

# TEHRAN TIMES

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## Iran Negotiation Team Travels to Qatar to Continue Diplomacy



Mehr/Saeed Reza Razavi

File photo

### Iran will not yield to pressure or excessive demands: president

TEHRAN- Iran will not surrender to pressure or excessive demands, President Masoud Pezeshkian said, stressing that Tehran's negotiations and foreign engagements are aimed at fully securing the rights of the Iranian nation.

Pezeshkian made the remarks during a meeting on Monday with members of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, convened to review and address the challenges facing economic actors — particularly those in the private sector — following developments stemming from the recent US-Israeli war of aggression. ▶ Page 3

### Iran rejects Strait of Hormuz toll claims, reaffirms commitment to safe navigation

TEHRAN- Iran has firmly dismissed reports alleging that Tehran intends to impose transit fees or tolls on vessels passing through the Strait of Hormuz, emphasizing instead that the Islamic Republic is working closely with Oman to establish a reliable mechanism for ensuring safe maritime navigation through one of the world's most strategically significant waterways.

"We are not seeking to impose transit tariffs," speaking at his weekly press conference on Monday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei said, stressing the importance of precise terminology when discussing maritime arrangements in the Persian Gulf. ▶ Page 2

### Why Iran will never surrender the Strait of Hormuz

By Batool Subeiti

LONDON - If the Strait of Hormuz were within the territorial boundaries of any great power, it would be considered a national treasure and sovereign asset, and that power would never relinquish full control over it. This is because of its strategic importance, given that around 11% of global trade passes through it and nearly 20% of the world's energy supply chains transit the strait.

America wants to deprive Iran of this right, even though it was previously recognized. Iran had overlooked its right to control the strait in previous periods because changing the long-established international approach toward the strait would have caused major upheaval, and Iran did not want confrontation.

The West, led by the United States, created many problems for Iran because of its independent political path, and Iran did not want to create additional issues that could provide America with a pretext for what it would claim was a legitimate military attack. Especially since America had been waiting for any excuse to justify its military campaign and attack on Iran alongside Israel.

### Hezbollah kills two more Israeli soldiers in Lebanon

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - Israeli media announced the deaths of two soldiers and the injury of several others "as a result of Hezbollah drones."

Hebrew media reported that "their families have been informed".

Describing difficult security incidents in southern Lebanon, media said, "All families of the wounded have been notified."

They added, "More than 30 explosive drones launched by Hezbollah" targeted Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF), calling it "the hardest day in Lebanon since the ceasefire."

Hebrew news outlets added that the launch of explosive drones toward soldiers and northern Israeli settlements, along with the severe losses, are revealed within the limits of the regime's permitted publication.

The IOF acknowledged the death of one soldier and the serious injury of another after an explosive drone launched by Hezbollah struck an infantry unit in southern Lebanon.

### Israel's old sabotage playbook is back

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — The visceral, coordinated backlash from Tel Aviv and Washington to the recent diplomatic openings between Iran and the United States has exposed the underlying fragility of the Zionist war machine.

As indirect negotiations mediated by Pakistan and Qatar signal a possible end to the war, the unfreezing of Iranian assets, and fresh de-escalatory steps regarding the Strait of Hormuz, Israeli leaders, the pro-Israel lobby, and American neoconservatives have erupted in synchronized panic.

Their fury reveals a strategic aim that transcends blocking a single memorandum. It is designed to preserve an architecture of coercion that attempts to make Iran permanently isolated, economically besieged, and portrayed as a dangerous rogue.

#### A theater of political humiliation

The reaction from Israel reads like an admission of profound strategic impotence. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been effectively sidelined from the core negotiations, sparking a political meltdown within the regime.

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### Qalibaf's reelection reinforces Iran's military-political continuity amid US psychological warfare

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN - The reelection of Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf as Speaker of the Iranian Parliament by an overwhelming majority carries significant political weight amid a psychological warfare campaign by the United States and Israel following their setbacks in the recent war.

On Monday morning, Qalibaf secured 235 of the 271 votes cast by lawmakers in the legislature's first session since the start of the joint US-Israeli war on February 28. He has now assumed the top parliamentary post for a third term in the current parliament, which began its four-year mandate in May 2024 and will run until May 2028. He also served as Speaker throughout the previous parliament from May 2020 to May 2024. ▶ Page 2

### Hezbollah chief says Iran will emerge victorious in US-Israeli war

TEHRAN- Iran will emerge victorious in the war imposed by the United States and the Israeli regime, the secretary-general of Lebanon's Hezbollah said, stressing that the Islamic Republic has humiliated both Washington and Tel Aviv.

Sheikh Naim Qassem made the remarks in a speech on Sunday marking Liberation and Resistance Day, describing Iran as an "exceptional power" destined to attain a major international standing that would inspire freedom-seeking people around the world.

"Iran alone stands against the world's tyrannical powers," the Hezbollah leader said, adding that under the leadership of Ayatollah Seyed Mojtaba Khamenei, the Islamic Republic has managed to humiliate both the United States and the Israeli regime. Naim Qassem said Iran would ultimately prevail in a war imposed by the US-Israeli coalition.

"Iran will emerge proud and triumphant," he stated, adding that the country is poised to become a leading international power and a refuge for free nations.



### Rally in Berlin in memory of Minab students on anniversary of Khorramshahr liberation

Concurrent with the liberation of the Iranian port city of Khorramshahr from the occupation of the invading Saddam Army in the border province of Khuzestan on May 24, 1982 (corresponding to the 3rd of Khordad, 1361 in the Iranian Solar calendar), hundreds of anti-war activists held a rally in the German capital Berlin to express their anger over the massacre of 150 schoolchildren, teachers and staff in the southern Iranian city of Minab. The school was struck with American Tomahawk missiles on the first day of the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran on Feb. 28.

### It is just a supradiplomatic op-ed

By Kurosh Alyani

TEHRAN - We are Iranians — heirs to a civilization that, for millennia, has forged a model of engagement alongside steadfast resistance. These principles are not hollow slogans, but the product of blood and historical experience.

#### 1. Negotiation exists only within the realm of interests

Iranians have always been a people of dialogue and negotiation, yet they have always understood the precise limits of engagement. From the Silk Road, where goods and cultures were exchanged, to the diplomacy of the Achaemenids with Greek cities and neighboring states, we have negotiated for progress and survival, fully aware that the basis of such negotiation is mutual benefit.

If the other side seeks influence, the alteration of our borders, or the weakening of our independence, ▶ Page 2

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

Three solutions for a permanent end to the war

Kayhan, in an article, outlined ways to achieve a permanent end to the war with the United States. According to the article, America's war against Iran follows very specific rules, and without understanding them, achieving a lasting end to the conflict is impossible. The United States has based its main strategy on economic sanctions and uses the threat of war to ensure that sanctions have a decisive impact on Iran's situation. If Iran can neutralize the sanctions, it will also achieve a permanent end to military and security threats. To do this, three steps are necessary: First, domestic positions must be firm and unified. Second, Iran must be resolute regarding a new legal regime for the Strait of Hormuz based on long-term national interests, and abandon behaviors that mistakenly signal weakness. Third, Iran must firmly insist on preserving enriched nuclear materials and the full nuclear fuel cycle. These measures will open international pathways for Iran, rendering economic sanctions and the naval blockade ineffective. As a result, the shadow of war will be permanently lifted, and deterrence will be established.

Iran: The battlefield and negotiations are not separate or opposing paths

The Iran newspaper analyzed the active diplomatic approach alongside military actions aimed at reaching a final agreement. In critical historical moments, a country's most important asset is neither military power alone nor diplomatic capability alone, but public trust in the decision-making process and national cohesion. Today, the country faces a situation in which developments on the battlefield, political maneuvers, and intensive negotiations are all intertwined and part of a single trajectory. In such conditions, more than ever, trust must be placed in national decision-makers and the negotiating team, allowing officials to carry out their mission within the framework of national interests. Recent regional developments show that the battlefield and negotiations are not two separate or contradictory paths, just as gathering in the street and public opinion are not outside this equation. Today, the battlefield, negotiations, and the street form three demonstrations of a single strategy that must ultimately serve national interests.

Sobh-e-No: Iran no longer falls for America's tactics

Sobh-e-No examined the current positive atmosphere for reaching an understanding with the United States, alongside Iran's deep distrust of Washington. Although a positive environment has emerged that might lead to a memorandum of understanding, the US may still launch an attack, as it has in the

past. Whenever positive news about negotiations and agreements increases, the situation becomes more dangerous. This distrust has become an unwritten rule in Iran-US relations after the JCPOA era. According to the article, Trump manages "strategic ambiguity" by combining maximum threats with offers of negotiation. But Iran is no longer deceived by these tactics. Until the US takes practical steps to lift sanctions and guarantees it will not withdraw from agreements again, Iran will continue to move along the border of possible peace just as it moves along the border of possible war.

Etemad: Trump's three miscalculations in confronting Iran

Etemad outlined what it sees as Trump's strategic errors in the war with Iran. The first mistake was viewing the battlefield in a one-dimensional way—believing that bombing alone would determine the outcome. Iran, however, elevated the conflict to a higher level: the arena of the global economy. When Iran introduced the Strait of Hormuz as a decisive variable, Trump was forced to focus all his efforts on containing the consequences of its closure—yet he could not reopen it. The second miscalculation was blind trust in Israeli military and intelligence reports, which presented an unrealistic picture of Iran's capabilities. The third was failing to understand the concept of a regional war. Trump either did not grasp the idea or dismissed it. When one regional country after another came under attack, he finally realized what a regional war meant: the expansion of conflict to all U.S. bases and allies.

Donya-e-Eqtasad: A "Helsinki Pact" for the Persian Gulf

According to Donya-e-Eqtasad, Saudi Arabia is pushing Europe toward a "Persian Gulf Helsinki Agreement" with Iran because Washington has failed. When military power cannot impose deterrence, oil becomes politics—and now the Strait of Hormuz, rather than the Pentagon, is writing the security rules of the Persian Gulf. Countries are moving along two paths: a unilateral path to protect their own interests, and a collective path to design a new framework that prevents the next shock. Saudi Arabia is taking the lead in the collective path—not out of a love for mediation, but because the cost of continued turmoil has become higher than the cost of reaching an agreement. It is proposing something like a "Persian Gulf Helsinki Pact" with Iran, aimed at establishing non-aggression principles, structured economic normalization, and mechanisms for monitoring and enforcement.



A memorial ceremony was held in Tehran on Monday to mark 40 days after the martyrdom of the head of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Intelligence Organization. Brigadier General Seyed Majid Khademi was assassinated in an attack by the US and Israel on April 6.

Iran rejects Strait of Hormuz toll claims, reaffirms commitment to safe navigation

TEHRAN- Iran has firmly dismissed reports alleging that Tehran intends to impose transit fees or tolls on vessels passing through the Strait of Hormuz, emphasizing instead that the Islamic Republic is working closely with Oman to establish a reliable mechanism for ensuring safe maritime navigation through one of the world's most strategically significant waterways.



transit tolls.

"We are not seeking to impose transit tariffs," speaking at his weekly press conference on Monday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei said, stressing the importance of precise terminology when discussing maritime arrangements in the Persian Gulf.

According to the spokesperson, Iran and Oman are coordinating efforts to draft a comprehensive protocol aimed at guaranteeing secure and predictable navigation in both the Strait of Hormuz and the Sea of Oman. He explained that while technical services related to maritime safety, environmental protection, and navigation management naturally involve operational costs, such measures should not be misconstrued as

"The services provided during this process, including navigation assistance and environmental protection measures, require cost recovery. However, this should not be interpreted as the imposition of transit fees," he stated.

Baqaei emphasized that Iran and Oman, as the two littoral states bordering the Strait of Hormuz, bear the principal responsibility for maintaining security and ensuring the safe passage of vessels through the waterway. He also dismissed reports suggesting possible Eu-

ropean involvement in administering the strait, particularly proposals attributed to Britain and France.

"Is there any neighboring country around the Strait of Hormuz other than Iran and Oman?" he asked. "It is the sole responsibility of Iran and Oman to take the necessary measures, and we are currently fulfilling that responsibility."

The Iranian spokesperson argued that external proposals lacking legal or geographical legitimacy risk further complicating an already sensitive regional situation.

Baqaei attributed recent instability in the strategic waterway to "unlawful actions" by the United States and the Israeli regime during and after their military aggression against Iran.

He stressed that Tehran and Muscat are seeking to establish a credible and internationally reliable navigation framework because they believe the Strait of Hormuz must remain open and operational for all nations engaged in lawful trade and maritime commerce.

"The reason Iran and Oman are working to establish a reliable and effective mechanism is our belief that this international waterway should remain open for free trade and safe navigation for all nations," Baqaei noted.

While emphasizing that he was not issuing threats, the spokesperson warned that any future aggression against Iran could have broader regional repercussions.

"Our armed forces do not speak frequently, but they will demonstrate in practice that any future response will be carried out with greater intensity and scope," he said.

Qalibaf's reelection reinforces Iran's military-political continuity amid US psychological warfare

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN – The reelection of Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf as Speaker of the Iranian Parliament by an overwhelming majority carries significant political weight amid a psychological warfare campaign waged by the United States and Israel following their setbacks in the recent war.

On Monday morning, Qalibaf secured 235 of the 271 votes cast by lawmakers in the legislature's first session since the start of the joint US-Israeli war on February 28. He has now assumed the top parliamentary post for a third term in the current parliament, which began its four-year mandate in May 2024 and will run until May 2028. He also served as Speaker throughout the previous parliament from May 2020 to May 2024.

Qalibaf is an Iranian politician and former military commander who has held several senior positions within Iran's political and security establishment. At the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War in 1980, he joined the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) and served as a frontline commander, later rising to lead key divisions in major operations during the conflict. He subsequently built a long career in Iran's security and political system, serving as head of the IRGC Air Force in the 1990s and later as Chief of the Iranian Police Force (NAJA) from 2000 to 2005. Before becoming Speaker of Parliament, he was Mayor of Tehran from 2005 to 2017, overseeing major urban development and infrastructure projects.

Qalibaf has been an active voice during the US-Israel war, articulating Iran's official political and military positions. He has also participated in high-level diplomatic engagements following a ceasefire on April 8 that temporarily halted 39 days of fighting.

Since the Pakistani-mediated negotiations were held in Islamabad on April 11, he



has served as Iran's top negotiator in talks with the US. Qalibaf has stressed that Iran remains open to dialogue but will not give in to pressure, threats, or political coercion from Washington.

Qalibaf is widely regarded as a trusted figure within Iran's political and military establishment, and his public profile has grown during the course of the conflict. On May 17, he was appointed Iran's special representative for China affairs following a proposal by President Masoud Pezeshkian and approval by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei. The appointment reflects the importance of strengthening strategic ties with China, which has strongly condemned the US-Israel war.

In a broader context, Qalibaf's expanding role reflects a consolidation of Iran's political and security messaging amid regional tensions and confrontation with the United States and Israel.

President Donald Trump has claimed that rifts exist between Iran's military and po-

litical leadership. Qalibaf and other Iranian officials have dismissed such claims, describing them as part of a broader information and media campaign aimed at shaping perceptions rather than reflecting realities on the ground. Qalibaf has argued that these narratives are intended to obscure strategic setbacks for the United States and its allies.

For Iran, engagement with the United States is viewed as a means of translating battlefield success into political leverage while maintaining a firm stance against pressure in negotiations. Hence, Qalibaf's combined military and political background has positioned him as an important figure in shaping this approach.

Overall, Qalibaf's reelection shows continuity in Iran's political system at a time of increased external pressure. It reflects institutional unity and a preference for experienced leaders in handling confrontation, diplomacy, and domestic stability. His role is likely to remain central in shaping Iran's parliamentary direction and its wider response to regional and international challenges.

It is just a supradiplomatic op-ed

From page 1 ► we halt engagement. This is precisely the policy we demonstrated in the face of Alexander's invasion, the Arabs, the Mongols, the Portuguese, the Russians, the British, and the Americans. Engagement is our instrument, not our objective. Our objective is the preservation and strengthening of Iran — not becoming something shaped to suit the preferences of others.

2. Rights are permanent and non-negotiable

Sovereignty over our land, the right to independent decision-making, the preservation of national identity and territorial integrity, and every other civilizational right are not commodities to us. These are not matters to be bargained over at a negotiating table.

In Iranian culture, rights are understood as sacred and enduring. In the Shahnameh — not merely a literary masterpiece, but an anthropological distillation of Iranian civilization — Ferdowsi repeatedly shows that even great kings fall when they violate what is right, regardless of their power. Cyrus, in his charter, recognized the rights of different peoples, yet never sacrificed the rights of Iran itself. We follow the same path.

Any agreement that seeks to trade away part of these rights under the pretext of "expediency" or "realism" is, in our view, illegitimate. History has taught us that a nation which sells its rights will, sooner or later, lose its very existence as well.

3. Justice is the only way to close the file of injustice

Injustice is a wound. It does not heal with time; it festers and poisons generations. We have seen this repeatedly throughout our history: from the Mongol devastations to the imposed treaties of the nineteenth century and the injustices of the modern era. Capitulation was among the major motivations behind our Islamic Revolution.

When injustice occurs, there is only one remedy: the establishment of justice. That means recognizing what is right, compensating for both material and moral damages, and creating mechanisms that make the repetition of injustice impossible.

Anushirvan was remembered as "the Just" not because of military power, but because of justice. We revere Ali because he was killed in his place of worship

for the sake of justice. Zoroaster regarded Asha — truth and justice — as the foundation of the world itself; without it, the world descends into corruption.

We do not forget justice because we know that forgetting justice is an invitation to the next injustice. In our view, problems must be resolved at their roots, not concealed beneath forced or transactional "forgiveness."

4. Human life is the most sacred red line

Above all else stands human life. The blood of an Iranian, the life of a citizen, is the most sacred value beyond negotiation.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

# Iran negotiation team travels to Qatar to continue diplomacy

TEHRAN - A high-ranking Iranian delegation headed by Parliament Speaker and top negotiator Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf travelled to Qatar on Monday afternoon amid increasing mediation efforts to bring a permanent end to the joint US-Israel war that began on February 28.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Central Bank Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati were among the delegation members to discuss the process of finalizing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Tehran and Washington.

The presence of the Central Bank chief is significant, as Iran has stressed that the immediate release of \$12 billion in frozen assets held in Qatar is a precondition for signing the MoU.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson said in his weekly press briefing on Monday that conclusions have been reached on many topics discussed in the potential MoU. However, he stressed that this does not mean Tehran is close to signing an agreement.

"It is correct to say that we have reached a conclusion on a large portion of the issues under discussion. But to say that this means the signing of an agreement is imminent — no one can make such a claim," Esmail Baghaei, who was also recently appointed as spokesperson for Iran's negotiating team with the US, said.

Baghaei stressed that any deal with the United States must include recognition of Iran's rights over the management of the Strait of Hormuz and an end to Israeli strikes in Lebanon.

## Iran will not yield to pressure or excessive demands: Pezeshkian

TEHRAN - Iran will not surrender to pressure or excessive demands, President Masoud Pezeshkian said, stressing that Tehran's negotiations and foreign engagements are aimed at fully securing the rights of the Iranian nation.

Pezeshkian made the remarks during a meeting on Monday with members of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, convened to review and address the challenges facing economic actors — particularly those in the private sector — following developments stemming from the recent US-Israeli war of aggression.

Highlighting Iran's policy of expanding regional and neighborhood economic engage-

ment, the president said his administration has sought to facilitate trade and boost exports by strengthening ties with neighboring countries and leveraging the nation's geo-economic capacities.

Pezeshkian added that despite the regional security situation, many of Iran's neighboring countries along its northwestern and eastern borders are now more inclined than before to expand economic and commercial cooperation with Tehran.

He also described the economic potential of regional frameworks and agreements — including the Eurasian Economic Union, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the BRICS — as significant opportunities for ex-

panding foreign trade.

The Iranian administration's approach, the president noted, is to maximize the use of regional and international markets in order to develop non-oil exports and support Iranian traders. He added that efforts have been made to strengthen economic diplomacy and facilitate the introduction, marketing, and expansion of Iranian products abroad.

The president further emphasized that Iran's negotiations and foreign engagement process has been structured to ensure the full realization of the rights of the Iranian people, reiterating that the country will under no circumstances yield to pressure or excessive demands.

sovereignty, adherence to international law, and coordination of development and security. Iran has endorsed the Chinese plan.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson also praised China's four-point plan as a "valuable proposal," describing China's role in promoting regional peace and stability as "very constructive and useful."

Qatar and Oman have also made efforts to bridge the gap between Tehran and Washington. However, Trump's inconsistency, which is believed to be influenced by Netanyahu, has undermined the prospects for a lasting truce.

During 39 days of war, the US and Israel not only bombed Iran's military sites but also residential areas and energy infrastructure, killing thousands of people. Iran, in response, carried out 100 waves of missile and drone strikes on Israel and American bases in the region. The military and economic cost of the war pushed Trump to accept a ceasefire with Iran.

Trump initially agreed to Iran's conditions but has since continued to shift the goalposts.

In addition to his contradictory statements, Trump said on Monday that it should be "mandatory" for certain countries in the region — Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, and Pakistan — to sign up to the Abraham Accords as part of US efforts to reach a broader deal with Iran.

Such comments leave little doubt that Israel is pulling the strings of US foreign policy in the West Asia region.



In the briefing, he also said that no nuclear issues would be included in the memorandum, except for a commitment to further negotiations within the next 60 days.

Iran has reiterated that it will not transfer its stockpile of highly enriched uranium to a third country and that domestic uranium enrichment remains a red line. President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, meanwhile, have demanded that Iran dispose of its stockpile of highly enriched uranium.

Overall, Iran's main conditions for ending the conflict include the lifting of sanctions, the release of frozen assets, compensation for damage caused by the US and Israeli war, recognition of Iran's sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz, an end to Israeli strikes in Lebanon, and the lifting of the US naval blockade of Iranian ports.

The US imposed the naval blockade after Pakistan-mediated talks between Iran and the US in Islamabad on April 11 ended

without a breakthrough due to what Tehran calls the US excessive demands. The talks followed the April 8 ceasefire that paused 39 days of war.

Following the failure of the Islamabad talks, Pakistan has intensified its mediation efforts.

On Saturday, Pakistan's Chief of Defense Forces, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, made his second visit to Tehran since the ceasefire and held talks with senior officials to advance the peace process.

Munir, who has been at the center of mediation efforts between Washington and Tehran, along with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, also held talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing on Monday.

In his meeting with Sharif, Xi said he appreciated Islamabad's "constructive role in mediating peace in the Middle East."

China has also made efforts to help end the war on Iran. President Xi unveiled a four-point peace proposal for the Middle East in mid-April, emphasizing peaceful coexistence, respect for

## LATEST NEWS

### Iran will not back down: SNSC secretary

Tehran "will not back down," Iran's new SNSC secretary, Mohammad Baqer Zolqadr, said in his first message to the nation since assuming office, stressing that the battlefield, diplomacy, and the resilience of the Iranian people had all demonstrated the enemy's failure.

Zolqadr emphasized that Iran now needs greater unity and national unity than ever before to frustrate the United States and the Israeli regime further.

He described national solidarity as "another front of resistance," urging all citizens to prevent divisive rhetoric and actions to secure Iran's "final victory."

### Pakistan army chief says Iran-US deal in sight

"Iran and the United States are close to reaching an agreement," Pakistan's Field Marshal Asim Munir said after talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing. Munir highlighted Pakistan's ongoing mediation efforts and expressed hope for a stronger Chinese role, while Beijing praised Islamabad as a trusted mediator committed to advancing regional diplomacy and de-escalation.

### No enemy capable of confronting powerful Iran: Army

Commander of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army's Ground Forces Brig. Gen. Ali Jahanshahi has said that no enemy is capable of

confronting the powerful country of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the worldwide.

### Berri: Proof of any Iran-US deal lies in implementation

Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri stated that any potential Iran-US agreement involving Lebanon must be judged by its practical execution, as regional mediation efforts intensify. However, Israeli forces continue operations in southern Lebanon.

### Diplomat: Iran's initial draft with US includes no nuclear commitments

A senior Iranian diplomat has denied rumors that Tehran accepted nuclear restrictions in a potential initial deal with Washington. Hossein Noushabadi told ISNA claims of a 20-year enrichment suspension are "pure fabrication." Iran's draft focuses on ceasing hostilities, lifting sanctions, releasing frozen assets, ending the US naval blockade, reopening the Strait of Hormuz, and withdrawing US troops. Nuclear issues would only be discussed in a later 60-day phase after full sanctions lifting.

### 'New Middle East' emerges as Iran's role rises, Israel's wanes: Al-Akhbar

A Lebanese daily says a looming Iran-US memorandum signals a "New Middle East" shaped by Tehran, not Tel Aviv. The end of Israel's hegemonic project and the collapse of Trump's maximum pressure strategy are noted. While Iran gains regional influence, Washington eyes economic benefits.

### China offered Iran mediation, Trump declined: Chinese scholar

Professor Hongda Fan said China offered to help mediate the Iran conflict during the recent China-US summit, but President Donald Trump rejected Beijing's proposal. Fan stressed that China remains committed to ending the conflict through diplomatic efforts, including support for regional mediation initiatives led by Pakistan and Qatar.

### China condemns US-Israeli war on Iran, urges dialogue

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning reaffirmed Beijing's opposition to the US-Israeli war on Iran, saying the conflict "should never have happened." She stressed that dialogue and negotiation remain the only viable path forward and urged all sides not to close the door to diplomacy. China also criticized Washington's military actions and maritime threats as destabilizing and irresponsible.

### US senator calls Trump's war on Iran 'a big blunder from the start'

Senator Chris Van Hollen said President Trump's war against Iran was "a big blunder from the very beginning." In a Sunday interview, Hollen noted that before the conflict, the Strait of Hormuz was open, but now Iran appears poised to gain more control. He accused Trump of breaking pledges to avoid war and lower prices, as Americans now face soaring costs and an Iran war with no tangible gains.

## Nemati expresses concerns for Iran's Para archery team

TEHRAN - Iran's Para Archery national team head coach, Zahra Nemati, has voiced significant apprehension regarding the team's prospects for the Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games. Citing the ongoing conflict, Nemati revealed that Iran has secured only three qualification quotas for the Games, and alarmingly, even these qualified athletes are reportedly far from peak physical condition.

The Open Para Archery Championships, commencing this year, are slated to serve as a crucial performance evaluation for the national team. Nemati indicated that the championships will allow the team to reassess their standing after a prolonged period of inactivity and will also provide a platform to identify and scout emerging talent, emphasizing that the national team remains open to new athletes.

"Regrettably, due to the prevailing war conditions, we were forced to miss the World Championships in Thailand," Nemati stated. "This event represented our final opportunity to qualify for Nagoya and was the most significant tournament for Para archery. We had initially registered 12 athletes for classification and qualification at the Worlds in Thailand, but that chance has been lost. Furthermore, we were unable to participate in the Asian Championships due to the 12-day war. All these circumstances have unfortunately left Para archery in a precarious and unlucky position as we look towards Nagoya."

Nemati highlighted the stark contrast with previous Games: "While we achieved considerable success and secured numerous medals in the prior Asian Para Games, this time we are entering with a mere three quotas—in the men's recurve and compound divisions. This is a deeply concerning development. We were unable to accumulate the necessary points in the other competitive categories. Our hope is that through diligent international negotiations, we can secure an additional opportunity to compete in Nagoya with the largest possible contingent. The Paralympic Committee and the Disabled Sports Federation of Iran are actively engaged in discussions to potentially bring this chance back to our archery community."

The three confirmed athletes for Nagoya are Hadi Nouri (compound), Gholamreza Rahimi, and Mohammadreza Arab Ameri (recurve). Nemati elaborated on their current challenges: "Unfortunately, Hadi Nouri is battling illness, which has significantly hampered his training and preparation. In the recurve division, Arab Ameri sustained a severe injury post the Paris Paralympics, necessitating surgery. Our efforts are intensely focused on his rehabilitation through physiotherapy to ensure his return to competitive form."

She added, "We are dedicating all our resources to bring these three athletes back to their professional best and ensure they deliver a formidable performance in Nagoya. In the women's category, the opportunity to qualify has regrettably been missed due to the prevailing war circumstances."

Nemati further explained the significance of the upcoming Open Archery Championships: "These championships offer us a vital chance to earn the required scores and compile documentation to present to the World Archery Federation, advocating for our results from these open competitions to be recognized for participation in Nagoya, Japan. We are actively engaged in discussions with the global federation, and we remain hopeful for a positive outcome."

Looking ahead, Nemati outlined the team's immediate schedule: "Prior to Nagoya, our sole remaining competition is the World Championships in the Czech Republic. This event is critical for athlete classification and gaining valuable competitive experience. The championships are scheduled for June 29. However, given the current war situation, even this event presents uncertainties, as most embassies are currently closed. Nevertheless, we have submitted our visa applications and await further developments," Nemati concluded, underscoring the persistent challenges facing the team.

## Iran march into 2026 CAVA semifinals

TEHRAN - The Iranian women's national volleyball team septs past Kazakhstan in straight sets (25-22, 25-20, 25-22) in the Central Asian Volleyball Association (CAVA) on Monday.

The tournament, hosted in Nepal from May 22 to 29, sees the top regional sides vying for continental glory.

Under the guidance of head coach Lee Doh-see, Iran have defeated Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in their first two matches in Pool B.

Team Melli will play Pool A's second team in semifinals on Thursday.

The CAVA Women's Volleyball Championship 2026 continues through May 29 in Kathmandu as teams compete for regional honors and strengthen sporting ties across the region.

## Iran wins bronze at Trampoline Asian Championships 2026

TEHRAN - Iran's team won a bronze medal at the 7th Trampoline Asian Championships.

Iran's Arya Akhavan and Emad Balanejad finished in third place in youth division.

In the competition underway at Runway 11, AsiaWorld-Expo in Hong Kong, a total of 10 teams have participated in a major continental competition.

It's a key qualification event for the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games.

Sanctioned by the Asian Gymnastics Union (AGU) and World Gymnastics, and organized by The Gymnastics Association of Hong Kong, China, the Championships welcomed around 200 gymnasts from 10 countries and regions, including Hong Kong, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Philippines, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

## Manolopoulos to return to Iran on Tuesday

TEHRAN - After a three-month hiatus, Greece's Sotiris Manolopoulos is set to return to Tehran this Tuesday, marking a critical turning point in Iran's preparation for the remainder of the FIBA World Cup Qualifiers.

The head coach, who has been away since the conclusion of the second qualifying window, will arrive on May 26th to oversee a rigorous training camp starting June 1st. His return signals the restart of Iran's campaign, which was abruptly disrupted in March following regional security tensions that led to the cancellation of the match against Syria.

Before the national team camp officially begins, Manolopoulos will waste no time in assessing the domestic talent pool. He is scheduled to attend the West Asia Basketball Club Championship qualifiers in Karaj, where he will closely scout players to finalize his squad list for the upcoming international fixtures.

Mohsen Moezifar, Secretary of the Iranian Basketball Federation, confirmed the news to reporters, signaling that the federation is fully aligned with the coach's road map.

### A Crucial Summer Stretch

The road ahead is demanding. The Iranian squad faces a packed schedule in Jordan, which has been designated by FIBA as the host venue for the upcoming games:

\* **June 29:** The rescheduled second-window clash against Syria

\* **July 2:** The return leg against Jordan (Third Window)

\* **July 5:** The return leg against Syria (Third Window)

## Preserving specialized human capital: Lessons from South Korea for Iran's economic recovery

By Pooya Firouzi & Morteza Soltanpour Abyaneh

TEHRAN— Facing post-war conditions and large-scale economic reconstruction requires the definitive protection of a country's most critical asset: "specialized human capital." In the face of major economic shocks and structural demand declines, the traditional and passive approach of governments often focuses on paying "unemployment benefits" after mass layoffs have occurred. This strategy not only imposes a heavy financial burden on the public budget but also leads to the waste of organizational skills, a decline in the national employer brand, and triple the cost of rehiring during boom periods.

An examination of South Korea's historical experience during the 1997 financial crisis (IMF Crisis) shows that shifting the paradigm from "passive post-unemployment support" to "preventive employment stability subsidies" is the most effective solution for preserving the stability of corporate employment chains. This document attempts to explain the financial and legal structure of this successful international tool for potential localization within the country's labor market decision-making system.

This report was prepared by the Iran-South Korea Chamber of Commerce to provide practical solutions for reconstruction without workforce reduction, aiming to transfer South Korea's experience to Iranian economic enterprises in post-war conditions.

### What do the statistics say?

Processed data from the Korea Labor Institute (KLI) and the OECD reveal the dynamics of macro labor market management at the peak of the crisis:

\* Peak Crisis Control: South Korea's official unemployment rate was at full employment levels of 1.2% before the shock. With the onset of the crisis, this rate jumped to an average of 7.0%, and in the worst month of the labor market (winter 1998) peaked at 8.4%, affecting 2 million people. However, smart interventions prevented the unemployment rate from reaching double digits.

· Sharing the Crisis Burden: The workforce, understanding the situation, accepted a 9.3% reduction in real wages and a 33.8% cut in bonus payments. This flexibility prevented the cash drain of enterprises.

\* V-Shaped Economic Recovery: Preserving the human resource structure within factories meant that when the market recovery began in 1999, the Korean economy immediately returned to its production capacity ceiling without wasting time on advertising, hiring, and retraining processes, recording a stunning +10.7% jump in GDP.

### \* Part One: A System Called "Paid Reduced Work Hours (Work Sharing)"

After the 1997 financial crisis, just as many countries were resorting to mass layoffs, South Korea chose a completely different path. They designed a system called "Work Sharing"; meaning that instead of firing workers, everyone's working hours are temporarily reduced, and the government pays the wage difference. The result of this smart measure became a triple-win: the enterprise saves on wage costs, the worker keeps their job, and the government prevents a surge in unemployment by paying subsidies.

### Part Two: Layoff as a Last Resort, Not the First Choice

Alongside financial incentives, South Korea also designed a strict legal framework. According to the country's labor law, layoffs are permitted only when four essential conditions are met: First, the enterprise must prove it is in a severe crisis and would go bankrupt without layoffs. Second, the employer is obliged to try all alternative solutions first, such as reducing working hours, unpaid leave, retraining, and using government subsidies. Third, the selection of workers for layoffs must be completely fair, and under no circumstances should contract workers or union members be the first victims. Fourth, the employer must negotiate with worker representatives for at least fifty days in good faith to seek an agreement. The enforcement of such regulations prevented arbitrary and mass layoffs.

### Part Three: An Agreement that Worked

In South Korea, many creative and practical solutions have been implemented between employers and workers that are also applicable to Iran. These include the company "Solidarity Fund," where workers and employers voluntarily deposit a portion of their wages or profits to rehabilitate struggling enterprises without layoffs. Also, flexible rotating shifts, where work teams are divided into groups that work every other



week or month, and during off-weeks participate in rehabilitation training courses. Another method is the temporary transfer of workers between enterprises: companies with reduced activity send their temporary surplus workers to companies in the same area that need labor; after the crisis, workers return to their original company. Another successful solution is converting overdue wages into company shares, which both preserves the company's liquidity and makes workers partners in the reconstruction.

### Part Four: The Active Role of the Workforce

In the South Korean model, workers are not just spectators of the crisis; they play an active and responsible role in preserving the enterprise. Voluntary acceptance of reduced working hours as an alternative to laying off colleagues is one of the biggest signs of this solidarity. Korea's experience shows that teams that collectively decide to work fewer hours so that no one gets laid off emerge from the crisis much more cohesive and productive than before. Additionally, forming reconstruction advisory teams composed of worker representatives and company managers provides creative solutions for utilizing existing capacities. Participating in free multi-skilling training courses transforms workers into far more valuable assets in exchange for keeping their jobs. Finally, proposing to convert overdue debt into an amicable installment plan with zero interest and a defined repayment period, instead of filing lawsuits and shutting down the company, demonstrates the maturity of labor relations in this country.

### Part Five: Three Golden Principles for Sustainable Understanding

South Korea has formulated three fundamental principles for creating sustainable understanding between employer and worker in crisis situations. The first principle is complete information transparency. In reconstruction situations, secrecy is the greatest poison. Managers must share financial statements, the extent of damages, and reconstruction plans with the worker council. Experience shows that when workers see the situation is genuinely difficult, they step up themselves. The second principle is the fair distribution of hardship. Managers should never receive bonuses while workers are laid off. In successful Korean companies, senior executives cut their salaries by fifty percent during the crisis, while workers only endured a ten percent cut. This fairness creates lifelong loyalty. The third principle is celebrating small victories. Every step taken toward reconstruction, even if small, should be celebrated with all workers to keep hope and motivation alive in the team.

### Conclusion: Reconstruction With Human Resources, Not Without

Workforce reduction in post-war conditions deals the heaviest blow to both the enterprise and the country. South Korea's experience clearly shows that enterprises that preserve their skilled and experienced human resources during difficult times return to the field with greater strength and speed when the crisis ends. But enterprises that resort to premature layoffs lose their precious human capital and pay many times more to hire and train new personnel after the crisis. Today, Iran needs every hand, every skill, and every heart. The South Korean model clearly shows that understanding between employer and worker is not just an ethical slogan but an intelligent economic strategy for reconstruction. Work-sharing systems, solidarity funds, rotating shifts, temporary worker transfers, converting wages to shares, and fifty-day negotiations are all tools that have proven in practice that one can emerge from the deepest crises without layoffs and rebuild the country.

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

# Petrodollar loop broken as Iran war chokes Persian Gulf wealth

TEHRAN – The escalating war with Iran is doing more than disrupting oil tankers. Analysts warn it is shattering the 50-year-old "petrodollar loop" that has quietly subsidized American borrowing costs and lubricated global finance.

In normal times, Persian Gulf states recycle their vast oil surplus into foreign assets like U.S. Treasuries. This keeps U.S. interest rates low while providing liquidity to world markets. The current conflict has broken that system.

First, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz – a chokepoint for 20% of global petroleum – has slashed revenue. With less money coming in, Persian Gulf monarchies have far fewer petrodollars to invest abroad.



Second, what little revenue remains is being redirected. Massive military expenditures and future reconstruction needs are consuming funds that once flowed to New York and London.

The real-world impact is al-

ready visible. Foreign holdings of U.S. Treasuries have dropped significantly, and global central banks have become net sellers of American debt.

"The war isn't creating this shift but accelerating it," one ana-

lyst noted. "We are witnessing the end of a historic free lunch that for decades lowered borrowing costs for the American taxpayer."

With energy, trade routes, and capital flows all under threat, the world faces not just higher oil prices but a permanent realignment of global finance.

For American consumers and businesses, the end of the petrodollar loop could mean persistently higher borrowing costs on mortgages, car loans, and government debt. Meanwhile, Persian Gulf states, long reliant on exporting their surplus, now face a stark choice. The full consequences of this rupture will take years to unfold, but the era of cheap, plentiful Persian Gulf capital recycling into Western markets appears to be over.

## Iran's gas export capacity to thirsty neighboring markets

TEHRAN— Iran, relying on the world's second-largest gas reserves, seeks to expand exports to its energy-thirsty neighbors in order to consolidate its role in regional security and trade.

According to Mehr News Agency, Iran, as one of the world's primary holders of gas reserves, has always faced numerous challenges and opportunities in the field of energy diplomacy. While demand for natural gas in the West and South Asia is increasing rapidly due to industrial growth and the need for electricity, many neighboring countries are grappling with a lack of domestic resources or challenges in securing sustainable energy. This situation has created high demand in the markets of Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan, Oman, and India, where Iran, by leveraging its geopolitical position and existing infrastructure, can emerge as a major supplier to meet part of these countries' needs.

Although in recent years, factors such as international sanctions and the need for heavy investment in the development of fields and transmission pipelines have prevented maximum exploitation of these opportunities, economic necessities and the urgent need of neighbors for sustainable resources continue to act as a primary driver. This report examines various dimensions of demand in these markets and the prospects for Iran's interactions with them. In fact, Iran's geographical position is such that it can act as an energy bridge between its rich domestic resources and major consumption centers in the west and east. This capability, combined with the growing needs of neighbors for cheap and reliable energy, has cre-

ated a strategic opportunity that, in addition to generating foreign exchange earnings, can also strengthen Iran's political position in global equations. Given the global increase in demand for cleaner fuels, natural gas as a transition fuel has gained a more prominent role, and this has added to the attractiveness of regional markets for major suppliers.

### Export infrastructure caught between politics

Turkey, as the gateway for Iran's energy to Europe, and Iraq, as the current main customer, hold special positions in gas policies. While Turkey seeks to diversify its sources and become a gas hub, Iraq remains dependent on Iranian gas for its power plants. Iran-Turkey gas relations have always been a mix of stable commercial interactions and price negotiations. For Turkey, Iranian gas is vital not only for domestic consumption but also to feed its growing industries. On the other hand, due to war-damaged infrastructure and an urgent need for electricity to prevent social crises, Iraq has consistently required cheap and accessible Iranian gas.

Although efforts have been made to increase gas production in Iraq, the supply-demand gap in the country remains. Turkey, despite access to Azerbaijani and Russian pipelines and LNG terminals, still views Iranian gas as a complementary source. These two countries have shown that despite external pressures, they prioritize their energy security above all else. Meanwhile, optimal management of pipelines and ensuring the stability of gas flow can transform Iran from an ordinary seller into an irreplaceable partner. The importance of these ties becomes

more evident during cold winter years when domestic demand in Iran and its neighbors peaks. Therefore, gas cooperation is not merely a commercial transaction but a guarantee of political stability among neighboring countries.

### Stalled projects in South Asia

The Peace Pipeline between Iran and Pakistan, which has been stalled for years due to political pressures and financial constraints, symbolizes the region's unresolved energy potential. Pakistan faces an energy shortage crisis, and India seeks to increase gas's share in its energy basket — factors that have left these markets thirsty. The Indian subcontinent, with its billion-plus population, will be the world's thirstiest energy market in the coming decades. Projects like the Peace Pipeline, although initially designed with an economic approach, became entangled in the complexities of global power politics. Due to an inability to secure financing and fear of sanctions, Pakistan has so far been unable to complete its portion of the pipeline. However, Pakistan's need for energy is so acute that its authorities have repeatedly emphasized the necessity of completing this project. India, as one of the world's largest energy consumers, although currently meeting its needs through LNG, could see a significant reduction in energy costs via a pipeline. Competition among suppliers in this region is very intense, with Russia and the Gulf states vying for market share. In the meantime, Iran offers the only secure and cheap land access to these markets. If active diplomacy can remove the obstacles, this route could bring about a major transformation in Iran's economy.

## All raw materials needed for production available in country

TEHRAN— The Deputy Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade stated: "All the raw materials needed for production are available in storage within the country, and in addition, imports are being carried out through various channels."

Mohammad Sadegh Mofatteh, Deputy Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade, told Mehr News Agency regarding the supply of raw materials needed by the country: "The necessary measures have been taken to supply raw materials, and there is no

problem in this regard."

He added: "All the raw materials needed for production are available in storage within the country, and in addition, imports are being carried out through various channels, and we have no restrictions."

Mofatteh clarified: "Necessary coordination has been made with customs, railways, and other transport sectors, and goods are entering the country via rail, road, and other routes, so there is no problem in this respect."

## Over 66,000 residential units ready for inauguration

TEHRAN— The Deputy Minister of Housing and Construction of the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development announced that more than 66,000 residential units across the country are ready to be inaugurated and handed over to applicants.

According to a report by IRNA from the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, Habibollah Taherkhani stated during the weekly monitoring meeting of housing support plans, held in the presence of the Minister of Transport and Urban Development: "In total, over 66,800 subsidized 99-year residential units — including urban, rural, armed forces, Mehr housing, urban self-owned, and distressed urban fabric units — are ready for inauguration and transfer to applicants in the country."

Referring to the coordination and unity

among officials of various institutions related to reconstruction during and after the imposed Ramadan war, he declared: "During this period, there was a high level of coordination and cooperation between the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, the Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation, Bank Maskan, the Engineering System Organization, and other relevant bodies and institutions. Tasks such as providing temporary accommodation deposit facilities to eligible applicants were completed in the shortest possible time."

### Emphasis on equipping rental units for young couples

The Deputy Minister of Transport and Urban Development also noted the planning to start registration for the rental housing scheme for young couples, saying: "Registra-

tion for the rental housing supply scheme for young couples will begin soon. Young couples without housing who have been married for less than five years and fall within income deciles 1 to 6 can enroll in this scheme."

He added: "An important issue in providing rental housing for young couples is the emphasis on completing and making these units habitable in terms of equipment such as cabinets, package boilers, radiators, and other interior fixtures."

Taherkhani, noting the provision of a significant number of rental units in the first phase of this scheme in metropolitan areas such as Tehran and Mashhad, as well as in new towns, said: "Provinces and new towns should focus on equipping the units so that they can offer these units to the rental market as soon as possible."

## Slab production increases 10.2% in a year

TEHRAN— According to the statistics of the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA), production of slab in Iran increased by 10.2 percent during the past Iranian calendar year 1404 (ended on March 20), as compared to the preceding year.

Based on the ISIPA data, 12,378

million tons of slab was produced in 1404, while the figure was 11,233 million tons in 1403.

In the steel industry, a slab is a semi-finished flat product with a rectangular cross-section, typically produced via continuous casting. Molten steel is solidified into widths ranging from 0.8 to

2.2 meters and thicknesses of 150–250 millimeters.

Slabs serve as the essential feedstock for hot strip mills and plate mills. They are reheated and rolled into finished flat products such as hot-rolled coil, sheet, and heavy plates—key materials for automotive body panels,

shipbuilding, pipelines, and construction. Quality control of slabs, including surface inspection and internal soundness, is critical as defects can propagate into final goods. Efficient slab handling and storage also optimize downstream production logistics.

From page 1 ▶ Opposition leader Yair Lapid framed the lack of Israeli involvement as an unprecedented historical disaster, complaining that Israel has been reduced to a mere demolitions contractor, utilized for firepower but discarded when terms are dictated.

Former deputy prime minister Avigdor Liberman delivered a blistering denunciation, calling any agreement a catastrophe because it leaves the Iranian leadership in power. He openly admitted military failure and accused Netanyahu of submissively transforming Israel into a banana republic.

Former Prime Minister Naftali Bennett peddled illusions of a "vengeful Iran rebuilding to buy time," and far-right politician Zvika Fogel accused Trump of wimping out.

## The neoconservative meltdown on Capitol Hill

In Washington, the hawkish chorus is equally frantic, exposing a deep fear that diplomacy could succeed where sheer military aggression has clearly failed.

Senators such as Lindsey Graham and Ted Cruz have cast the diplomacy as an apocalyptic surrender. Cruz warned that allowing a sovereign Iran to receive its own financial assets and control strategic waterways is a "disastrous mistake."

Graham claimed an early deal would become a nightmare for Israel, inadvertently confessing that geopolitical dominance is his true priority.

Former State Secretary Mike Pompeo furiously attacked the diplomatic process, comparing it to the Obama administration playbook and accusing mediators of abandoning an America First policy.

Former national security adviser John Bolton further accused the White House of failing to finish the job, lamenting the lost opportunity



to completely dismantle Iran.

Trump-aligned right-wing media figures have amplified this hysteria. Mark Levin raged against the word "ceasefire," demanding unconditional surrender and invoking Hitler analogies.

Laura Loomer complained that the Iranian government is now legitimized, emboldened, and celebrating the ceasefire.

## The collapse of a sabotage routine

This synchronized outrage signals the death rattle of the longstanding good-cop, bad-cop routine. For decades, Washington posed as the voice of restraint while Israel played the role of the erratic attack dog, using assassinations, sabotage, and military strikes to extract maximalist concessions or kill diplomacy altogether.

Now, Trump's blatant warmongering has left no room for such pretense, exposing the seamless coordination between Washington and Tel Aviv in their joint campaign against Iran.

Historically, whenever talks showed momentum, kinetic sabotage swiftly followed. In 1995, 2002, and during the extensive JCPOA negotiations, the Israel lobby weaponized Congress to block any meaningful rapprochement.

During the June 2025 Oman talks,

Israel launched surprise airstrikes hours before scheduled negotiations, a provocative move some believe was designed specifically to sabotage diplomacy, while some believe the whole negotiation process was only a ruse.

AIPAC and other pro-Israel groups have consistently supplied the organizational muscle, spending tens of millions of dollars to shape congressional votes and bombard offices with demands for military intervention.

However, that routine has now collapsed. The United States can no longer absorb the catastrophic global economic consequences of a prolonged maritime blockade.

Washington is seeking an exit ramp because Israel has fully exhausted its escalatory leverage, failing to achieve a single strategic victory despite raining immense destruction on the region.

## The roadmap for future disruption

Desperate to prevent normalization, the Israel lobby and its allied hawkish networks are preparing their sabotage playbook.

To disrupt the implementation window, lawmakers led by Roger Wicker and Thom Tillis are formulating legislative poison pills, demanding congressional ratification for any agreement.

They may intend to paralyze the White House from unfreezing assets by tying sanctions relief to implausible, non-negotiable demands, such as the total dismantlement of Iran's nuclear infrastructure.

Given the simmering tensions between Trump and the GOP establishment, this move is as much about domestic survival as it is about derauling diplomacy with Iran.

Trump's political capital is being drained by multiple scandals, including fierce backlash to his \$1.8 billion "anti-weaponization" slush fund for January 6 defendants, congressional rejection of the East Wing ballroom fund over cronyism accusations, Justice Department immunity battles, and allegations of diverted campaign funds, just months ahead of the 2026 midterms. This domestic chaos has emboldened the war party to sabotage his diplomatic efforts with renewed intensity.

Concurrently, Israel will likely attempt to manufacture crises through sudden escalations. By continuing aggressive strikes in Lebanon, Tel Aviv may hope to bait Iran and its allies, knowing full well that a comprehensive ceasefire must include all regional fronts.

False flag operations and targeted assassinations remain persistent threats, deliberately designed to create an emotional shock that resets negotiating dynamics in favor of the war party.

The neoconservative media ecosystem also stands ready to weaponize any Iranian defense as an unprovoked violation of the agreement.

Ultimately, this furious backlash exposes the institutional dependence of the anti-Iran consensus. Assuming the diplomatic process bears fruit, it can fundamentally threaten a political machine built entirely on permanent confrontation, arms procurement, and endless regional suffering.

## Why Iran will never surrender the Strait of Hormuz



From page 1 ▶ America launched the recent war against Iran without any legal or legitimate justification. Iran committed none of the acts that would warrant such a military campaign. This is a campaign aimed at uprooting the independent approach of the Iranian government. It is a campaign against anyone who thinks of becoming independent from the American will, and this is the essence of the matter.

Through this unjust war against Iran, America has actually given Iran a golden opportunity by effectively placing on a silver platter the possibility of moving toward control of the strait. The justification for Iran's control over the strait lies in the fact that it is a natural right, especially since Iran itself was attacked using this very waterway. Its territorial waters and adjacent waters were used in military operations against it, making control of the strait necessary for protecting its national security.

If we also consider that Iran faces sanctions, blockade, and economic isolation from the West, led by America, then the strait gains double importance. It is not only significant because it controls a major portion of global trade and energy supplies; it also becomes a weapon against sanctions. Sanctions can be met with sanctions, and blockade with blockade.

This weakens America's ability to enforce

economic pressure, especially since sanctions and embargoes have become central tools in U.S. strategic policy for imposing its agenda on other countries. Considering that the damage Iran could inflict on companies, institutions, or countries participating in sanctions against it may exceed the damage caused by American threats against them, Iran can significantly influence U.S. sanctions policy.

The American administration and President Trump believe that through threats, intimidation, and threats to strike Iranian infrastructure and strategic assets, they can force Iran into submission out of fear of worse consequences. This reflects a misunderstanding and miscalculation of Iran's nature.

The goals that were supposedly set to eliminate Iran through this war were actually strengthened by the war itself. The system became stronger instead of collapsing. The country became more united instead of divided. Border security became stronger instead of weaker. Unity between the people, the leadership, and the nation deepened instead of breaking apart. Millions took to the streets in support of the system and the revolution instead of revolting against it. Likewise, threats only produce positive outcomes in the Iranian case.

## Hezbollah kills two more Israeli soldiers in Lebanon

From page 1 ▶ An IOF military assessment reportedly found that Hezbollah's explosive drones "restrict nearly 70% of the operational freedom of (occupying) forces in southern Lebanon," according to Hebrew media.

Before the latest revelations on IOF casualties, Israel's Health Ministry announced five new injuries, bringing the total number of casualties since the beginning of the American-Zionist war on Iran through Sunday to 8,831.

The ministry stated that 930 of those injuries occurred after the ceasefire with Iran on April 8 and were linked specifically to the war in Lebanon.

Since the ceasefire in Lebanon was declared on April 17, a total of 515 injured soldiers has been admitted to hospitals.

These numbers continue to rise daily as Hezbollah maintains operations against the IOF in southern Lebanon in response to the U.S.-backed aggression and ongoing ceasefire violations.

The resistance movement has relied heavily on explosive drones in its operations, while the IOF

continues to struggle to find an effective solution to this growing challenge, leading to increasing deaths and injuries among the occupation forces.

On Monday, the IOF said a drone struck an area where its troops were operating in southern Lebanon after sirens warning of a hostile aircraft infiltration that sounded across several northern settlements.

In its latest operations, Hezbollah struck an IOF Merkava tank in the town of Debl with an Ababil loitering glider (FPV) confirming a direct hit. Other operations included an attack on an IOF artillery bunker and strikes on gatherings for the occupation regime's troops and vehicles. The resistance movement also published more videos documenting its recent operations with FPV drones.

The Lebanese Ministry of Health stated on Sunday that 3,151 people have been killed and 9,571 injured in the Israeli aggression on Lebanon since March 2. Most of them are women, children, and other civilians, including an increasing number of paramedics and rescue workers.

Meanwhile, Hezbollah's political council member Wafiq Safa affirmed that the resistance movement will never enter into any confrontation with the Lebanese Army, stressing that the military institution possesses "sufficient political and social awareness to protect Lebanon's interests."

In an interview, Safa said: "The day will never come when the resistance clashes with the Lebanese Army, which carries a national doctrine."

He added, "The resistance still possesses more surprises," emphasizing that these capabilities "will ultimately force the enemy to withdraw from Lebanon."

On the American-Iranian negotiations, Safa confirmed that "there will be no agreement unless Lebanon is included in it." The council member added: "This is what has been conveyed to us, to the Pakistanis, and to the Americans."

He also praised the role of Iran, saying: "It is enough of an honor for Iran that it stood up against American power, which no one today dares to confront."

## Huckabee's degrading remarks are deeply insulting to Lebanese

TEHRAN — Mike Huckabee, the U.S. ambassador to Israel and a passionate advocate of its wars in the region, has told the people of Lebanon to be grateful for Israeli contributions to their society.

Video of Huckabee speaking at the Atlas Awards in Tel Aviv on May 12 is being shared online after it was picked up by Chris Menahan of the news site Information Liberation.

In the speech, Huckabee extolls the various purported Israeli contributions to society, including USB drives, cherry tomatoes and seedless watermelons.

"I wonder if everyone in Lebanon understands that if there were no Israel, they wouldn't have a cell phone," Huckabee said, according to Middle East Eye.

These comments paint Huckabee profoundly unfit for a diplomatic post.

The most glaringly bizarre aspect of the speech is the comparison of human life to consumer goods.

In the middle of this immense human suffering in Lebanon at the hands of the occupation Israeli army, the U.S. diplomat suggests the appropriate emotional response for the Lebanese people should be gratitude for agricultural and tech innovations.

Telling people whose homes are being leveled to essentially say, "Well, my neighborhood is de-

stroyed, but at least this seedless watermelon is delicious, thank you Israel," moves past standard political spin into the realm of the surreal. It reads more like dark satire than the words of an official representative of the United States.

In the context of international relations, this is a form of diplomatic malpractice. Lebanon and Israel are in an active, bloody conflict. The southern border is a heavily fortified, mined, and actively bombarded war zone. Civilians attempting to return to their homes in the south are being targeted.

For a U.S. ambassador to publicly advise civilians in a hostile country to physically cross an active battle line to say thank you is not just odd—it is wildly irresponsible advice that, if actually followed, would result in immediate civilian casualties.

Diplomacy relies on nuance, historical awareness, and an understanding of deep-seated regional grievances. Huckabee reduced a multi-decade, highly complex geopolitical conflict down to a list of corporate patents and tech features.

By implying that Lebanon "wouldn't have a cell phone" without Israel, he ignores how globalized supply chains and technology work, while simultaneously using a patronizing "we civilized you" tone. This type of rhetoric serves no strategic purpose; it only deeply insults the



Mike Huckabee visits the Israeli-occupied Palestinian village of Taybeh in the West Bank in July 2025 (AFP)

population of a sovereign country.

By combining this "watermelon speech" with his previous statements that Israel should "take it all" (expanding borders from the Nile to the Euphrates), Huckabee completely destroys any pretense of U.S. neutrality or fairness. He sounds less like an ambassador representing the broader strategic interests of the United States and more like an absolute ideologue who views a complex war purely through a black-and-white, theological lens.

Statecraft requires tact, empathy, and a razor-sharp grip on reality. Suggesting that seedless watermelons and cherry tomatoes should outweigh the trauma of an active bombing campaign makes Huckabee look entirely out of touch with the gravity of his office.

## Hezbollah chief says clashes in South Lebanon is beginning of 'Israel's fall'

TEHRAN — Delivering a speech on Sunday evening, Hezbollah Secretary-General Sheikh Naim Qassem warned that drones by the resistance movement "will continue tracking the Israeli regime's soldiers, and without drone footage, the regime would never have acknowledged these losses."

Addressing both "friend and foe," Sheikh Qassem stressed that the resistance front "will defend the land, honor, and people."

He also warned, "Anyone who confronts us alongside Israel will be confronted just as we confront Israel. These weapons will remain in our hands until the state practically fulfills its duties."

Lebanon has come under pressure by Israel, the U.S. certain Arab states and political opponents at home that Hezbollah should be disarmed.

"There is no real political sovereignty in Lebanon, as the country remains under American guardianship. Sovereignty is not only security-related; it is also economic, political, and social," the Hezbollah chief regretted.

Sheikh Qassem stated: "The weapons will remain in our hands until the Lebanese state is capable of fulfilling its responsibilities," warning that "calls for exclusive state control over weapons at this stage serve an Israeli agenda and must be rejected."

He emphasized: "Disarmament means stripping Lebanon of its defensive capability in preparation for extermination, and this is something we will never accept."

He also called for an end to the aggression, the complete withdrawal of Israel from Lebanese territory, the release of prisoners, and the return of displaced residents before discussing a national defense strategy.

"What is happening today is a confirmation of Lebanon's survival as a strong and liberated nation; and what is taking place in the south is the beginning of Israel's downfall," he asserted.

He pointed to "real Israeli losses in southern Lebanon," while accusing Israel of responding by targeting civilians and homes.

Sheikh Qassem reiterated his rejection of direct talks between the Lebanese government and Israel, describing them as "a pure gain for the regime."

He said: "My advice to you is to abandon direct negotiations. Tell the United States not to demand anything from you. Then the Americans themselves will come running to seek an agreement."

Addressing the Lebanese government, he said: "We are not asking the state to confront the American-Zionist project, but it must not become a tool that facilitates it."

Sheikh Qassem affirmed that Hezbollah would continue resisting the U.S.-backed aggression "until achieving one of two victories: triumph or martyrdom."

He added: "All the killing and destruction are aimed at forcing us into submission, but we will never surrender. We will remain on the battlefield and emerge from this war with our heads held high."

## Shaneh Tarash revives traditional wooden comb craft to boost rural tourism



TEHRAN - A five-day workshop aimed at reviving the traditional craft of wooden comb making has been held in the village of Shaneh Tarash in northern Iran, local tourism officials said, as authorities seek to preserve indigenous handicrafts and strengthen community-based tourism.

The workshop, held from May 20 to May 24, was organized with the support of the Shaneh Tarash Sustainable Development Cooperative and the village council, according to the director general of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts in Mazandaran.

Officials said the initiative is part of broader efforts to revive a craft deeply tied to the village's cultural identity and historical livelihood.

Shaneh Tarash, located in Tonekabon county of Mazandaran province, amid the forested landscapes of northern Iran near the Caspian Sea, has long been known for the production of hand-carved wooden combs. The village's name reflects this heritage, as "Shaneh" means comb in Persian and "Tarash" refers to carving.

The provincial tourism official said the craft, once a major source of income for local residents, is now being reintroduced to younger generations through training programs and community participation.

According to officials, women and young people showed strong interest in the workshop, a development authorities described as encouraging for the future of the traditional industry and local employment opportunities.

"The active participation of women and youth could help revive this traditional art and create new sources of income in the region," the official said.

Authorities also said the wooden comb could become one of the village's signature handicraft products and a cultural souvenir for visitors, contributing to tourism growth and the local economy.

The workshop was held at the village's handicrafts innovation center, where training and production activities are continuing with the backing of the local cooperative.

Officials said they are also pursuing national recognition of wooden comb making as part of Iran's intangible cultural heritage, a step they believe could help promote the craft domestically and internationally.

In support of the initiative, village authorities said 5% of revenue generated from wooden comb sales will be allocated to projects aimed at preserving the village's cultural heritage, restoring local identity, and supporting long-term sustainable development.

## Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Nubian Monuments from Abu Simbel to Philae

The Nubian Monuments from Abu Simbel to Philae lie in the Governorate of Aswan. It is a serial property of ten component parts covering 374.48 ha: Abu Simbel, Amada, Wadi Seba, Kalabsha, Philae (Island of Agilkia), Old and Middle Kingdom Tombs, Ruins of town of Elephantine, Stone quarries and obelisk, Monastery of St. Simeon, and the Islamic Cemetery.

The first five component parts contain temples moved during the UNESCO International Campaign from 1960 to 1980 to save them from flooding by the Nile and Lake Nasser because they were recognized as in-

ternationally significant by the international community. The remaining five cover antiquities of the Aswan area.

This stretch of the Nile from Aswan in the north to the Sudanese border in the south is an archaeological haven. Home to temples ranging from the New Kingdom to the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, as well as early Coptic sites and villages, the region's monuments represent the breadth of Nubian cultural articulations, and the various influences shaping the culture over time.

# Eco-lodges offer tourists a window into traditional rural life

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN - In the mountainous villages, desert settlements and forested regions of Iran, a growing network of eco-lodges has become more than a form of rural accommodation.

Supporters say the traditional guesthouses are helping preserve local cultures, revive fading customs and provide economic opportunities in some of the country's less-developed areas.

Known in Iran as "boomgard" accommodations, the lodges are often restored traditional homes built with local materials and shaped by regional architectural styles. Their operators say the concept has evolved into a broader movement linking tourism, environmental awareness and community livelihoods.

"Eco-lodges have emerged from the ethnic and cultural diversity of the country," said Yavar Abiri, head of the Iranian Ecodge Association, in comments to the Tehran Times. "Each one, through its language, clothing, music, architecture and way of life, pursues a shared goal: preserving cultural identity and developing indigenous tourism."

Iran's eco-tourism sector has expanded significantly in recent years, particularly in rural regions that previously saw little tourist activity. According to Mohammad Jahanshahi, secretary of Iran's national committee for nature tourism and green tourism, around 4,000 eco-lodges are currently operating across the country, with nearly 80% located in villages and rural districts.

Advocates of the sector say its importance extends beyond tourism revenue. In many communities, old houses have been restored instead of abandoned, while local crafts, regional cuisine and traditional ceremonies have regained visibility through visitor demand.

"These lodges have been able to create employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in deprived and remote villages and have even played an effective role in reducing poverty," Abiri said.

The increased visibility of rural destinations has also helped channel tourism income into local economies, supporters say, strengthening small businesses and encouraging residents to remain in their villages rather than migrate to cities.

Iran's eco-lodges are often de-



signed around immersive cultural experiences rather than conventional hotel services. Visitors may sleep in mud-brick houses, eat locally sourced dishes, listen to regional music performances or participate in agricultural activities and handicraft workshops.

"Eco-tourism in Iran is not merely about sleeping in a rural house," said Azadeh Abedinzadeh, a tourism researcher and instructor. "It is an opportunity to experience a way of life in which the relationship between humans, nature and community has not yet been severed."

Speaking to the Tehran Times, she contrasted the concept with the commercial hospitality industry. "Hotels provide services," she said. "Eco-lodges narrate a way of living."

"Local food has become a central feature of many lodges. Operators increasingly serve regional dishes instead of standard urban menus, presenting food as part of each area's cultural memory and identity."

"Many customs, local foods, music traditions and traditional clothing that were fading away have been revived through eco-lodges," she said.

Alongside the accommodations themselves, village markets and small stalls selling handicrafts and locally produced goods have also grown around the sector. According to operators, these markets complement the tourism experience while providing additional income streams for local families.

Environmental sustainability has become another defining aspect of the movement. Oper-

ators and tourism activists say many eco-lodges are rooted in long-standing Iranian traditions of adapting architecture and resource use to local climates.

Traditional houses in different parts of Iran were historically designed to conserve water, regulate temperature naturally and rely on locally available materials. Advocates say modern eco-lodges often seek to maintain those principles through climate-adapted construction, waste management programs and efforts to reduce plastic consumption.

"From the first mud brick placed in an eco-lodge to the meal served to guests, environmental protection is central to our work," Abiri said. "Tourism should not become a wound on nature; it should help revive indigenous authenticity and support natural resources."

Despite the sector's cultural and environmental role, operators say eco-lodges face mounting economic pressures. Rising operational costs, declining purchasing power among domestic travelers and limited access to state support have placed many businesses under strain.

Eco-lodge representatives are calling for measures including loan repayment deferrals, revised utility tariffs for rural tourism businesses and tax exemptions to help small operators remain viable.

Abiri described eco-lodges as "the most modest sector in Iran," arguing that operators had carried part of the country's social and cultural responsibilities during difficult economic periods while receiving limited attention

in policy-making and resource allocation.

Another challenge identified by operators is the risk of standardization. Some tourism activists warn that copying luxury hotel models could undermine the distinct identity that gives eco-lodges their appeal.

"Eco-lodges are not supposed to become rural hotels," Abedinzadeh said. "Their value lies precisely in their differences — in simplicity, in closeness to nature and in preserving indigenous characteristics."

She and other advocates argue that training programs for the sector should focus on local culture, environmental awareness and community engagement rather than replicating conventional hotel industry standards.

Digital restrictions and internet disruptions have also become a concern for operators in rural areas, many of whom depend heavily on online platforms and social media to attract visitors and promote lesser-known destinations.

Even with the challenges, supporters say Iran's eco-lodges have become important cultural spaces that combine heritage preservation with economic survival for rural communities.

Today, they argue, eco-tourism in Iran can no longer be viewed solely as a branch of the travel industry. Instead, these houses stand at the intersection of cultural heritage, environmental education and local livelihoods, offering travelers a closer connection to the country's diverse traditions while providing villages with new economic opportunities.

## Ilam handicrafts exhibit in Iraq highlights cross-border cultural ties

TEHRAN - An exhibition showcasing handicrafts from Iran's western province of Ilam was held recently in the Iraqi city of Kut, drawing strong public interest and underscoring growing cultural and economic ties between the neighboring regions, a provincial official said.

Farzad Sharifi, director general of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts of Ilam province, said the 43rd Ilam handicrafts exhibition in Iraq was held on May 22 in Kut, the capital of Iraq's Wasit province.

Sharifi described the event as part of broader efforts to strengthen cultural diplomacy and expand economic co-

operation between Ilam and Wasit provinces through the promotion of traditional arts and local products.

"The exhibition once again demonstrated that the authentic art of Ilam can serve as a bridge between the peoples of Iran and Iraq beyond geographical borders," Sharifi said, according to statements carried by state-affiliated media.

The exhibition featured a range of traditional handicrafts and locally produced goods from Ilam province, with Iraqi visitors showing strong interest in handmade products created by Iranian artisans.

Sharifi said the event aimed to introduce premium handicraft brands and indigenous arts from Ilam while creating opportunities for exports and market expansion in Iraq.

He said the large turnout in Kut indicated significant commercial potential for Ilam's handicraft sector and could help generate income for local artists and craftspeople.

"We sought to present a picture of the richness of Ilam's traditional arts to our neighbors in Iraq while promoting cross-border relations," Sharifi said.

According to provincial officials, the regular participation of Ilam artisans in exhibitions in Iraq has helped strengthen cultural exchanges, improve marketing opportunities



and support the export of handicraft products.

Among Ilam's best-known traditional products is embossed kilim, a textile craft that combines flat-weaving techniques with carpet knotting. The handicraft has been nationally registered as a cultural symbol and souvenir of the province and is considered one of the region's most important artisanal products.

Ilam province, located along Iran's western border with Iraq, has increasingly used handicraft exhibitions and cultural events as part of efforts to expand economic and cultural engagement with neighboring Iraqi provinces.

Second Announcement



Notice of International Public Tender No.948258

Subject: Purchasing 33,280 Liter Fire-Resistant Hydraulic Oil (HFC46)

Row No.	Type of Tender	Tender No.	Publication Frequency	Tender Subject	Deadline for Receiving Tender Documents and Submitting Techno-commercial Bids	Opening Date of Techno-commercial Bids
1	International Public Tender	948258	2	Fire-Resistant Hydraulic Oil (HFC46) (33,280 Liter)	02.June.2026	06 and 07 June 2026

Notes:

- 1) To receive tender documents, please refer to ESCO's Eitaa channel (Enquiries/Tenders) through the link of [eitaa.com/escomonaghese](http://eitaa.com/escomonaghese).
- 2) For more information, please refer to ESCO's Eitaa channel (Enquiries/Tenders) through the link of [eitaa.com/escomonaghese](http://eitaa.com/escomonaghese).

# IRCS aims to draft a roadmap for collaboration with IFRC

TEHRAN – Pirhossein Kolivand, the president of the Iranian Red Crescent Society, is scheduled to visit Geneva at the invitation of officials from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), aiming to draft a roadmap for long-term collaboration.

Kolivand plans to follow up on cooperation agreements, expand humanitarian diplomacy, and share expertise gained during the 12-day US-Israeli war in June 2025 against the country, and the recent 40-day aggression by the US-Israeli coalition.

The official will expound on the operational, rescue, and humanitarian capabilities of the IRCS, as well as share experiences in fields such as crisis management, support for victims, and the sustained delivery of humanitarian services in difficult situations and in times of crisis, such as floods, earthquakes, and armed conflicts.

He will also hold specialized meetings and consultations with the officials from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the IFRC.

They will discuss promoting collaborative efforts, developing a joint roadmap for long-term collaborations, and improving the IRCS's standing at the regional and international levels.

Establishing a regional, international educational hub in IRCS, holding specialized relief and logistics workshops, exchanging trainers and instructors, and developing educational and specialized cooperation are also on the agenda.

In addition, the two sides will explore ways to address the



impacts of sanctions on humanitarian activities, establish financial and logistical channels to expedite delivery of humanitarian assistance, support the injured and affected families, exchange experiences in family reunification, search for missing individuals, and develop psychological and social support for those affected by crises.

Supporting international humanitarian law and aid workers in armed conflicts, and pursuing international initiatives to protect humanitarian staff, will be among the important issues in the meetings.

The IRCS will follow up on the issues, such as the expansion of the IRCD data monitoring and data mining center, the use of relief and medical products manufactured by the national society to meet the operational needs of the IFRC.

Developing and equipping rehabilitation centers and supporting the production of smart prosthetics will also be pursued.

**Our priority is to introduce IRCS capabilities: IFRC official**

In April, Xavier Castellanos

Mosquera, the IFRC undersecretary-general for national society development and operations coordination, said that the IFRC has put the priority on showcasing the IFRC's capabilities, specialized staff, and professional volunteers to international societies.

"The Iranian Red Crescent Society is our reliable global partner; the international societies should know that during the 40-day [US-Israeli imposed] war, more than 100,000 rescuers volunteered to provide relief services," IRNA quoted Castellanos Mosquera as saying.

The official made the remarks at a meeting with Kolivand, on April 18.

The IRCS measures and activities over the past years and the forty-day war have been brilliant. The IRCS is a valuable society in the region, "We are proud of you," he stated.

The official went on to say that the IRCS has observed all the humanitarian principles in its missions, while maintaining the quality of services provided to those affected by the war has

been its top priority. "You have a golden society, and it is an honor to learn so many new things from you," he noted.

Castellanos Mosquera also highlighted that the IFRC and other international societies will do their best to assist the IRCS. He said the IRCS is not alone. The IFRC is the representative of 191 national societies, and it will support the IRCS based on humanitarian principles.

Referring to the martyred and wounded staff members of the IRCS during the recent illegal war, the official said the loss of a relief worker is painful for IFRC and all international societies; "it is shameful that rescuers and relief workers are targeted in war," he emphasized.

The official assured that upon their arrival to Geneva, he would share IRCS measures and challenges, particularly during this war, with the international community.

**Humanitarian shipments delivered to support IRCS**

The IRCS has recently received aid cargo shipments from Iraq, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan.

The aid consignment from Iraq included nine trucks deploying 120 tons of food items involving rice, flour, beans, and canned food, and 60 tons of medicines and medical equipment.

Uzbekistan deployed fifteen trucks carrying some 300 tons of medical tools and pharmaceuticals to help enhance IRCS aid capacities.

Kazakhstan delivered a shipment weighing over 1,700 tons, including food parcels, flour, sugar, canned food, and medical supplies.

## WFP releases April report on Iran

TEHRAN – The World Food Program (WFP) has released a report, expounding on activities in Iran over the month of April.

In April, WFP food assistance reached 34,210 beneficiaries, including Afghan and Iraqi refugees, through a hybrid combination of in-kind food and cash-based transfers (CBT).

Refugees are assisted with a staple food basket, which includes fortified wheat flour (a ration of 9 kg per person, reduced from 12 Kg since the month of November 2025 due to funding shortfalls).

As part of the ongoing inclusion of 7,000 newly referred refugees, 829 refugees were added to the wheat flour recipient list in April, bringing the total number of beneficiaries to 1,600 since March 2026, with additional eligible individuals expected to be incorporated progressively.

CAFIA, the Iranian authorities handling refugees status, paused documentation processing temporarily due to the escalation of conflicts, but the process for administrative processing has now resumed.

Under CBT modality, WFP continued to provide cash assistance to support the essential living costs of vulnerable refugees. The transfer is IRR 8 million (USD 5.7) for households headed by men and IRR 9 million (USD 6.4) for households headed by women. In addition, a supplementary top-up equivalent to half of the monthly entitlement was disbursed to beneficiaries' bank cards.

By April, WFP Iran helped ease the financial burden associated with the gluten-free dietary needs of 57 refugee celiac patients from WFP's beneficiaries by providing them with an extra cash amount of IRR 9.7 million (USD 6.9) per person as a replacement for their usual food entitlement.

Moreover, WFP supported 409 refugees with disabilities across eleven settlements, each receiving an additional monthly cash support of IRR 3 million (USD 2.1), on top of their regular aid. Initially launched in two provinces, the initiative was gradually expanded to cover 11 settlements in Saveh, Semnan, Bani Najar, Sarvestan, Bezleh, Abazar, Rafsanjan, Bardsir, Jahrom, Meybod, and Torbat-e-jam.

As schools shifted to remote learning amid rising hostilities, WFP transitioned to take home rations, distributing biscuits and date

bars to 8,303 refugee students and their teachers in April. Milk could not be procured due to funding shortfalls and its high cost. A total of 4.6 mt of date bars and 3.8 mt of fortified biscuits were distributed.

WFP provided 2,618 refugee girls with a monthly cash incentive of IRR 2 million (USD 1.4) transferred to their bank accounts. This is a part of WFP Iran's efforts to promote education for refugee girls by providing them with cash for each month of regular school attendance.

To enhance the economic resilience and self-sufficiency of 315 refugees (50 percent women) in April, WFP continued its support for 26 income-generating initiatives across 18 settlements. Activities included welding, tailoring, baking, and farming, among others.

In 2025, WFP sustained food assistance to some 33,300 vulnerable refugees living in 20 settlements across 13 provinces, including 404 refugees with disabilities (40 percent women) who received monthly cash top-ups. About 183 women and 190 men received WFP livelihood support.

WFP doubled cash transfer values since January 2025 safeguarding access to food amid price volatility and protecting the most vulnerable households.

Assistance remained uninterrupted, with targeted adjustments: wheat flour entitlements reduced from 12 kg to 9 kg (Nov-Dec) and school snacks paused (Oct-Dec) to stretch limited resources.

To promote girls' education and reduce barriers to attendance, approximately 2,629 girl students received cash incentives as part of WFP's commitment to empowering young women. Some 9,261 boys and girls and their teachers benefitted from WFP school snacks.

For more than four decades, the Islamic Republic of Iran has hosted Afghans fleeing conflict and hardship. In 2025, WFP remained essential to protecting the food security of vulnerable refugees residing in 20 settlements, where households rely on shelter, education and primary health care by the Government and other humanitarian actors, complemented by WFP's monthly food assistance (through cash and in-kind modalities).

The program's focus is on maintaining a dignified minimum basic needs while prioritizing those with the highest vulnerability, including

households headed by women and persons with disabilities.

Operations are implemented in close collaboration and coordination with the Center for Alien and Foreign Immigrant Affairs (CAFIA), WFP's primary governmental counterpart, and with International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGO) and UN agencies mainly United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to ensure coherent refugee support and referral pathways.

Despite a complex year, marked by economic volatility and temporary operational risks, WFP sustained core assistance to settlement refugees. To safeguard purchasing power, WFP increased cash-based transfer values by 100 percent in January 2025 following the recommendation of a settlement-specific Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) assessment; this was complemented by a one-time cash top-up to cushion households during market instability and reduced income after Iran-Israel 12-day conflict.

Targeted adjustments preserved program continuity: wheat flour entitlements were reduced from 12 kg to 9 kg per person for November-December, and the school snacks program was suspended for October to December.

These measures limit service disruptions while protecting life-saving transfers for the most vulnerable. Livelihood activities were scaled down given funding shortfalls and corporate efficiency measures, with WFP continuing to explore cost-effective, resilience-building options that can be re-activated as resources allow.

By December 2025, Iran continued to be one of the world's largest refugee-hosting countries, sheltering approximately 2.5 million Afghans, including 773,000 individuals with official refugee status. Among them, around 35,000 critically vulnerable refugees reside in 20 settlements across 13 provinces.

Due to their extreme vulnerability, these refugees depend on free housing, primary healthcare, and education provided by the government and humanitarian actors. WFP supports these individuals through monthly food assistance (cash and in-kind), complemented by cash top-ups for persons with disabilities, celiac diseases, as well as school meals and livelihood program.

## Knowledge-based products: the driving engine of Iran's energy optimization market

TEHRAN - Domestic knowledge-based products have become the driving engine of the growing energy optimization market in Iran.

By innovating in the lighting, cooling, and agriculture sectors, knowledge-based companies help reduce energy consumption and increase efficiency, paving the way for a knowledge-based economy, according to Mehdi Nourbakhsh, the secretary of the headquarters for the development of the country's knowledge-based economy.

**Smart Lighting and Grid Stabilization**

Domestic high-efficiency lamps and smart equipment hold the central role in implementing national lighting optimization projects for both public thoroughfares and indoor spaces.

In this sector, knowledge-based companies have captured a major share of grid power reduction by manufacturing advanced lighting systems. Produced under strict quality standards, these products serve as highly effective replacements for legacy technologies, practically acting as the executive arm of the Ministry of Energy in this segment of the energy optimization market.

**Advanced Cooling Technologies and Demand Management**

In addition to lighting, the large-scale replacement of worn-out cooling units with ultra-low-consumption BLDC electric motors serves as a prime example of commercializing the technical expertise of Iranian companies.

Designed and manufactured relying on indigenous knowledge, these electric motors have dramatically increased efficiency. Consequently, they have turned into a powerful tool for power demand-side management, standing as a testament to the capability of knowledge-based companies in optimizing household appliances.

**Modernizing the Agricultural Supply Chain**

In the agricultural sector as well, the en-



ergy optimization market has turned into an arena for presenting technological solutions. Knowledge-based companies, by focusing on modifying and rehabilitating agricultural wells and replacing worn-out pumping equipment with advanced, high-efficiency systems, have played a prominent role in reducing energy consumption and increasing farm productivity.

These measures demonstrate that the integration of knowledge-based products into the agricultural energy supply chain has not only lowered energy costs for operators but has also significantly contributed to the sustainability of production in this strategic sector.

**Strategic Synergy and Government Backing**

This synergy between the "existing demand in the energy market" and the "supply capacity of knowledge-based companies" has paved the way for the country's transition from a traditional, energy-intensive economy to an efficient one.

To reinforce this momentum, the Vice Presidency for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy has prioritized supporting the development of the innovation ecosystem in the energy industry and backing companies that stand at the forefront of consumption optimization with their technological solutions.

## Rainfall increases by 3.8% compared to long-term average

TEHRAN – Since the beginning of the new water year, September 23, 2025, till May 21, the country has received 224 mm of rain, indicating an increase of 3.8 percent compared to the long-term amount, according to the Meteorological Organization.

The recorded rainfall has been abundant in Hormozgan, South Khorasan, Ilam, Bushehr, and West Azarbaijan provinces. However, Tehran, Qom, Semnan, Markazi, and Qazvin have received lower rainfall, respectively, IRIB reported.

Precipitations are forecast to drop next week. It will be normal and less than normal in the northern strip; low or no rainfall is expected in other parts of the country.

**El Niño can lead to normal precipitation in fall**

As Iran has entered the El Niño phase, particularly in spring and summer, precipitation is forecast to be low in the southeast of the country in summer, but normal in fall, Ahad Vazifeh, the head of the Meteorological Organization, has said.

Currently, El Niño and La Niña phases are in neutral conditions, that is, the difference between the temperature of the water in the surface of the Pacific Ocean and 200 meters below the surface of the ocean, in central and eastern parts, is less than 0.5 degrees cooler compared to a normal situation, which indicates neutral conditions, he added.

However, based on simulated models, the temperature of water at the surface of the ocean is predicted to get more than 0.5 degrees warmer, and enter El Niño Southern Oscillation phase, ISNA quoted Vazifeh as saying.

The situation is not expected to affect summer much as summers are mostly dry in the country; rainfalls in the southern half of Sistan-Baluchestan, east of Hormozgan, and south of Kerman will be less than normal.

Precipitation in the fall will be influenced by El Niño and are projected to be normal, unlike last year, in which rainfall dropped

significantly.

'El Niño' or "the boy" is widely used to describe the warming of sea surface temperature that occurs every few years, typically concentrated in the central-east equatorial Pacific.

'La Niña' or "the girl" is the term adopted for the opposite side of the fluctuation, which sees episodes of cooler than average sea surface temperature in the equatorial Pacific.

**Rainfall restores many wetlands**

Thanks to the increase in average rainfall, the water inflow to wetlands across the country has improved compared to last year, IRIB quoted Arezou Ashrafzadeh, an official with DOE, as saying.

In Gilan province, Bojaq wetland is in good standing. Anzali wetland is in fair condition after the removal of invasive water hyacinths. However, Gorgan Bay, and Miankaleh wetland require additional measures to be restored.

About 70 percent of Quri Gol wetland, the only fresh wetland, in East Azarbaijan, is filled with water. Compared to the same period last year, the water level of the wetland has increased by 27 cm, reaching 1912.43 meters now.

Quri Gol wetland hosts over 92 bird species, which are all migratory birds, except reedhead coots, 14 species of reptiles, 4 species of amphibians, and one species of fish, as well as 280 plant species.

In Fars province, 80, 30, and 10-15 percent of Maharloo, Arjan, and Bakhtegan wetlands are filled with water.

In Khuzestan province, Hour al-Azim and Shadegan wetlands are in optimal shape. Until last year, Hour Al-Azim wetland, located on the border of Iran and Iraq, was grappling with water scarcity.

Intense rainfalls have led Shimbar, Zarivar, and Helleh wetlands to be filled to 100 percent, and overflow.

Marreh wetland in Qom, and Miqan wetland, in Markazi provinces are in a favorable condition.



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MAY 26, 2026

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Mix with people properly, so that they weep for you when you die, and show you affection and fight your enemy when you are alive.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:01 Evening: 19:31 Dawn: 03:10 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 04:52 (tomorrow)

## IAF commemorates Minab school martyrs with art, music

TEHRAN- The Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran is hosting an event dedicated to the martyred students of Shajareh Tayyebeh Elementary School in Minab, southern Hormozgan province.

The five-day event, titled "Absence Presence," was inaugurated on Monday and is being held in collaboration with the Iranian House of Cinema, House of Theater, and House of Music, Mehr reported.

The event is taking place every evening at 7:30 p.m. in the open-air courtyard of the IAF, the report added.

The program features musical performances, street theater, and various artistic presentations by renowned artists, offering audiences a different experience each night.

This initiative is being organized in cooperation with the IAF and Tehran Municipality's District 6, with support from the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture.

On February 28, the Shajareh Tayyebeh Elementary School in Minab, Hormozgan province, became the site of a devastating massacre as the United States and Israel initiated their strikes against Iran.

While dozens of girls and boys aged between 7 and 12 were beginning their lessons, the school was targeted by a missile strike that caused the building to collapse, trapping children and teachers beneath the rubble. Iranian authorities confirmed a final death toll of 168 people, with at least 95 others wounded, marking one of the most harrowing incidents of the conflict's opening day.

Despite attempts by US and Israeli authorities to distance themselves from the carnage as



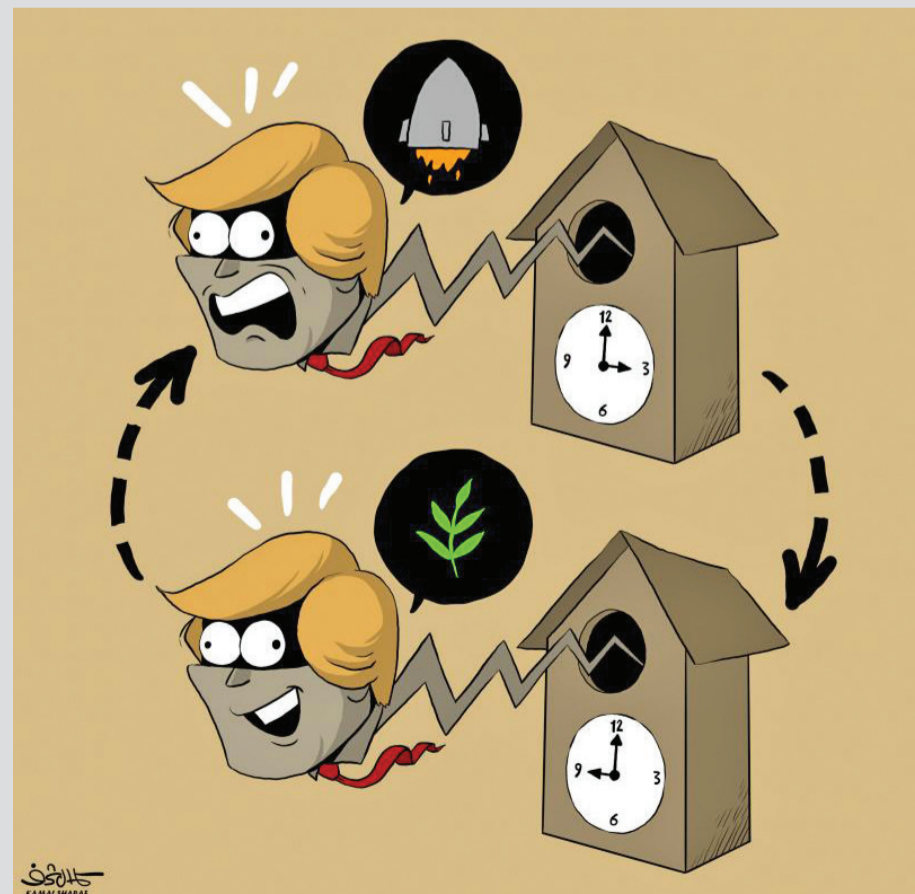
images of the tragedy spread across social media, detailed forensic and digital investigations have painted a starkly different picture.

An analysis by Al Jazeera's digital investigations unit, utilizing over a decade of satellite imagery and recent video clips, revealed that the school was a clearly distinct civilian facility, separated from any adjacent military sites for at least ten years. Furthermore, witness accounts and satellite-based analyses confirmed that the school was triple tapped by three separate, deliberate strikes, leaving no doubt about the nature of the attack.

The international community has faced mounting evidence regarding the responsibility for this atrocity, with investigations from major global outlets including The New York Times, BBC Verify, CBC, and NPR all concluding that the United States was responsible for the strike.

These findings have raised fundamental questions about the intelligence used to justify the bombing, as the patterns of the strike suggest a direct targeting of a civilian educational institution. The Minab school tragedy now stands as a somber testament to the immense human cost of the aggression and a focal point for those demanding international accountability.

## Cartoon of Day



Daily Contradictions  
Cartoonist: Kamal Sharaf from Yemen

# Martyr Leader's books top Tehran International Book Fair's best-seller list



From left: "Blood of the Heart That Turned into Ruby," "Agha's Narrative," "In the Embrace of the Nile," and "The Geometry of Battle"

TEHRAN – Four books by the Martyr Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei are among the top five best-selling books at this year's edition of the Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF), which wrapped up on Monday.

Based on the statistics, of the five titles topping the best-seller list at the TIBF, which was held online, four belong to the Islamic Revolution Publications, including "Blood of the Heart That Turned into Ruby," "Agha's Narrative," "In the Embrace of the Nile," and "The Geometry of Battle," ILNA reported.

Also known as "Cell No. 14," "Blood of the Heart That Turned into Ruby" covers the first half of the life of Ayatollah Khamenei, from his early childhood all the way to the 1979 Islamic Revolution that brought the monarchical regime to an end in Iran.

In his book, the author skillfully transports readers to a tangible and realized space through simple yet comprehensive literature. The book's narrative is devoid of imposing or imaginative elements, resulting in a striking sense of concreteness and realization.

It is a remarkable saga of a young cleric blessed with an indomitable spirit who fights a dictatorial regime with his sermons and speeches as well as with his organizational abilities. He never loses hope despite being sent to prison and exile and finally emerges victorious against all odds.

The book serves as a source of inspiration to all activists around

the globe who are trying to bring about social and political change.

It also contains unpublished photos of the Leader, his father, and his children, in addition to a photo collection of paintings related to the topics in the book.

The Persian edition of the book was published in 2019. It was a Persian translation of "Inna Ma as-Sabri Nasra" the Leader had written in Arabic. The memories were then compiled by the Iranian Arabic language scholar Mohammad-Ali Azarshab.

The book "Agha's Narrative" explores the upbringing and formation of the personality of the Martyr Leader.

The book narrates the Martyr Leader's family relationships, methods of upbringing within the household, and the spiritual and cultural atmosphere that shaped his life.

It provides an in-depth account of the life, personality, and scholarly and spiritual journey of Ayatollah Seyyed Javad Khamenei, the father of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

Compiled from the Martyr Leader's speeches and writings, the book features previously unreleased documents. The final text was also reviewed and approved by the Leader himself.

The book argues that any analysis of the Leader's approach and behavior would be incomplete without an understanding of his father's guiding principles.

"In the Embrace of the Nile" is a comprehensive overview of divine traditions in the thought of the Martyr Leader.

Deep faith in these divine traditions and the belief in the inevitable fulfillment of God's promises are among the fundamental principles of the intellectual and personal identity of Ayatollah Khamenei. This foundational perspective caused his decision-making system and policies to be based on spiritual calculations and the existential rules of the Almighty, rather than relying solely on material calculations and transient shifts. It is precisely for this reason that in all circumstances, whether during times of challenge and pressure or in times of victory, a firm, calm, and unwavering resilience was observed in his behavior and guidance.

Spanning 208 pages, the book covers topics such as the definition of divine traditions and an explanation of their characteristics, the importance of divine traditions, the various types of these traditions, an examination of the conditions for their fulfillment, a description of the positive outcomes of trusting in divine traditions, and an analysis of tangible instances of these traditions manifesting throughout the history of the prophets.

"The Geometry of Battle" is a valuable collection of the statements and guidance of Ayatollah Khamenei, regarding understanding the enemy and the methods of confronting it.

This work was compiled with the aim of explaining the nature of the conflict between the Islamic Revolution front and the hegemonic system, global Zionism, and the enemy's soft war. It strives to present a cohesive and understandable picture of the logic of struggle to the audience.

In the book, the speeches of the Martyr Leader have been categorized thematically so that the reader can become acquainted with the various layers of the arrogance's enmity with greater order and coherence.

From psychological warfare and propaganda to cultural infiltration, distortion of truth, and sowing doubt in public beliefs, all have been addressed in this work.

"The Geometry of Battle" is not just a collection of discourses. Rather, it is an effort to provide an intellectual roadmap for confronting the hard threats of the present era.

Organized by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, the TIBF is widely regarded as Iran's most significant publishing event, annually drawing hundreds of domestic and international publishers as well as large crowds of book lovers, academics, and cultural figures.

It was the seventh edition of the fair in virtual format, which was held with the motto "Let's Read for Iran," highlighting the nation's commitment to fostering a culture of reading and intellectual engagement.

## Artist's MFA show confronts Columbia University over Gaza

In Columbia University's MFA show, artist Alejandro Valencia loudly names the elephant in the room: The Manhattan school's institutional failure to come to terms with Israel's genocide of Palestinians.

"DYNAMO (RATM01)" (2026) is included in the Visual Arts + Sound Art Class of 2026's thesis exhibition, on view at the Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery through this Sunday, May 24. The work resembles an engine room, alluding to the institution's hidden machinery. Its three modules feature sundials, evoking the university campus' iconic central landmark, but compressing and constricting what they precariously hold.

Columbia's 2026 graduating MFA cohort had to weather a storm on the way to their degree. The class matriculated in the fall of 2024, following the April 30, 2024, forced clearings of the university's student encampments protesting the genocide in Gaza. The aftermath was intense — more crackdowns, protests, arrests, and human rights violations from ICE that kept the campus environment hostile.

The cohort got off to a divisive start. According to Ridwana Rahman, another MFA student, she had printed out several posters that read "Free Palestine, Long Live the Intifada" during the 2025 spring semester. She and several of her classmates then chose to hang them on their studio doors. A few days later, an undergraduate student ripped them down. Another MFA student then

replaced their poster, only to have it ripped down again.

The first section of Valencia's piece on view features a keffiyeh that belonged to Rahman, who wore the headscarf during protests against the Gaza genocide on campus and who shared keffiyehs with students to wear in class photos, as well as at last year's opening for the 2025 cohort show. She was part of the 2025 cohort, one year ahead of Valencia.

In the installation, Rahman's keffiyeh is smashed by two sundials on opposing sides, converting the school's Class of 1885 memorial and beloved campus meeting spot into a symbol of oppressive constriction. Rahman is currently under criminal investigation for allegedly participating in a protest inside the Butler Library on May 7, 2025. After her arrest, which Hyperallergic independently verified through public records, she was one of the more than 70 students disciplined by Columbia. Rahman was immediately banned from campus, evicted from her studio with little notice, and denied her MFA degree, despite having fulfilled the program's requirements.

In response to Hyperallergic's request for comment, a Columbia University spokesperson said, "In compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), neither the School nor the University can disclose information related to student records outside of approved directory information."

Visual Arts Department Chair



Naeem Mohaiemen added, "In the face of many challenges, we still encourage students to explore complex, contradictory ideas through artwork in their studios. I was Ridwana Rahman's MFA Thesis Chair, and her performance and installation based project 'Revert' was one of the most thought-provoking works in the 2025 MFA Thesis Exhibition at Wallach Gallery."

In the second section of Valencia's installation, pencils oppose and threaten each other with their sharp tips. These two graphite phalanges evoke the fierce divisions within the student body about how far to go in speaking out against the genocide.

The third module features a broken microphone and an industrial punchcard overlaid with the late Edward Said's hand. Said was a Palestinian scholar, Columbia professor,

and one of the luminary founders of post-colonial studies. His mic has now been cut; Said's voice no longer resonates in a university policy that muffles voices that defend the fundamental right of the Palestinian people to simply exist.

A speaker within Valencia's installation collages the sounds of bombs dropping, the rumble of subway trains from gentrified Harlem, and protest audio, rendering it all in a distorted hum. This soundtrack evokes how Columbia's Kafkaesque bureaucracy flattens and distorts events.

"I was meditating on the larger forces constantly at work — the forces that resist, and the forces that oppress — and how that dialogue transforms our notions of history," Valencia told Hyperallergic in an interview at the gallery.