

The Tehran Times special report from the resting place of Israel's war victims in Tehran

Section 42: Where the Youth Speak With the Martyrs

The gravestone of an Iranian citizen in Behesht-e-Zahra, who was martyred during Israel's June aggression against Iran.

Armenia will make no major decision without consulting Iran: PM Pashinyan

TEHRAN – Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has underlined the “special and distinguished” status of Yerevan's ties with Tehran, calling the relationship “strategic” and pledging that all major decisions would be made in close consultation with Iran.

Speaking by phone with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Monday morning, Pashinyan briefed him on the recent peace memorandum signed between Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan and outlined the details of the planned Caucasus transit corridor project. He thanked the Islamic Republic and the Pezeshkian administration for their “principled stance” in supporting regional convergence and stability. ▶ Page 2

Iran and China to preserve their ‘robust’ relations: Iran foreign ministry

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmail Baqaei delivered a rebuke of U.S. sanctions targeting Iran-China trade during his weekly press briefing in Tehran on Monday, declaring: “Iran and China preserve their robust relations.”

Addressing Washington's escalating campaign to disrupt bilateral oil trade, Baqaei stated: “The U.S. has undermined all international rules and norms of free trade, either by imposing tariffs against countries or by imposing sanctions against the legitimate relations of various nations. Regarding Iran-China trade, Washington's actions contravene international law because they violate the decisions of two independent UN member states.” ▶ Page 2

Iran's legal standing in the Zangezur question

By Salar Seyfodini

TEHRAN – The so-called Zangezur Corridor has emerged as an international geopolitical Question with far-reaching implications following the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Some observers believe that Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, frustrated in his attempts to fully incorporate the region, has sought to advance his agenda by engaging key international players, including the United States. Between 2020 and August 2025, ▶ Page 2

Iran's iron, steel exports up 13% in 4 months on year

TEHRAN – Iran's iron and steel exports rose 13 percent in the first four months of the current Iranian year (starting March 21), equivalent to an additional 469,000 tons, the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA) said.

The value of exports in the iron and steel production chain climbed seven percent year-on-year to more than \$2.3 billion during the period, according to ISPA data.

Exports of billet and bloom, which had posted an eight percent drop in the first-quarter of the year, reversed course in the four-month figures to record a 15 percent increase.

The upward trend also continued in raw material shipments, with iron ore concentrate exports surging 78 percent from a year earlier – a development that has raised concern among domestic steelmakers about potential shortages for local production. ▶ Page 4

War on witnesses: Israel's deadly campaign to silence Gaza's journalists

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN — Since launching its war on Gaza in October 2023, Israel has pursued a systematic campaign to silence the media and obscure the reality of what many observers call a genocide in the besieged enclave.

The latest escalation came late Sunday, when an Israeli strike targeted a journalists' tent outside al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, killing five members of the Qatar-based Al Jazeera Media Network.

The life and death of Anas Al Sharif: Gaza's relentless voice

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN – Amidst Gaza's devastated streets, where buildings lay in ruins and daily life was stripped to its barest form, Anas Sharif more than a reporter — was a chronicler of a crisis.

At the very young age of 28, Al Jazeera correspondent Sharif lucidly and urgently documented the human face of Israel's ongoing assault. His reports transcended the simple headlines; they showed life under siege from an unfiltered perspective. Through his very lens,

Murder of Gaza journalists sparks global outrage

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – The Israeli regime's killing of Palestinian journalists in northern Gaza is facing growing international condemnation.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres's spokesperson, Stéphane Dujarric, stated: “We have always been very clear in condemning all killings of journalists. In Gaza and everywhere, media workers must be able to do their jobs freely and without harassment, intimidation, or fear of being targeted. Journalists must be granted free access to all areas of Gaza to report independently on the situation.” ▶ Page 5

Damghan offers journey through centuries of culture

TEHRAN – Damghan, in Iran's Semnan province, is rich in history and home to notable architectural sites, making it a key destination for cultural travelers and history enthusiasts.

The ancient city, situated about 350 kilometers east of Tehran, is not only famed for its high-quality pistachios – often dubbed “the smiling nuts” – but also for its impressive collection of historical monuments, caravanserais, fortifications, and places of worship that echo the grandeur of bygone eras.

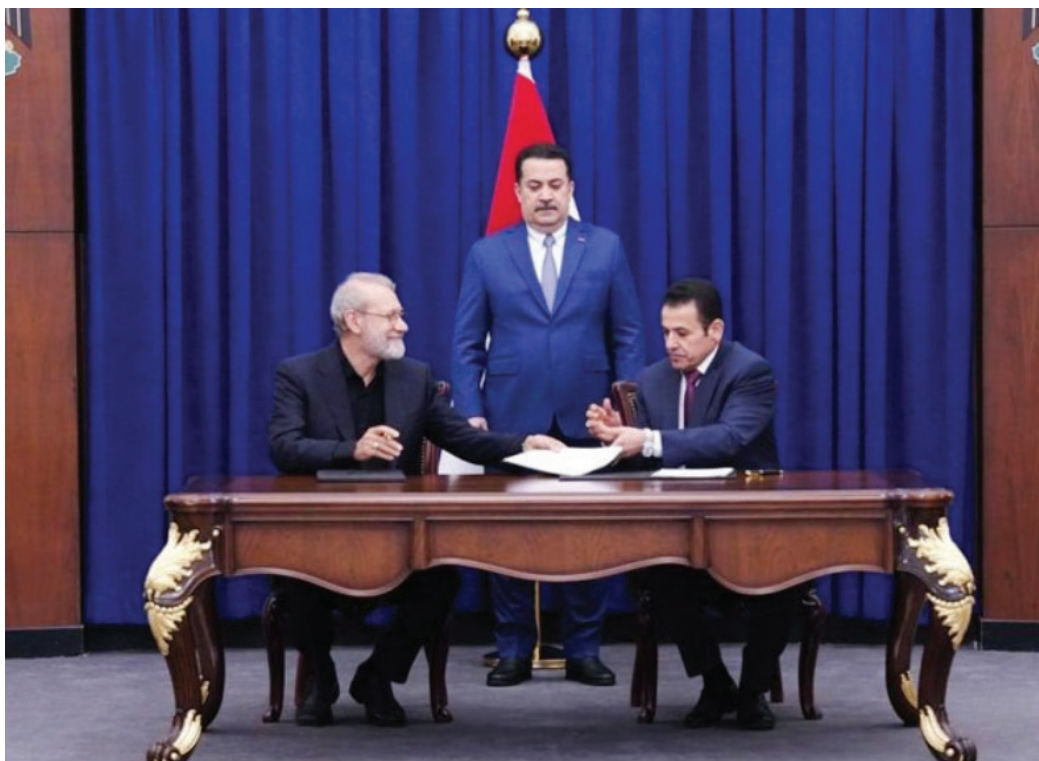
A city of mystics and legends

Legend has it that Damghan's name is rooted in the ancient Persian word ‘Moghan’, referring to practitioners of mystical arts such as astrology, alchemy, and other esoteric sciences. Originally known as ‘Dah Moghan’, the name gradually evolved into its present form, Damghan. ▶ Page 6

Larjani signs new security agreement in Iraq before heading to Lebanon

TEHRAN – In his first major trip since being appointed Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), Ali Larjani met with top officials in Iraq on Monday to address pressing bilateral and regional security issues. The next stop on the seasoned statesman's itinerary is Lebanon.

Larjani was welcomed by Iraqi National Security Advisor Qasim al-Araji upon his arrival in the Baghdad airport. He visited the martyrdom site of General Qassem Soleimani, a revered Iranian commander assassinated by a U.S. drone attack in 2020, before participating in high-level discussions with Iraqi officials. ▶ Page 2



TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Iran's economic diplomacy in post-war period

Dr. Davoud Manzoor, former head of the Planning and Budget Organization analyzes Iran's economic diplomacy in the post-war period with the Jam-e-Jam newspaper. He said: In light of the ongoing military threats from the United States and Israel and after the recent direct attack on Iran's nuclear facilities, the need to adopt policies beyond a military response to create deterrence has increased sharply. One of the key tools in this regard is economic diplomacy, a tool that, if used intelligently and purposefully, can increase the costs of military action against Iran for the aggressors and their regional allies and create a structural barrier to repeating such attacks. Strengthening Iran's role in regional transit and energy corridors is one of Tehran's strategic policies in confronting the U.S.-Israeli hybrid war. Even under sanctions, Iran enjoys a privileged geographical opportunity in the transit of goods, energy, electricity, and transportation services. The starting point of economic diplomacy under sanctions is strengthening domestic foundations. Without exchange rate stability, inflation control, and reduced risks in the banking and legal systems, no foreign economic agreement will last.

Hamshahri: Setting new frameworks for Tehran-IAEA cooperation

In a note, Hamshahri discussed the visit of the deputy director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to Iran after military strikes on Iran's nuclear sites by Israel and the United States during the 12-day war in June. The paper said: What is important about the deputy director general's visit to Iran is to set new frameworks for a new round of cooperation between Tehran and the Agency. However, as Araghchi emphasized, visiting any nuclear facility will not be on the agenda until new frameworks for cooperation are determined. The quality of cooperation between Tehran and the IAEA prior to the 12-day war proved detrimental to Iran in terms of security, especially as the release of the "unrealistic" report about Iran's nuclear program by the IAEA paved the way for the Zionist regime aggression against Iran. This issue got more complicated as the Agency was silent about the Zionist regime's attack on Iran's nuclear sites (which are banned under the Vienna conventions). Such an approach prompted the Iranian parliament to take an important step to restore Iran's legal rights, approving a legislation that set certain conditions for cooperation with the Agency. Thereby, the visit by Grossi's deputy to Tehran falls within this legislation which sets a new framework for cooperation.

Iran and China to preserve their 'robust' relations: Iran foreign ministry

From page 1 ► He emphasized that Iran's relationship with China is "robust," and both countries make decisions based on their "assessment of interests."

Baqaei's remarks countered the Trump administration's unilateral and hostile sanctions against Iran, including the June sanctions targeting what Washington claimed was a 50-entity network facilitating Iranian oil exports to China.

The measures, which the U.S. Treasury claimed are the largest enforcement package since 2018, aimed to choke Iran's oil exports, with U.S. officials pressuring Beijing to halt purchases in their bilateral trade talks in Stockholm.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent grudgingly acknowledged China's uncompromising position and pointed to Washington's possible punitive measures for defying U.S. sanctions, noting that the Chinese "take their sovereignty very seriously" and would rather pay tariffs than comply.

China's Foreign Ministry has rejected Wash-

Sazandegi: Caucasian peace with American signature

Sazandegi wrote about the signing of peace deal in the White House between Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan according to which the two sides reached an agreement on the Zangezur Corridor a mediation by the United States: The Islamic Republic of Iran has always opposed any geopolitical change in its northern borders, especially the creation of the Zangezur Corridor. Tehran believes that this route could upset the regional balance of power and even endanger Iran's transit routes to Europe. For this reason, although the Iranian Foreign Ministry welcomed the "finalization of the text of the peace agreement" and evaluated it as an "important step for a lasting peace," at the same time it warned that any foreign intervention, especially in the vicinity of the joint borders, could threaten security and stability. Some experts and observers consider an active presence of the United States in the corridor project will help increase the influence of Washington and its allies in the South Caucasus; an issue that, in addition to limiting the role of Iran in terms of transit, also conflicts with the interests of Russia and China. Such a change could be part of the U.S.'s grand strategy to reduce the influence of Tehran and Moscow on Eurasia communication routes.

Iran: First suspend confrontation, second exit from blacklist

In an interview with Hadi Khani, head of the Financial Intelligence Center (FIC) at the Iranian Ministry of Economy, the Iran newspaper discussed the agenda of negotiations with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). He said: Six years after Iran's entanglement with the FATF, it now appears that new developments are underway. The Financial Action Task Force has officially invited the head of Iran's Financial Intelligence Center for in-person negotiations, aiming to take steps toward normalizing the Iran case. It seems that a large part of the new space for dialogue with international institutions is due to the ratification of the so-called "Palermo" convention, which had remained in the midst of Iran's political and legal conflicts for years. We have a joint action plan with the FATF. We must implement this in full. Implementing this plan is certainly a time-consuming process. But what is certain is the suspension of confrontational measures. Exiting the blacklist is the second priority. The first priority is confrontational measures, which must be suspended. The FATF's condition for suspension is ratification of the Palermo and CFT conventions. This decision-making requires follow-up and lobbying, and networking needs to be done. But for now, the Palermo Convention has been ratified, and we hope to improve our interaction space with the FATF.

ington's coercion. Its spokesperson has said China "firmly opposes long-arm jurisdiction and unilateral sanctions," adding that Beijing does not agree with "resolving issues with sanctions, still less unilateral sanctions that lack the basis of international law."

Additionally, during talks with his Iranian counterpart, Chinese FM Wang Yi reiterated opposition to the "abuse of force and illegal unilateral sanctions."

Legal pursuit of attacks against nuclear facilities

Baqaei also lambasted Washington's justification of its strikes on Iranian civilian nuclear sites on June 22 as "preventing war" as "preposterous and unjustifiable."

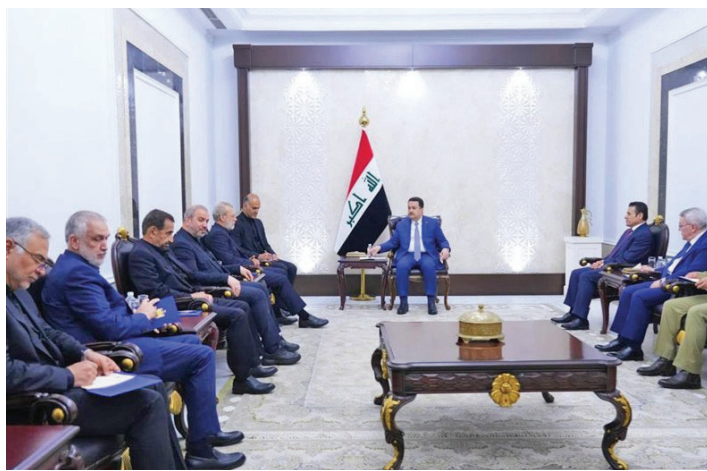
He reiterated that the attacks occurred mid-negotiations: "Two days before the sixth round of nuclear talks, the U.S. sent its proxy [the Israeli regime] to wage war on Iran and joined this blatant military aggression itself."

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](#))

Larijani signs new security agreement in Iraq before heading to Lebanon

From page 1 ► Larijani's meetings with Iraqi Parliament Speaker Mahmoud Al Mashhadani and President Abdul Latif Rashid were followed by a separate discussion with the country's most senior political official, Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani

The Iranian official told al-Sudani that Iran is thankful for Baghdad "balance" in foreign policy, which has brought about security and stability not only for Iraq but also other countries in the region. "The people of Iraq are brave and generous, and the road to Karbala today is a testament to the generosity of the Iraqis." Larijani was referring to the millions of Iranian pilgrims who have travelled to Iraq in recent days to commemorate Arbāeen near the tomb of Imam Hossein (AS). The annual Arbāeen pilgrimage, the largest in the world, has served as a crucial cultural and religious link connecting the Iranian and



Iran's top security official Ali Larijani met with Prime Minister Mohammad al-Sudani during a short visit to Iraq on August 11, 2025.

Iraqi people for centuries.

According to reports in Iraqi media, al-Sudani stated that Iraq attaches great importance to its ties with Iran and will use various means to strengthen bilateral cooperation at different levels. Reports suggest that Larijani, who is also an advisor to the

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, delivered a message from Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to al-Sudani before sitting down with al-Araji to sign a joint security agreement.

The specific details of this security agreement have not yet

Armenia will make no major decision without consulting Iran: PM Pashinyan

From page 1 ► "Iran's emphasis on preserving Armenia's sovereignty and territorial integrity is highly valuable to us," Pashinyan said. "We will not sign any agreement unless we are fully assured that the interests, considerations, and sensitivities of our friend and neighbor, Iran, are respected."

President Pezeshkian described relations with Armenia as "strategic" and said bilateral interactions have consistently been constructive, rooted in good neighborliness, and based on mutual respect for territorial integrity. "Principled and rational approaches have always provided a solid foundation for strengthening the friendly and strategic bonds between Tehran and Yerevan," he said, adding that any attempt to undermine these "historic and deep-rooted" ties would be

firmly rejected by both sides.

Pezeshkian reiterated that Iran, as an "anchor of peace, stability, and security in the region," welcomes any agreement that strengthens peace, particularly among neighboring countries.

Addressing the planned Caucasus transit corridor project involving U.S. participation, the Iranian president stressed the need to protect Armenia's sovereignty and prevent the involvement of any military or security forces in the project's execution. He cautioned against possible U.S. moves which, under the guise of investment and peacebuilding, could pursue "hegemonic objectives" in the region. "We must ensure that this route will truly serve as a path for peace and development, not a tool for advancing the expansionist aims of for-



eign powers," he said.

Pezeshkian also emphasized the importance of maintaining strong neighborly relations among Iran, Azerbaijan, and Armenia, saying their continuation depends on vigilance, coordination, solidarity, and the exclusion of foreign interference. "The Islamic Republic of Iran has always prioritized common interests in regional relations—especially with its

neighbors—and is confident that this perspective will also be considered a fundamental priority by the countries of the region," he added.

Under a deal signed between Azerbaijan and Armenia in Washington on Friday, Armenia granted the U.S. exclusive rights to develop a corridor in its southern Syunik province—which borders Iran—linking Azerbaijan to Nakhchivan.

Iran's legal standing in the Zangezur question

From page 1 ► Aliyev put forth two aggressive claims concerning Armenia's internationally recognized territory: first, labeling Armenia's Syunik Province as "Western Azerbaijan," and second, demanding the "return" of approximately 500,000 ethnic Azerbaijanis who allegedly lived in the Armenian SSR before the Soviet Union dissolved.

Initially, Aliyev pursued a strategy focused on integrating Syunik into Azerbaijan. However, this approach was ultimately dropped due to strong opposition from Iran and a lack of support from Russia and the United States. The recent agreement's inclusion of Article 5, which references the 1991 Alma-Ata Declaration and affirms respect for states' territorial integrity and the inviolability of international borders, represents a significant shift. The Alma-Ata Declaration established the basis for recognizing the borders of post-Soviet states based on the former administrative divisions of the USSR.

From an international legal standpoint, this reference indicates a mutual acceptance by Armenia and Azerbaijan of the existing border demarcations, effectively ending further territorial claims. On the surface, this seems beneficial for Iran, as it could prevent border instability along its northwestern border and lessen the chance of a broader regional conflict. However, a more in-depth legal and strategic analysis reveals potential complications, particularly during the phases of boundary delimitation on maps and subsequent demarcation on the ground. Certain aspects of the agreement, therefore, demand close examination, given the potential risks they could pose to Iran's access and security interests.

A central question surrounding the Zangezur issue involves the legitimacy and legal grounds for Iran's involvement, or its potential objections, as a third party in the negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The core issue is this: when two countries are negotiating matters that affect Iran's "vital in-

terests," does international law allow Tehran to intervene, voice its concerns, or object to the outcome? Moreover, if Armenia's current government, under Prime Minister Pashinyan, were to concede any part of its sovereignty, or be pressured into a treaty that transfers territory, does Iran have the legal means to challenge or influence such agreements? And how might these legal tools be interpreted in light of the changing geopolitical landscape of the region?

International law generally recognizes that when a third state's vital interests or established rights could be impacted by a bilateral treaty or negotiation, that state has the right to express its views, raise objections, or engage in limited intervention. This right is derived from established legal principles, although the specific scope and terminology might vary depending on the specifics of each case.

Principle of Non-Binding Effect on Third States

Intl. law acknowledges that a country can voice objection if its key interests are threatened by a treaty between two other countries

The fundamental principle is that no international agreement can impose rights or obligations on a third state without its explicit agreement. This is enshrined in Article 34 of the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties.

This principle, originating in Roman law, prevents contracts from binding or benefiting parties that were not involved, summarized by the maxim: *res inter alios acta aliis nec nocet nec prodest* ("a matter transacted between others does not harm or benefit a third party").

The right of objection by a third state

When two states negotiate on issues that directly affect the territorial integrity, security, or other vital interests of a third state, that third state has the right to formally object and insist that its concerns are addressed in any bilateral agreement. This right primarily stems from diplomatic practice, customary international law, and well-established legal doctrines. While not explicitly defined in treaty law, it has been consistently upheld by international courts and arbitration tribunals.

Legally, this right flows from the principle that treaties cannot bind third states without their consent and generally enables a third party to prevent the enforcement of a treaty, or specific provisions thereof, against its will. This right is usually exercised during treaty negotiations or the formation of customary international norms. Practically, it allows a third state—like Iran—to voice its opposition through diplomatic channels, formal protests, raising the issue in international organizations, or even pursuing legal action. If the implementation of the proposed Zangezur Corridor were to threaten Iran's northern border security, disrupt the Iran-Armenia-Georgia transit corridor, or alter the geopolitical balance in the South Caucasus, Iran could fully invoke this right to protect its interests.

Principle of the Indispensable Party

When resolving a dispute between two states necessarily involves determining the rights and interests of a third state, that third state must be included as a party to the proceedings; without its participation, the adjudication is deemed invalid. The increase in multilateral disputes and the growth of international courts and tribunals have strengthened this principle, which is reflected in the case law of the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](#))

Section 42: Where the youth speak with the martyrs

The Tehran Times special report from the resting place of Israel's war victims in Tehran

By Somayeh Abdollahi

TEHRAN – I am in the Behesht-e Zahra Cemetery, the largest burial ground in Tehran which is the resting place of generations. Established in 1963 (1342 in the Persian calendar) and named “Behesht-e Zahra” after consultations among the city's council of elders and merchants at the home of the late Seyyed Ahmad Khansari, this cemetery has since become a landmark in the capital's history.

It was here, in 1979, that the Founder of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini, delivered his first speech after returning to the homeland — a historic gathering marked by a massive, unprecedented welcome from the people.

For some years after its establishment, the cemetery did not attract much attention. But as Tehran expanded, it became the city's principal burial site. There are still smaller local cemeteries and shrines in different districts of Tehran, where social and economic factors influence burial choices. Yet Behesht-e Zahra remains the largest cemetery in Iran, home to the graves of people from every walk of life.

It is the morning of August 7. A cool breeze is blowing. I take an online taxi service to the site of my report. The driver happens to be an employee of the Behesht-e Zahra Organization, working as a driver for the funeral transport vehicles.

I ask him about the war days and how the martyrs and victims were brought here. He says that a few days after the attacks and the martyrdoms, burial operations began. He speaks about the “Martyrs' Resting Place” (Me'raj al-Shohada). His vehicle, however, was not used for transporting martyrs — but the term “Me'raj al-Shohada” still catches my attention.



The father of Martyr Hossein Taghi Kako at the gravesite of his son

In the administrative offices of Behesht-e Zahra, one of the managers tells me that about 250 martyrs from Tehran are buried in Section 42. The actual number of Tehran's martyrs is higher, but some were taken to their hometowns to be laid to rest there.

Section 42 is a square-shaped area next to the section for martyrs of the eight-year war with the Ba'athist regime of Iraq.

He explains that, to facilitate and speed up the burial process for martyrs, representatives from all relevant organizations were gathered into a single unit called the “War Headquarters.” This headquarters worked alongside the Burial Committee, the Ministry of Defense, the Martyrs Foundation, and the Civil Registry Organization, and maintained a dedicated morgue — all to honor and bid farewell to the martyrs. He adds that neither



the emptiness of Tehran during those days nor the shock of the missile strikes prevented the grand farewell ceremonies from taking place. Every effort by the organization and the martyrs' committee was directed toward ensuring the most dignified send-off possible.

It is about 8 a.m. A notable number of visitors have come to pay respects to the martyrs. A placard reads: This is Section 42; the same year in which Imam Khomeini described the infants in their cradles as the future soldiers of the struggle. It feels as if this “cradle” still raises children to become soldiers in defense and resistance.

The graves are white. Green and red flags flutter in the wind — the colors alongside white recalling the flag of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

After reciting the Fatiha over the graves and receiving warm thanks from the martyrs' mothers and families, I begin speaking with them and the other visitors.

The mother of Martyr Commander Javad Pour Rajabi, a disabled veteran of the IRGC's Aerospace Division, tells me: “When I bid farewell to my son, I said only one thing to God: ‘O God, accept this gift from us.’” Javad's sister recounts how her brother's body had gone missing, and how she dreamt of a sign showing where he would be found, and later, his remains were discovered in that very location.

Section 42 reflects the diversity of Iran's people — a blend of professions, backgrounds, and even religious beliefs. Among the gravestones are doctors, nurses, engineers, civil servants, drivers, and students, all victims of an imposed and unjust war waged by an aggressor that claimed it was “not at war with the people.”

From two-month-old Rayan, who lies in his mother's arms in eternal sleep, to father and son martyrs Reza and Amir Ali Amini, buried together in their final resting place — each grave tells a story. The section gradually fills with more visitors. Families and fellow citizens join in steadily. They offer condolences, pray, talk, and comfort one another. Each shows kindness in their own way — offering refreshments, serving sherbet and dates, speaking of the martyrs, or embracing the martyrs' families with tears and trembling voices. Here, the word “martyr” is a badge of honor.

Among the visitors, I see young women wearing a variety of styles, some even in non-religious attires. In the city, you might not guess they, too, would come to visit the

martyrs' graves. They walk respectfully, sit by the graves, and whisper quietly. This war, with all its tragedies, has confronted Iran's younger generation with profound realities, transforming their views on many things — including homeland, resistance, and, of course, martyrdom.

The father of Martyr Hossein Taghi Kako tells me: “My son wrote in his will many times that I should never allow anything other than ‘Martyr’ and ‘Soldier of the Leader’ to be engraved on his tombstone. He loved the Leader deeply and said no title could be greater for me than ‘martyr.’” His father speaks firmly and with pride.

The sound of elegies comes through the loudspeakers, filled with both passion and sorrow. I meet families of martyrs from the war with Saddam's regime. They understand more than anyone the pain felt for the martyrs of Israel's recent aggression, as well as the meaning of steadfastness, patience, and resistance.



The grave of Zohreh Rasouli and her 2-month-old son, Rayan Ghasemian

On the far side of Section 42, a hospitality stand is set up. I ask a young man serving juice which organization is in charge of it.

“In charge? No one,” he replies. “We've been here ourselves since the very first days of the burials. We were supposed to stay until the fortieth day, but so many people came to visit the martyrs that now it's been over fifty days and we're still here.”

He stirs the large pot of sherbet, pours me a glass, and adds: “We'll be here until after Arbæen.”

Before leaving, I visit the graves of several more martyrs. I tell their mothers that, although I came for work, I also came to express my gratitude. These mothers — standing tall, resilient, and proud — each respond with kindness and a smile, however tinged with sorrow.

Noufal, and Moamen Aliwa — was sheltering in a designated press tent at al-Shifa Hospital when the Israeli strike hit. All five were killed.

A sixth journalist, Mohammad al-Khaldi, was also killed in the same strike outside the hospital, Reuters reported, citing medical staff.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) says at least 186 journalists have been killed since the start of Israel's military campaign in Gaza on October 7, 2023. Authorities in Gaza put the toll far higher, reporting that nearly 270 journalists and media workers have been killed during the conflict.

He also criticized the Israeli cabinet's recent approval of a plan to occupy Gaza under the pretext of “liberating” it from Hamas.

“It was clear from the outset that the Israeli regime intends to seize Gaza and the West Bank, erasing Palestine as a country, an identity, and a people,” Baghaei said.

He called on the international community to take “credible and urgent” steps to halt Israel's “genocidal measures” in Gaza and to prosecute those responsible.

The Al Jazeera team — journalists Anas al-Sharif and Mohammed Qreiqeh, along with cameramen Ibrahim Zaher, Mohammed

and targeting” of Palestinians, including through the Israeli-American “food traps.”

“Strong condemnation is the bare minimum for any decent human being,” he added, “but the world must act immediately to stop this harrowing genocide and hold the criminals accountable. Indifference and inaction are complicity in Israel's crimes.”

Speaking later at his weekly press briefing, Baghaei reiterated Iran's “strongest possible” condemnation of the attack.

“Attacking journalists and media outlets is never permissible under any circumstances,” he said. “In wartime, such an attack is unequivocally considered a war crime.”

Sepahan to face Al Duhail for 26/2025 ACL Elite coveted place

TEHRAN — Chengdu Rongchen of China, Bangkok United of Thailand, Al Duhail SC of Qatar, and Sepahan of Iran are all eager to secure a coveted place in AFC Champions League Elite 2025/26.

This will be Al Duhail's first competitive match of the season, with Qatar's domestic league only kicking off this week, setting up a testing period where form and fitness will be under scrutiny.

A storied club seeking a 15th appearance on the continental stage, Sepahan remain among Asia's most consistent franchises. The Iranian side, 2007 AFC Champions League finalists, face the challenge of rust as the 2025-26 Persian Gulf Pro League begins soon, potentially impacting readiness for crucial qualifiers.

The decisive match, which could unlock one of the two remaining Elite spots, is set to be staged at the Khalifa International Stadium in Al Rayyan. The venue is renowned for hosting marquee continental fixtures, and its capacity to handle high-stakes football will add to the drama as teams vie for a place in the 2025/26 tournament.

With several clubs carrying momentum from their domestic seasons—though some faces, like Sepahan, may have to overcome rust—the battle for the remaining two spots promises to be intense. Tactical considerations, squad depth, and fitness will all play pivotal roles as teams navigate the pressures of an early-season qualifier.

Abdullah Jamali to officiate Al Duhail v Sepahan

TEHRAN – Kuwaiti referee Abdullah Jamali has been chosen to officiate the match between Al Duhail and Sepahan.

Jamali,33, is a Kuwaiti football referee who has been involved in domestic Kuwaiti league matches and regional competitions.

The match will take place on Sunday at the AFC Champions League Elite play-off in Doha's Khalifa International Stadium.

Jamali will be assisted by his compatriot Soud Al Rashidi and Saoud Al Shemali.

Leeds United lead Fulham in race to bring Taremi

TEHRAN - Leeds United are reportedly ahead of Fulham in the race to bring Inter Milan striker Mehdi Taremi to the Premier League.

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.

There have been plenty of clubs to show an interest in Taremi's signature.

The likes of Botafogo and Flamengo have tried to bring the 33-year-old to Brazil. However, his priority has been to stay in Europe.

Meanwhile, Turkish giants Bestikas have also been eyeing up a move for Taremi.

In the meantime, however, the interest in Taremi's signature is also arriving from the Premier League.

SportMediaset name two teams in particular as being keen to sign the Iranian international. Leeds United and Fulham.

And according to Mediaset, it is newly-promoted Leeds who have the edge.

Daniel Farke's side have emerged with a strong interest in Taremi's signature. Therefore, they are in the driver's seat to complete a deal for the Iranian.

Apollon eye Alireza Jahanbakhsh

TEHRAN - Apollon are moving towards a major move, with the Limassol team being in contact with Iranian winger Alireza Jahanbakhsh.

The 31-year-old player, who left sc Heerenveen after his contract expired, is reportedly a candidate to join the Cypriot team.

Apollon based in Limassol, have been founded in 1954.

Apollon currently play in the Cypriot First Division and have won the championship title four times, the cup nine times and the Super Cup four times.

Iran secure direct 2025 FIBA Asia Cup Quarter-Finals berth

TEHRAN – Iran completed a clean sweep of Group B at the FIBA Asia Cup 2025, shaking off a slow first half to overwhelm Syria 82-43 on Sunday at King Abdullah Sports City and advance directly to the Quarter-Finals.

The three-time Asia Cup champions improved to 3-0, setting up a last-eight meeting with the winners of the Chinese Taipei vs. Jordan clash in the Qualification to Quarter-Finals. Syria, who finished 0-3, bow out of the tournament after another battling but ultimately frustrating night.

Sina Vahedi was once again the steady hand for Iran, producing 19 points, three rebounds, three assists and two steals. But it was Matin Aghajanzpour who delivered the knockout blows, erupting for a game-high 24 points on six triples, including a flurry in the third quarter that broke the contest open.

“Every game is tough,” Aghajanzpour said post-game. “Syria is a very good team. In the first half we could not play well, but in the second half we heard our coaches, and we did do our job.”

For Syria, the loss marked the end of their Asia Cup run, though their first-half performance showed the grit and organization that troubled Iran for long stretches. Deshields' scoring and defensive activity kept them competitive until the floodgates opened.

Iran, meanwhile, left fans with another reminder of why they are among the region's elite, capable of weathering adversity, flipping a game in minutes, and riding multiple offensive weapons to decisive wins. With Vahedi in control and Aghajanzpour firing from deep, they now turn their attention to the Final Phase with momentum firmly on their side, fiba.basketball reported.

“I think we have a game with the winners of Chinese Taipei and Jordan,” Aghajanzpour noted. “Both of them are tough teams, but we will just go for the win.”

Iran's 2025 Paralympic Day slogan unveiled

TEHRAN - Iran's 2025 Paralympic Day's slogan was unveiled in the session took place in the Iran Paralympic Committee's headquarters on Monday.

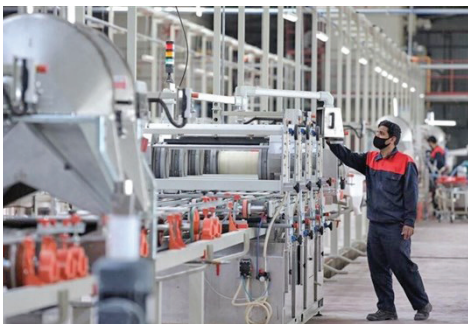
The slogan for this year was designated as “National Paralympic Day; A Celebration of Big Dreams.”

Iran celebrates its National Paralympic Day annually on October 16th. This day is dedicated to raising awareness and promoting the Paralympic Movement in Iran, aiming to foster inclusion and change perceptions about people with disabilities.

The day is designed to introduce the Paralympic Movement to the Iranian public, encourage participation in para-sports, and promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in society.

National Paralympic Day was first celebrated in Iran in 2003 and was later officially included in the Iranian calendar in 2016 by a Presidential order.

Business environment index shows improvement in spring: ICCIMA



TEHRAN – Iran's national business environment index improved marginally in the spring to 5.95 from 6.01 in the winter, on a scale where 10 is the worst score, the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture's (ICCIMA) research center said.

The quarterly survey found that the five most problematic factors for businesses were: unpredictability and volatility of raw material and product prices; difficulty securing bank financing; instability in policies, laws and regulations; unfair tax auditing and collection procedures; and the production and distribution of substandard or counterfeit goods in the market.

Based on the Shane general entrepreneurship model, which weighs different factors in

calculating the score, Iran's spring business environment index stood at 6.13, slightly better than the winter figure of 6.16.

The average score for the economic environment – which covers macroeconomic conditions, finance, geography and production structure – was 6.64, down from 6.68 in winter. The institutional environment – which includes political, educational, cultural, technological, legal and governmental factors – averaged 5.72, compared with 5.74 in the previous quarter.

Among these, the legal and regulatory environment was rated the most favorable with a score of 5.36, while the financial environment was assessed as the least favorable at 8.22. The ICCIMA said the Shane model offers a more precise measure than the national index due to its weighted approach to different components.

The report comes as Iranian businesses continue to navigate high inflation, currency volatility and financing constraints, while policymakers seek to foster entrepreneurship and attract investment. Analysts say that despite the marginal improvement, sustained reforms are needed to address chronic bottlenecks in access to finance, regulatory stability and tax fairness

Foreign investors in Iran's stock market rise to 5,100

TEHRAN – The number of active foreign investors in Iran's stock market reached 5,100 by the end of the fourth Iranian calendar month of Tir (July 22), up from 4,839 a year earlier, data from the Research, Development and Islamic Studies Department of the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) showed.

The total value of foreign investors' portfolios in the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE) and Iran's over-the-counter market, the Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), exceeded 180 trillion rials (\$360 million) in Tir, compared with 95.13 trillion rials (\$190 million) in the same month last year – marking a 91 percent increase year-on-year.

Of the total, individual foreign investors held portfolios worth 14.81 trillion rials (\$29.6 million), while corporate foreign investors accounted for 167.02 trillion rials (\$334 million).

The figures for the mentioned month showed 3,391 individual foreign shareholders and 1,709 corporate investor accounts active in the Iranian equity market.

The SEO data comes amid broader efforts by Iranian market regulators to attract more overseas capital, including easing certain trading restrictions and expanding access to market data for international participants.

While foreign investment in the market remains small compared with domestic participation, the sharp annual increase reflects both the entry of new investors and valuation gains in listed companies over the past year.

The head of the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) has said that the capital market's share in the national financing system is going to increase to 50 percent over the next five years, positioning it as a key engine of economic activity, employment, and industrial growth.

11 wastewater treatment plants to be inaugurated during Government Week



TEHRAN – Iranian Energy Ministry will put 11 wastewater treatment plants into operation during Government Week (August 24–30), the head of the National Water and Wastewater Engineering Company said, as

part of efforts to expand industrial use of reclaimed water.

Hashem Amini said that so far, 320 million cubic meters of treated wastewater have been allocated to industries under 78 contracts.

“One of the key policies of the Energy Ministry is to maximize the use of reclaimed water as a substitute for raw water, in line with legal requirements that set clear obligations in this regard,” he said.

Currently, 365 cities are covered by wastewater services, with the access rate at 65 percent. The figure is expected to reach 70 percent by the end of Iran's Seventh Development Plan.

Iran's iron, steel exports up 13% in 4 months on year

From Page 1 ► Iran, West Asia's top steel producer, has been ramping up overseas sales despite Western sanctions that complicate shipping and payments.

The country's steel exports have found steady markets in Asia, including China and South-east Asia, as well as in Africa, where demand for construction materials is rising.

Last year, Iran exported more than 10 million tons of steel products, worth over \$6.0 billion, despite logistical and financial constraints.

Industry officials say maintaining export momentum requires balancing foreign sales with domestic supply, especially as infra-

structure and housing projects inside Iran consume significant volumes.

The government has in recent years encouraged downstream steel production and value-added exports, seeking to move away from reliance on raw iron ore sales. However, the sharp increase in concentrate exports in early 2025 has sparked debate within the industry over whether raw material shipments should be curbed to support domestic manufacturing capacity.

ISPA has called for “a balanced export policy” that safeguards domestic needs while allowing Iranian producers to compete in global markets. The association also urged continued investment



in modernizing plants, boosting energy efficiency, and expanding port facilities to handle larger cargo volumes.

With global steel demand projected to recover in 2025 follow-

ing a slowdown in the construction and manufacturing sectors, Iranian producers are aiming to consolidate their foothold in key foreign markets while navigating geopolitical and economic headwinds.

Tehran, Nairobi to hold 7th joint economic committee meeting

TEHRAN – Iran and Kenya will hold their seventh Joint Economic Committee meeting from Tuesday for two days in the Kenyan capital, chaired on the Iranian side by the agriculture minister.

The last committee was held more than a decade ago, in 2014, in Tehran.

Kenya, a developing African nation, is widely regarded as a “gateway to the continent.”

According to customs data, Iran-Kenya non-oil trade reached more than \$50 million last year.

Iran's total non-oil trade with Africa in 2024 stood at about \$1.0 billion – roughly one-thousandth of the continent's total trade for the year.

At the third Africa Economic Summit in Tehran, Iran set a target of raising trade with Africa to \$10 billion.

As part of the upcoming committee, technical meetings will be held on Tuesday, followed by a ministerial session on Wednesday where the agriculture ministers of both countries will sign cooperation documents.

As previously announced by a senior official at Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), Iran's exports to African countries rose 85 percent in the first quarter of the current Iranian year (March 21– June 21) compared to the same period last year, while its trade surplus with the continent surged by 113 percent.

Mohammad Reza Safari, acting head of TPO's Africa office, said the number of African countries importing Iranian goods increased from 27 to 32 in the three-month period.

Safari attributed the sharp increase in trade to the recent Iran-Africa Economic Cooperation Summit, adding that further implementation of decisions made by the Africa Task Force could accelerate the trend.

He also called for a shift in Iran's trade strategy toward Africa, advocating for the export of high value-added final products and offshore production investment. He said this approach—mirroring China's long-term investment model on the continent—would help Iran adapt to recent global shifts including rising energy and transport costs, reduced financial support, and new U.S. tariffs on African exports.

Back in May, the secretary of the Iran-Africa Economic Cooperation Summit said commercial and investment contracts were signed between African traders and Iranian business leaders in four key sectors—mining, agriculture, petrochemicals, and medical equipment—at the conclusion of the third Iran-Africa summit.

Seyed Mehdi Hosseini said African delegations left Iran with substantial results, noting that foreign businesspeople and Ira-

nian economic operators both benefited from the international gathering.

According to Hosseini, the third summit was distinguished by its focus on specialized, results-oriented activity, which led to greater coordination, satisfaction among participants, and significant achievements.

He noted that the summit witnessed several key developments, including the signing of commercial and investment agreements in the mining, agriculture, petrochemical, and medical equipment sectors.

Hosseini explained that unlike the two previous summits, which were general in nature, this edition was structured around four economic sectors: oil and petrochemicals, mining, agriculture, and medical equipment. Accordingly, the invited foreign delegations had relevant experience and expertise. This specialization, he said, helped ensure the summit remained outcome-driven.

He added that these four sectors were chosen due to their interrelated nature, with complementary operations and aligned objectives. The structure of the summit helped produce substantial results, the details of which would be disclosed in the coming days.

Hosseini said a major feature of this year's event was the shift away from centralization in Tehran. After initial visits and consultations in the capital, delegations were divided into 15 groups based on their sectoral focus and flown to Isfahan for field visits.

This targeted approach allowed each group to visit companies and institutions aligned with their interests. African delegates specializing in mining, for instance, met directly with Iranian miners and entered negotiations or agreements.

According to the summit secretariat, a major memorandum of understanding was signed between an African trading company and an Iranian firm in the pharmaceutical and medical equipment sector, described as significant in scope.

On May 2, coinciding with the final day of Iran Expo 2025, several African delegates departed Iran after concluding purchase agreements and visiting pavilions representing the four main sectors.

Long-term impact and increased engagement expected

Hosseini emphasized that the positive experience of the attendees would turn them into “ambassadors” for Iran's capabilities, increasing the likelihood of higher foreign participation in future events. He highlighted that 20 percent of the summit's participants extended their stay to explore more economic opportunities in Iran.

Describing the summit's outcomes as positive, Hosseini said approximately 600 African traders, officials, and economic experts participated, underscoring Iran's strong capacity across various economic and commercial sectors.

He stressed that while this year's summit focused on a few sectors, showcasing Iran's full capabilities would likely attract more foreign participation in the future.

More than 1,000 Iranian companies displayed their achievements in petrochemicals, mining, agriculture, and medical equipment during the summit. Choosing Isfahan as a co-host reflected the broader geographical potential of the country, he said.

Follow-up on economic agreements begins

Hosseini announced that the summit's secretariat has already begun pursuing the implementation of the agreements signed during the event.

In a separate interview with state media, Hosseini said the parallel hosting of Iran Expo 2025 allowed African business delegations to explore additional trade opportunities, further strengthening the summit's outcomes.

He underscored that consistent follow-up is essential for turning summit agreements into tangible results. The secretariat, operational since February, is now tasked with ensuring the implementation of signed memorandums and deals.

Hosseini concluded by stressing the need for trade balance between Iran and Africa. While the current relationship is one-sided, he said sectors such as petrochemicals and mining—where Iran is a major exporter and Africa has mineral wealth—could help bring trade flows into equilibrium.

Trade between Iran and Africa is experiencing significant growth, with both sides actively pursuing new opportunities in key sectors such as energy, industry, and agriculture. The Iranian government has emphasized its commitment to enhancing commercial relations with African nations, leveraging strategic initiatives aimed at boosting trade volumes.

Speaking at the opening of the Third Iran-Africa Cooperation Summit in Tehran, Iran's Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade Mohammad Atabak highlighted the vast potential for cooperation between Iran and Africa and announced plans to increase trade value by tenfold, aiming for a target of \$10 billion.

Atabak emphasized that the friendship between Iran and Africa is a long-standing cultural and historical bond that has now evolved into a valuable asset.

While reflecting on the

War on witnesses: Israel’s deadly campaign to silence Gaza’s journalists

Global journalists condemn Israel’s killing of Gaza reporters in Tehran Times interviews

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN — Since launching its war on Gaza in October 2023, Israel has pursued a systematic campaign to silence the media and obscure the reality of what many observers call a genocide in the besieged enclave.

The latest escalation came late Sunday, when an Israeli strike targeted a journalists' tent outside al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, killing five members of the Qatar-based Al Jazeera Media Network: correspondents Anas al-Sharif and Mohammed Qreiqeh, cameramen Ibrahim Zaher and Moamen Aliwa, and their assistant Mohammed Noufal.

Authorities in Gaza report that nearly 270 journalists and media workers have been killed since October 2023 — making this the deadliest conflict for media workers ever recorded. Journalists in Gaza, especially in the north, have served as the eyes and ears of the world, documenting starvation, mass displacement, and the destruction of civilian life.

The killings come amid Israel's preparations to expand its military operations, seize Gaza City, and displace nearly a million Palestinians. By targeting reporters, many journalists say, Israel is attempting to erase evidence of its actions and prevent coverage of fresh atrocities.

Global outrage from the press community

Journalist from across the globe have condemned Israel's killing of the five journalists in Gaza in interviews with the Tehran times. From Bulgaria, Dr. Tania Glouhtcheva, Head of the International Department at DUMA newspaper, condemned the killings as "shameful" and accused Israel of fabricating claims that the journalists were "disguised terrorists" to justify their deaths. "Freedom of speech is becoming a myth," she said, calling it part of Israel's "thirst for more and more blood."



Slovak journalist and activist Lucia Hubinska described Gaza as "a war zone almost entirely devoid of international press" due to Israel's systematic exclusion. "By 2025, the average stands at 13 journalists killed every month — making this the deadliest conflict for media workers ever recorded," she said. "It is genocide — a deliberate erasure of a people, their history, and even those who risk everything to bear witness."

Mojca Pisek-Mika from Slovenia called the killings "a blatant attack on press freedom and a desperate effort to silence the truth about [Israel's] genocidal campaign."

From Indonesia, Mario Pascal stressed that "the killing of five journalists in Gaza is a serious violation of international law... Such actions weaken press freedom and prevent the public from getting accurate information."

Malaysian editor Joseph Khor warned that killing even one journalist "is already far too many,"



calling such acts "tantamount to committing a war crime."

Brazilian reporter Guilherme Oblasser Paladino called the killings "another explicit example of the genocidal mindset of the current Israeli government" and urged global solidarity with Palestinians.

Argentinian journalist Silvina Pachelo said: "Gaza is not a 'humanitarian crisis.' It's genocide... Silence and indifference are accomplices."

Russian journalist Maxim Natchinov said such attacks "cannot be justified by any military logic," while Kazakhstan's Ilyas Mashanlo warned the deaths were "a tragedy not just for their families but for freedom of speech worldwide."

From Pakistan, Haseeb ur Rehman called the strike "a stark and tragic illustration" of Israel's violations of international humanitarian law, urging the

international community to "hold Israel accountable" and to make journalist protection "an absolute priority."

Jordanian journalist Maen Salam Albelbese described the killings as "a message of criminal terrorism to the entire world" and evidence of "the collapse of the system of international values and laws."

Tunisian journalist Karim Wannes linked the attack to a broader strategy, saying: "Like any criminal colonial regime, the Zionist enemy cannot tolerate the continued intensive media coverage of its crimes... the assassination of martyred journalists is both expected and logical in the context of this horrific genocidal war."

Bangladeshi reporter Md Shari-ful Islam called the killings "an attack on truth itself," while Mongolian journalist Isu Tuvshin reflected on the irony of "a nation born from [the trauma of the Holocaust] inflicting mass destruction on Gaza."

From Trinidad and Tobago, Danielle John stressed that "press freedom and the protection of journalists... are vital to democracy and human rights." Saint Lucian journalist Casey Jerson condemned the attacks as violations of human rights and international law "that suppress the stories of suffering Palestinians."

Jamaican senior journalist Dwayne Anderson summed up the grief of the profession: "At a time like this, journalists are needed more than ever to tell the world the truth of the atrocities. Instead, they are being cut down. It's painful."

The killing of Gaza's journalists is not an accident of war — it is part of a calculated effort to eliminate witnesses and control the narrative. For many of the world's journalists, the attack on their colleagues is not just an assault on the press, but on truth itself.

The life and death of Anas Al Sharif: Gaza’s relentless voice



By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN- Amidst Gaza's devastated streets, where buildings lay in ruins and daily life was stripped to its barest form, Anas Sharif more than a reporter — was a chronicler of a crisis.

At the very young age of 28, Al Jazeera correspondent Sharif lucidly and urgently documented the human face of Israel's ongoing assault. His reports transcended the simple headlines; they showed life under siege from an unfiltered perspective.

Through his very lens, the audience was faced with images not only of blasts and rubble but also of quiet calamities such as empty stares from starving children, hurried funerals in hospital courtyards, and the unyielding will of a people who refused to disappear.

In a war where truth is often the first casualty, Al Sharif, through his courage, turned journalism into an act of defiance, transforming impersonal statistics into moving human stories that argued against the indifference of the world.

Reporting from the heart of danger

The importance of Sharif derived from his unwavering presence in the middle of danger. Born in the Jabalia refugee camp, he was a child of Gaza's ongoing misfortune.

He was a child of the Second Intifada, a teenager under blockade, and an adult repeatedly bombarded with war.

Reporting from northern Gaza which is closed to foreign reporters, he compiled detailed first-hand reports that filled an important information gap.

“Sharif’s final words, written like a will, left the world with a charge: ‘Do not forget Gaza.. And do not forget me.’ His legacy lies not in the label of martyrdom, but in the silence left behind—a stark reminder that erasing witnesses does not erase the truth.”

His journalism documented vast rounding ups on civilians, strikes on medical facilities including Al-Shifa Hospital and starving civilians, patterns that legal experts are starting to describe as genocidal.

As opposed to faraway satellite visions or measured official language, Sharif's live reports told the story on the ground, involving the smoke and mayhem of airstrikes, the yells of the wounded, and the fortitude of everyday Palestinians.

His voice pushed against the state narrative of Israel, witness to the claims of "precision strikes" and clear evidence of unmitigated devastation.

Amidst an era of sanitized news and algorithmically-controlled experience, his work cut through the noise, ignited global outrage and solidarity, motivated aid efforts, and pressed the calls for accountability.

In certain terms, Sharif was doing more than reporting on events.

He was governing power, forcing the world to witness both the facts of the violence and the consequences of silence.

Marked as a target

Sharif's impact also made him a priority target for Israel. On August 10, 2025, an Israeli airstrike destroyed a tent designated for journalists near Al-Shifa Hospital, killing Sharif along with four Al Jazeera colleagues—Mohammed Qreiqeh, Ibrahim Zaher, Mohamed Noufal, and another staff member.

Within hours, the Israeli military claimed Sharif was leading a Hamas media unit and coordinating attacks—allegations Al Jazeera rejected as unfounded and unsupported by evidence.

This was not an isolated incident but part of a broader strategy: systematically targeting journalists to disrupt the documentation of potential war crimes.

Since October 2023, more than 178 Palestinian media workers have been killed, making this the deadliest period for journalists ever recorded.

Analysts note that Israel sees reporters like Sharif as direct threats because they pierce the fog of war, producing visual and firsthand evidence that could be used in international courts or lead to diplomatic fallout.

With a large audience, a history of receiving threats from Israeli forces, and coverage that exposed the realities of the siege in northern Gaza—where forced evacuations raised fears of ethnic cleansing—Sharif represented exactly the kind of scrutiny Israel sought to silence.

His assassination was more than the killing of a journalist; it was an attempt to blind the global public, ensuring that what happens in Gaza can unfold without witness.

Al Jazeera has been publicly targeted by Israel's punitive and hostile actions and cannot be allowed to work inside the country, and had its Gaza offices destroyed in 2021, is now emblematic of a broader attack on press freedom.

Any allegations of affiliation with militants are typically used as justification, a tactic also evident in the killing of Shireen Abu Akleh in 2022.

Numerous investigations demonstrated she was outright targeted, employing the same pattern of using the absence of accountability: when accountability doesn't exist, reporters are expendable in the information war, starving, threatening, and killing them to try to control for the narrative we live in and whose history we are remembering.

A final plea to the world

Sharif's final words, written like a will, left the world with a charge: "Do not forget Gaza... And do not forget me."

His legacy lies not in the label of martyrdom, but in the silence left behind—a stark reminder that erasing witnesses does not erase the truth. As global powers stall and equivocate, his death underscores a clear choice: safeguard those who risk everything to expose reality, or allow history's darkest chapters to pass unrecorded.

Amid Gaza's ruins, Sharif's voice endures, urging the world to carry forward the stories Israel is determined to suppress.

Murder of Gaza journalists sparks global outrage

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – The Israeli regime's killing of Palestinian journalists in northern Gaza is facing growing international condemnation.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres's spokesperson, Stéphane Dujarric, stated: "We have always been very clear in condemning all killings of journalists. In Gaza and everywhere, media workers must be able to do their jobs freely and without harassment, intimidation, or fear of being targeted. Journalists must be granted free access to all areas of Gaza to report independently on the situation."

The United Nations Human Rights Office condemned the killing of Palestinian journalists in Gaza, describing the Israeli military strike on their tent as a "grave breach of international humanitarian law."

"Israel must respect and protect all civilians, including journalists," the office stated in a post on social media, noting that at least 242 Palestinian journalists have been killed in Gaza since October 2023.

"We call for immediate, safe, and unhindered access to Gaza for all journalists," It added.

The killing of Al Jazeera journalist Anas al-Sharif, one of Gaza's most prominent reporters, was a deliberate effort to suppress coverage of the Israeli regime's "atrocities," said Ken Roth, former executive director of Human Rights Watch.

"This is not an accidental killing. This is not a journalist who happened to get caught in Israel's indoctrinated bombardment of Palestinian civilians in general. This was a targeted killing," Roth told Al Jazeera.

Amnesty International strongly condemned the killings, stating: "The deliberate targeting and killing of journalists by Israeli forces constitutes a war crime under international humanitarian law. We are deeply saddened and heartbroken. Words cannot describe the grief we feel over the deliberate targeting of journalists. Anas al-Sharif dedicated his life to standing in front of the camera, exposing Israeli crimes against Palestinians, and documenting the truth so the world could witness it."

Reporters Without Borders condemned what it called the "acknowledged murder by the Israeli army" of Anas al-Sharif and several of his colleagues. The media watchdog told AFP it "strongly and angrily condemns the acknowledged murder by the Israeli army" of the Al Jazeera correspondent and other journalists.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) said it was "appalled" by the killings.

"Israel's pattern of labeling journalists as militants without providing credible evidence raises serious questions about its intent and respect for press freedom," said CPJ Regional Director Sara Qudah.

"Journalists are civilians and must never be targeted. Those responsible for these killings must be held accountable," She added.

CPJ also noted that in July it had urged the international community to protect al-Sharif, and reiterated that the Israeli occupation regime has provided no evidence to support its allegations against him.

Rights advocates echoed this, saying al-Sharif had been targeted for his frontline reporting and the Israeli regime's claims lacked evidence.

The Press Freedom Foundation also condemned the killings and called for urgent international action to prevent further attacks on the press.

"Anyone angered by the recent horrific images of hunger and suffering in Gaza should know that without journalists risking their lives, you wouldn't have seen these images or known about the atrocities your governments are funding," said Seth Stern, the foundation's advocacy director.

Stern went on to say: "That's exactly why Israel targets and kills them in violation of international law. Now, perhaps more than at any time since the slaughter began, the world understands how vital this work is."

The former leader of the UK's Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn, described the killing of the journalists as "sickening beyond words" and "a desperate attempt to silence the truth about Israel's ongoing crimes against humanity."

Pasargadae is a rich source of pride, tourism minister underlines



TEHRAN—Pasargadae is a rich source of pride, the unparalleled origin of Iranian culture and civilization, said Minister of Cultural Heritage Reza Salehi-Amiri during his field visit to Pasargadae in Fars province and in the presence of media members on Monday.

He said that this land is not only a geographical region, but also a symbol of the uniqueness and spiritual identity of the Iranian nation, to which every Iranian, anywhere in the world, belongs and praises, Miras Arya (CHTN) reported.

Pointing to the importance of managing the precincts, area, the heights and constructions in this historical site, he said: “We follow two central and equal principles: “national sovereignty” and “people’s rights”, because preserving national heritage is not possible without respecting citizenship rights and the interests of the people.”

Any decision to protect and preserve this precious heritage must take into account the public and private rights of the people, and the dear people, like the government, must play an active role and unwavering support in this path, he said.

Appreciating the follow-up efforts of the representative of Marvdasht, Pasargadae and Arsanjan in Majlis, said: “The representatives of the Parliament and local officials, in conjunction with the ministry, pursue the issues of this region passionately, and we are confident that the concerns of the people will be fully heard and followed up.”

Salehi Amiri, while referring to the special prioritization of cultural heritage, civilization and tourism of Fars province by the governor-general, emphasized that this strategic cooperation will pave the way for tangible

progress in the protection and development of tourism in the province.

Pointing to the registration of near 7.4 million visits during the last Iranian year, he said Fars province and Pasargadae are top tourist destinations of the country.

“And in 2025, our goal is to attract between 9 and 10 million foreign tourists, which, thanks to the 48 percent growth in tourism in Farvardin this year, promises to achieve our goals.”

Salehi-Amiri emphasized:” The basis for tourism cooperation with neighbors, including Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the countries of the Caucasus, is the key to developing our cultural and economic diplomacy, and we are trying to turn these ties into sustainable and productive relations.”

In conclusion, he expressed his sincere apology to the people of Fars province for any shortcomings and emphasized that the government is committed to providing favorable conditions for tourism in the country as soon as possible so that people can witness the unprecedented boom in the presence of domestic and foreign tourists in this ancient land.

Pasargadae, the resting place of Cyrus the Great, recorded 14,242 visitors during Nowruz holidays.

Fars province, historically known as Persis, was the heartland of the Achaemenid Empire (550–330 BC), founded by Cyrus the Great. It was later that the administrative center under Darius I, who established Persepolis as the empire’s ceremonial capital. Today, Fars remains one of Iran’s most culturally significant regions, home to iconic poets, historical sites, and architectural marvels.

Shiraz, the capital of Fars, is celebrated as the city of poetry, nightingales, and gardens. It was a major center of learning in the medieval Islamic world and served as the capital during the Zand dynasty (1751–1794). The city houses several breathtaking landmarks, including the Afif-Abad Garden, the Tomb of Hafez, the Tomb of Sa’di, and the Atigh Jameh Mosque. Additionally, its lush Persian gardens, such as Narenjestan Garden and Eram Garden, continue to enchant visitors from around the world.

Restoration of Musa Khani edifice, important for promoting Kerman’s Shahr-e Babak tourism

TEHRAN--The fundamental restoration and change of the use of the historic Musa Khani building in Shahr-e Babak, Kerman province, in order to develop tourism and economic prosperity in the region is one of the priorities of the Kerman Cultural Heritage Department, said the caretaker of Kerman Cultural Heritage Department.

According to IRIB, Morteza Nikru visited the Musa Khani building and studied the restoration trend of this structure.

He said the first phase of this project as catering unit has been inaugurated. “Currently, the second phase which includes establishing accommodation sites in this historical building is under implementation. We will witness its inauguration soon.”

The cooperation of private sector in this project has played an important role in accelerating the restoration trend and inauguration of this historical complex, he said.

Nikru expressed the hope that the project will help attract the tourists and boost economic prosperity of Shahr-e Babak county.

He added that the project is being carried out in order to preserve and revive the cultural heritage and increase the tourism capacities of Kerman province with the good cooperation of industrial and mining companies and will be continuously followed up until the result is achieved, which is to increase the capacity of Shahr-e Babak city in the tourism facilities sector.

Musa Khani Mansion is one of the buildings of the Qajar era, which was built in 1265-1270 AH by Musa Khan, the son of Sheikh al-Molk. The area of this mansion is 2,300 square meters and its vast garden is about 5,200 square meters. This historical monument is one of the noble

residential buildings and the residence of the ruler of Shahr-e Babak city.

Shahr-e Babak is located in the west of Kerman province at the height of 1,845 meters above the sea level. This county is limited to Yazd province from the north, Sirjan county from the south, Rafsanjan from the east and Fars and Yazd provinces from the west. The climatic conditions of Shahr-e Babak plain are semi-desert and it is moderate in mountainous regions. Shahr-e Babak county consists two districts naming “Markazi”, “Dehaj”, four cities as “Khorsand”, “Shahr-e-Babak”, “Jowzam”, Dehaj” and nine rural districts.

Shahr-e Babak is one of the most important and historical cities of Kerman province due to embracing the historical village of Meymand, Musa Khani edifice known as Vally mansion, ancient mosque of Shahr-e Kohne, Azarbagh temple, etc.

Shahr-e Babak enjoys a privileged economic and political position by situating on the south-western region of Tehran-Bandar Abbas transit road (golden road of Iran) and the communicational road of Shiraz and Isfahan, passing the railway of Bafq-Bandar Abbas from this region and also having the great mines of copper, lead and zinc, silica, salt, turquoise, copper smelting plants, numerous stone cutting plants, milk and pasteurized dairy.

The major economy of Shahr-e Babak is based on gardening and livestock in addition to industry and mine. The people of Shahr-e Babak speak in Farsi with special and different dialects related to each region such as Meymandi and Dehaji.

The religion of the people in this city is Islam and they are followers of Jafari Shia or Ismaeili-ian Also, Sunni people and a minor group of Zoroastrians live in this region, as well.

From Page 1 ▶ A selection of Key attractions includes:

Tarikhaneh, widely known as Iran’s oldest standing mosque

Among Damghan’s most distinguished monuments is the Tarikhaneh Mosque, believed to be the oldest mosque in Iran still in its original form, dating back to the first century after the advent of Islam. Located in the southeastern part of the city, this mosque, alongside the historic mosque of Na’in in Isfahan province, stands as a rare example of pre-Seljuk Islamic architecture.

Constructed with Sassanid-era building techniques, the mosque bears remarkable resemblance to structures like Sarvestan Palace near Shiraz and the Palace of Ardeshir in Firuzabad. Some historians suggest that the mosque may have originally been a Zoroastrian fire temple.

The mosque features a spacious courtyard, flanked by porticos on three sides, and a gallery of 18 columns facing the Qibla (direction of prayer). Its Seljuk-era minaret, crowned with what is considered the oldest known tile inscription in Islamic architecture, further enhances its historical significance. The name Tarikhaneh, a fusion of the ancient Turkic term for “sky” or “god” (Tari, Tengri) and the Persian word for “house” (Khaneh), can be translated as “House of God.”

Tepe Hessar: an archaeological treasure trove

Located just outside the city, Tepe Hessar is an archaeological site of immense historical importance. Excavated in the 1930s by Prof. Ernst Herzfeld and later Dr. Erich Schmidt, the site reveals multiple layers of civilization, spanning from the 5th millennium BC to the Parthian and Seleucid periods.

Artifacts unearthed from Tepe Hessar, some dating back over 7,000 years, offer a window into



A view of Masjed-e Tarikhaneh in Damghan, which is widely known as Iran’s oldest standing mosque.

the region’s ancient past, with evidence of settlements from the Medes, Achaemenids, and later dynasties.

Ancient city walls and fortifications

Remnants of Damghan’s ancient fortifications still survive, with massive walls and battlements once wide enough to accommodate chariots, as described in historical accounts. Visitors can witness the enduring legacy of these defensive structures in the northern and southern outskirts of the city.

Seljuk-era architectural jewels

The Seljuk era enriched Damghan with several remarkable architectural works. Notable sites include the Shrine of Pir Alamdar, the Jame’ Mosque (Congregational Mosque) and its iconic minaret, Mansurkuh village, the Tower of Jafar’s Tomb, and the impressive Chehel-Dokhtaran Vault. The Seljuks introduced intricate brickwork decorations, breaking the monotony of early Islamic

architecture and leaving behind masterpieces of artistic craftsmanship.

Chehel-Dokhtaran Vault: an enduring family mausoleum

Located in central Damghan, behind Jafar’s Tomb, the Chehel-Dokhtaran Vault (translated as “Vault of Forty Girls”) was built in 1087, according to its Kufic inscription. Remarkably, despite Damghan’s location on an earthquake fault line, the mausoleum has withstood the test of time without significant structural damage.

The vault, with its onion-shaped dome, features exquisite brickwork and inscriptions, reflecting the artistry of the Seljuk period. Standing 14.8 meters tall, the structure was used as a family mausoleum, where inscriptions invoke divine mercy for the deceased.

Cheshmeh-Ali: a picturesque oasis

About 30 kilometers north of Damghan, Cheshmeh-Ali is a

lush and scenic spring that has been a favored retreat since ancient times. During the Qajar era, this idyllic setting inspired the construction of several palatial structures, including those built by Fath-Ali Shah and Aqa Mohammad Khan. Fath-Ali Shah’s palace, uniquely situated in the center of the lagoon between two springs, continues to attract visitors seeking tranquility and history.

Ismaili fortresses: echoes of a mysterious past

To the north of Damghan, two Ismaili fortresses perch atop rugged mountains, once serving as strongholds for the esoteric Ismaili sect during the medieval period. The Gerdkuh Fortress, located about 5 kilometers from the city, and Mehrnegar Fortress, on Mansurkuh Mountain (22 kilometers north of Damghan), offer breathtaking views and a glimpse into the strategic prowess of the Ismailis.

Royal Ilkhanid cemetery unearthed near UNESCO-listed Soltaniyeh Dome

TEHRAN – Archaeologists have uncovered parts of a royal Ilkhanid cemetery adjacent to the UNESCO-listed Soltaniyeh Dome in west-central Iran, the head of the excavation team said on Sunday.

Abolfazl Aali, who also manages the Soltaniyeh World Heritage site, said the discovery was made during excavations in an area known as Abwab al-Berr, revealing sections of an underground tomb.

“Based on existing evidence, historical texts, and the skeletons found, the burial site likely belongs to members of the Mongol Ilkhanid royal family,” Aali said.

He said the cemetery may have been the resting place of some relatives of Oljaytu, the eighth Ilkhanid ruler, including one of his wives and children, as recorded in historical accounts.

Archaeologists say royal cemeteries can provide information on social hierarchy and the status of individuals in past societies. The way the dead were buried and the objects buried with them can offer insights into the beliefs and religious practices of the period, Aali explained.

The excavation, which began in early August in the south-western section of the Soltaniyeh citadel, is expected to continue until late September. Items typically found in such burials include human remains, valuable objects, architec-

tural structures, and inscriptions.

The Soltaniyeh Dome, built in the 14th century by Sultan Mohammad Khodabandeh (Oljaytu), is the world’s largest brick dome and a major tourist attraction in Zanjan province. Recognized for its innovative double-shell structure and intricate turquoise tilework, it is considered a masterpiece of Islamic architecture.

The city of Soltaniyeh served briefly as the capital of Persia’s Ilkhanid dynasty, a branch of the Mongol Empire, and is regarded by UNESCO as a key link in the development of Islamic architecture in Central and Western Asia.

According to UNESCO, the mausoleum’s interior decoration is so outstanding that scholars like A.U. Pope have described the

building as “anticipating the Taj Mahal”.


The dome is embellished with turquoise-blue faience tiles, the stunning structure dominates the skyline of Soltaniyeh, an ancient city of the same name in Zanjan province, north-western Iran. It rises dramatically 48m above from its base that neighbors dusty archaeological digs and crumbling walls.

UNESCO says that the Mausoleum of Oljaytu is an essential link and key monument in the development of Islamic architecture in central and western Asia.

The fairly large dome is the earliest extant example of its type in the country, and became an important reference for the later development of the Islamic dome.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

Second Announcement



N.I.S.O.C.

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO.: 08-38-0340005

The National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC) is seeking to procure the specified goods listed in the table below through a Qualitative Evaluation Call for conducting a public tender via the Government Electronic Procurement System (SETAD). All stages of the tender process including the receipt of tender documents, submission of bidders' proposals, and the opening of bid envelopes, shall be carried out exclusively through the Government Electronic Procurement System (SETAD) portal at www.setadiran.ir. Bidders who have not previously registered must complete the registration process on the aforementioned portal and obtain an Electronic Signature certificate to participate in the tender.

Item	Material Description	Quantity
4	POLYCRYSTALLINE DIAMOND COMPACT(PDC) 5-7/8 IN., DRILLING BIT SIZE AND TYPE AS SPECIFIED LEVEL OF INSPECTION: 2 (L.O.I.: 2) API SPEC 7-1/ISO 10424-1 SHOULD BE DIE STAMPED ON THE TOP OF THE BIT 5-7/8 X 3-1/2 IN. STR445XL, HUGHES	35NO
	NOZZLES SIZE 4-1/8 IN. 14/32 IN. & 15/32 IN. & 16/32 IN.	420NO

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their" Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: www.setadiran.ir, not later than14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 16,399/15 EURO or 12,686,150,000 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS CFR, BANDAR IMAM KHOMEINI, IRAN PAYMENT TERM IS C.A.D., SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL.

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex
Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran Tel. No.: 061 34 12 4644 Fax No.: 061 34 45 74 37
Public Relations www.shana.ir www.nisoc.ir <http://iets.mporg.ir>

Over 1m Afghans deported in 4 months

TEHRAN – Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni has said some 1.1 million illegal Afghan refugees have been sent back to their home country since the beginning of the current Iranian year, March 21.

Seventy percent of them have left the country voluntarily, IRNA quoted Momeni as saying.

The number of deported undocumented Afghans has increased by 4.5 percent compared to the same period last year, Mehr news agency quoted Police spokesman General Saeed Montazer-al-Mahdi, as saying.

The police have also prevented the illegal entry of some 2,500 refugees to the country, the official added, highlighting that foreign nationals are treated decisively and with dignity.

In July, Momeni said the country is not planning to deport documented and authorized refugees.

"Iran is not an anti-immigrant country, as it is hosting six million foreign nationals. We are only deporting the two million Afghans who are illegally residing in Iran. These are honorable people who have contributed to the country's production. Based on regulations, unauthorized refugees must leave the country.



If they wish to live here, they have to follow legal procedures."

According to the head of the National Organization for Migration, Nader Yar-Ahmadi, there has been no change in the residency and the kind of services provided to documented Afghans residing in the country. On the contrary, they will benefit from more services as illegal nationals leave the country, IRNA reported.

The official went on to say that the presence of illegal migrants in any country poses many challenges, and in critical situations, they will be the main suspects. Their presence negatively impacts the economy, social, and security sectors.

Service provided to refugees in border

The ministry of health has expounded on a wide range of services being offered to refugees, particularly in eastern South Khorasan, northeastern Khorasan Razavi, and southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan provinces.

The services include the establishment of health camps, the screening of communicable diseases, and the provision of safe water and sanitation, the health ministry's website reported.

The health ministry has established permanent and temporary camps to do screening, and provide medical services such as injections, serum therapy, as well

as treating acute patients.

Extensive screening of communicable diseases and epidemic risk management, like syndromic screening for 14 contagious diseases, ongoing water and food sampling, and disinfection of drinking water, are among other measures adopted by the ministry.

Improving infrastructures, access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities, as well as environmental hygiene like proper management of infectious waste in camps are other parts of the health ministry efforts to ensure the prevention of communicable diseases, and monitoring the environment to prevent the transmission of diseases such as Malaria, Chloral (El Tor), and other similar diseases are some other services offered to refugees.

The health ministry has done its best to manage referrals, with an average of more than 5,000 individuals receiving health services at busy times. It has also enhanced camps' capacities in terms of human resources, equipment, temporary beds, coordination, and logistical support for the immediate provision of medicine, disinfectants, personal protective equipment, and other essential items.

Transformative role of youth in localizing SDGs

By Maryam Tavassoli

TEHRAN – The International Youth Day (IYD) is observed on August 12 annually to highlight the potential of the youth as partners in global society, and the importance of strengthening their engagement in local development.

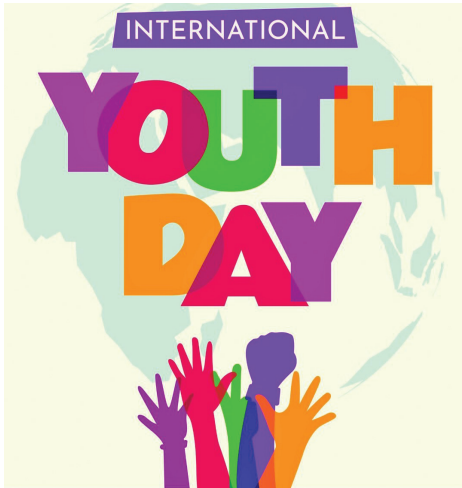
This year's theme, 'Local Youth Actions for the SDGs and Beyond', underscores the unique role of young people in translating global ambitions into community-driven realities.

As development partners work to translate and implement the global goals within specific local contexts, aligning them with community needs while maintaining consistency with national and international commitments, young people are critical partners.

They bring creativity, insight, and deep community ties that help bridge the gap between policy and practice. With over 65 percent of SDG targets linked to local governance, youth engagement is not a luxury—it is a necessity.

This year's IYD will also underscore the essential role of local and regional governments. Being the closest to the communities they serve, they are uniquely positioned to create inclusive policy environments, allocate resources, and establish mechanisms for youth participation in local planning and decision-making.

By integrating youth priorities into local and regional strategies and fostering partnerships with youth organizations, authorities can collaborate with young people to transform their ideas into impactful solutions. When local governments provide spaces for innovation, mentorship, and civic



engagement, they not only accelerate SDG implementation but also nurture future community leaders and changemakers.

This year's IYD takes on added significance as it coincides with the upcoming 30th anniversary of the World Program of Action for Youth. It remains a guiding framework for recognizing youth as key actors in sustainable development and participatory governance—principles directly echoed in this year's theme. Discussions related to the 2025 IYD theme will also inform preparations for the Second World Summit for Social Development to be held in Doha in November.

As the world embarks on the final stretch toward 2030, IYD 2025 calls for real investments in inclusive policies and programmes that leverage local youth actions for the SDGs.

Youth population can contribute to a hopeful future

"In today's world, where the competition

among countries relies more than ever on the productivity of knowledge and human resources, no factor other than the youth population can contribute to a hopeful future for any nation," IRNA quoted Alireza Raeisi, an official with health ministry, as saying. The official made the remarks on the occasion of the national population week observed from May 14 to 20.

Iran is going through a population window of opportunity – a period in which a large proportion of the population is the working age. Known as a unique opportunity for economic, social, and cultural growth, it requires comprehensive policies in the fields of health, employment, education, welfare, and family.

However, ignoring this opportunity may lead the country to face numerous demographic challenges, such as an aging population, a shrinking workforce, and disruptions in the intergenerational balance in the not-so-distant future.

The official went on to elaborate on services being provided by the health ministry; these include providing free educational courses to young couples, supporting over 300 non-governmental anti-abortion centers, training of trainers to develop a health-oriented family culture, and establishing a digital birth registration system in hospitals.

Free natural childbirth services to promote safe and physiological childbirth, extensive insurance coverage (up to 90%) for infertility treatment, free pregnancy consultation, and education programs are among other measures taken by the health ministry in line with the youth population law.

Police seize over 113 tons of narcotics since March



TEHRAN – The Iranian anti-narcotics police have seized more than 113,278 tons of narcotics since the beginning of the current Iranian year (March 21), seventy-five percent of which were discovered in the eastern provinces of the country.

Benefiting from modern technologies, the police have also dismantled 816 drug trafficking bands, and seized 292 weapons, as well as 6,502 vehicles carrying drugs, IRNA reported.

Eleven online bands were also disrupted, with the seizure of 292 kilograms of narcotics.

'National heroes'

Martyrs and war veterans who have sacrificed their lives in the fight against narcotics to ensure the security and safety of people are the national heroes, Brigadier General Hossein Zolfaqari, the secretary general of the Drug Control Headquarters (DCHQ), said in June.

Thanks to their efforts, the anti-narcotics police are capable of taking more effective national and international measures in the fight against drugs. They are symbols of perseverance and determination who truly deserve to be respected and appreciated, ILNA quoted

Zolfaqari as saying.

The official made the remarks on the occasion of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, or World Drug Day, which is marked on June 26 every year.

Enumerating on Iran's role in combating narcotics, the official said, Iran plays a critical role in the global fight against drugs. Due to its proximity to Afghanistan, the country has constantly faced many challenges.

However, counter-narcotics and security forces have done their best, carrying out numerous extensive operations over the years to thwart smugglers and their networks. The martyrdom of 3,800 individuals and the injuries of 12,000 others highlight the country's determination in combating narcotics and drug-related crimes.

DCHQ, in cooperation with governmental and non-governmental organizations, has taken different measures such as implementing preventive programs, supporting addicts, and developing treatment centres.

World Drug Day, or the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, aims to strengthen action and cooperation in achieving a world free of drug abuse. This year's World Drug Day calls for investment in prevention, including justice, education, health care, and alternative livelihoods — the building blocks of sustainable resilience.

This year's campaign, "Break the cycle. Stop Organized Crime," highlighted the need for coordinated long-term action to break the cycle of organized crime and drug trafficking by addressing root causes, investing in prevention, and building stronger health, education, and social systems.

DOE implementing over 120 projects to preserve marine coastal ecosystem

TEHRAN – Over the past few years, the Department of Environment (DOE) has been implementing more than 120 projects to protect the country's marine coastal ecosystem.

These projects play crucial roles in safeguarding, managing, and restoring marine ecosystems, IRNA quoted Shahram Fadakar, an official with DOE, as saying.

They encompass a wide range of sectors such as conserving sea turtles, managing coral reef habitats, coastal zoning, studying marine mammals, as well as evaluating the marine ecosystem's health, and mangrove forests, the official added.

Studying sea turtle nesting habitat restoration in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, monitoring coastal and offshore ecosystems in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, developing national action plans for endangered species, and assessing the biodiversity of marine invertebrates are among the key projects, he noted.

The official went on to say that ongoing collaborations with universities, research institutes, and related organizations have enhanced the efficiency of these projects.

Marine biodiversity conservation

In April, the head of the DOE, Shina Ansari, announced the provision of a data bank of more than 5,000 creatures in the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea, saying that it will serve as a regional and even international platform for the preservation of the biodiversity in these waters.

"This includes efforts such as preparing an atlas of sensitive marine ecosystems and the identification of unknown coral reef habitats, such as the Shah Alam area on the maritime border with Qatar, which allows for effective and targeted intervention at a macro level," ILNA quoted Ansari as saying.

The official made the remarks on the occasion of Persian Gulf National Day, which is observed on April 29 every year. The day marks the anniversary of forcing out the Portuguese navy of the Strait of Hormuz in the Capture of Ormuz (1622).

The Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, with

more than 4,900 kilometers of coastline in Iran, are home to one of the richest marine ecosystems in the world. The DOE has implemented different measures to conserve the biodiversity of the marine ecosystems, such as developing a data strategy and planning tool to implement scientific and data-driven decision-making.

Any preserving measure without legal support and control will fail to succeed. In order to strengthen the regulatory and legal framework, the DOE has developed and issued seawater quality standards, discharge regulations at sea, dredging guidelines, waste disposal regulations, and guidelines on oil pollution damage assessment, the official added.

The DOE is implementing other programs such as coral restoration, registering coastal wetlands in the Ramsar Convention, developing a national action plan for mangrove conservation, and monitoring the marine environment, Ansari further noted.

The DOE in collaboration with local communities, government agencies, and scientific centers, has developed an action plan for the preservation of sharks

and rays through monitoring their populations, raising fishermen's awareness, and empowering them.

Unfortunately, overexploitation and illegal fishing, their late maturity, and low breeding have threatened these species with extinction.

Adopting a participatory approach, the action plan aims to identify threats, reduce conflicts, promote preservation culture, and determine priority actions for a five-year period, the official stressed.

Fadakar went on to say the DOE has so far conducted 48 educational and participatory workshops in coastal provinces.

The latest workshop was held with the participation of representatives from Iran Fisheries Organization, the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, Iran's Customs Administration, and the National Planning and Budget Organization, to strengthen collaborations among these institutions.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Water ambulances to join medical emergency fleet

Five water ambulances will be added to the current medical emergency fleet in provinces neighboring the Persian Gulf, southern coast of the country, head of Iran's Emergency Medical Services Organization Pir Hossein Koulivand, said on Wednesday.

Since air emergency fleet have been developed, the Organization is looking forward to develop the marine medical fleet, he said, adding that in recent years, there were only five helicopters in service of the Organization, which have already added to 40.

شناورهای دریایی به اورژانس کشور می‌پیوندند

رئیس سازمان اورژانس کشور با بیان اینکه در حال توسعه اورژانس دریایی هستیم، گفت: در حال حاضر اضافه کردن پنج فروند شناور دریایی اورژانس به استان های همسایه خلیج فارس در دستور کارمان قرار دارد.

دکتر پیرحسین کولیوند در گفت‌وگو با ایسنا، گفت: همانطور که ناوگان هوایی اورژانس را توسعه دادیم، در حال حاضر هم به دنبال تکمیل و توسعه ناوگان دریایی اورژانس هستیم. باید توجه کرد که در گذشته فقط پنج بالگرد اورژانس داشتیم، اما در حال حاضر با اقداماتی که انجام شده ۴۰ بالگرد و پایگاه اورژانس هوایی تامین و ایجاد شده که واقعا افتخاری برای کشور است.



AUGUST 12, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

A believer divides his day and night into three parts: he spends some of it in communion with God; another part in repairing his life and needs; and the third part in providing his body and soul with legitimate and admirable joys.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:09 Evening: 19:17 Dawn: 3:49 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:22 (tomorrow)

Iranian short film “A Death for Life” to attend 15th International Haiku Amateur Little Film Festival

TEHRAN – The Iranian short film “A Death for Life” written, directed, and produced by Mohammadreza Setarehshenas will represent Iran at the 15th International Haiku Amateur Little Film Festival (HALF) Festival, set to be held in Kerala, India, from September 13 to 14.

Selected for the Mynote Section, the one-minute film, shot in a single take (plan-sequence), tells the story of a female pigeon that dies, and whose mate also dies upon seeing the scene, IRNA reported.

The short film has been featured in various international festivals, such as the Kalakari International Film Festival in India, the Blow-Up Chicago International Arthouse Film Awards in the U.S., the La Boheme International Film Festival in Russia, and more.

It has also been a finalist at the Busan New Wave Short Film Festival in South Korea, was nominated at the Lancillotto al Cinema Film Festival in Italy, and won the Special Prize in the Experimental section of the Black Cat Award International Film Festival in Bolivia, among others.

Born in Gilan Province, north of Iran, Mohammadreza Setarehshenas, 35, began filmmaking in 2013. He holds a Master's degree in cinema and is a university lecturer, instructor

at the Iranian Youth Cinema Society, writer, cinematographer, editor, photographer, producer, and director.

He is also a filmmaking and photography instructor at the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults in Gilan, and has served as a judge in four photography competitions at the same institute, among other roles. He has so far directed 10 short films including “Twelve O'clock Position” and “D L S”.

Haiku Amateur Little Film Festival for short films of less than 5 minutes, is being annually organized by Insight, the creative group, an association of amateur short filmmakers based at Palakkad, with operations worldwide.

“Haiku” refers to a very short form of Japanese poetry, used here to denote any kind of brevity in aesthetic creativity.

“Amateur” refers to a work created by its maker without the primary intention of making a profit. The meaning of “amateur” as something lacking professional quality does not apply in this context.

“Little” indicates the short duration of the film, defined as “a maximum of 5 minutes total runtime, including opening and closing credits.”

Tehran’s Palestine Square showcases anti-Israeli mural, expressing solidarity with oppressed nations

TEHRAN – The new mural in Palestine Square in Tehran, featuring an image from an anti-Israeli painting by Australian artist Scott Marsh, has been unveiled, which highlights the plight of Palestinians and unveils the true face of Zionism.

The painting had previously appeared on the wall of a building in Sydney, Australia, and now, with an anti-Israeli theme, conveys Iran's solidarity with oppressed nations around the world, IRNA reported.

In his recent work of art, Marsh has portrayed Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of the Zionist regime, dressed in a military-style uniform with an Israeli flag armband. In the background, a burning and bombed city clearly alludes to the destruction caused by Israeli attacks on Gaza.

The uniform, posture, and overall aesthetic of the portrait strongly resemble propaganda imagery from Nazi Germany when Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party controlled the country, subtly drawing a disturbing visual parallel between fascist regimes of the past and the actions of the current Zionist leadership. This visual message aligns powerfully with the tone, courage, and political commentary seen in Scott Marsh's body of work.

Scott Marsh is a renowned Australian street artist known for his large-scale, political, and provocative murals. His works combine sharp satire, social critique, and rapid response to current events. Starting from graffiti, Marsh gradually evolved into a public artist with strong social messages.



Marsh typically chooses themes that resonate with public emotion and controversy. He believes that street art isn't necessarily about changing minds, but about reflecting what people already feel. Due to the controversial nature of his work, he often stays anonymous to avoid threats and vandalism.

Sharing this recent work on his Instagram feed, the artist wrote: “History doesn't repeat itself, but it often rhymes. I have said for years that my work exists in the streets but finds an audience online. However, during the COVID years that connection was taken away. My work has since been heavily censored, shadow banned, throttled - whatever you want to call it. My posts reach a handful of my followers and the



algorithm kills them before they can escape”.

“Rather than let this deter me, I'm forced to think creatively about ways I can deliver work/ideas to the public. I knew this work could not exist as a mural. In the unlikely event I finished it, the mural would be immediately destroyed, the post would be buried by the algorithm and the censors would win,” he added.

“The Netanyahu government is committing genocide in Gaza. I believe this message should NOT be censored. I know I'm gonna have critics - that comes with the territory,” Marsh noted.

“I'm also releasing a print edition of the original painting - 100% profit from the first 10 prints being donated to the gazachildrens-fund.org,” he stated.

Persian translation of Koestler’s “The Thirteenth Tribe” republished after 30 years



TEHRAN- A Persian translation of Hungarian author and journalist Arthur Koestler's 1976 book “The Thirteenth Tribe: The Khazar Empire and its Heritage”, by Iranian translator and scholar Mohammad Ali Movahed, has been republished 30 years after its initial release.

Published by Kharazmi Publications in Tehran, the book was rendered into Persian by Movahed in 1982 based on the English edition.

In the preface, Movahed writes: “The name ‘Khazar’ evokes the story of a doomed people who resided across the Caspian Sea, in regions now part of the former Soviet Union. Historically, they held courts with golden thrones—symbols of importance and respect—and had interpreters familiar with the Khazar language and script, reflecting extensive diplomatic relations. This restless, warlike, and often troublesome people were constantly enticed by the Byzantine Empire (Rome), repeatedly attacking cities in Aran, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. At one point, their incursions reached as far as Hamedan in Iran's heartland. The Sassanid kings built fortifications across the Caucasus to guard against surprise attacks. The Khazars resisted the Islamic advance, and after many of their Turkic kin converted to Islam, they turned to Judaism.”

“The Thirteenth Tribe” is a highly controversial and widely discredited book that introduc-

es the Khazar hypothesis of Ashkenazi Jewish origins. Koestler's central claim is that the majority of Ashkenazi Jews do not descend from the ancient Israelites and Judeans of biblical times, but rather from the Khazars, a Turkic people who, according to his thesis, converted en masse to Judaism in the 8th century. He further argued that following their conversion, the Khazars migrated westward into Eastern Europe during the 12th and 13th centuries, as their empire was collapsing, shaping the Jewish communities in that region.

Koestler's hypothesis draws on a limited set of historical sources, notably works by scholars such as Douglas Morton Dunlop, Raphael Patai, and Abraham Polak. His primary aim was to challenge the racial and biological notions of Jewish identity that fueled antisemitism. Koestler believed that if he could demonstrate that Ashkenazi Jews primarily descended from the Khazars—who were Turkic and not Semitic—then the racial basis for antisemitism would be undermined, potentially eradicating one of its main ideological justifications. He sought to shift the narrative from racial genetics to cultural and historical identity, hoping to promote a more inclusive understanding of Jewish origins.

However, the scholarly community has largely rejected Koestler's claims. Critics argue that his research was superficial and relied

heavily on speculative interpretations. Many historians and geneticists contend that Koestler's sources, such as Dunlop's “History of the Jewish Khazars”, are tentative at best and do not provide conclusive evidence of a Khazar origin for Ashkenazi Jews. Genetic studies conducted in recent decades have overwhelmingly shown that Ashkenazi Jews share common ancestry with other Jewish populations and are genetically linked to Middle Eastern groups, challenging the core of Koestler's hypothesis. Leading scholars like Peter Golden and Moses Shulvass have dismissed the Khazar theory as lacking solid evidence and containing sweeping, unsupported claims.

Koestler's motives are believed to be rooted in a desire to combat antisemitism. Biographer Michael Scammell reports that Koestler told French biologist Pierre Debray-Ritzen that his goal was to demonstrate that if Ashkenazi Jews descended from Khazars rather than biblical Israelites, then racial antisemitism would lose its foundation. Some scholars suggest that Koestler was also motivated by an interest in reconciling Jewish history with a broader cultural narrative that minimized racial distinctions.

Despite its initial attention, the book's claims have faced widespread criticism. Many historians, geneticists, and scholars have dismissed it as pseudohistory. Nonetheless, the Khazar hypothesis has found a receptive audience among certain groups outside mainstream academia. In particular, some anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic factions have exploited the theory to deny Jewish historical claims to Israel. Arab states, including Saudi Arabia, have argued that if Ashkenazi Jews are primarily Khazar, then their claim to the biblical land of Israel is invalid. Extremist groups, such as neo-Nazis and Christian Identity followers, have embraced and promoted the Khazar theory, viewing it as evidence to undermine Jewish legitimacy.

Jeffrey Kaplan notes that organizations promoting white nationalism and conspiracy theories have used Koestler's work to reinforce their narratives. The neo-Nazi magazine “The Thunderbolt” called “The Thirteenth Tribe” “the political bombshell of the century,” and the theory continues to circulate among extremist circles.

Cartoon of Day



Gaza

Cartoonist: Fares Garabet from Germany