollah Khamenei's guidance that Iranians should be ready for defense but prioritize peace and diplomacy, emphasizing that living in peace is preferable to war. ▶ Page 2

Iran–Saudi cordial ties: A thorn in Israel's side

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN — Growing amicable relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia have played a significant role in promoting peace and security in West Asia over the past years.

Such cordial ties have come into even sharper focus following Israel's aggression against Iran last month.

On June 13, Israel launched unprovoked strikes on Iranian territory, targeting high-ranking military commanders, nuclear scientists, and civilians alike. The United States later joined the Israeli war effort, launching attacks on three of Iran's nuclear facilities—actions widely viewed as violations of the United Nations Charter and the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

In a swift and powerful response, Iranian Armed Forces launched retaliatory strikes on strategic Israeli targets in cities such as Tel Aviv and Haifa, and struck the al-Udeid air base in Qatar—the largest American military installation in West Asia.

By June 24, Iran's coordinated operations had effectively brought Israeli and American aggression to a halt.

The scale and precision of Iran's missile power shocked Israel and its Western allies, particularly the United States. ▶ Page 5

Terrorists kill 6, injure 22 in deadly attack on courthouse in southeast Iran

TEHRAN – Armed militants affiliated with the terrorist group Jaish al-Zulm launched a coordinated assault on a courthouse in Zahedan, the capital of Iran's southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan Province, killing six and wounding twenty-two on Saturday morning.

According to local officials, several gunmen stormed the provincial courthouse located on Azadi Street, opening fire inside the building and on civilians in the surrounding area. The attack caused widespread panic and significant damage to nearby properties.

Jaish al-Zulm, a U.S.- and Israeli-backed terrorist group based along Iran's eastern borders, has claimed responsibility for the attack. ▶ Page 2

Diplomat says Iran demands diplomatic guarantees, confirms US message exchange via intermediaries

TEHRAN – Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs, Majid Takht-Ravanchi, confirmed on Tuesday that Tehran and Washington are exchanging messages through intermediary nations, while simultaneously laying out stringent conditions for any future direct negotiations following the U.S.-Israeli "betrayal of diplomacy" with a 12-day aggression against Iran.

"Iran and the United States are exchanging messages through intermediaries," Takht-Ravanchi stated during an interview with Turkey's Habertürk TV in Istanbul.

The Iranian diplomat made the remarks following a round of discussions with the E3 countries (France, Germany, and the UK) in Istanbul, described as part of a continuous process at the deputy foreign minister level.

He emphasized that Iran's core positions remain unchanged: any agreement must include the lifting of all U.S. and EU sanctions, which he termed an "indispensable element," and affirm Iran's right to conduct uranium enrichment domestically for peaceful purposes under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). "Zero enrichment is impossible and unacceptable for us," he stressed.

The deputy FM provided crucial context for Iran's current stance, recalling the recent breakdown in diplomacy. ▶ Page 2

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Joint authority

In a commentary, Siasat-e-Rooz addressed the recent Iran-Russia joint search and rescue exercise in the Caspian Sea, underscoring its strategic significance. The editorial stated that recent developments in the Caucasus and the Caspian region reveal efforts by adversaries of regional security—including Western powers and the Zionist regime—to undermine cohesion, stability, and neighborly relations. According to the note, these actors employ various pretexts and tools to advance their economic and geopolitical agendas, attempting to transform the Caspian Sea from a zone of peace and cooperation into one marked by conflict and exploitation. Suspicious activities by the Zionist regime in parts of the Caucasus, coupled with provocative actions targeting Iran and Russia, have raised regional concerns. The West's sudden and questionable outreach to Armenia, as well as aggressive moves to reshape the region's geopolitical landscape—such as the proposed Zangezur corridor—are seen as destabilizing forces. In addition, Western initiatives to launch oil and gas exploration in the Caspian Sea threaten the stability of littoral states. In response, the joint Iran-Russia search and rescue exercise in the Caspian Sea serves not only as a warning to actors undermining regional security and sovereignty, but also as a declaration of unity and friendship among neighboring nations.

Javan: Distinctive aspects of moral and civilizational victory

In an analysis, Javan discussed why Iran did not preemptively attack Israel and wrote: Given the occupying nature of the Zionist regime, any action against this regime is considered defensive, but our confrontation with this regime is not simply a political or security battle; it is a full-scale civilizational battle; a battle between the Islamic-Iranian civilization, with a human identity, and a fake civilization that has been stripped of moral and human principles. Iran's final victory in this decisive battle was historic: first, a military and strategic victory, and second, a moral and civilizational victory. The Zionist regime's belligerent and occupying behavior is rooted in a crisis of identity, geographical weakness, and existential fear. On the contrary, the Islamic Republic of Iran not only heroically defended its territory and territorial integrity but also proved to the world that even in the most difficult conditions of battle, it is possible to behave humanely and ethically. The world witnessed how the authentic Islamic-Iranian civilization, from the heart of the fire and blood of war, can bring the voice of justice, wisdom, and humanity to the ears of humanity and raise

Terrorists kill 6, injure 22 in deadly attack on courthouse in southeast Iran

From page 1 ► Security forces from the IRGC Quds Base responded swiftly to the incident, engaging in a firefight that led to the killing of three militants and the restoration of security at the site. Eyewitnesses reported that the gunmen fired indiscriminately before being confronted by IRGC personnel.

Medical teams from Emergency Unit 115 and Khatam al-Anbiya Hospital provided immediate care to the injured. Dr. Mohammad Hassan Mohammadi, head of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences, confirmed that diagnostic and surgical teams had been mobilized to treat the wounded.

The brutal assault in Zahedan marks the latest in a series of terrorist operations targeting Iranian security forces in border regions.

Just a day prior to the Zahedan attack, an IRGC Basij member was martyred and another injured in a separate terrorist assault on an IRGC outpost in Sardasht, a city located in Iran's northwestern West Azerbaijan Province.

The head of public relations for the IRGC's unit in the province, said that members of an armed terrorist group opened fire on the IRGC base near the village of Aghlan in Sardasht.

The attack, described as a "blind shooting," resulted in the martyrdom of Meysam Kabiri,

the flag of honor and dignity.

Iran: Europe's real intention in proposing to extend the snapback mechanism

In a commentary, the Iran newspaper addressed the meeting of Iranian diplomats and the European troika in Istanbul and said: A day before the Istanbul talks, Reuters news agency revealed a new proposal from the European troika that not only was not welcomed by Tehran, but also was seen by observers as a clear attempt to suspend the negotiation atmosphere and deviate from the main path of the talks. According to Reuters, the three European countries have proposed extending the "snapback mechanism" for another six months. On the surface, this proposal is presented with the aim of a kind of political respite for diplomatic breathing, but in essence, it is conditioning the negotiations again on not-so-hidden demands, including Tehran's official entry into direct talks with the United States, full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency, and providing accurate reports on the level and volume of its highly enriched uranium reserves. According to some observers, this proposal is seen as a tactic to erode the negotiation process and add to Europe's unilateral demands. A strategy designed to lay the groundwork for new claims against Iran.

Donya-e-Eqtesad: Iran's hands are not empty

In an article, Donya-e-Eqtesad discussed Iran's leverage in negotiation with the United States and wrote: Iran has leverage in some areas in dealing with Europe and the United States. For example, energy security and the security of sea routes are very important for the United States, and Iran plays an important role in this regard in the northern part of the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. In the region, the security of America's friends in the Cooperation Council and the security of the region in general are very important for Washington. The priority of these countries, as well as the priority of the United States, is to maintain their security and avoid a widespread war in the region that could spread to those countries. The U.S. preference is to reach a compromise with Iran in some way. And in this case, the U.S. can withdraw the majority of its forces from the region and focus on its first priorities, such as China and Russia, and international security. Therefore, Iran, as the most important potential regional power, can always have leverage for negotiating with the United States. Iran can also use regional diplomacy to reduce the Western pressure if the snapback mechanism is activated.



The photo shows the medical teams on standby, along with police forces, following a terrorist attack targeting the courthouse in Iran's Sistan and Baluchestan Province, July 26, 2025

a Basij force stationed at the base, and left another individual wounded.

In April, Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Ground Forces delivered a blow to the Jaish al-Zulm terrorist group during an anti-terrorism military operation in Sistan and Baluchestan province, killing a ringleader of the group.

Sistan and Baluchestan province, which borders Pakistan, has witnessed several terrorist attacks targeting both civilians and security forces over the past years.

Terrorist groups carrying out attacks against Iranian interests in the southeastern and southwestern parts of the country are believed to be linked to foreign spy agencies.

Pezeshkian: Iran should pursue defense and diplomacy in tandem

From page 1 ► Addressing regional tensions, Pezeshkian condemned the Israeli attack on Evin Prison and criticized Western countries and human rights organizations for their perceived hypocrisy regarding human rights abuses in Gaza, questioning how they justify such brutality.

Domestically, he stated that Iranian officials are working to strengthen their connection with citizens by listening to grievances and addressing issues. He thanked Foreign Ministry staff for their tireless efforts in executing the country's foreign policy, particularly during the recent 12-day conflict imposed by Israel, and highlighted that all major international organizations (except the UN Security Council) condemned Israel's actions.

Pezeshkian reaffirmed Iran's intention to expand ties with friendly countries, focusing on BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the Eurasian Economic Union, and emphasized ongoing coordination with Russia, China, and other global partners, as well as continued engagement with Europe based on prudence, dignity, and nation-



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (R) addresses senior diplomats at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the capital Tehran on July 26, 2025.

al interests.

Diplomacy on the frontline

Foreign Minister Araghchi also addressed the meeting, highlighting the ministry's extensive diplomatic efforts during and after the recent 12-day war, with President Masoud Pezeshkian and senior foreign ministry officials in attendance.

Araghchi underlined the close coordination between Iran's armed forces and diplomats during the recent conflict, calling it a clear example of battlefield and diplomatic synergy.

He emphasized that alongside

military resistance, Iran's unique governance played a key role in forcing the enemy to retreat and seek a ceasefire.

Through embassy efforts and phone diplomacy, over 120 countries condemned the attacks and supported Iran, with most international organizations backing Iran except the UN Security Council and the IAEA.

Araghchi noted ongoing diplomatic work to document Israeli crimes and coordinated efforts to halt Israeli atrocities in Gaza, including blockades used as political tools.

Diplomat says Iran demands diplomatic guarantees, confirms US message exchange via intermediaries

From page 1 ► He referenced the indirect negotiations mediated by Oman between Iran and the U.S., which encompassed five rounds aimed at reaching a nuclear deal.

However, Takht-Ravanchi asserted that this diplomatic process was violently disrupted.

"We were in the middle of the negotiation process when we faced attacks first by Israel and then by the U.S.," Takht-Ravanchi declared. "This was a betrayal of diplomacy. This was an attack on diplomacy.

He characterized the U.S.-Israeli strikes as "unprovoked and naked aggression" against the Iranian people, resulting in over 1,064 martyrs, mostly civilians, and thousands wounded.

Iran views these attacks as a flagrant violation of international law and the UN Charter, fundamentally undermining trust.

Given this experience, Takht-Ravanchi outlined clear prerequisites for re-engaging with the U.S. "Before starting a new round of negotiations with the U.S., we must receive guarantees that we will not face similar attacks again," he insisted. "The non-repetition of betrayal of diplomacy is an essential condition for us."

He emphasized that Iran would not be lured into talks only to be "surprised" by military strikes again.

Furthermore, he stressed that any dialogue must be meaningful and based on mutual respect and the "win-win principle," where both parties feel they gain something.

"We do not want dialogue just for the sake of 'having dialogue'. Dialogue must produce a result that satisfies both sides," Takht-Ravanchi explained, firmly rejecting any notion of accepting U.S. diktats. "We cannot enter into a real dialogue without being sure that the negotiations will continue and without being convinced that the U.S. will not impose its will"

Addressing recent claims about Iran's nuclear program, Takht-Ravanchi reiterated Iran's long-standing position. "No, the fatwa [by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution banning nuclear weapons] is still valid. Our stance has not changed. We are not pursuing nuclear weapons," he stated, affirming that nuclear arms have no place in Iran's defense doctrine.

He defended Iran's right to peaceful enrichment on its soil under the NPT, dismissing calls for zero enrichment.

Tehran urges unified Islamic response to Gaza starvation in regional calls

TEHRAN – In a diplomatic move on Friday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi held urgent calls with counterparts from Pakistan, Egypt, Qatar, Iraq, and Tunisia, demanding immediate collective action to break the Israeli regime's "genocidal siege" of Gaza, where starvation now kills as swiftly as bombs.

The consultations, following similar talks with Saudi and Bangladeshi officials, come amid UN warnings that over 1 million Gazans face catastrophic famine conditions while Israel systematically blocks aid.

Araghchi's talks centered on mobilizing the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for an emergency session to coordinate a unified response.

In calls with Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, whose country currently chairs the UN Security Council, and his Egyptian counterpart Badr Abdelatty, Araghchi condemned Israel's "deliberate deprivation of water, food, and medicine" as a tool of annihilation.

"The global community must end this impunity," he insisted, urging Dar to leverage Islamabad's Security Council role for binding measures.

With Egypt's top diplomat, Araghchi warned that Israel's annexation plan for the West Bank constitutes a "roadmap for Palestine's colonial erasure." Both ministers agreed: without decisive intervention, a regional catastrophe looms.

Similar urgency marked discussions with Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, where Araghchi stressed that "starving civilians is a



A young Gazan girl stands behind makeshift barricades, her face etched with weariness and hunger, pleading for the arrival of food aid.

war crime." He demanded that Israeli officials face prosecution for atrocities.

Iraq's Fuad Hussein and Tunisia's Nabil Ammar echoed calls for immediate aid corridors. Araghchi pressed all counterparts: "Islamic nations must deploy every legal, political, and humanitarian instrument to stop this genocide."

A manufactured hell

The diplomatic blitz responds to an engineered catastrophe.

Since October 2023, the Israeli regime's blockade and bombardment have claimed the lives of more than 59,700 Palestinians — the majority being civilians, including over 16,500 children.

However, this figure does not account for additional deaths resulting directly or indirectly from Israeli actions, such as those still buried beneath rubble or individuals who

He also mentioned that indirect Iran-US negotiations, mediated by Oman, had advanced through five rounds before being disrupted by Israeli aggression.

On June 13, the Zionist regime launched a military offensive against Iran, targeting its military installations, nuclear facilities, and civilian areas over a span of 12 days. The United States later escalated the conflict by carrying out airstrikes on three of Iran's nuclear sites—Natanz, Fordow, and Isfahan—on June 22.

In swift retaliation, Iranian armed forces launched a series of powerful counterstrikes. The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Force executed 22 rounds of missile attacks against targets in the occupied territories under Operation True Promise III, causing significant damage and casualties.

In response to the U.S. strikes, Iran also fired a barrage of missiles at al-Udeid Air Base in Qatar, the largest U.S. military installation in West Asia.

Hostilities came to a halt after a ceasefire agreement took effect on June 24.

Regarding the damage inflicted by the U.S.-Israeli attacks on Iranian nuclear and military infrastructure, Takht-Ravanchi acknowledged it was "serious and heavy," but deferred detailed assessment to the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI).

He confirmed that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was aware of the locations of nuclear materials prior to the attacks.

The interview also covered broader regional issues. Takht-Ravanchi strongly condemned the ongoing Israeli assault on Gaza, describing it as "genocide" enabled by U.S. support and the inaction of the UN Security Council.

"If the international community, especially the countries of the region, does not show unity in defending Palestine and condemning Israel, Israel will feel free to act," he warned.

Takht-Ravanchi called for unified regional action and pressure on the U.S. to halt weapons supplies and diplomatic cover for Israel. "Otherwise, Israel may think of attacking other countries. This would be an extremely dangerous scenario not only for the Middle East [West Asia] but for the entire region," he cautioned.

have perished due to the systematic destruction of Gaza's healthcare infrastructure.

In addition, hospitals report 115+ starvation deaths since March, including infants and adolescents perishing from malnutrition-induced complications.

Compounding this, Israel's total siege since March has choked 99% of aid. UN agencies confirm 470,000 Gazans now face "catastrophic" (IPC Phase 5) famine — one in five residents. Acute malnutrition among children has surged 300% since May.

Meanwhile, 97% of Gaza's water is unfit for human consumption. UNICEF reports that children queue for 8 hours daily for contaminated puddles; families survive on only 3% of their minimum daily water needs. Israel's deliberate destruction of reservoirs and desalination plants has collapsed the water system.

Despite global outcry, Israel has enforced a near-total blockade since March, funneling minimal aid through the U.S.-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF)—a secretive, Mossad- and Israeli War Ministry-funded scheme reportedly backed by an undisclosed \$100 million donor and approved amid resignations and deadly distribution chaos.

The program herds civilians into tightly controlled, biometric-tracked "sterile zones" in southern Gaza that critics liken to concentration camps and has become what UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini labels a "sadistic" killing field: Israeli snipers have allegedly shot more than 1,000 aid-seekers near GHF sites, while a U.S. contractor reports guards shooting at civilians' feet and tossing stun grenades into starving crowds.

Head of Iran’s Martyrs and Veterans Affairs Foundation Saeed Ohadi in exclusive interview with the Tehran Times:

Israel aimed to collapse Iran, but united us instead

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN – Head of Iran’s Martyrs and Veterans Affairs Foundation Saeed Ohadi says Israel’s recent 12-day assault, intended to collapse Iran, only served to unite the nation more deeply than ever before.

In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times newspaper on Saturday, he revealed that despite losses—including civilians, women, and children—the people of Iran rallied in solidarity, honoring their martyrs and standing firmly behind their government and armed forces.

The full text of the interview is as follows,

Following the recent war with Israel in June, what is the Martyrs Foundation’s immediate response in terms of identifying and supporting victims and their families?

Before answering your question, I’d like to say a few things about the recent imposed war that lasted 12 Before we get into your question, I would like to mention some points about this imposed war, which happened during these 12 days, and the comparison between this imposed war and the 8-year war that we had a long time ago at the beginning of the Iranian Revolution. It is a fact that the time period of this war is not comparable to the 8-year imposed war, because we had 12 days of war; at that time, we had 8 years of war.

So, this is one difference between these two wars. The second difference is the geographical area of the war and the region where the war was happening. Actually, this imposed war—the second imposed war, as we call it—basically happened in Tehran and some other provinces, but the 8-year imposed war basically happened along all the borders from the north to the south of Iran.

Geographically, the 8-year war was very vast and expanded. But there is a very significant difference, which is the depth of this war. I believe that despite the area and the time period of the war, the depth of this war is completely different from the 8-year war.

The depth of this imposed war is so deep and vast that the consequences and the result of this war are also very far-reaching, and I think we have to concentrate on the consequences of this war. During these 12 days of war, you know that we lost many of our great commanders. Each one of them was like a history of the Iranian Revolution and the war, from the beginning of the revolution until now. We lost many of our scientists, who were university professors, and they were martyred. During these 12 days of war, many of our civilians were also martyred. They were oppressed people, living their lives in their homes, and they were bombarded by the Israeli Zionist regime.

At the beginning, the Zionist regime claimed that they were targeting and planning to destroy Iranian nuclear energy infrastructure. This is what they claimed. They said that they wanted to solve and destroy all these infrastructures.

We were in the middle of negotiations with the United States. Our foreign ministers and U.S. delegates were having these talks and negotiations in Oman.

Why did they start the bombardment? Why did they begin these attacks against us in the middle of negotiations? What I’m trying to say is that the aim and goal of the enemy were far from what they claimed—way beyond what they claimed. It now seems, based on analysis and studies



Head of Iran’s Martyrs and Veterans Affairs Foundation Saeed Ohadi speaks in an interview with the Tehran Times on July 26, 2025.

over this war, that their aim was to demolish and destroy everything in Iran.

They actually attacked the dignity, the culture, and the civilization of the people. This is what they were targeting. They wanted to collapse it all.

“1,064 people were martyred, including 47 under 17 years old—innocent civilians, not military personnel or scientists.”

They were aiming to collapse the entire country during this war. This was their main goal. If you consider that, if you recognize that—as I mentioned during the negotiations that we had with the U.S. delegates, and as both the U.S. delegates and the Iranian foreign ministers emphasized—they were getting to some good results and nearing the final points.

Why did the Zionist regime attack at this time? Because they attacked the people. They didn’t just want to attack the infrastructure—they thought they could demolish and destroy the entire country.

This is what they had in mind. What was the result? They thought that with their huge bombardment, they could intimidate the people with this horror, create an atmosphere of fear and terror among the population, and that people would be scared. Because of all these bombardments, because they had killed and martyred high-ranking commanders, they thought people would rise up in the middle of this game. They thought people would come into the streets, stage demonstrations, and maybe revolt against the country and the government.

It was the opposite. Because people believe in this country. People believe in the commanders of the country.

People respect the leaders of this country. People love and respect them. When the dignity of the people is attacked, when the culture of the people is targeted, it is the people who rise to defend everything.

And the consequence, the result of this attack, was the unity of the people. We saw that people were unified. People were supporting the government.

People were supporting their armed forces, who were launching missiles at Israel. What I’m trying to say is that it was Israel—the same regime—that was finally defeated and asked for a ceasefire, because they knew there were no other choices.

They knew that the goal they had—to hurt the unity of this people and this country—only resulted in strengthening and reinforcing the unity and solidarity of the people. And what we recognize now—believe me—is that in every house of these martyrs we visit, what we hear from the

people is: “We have sacrificed everything. We have sacrificed our children.”

They were martyred for the dignity and the future of this country. This is what we should respect. To get back to your question: I think on the first or second day of this attack, this foundation decided that we had to carry out our mission, our responsibility toward the families and the martyrs.

So what we decided to do—because of security reasons—was that we couldn’t hold funeral ceremonies in the streets, like we usually do. As you know, we usually have huge funeral ceremonies. Even for martyrs from the war 40 years ago, when their bodies return, everyone comes into the streets.

A huge number of people gather. But because of security measures, we were not able to have public funeral ceremonies.

Instead, we arranged for ceremonies to be held in Behesht Zahra Cemetery. We prepared special halls there so that families could mourn and honor their loved ones respectfully.

We also coordinated with the Ministry of Defense to set up a DNA identification center. Some of the bodies were severely damaged due to the intensity of the attacks. This facility helped identify martyrs quickly and respectfully. The entire process was designed to take less than 24 hours, so families wouldn’t have to wait or worry.

Beyond that, the Martyrs Foundation operates about 50 centers, including hospitals and clinics. In Tehran, we have major facilities like Khatam al-Anbiya Hospital, Sasan Hospital, and Sayyid Mustafa Khomeini Hospital. We spoke with the hospital directors to increase capacity—some facilities by up to 200%. We even prepared tents to handle overflow if needed, though thankfully, we didn’t reach that point.

We also provided childcare for hospital staff. For instance, nurses with children were able to bring them to special centers within the hospital, allowing staff to focus on their work without worrying about their families.

What are the latest casualty figures, and how were civilians affected?

As of now, we’ve confirmed that 1,064 people were martyred. Among them, 47 were under 17 years old—including a two-month-old and a nine-month-old baby. These were innocent civilians, not nuclear scientists or military personnel.

We also lost 162 women. Again, they weren’t members of the armed forces. They were ordinary people, living their lives at home.

What I’m trying to say is that, you know, nowadays we see that the human rights organizations always claim that they are defending human rights, law, and regulations for people all around the world.

Where are these people? Where are these organizations? Have any of these organizations ever come to Iran and tried to follow up on one of these cases

that I talked to you about? This two-month-old baby who was martyred and killed—what was the reason he was killed?

Among the people I mentioned—162 women were martyred, and 47 of them were teenagers, plus the babies and children—we had some families who were martyred together. Regarding the figures you were asking about, I can say that 32 families were martyred.

Two persons from one family were martyred together—either the father and mother, or the father and son or daughter, or the mother and son or daughter—they were martyred. We have one family in which the mother was martyred while feeding her baby in the middle of the night.

In the case of the Bahmanabadi martyrs, the mother was feeding the baby late into the morning. The baby was only nine months old, and both were martyred while the baby was hugging the mother.

Also, in the same Bahmanabadi family, there was Haniyeh, who was only three and a half years old. Her sister was eight and a half years old. When the bombardment happened, Haniyeh was afraid and ran to her sister, hugging her. Both were martyred at the same time.

Is this human rights? If so, where are those organizations and NGOs—those who claim they are supporting human rights? Why are they not speaking about any of these events that happened in Iran?

Among the figures I already mentioned, we have about 267 civilians who were martyred.

Out of the 1,064 people I mentioned, most were in Tehran and are buried in Tehran. We have two families in which eight members were martyred at the same time—the babies, the father, the mother, and even the grandfather and grandmother were all martyred in the same house. These are the figures I mentioned.

What specific support mechanisms are being activated or implemented for families who have lost loved ones or have been otherwise affected by the recent war?

“We must document the stories of this imposed war to pass its history to future generations.”

Actually, we have, I can say, two ways of addressing your question. One way is that, in this foundation, we decided to mobilize everybody in the organization—to go to the homes of the martyr’s families and meet them face-to-face.

Up to now, out of these 1,064 people, we have visited more than 985 houses of these martyrs. I think this is a great blessing from Allah for our foundation.

We went to their houses, and when we go, we have two main reasons or goals. One is to meet these people—because they are the families of the martyrs.

And believe me, when we go to their homes, we see many consequences of the martyrdom. These people have so much to share.

If we are talking about this imposed war, and if we believe that its depth is quite different from the first imposed war—that it was so huge and deep—then we must try to document the stories of this second imposed war. We must write the history of these people.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Hamed Haddadi changed Iranian basketball forever: FIBA

In the landscape of Asian basketball greats, few loom as large as Hamed Haddadi, the 218cm/7'2" colossus who reshaped the FIBA Asia Cup across more than a decade of dominance.

From his debut in 2005 through 2022, Haddadi starred in eight Asia Cup tournaments, claiming four MVP awards, more than any player in the tournament’s modern era. He anchored Iran’s rise to continental supremacy and stood as the immovable object at the heart of the Iranians’ golden generation.

Iran’s breakthrough came at the FIBA Asia Championship 2007 in Tokushima, when Haddadi at age 22 led Team Melli to their first-ever Asia Cup title. He averaged approximately 13 points, 10 rebounds and 1 block per game, dominating inside against opponents who could not effectively stifle his mobility and strength.

Two years later, at Tianjin in 2009, Haddadi elevated his impact even further. He averaged 15.8 points, 13.1 rebounds and 4 blocks per contest—leading Iran to back-to-back gold medals and earning his second MVP award. His dominance in the Final—19 points, 17 rebounds and 1 block against China—was a declaration: Iran belonged atop Asia.

Despite the Chinese bouncing back and capturing the 2011 title, Haddadi was still stellar, putting up 15.4 points and 11.4 boards per contest. He then returned in 2013 and reclaimed the championship mantle. Iran clinched another championship in Manila, and Haddadi collected his third MVP trophy—now firmly sealed as the face of Asian post?play dominance

His Asia Cup journey reached its apex at the FIBA Asia Cup 2017 in Beirut. Iran finished second, falling to Australia in the Final, but Haddadi still earned MVP honors, becoming the only player to ever win four FIBA Asia Cup MVP awards.

Iran sweep Tunisia in 2025 Volleyball Boys’ U19 World Championship

TEHRAN – Iran swept past Tunisia in straight sets (25-20, 25-15, 25-20) in 2025 FIVB Volleyball Boys’ U19 World Championship on Saturday.

Amirmohammad Rafieirad led Iran with 14 points, while Omar Hfaiedh collected 10 points.

The young Persians, who had lost to Spain and defeated Poland in their previous matches, will play Egypt (July 28), and Italy (July 29) in Pool C.

Uzbekistan hosts the Championship from 24 July to 3 August in Tashkent, with preparations supported by the FIVB Volleyball Empowerment program through 12 months of coaching support, event equipment, and three knowledge transfer programs.

Goalkeeper Hosseini signs for Sepahan

TEHRAN – In a surprise move, Esteghlal football team goalkeeper Hossein Hosseini joined Sepahan on Wednesday.

The 33-year-old custodian had been linked with Tractor but Sepahan announced that they have completed the signing of him.

Hosseini has penned a two-year deal with Sepahan for an undisclosed fee.

Esteghlal have reportedly reached an agreement with Spanish goalkeeper Antonio Adan.

Esteghlal, Joel Kojo part ways

TEHRAN – Esteghlal football club has announced that striker Joel Kojo has left the team

on loan.

The 26-year-old forward joined Esteghlal from Dinamo Samarqand last season but was unable to meet expectations.

During his tenure, he scored only two goals for the Blues.

He has been linked with Uzbek clubs Neftchi and Nasaf in recent reports.

Esteghlal, under the management of Ricardo Sa Pinto, have also been pursuing Persepolis forward Issa Alekasir.

Botafogo join West Ham, Fulham for Mehdi Taremi

TEHRAN – Botafogo are reportedly ready to rival West Ham United, Fulham, and Leeds United to sign Inter Milan striker Mehdi Taremi.

This according to Milan-based newspaper Gazzetta dello Sport, the Nerazzurri want €8-9 million for Taremi.

Taremi has been at the center of a number of transfer rumors in recent weeks.

The 33-year-old had a very underwhelming first season at Inter. Therefore, there is a widespread feeling that he will be on his way after just one year at the club.

Inter would like to sell the Iranian international on for a fee. This would still represent a capital gain, since the Italian side signed Taremi on a free transfer twelve months ago.

The likes of West Ham United, Fulham, and Leeds United are all thinking of taking a chance on the former Porto striker.

Former PSG defender Aurier nears to Persepolis

TEHRAN – Serge Aurier, the former Paris Saint-Germain right-back, is close to joining Persepolis football club.

The 32-year-old Ivorian player has arrived at Persepolis’ training camp in Erzurum, Turkey, to finalize his contract with the team.

Aurier began his professional career in 2009 with Lens II and has since played for clubs including Toulouse, Tottenham Hotspur, Villarreal, Nottingham Forest, and most recently, Turkish giants Galatasaray.

Persepolis reach agreement with Hossein Abarghouei

TEHRAN – Persepolis football club have announced the reaching agreement with Kheybar defender Hossein Abarghouei.

The club recently parted ways with Giorgi Gvelesiani and Farshad Faraji, creating a vacancy in the defensive line.

Media reports indicate that the 29-year-old defender is expected to join the Iranian giant.

Abarghouei spent two seasons with Kheybar, during which he scored two goals in 58 appearances.

Iran end Beirut basketball tournament on high

TEHRAN – The Iran basketball team defeated Jordan 70-61 in its last match in the four-team tournament in Beirut.

Team Melli had lost to Egypt and Lebanon in the event.

The Persians took part in the tournament as part of their preparation for the 2025 FIBA Asia Cup.

Led by Greek coach Sotiris Manolopoulos, Iran is 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.

Petchem products worth over \$4.6b exported in Q1



TEHRAN- Iran exported petrochemical products valued at \$4.684 billion during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

Foroud Asgari said that 11.133 million tons of petrochemicals was exported during the three-month period, showing 28.7 percent fall in terms of weight, and 24.5 percent drop in terms of value, year on year.

As stated by the head of the National Petrochemical Company (NPC), Iran's annual export of the petrochemicals is anticipated to reach about 34.8 million tons in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 2026).

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

The official has previously 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.

Abbaszadeh also credited parliamentary and government support for motivating industry players to pursue expansion strategies and focus on completing the value chain as a key priority.

Production in the petrochemical sector increased in the last Iranian year (ended on March 2025) compared to the year before, despite energy imbalances and feedstock shortages, he said, noting that most petrochemical plants achieved their production targets.

The National Petrochemical Company's chief underscored the need to attract new investments and boost production in line with this year's national motto.

67 urban wastewater projects to be launched by end of current administration

TEHRAN — Iran plans to bring 67 urban wastewater projects online by the end of the 14th administration, as part of efforts to expand the country's sewage infrastructure, the head of the National Water and Wastewater Engineering Company said.

Hashem Amini, head of the state-run utility, said the projects will collectively add a daily treatment capacity of more than 1.8 million cubic meters.

According to Amini, 27 of the projects — with a combined capacity of over 1.0 million cubic meters per day — are scheduled to be completed in the current Iranian year (ending March 2026).

Abbaszadeh reiterated the company's readiness to facilitate private investment and stressed the importance of management's support for the industry in tackling structural challenges.

He said the completion and operation of development projects could be accelerated through improved financial flows, and added that despite last year's feedstock-related difficulties, coordinated efforts this year could drive better results in the high-value petrochemical sector.

The official concluded that strong backing from the Iranian parliament and government has empowered the industry to move forward with determination, focusing on value chain completion as a strategic imperative.

In early June, the NPC head had said that under the country's Seventh National Development Plan, Iran aims to increase its petrochemical production capacity to 131 million tons, adding that this expansion is being pursued across various value chains, with a focus on creating balance between downstream and upstream development.

He emphasized that the lack of such balance in recent years has led to feedstock supply issues for several complexes. "Stable feedstock supply is a central pillar of the Seventh Plan, and our goal is to develop production capacity and feedstock sources in parallel," he added.

To address the shortfall, NPC plans to source feedstock from multiple channels, including the recovery of flare gas — a short-term strategy that also benefits the environment.

Abbaszadeh identified the key flare gas recovery zones as West Karoun, East Karoun, Dehloran, and Ilam, which together account for about 75 percent of Iran's flared gas. Projects in these areas are underway, including NGL 3100, which is expected to be operational in the coming months.

The expansion of the Bidboland Persian Gulf Gas Refinery under the Persian Gulf Holding is also in progress. It aims to eliminate around 55 gas flares, with 14 slated to be extinguished this year. In addition, Phase 2 of the Hoveyze Persian Gulf Gas Refinery (NGL 3200) is being developed, and by the end of next year, roughly 80 percent of associated flare gas is expected to be recovered and redirected to the petrochemical sector.

Abbaszadeh reiterated that securing feedstock remains NPC's top priority. "With coordinated efforts across various agencies and implementation of targeted programs, we aim to minimize idle capacity and elevate Iran's petrochemical industry to a strategic position in line with our long-term development goals," he said.

On July 18, Hossein Alimorad, director of planning and development at the National Petrochemical Company, said that 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.

The official 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."

Another 16 projects with a total capacity of about 254,000 cubic meters per day are expected to come online next year.

The remaining 21 projects are planned for 2027, with a combined capacity of roughly 456,000 cubic meters per day. If all projects remain on schedule, an additional two plants with a capacity of 17,000 cubic meters per day are set to be launched in July 2028.

Iran has prioritized wastewater infrastructure in recent years to address water scarcity, improve sanitation, and enable water reuse for agriculture and industry. Officials say expanding treatment capacity is key to supporting population growth and environmental sustainability in urban areas.

Iran posts largest oil revenue gain among OPEC members in 2024

TEHRAN — Iran's oil revenues surpassed \$46 billion in 2024, marking a year-on-year increase of over \$5.6 billion, or 14 percent, according to the latest data from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Figures published in the 60th edition of OPEC's Annual Statistical Bulletin show that Iran recorded the highest growth in oil export earnings among the group's members in 2024.

Iran's oil export revenues rose from approximately \$41.1 billion in 2023 to more than \$46.7 billion in 2024.

Venezuela followed with a jump from \$13.1 billion to \$18.4 billion over the same period.

Only four OPEC members — Iran, Venezuela, Nigeria, and Equatorial Guinea — posted gains in oil income in 2024.

Nigeria's revenues rose by \$1.0 billion, while Equatorial Guinea saw a modest increase of \$39 million.

In contrast, total oil export earnings for OPEC declined by four percent, falling from \$678



billion in 2023 to around \$652 billion in 2024.

Saudi Arabia's oil revenues dropped sharply by more than \$24 billion to \$223 billion, while Kuwait's earnings fell by \$9.0 billion to roughly \$69 billion.

The rise in Iran's oil revenue reflects a broader trend of increased output and exports despite U.S. sanctions.

According to recent official data, Iran's crude oil production has reached over 3.6 million barrels per day (bpd), up from around

2.5 million bpd two years earlier.

Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad has said Iran aims to reach 3.8 million bpd in the near term.

Exports have also climbed significantly, with some estimates indicating that Iran is currently exporting over 1.6 million bpd, the highest level since the reimposition of U.S. sanctions in 2018.

China remains Iran's main customer, often receiving shipments under various pricing and payment arrangements.

3 categories of units included in government's industrial support package



TEHRAN- Iran's deputy minister of industry, mining and trade for planning and innovation has stated that three categories of units are included in the government's industrial support package.

Saeed Shojaei has explained: "The first group are the units that were directly damaged in the war. The second group are the units that are included in this package in accordance with our two policies, namely "evaluation" and "livelihood".

The third group are the units that were damaged as a result of and affected by the war conditions. For example, the raw material did not reach these units or they were closed according to the notification of the Supply Council, etc."

He added that each of these units must be identified and entered into this process.

As stated by the head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), the government's production support package indicates facilitation and removal of obstacles.

Samad Hasanzadeh has said: "The government's production support package made it possible to open up and remove barriers in the shortest possible time. Therefore, it is suggested that the government also consider this facilitation in customs, tax, and banking matters and not deal with it on a piecemeal basis."

The official went on to say that one of the economic imperatives is to facilitate trade and reform foreign currency policies so that

importers and exporters can manage assets, otherwise the process of converting immovable and movable assets and the flow of production will be disrupted.

He emphasized the formation of a special economic measures headquarters for the private sector and said: "This headquarters must be formed urgently, in this way, the economic threat will be turned into an opportunity."

The Iranian Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade has unveiled a production support package focused on sustaining industrial output, particularly for sectors affected by the recent war.

On July 12, Deputy Minister of Mining and Mineral Industries Vajjollah Jafari said the package has been designed around two key pillars, with special assistance allocated to units damaged by the conflict, including access to foreign currency and financial resources.

Jafari said the ministry has held intensive meetings with private-sector industry associations to assess their conditions and formulate targeted measures.

These sessions, he noted, are ongoing and include separate talks with groups such as the Lead and Zinc Industries Association, the Refractories Industry Association, and the Cement Employers' Association.

The key topics raised in the consultations included securing stable electricity supplies, maintaining fuel safety for mining industries, addressing foreign currency concerns, expediting import order registrations, supporting domestic production, and boosting resilience in the face of potential crises.

He said the issue of passive defense—measures aimed at increasing deterrence, reducing vulnerability, and maintaining critical operations during emergencies—was also discussed, with the goal of ensuring that industrial production continues uninterrupted in the event of attacks or disruptions.

The ministry has coordinated with its infrastructure working group to incorporate these

concerns into a finalized package that has now been approved and issued by the government. According to Jafari, the package includes two major components: the first targets war-damaged production units by providing access to foreign currency and reconstruction financing, while the second offers broader support to domestic industries through streamlined customs clearance, import procedures, and removal of production bottlenecks.

Although the initiative originated within the Industry Ministry —following a proposal by Seyed Mohammad Atabak—Jafari stressed that multiple government bodies played a key role in its approval.

These included the ministries of economy, agriculture, justice, oil, and energy; the Central Bank of Iran; the Planning and Budget Organization; and the Vice Presidency for Science, Technology and Knowledge-Based Economy. Their cooperation will also be essential during the implementation and oversight phases.

Jafari emphasized the package's comprehensiveness, noting that it covers mining and mineral industries as well. Developed by the ministry's infrastructure task force, the package consists of five components: fiscal measures (taxation and social insurance), financial support (loans and bank debt), foreign currency (funding and export obligations), infrastructure (transport and energy), and trade (customs and import registration).

Its primary focus is to support continuous production, remove potential barriers for manufacturers and service providers, and align industrial operations with broader foreign currency policies, especially under current economic constraints.

He added that the concerns voiced by various associations have been incorporated into the package, including provisions for prioritizing electricity, fuel, gas, and petroleum products for critical production units. The Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Petroleum have been tasked with ensuring these supplies remain uninterrupted in support of national infrastructure stability.

South Pars refinery begins major overhaul to boost efficiency, safety

TEHRAN — The fifth refinery of Iran's South Pars Gas Complex has begun a major overhaul aimed at improving operational efficiency, enhancing safety, and maximizing the use of domestic expertise and materials, the complex announced.

Kambiz Sefati, director of the refinery, said the scheduled maintenance for the Iranian calendar year 1404 (starting March 2025) began on July 22 and will continue through August 9.

The overhaul is being carried out entirely with local engineering capabilities and high-quality Iranian-made equipment.

"This overhaul is focused on upgrading production processes, improving operational safety, and aligning with the strategic directives of the Supreme Leader," Sefati said.

The project includes a total of 2,114 maintenance tasks — comprising 13 corrective actions, 1,389 preventive measures, and 712 event-driven interventions — underscoring the scope and complexity of this year's operations.

The official emphasized that precise and timely execution of the overhaul will ensure uninterrupted gas production while improving service quality and safety

standards at the refinery. He said the effort reflects the strong capacity of Iran's domestic workforce in delivering key projects within the country's gas industry.

The South Pars Gas Complex, located in the Persian Gulf, is the world's largest gas field shared between Iran and Qatar.

The complex plays a vital role in meeting Iran's energy demand and supporting its petrochemical and industrial sectors.

South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf water, is divided into 24 standard phases of development in the first stage. Most of the

Tehran has ramped up investments in upstream oil projects and infrastructure, including enhanced recovery from mature fields and the deployment of advanced drilling technology. Iranian officials have also credited increased efficiency at export terminals and stronger regional energy diplomacy for boosting sales.

Despite sanctions, Iran continues to find ways to monetize its crude, often through non-traditional channels, regional intermediaries, and barter trade involving petrochemicals, food, and other goods.

Analysts say these practices have helped Tehran stabilize its oil revenue stream while evading enforcement mechanisms.

The sharp contrast between Iran's revenue growth and the broader OPEC downturn highlights the country's resilience in adapting to geopolitical and market challenges — as well as its determination to reclaim market share amid shifting global energy dynamics.

phases are fully operational at the moment.

The huge offshore field covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which are in Iran's territorial waters in the Persian Gulf.

The remaining 6,000 square kilometers, called North Dome, are situated in Qatar's territorial waters.

The field is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

Iran–Saudi cordial ties: A thorn in Israel’s side

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN — Growing amicable relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia have played a significant role in promoting peace and security in West Asia over the past years.

Such cordial ties have come into even sharper focus following Israel's aggression against Iran last month.

On June 13, Israel launched unprovoked strikes on Iranian territory, targeting high-ranking military commanders, nuclear scientists, and civilians alike. The United States later joined the Israeli war effort, launching attacks on three of Iran's nuclear facilities—actions widely viewed as violations of the United Nations Charter and the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

In a swift and powerful response, Iranian Armed Forces launched retaliatory strikes on strategic Israeli targets in cities such as Tel Aviv and Haifa, and struck the al-Udeid air base in Qatar—the largest American military installation in West Asia.

By June 24, Iran's coordinated operations had effectively brought Israeli and American aggression to a halt.

The scale and precision of Iran's missile power shocked Israel and its Western allies, particularly the United States.

“Although Israel has its own sophisticated, multilayered defense, which includes systems like Arrow, David's Sling and Iron Dome, the country was running low on its own interceptors and was husbanding resources by the time the conflict ended. Had Iran fired a few more large volleys of missiles, Israel could have exhausted its supply of top-tier Arrow 3 munitions,” The Wall Street Journal reported on



Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman meets Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in Jeddah on July 8

Friday, citing American officials familiar with the 12-day war.

The Journal also revealed that despite deploying two advanced THAAD missile-defense systems to Israel in the wake of the conflict, the US efforts proved insufficient to fully stop Iran's missile barrages.

“Operating alongside Israeli systems, THAAD operators burned through munitions at a furious clip, firing more than 150 missiles to shoot down the waves of Iranian ballistic missiles,”

the paper reported.

The intensity of the Iranian attacks created such a high demand for interceptors that, according to the Journal, the Pentagon considered diverting THAAD interceptors already purchased by Saudi Arabia to Israel.

“Saudi Arabia refused US request to send interceptors to Israel”

Meanwhile, according to Middle East Eye, which cited two American officials, the US asked Saudi Arabia to turn over THAAD

interceptors to help Israel, but Riyadh rejected the request.

“Saudi Arabia's refusal to help Israel will sting officials in Washington,” MEE added.

Saudi Arabia's “no” to the US demand underscores the deepening ties with Iran.

On July 8, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) held talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in Jeddah. In the meeting, the Saudi crown prince condemned any military aggression against Iran's sovereignty and territorial integrity. He welcomed the improving climate of cooperation between the two Islamic powers.

Araghchi, in turn, “thanked Saudi Arabia for its responsible stance in condemning the Israeli aggression against Iran.”

He put emphasis on Iran's commitment to building stronger ties with its neighbors, including Saudi Arabia based on principles of good neighborliness and mutual interest.

Araghchi also held talks with Saudi Defense Minister Prince

Khalid bin Salman and Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan, reaffirming the countries' commitment to closer strategic cooperation.

China's mediation drives Iran-Saudi unity for regional stability

The renewed diplomatic warmth is rooted in a 2023 agreement brokered by China, which saw Iran and Saudi Arabia formally restore ties after years of estrangement. Since then, China's constructive mediation has played a key role in bringing Tehran and Riyadh closer together.

As the dust settles on the most intense Israel-Iran war in recent memory, the strengthening bond between Iran and Saudi Arabia emerges as a powerful force for stability in West Asia. Their growing diplomatic, political, and economic cooperation is not only reshaping the region's strategic landscape—but also offering a compelling alternative to the cycles of escalation driven by Israeli aggression.

Once geopolitical rivals, Tehran and Riyadh now appear poised to lead a new era—one rooted in sovereignty, mutual respect, and collective security. Their united front sends a clear message: regional peace is best preserved not through foreign intervention or militarism, but through regional unity and shared interests.

In a time of increasing volatility, Iran and Saudi Arabia are demonstrating that Islamic nations can rise above division and become pillars of stability—capable of defending their people, upholding international law, and resisting those who threaten the peace of the region. The path they have chosen may well define the future of West Asia.

Under US–French orders, no celebratory rituals for Georges Abdallah

From page 1 ► Reportedly, a representative of the French judiciary briefed Salam on the details of Abdallah's case and the measures Lebanon was required to take against him to restrict and obstruct his political activism.

This is what actually happened, not only at the airport but also in his hometown of Qo-bayat, where the municipality imposed strict measures, including a ban on wearing the Palestinian keffiyeh and raising the Palestinian flag.

This was amid a shameful absence of political and religious figures (even from his own town), as well as restrictions on journalists, who were prevented from conducting direct interviews with Georges Abdallah.

George Abdallah remained loyal to his legitimate and honourable history of struggle, and the years did not force him to reconsider his convictions.

Georges Abdallah broke the shackles after spending more than half his life in the dungeons of the white man who repeatedly attacks us with the freedom, democracy, and human rights, refusing to apologize for his



brave and heroic resistance work that made him a struggle icon who rejected all offers and compromises.

The Lebanese government acted as an “arm” of imperialist regimes, complying with the highest orders, preventing the hero Georges Abdallah from being welcomed.

Had he been their envoy, carrying a barrage of threats of woe and damnation against the Lebanese people, Lebanese government officials would have prepared themselves for a humiliating celebratory rituals, just as they recently did with the U.S. envoy Thomas Bar-

rack, the man of Lebanese origin, who was welcomed with open arms.

Barrack came to strip the Lebanese state of its strongest guarantee of sovereignty: resistance, while Georges Abdallah insisted on the inalienable right to resistance.

Thomas Barrack claimed that his colonial country could not impose anything on Israel, which would inevitably mean the freedom to take hostile aggression against Lebanon without deterrence.

The U.S. envoy was not ashamed to threaten his countrymen with the takfiri terrorist policy that rules Syria, while George Abdallah boosted the morale of the people with the effectiveness of resistance.

Barrack relied on a strategy of inciting “panic” and frightening the Lebanese people with brutal sanctions; that is why Thomas Barrack was not and will not be a “mediator,” but rather a high commissioner whose only goal is to impose the U.S. policy of “enforced submission” without compensation or guarantees!

suffering in this war.

“That pathway will set out the concrete steps needed to turn the ceasefire so desperately needed, into a lasting peace.

“Recognition of a Palestinian state has to be one of those steps. I am unequivocal about that.

“But it must be part of a wider plan which ultimately results in a two-state solution and lasting security for Palestinians and Israelis.”

220 British MPs call for PM Starmer to recognize Palestinian state



More than a third of MPs have signed a letter to Prime Minister Keir Starmer calling for the UK

to recognize a Palestinian state, BBC said on its website.

Some 220 MPs from nine political parties have backed the call - more than half of them Labour - arguing that UK recognition would send a “powerful” message and a vital step toward a two-state solution.

The letter piles pressure on the prime minister after France committed to recognizing a Palestinian statehood within months.

In an earlier statement after

an emergency phone call with French President Emmanuel Macron and Germany's Friedrich Merz, Starmer claimed recognizing Palestinian statehood would have to be part of a “wider plan which ultimately results in a two-state solution”.

In his statement, the prime minister said: “Alongside our closest allies, I am working on a pathway to peace in the region, focused on the practical solutions that will make a real difference to the lives of those that are

Fragments of hope, crumbs of bread



From page 1 ► Abdullah's story is no singular tragedy. It echoes through the corridors of Patient's Friends Hospital in northern Gaza, where Dr. Rana Soboh threads her way between rows of skeletal children, their bodies silent testimonies to a famine that now offers no mercy. The usual treatments—nutritive formulas and therapeutic foods—have vanished from shelves, replaced by makeshift remedies and mothers' prayers. Five children died in just four days, and for the first time, even those without illnesses wasted away before their mothers' eyes.

“There are no words in the face of the disaster we are in,” Dr. Soboh confides, voice heavy with exhaustion and despair. “Kids are dying before the world... There is no uglier and more horrible phase than this.” Some children are too weak to cry. Others have lost even the strength for pain.

A few miles away, inside Shati Refugee Camp, Naima Abu Ful tenderly lifts her two-year-old son, Yazan. His arms dangle, limp and skeletal, each rib and vertebra visible through paper-thin skin. His siblings watch as their mother tries to conjure a meal out of nothing: two eggplants boiled in water across three days. “Doctors just say we should feed him,” says Mahmoud, Yazan's father. “But there is no food.” For hours Yazan lies on the floor, too weak to play, lacking even a reason to cry. Mahmoud holds his son's frail arms and wonders aloud if Yazan will simply slip away between their fingers—uncounted, mourned without resolution.

On Khan Younis and Rafah's cracked pavements, the consequences of hunger are plain. A woman in her 50s collapses, unable to muster the energy to walk. “I just wanted a piece of bread for my children,” she whispers as strangers try to revive her with water.

The lines for a single loaf stretch for blocks. Bread, once a birthright, is now a myth traded on black markets for a day's wages.

The numbers are relentless. At least 69 children have died from malnutrition since October; total famine-related deaths spiral past 600, and some 650,000 children under five along with tens of thousands of pregnant women teeter at the edge of survival. Gaza's health officials stare into the abyss of “real famine”—their warnings unheeded. Hospitals report waves of people fainting in the street as humanitarian aid shrinks to a trickle and harvests rot behind closed crossings.

If aid convoys break through, they become scenes of chaos, desperation, and gunfire. Since May, over a thousand have died during food distributions. The World Food Programme warns famine is not only real but multiplying—halted only, perhaps, by a ceasefire that remains a distant hope.

Across Gaza, the vocabulary has changed. Bread is no longer a right, but a rumor. The whispers of mothers at night are prayers for crumbs; social media is filled with anguished confessions from teachers, doctors, journalists. “There's no talk of war anymore—only hunger. That's the headline,” writes one. “How do I sleep while my children cry from hunger?” asks another.

“For Gaza's 2.4 million people, we're not living,” says Ahmed Abu Nada. “We're enduring.” Elapsed between hunger and hope, between yesterday's dreams and tomorrow's emptiness, Gaza's people grasp for dignity under global silence—a silence as suffocating as the hunger gnawing them from the inside.

In Gaza, breadless nights follow breadless days. And the world, for now, simply watches.

U.S. obstructing Gaza ceasefire

From page 1 ► In a press statement, Hamas official Izzat al-Rishq criticized the United States for disregarding “the real obstacle to any agreements.” He also accused the Netanyahu government of creating roadblocks, engaging in delays, and breaching prior commitments.

Al-Rishq stressed that Hamas has, from the start of the negotiations, acted with national responsibility and great flexibility.

He said the movement has been keen to reach a comprehensive agreement that would end the genocidal war and alleviate the suffering of Gaza's population.

Al-Rishq also said Hamas's latest response came after extensive national consultations with Palestinian factions, mediators, and friendly countries.

The official added that Hamas had engaged constructively and flexibly with all comments and suggestions raised, including those within Witkoff's own proposal.

In its response, Hamas emphasized the need for clear and enforceable terms, particularly regarding humanitarian issues.

It called for an unimpeded flow of aid, distributed through the United Nations and its approved agencies, without interference from the Israeli occupation regime.

According to al-Rishq, Hamas also insisted on reducing the size of buffer zones where Israeli occupation forces would remain for 60 days and not allowing most displaced people to return to their homes.

Hamas also dismissed accusations by the U.S. administration that the aid intended for



Gaza is stolen. These claims were baseless and recently disproven by a Reuters report citing a USAID investigation, which found no evidence linking Hamas to the misappropriation of U.S. assistance, it asserted.

Furthermore, Hamas called on the U.S. administration to stop providing political and military cover for the Israeli regime, which continues to carry out a campaign of extermination and starvation against more than two million Palestinians in Gaza under the watch of the international community.

Hamas urged Washington to pressure the Israeli regime to engage seriously in a political process that ends the genocide, leads to a fair prisoner exchange deal, and alleviates the suffering of Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons.

President Trump stated on Friday that “Hamas didn't really want to make a deal. I think they want to die and it's very, very bad. And, it got to a point where you have to finish the job. (Hamas) pulled out (of the negotiations).”

Tourism ministry proposes week-long public vacation for tourism boost



Cultural Heritage Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri

TEHRAN—Cultural Heritage Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri said that the government is pulling Iranian tourism out of the wartime recession with two national strategies and 14 operational mechanisms.

He added that a one-week vacation plan before the end of summer has been discussed by the cabinet so that people can travel with facilities provided by the government, IRNA reported.

The minister explained that the plan is tied to ratification by the cabinet, adding: “We have reached this conclusion in an expert structure, and to boost tourism industry in Iran, we are pursuing it with two motives: creating vitality and maintaining employment. In addition, we have 570,000 registered jobs in handicrafts and 1.6 million registered jobs in the tourism industry, and maintaining them is a priority for the government, and we have provided incentives in this regard.”

In response to a claim made about the discovery of enriched uranium in one of Iran's historical monuments, he said: “We are pursuing this issue legally and internationally. A reporter asked the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency about this claim, but did not receive a clear answer, and the claim was not confirmed by the agency's director general.”

Stating that Iran is among top 20 tourist destinations in 2025, he said that three elements of attractiveness, security and infrastructure are bases of this grading.

12th-century Shebeli Tower to undergo restoration



TEHRAN – The historic Shebeli Tower in Damavand is set to undergo restoration, a local tourism official said on Saturday.

Ali Afzali, director of the Damavand Cultural Heritage Office, announced that a restoration is planned for Shebeli following recent assessments and contractor selection for the dome, walls, basement, and surrounding areas.

Afzali also stated that there are 160 registered

He pointed out that the tourism industry affects more than 100 jobs, adding: “We have negotiated with regional countries such as Egypt, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, and Iraq. Egypt has high potentials given its historical and religious identity. Currently, 3.5 million tourists arrive Iran from Iraq. We seek to raise the figure to five million.”

Saying that 50 percent of Iranian tourism is religious and pilgrimage field, he continued: “During the post-war era, two macro strategies have been compiled: first, developing domestic tourism to restore social vitality, and second, promoting foreign tourism with focus on religious, pilgrimage and medical tourism. Our foreign exchange target is \$10 billion, \$2 billion of which will be provided by medical tourism.”

Announcing the arrival of the first flights of Iraqi tourists after the end of the war, he noted: “This is the beginning of our path to revive tourism. Within a six-month horizon, we have set a goal to restore 50 percent of the previous capacity. Currently, 23,000 accommodation units, including hotels, eco-lodges and guesthouses, have been activated in the country, which require operational support.”

“We have planned a three-sided package for boosting low-cost and accessible trip. A portion of the costs is secured by the government, while the private sector (hotels and travel agencies) supplies another portion and people pay the remaining portion. The plan will be studied in the cabinet next week.”

Salehi-Amiri continued that 570,000 persons work in handicrafts sector and 1.6 million people are involved in tourism sector. Preserving this employment capacity is one of the government's top priorities, he added.

Pointing to the continuation of global registration plan for Iran's historical monuments, he said: “We achieved to inscribe the Prehistoric Sites of Khorramabad Valley on UNESCO's World Heritage List as the first human habitat in Iran.”

He gave news that monuments such as Alamut Castle and Masuleh historical texture are in the process of possible registration as world heritage sites, expressing the hope that this will be achieved.

historical sites within Damavand county, of which 82 are nationally registered. These sites include houses, castles, mounds, archaeological sites, ancient trees, baths, mosques, and monuments such as the centuries-old Shebeli Tower.

He described Shebeli Tower as a unique monument in Iran with distinct architecture and a masonry technique known as “free-stone” construction. The tower was officially registered as a national heritage site in 1972.

The tower is an octagonal, roofed tomb approximately 10 meters tall, dedicated to Abu Bakr al-Shibli, a 4th and 5th-century Sufi mystic and former governor of Damavand. It features a basement (sardab) beneath the main structure. The monument is a remnant of the Samanid era and is architecturally similar to historic structures found in Bukhara.

Afzali said once the restoration and landscaping are completed, Shebeli Tower will serve as a cultural center and hub for handicraft activities and cultural programs in the county.

Constitution House of Tabriz: where Iran's struggle for democracy has its roots in

TEHRAN – Nestled beside the historic bazaar of Tabriz in the heart of northwest Iran, the Constitution House of Tabriz -- locally known as Khaneh Mashrouteh -- stands as a powerful symbol of Iran's early democratic aspirations.

With a legacy rooted in the Persian Constitutional Revolution (1905–1911), this remarkable two-story Qajar-era building now serves as a museum and cultural landmark, drawing tourists, historians, and patriots alike to witness a pivotal chapter in Iranian history.

Built in 1868 by Haj Mehdi Kouzeh-Kanani, a prominent merchant and avid supporter of the Constitutional movement, the house quickly transformed into a hub for political resistance.

The 1,300-square-meter structure once hosted secret meetings, underground publications, and coordinated efforts that challenged the absolute power of the Qajar monarchy.

During the revolutionary years, the house welcomed some of the most prominent figures of the movement, including Sattar Khan, Bagher Khan, Seqat-ol-Eslam Tabrizi, and Haji Mirza Aqa Farshi.

His home became a safe haven for strategizing, printing anti-monarchy texts, and rallying constitutionalists during the most turbulent years of modern Iranian history.

The house's architectural splendor is equally captivating. Built in the elegant Qajar style, it features tall arched windows, intricate wood carvings, and a stunning conical skylight that illuminates



the mirror hall, often considered the most beautiful part of the building.

The play of natural light through stained-glass windows adds a serene yet powerful ambiance to a place once filled with revolutionary urgency.

Today, the Constitution House functions as a museum, meticulously preserving the spirit of resistance and reform. Its first floor exhibits lifelike statues of constitutional heroes, personal belongings like Sattar Khan's dagger, rare photographs, underground newspapers, and the original printing press used for revolutionary publications.

Visitors can also see the Constitution Carpet and documents chronicling the struggle for a par-

liamentary system in Iran.

Recognized as a national heritage site in 1975, the building reopened to the public in 1996 following extensive renovations.

It remains the most famous and prestigious historical house in Tabriz, offering visitors a rare blend of political legacy and architectural beauty.

The city of Tabriz, known for its rich history, warm hospitality, and the UNESCO-listed Grand Bazaar, remains a key gateway for visitors, particularly those entering Iran from Armenia and Turkey.

Tabriz has a long and rich history. It became the capital of the Mongol Il-Khan Mahmud Gazan (1295–1304) and his successor: Timur (Tamerlane), a Turkic conqueror, took the city in 1392.

Some decades later, the Kara Koyunlu Turkmen made it their capital, and it was then that the famous Blue Mosque was built in the ancient city.

Tabriz retained its administrative status under the Safavid dynasty until 1548, when Shah Tahmasp I relocated his capital westward to Qazvin.

During the next two centuries, the Iranian city of Tabriz changed hands several times between Persia and the Ottoman Empire.

During World War I, the city was temporarily occupied by Turkish and then Soviet troops.

The largest economic hub and metropolitan area in northwest Iran, Tabriz represents an essence of Iran's architectural transition throughout its long history.

Over 3,000 historical photographs at Golestan Palace classified in new project



TEHRAN – More than 3,000 historical photographs being kept at the UNESCO-registered Golestan Palace have been classified under an extensive new project called “Awakened Mirrors,” the palace's director announced on Saturday.

Afrin Emami, director of the Golestan Palace World Heritage site, said the project was implemented during a period of public closure [due to potential threat of Israeli air strikes, which came to a halt on June 24, following a 12-day conflict] and involved collaboration across the palace's specialized units.

She underlined that the initiative aimed to transform Golestan Palace into a dynamic and innovative center for museum practices.

Emami described the museum's temporary closure not as a halt but as an opportunity for reinvention. “This project was developed in response to a question: Can a museum shine even in silence? Through the simultaneous execution of six key plans, we have answered this question affirmatively,” she said.

The six core plans include interactive exhibitions titled “Unseen Pages of History,” archival research based on unpublished documents from the palace's photo archives, emergency restoration of mirror work, plasterwork, and infrastructure, specialized staff training under the “Learning Golestan” program, creative storytelling for children and teenagers called “Palace Tales,” and documentation of behind-the-scenes museum activities for the first time.

Emami also highlighted content development efforts during this period, such as narrating artifacts through historical documents, producing documentary clips, redesigning the website with multimedia capabilities, and redefining content production on social media platforms.

She noted that the classification of over 3,000 historical photographs followed the international CIDOC-CRM standard, marking a significant step toward professional documentation and facilitating research for the academic community.

Additionally, Emami emphasized the invitation extended to historians and academics to participate in research projects and to correct historical narratives, as part of the management's commitment to transparency and scientific rigor.

The palace complex of Golestan once served as the official residence of Qajar monarchs, who ruled Persia (now Iran) between 1789 and 1925.

It exemplifies the architectural and artistic achievements of the Qajar epoch, as well as the introduction of European motifs and styles into Persian art.

Experts say it displays a remarkable mixture of ancient Persian and contemporary European architectural styles, which characterized much of Iranian art in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The complex embodies a successful integration of earlier Persian crafts and architecture with Western influences. Over the past two centuries, it has become a center of arts and architecture, a source of inspiration for Iranian artists and architects to this day.

A top destination for visitors to the Iranian capital, the property embraces eight key palace structures mostly used as museums and the eponymous gardens, a green shared center of the complex, surrounded by an outer wall with gates.

Iran's medical tourism brand proven with Hamedan's excellent hosting

TEHRAN-- Deputy Governor-General of Hamedan Mojtaba Hosseini gave news of the successful hosting of the third international medical tourism conference of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) member countries in this province. He also said that Iran's medical tourism brand was proven with Hamedan's distinguished hosting of the Health Tourism Confobition (conference and exhibition).

According to Miras Arya (CHTN), he added that the event was held with the aim of introducing treatment capacities and medical tourism of Hamedan province, exchanging medical knowhow and improving the regional collaborations.

Appreciating the support of media members, governors, executives, and public participation, he added: “During the days when the country was engaged in a 12-day combined war imposed by Is-

rael, our nation left a successful record in simultaneously managing the economic front and hosting an international event. This support deserves special appreciation.”

He pointed out that medical tourism has been defined as one the strategic axes of ECO, adding that Hamedan hosted the third round this event.

Hosseini called historical and cultural antiquity, medical infrastructures, specialized physicians, geopolitical situation, and convenient air access as major reasons behind choosing Hamedan for hosting the event. With emphasis of the respected governor-general, it was decided that the medical, tourism and economic potentials of the province are introduced during the event, he added.

The official continued that the event included two scientific and exhibition parts. Beside official inauguration cere-

mony which was attended by ECO Secretary General Assad Majid Khan and other guests, specialized panels were held with focus on the role of ECO member states in medical tourism, the impact of technology and artificial intelligence, health startups, analysis of regional situation, and introduction of Hamedan as new medical tourism destination.

Other side programs included visiting international patient departments (IPDs) of the province, introducing medical capacities and identifying infrastructural potentials in medical tourism, he added.

Pointing to the final statement of the conference, he said: “Forming a joint medical tourism committee based in Hamedan, creating a regional digital platform, supporting research projects, expanding the exchange of medical knowledge, promoting educational cooperation, and developing hydrotherapy

are among the most important clauses of this 13-article statement.”

Saying that medical tourism generates income and promotes economic development, he mentioned: “Holding this event was an effective step towards establishing the health brand of Iran and Hamedan at the regional level, and I would like to sincerely thank all the participating institutions, especially the University of Medical Sciences, the General Directorate of Hamedan Cultural Heritage Department, the Municipality, the Management and Planning Organization, and the governorates.”

The third international medical tourism confobition of the ECO member countries was held in Hamedan during June 11-13.

Hamedan that boasts equipped hospitals, complementary medicine, and a nature full of herbal plants, was selected to host the event. And most importantly,

Hamedan is the birthplace of Avicenna, the great Persian physician and the most famous and influential philosopher and scientist of the medieval Islamic world.

Over the past couple of years, the Islamic Republic has emerged as a significant destination for health tourism, attracting individuals from various parts of the world seeking high-quality healthcare services at affordable prices.

The country's medical tourism sector has experienced substantial growth due to its advanced medical facilities, skilled healthcare professionals, and cost-effective treatments. The country boasts a robust healthcare infrastructure with modern hospitals, specialized clinics, and state-of-the-art medical equipment. Major cities like Tehran, Shiraz, and Isfahan house internationally accredited medical facilities offering a wide range of medical treatments and procedures.

According to available data, patients from neighboring countries, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Oman, Bahrain, Armenia, and Tajikistan, constitute the lion's share of medical tourists arriving in the Islamic Republic.

Experts say medical tourism in Iran is a win-win opportunity both for the country and foreign patients, as they are offered affordable yet quality treatment services and the country gains considerable foreign currency.

The Islamic Republic is branded globally as an affordable destination for health and medical tourism. Credible surgeons and physicians, cutting-edge medical technologies, high-tech medicine and diverse specializations, affordable procedures, and finally, its hospitable people, are considered Iran's trump card when it comes to medical tourism.

Iranian students garner silver medals at IPhO 2025

TEHRAN – Five Iranian students secured silver medals at the 55th International Physics Olympiad, ranking 11th globally.

Held from July 18 to 24 in Paris, the IPhO 2025 brought together 440 candidates from over 90 countries.

Mohammad-Hassan Sadeqinejad, Arya Zarabi, Ilya Qashae, Mohammad-Hassan Golabdar, and Milad Mohammadi won silver medals, IRIB reported.

The primary goal of IPhO is to examine, to the highest level, the knowledge, analytical skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills in theoretical and experimental physics.

Two five-hour tests, drawn up by the host country and amended by the leaders of the teams involved, are open to candidates competing individually. The first is experimental, using equipment supplied to the candidates. The second is theoretical, focusing on phenomena and their modeling.

The 54th edition of the IPhO was hosted by Isfahan University of Technology, Iran. Iranian students who attended the 54th IPhO managed to win a gold medal and four silver medals.

Recent achievements

Iran grabbed two gold medals, three silver medals, and a bronze medal at the 66th International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO 2025), held from July 10-20 in Australia.

Hosted by the Australian Maths Trust, the event attracted more than 600 high school students from 112 countries.

The competition represents the culmination of many years



of mathematical endeavour and hundreds of attempts at solving problems.

Bardia Khosh-Eqbal and Mehdi Aqajanloo grabbed gold medals, Mohammad-Reza Attaranzadeh, Mohammad-Sajad Memari, and Amir-Hossein Zarei secured silver medals, while Parsa Tajallaei won a bronze.

The IMO is the largest and most prestigious of all the international Olympiads, having grown from seven countries to over a hundred each year.

IMO brings the brightest young minds from around the world and represents the culmination of many years of mathematical endeavour and hundreds of attempts at solving problems. Australia has participated since 1981 and has hosted only once before (Canberra, 1988).

The team had ranked second in the 3rd International Mathematics Summer Camp (IMSC) held in Beijing, China, from June 20 to July 12, 2025.

Bardia Khosh-Eqbal grabbed a gold medal, Mehdi Aqajanloo, Parsa Tajallaei, Mohammad-Reza Attaranzadeh, and Moham-

mad-Sajad Memari won silver medals, and Amir-Hossein Zarei won a bronze medal, IRIB reported.

It was a three-week training program designed to strengthen students' problem-solving skills in elementary mathematical fields, including algebra, geometry, number theory, combinatorics, and to enrich their analytic thinking, fostering a passion for math.

IMSC 2025 brought together over 300 people, including students and lecturers, from 32 countries such as Belarus, Belgium, Cameroon, Germany, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, the United States, Romania, Poland, and Uzbekistan.

The 65th IMO was held from July 11 to 22, 2024, in Bath, United Kingdom. Some 108 countries and 609 students competed. The Iranian team scored 137 points, earning 19th place.

Attending the second International Mathematics Olympiad for high school students in Turkmenistan, Iranian students managed to win seven bronze medals.

Hosted by Ashgabat special-

ised General Education School, the event was held from April 21 to 26.

More than 230 talented students from 15 countries, including Russia, Belarus, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Iran, Armenia, Bulgaria, Nepal, China, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Vietnam, Qatar, and Turkmenistan, took part in the competition.

Thirty-one students from North Khorasan represented Iran in the second Olympiad. Mohammad-Javad Kamali Kalati, Arya Mohammadi Razi, Mahsa Abron, Sajjad Azizi, Mahyar Forooghifar, Yalda Mesrzadeh, and Setayesh Rahimi won bronze medals, Tasnim news agency reported.

Iranian students won two silver and two bronze medals, ranking fourth at the Turkic International Mathematics Olympiad (TIMO) held from April 17 to 22, in Antalya.

TIMO is an international event that is open to students from grades 3 to 12. The competition is held in two rounds, including the preliminary and global rounds.

In the preliminary round, over 27,350 students from 35 countries competed against each other online in December. The offline qualifying exam had 25 multiple-choice questions, administered for 60 minutes.

In the Global round, which was held paper-based, 1,500 selected participants attended the event.

Parnian Heydarian and Anusha Abdi grabbed silver medals and won the world star awards, while Fatemeh Mazini and Ava Dejagah won bronze medals.

Over 214,000 births registered in three months

TEHRAN – A total of 214,223 births were registered in the country in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year that started in March 2025, the Civil Registration Organization has announced.

Baby boys and girls accounted for 11,238 and 102,985 births, respectively, Mehr news agency quoted Hashem Kargar, an official with Civil Registration Organization, as saying.

Out of the registered births in spring, 4,202 were twins, 120 were triplets, and five were quadruplets, the official added.

The average age of women in Iran giving birth to their first child stands at 27.5, and the average age at which men became fathers is 32.5, Kargar noted.

During the same period, more than 129,000 marriages were registered across the country; the average age of first marriage was 28.4 for men and 24.1 for women, the official further noted.

National population week

National population week was observed from May 14 to 20 under the theme 'children, life assets'.

This year, the days of the week were named

as follows: Wednesday, May 14, 'Father, mother, good sense of life'; Thursday, May 15, 'Motherhood, elixir of youth'; Friday, May 16, 'Desiring a child'; Saturday, May 17, 'My lonely child'; Sunday, May 18, 'I want to stay alive'; Monday, May 19, 'My life in old age'; Tuesday, May 20, 'Child-friendly society'.

Enacting the youth population law has stabilized the total fertility rate, slightly increasing the general fertility index over the past two years. After experiencing seven years of decline by about 20 percent, the fertility rate is now stabilized at around 1.6.

The total fertility rate has experienced a sharp decline since the Iranian calendar year 1394 (2015-2016), as the number of births reached 1.057 million in 1402 (2023-2024) from 1.570 million in 1394. However, since the Iranian calendar year 1401 (March 2022–March 2023), the downward trend in fertility came to a halt.

However, it has intensified concerns over the decreasing trend in population growth in the coming years, and the probability of turning Iran into one of the oldest countries in the world, IRIB quoted Mohammad-Javad Mahmoudi, an official with the Civil Registration Organization, as saying.

"At best, Iran's population with a total fertility rate of 2.5 will reach 102,890,000 by the next seven years," Mahmoudi said.

An important factor contributing to lower birth rates in the country is the cost of living. Indeed, due to the high inflation rate and the expensive real estate sector, many families are choosing to have a smaller family size. The current one-child trend is prevalent in many young Iranian families, many of whom also have to support their aging parents.

Delayed marriage, along with extended intervals between childbirth, is another factor.

Many incentives have been introduced to encourage childbearing by the Iran Welfare Organization and the Ministry of Health.

However, the rate of population aging is growing rapidly in Iran. According to a recent report, Iran is expected to enter a phase of population aging between 2041 and 2046, with nearly a third of the population being aged 60 and older by 2050. Press TV quoted Mehdi Malmir, an official with the National Population Headquarters, as saying.

The number of Iranians aged 65 and older is currently at 7.5 million, accounting for less than 10 percent of the country's total population.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

“Noora” vaccine passing first phase of clinical trial

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

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

He stressed the need to integrate the human testing phase of the Noora vaccine and said that “this must be done to make the vaccine available for the mass vaccination; while many vaccine producing countries have done the same.”

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

تهران – رییس دانشگاه علوم پزشکی بقیه الله گفت: تزریق دز اول واکسن نورا به تمام داوطلبان انجام شد و دز دوم هم به نیمه تزریق رسیده است. دکتر حسن ابوالقاسمی روز شنبه در گفت و گو با ایرنا، روند فعالیت کارآزمایی بالینی واکسن نورا را مطلوب ارزیابی کرد و افزود: این واکسن به نحو مطلوبی درحال طی کردن فاز اول تست انسانی است.

وی با یادآوری اینکه طبق برنامه ریزی انجام شده طول دوره مرحله اول تست انسانی ۲ ماه است، ادامه داد: تاکنون بیش از یک ماه از این دوره سپری شده است.

وی بر لزوم ادغام مراحل تست انسانی واکسن نورا تاکید کرد و گفت: این کار باید صورت گیرد و بسیاری از کشورهای تولید کننده واکسن هم از این ظرفیت بهره بردند.

Iran elected as vice-chair of Ramsar Convention on Wetlands meeting



TEHRAN – The new Standing Committee of the Convention on Wetlands has elected Iran as the Vice-Chair for the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, which is taking place from July 23 to 31 July in Victoria Falls City, Zimbabwe.

The meeting is being held under the theme “Protecting Wetlands for our Common Future.” This COP aims to adopt a new strategic plan for 2025-2034, the Convention's fifth action plan.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands was signed in the city of Ramsar, Iran, in 1971. This intergovernmental treaty provides the framework for international cooperation on wetland conservation. The convention officially came into force in 1975.

Since then, many countries have become Contracting Parties to the convention. Saudi Arabia is the 173rd one, ISNA reported.

Moreover, the three Iranian cities, including Babol in northern Mazandaran province, Kiashahr in northern Gilan province, and Gandoman in southwestern Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province, received wetland city accreditation certificates on the first day of COP15 of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

A city's commitment to wetland conservation, awareness, active engagement in sustainable practices, and integration of wetland conservation into planning makes it a strong candidate for this recognition.

A candidate city for the Wetland City Accreditation will be assessed and recommended as an Accredited Wetland City by an Independent Advisory Committee after being proposed by the Contracting Party (through its Ramsar National Focal Point or Head of Administrative Authority) on whose territory it stands.

List of 31 newly accredited Wetland Cities, were formerly announced at the 64th meeting of the

IRCS dispatches over 8,000 rescue workers to Iraq for Arbadeen

TEHRAN – A total of 8,200 rescue workers of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), including relief workers, physicians, and nurses will offer services to people in Iraq during Arbadeen pilgrimage, according to the head of the IRCS.

Moreover, some 7,000 IRCS forces are working in the country on the routes and borders, IRIB quoted Pirhossein Kolivand as saying.

Arbadeen, commemorating Imam Hussein's martyrdom on the 40th day after Ashura, is the world's largest annual pilgrimage. This year it falls on August 14.

Each year, millions of Shia believers trek the 80-kilometre Najaf-Karbala route in a faith-driven, transnational movement that embodies Islamic unity, solidarity, and the enduring call for justice.

Four hospitals will provide services on Najaf – Karbala highway. Also, the number of medical mawkibs (voluntary stations) has increased in Karbala, Najaf, and Samarra, he added.

Pilgrims will be able to benefit from medical, health, and nutritional consultations through mobile applications free of charge, Kolivand noted.

The official went on to say that the IRCS will use more than 200 special vehicles and ambulances to perform their tasks during the Arbadeen pilgrimage.

5th Intel. Congress on “Health in Arbadeen”

The 5th International Congress on “Health in Arbadeen” was held in Tehran from May 26 to 27 with the participation of six countries.

This year's event brought together participants as well as 24 international lecturers from Italy, Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, IRNA reported.

“The main goal of the congress is to make physicians familiar with the issues of health care and

Standing Committee.

The city of “Bandar Khamir” near the Khorkhoran International Wetland in Hormozgan province was recognized and introduced as the first wetland city in Iran by the Ramsar Convention in 2022, IRNA quoted Arezou Ashrafzadeh, an official with the Department of Environment (DOE), as saying.

In the same year, the city of Varzaneh, in the east of Isfahan province, and Bandar Khamir, near the Gavkhuni International Wetland in Isfahan province, were recognized as wetland wetland-accredited cities as well, Ashrafzadeh noted.

There are also 25 sites in the country designated as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites), covering a surface area of 1,488,624 hectares.

Wetland City Accreditation scheme

The 172 Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands have agreed to the conservation and wise use of wetlands in their territories.

Recognizing the importance of cities and urban wetlands, the Convention has introduced a Wetland City accreditation scheme (Resolution XII.10).

This voluntary scheme provides an opportunity for cities that value their natural or human-made wetlands to gain international recognition and positive publicity for their efforts.

The Wetland City Accreditation scheme will encourage cities in close proximity to and dependent on wetlands, especially Wetlands of International Importance, to highlight and strengthen a positive relationship with these valuable ecosystems, for example through increased public awareness of wetlands and participation in municipal planning and decision-making.

The Accreditation scheme should further promote the conservation and wise use of urban and peri-urban wetlands, as well as sustainable socio-economic benefits for local people.

Urban wetlands are prize land not wasteland and therefore should be integrated into the development and management plans of cities.

When preserved and sustainably used, urban wetlands can provide cities with multiple economic, social and cultural benefits. During storms, urban wetlands absorb excess rainfall, which reduces flooding in cities and prevents disasters and their subsequent costs. The abundant vegetation found in urban wetlands, acts as a filter for domestic and industrial waste and contribute to improving water quality.

treatment during the Arbadeen pilgrimage. It mainly focuses on endemic diseases that may spread by Afghan and Pakistani pilgrims who pass Iran on their way to Iraq,” IRNA quoted Abdolreza Pazoki, an official with the health ministry, as saying.

They also discussed guidelines for treating skin, musculoskeletal, and other diseases, as well as needed medicines and medical equipment.

The same as previous years, medical universities on the borders will monitor infectious diseases by taking preventive measures.

Iraq lauds IRCS for services

In August 2024, Iraqi health minister Saleh Mehdi Al-Hasnawi commended the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) for its outstanding efforts to offer services during the Arbadeen pilgrimage.

Meeting an Iranian delegation, led by Kolivand, Al-Hasnawi said, “the Iranian Red Crescent Society's cooperation with Iraq's health ministry in providing health services to pilgrims is praiseworthy,” the IRCS website reported.

“Medical services are being carried out in collaboration with the two parties for all the pilgrims, including Iranians and Arabs,” he added.

On August 5, 2024, Iranian and Iraqi officials held a meeting in Baghdad to review and discuss strategies to facilitate the Arbadeen pilgrimage and ensure the safety of pilgrims.

Iran's Deputy Minister of Interior, Majid Mirahmadi, and Kolivand, in a meeting with the Iraqi Minister of Interior, Abdul Amir al-Shammari, followed up on the latest arrangements made regarding the Arbadeen pilgrimage.

During the meeting, the Iranian officials obtained permission to operate IRCS rescue helicopters as well as ambulances and bring necessary medicine and equipment to provide medical services to pilgrims.



JULY 27, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Whoever warns you against sins and vices is like the one who gives you good tidings.
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:11 Evening: 19:33 Dawn: 3:31 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:09 (tomorrow)

Adaptation of “The Trial” on stage at Tehran theater



TEHRAN – An adaptation of Czech writer Franz Kafka's novel “The Trial” is currently on stage at Tehran's Homa Theater Hall.

Written by Mohammad Charmshir and Farhad Mohandespour, Shahrour Delafkar is the director of the play, which has been renamed “Joseph K”.

Behrouz Panahandeh, Pezhvak Imani, Raha Hajzeinal, Sahar Abdolmaleki, Ehsan Rezvani and Ehsan Rezvani are the main members of the cast for the play, which will remain on stage until July 30.

“The Trial” is a seminal novel written between 1914 and 1915, published posthumously in 1925. Considered one of Kafka's most influential works, it explores themes of justice, guilt, and the absurdity of bureaucratic systems. The novel chronicles the mysterious and harrowing experience of Josef K., a bank clerk who one day finds himself unexpectedly arrested by an opaque authority for an unspecified crime. Throughout the story, Kafka delves into the existential anxiety of facing an incomprehensible legal system that remains largely inaccessible and unfathomable to both Josef and the reader. Notably, Kafka never completed the novel, but it includes a chapter that appears to serve as an abrupt, perhaps symbolic, conclusion.

Kafka's “The Trial” was heavily influenced by Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky, particularly “Crime and Punishment” and “The Brothers Karamazov”. Kafka himself regarded Dostoevsky as a “blood relative,” reflecting the shared intensity of their exploration of guilt, morality, and human suffering. Like

Kafka's other unfinished works, “The Castle” and “Amerika”, the novel remains incomplete, with Kafka's original manuscript consisting of loose pages that his friend and literary executor, Max Brod, compiled into the narrative we know today. Brod's editing was necessary due to Kafka's habit of destroying his own work, and the original manuscript is now housed at the Museum of Modern Literature in Marbach, Germany.

The story begins on Josef K.'s thirtieth birthday, when he is unexpectedly detained by two agents for an unspecified offense. Remarkably, he is not imprisoned but is allowed to continue his daily routine, leaving him confused and increasingly anxious. Over the course of the novel, Josef attempts to understand the charges against him, which remain shrouded in mystery. His interactions with various figures—lawyers, court officials, and acquaintances—highlight the labyrinthine and often surreal nature of the judicial process. He visits courts hidden in dilapidated buildings, encounters officials who behave bizarrely, and faces constant frustration and disillusionment.

Throughout his ordeal, Josef encounters a series of symbolic episodes, including a failed attempt to appeal, a meeting with a court painter named Titorelli who offers dubious legal advice, and a tragic visit to a priest who recounts the famous parable “Before the Law”, illustrating the endless and often futile pursuit of justice. As the story progresses, Josef's life becomes increasingly entangled in the absurdities of the system, and his sense of guilt and helplessness deepens. Despite his efforts to clear his name, the opaque authority remains distant and indifferent.

The novel culminates in Josef's death outside the city, where he is murdered by two men who arrive unexpectedly at his clandestine meeting. They stab him in the heart and strangle him, leaving him to die with the final, despairing words: “Like a dog!” Kafka's “The Trial” remains a powerful allegory for the human condition, illustrating the terrifying and often incomprehensible nature of authority, justice, and guilt in modern society.

Cartoon of Day



Feeding Time

Cartoonist: Glen Le Lievre from Australia

Iranian, Afghan women artists showcase unity at Tehran art exhibition

TEHRAN – The ECO Cultural Institute in Tehran is hosting a group painting and calligraphy exhibition titled “Voices in Color,” showcasing the artistic talents of 24 women from Iran and Afghanistan.

The event, being held at the Institute's Diplomatic Conference Hall, was inaugurated on Thursday and will run until July 30, attracting art enthusiasts and cultural aficionados alike.

The opening ceremony was graced by prominent figures, including Professor Seyyed Zia Qasemi, a renowned Afghan poet and scholar, and Fahimeh Dehghan, a distinguished Iranian poet, both of whom shared their poetic compositions to enrich the cultural atmosphere.

The event was attended by Asad Majeed Khan, Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), emphasizing the importance of regional cooperation through cultural exchange.

The ceremony also featured a poetry reading session with speeches from key cultural figures. Saad Khan, President of the ECO Cultural Institute, delivered remarks emphasizing the vital role of female artists in fostering regional unity and cultural dialogue. “Art transcends borders; it is the shared language of women across the ECO region, building bridges of understanding, peace, and friendship,” he stated.

Esteemed historian and cultural researcher Jafar Shiralinia highlighted the significance of women's contributions to the arts, underscoring their influence in shaping the



region's cultural landscape.

The exhibition brought together diverse works of painting and calligraphy created by women affiliated with the Qalam Moo organization, reflecting themes of identity, heritage, and regional unity.

Throughout the week, visitors can explore a vibrant collection of artworks that exemplify creativity and resilience. The exhibition is open daily from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the ECO Cultural Institute, located at No. 10, Movahed Danesh Street, Bagher Al-Namar Alley, in Tehran.

This event underscores the enduring power of art as a universal language and highlights the vital role of women artists in promoting peace and cultural understanding within the ECO region.

Iran has long served as a refuge for Afghan writers, poets, and artists seeking safety and freedom to express their creativity. Many talented Afghan intellectuals have found sanctuary within Iran's borders, where they continue to contribute to the cultural and literary landscape while preserving their rich heritage.

The deep historical, religious, and linguistic ties between Iran and Afghanistan foster a strong sense of brotherhood and cooperation, strengthening their cultural connections. This mutual relationship not only provides a safe haven for Afghan artists but also enriches Iran's diverse artistic scene, creating a vibrant exchange of ideas, literature, and traditions that benefits both nations and reinforces their enduring bond.

Book about Al-Ghazali's theory of mystical cognition published in Persian

TEHRAN – The Persian translation of the book “Inspired Knowledge in Islamic Thought: Al-Ghazali's Theory of Mystical Cognition and Its Avicennian Foundation” written by Alexander Treiger has been released in the Iranian bookstores across the country.

Samaneh Feyzi and Ahmad Yazdi have translated the book and Oqnoos Publishing House has brought it out in 336 pages, ILNA reported.

It has been customary to see the Muslim theologian Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058-1111) as a vehement critic of philosophy, who rejected it in favor of Islamic mysticism (Sufism), a view which has come under increased scrutiny in recent years.

Originally published in 2012, the book argues that al-Ghazali was, instead, one of the greatest popularizers of philosophy in medieval Islam.

The author supplies new evidence showing that al-Ghazali was indebted to philosophy in his theory of mystical cognition

and his eschatology, and that, moreover, in these two areas he accepted even those philosophical teachings which he ostensibly criticized.

Through detailed discussion of more than 80 key passages (with many more surveyed throughout the book), the author shows how al-Ghazali's understanding of “mystical cognition” is patterned after the philosophy of Avicenna (980-1037).

Arguing that despite overt criticism, al-Ghazali never rejected Avicennian philosophy and that his mysticism itself is grounded in Avicenna's teachings, the book offers a clear and systematic presentation of al-Ghazali's “philosophical mysticism.”

Challenging popular assumptions about one of the greatest Muslim theologians of all time, this is an important reference for scholars and laymen interested in Islamic theology and in the relations between philosophy and mysticism.

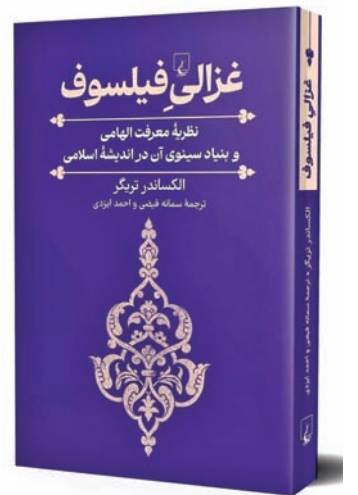
Al-Ghazali was a Muslim scholar

and polymath. He is known as one of the most prominent and influential jurists, legal theoreticians, muftis, philosophers, theologians, logicians, and mystics in Islamic history.

Al-Ghazali's works were so highly acclaimed by his contemporaries that he was awarded the honorific title “Proof of Islam” (Hujjat al-Islām).

Much of Al-Ghazali's work stemmed around his spiritual crises following his appointment as the head of the Nizamiyya University in Baghdad - which was the most prestigious academic position in the Muslim world at the time.

He believed that the Islamic spiritual tradition had become moribund and that the spiritual sciences taught by the first generation of Muslims had been forgotten. This belief led him to write his magnum opus entitled “The Revival of the Religious Sciences”. Among his other works, “Incoherence of the Philosophers” is a landmark in the history of philosophy, as it



advances the critique of Aristotelian science developed later in 14th-century Europe.

Alexander Treiger is an assistant professor of Religious Studies at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada. His research focuses on Islamic theology, Arabic philosophy, and Syriac and Arabic Christianity, with emphasis on the transmission of theological and mystical ideas from Late Antiquity to early Islam.

Gaza refugee artist in Paris embroiders her pain on canvas

In her new Paris home, Palestinian artist Maha Al-Daya pulled a needle and thread through material as news for war-torn Gaza blared in the background.

“Before the war I used to embroider for happy occasions, but today I stitch away my pain,” said the 41-year-old visual artist, who also paints, Dawn reported.

Daya, her husband and three children — aged 8, 15, and 18 — are among several hundreds of Palestinians to have been granted a visa to France since the war on Gaza broke out in October 2023.

Stitch after stitch, Daya embroiders impressions of the war on to drab-colored material. In one work, she has stitched red thread over most of a map of Gaza to show areas ravaged by now more than 21 months of war. In another, Daya has sewn the Arabic words “Stop the genocide” in black wool.

Rights groups, lawyers, and some Israeli historians have described the Gaza war as a genocide. Israel, created in the aftermath of the Nazi Holocaust of Jews during World War II, vehemently rejects the accusation.

Palestinians have for centuries painstakingly sewn long black dresses and adorned them with stark red embroidery, in designs still worn today in rural areas and at weddings, or other celebrations.

But today, Daya is using it to highlight the suffering of two million Gazans in the latest

Israeli bombardment campaign against the besieged Palestinian territory.

Israel's military campaign has killed nearly 60,000 Palestinians, most of them civilians. Humanitarian groups say Gaza's population is facing famine-like conditions.

In April this year, Daya met French President Emmanuel Macron to show him her work when it was exhibited at the French capital's Arab World Institute. She says she gave him an embroidery bearing the words “Where are we going to go now?”

Daya and her family lived through six months of conflict in Gaza before they were able to escape the Palestinian territory.

Just days after the war started, she and her children fled their home in Gaza City — and its flowered balcony — with just some clothes stuffed into backpacks.

“I thought, it's just for a few days, we'll be back,” she said. “We had no idea it would last for so long.”

They found refuge with friends of a nephew in the southern city of Khan Younis — people they had never met before but who were incredibly kind to them, she said.

But in mid-December, bombardment hit that house, gravely wounding two of her nephews, one of whom had to undergo an amputation. They then lived in a tent for four months.

“The cold was unbearable. In winter, rain would come inside,” she said. But they had heard of a Cairo-based agency that could put their names on a list so they could leave via the crossing point with Egypt for a fee of \$4,000 a person.

A Bethlehem artist raised the funds to pay in exchange for future works by her and her husband, also an artist.

In Cairo, she started embroidering. Her husband picked up a paint brush again. “We were like birds who had been freed from their cage,” she said.

A non-profit set up to help Gaza artists called Maan helped her apply for PAUSE, a French government program for researchers and artists in need.

Her application was accepted by Sciences Po and the Paris-based branch of Columbia University. After nine months in Egypt, the family landed in Paris. Daya started attending French courses in the morning and embroidering in the afternoon. In the evening she joins her family in the university residence where they now live.

Yaffa, eight years old, Rima, 15, and Adam, 18, are back in school. “When I arrived here, I was happy,” she said. “But at the same time, there's a sort of internal pain. While there's still war over there, while people are dying, it's difficult to find peace.”