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From 'Epic Fury' to 'Fake Victory'

Trump is trying to find a dignified way out of the quagmire of war by making unrealistic claims about the results of negotiations with Iran

Leader urges national unity amid hostile attempts to create division

TEHRAN - The Leader of the Islamic Revolution has underlined the need for Iranian intellectual and political elites, including members of parliament, to safeguard national unity.

In a message released on Thursday on the anniversary of the first session of Iran's parliament on May 28, 1980, after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei said the United States and Israel, having failed in their military aggression against Iran, are now plotting to sow discord within the country. ▶ Page 3

President orders to develop alternative trade corridors through northern ports, neighboring countries

TEHRAN - President Pezeshkian emphasizing the need to maintain market stability and prevent price volatility, ordered the acceleration of activating alternative import routes and maximum use of neighboring countries' capacities.

According to ISNA, at the coordination meeting on accelerating the supply of essential goods, medicine, and management of alternative import routes, chaired by President Masoud Pezeshkian and attended by some ministers, the Central Bank Governor, and officials from relevant bodies, the necessity of maximizing the country's logistical, commercial, and economic diplomacy capacities to maintain market stability and ensure supply chain continuity was emphasized. ▶ Page 4

The shock absorber doctrine and the 'Abraham' suicide pact

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN - The old American playbook in the Middle East has completely shed its diplomatic veneer. Arab capitals are not treated as sovereign partners; instead, they have been strategically downgraded to regional shock absorbers designed to absorb the geopolitical, economic, and military blows meant for Tel Aviv and Washington.

The "Abraham Accords," aggressively marketed as a dawn of regional integration and mutual security, have definitively revealed themselves as a mechanism of subcontracted instability.

Following the disastrous U.S.-Israeli assault on Iran in 2026, the strategic map was irreversibly altered. Despite enduring an all-out attack, Iran emerged with strategic supremacy.

Tehran successfully blocked the Strait of Hormuz to hostile actors and managed the vital chokepoint, absorbed the strikes, and ultimately dictated the operational terms of the subsequent ceasefire. In response to this profound collapse of its regional gendarme, a panicked Washington has resorted to open extortion, lashing out at its own Arab allies in blind frustration.

Defiance will define the world order

By Jin Liangxiang

SHANGHAI - A hegemony never simply fades into history on its own. In fact, over the last couple of years, the world has witnessed U.S. hegemonic policy reach new extremes—even as the power sustaining that hegemony declines.

Shortly after taking office, Donald Trump launched a global tariff war, proposed renaming the Gulf of Mexico the "American Gulf," kidnapped Venezuelan President Maduro, and floated the idea of annexing Canada as the 51st U.S. state, along with Greenland, a territory of a European ally. These are all extreme manifestations of American hegemonic policy.

However, the future of the global order will not be shaped by hegemonic push—but by defiance against it.

It is always a challenge to face hegemonic pressure. To be sure, some compliance and even surrender have followed America's bullying. Leaders of certain countries have pledged massive investment to please Trump—sums equal to or exceeding their annual GDPs,

America's support for Lebanon: A deadly friendship

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - The lessons drawn from the history of U.S. relations, whether with governments or non-state actors across the world and the region, point to a dramatic and painful end to such alliances.

The speed of the American response to Hezbollah Secretary-General Sheikh Naim Qassem's recent speech marking Resistance and Liberation Day was striking. Despite his busy schedule, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio did not hesitate to issue a lengthy statement on Lebanon, reaffirming Washington's support for Nawaf Salam's government.

What Sheikh Qassem said is a position repeated daily in many countries considered democratic. He stated: "People have the right to take to the streets to bring down the government"

This statement reflects a principle at the core of democratic systems, where the people are considered the source of authority and therefore have the natural right to protest against governments. He did not call for an armed coup and nor did he call for violence.

Germany's response to the Iran war exposed a deep contradiction in Berlin's foreign policy, says German analyst



▶ Page 2

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US era is over, Leader says in Hajj message

TEHRAN - Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei has urged Muslim countries to deepen cooperation and shape a new regional and global order beyond American dominance.

"The Muslim Ummah and the nations of the region possess many shared capacities and common interests that will shape the new order and the future architecture of the region and the world," Ayatollah Khamenei wrote in his message on the occasion of the Day of Arafah, the second day of the Hajj pilgrimage (2026), on Tuesday. ▶ Page 2



Commemoration ceremony held for Leader's martyred family members

TEHRAN - On Thursday, a ceremony was held in Tehran to commemorate family members of the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei who were also martyred during the US-Israeli strikes.

On February 28, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was martyred in a coordinated attack that targeted his office in central Tehran.

The Leader's residence was in very close proximity to his office. Two of his children were also lived in nearby homes. ▶ Page 7

US era is over, Leader says in Hajj message

From page 1 ▶ He said Muslim nations were entering a historical phase in which regional realities were changing irreversibly, and American military influence was steadily diminishing.

"The hands of time will not turn back, and the nations and lands of the region will no longer serve as shields for US bases," the Leader stated.

He added that the United States "will no longer have a safe haven for its mischief and for establishing military bases in the region" and was "growing more distant from its former status day by day."

"The future belongs to the Muslim Ummah and the new Islamic civilization."

The message highlighted the role played by the regional Resistance Front, describing it as a unified movement extending "from Iran to Lebanon and Palestine and Iraq and Syria, from Africa and Yemen to Afghanistan and Pakistan."

It noted how these forces have confronted American influence, challenged Israeli occupation, and fought the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group.

Ayatollah Khamenei, meanwhile, identified the Israeli regime as a "cancerous tumor" and an "unstable regime" nearing "the final stages of its cursed life."

It additionally reiterated a prediction by the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, who once predicted that the Israeli regime would not survive to see another 25 years.

Elsewhere in the message, the Leader celebrated Iran's decisive blows to the United States and the Israeli regime during the duo's latest bout of unprovoked aggression against the Islamic Republic.

"The Islamic Republic succeeded in rendering the Zionist regime helpless under its heavy blows, delivering a hard slap to aggressive America, and thwarting the enemy's goal of forcing Iran into surrender," the message read.

Ayatollah Khamenei praised the Iranian Armed Forces and allied resistance groups,

particularly in Lebanon, for achieving "remarkable victories" in the face of the aggression being waged by the "fully armed American-Zionist terrorist armies."

It specifically referred to the deployment of missiles and drones "on land, in the air, and at sea" against "the Great Satan, meaning America, and its trained animal, the Zionist regime."

The message pointed to the martyrdom of Ayatollah Khamenei during the early hours of the US-Israeli aggression, noting that following the "heartbreaking martyrdom" of the "great leader," the Iranian public entered a new phase of mobilization.

The nation, it added, "astonished the world" through its mass participation on the streets in support of the country's Armed Forces and defense of the homeland, as well as through its display of resilience following the martyrdom.

The message highlighted the religious zeal that invigorated the Iranian nation in its efforts to overthrow the former tyrannical US-backed regime. The same zeal also reinforced the country's defensive efforts in the face of the Western-backed, imposed war of the 1980s and decades of foreign pressure and sanctions, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei added.

Addressing Iranian pilgrims directly, the message said they bear "an effective and prominent role" in conveying the saga of "victory in the face of the third imposed war" to Muslims from other countries during the Hajj pilgrimage.

It also called for prayers for Muslim unity, the liberation of Palestine, and victory over global arrogance.

The message further emphasized the concept of "bara'ah," or disavowal of enemies and oppressors, saying the principle extends beyond Hajj rituals into the political and social life of Muslims worldwide.

"Death to America and death to Israel will be the common slogan of the Islamic Ummah and the oppressed of the world, especially the youth."

Legal foundations for collecting dues in the Strait of Hormuz



By Seyyed Mohammad Hosseini

QAZVIN – Examining the recent actions and initiatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Strait of Hormuz through the prism of international law, specifically the specialized branch derived from these rules known as the "law of the sea," is an essential necessity at this critical historical juncture.

It must be observed that, as in the broader arena of public international law, the primary sources for evaluating the legitimacy of actions within the international order under the law of the sea are international treaties and customs. Consequently, verifying the legal validity of Iran's actions and initiatives requires a rigorous assessment of their conformity with these foundational sources.

International treaties are explicitly understood to be written agreements concluded between subjects of international law (namely, states and international organizations) that are intended to produce specific legal effects under international law.

International customs, similarly, are settled and consistent practices that mature into customary international law through the convergence of two elements: continuous state practice (state practice) and a belief in a legal obligation (opinio juris) among the subjects of international law.

The fundamental question arises: do Iran's actions in the Strait of Hormuz violate the conventional or customary rules of the law of the sea? Alternatively, under the consensual nature of international law, has Iran accepted treaty or customary obligations that run counter to its recent initiatives in the Strait?

It is worth recalling that while peremptory norms (jus cogens) and certain general customary obligations are binding irrespective of explicit consent, the principle of consent dictates that states are generally bound by an obligation only when they have expressly manifested their willingness to be so bound.

With respect to international treaties and the regime of international navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, the preeminent source is the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

While this Convention delineates the rights and obligations of coastal and non-coastal states across various maritime zones, Iran has merely signed the instrument but not ratified it. As a result, Iran is not bound by all the obligations set forth in the treaty in the manner of a state party (it is notable that the United States has not even signed the Convention).

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran calls for new regional security order

TEHRAN – The deputy secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) for international affairs has said a growing number of countries have welcomed Tehran's proposal to establish a new regional security equation aimed at ensuring long-term peace and stability in the region and beyond.

Ali Baqeri made the remarks during a three-day visit to Moscow, where he attended the 14th International Meeting of High Representatives Responsible for Security Issues. He also held talks with senior security officials from Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America, and neighboring countries.

Baqeri said Iran's proposal for a new regional security architecture gained broad support during the meetings, particularly in the aftermath of the recent military aggression by the United States and the Israeli regime against the Islamic Republic.

He stressed that any future regional security framework must be based on the participation of regional countries themselves, while excluding foreign interference and rejecting the influence of the Zionist regime.

"There is now widespread acknowledgment that the US has been a source of instability in the region, with its military bases serving as one of the manifestations of that role," Baqeri stated.

Speaking in an interview with



Russia Today (RT) on the sidelines of the Moscow gathering, the Iranian official said the region would become "the most stable in the world" if US military bases were removed and Israel ceased interference in regional affairs.

"If the US leaves the region and its military bases are eliminated from the region and the Zionists no longer play a role in regional affairs, the region will enjoy stability, security, and peace, thereby creating the conditions for development and progress for all countries," he pointed out.

Baqeri also accused Washington of pursuing unrealistic demands in ongoing negotiations with Iran after failing to achieve its objectives through military pressure.

"The excessive demands made by the US demonstrate that offi-

cial in Washington are detached from reality," he said, adding that Iran believes in resolving disputes through dialogue and diplomacy, whereas the United States relies on "force, aggression, and barbarism."

The diplomat official further stated that there are no fundamental disputes between Iran and the Persian Gulf states, blaming the US military presence and Israeli influence for escalating tensions across the region.

Referring to a special BRICS security meeting held in Moscow, Baqeri said Iran emphasized that recent US-Israeli aggression on Iran had exposed the weaknesses of the existing regional security order. He added that Russia and China were recognized for their opposition to unilateral US sanctions and Western pressure mechanisms,

including the snapback process.

Baqeri described the Moscow forum as an important platform for independent countries seeking to counter US unilateralism and coordinate common positions at the international level.

On the issue of negotiations with Washington, the Iranian official confirmed that indirect contacts between Iran and the United States are continuing, but said discussions over Iran's enriched uranium stockpile are "not on the agenda" of the current talks.

He also addressed developments surrounding the Strait of Hormuz, saying Tehran and Washington have not yet reached a final agreement on the reopening of the strategic waterway following recent regional tensions.

"Until we agree on all issues, we consider that we have not agreed on anything," Baqeri said.

The SNSC deputy secretary for international affairs emphasized the legal right of the Iranian nation to the release of all Iranian assets frozen by the United States.

He revealed that Iran and Oman are jointly working on a new mechanism for vessel transit through the Strait of Hormuz, adding that the proposed arrangements would differ significantly from the regulations that existed prior to the recent conflict involving Iran.

Germany's response to the Iran war exposed a deep contradiction in Berlin's foreign policy, says German analyst

'People in the West are beginning to take Iran more seriously'

TEHRAN – Germany's official stance during the recent conflict with Iran has highlighted profound contradictions in Berlin's foreign policy, according to prominent German political analyst Christoph Hörstel, who argues that while German leaders publicly express concern over Israeli actions, they continue to support Tel Aviv behind the scenes.

In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, Hörstel, founder of the German political party Die Neue Mitte, provided a sharp critique of Western strategies toward Iran. He examined the deeper geopolitical motivations behind the aggression against Iran, the shifting regional dynamics in West Asia, and the erosion of U.S. credibility among both the European public and Persian Gulf states.

Hörstel asserted that the attacks on Iran were never merely about "limited deterrence," as claimed by Western officials. Instead, he described them as part of a long-term U.S. strategy aimed at gaining control over Iran's vast oil and gas resources.

"The long-term strategy of the West, especially the U.S., has always been to get Iran's oil and gas resources under control,"

he explained. This objective, he noted, has gained new urgency as Washington seeks to disrupt Russia's export routes and limit China's access to Iranian energy at market prices, using leverage to pressure Beijing over issues such as Taiwan.

The analyst argued that Washington's approach reflects a broader pattern of using military and economic pressure to maintain global dominance. By making Iranian energy shipments more difficult and costly, the U.S. hopes to extract concessions from China, though Beijing has consistently resisted such tactics.

Exposed limits of coercive power

Hörstel believes the 40-day war against Iran produced mixed results for the aggressors. On one hand, it exposed serious weaknesses in American and Israeli military capabilities.

"Washington came to know the hard way that its whole military setup is old-fashioned, as are its armament and overall strategy," he observed. He noted that U.S. strategic thinking remains shaped by outdated models from the Second World War.

On the other hand, the conflict demon-

strated the resilience of the Iranian nation. Despite internal challenges, Hörstel emphasized that external threats have unified the Iranian people and government. "Iran will not bow to any pressure, even in the case of a nuclear attack," he stated, citing assessments from credible American military sources.

This steadfastness, the political analyst said, stems from a clear understanding that yielding to U.S. or Israeli demands would lead to total subjugation.

The analyst placed the conflict within a larger Western strategy of engineered instability. He claimed that power structures delayed Donald Trump's presidency to allow for simultaneous conflicts in Europe and West Asia.

According to Hörstel, Trump was given until 2029 to neutralize Iran, aligning with RAND Corporation analyses that project escalation against Russia around that timeframe. He warned failure to achieve objectives in Iran could accelerate conflict in Ukraine.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iranian dissident news network received £650 million of debt relief

TEHRAN – The company that owns the UK-based broadcaster Iran International received £650 million of debt relief from its shareholders, strengthening the balance sheet of the prominent platform for anti-Iran voices.

The previously unreported debt-for-equity swap in December shored up the network's finances, which claims to be the most-watched Persian news channel and has burnt through hundreds of millions of pounds since it was founded in 2017 with backing from British-Saudi investors.

It came shortly before protests erupted across Iran, marking the start of a turbulent period. Weeks later, the US and Israel launched a war on Iran, assassinating its leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Iran International — which employs about 700 people globally — broadcasts into Iran from London through satellite, radio, and a massive social media following. Critics accuse it of pushing a pro-war narrative and

using its reach to promote Reza Pahlavi, the US-based son of the last shah.

The network has not disclosed the source of its funding, a decision that has long unsettled some of its journalists, who have privately raised concerns about its editorial decisions, said a person with direct knowledge of its operations.

Iran International's parent company, Volant Media UK, has lost more than £410mn in the past five years and it owed related entities about £482 million, according to its last set of accounts covering the financial year ending December 2024. Volant also runs a separate network called Afghanistan International.

Volant claims it is editorially independent, has never received state funding from Saudi Arabia, Israel or elsewhere, and is backed by a consortium of private, commercial investors. It declined to comment on their identity.

Filings for Volant in the UK's



corporate registry show that an allotment of 648mn shares, valued at £648mn, was issued on December 13.

A separate confirmation statement shows that on the same date, all of Volant's original 50,000 shares were transferred from the British-Saudi film executive Adel Abdulkarim Alabdulkarim, who serves as Volant's company director and secretary, to the offshore company Info-Cast Cayman Limited.

The confirmation statement does not make any reference to the newly allotted shares or to whom they were allotted.

Abdulkarim remains listed as a person with significant control of Volant on the grounds he has the right to appoint or remove the majority of the company's board of directors. Info-Cast Cayman was listed as the immediate parent company at year-end 2024.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

From 'Epic Fury' to 'Fake Victory'

Trump is trying to find a dignified way out of the quagmire of war by making unrealistic claims about the results of negotiations with Iran

By Hossein Amiri

TEHRAN - US President Donald Trump has once again claimed that Washington is close to reaching an understanding with Iran, while Iranian sources dismissed his remarks as a mixture of "truth and exaggeration" aimed at portraying an artificial victory for the United States.

In a series of statements posted on Truth Social, Trump said Iran "must agree that it will never possess a nuclear weapon or nuclear bomb," while also calling for the immediate reopening of the Strait of Hormuz "without any transit fees in either direction."

Trump further claimed that naval restrictions imposed around Iran would now be lifted and stated that vessels stranded in the Strait of Hormuz could begin returning to their destinations. He also alleged that maritime mines in the area would be removed, claiming that US forces had already destroyed many of them and that Iran would clear the remaining mines.

The US president additionally stated that any extraction of what he described as "buried nuclear dust" would be carried out in coordination with Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). At the same time, however, he stressed that "no financial exchanges with Iran" would take place "until further notice."

Trump also announced that he would convene a meeting in the White House Situation Room to make a "final decision" regarding the ongoing developments.

Iranian sources, however, strongly pushed back against several of Trump's claims. Sources cited by the Fars news agency said the American president's remarks were "a combination of reality and falsehood" intended to create the impression of a diplomatic triumph for Washington.

According to the same sources, Trump falsely claimed that Iran would dismantle or destroy its nuclear materials, insisting that no such provision exists in the memorandum of understanding currently under discussion.

Officials quoted by Iranian media stressed that Tehran would not move to the next phase of negotiations on sanctions relief or nuclear issues until all outstanding matters outlined in the memorandum are resolved.

They further emphasized that any final agreement would be drafted strictly on the basis of Iran's "red lines" and Tehran's longstanding dis-



trust of the United States.

Iranian officials also underlined that any potential agreement would include mechanisms for an "immediate reciprocal response" should Washington once again violate its commitments.

An Iranian official cited by the Mehr news agency said Trump's latest remarks "reflect more what he wishes for than the actual reality on the ground."

Despite the renewed rhetoric from Washington, Iranian officials maintain that no final understanding has yet been reached and caution that similar American claims about being "close to a deal" have been repeated many times before without producing tangible results.

Tensions between Iran and the United States have once again entered a new phase after the clashes of the past few days in the Persian Gulf, and the US military attacks on southern Iran.

An unnamed US official told Reuters that the American military carried out strikes early Thursday against a target near the Strait of Hormuz. The official claimed the site posed a threat to US forces and maritime navigation in the strategic waterway.

While Washington has attempted to justify its actions as measures aimed at "protecting US forces and maritime security," Iranian officials describe the attacks as a blatant violation of the ceasefire and a continuation of hostile American policies in the region.

JD Vance, the US Vice President and head of the American negotiating team, described the ceasefire situation as "messy," while implicitly acknowledging possible coordination failures within US forces. He stated that field commanders are sometimes not fully aligned with senior officials and that "mistakes" can happen.

Meanwhile, the US Central Command (CENTCOM) accused Iran of violating the ceasefire, claiming Tehran had launched a ballistic missile toward Kuwait and deployed several attack drones near the Strait of Hormuz. However, the US statement made no mention of whether the alleged Iranian actions took place after the latest American strikes against Iranian territory.

Tehran has rejected Washington's narrative and insists that Iran's actions were a direct response to repeated US aggression. In a statement, the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) announced that after American forces targeted an area near Bandar Abbas Airport early Thursday, the US airbase (in Kuwait) used to launch the attack was itself targeted in retaliation.

At the same time, Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi stated that the IRGC's response to "American mischief" demonstrated the full readiness of Iran's armed forces and warned that Tehran would respond proportionately if such actions continue.

Iran's Foreign Ministry also issued a statement condemning the recent US attacks as a clear violation of the ceasefire and contrary to Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter, emphasizing that Iran "will leave no act of aggression unanswered."

The statement added that the American actions, taking place amid ongoing diplomatic efforts, once again exposed Washington's "bad faith and unreliability" and reinforced the Iranian nation's deep mistrust of US behavior based on "experience and realities on the ground."

At the same time, Iran's armed forces recently announced the destruction of a hostile drone over the Persian Gulf using the new "Arash Kamangir" defense system. Iranian officials described the system as a

message that no stealth drone would any longer be capable of dominating the skies over the Persian Gulf.

At the strategic level, a growing number of Western analysts and research centers have acknowledged Iran's considerable geopolitical leverage and deterrence capabilities in the Strait of Hormuz.

David Roberts, an analyst at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), argued that the United States still lacks a clear strategy for "fully securing" the Strait of Hormuz and that the waterway cannot realistically be managed without taking Iran's influence into account.

Similarly, Christian Emery of University College London (UCL) stated that the recent conflict demonstrated how Iran's geography itself has become one of Tehran's most important deterrence tools, adding that the US and its allies have failed to prevent Iran from exerting influence over the Strait despite extensive military pressure.

John Mearsheimer, the prominent international relations scholar at the University of Chicago, also argued that the US Navy is incapable of fully controlling the Strait of Hormuz and that "Iran holds the geographical upper hand in the region."

In another report, Navy Times quoted several Western military analysts as saying that, contrary to claims by some US officials, keeping the Strait of Hormuz open is far from a "simple operation," since Western naval forces remain vulnerable to Iranian missiles, drones, and asymmetric warfare capabilities.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) likewise noted in a recent analysis that the current confrontation has evolved beyond a purely military conflict into a broader arena of "geopolitical pressure," with Iran successfully using its strategic position in the Strait of Hormuz as an effective deterrent tool.

Some Western analysts have even referred to the Strait of Hormuz as Iran's "golden card," with Al-Monitor describing it as one of Tehran's most effective instruments of deterrence against foreign pressure.

The Strait of Hormuz now appears more than ever to have become the central arena of strategic confrontation between Tehran and Washington — a confrontation with significant implications not only for Persian Gulf security, but also for global energy markets, international trade, and regional stability.

curbing inflation and high prices, and achieving the total eradication of poverty."

On that basis, he said parliamentary legislation "must have a direct and visible relationship with the country's main issues and the needs of the people, and must be oriented toward creating hope and building the country's future."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)



capacity and maintain full coordination with the administration while preserving legislative independence in pursuit of that goal.

He listed the country's priorities including "reconstructing the country, allaying the people's concerns — especially economic and livelihood issues — boosting production and employment, advancing science and industry, elevating culture and ethics, fighting financial corruption,

coercive measures, tariffs, and protectionist policies instead of dialogue, diplomacy, and fair trade," Iravani said.

He argued that selective approaches to international law, unequal participation in global decision-making, widening financial inequalities, climate challenges, and persistent conflicts have had particularly severe consequences for developing countries.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran calls for inclusive global governance

TEHRAN - Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Amir Saied Iravani, has called for a more representative and equitable system of global governance while warning against unilateralism, coercive policies, and violations of international law during two high-level meetings at the United Nations in New York.

Addressing a meeting of the Group of Friends of Global Governance on May 28, Iravani said the international community is facing not only mul-

tiple global crises but also a growing crisis of trust and legitimacy in the current global order.

The envoy criticized "the increasing replacement of genuine multilateralism with unilateral approaches," saying sanctions, coercive measures, tariffs, and protectionist policies have undermined international cooperation and deepened instability across the world. "Our world is witnessing dangerous contradictions: unilateralism instead of genuine multilateralism; confrontation instead of cooperation; sanctions,

coercive measures, tariffs, and protectionist policies instead of dialogue, diplomacy, and fair trade," Iravani said.

He argued that selective approaches to international law, unequal participation in global decision-making, widening financial inequalities, climate challenges, and persistent conflicts have had particularly severe consequences for developing countries.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Skipper Jahanbakhsh struggles for fitness ahead of World Cup

TEHRAN - The Iranian national team face a race against time as captain Alireza Jahanbakhsh continues to struggle with an injury sustained during his match against La Louviere.

Despite 23 days having passed since the incident, which forced him to miss three club matches, Jahanbakhsh remains sidelined and unable to participate in full training.

His condition has become a primary concern for the coaching staff as they finalize preparations for the upcoming World Cup. During intra-squad scrimmage at the team's training camp in Turkey, Jahanbakhsh was kept out of action. Denis Dargahi also missed the session, though his absence was attributed to his late arrival at the camp rather than injury.

The current status of the skipper is a significant blow to the squad's cohesion, as he continues to undergo a recovery program tailored to his specific needs.

Iran, drawn into a challenging Group E alongside Egypt, Belgium, and New Zealand, will be banking on their captain's fitness as they finalize their roster for the global tournament.

With the tournament fast approaching, the medical team is working around the clock to ensure Jahanbakhsh can regain match fitness in time to lead his side on the world stage.

2026 World Cup: Iran move camp to Mexico

TEHRAN - Iran's national team unexpectedly altered their plans for the 2026 World Cup and decided to move their base camp to Mexico, leaving behind the location it had originally planned in the United States.

Tijuana will become the Asian side's operations center before and during its World Cup campaign.

The decision turns Tijuana into the new strategic hub for the Asian side during the tournament hosted by Mexico, the United States, and Canada.

The Iranian federation confirmed that the team will train in Tijuana, a border city that will help facilitate logistics and squad mobility. Several reports indicate that the move received FIFA approval following discussions between the parties involved.

The new camp is expected to be located at facilities connected to professional Mexican soccer, a choice that also places the team closer to their competition venues.

The move is mainly linked to logistical and security factors surrounding the Iranian team's presence in the United States. The political context and complications related to mobility and accommodation influenced the decision to shift the camp to Mexico.

Although the team changed their operational base, FIFA has kept the tournament's official schedule unchanged.

Despite relocating the camp, Iran will play its group-stage matches in the United States. The Asian side remain scheduled to play in cities such as Los Angeles and Seattle during its 2026 World Cup journey.

Iran's arrival strengthens Mexico's role as a key training and preparation hub for several national teams during the World Cup. Tijuana is set to join the World Cup map as one of the tournament's most relevant international preparation centers.

Speaking at a news conference, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said a FIFA representative told her the U.S. was reluctant to allow the Iranian squad to remain on American soil outside match days, prompting the relocation of its base camp to Mexico.

"The United States doesn't want the Iranian national team to stay overnight in the United States," Sheinbaum told reporters. She said a FIFA representative then asked, "Can they stay overnight in Mexico?"

"And we said, 'Yes, no problem. We have no issue with that,'" she said.

Iran's fixtures at 2026 AVC Women's Championship unveiled

TEHRAN - The Asian Volleyball Confederation has announced the full schedule for the 2026 AVC Women's Volleyball Championship.

The tournament is set to take place from June 6 to 14, with 12 teams competing in the Philippines.

The preliminary round will feature two groups, with the top two teams from each group advancing to the semi-finals.

Group A: Philippines, South Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Chinese Taipei, and Australia.

Group B: Vietnam, Hong Kong, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Iran, and Lebanon.

Under the guidance of head coach Lee Doh-hee, the Iranian women's national team will kick off their campaign against Indonesia on June 6. They will then face Kazakhstan (June 8), Lebanon (June 9), Vietnam (June 11), and Hong Kong (June 12) in subsequent matches.

The final ranking matches for positions 1st through 12th will be played on June 13, and 14.

Weightlifting chief says Iran's new generation is ready to deliver

TEHRAN - The president of Iran's Weightlifting Federation says the sport has turned a major corner after years of hard work to rebuild its talent pipeline.

Speaking after Iran's junior team won the world title in Egypt and Alireza Yousefi smashed the clean and jerk world record in India, Sajad Anoushiravani said he has fought for four years to create a proper generational development chain in Iranian weightlifting.

"We struggled for four years to build this system, and we went through a lot of difficulties," he said. "Now we can say we'll start seeing the fruits of that work."

Anoushiravani, who was present on the platform for both recent achievements, stressed that Iran cannot afford any interruption in training as the team prepare for the Nagoya Asian Games and the World Championships in Egypt, which will serve as the first qualification event for the Olympic cycle.

"We must not allow even one day of disruption in the national team's training," he said.

He pointed to the rise of a younger, faster-developing squad, noting that over the past three years Iran has undergone a major generational transition. The team's average age has dropped from around 26-27 to 22.

Among the standout names is Alireza Nasiri, whom Anoushiravani described as one of the top three lifters in his weight class in the world. Nasiri was identified as a talent at just 16 and has been in national-team camps for three and a half years, excelling across youth and junior levels.

Anoushiravani also highlighted Alireza Yousefi, who recently returned strong after major surgery and is now, at just 23, one of the leading contenders for Olympic gold.

Iran's junior men also underlined the depth of the system, winning the world title in Egypt for a second straight year in both the medal standings and the points rankings. Anoushiravani said 50 percent of that squad has now been promoted into the senior national-team camp.

"That was the missing link in our development chain," he said. "We worked for four years to build it."

On the women's side, Anoushiravani said there is also reason for optimism, pointing to Iran's growing medal record at international events.

"We're very hopeful the number of women's medals this year will double compare to last year," he said.

His message was clear: momentum must not be lost.

"We have to keep training camps going under any circumstances," he added. "There is no room to stop. Any pause in our program will hurt our results in Nagoya and at the world championships in China."

Iran, Tajikistan forge closer economic ties as \$1-billion trade target looms

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN- The closing ceremony of the 18th meeting of the Iran-Tajikistan Joint Economic Committee was held in Dushanbe on May 26.

Addressing the meeting, Tajikistan's Minister of Energy and Water Resources, noting a significant increase in trade between Iran and Tajikistan in the first quarter of 2026, called Iran Tajikistan's most important partner in the region and emphasized the development of technological and energy cooperation based on historical commonalities.

Dalir Juma referred to Iran as a friendly and brotherly country and said: "We consider the role of Iran important for peace and stability in the region and the world. Tajikistan evaluates cooperation between the two friendly and brotherly countries, i.e. Iran and Tajikistan, as beneficial, and relying on the principle of good faith, considers Iran one of its most important partners in the region and the world."

He added: "Deep historical, cultural and linguistic commonalities have provided the ground for beneficial cooperation in technology, industry, energy and many other fields between the two countries."

Tajikistan's energy minister, referring to official statistics, noted: "Trade between Iran and Tajikistan in the first quarter of 2026 has increased significantly compared to the same period last year, and the expansion of this trade will lead to economic security and further development for both countries."

The 6,000 year culture of Iran and Tajikistan is unbreakable – upgrading relations pursued seriously

Iran's Minister of Energy, pointing to the favorable political relations between the two countries, called upgrading trade and economic relations a primary duty and said: "The end of this session is not the end of the work, but the beginning of a heavy responsibility on the path to realizing the agreements."

Abbas Aliabadi, referring to the deep bonds between the two nations, said: "As discussed during this session and as President Emomali Rahmon also noted, today, relying on the deep linguistic, cultural, religious and social bonds between the two brotherly nations, we stand on a new path of cooperation."

He added: "Developing relations with neighboring countries and Muslim countries has always been at the top of the strategic priorities of our country's officials, and among these, Tajikistan has a special place."

Aliabadi, pointing to the favorable political relations between the two countries, stated: "Today we see that political relations between Iran and Tajikistan are at an excellent level, but our main challenge and duty is to raise this level of political intimacy to a similar level in trade and economic relations. Enemies should know that this 6,000-year culture of the two nations is unbreakable."

The Minister of Energy emphasized: "The end of this session is not the end of the work, but the beginning of a heavy responsibility on the path to realizing the agreements. The document resulting from this session is not just a collection of words, but a covenant for action. For these agreements to become a turning point in relations between the two countries, we need to operationalize the executive mechanisms in a timely manner. Here I must express my gratitude to the people and government of Tajikistan for accompanying us on this path."

Aliabadi, stressing the formation of joint technical committees, noted: "I emphasize that the formation of joint technical committees and a follow-up committee for the session must not be delayed. I sincerely thank all the expert delegations and especially my colleagues in the international department of the Ministry of Energy who played a role in advancing these clauses with precision and speed. I hope all the proposed suggestions reach the implementation stage with the same speed and precision."

The Minister of Energy, referring to the capacities for cooperation between the two countries, said: "Increasing capacities and potentials to expand trade and economic relations between the two countries, especially in the field of exporting technical and engineering services, using transit capacities, and selling oil and oil products to Tajikistan, are among the important axes of cooperation."

Aliabadi expressed hope at the end: "I hope the implementation of the agreements reached at this session will be a turning point in the relations and interactions between the two countries, and that



the proposed clauses in the joint committee will all proceed with precision and speed."

Iran's energy minister meets Tajik president – emphasis on diplomacy to resolve West Asia tensions

During this trip, Iran's Minister of Energy also met with Tajik President Emomali Rahmon. In this meeting, current cooperation between the two countries, especially in the economic, industrial, energy, agricultural, road construction and transport sectors, was reviewed and discussed.

The President of Tajikistan noted that the existing tensions in West Asia can only be resolved through diplomatic tools and negotiation. Tajikistan's firm stance in support of ongoing political efforts and constructive dialogue to resolve conflicts was emphasized.

Presidential phone call – Iran ready to expand cooperation in all fields

Also, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, in a telephone conversation with Tajik President Emomali Rahmon, referring to the expanding relations between Tehran and Dushanbe, stated: "Iran is ready to further develop bilateral cooperation with Tajikistan in all fields, especially in the economic, energy, transport and cultural sectors."

\$1 billion trade target – joint industrial plants and mining task force

Back in mid-February, Seyed Mohammad Atabak, Iran's minister of industry, mining and trade, said that Iran and Tajikistan have set a target of raising bilateral trade to \$1.0 billion in the near future and agreed to expand joint investments and establish shared industrial plants, as senior officials from both sides moved to deepen economic and mining cooperation.

He made the remarks during a visit to Dushanbe, where he met with Prime Minister of Tajikistan Qohir Rasulzoda and other senior officials.

Atabak said economic relations and trade exchanges between the two countries were on a positive and expanding trajectory, adding that bilateral ties, particularly in commerce, were stronger than before. During the multi-day visit, he held talks with three Tajik ministers, two heads of state committees and the prime minister on boosting cooperation in areas including pharmaceuticals, mining and industrial development.

The two sides agreed to pursue a roadmap aimed at accelerating the implementation of existing agreements, facilitating private sector engagement and strengthening export capacity, technology transfer and bilateral infrastructure.

In the mining sector, Iran and Tajikistan agreed to form a joint working group between Iran's Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade and Tajikistan's Ministry of Industry to expand the presence of Iranian companies in Tajikistan's mining and mineral industries.

Masoud Sami'e Nejad, head of the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organisation (IMIDRO), said the task force would focus on reconstructing Tajik mining industries through Iranian engineering and design teams, training Tajik engineers and establishing structured engineering systems for mineral processing industries.

Iran's advantages lie in technical services, competitive prices and cultural proximity

On May 19, the commercial attaché of Iran in Tajikistan, referring to the envisioned roadmap for Iran-Tajikistan trade exchanges, stated that Iran's main advantages in this market are providing technical and engineering services, industrial technologies at competitive prices, cultural proximity, and the capability to implement joint projects.

Mohammad-Ali Amirfakhrian said, pointing to the forecast of over 8% economic growth in Tajikistan: "The development of infrastructure projects, energy, mining industries, mineral processing, technical and engineering services, and support for export-oriented production will be among the most important economic axes of Tajikistan in the coming years, which can create a good opportunity for the presence of Iranian economic entrepreneurs and capable companies."

President orders to develop alternative trade corridors through northern ports, neighboring countries

TEHRAN- President Pezeshkian emphasizing the need to maintain market stability and prevent price volatility, ordered the acceleration of activating alternative import routes and maximum use of neighboring countries' capacities.

According to ISNA, at the coordination meeting on accelerating the supply of essential goods, medicine, and management of alternative import routes, chaired by President Masoud Pezeshkian and attended by some ministers, the Central Bank Governor, and officials from relevant bodies, the necessity of maximizing the country's logistical, commercial, and economic diplomacy capacities to maintain market stability and ensure supply chain continuity was emphasized.

During the meeting, the latest status of supply and import of essential goods, medicine, and needed inputs, considering restrictions imposed on some southern routes, was carefully reviewed, and executive bodies presented reports on actions taken to manage the situation and create alternative routes.

According to a report from the ministers, as a result of negotiations and coordination with neighboring countries, a significant capacity of land border crossings and alternative transport routes has been activated and strengthened to facilitate and increase imports of goods, and



the process of importing essential goods into the country is being continuously pursued.

At the meeting, the President, stressing the need for intelligent market management and preventing any price volatility, tasked the Ministry of Agriculture with minimizing the possible effects of restrictions on some entry points on the prices of essential goods and medicine through careful, continuous, and forward-looking planning.

The President also emphasized the need to maximize the use of the country's northern ports, develop alternative trade corridors, and utilize the capacity of neighboring countries – including Pakistan, Russia, and Azerbaijan – for supplying and importing certain needed items, and called for accelerating the im-

plementation of relevant agreements in this area.

Following this, the President instructed the Ministry of Agriculture to assign specific, specialized working groups for each commodity category. This aims to prevent any fragmentation, duplication, or disruption in decision-making, while identifying source countries for supply as quickly as possible and ensuring the purchase and import process is followed with greater coherence and speed.

Pezeshkian also stressed the need to guide and coordinate private sector actors and stakeholders in using alternative transport and supply routes, and called for maximum synergy between the government and the private sector in managing the current situation.

During the meeting, the feasibility of importing medicine and certain critical items from China via rail routes was examined, and the need to strengthen multimodal transport infrastructure and increase the resilience of the country's supply chain was emphasized.

In another part of his remarks, the President emphasized the need for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to further activate the country's economic diplomacy capacity, stating: "All political, economic, and regional capacities of the country must be employed to facilitate the purchase, transport, customs clearance, and entry of essential goods and medicine so that no interruption occurs in meeting the people's needs."

Pezeshkian also made clear that if necessary, he would personally negotiate with the leaders of neighboring countries and regional partners to remove any potential obstacles to the supply and transport of essential goods and medicine as quickly as possible.

The Central Bank Governor also presented a report on the status of foreign currency and financial resources needed for importing essential goods and medicine, stating that fortunately there is no problem in financing these items, and necessary support will continue uninterrupted.

Geopolitics over supply: Why Iran-US talks now drive global oil prices

TEHRAN- The recent analysis by the international oil and energy market experts highlights that global crude prices have become dangerously dependent on the outcome of diplomatic talks between Iran and the United States. According to the analysts, the traditional market drivers of supply and demand have taken a backseat to geopolitical forces, with the Iran-US negotiation table now representing the single most sensitive variable for oil markets.

The reports warn of two dramatically different price scenarios. A successful agreement

could inject stability into the market, potentially lowering oil prices by as much as \$15 per barrel. Conversely, a deadlock or collapse of talks would significantly increase the risk of a price shock, pushing Brent crude above the \$120 threshold.

This volatility is exacerbated by recent military actions, including attacks on Iranian oil facilities following US and Israeli operations, which have demonstrated the vulnerability of critical energy infrastructure.

The West Asia's geopolitical landscape has

become the Achilles' heel of the oil market. Policies enacted by consumer nations, producer nations, and non-state actors now exert greater influence than classic supply-demand fundamentals. In this high-stakes environment, market expectations are shaped almost entirely by diplomatic headlines.

As such, both bullish and bearish outcomes remain possible, making the coming weeks critical for energy markets worldwide. Any signal of progress or breakdown in the Iran-US talks is likely to trigger immediate and sharp price movements.

Iran, Kazakhstan emphasize development of trade, transport, industry, mining, logistics co-op

TEHRAN- The Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade of Iran, during a meeting with the Minister of Industry and Construction of Kazakhstan, in Astana, while reviewing ways to develop economic relations, emphasized the implementation of joint industrial projects aimed at increasing the volume of trade between the two countries.

According to IRNA from the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, Seyed Mohammad Atabak, in his meeting with Kanat Sharlapayev, Minister of Industry and Construction of Kazakhstan, stressed the development of relations. It was decided that in order to frame cooperation and accelerate defined projects, bilateral memoranda of understanding between the responsible bodies of the two countries would be drafted and signed to facilitate the implementation of industrial plans.

One of the key axes of this dialogue was resolving financial challenges facing contractors and industrialists of both countries. In this regard, the parties agreed to establish necessary mechanisms to facilitate the issuance of bank guarantees aimed at ensuring the implementation of joint projects and supporting companies active in these fields.

The Minister of Industry and Construction of Kazakhstan, welcoming the proposals put forward, emphasized his country's readiness to provide legal and executive frameworks for more active participation of Iranian companies in Kazakhstan's industrial projects.

This meeting, which is considered an important step towards strengthening economic relations

in the Eurasia region, ended with an emphasis on continuing expert-level negotiations to finalize the aforementioned memoranda.

Meanwhile, during a meeting between the Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade of Iran and the Minister of Transport of Kazakhstan in Astana, the two sides emphasized expanding bilateral cooperation in trade, transport and logistics.

According to IRNA from the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, at the meeting between Seyed Mohammad Atabak, Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade of Iran, and Nurlan Sauranbayev, Minister of Transport of Kazakhstan, the development of joint cooperation with the aim of increasing demand and supply volume of essential goods, facilitating loading, unloading and customs clearance processes at the customs of both countries, as well as utilizing the successful experience of sea lines between Iran's northern ports including Anzali, Amirabad and Nowshahr with the port of Aktau, were examined in order to enhance the level of trade.

The two sides also emphasized cooperation to attract Kazakh investors to invest in Iran's northern ports and supply the required vessels in the Caspian Sea.

Increasing shipping lines in the Caspian Sea between Iranian and Kazakh ports with the aim of increasing the volume of maritime exchanges and taking advantage of the competitive advantages of this mode of transport was another axis of this meeting.

Furthermore, the necessity of eliminating re-inspections of containers carrying Iranian products

by Kazakh customs at the port of Aktau, removing additional port and customs service costs, and reducing the time for unloading and loading Iranian export goods was emphasized.

The parties also called for the resumption and re-licensing of flight lines between the two countries – flights that had been halted after the recent imposed war, and whose revival can play an effective role in developing economic, commercial and tourism relations between Iran and Kazakhstan.

This meeting was held in line with strengthening strategic cooperation between Tehran and Astana and with the aim of enhancing the level of economic and transport interactions between the two countries.

Back in December 2025, Mohammad Ali Dehghan-Dehnavi, deputy industry, mining, and trade minister and head of the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), said that trade ties between Tehran and Astana are entering a more dynamic phase following the recent presidential visit to Kazakhstan, with both sides seeking to expand economic cooperation through logistics projects and regional partnerships.

cooperation between provinces of the two countries was a key pillar of bilateral trade policy, adding that political relations had outpaced economic ties despite strong potential.

Speaking at a meeting on logistical cooperation with Kazakhstan, attended by senior officials and business representatives, Dehghan-Dehnavi said closer coordination and joint infrastructure projects were needed to rebalance economic relations and raise trade volumes.

Golestan province, due to its geographic proximity, cultural links and past cooperation with Kazakhstan, could play a central role in advancing provincial-level projects, he said.

Golestan Governor Ali-Asghar Tahmasebi said current trade stood at about \$300 million and that both sides aimed to raise it to \$1.0 billion by 2026 and \$2.0 billion the following year, citing commitments made during the presidential visit.

He said Kazakhstan could source part of its agricultural needs, including citrus fruit, vegetables and horticultural products, from northern provinces, while highlighting the strategic importance of the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC) for both countries.

Tahmasebi said a rail corridor linking China, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Tehran had not yet been fully utilized and called for greater use of the route to unlock trade opportunities from Central Asia to southern ports.

Also, Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Tehran Ontalap Onalbayev said Tehran was an important political, economic and cultural partner, noting particular interest in cooperation with Golestan province and the Incheh Borun free trade zone to address logistical bottlenecks through joint projects.

Meanwhile, Reza Masrouf, the former secretary of the Iranian Free Zones High Council, said the China-Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan corridor had strong commercial potential if transport costs were reduced and incentives expanded, adding that the Incheh Borun zone was ready to host Kazakh investors.

The shock absorber doctrine and the 'Abraham' suicide pact

From page 1 ▶

Mafia diplomacy

Oman has spent more than half a century acting as America's quiet, reliable diplomatic bridge in the Persian Gulf, frequently hosting the delicate negotiations necessary to maintain regional balance.

Yet, when Muscat engaged in pragmatic talks with Tehran to jointly manage shipping and to restore order to a global energy crisis, the White House responded with naked verbal aggression.

Trump casually threatened to annihilate the sovereign nation. Speaking at a cabinet meeting, he declared, "Oman will behave just like everybody else or we'll have to blow them up."

This was a brutal demonstration of mafia diplomacy. The phrase "blow them up" dismantled decades of diplomatic theater, proving that Washington views Arab states in the Persian Gulf not as independent allies, but as geopolitical hostages.

The Doha bombing and Hegseth's threat

Qatar received an equally jarring reality check regarding the true cost of American partnership. On May 26, an explosive leaked report surfaced via Saudi-owned Al-Hadath reporter Sareh bin Aishouh detailing a tense phone call between U.S. War Secretary Pete Hegseth and Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani.

Infuriated by Doha's refusal to expel Hamas political officials and its insistence on American flexibility toward Iran, Hegseth is said to have resorted to explicit blackmail aimed directly at the Qatari royal family.

Hegseth reportedly snarled, "Remember, if President Trump had not intervened last time and stopped Netanyahu's fundamental plan, you and your tribe would not be in this world right now. If the



Qatari government is ungrateful for President Trump's favor, we will have no reason to stop Netanyahu from doing what he normally does."

This alleged horrific threat carried the heavy weight of recent bloodshed. Just months prior, on September 9, 2025, Israel fired ten precision missiles into a government residential complex in Doha's West Bay Lagoon district.

The strike targeted Hamas political leaders who were meeting specifically to discuss a U.S.-brokered ceasefire, ultimately killing a Qatari security official and five others.

While Washington claimed plausible deniability, it is militarily impossible for Israeli warplanes to strike the capital of a major non-NATO U.S. ally, flying through airspace monitored by CENTCOM from Qatar's own Al Udeid Air Base, without American facilitation. The message, which was also received during the 2026 war on Iran, was unmistakable: hosting American bases offers zero protection; it only transforms sovereign soil into a zone of permitted Israeli aggression.

The Kushner grift and Emirati vulnerability

Arab monarchies in the Persian Gulf originally believed they could purchase insulation from this chaos. They funneled billions into Jared Kushner's Affinity Partners, an investment fund managing \$6.16 billion, 99 percent of which is derived from foreign nationals, predomi-

nantly the sovereign wealth funds of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar.

Despite objections from their own financial advisors, Arab leaders paid this multi-billion-dollar tribute as a protection fee to guarantee access and safety in Washington.

The return on this staggering "investment" has been pure humiliation. Kushner secured his \$2 billion anchor investment from the Saudis and assumed his role as U.S. special envoy for peace, yet he delivered a catastrophic regional war and explicit military threats against the very nations paying his management fees.

The United Arab Emirates stands as the premier cautionary tale of this dynamic. Abu Dhabi signed the Abraham Accords under the illusion that normalization would yield an ironclad security umbrella.

Instead, by embedding Israeli military and intelligence assets within its borders, the UAE compromised its national security and alienated its permanent neighbor, Iran.

While trade with Israel crept to \$3.2 billion in 2024, the UAE placed its critical \$28 billion annual commerce with Iran at severe risk. The UAE spent \$4.5 billion on American THAAD missile systems, effectively paying a recurring tribute to Western defense contractors, only to find its critical infrastructure targeted by retaliatory drones.

The UAE was forced into a state of fiscal hemorrhage, spending 20 to 30 times more on interceptors than the cost of incoming fire, a ruinous equation that preserves Israeli security at Arab expense.

The historic crossroads for Riyadh

The desperation driving Washington's current diplomatic posture stems from a reality it cannot publicly admit: the total strategic failure of its aggressive campaigns against Iran.

Because the U.S. can no longer protect commercial shipping or dominate the battlefield, it is attempting to salvage its fractured hegemony by legally binding Arab sovereignty to a sinking Israeli security framework.

Trump's recent insistence that the expansion of the Abraham Accords must be "mandatory" for nations such as Saudi Arabia is an admission of weakness, a desperate attempt to force compliance where persuasion has failed.

Saudi Arabia now faces a definitive choice at a narrowing historic crossroads. Riyadh cannot simultaneously chase the illusion of Western protection and maintain illusions of strategic autonomy.

The regional lessons are stark: the UAE has forfeited its security and business model, Qatar has faced Israeli bombardment and reported threats from the Pentagon, and the U.S. President has casually threatened Oman with annihilation.

The Abraham Accords are capitulation documents that turn sovereign Arab wealth into Israeli-American slush funds and Arab lands into a buffer zone for foreign wars. For Saudi Arabia, stepping into this trap signifies "Game Over" for independent Arab statehood and the final surrender of its future to a collapsing American order that has already proven it will burn its allies to save itself.

Why Iran will never surrender the Strait of Hormuz

Defiance will define the world order

From page 1 ▶ though they know full well such promises will never be kept. Some presidents or prime ministers have traveled to Washington seeking tariff pardons; others have surrendered to U.S. pressure in various ways.

Yet defiance, not compliance, remains the mainstream trend in the face of hegemonic pressure. Compliance and surrender are only part of the story.

Defiance is first and foremost embodied in Iran's resistance against joint U.S.-Israeli aggression. Iran has undoubtedly been one of the countries hardest hit by U.S. hegemonic policies—facing decades of severe economic sanctions, military threats, and political isolation, including two direct U.S. wars of aggression respectively in 2025 and 2026.

Despite all the difficulties, Iran has stood defiant as a truly sovereign nation. It has not only remained resilient through those hard years but also won both of the two wars. According to recent U.S. assessments, 228 American military sites or facilities were severely damaged by Iranian strikes during the 39-day war.

The reason is simple: Iran's defiance enjoys unanimous national support, as the Iranian people deeply cherish their independence and sovereignty. The U.S. lost both wars largely because neither the American public nor its major allies supported an unjustified war policy.

Iran's defiance will certainly pay off. With these victories, Iran's regional and global standing will rise, and it will play an even larger role in shaping the postwar order.

Defiance is secondly seen in European countries' rejection of U.S. requests to join military actions. Major European nations have long been U.S. allies, often following Washington's lead. Yet recent experiences show that European allies are not immune to U.S. hegemonic policies—whether through tariff wars or threats to annex the territory of another NATO ally.

For years, Europeans followed the U.S. on major strategic issues. But in the last two wars against Iran, Washington did not share any information with its European allies—a clear sign of disrespect. In response, Britain, France, and Germany all refused to provide military assistance and rejected U.S. requests to help escort vessels in the Strait of Hormuz. This defiance reflects growing dissatisfaction with longstanding unequal relations and America's persistent disregard.

An even more telling example of defiance is China's resistance to the U.S. tariff war. China has long been a major victim of U.S. economic sanctions, yet it has consistently maintained a



resistant posture. Over the past several years, China has held its course in the face of U.S. tariff bluffing.

On one hand, China imposed export controls on rare earths as a countermeasure against U.S. tariffs and advanced chip restrictions. On the other hand, China agreed to negotiate with the U.S. on tariff issues—but insisted that talks take place not in the U.S., but in third countries. Negotiations were subsequently held in Switzerland, Britain, Sweden, Spain, Malaysia, France, and South Korea.

Those talks did produce some agreements, but most were merely about suspending the trade war for three months, six months, or one year—suggesting that U.S. bluffing achieved little, while defiance paid off. On May 13, U.S. President Donald Trump made a state visit to China at his own initiative, signaling that China had won respect through defiance.

All in all, hegemony has its own logic, mindset, and trajectory. It never reflects on its wrongs, and often experiences a last, desperate resurgence—one that is highly detrimental to regional and global order. That is the reality of today's world.

Still, despite some acts of compliance, defiance will always endure. Compliance may yield small, immediate gains, but defiance ultimately defines strategic outcomes and the world order. History tells us so: it was defiance against fascism and militarism that allowed China to finally win its independence, and it was a united world that created a new order in the Second World War.

Iran's ongoing defiance will be remembered as one of the most heroic and brave stands in human history against bullying and hegemony. Despite enormous losses, Iran has already won—and will continue to win—the respect of people in defiant nations and even in those that comply.

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Every ego empire eventually falls

By Syeda Farheen Naqi Mossavi

HAFIZABAD, Pakistan - The tensions between the United States and Iran did not begin overnight. Their roots trace back to the 1979 Iranian Revolution, yet over the decades the conflict evolved into something far more dangerous and unpredictable. At times, American naval fleets move through the Persian Gulf; at other moments, new sanctions tighten pressure on Tehran. Israel's growing involvement, repeated threats, and aggressive rhetoric have added further instability to an already fragile region.

Amid this global confrontation, the personality and leadership style of Donald Trump became impossible to ignore. His political approach has often been shaped by confrontation, dramatic statements, and emotionally charged communication. Late-night social media posts, sarcastic attacks on opponents, and direct warnings toward Iran gradually became part of international headlines.

For many observers, the concern was never limited to foreign policy alone. It was also about temperament, ego, and the impact personality-driven leadership can have on global affairs.

American actor Robert De Niro once described Trump as a "sociopathic, psychopathic malignant narcissist," reflecting the intensity of criticism surrounding his public behavior. Beyond Hollywood, several psy-

chologists and commentators also expressed concern about the broader consequences of leadership centered around self-image and emotional dominance.

The term "malignant narcissism" was originally introduced by Erich Fromm, a German-born psychologist who escaped Nazi Germany and later studied authoritarian personalities, including Adolf Hitler. Fromm described malignant narcissism as a combination of extreme self-obsession, aggression, lack of empathy, paranoia, and an unhealthy desire for control.

Psychologist John Gartner was among those who publicly warned about these concerns during Trump's rise in American politics in 2015. He argued that a personality heavily driven by ego, impulsiveness, and emotional reactivity could become dangerous not only for domestic stability, but also for diplomacy and international balance.

Several books further expanded these debates. The Dangerous Case of Donald Trump brought together psychiatrists and psychologists who argued that Trump's conduct posed risks to democratic institutions and public stability. Another work, The Episodic Man, explored the connection between identity, personality structure, and modern political leadership.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

America's support for Lebanon: A deadly friendship

From page 1 ▶ As for Lebanon's current government, which has failed to achieve anything meaningful, all the conditions for a popular uprising appear to exist. The government has failed to solve the disaster of stolen depositors' funds, has not improved the electricity supply, and has not introduced any serious plan to address the waste crisis.

At the top of a long list of unresolved crises that have seen no governmental response is its inability to defend Lebanon against the Israeli regime's aggression, which is carpet bombing towns and villages, liberate occupied parts, or even properly address any of these national security interests.

So why was Rubio so quick to support the Lebanese government despite its failures?

The United States usually supports governments that meet certain conditions, most being submissive to Washington, aligned with its broader project, and willing to perform roles that serve American interests. Many governments around the world that enjoy U.S. backing fit this description.

In West Asia, however, another essential condition is added: the supported government must protect and preserve the Zionist regime's interests, even at the expense of its own national interests. It is also expected to accept and accommodate the Israeli regime.

Nawaf Salam's government fulfills these conditions to the fullest extent.

Lebanon's leadership has entered direct negotiations with an occupying regime without any conditions or limitations, in ways

that serve American and Israeli interests while openly sacrificing national interests. This includes abandoning all sources of strength, foremost among them Hezbollah's weapons, which the government has officially declared illegitimate, thereby achieving a key Israeli objective.

For this reason, Rubio's statement falls perfectly within the normal framework of American policy.

What should not be overlooked, however, is that American support offers no guarantees. Lessons drawn from the history of U.S. relations highlight this. Washington quickly abandons its allies, no matter how many concessions they make. The moment its interests change or the cost of support outweighs the political or military benefit, it does not hesitate to change policy.

This pattern was repeated with leaders such as Ngo Dinh Diem in Vietnam, Augusto Pinochet in Chile, the Somoza dynasty in Nicaragua, Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi in Iran, and later Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani in Afghanistan.

All of them were left to face their fate without warning and without even the minimum effort to preserve their dignity.

The same pattern exists in the Arab world. The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) provides one of the latest and clearest examples after years of American backing. The United States used the SDF to keep Syria politically unstable and supported it as a force controlling strategic resources in eastern and northeastern Syria, serving as a proxy that secured American in-



From left, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, U.S. Ambassador to Beirut Michel Issa, Lebanese Ambassador to Washington Nadema Moawad, and Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Yechiel Leiter

fluence there.

Yet the SDF found itself outside American priorities once the former Syrian government fell. Before that, Washington abandoned Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and his Egyptian counterpart Hosni Mubarak.

Perhaps the experience of Lebanese Christians and their relationship with the United States is among the clearest examples. Lebanese people often recall the proposal allegedly made by Kissinger to former Lebanese President Suleiman Frangieh in the 1970s to transport Christians out of Lebanon on American warships. It showed how little value the U.S. placed on the Christian presence in Lebanon and how prepared it was to abandon them.

This became even more evident during Lebanon's Mountain War in 1983 and later at the end of the civil war, which led to the Taif Agreement. The agreement included provisions that reduced Christian political powers within Lebanon's system, while Christian leaders at the time were also abandoned, most notably Michel

Aoun, whose exile to Paris, which America did not prevent, and Samir Geagea, whose imprisonment it also did not stop.

This happened even though many Lebanese Christians, at critical moments, believed that Washington held all the leverage, and they based their expectations on that assumption.

Yet the Americans did not hesitate to leave them to their fate. Washington became one of the main architects of the post-Taif era, during which Christians were excluded from key positions of power in Lebanon for many years.

Today, this same mistaken reliance on the United States is being repeated by Lebanon's ruling authorities, who have placed all their cards in American hands without learning the lessons of recent history.

For this reason, Rubio's remarks defending the Lebanese government after Hezbollah's secretary-general criticized it may not be worth the ink used to write them. The real danger lies in trusting the deadly friendship of the United States.

Mashhad mayor urges global urban forum to condemn attacks on civilian infrastructure



TEHRAN - The mayor of the Iranian city of Mashhad has issued an open letter to participants at the 13th session of the World Urban Forum in Baku, calling for international action against attacks on civilian infrastructure in West Asia and warning against what he described as the normalization of violence against noncombatants.

The forum, organized by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), was held in the Azerbaijani capital from May 17 to 22 and brought together representatives from more than 100 countries to discuss sustainable urban development, city diplomacy and international cooperation on urban challenges.

In the letter addressed to senior UN-Habitat officials, international urban organizations and mayors attending the gathering, Mashhad Mayor Mohammadreza Ghalandar-Sharif accused the United States and the Israeli regime of contributing to what he described as systematic destruction of civilian infrastructure in Gaza, Lebanon and Iran.

The statement focused in particular on an airstrike on an elementary school in the southern Iranian city of Minab, which the mayor described as evidence of a broader collapse in humanitarian and legal norms during modern conflicts. According to the letter, the attack, occurred on Feb. 28, killed 176 schoolchildren between the ages of six and 10, most of them girls.

Iranian officials have repeatedly accused the United States and the Zionist regime of Israel of involvement in attacks targeting civilians in the region, allegations both countries have denied in previous disputes.

The mayor said the destruction of schools, residential neighborhoods and public infrastructure across the region represented not only a political issue but also a humanitarian and urban planning crisis that threatened citizens' rights to housing, education and security.

Citing figures related to the war in Gaza, the statement said more than 40,000 people had been killed and large residential areas reduced to rubble. It also claimed that in Iran more than 1,288 educational facilities and 36,000 civilian buildings had been damaged, while urban destruction and mass displacement had affected southern Lebanon.

Ghalandar-Sharif criticized what he called the silence of international institutions and urban organizations, saying a lack of response risked creating impunity for attacks on civilians.

"If attacks on schools and the killing of children remain unanswered, no city in the world will be safe from the threat of war and state terrorism," the statement said.

The letter proposed a five-point framework for international action, including the establishment of a global protocol for the protection of civilian sites, the formation of an independent fact-finding committee on incidents in Minab and Gaza, and the creation of a "Baku Urban Reconstruction Fund" to support rebuilding efforts. The mayor also urged support for legal proceedings at the International Criminal Court and called on municipalities worldwide to reconsider commercial ties with defense companies including Boeing, Lockheed Martin and Rafael Advanced Defense Systems.

Moreover, the statement described such measures as an ethical responsibility for municipal governments, arguing that local authorities could not remain passive in the face of attacks affecting homes, schools and urban infrastructure.

The World Urban Forum is the largest international conference focused on cities and human settlements and is coordinated by UN-Habitat to address global urban policy and sustainable development.

Bajestan: A quiet treasure beyond Iran's tourist trail



By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN - Set against the plain beauty of eastern Iran's desert landscapes, the ancient city of Bajestan remains one of the lesser-known destinations of the country, despite possessing a remarkable combination of history, architecture, and natural scenery.

Located in the southern part of Razavi Khorasan province, roughly 300 kilometers from Mashhad, 50 kilometers west of Gonabad and 62 kilometers north of Ferdows, Bajestan lies along the major transit corridor linking southern Iran to Mashhad. For centuries, caravans, merchants, pilgrims, and travelers crossed this harsh yet captivating terrain, transforming the city into an important stop on historical trade routes.

Today, Bajestan is often described as the "land of red rubies," a poetic title inspired by its saffron farms, pomegranate orchards, and the red marble mountains surrounding the region. During autumn, when saffron flowers bloom across the plains, the landscape acquires shades of purple and crimson that contrast dramatically with the pale desert earth. The region's dry climate, together with its traditional agricultural systems, has helped preserve an environment that feels both timeless and deeply connected to Iran's eastern desert culture.

Yet Bajestan's significance extends far beyond its agricultural identity. The city occupies an important place in the historical memory of Khorasan and is believed to date back to the Achaemenid era. Historians and local traditions alike point to the region's ancient roots, while archaeological remains scattered throughout nearby villages reinforce the idea that Bajestan has been inhabited for many centuries. The area is also associated with ancient Zoroastrian communities, and some researchers consider it one of the historic sacred regions connected to pre-Islamic religious traditions in eastern Iran.

The city reached particular prominence during the Timurid era. Contemporary accounts suggest that

Bajestan enjoyed such prestige that even the armies of Timur refrained from destroying it during campaigns across Khorasan. Later, during the Qajar period, Bajestan prospered as a commercial center thanks to its strategic position along caravan routes connecting central and eastern Iran. The remains of caravanserais, bridges, and mosques throughout the county still testify to that period of economic vitality.

Among the most significant historical monuments in the city is the Bajestan Grand Mosque, an architectural landmark dating back to the reign of Timurid ruler Shahrokh. According to inscriptions preserved within the mosque, construction was completed in 828 AH. Located in the old urban fabric of Bajestan, the mosque reflects the architectural traditions of Timurid religious buildings in Khorasan. Its square courtyard, flanking iwans, carved mihrab, and column-supported Shabestan reveal the refined aesthetic associated with Persian-Islamic architecture of the fifteenth century.

The mosque was restored during the Safavid period, a fact that illustrates the continued importance of the structure over several dynasties. Though less famous internationally than the great mosques of Isfahan or Yazd, Bajestan's congregational mosque offers visitors a more intimate encounter with Iranian architectural heritage. Its modest scale and desert setting create an atmosphere of quiet dignity rather than monumental grandeur.

Five kilometers from Bajestan lies the village of Mazar, home to one of the region's most mysterious historical sites: the hand-carved monastery or underground mosque known locally as the Mazar Monastery. Dug into rock beneath an ancient fortress, the structure consists of corridors and chambers carved directly into the earth. Visitors enter through a narrow passageway before reaching a large subterranean chamber supported by massive stone pillars.

The darkness and enclosed design of the site have led researchers

to speculate about its original purpose. Local traditions refer to it as a monastery, yet some historians believe the structure may once have served as a Mithraic temple dating back to the Achaemenid era or earlier. The association with Mithraism is strengthened by the underground nature of the complex, since many Mithraic rituals historically took place in cave-like environments symbolizing cosmic creation and rebirth. Whether interpreted as a religious sanctuary or defensive refuge, the Mazar complex remains one of eastern Iran's most enigmatic archaeological locations.

Equally reflective of Bajestan's historical importance are its caravanserais, many of which once served merchants traveling through the deserts of Khorasan. The Zein Abad Caravanserai, situated southeast of the city along the road to Ferdows, exemplifies the roadside architecture of the Qajar period. Built on a quadrilateral plan and covering approximately 2,500 square meters, the caravanserai contains accommodation chambers, corridors, and a distinguished royal section intended for elite travelers.

Nearby stands the Fakhr Abad Caravanserai, another four-ivan structure that once welcomed caravans preparing to cross the desert. Its most striking decorative feature is the use of partially fired bricks combined with ordinary bricks to create geometric patterns across the façade. The caravanserai's design demonstrates how even utilitarian desert architecture in Iran often incorporated artistic sophistication.

Perhaps the most famous of Bajestan's roadside monuments is the Qasem Abad Caravanserai, a Safavid-era structure located west of the city. Once positioned along the Silk Road, the caravanserai later found itself beside the modern Bafq-Mashhad railway line, linking historical and contemporary transportation networks. Its defining feature is a distinctive four-sided wind tower, regarded as one of the most beautiful examples of desert climate adaptation in Khorasan architecture. Rising above the desert

plain, the wind tower once helped cool interior spaces during the intense summer heat, reflecting the ingenuity of traditional Iranian engineering.

Bajestan's historical landscape also includes the Yunesi Bridge, a Safavid-era brick bridge spanning the Shore River. With nine arches constructed from brick, stone, and sarouj mortar, the bridge represents another example of the infrastructural sophistication that sustained trade routes through eastern Iran. Although modest in comparison with Iran's larger historic bridges, Yunesi Bridge remains an important reminder of the region's role in facilitating commerce and movement across difficult terrain.

Further northeast, in the village of Merandiz, stands the Marandiz Grand Mosque, an 11th-century religious structure whose architectural features resemble those found in historic mosques of Khaf, Roshtkhar, and Torbat Heydarieh. The mosque's courtyard, iwan, domed chamber, and decorative elements reveal stylistic continuities across Khorasan's medieval religious architecture. Though located far from Iran's principal tourist circuits, the building forms part of a broader architectural tradition that once flourished across northeastern Iran.

For travelers seeking destinations beyond the conventional routes of Iranian tourism, Bajestan offers a distinctive combination of desert landscapes, caravan heritage, and ancient spirituality. Unlike heavily visited historical cities, Bajestan retains an atmosphere shaped more by local rhythms than by commercial tourism. Saffron fields, abandoned caravan paths, wind towers rising above desert villages, and underground sanctuaries carved into stone collectively create a portrait of eastern Iran that is both historically layered and visually striking.

In many ways, Bajestan embodies the overlooked cultural geography of Khorasan itself — a region where deserts were never empty spaces, but crossroads of commerce, belief, and civilization.

Shushtar aims to become global model for linking heritage and economy

TEHRAN - The director of the UNESCO-listed Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System has called for the ancient Iranian city of Shushtar to become a global model for linking culture, history and economic development, following ceremonies marking Iran's Cultural Heritage Week.

Speaking to Miras-e Aria Atefeh Rashnoei, director of the Shushtar World Heritage base, described the southwestern Iranian city as "a living civilizational system" rather than merely a historical urban center. She said the preservation and future prosperity of Shushtar depended not only on the protection of monuments but also on sustaining the city's cultural dynamism.

"Cultural Heritage Week has ended, but the glory of Shushtar's name, under the shadow of its world heritage, shines brighter than ever," Reshnoei said. "The survival of this ancient city is tied not only to its architectural structures, but also to the living culture flowing through this land."

Rashnoei praised what she described as unprecedented cooperation among cultural activists, local officials, investors and scholars during the heritage events held in the city. She said strategic support from provincial authorities and the Khuzestan department of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts had enabled a broad range of cultural activities and laid the

groundwork for future development initiatives.

She also emphasized the role of local residents in safeguarding the city's identity and historical assets. "The people of Shushtar are the true guardians of this ancient land," she said, adding that recent programs represented "the beginning of a major path toward recreating our urban identity."

The official said authorities aim to transform Shushtar into an international example of how heritage conservation can be integrated with economic growth and cultural development.

Located in Khuzestan province, the Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2009 as "a masterpiece of creative genius." The vast hydraulic complex, parts of which date back to the reign of Darius the Great in the fifth century B.C., represents one of the ancient world's most sophisticated water management systems.

The system reached its current form during the Sasanian era in the third century CE and includes dams, bridges, canals, tunnels, mills and irrigation structures designed to control and distribute water from the Karun River. UNESCO has described the site as exceptional for both its engineering scale and its multiple functions, including urban water supply, agriculture, transportation and defense.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)



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'IFRC firmly supports IRCS in conducting humanitarian activities'



TEHRAN – Jagan Chapagain, the Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), has said the Federation firmly supports the Iranian Red Crescent Society in conducting humanitarian activities.

Expressing solidarity with the IRCS, he lauded the Society's humanitarian efforts, as well as the professional management of crises, particularly during the recent US-Israeli war against the country, IRNA reported.

The IFRC official made the remarks in a meeting in Geneva with Pirhossein Kolivand, the head of the IRCS, IRNA reported.

Kolivand visited Geneva at the invitation of IFRC officials to draft a roadmap for long-term collaboration.

"I deeply understand the pain and suffering you have gone through; I sympathize with you and stand with you. We are there for each other through tough times, and you have proven this fact well.

When women, children, and civilians were targeted, you courageously defended their human rights; such dedication is truly worthy of commendation and respect," the IFRC secretary general told Kolivand.

Referring to unfair sanctions, Chapagain said, "My primary objective is to work toward mitigating the impact of sanctions on the humanitarian activities of the Iranian Red Crescent Society.

Iranian Red Crescent Society.

We will do our best to reconstruct and replenish the depleted capacities and reserves of the Iranian Red Crescent Society."

Admitting the capabilities of the IRCS, Chapagain said it is the collective duty of the international community and the Federation to support you.

He went on to say that the IRCS is the source of pride of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, bringing immense credit and prestige to the movement.

Moreover, the head of the IRCS held a meeting with Kate Forbes, President of the IFRC, to discuss the humanitarian efforts of the IRCS during the 40-day war imposed on Iran by the US-Israel coalition, the IRCS website reported.

The IFRC President expressed her sympathy to the families of the aid workers who were martyred and to those injured in the line of duty, stating that "We stand with these families, and the services provided by the Iranian Red Crescent during the war that have deeply moved us."

Referring to the initiatives and capabilities of the IRCS, Forbes asked for further information and more detailed explanations on the performance of the "water rescue robots", to facilitate the introduction and sharing of these experiences and technologies with other national societies that are members of the IFRC.



IFRC pledge to support IRCS

Kolivand also called on the IFRC to support the IRCS in providing rescue vehicles and ambulances. The IFRC pledged to facilitate legal, financial, and administrative channels for the IRCS's access to up-to-date, standard, specialized equipment and the direct purchase of rescue vehicles.

Highlighting the extensive capacity of the federation's logistics centers in different countries around the world, the officials affiliated with the IFRC announced readiness to provide relief items, vital equipment, and operational support to the IRCS, to partially compensate for destruction and depreciation resulting from war conditions and sanctions pressures.

For his part, Kolivand elaborated on the manufacturing capability of the IRCS, including the capacity of the textile company in producing mass production of disaster relief tents, blankets, carpets, essential tools, and emergency relief shelters, which play a pivotal role in saving human lives during crises, natural hazards, and conflicts.

The proposal was well-received by the officials, and they agreed to make part of the international purchases from the textile, pharmaceutical, and medical companies of the IRCS.

ICRC president: IRCS is a powerful national society

Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, the president of the International

Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in a meeting with Kolivand, has described the IRCS as one of the most powerful national societies in the world, emphasizing the distinguished and influential position of the IRCS in the global humanitarian arena.

The official also said that the humanitarian efforts of the society are always respected and admired by the international community.

The official promised to follow up on the agreements made on her official visit to Iran and boost cooperation with the IRCS on humanitarian assistance, relief, and medical care.

Kolivand, for his part, called for the ICRC support for the rehabilitation centers and emphasized the need to provide specialized equipment and expand services for the disabled, veterans, and patients in need.

Meetings with Red Cross representatives

The head of the IRCS also held meetings with representatives from the national Red Cross Societies of Norway, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Italy, based at the IFRC headquarters.

The separate sessions were centered around strengthening joint effort and exploring avenues for developing collaborations. Also, discussions expounded on the capabilities and capacities of the IRCS, the exchange of expertise, and the development of ties.

Tehran, Dushanbe ink MOU in health sector, medical insurance

TEHRAN – Iran and Tajikistan have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in the health sector focusing on six parts, including medical education, research, healthcare, treatment, medicine, and health insurance.

According to the Head of the Iranian Health Insurance Organization, Mohammad-Mehdi Nasehi, the MOU was signed on the sidelines of the 18th session of the Joint Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technical, and Cultural Cooperation between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran which was held on May 26, in Dushanbe under the chairmanship of the co-chairs of the commission — Minister of Energy and Water Resources of the Republic of Tajikistan Daler Juma and Minister of Energy of the Islamic Republic of Iran Abbas Aliabadi, IRNA reported.

Fostering ties in the health sector, particularly health insurance, is a part of Iran's six-point roadmap for water diplomacy.

Referring to Iran's expertise in health insurance, the official said the country's experiences in implementing health insurance, referral systems, and other fields of health will be shared with Tajikistan through consultation and implementation.

In this regard, Iran's six proposals included: Establishment of a regional assembly: Creating an assembly for cooperation on water, climate, and infrastructure resilience with the participation of the United Nations.

Protection of vital infrastructure: Developing regional protocols to prevent the targeting of water and energy facilities during crises.

Early warning systems: Launching a joint network for monitoring drought, floods, and dust storms to reduce human and economic losses.

Transfer of modern technologies: Sharing Iran's technical expertise in the fields of water recycling, desalination, and low-water agriculture.

Linking water and energy diplomacy: Utilizing Iran's capacity in electricity exchange networks and renewable energy to create new models of cooperation.

Participatory governance: Emphasizing the central role of women, youth, and scientific institutions in the sustainable management of water resources.

"The destruction of water and energy facilities is not just damage to a country's infrastructure; it is a trigger for crises such as forced migration, widespread poverty, and environmental disasters," Aliabadi noted.

He called on the international community to abandon double standards and develop binding mechanisms to protect these infrastructures from conflicts, so that water never becomes a tool for political pressure.

Describing the climatic situation of the Iranian Plateau and Central Asia, Aliabadi stated that cooperation among neighbors is a strategic necessity to combat drought and desertification, and emphasized: "The deep historical and civilizational ties of Iran with regional countries provide the best foundation for institutionalizing joint management of water resources and enhancing regional stability."

In December 2025, Nasehi and the Minister of Health and Social Protection of Tajikistan, Jamoliddin Abdullozoda, agreed to promote cooperation between the two countries in the field of medical health insurance.

During a meeting held in Tajikistan, the two sides discussed the potential for expanding ties by launching joint investments in the health sector, ihio.gov.ir reported.

For his part, Nasehi announced the organization's readiness to share experiences with Tajikistan to help strengthen its insurance system.

Health insurance services

According to the health ministry, about two million patients with rare and hard-to-treat diseases are covered by the Health Insurance Organization.

All resident and non-resident foreign nationals with legal stay in Iran are required to have basic health insurance coverage following a new enactment by the Cabinet of Ministers.

It also stipulated that non-resident foreign nationals with legal stay in the country could benefit from insurance by paying the health insurance premium fee, and in the absence of insurance, all health services provided will cost them as per health tourism fees, or at least as per private sector fees.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

DOE starts satellite monitoring across Hyrcanian forests

TEHRAN – The Department of Environment has announced that it began satellite monitoring in the UNESCO-registered Hyrcanian forests in the northern province of Gilan.

The Hyrcanian forests cover the northern slope of the Alborz Mountains at the southern edge of the Caspian Sea, and contain very rich ecosystems due to the particular orographic and climatic situation (precipitation-rich, warm-temperate, high moisture from the Caspian Sea and the damming effect of the Alborz Mountains).

The 10-year Hyrcanian Forests Breathing Plan, which began in 2016 to combat the destruction of northern forests, has reached its final year, Hamid Zohrabi, an official with the Department of Environment, said.

In the meantime, the Department of Environment has begun investigating this issue by starting satellite monitoring of the Hyrcanian forests, he added.

"The purpose of satellite monitoring is to examine the process of changes in the northern forests and provide a detailed report on the quantitative and qualitative status of this world heritage based on scientific data," IRIB quoted Zohrabi as saying.

"Using satellite images along with field visits, the Department of Environment can provide a clearer picture of the actual conditions of the forests."

The Department of Environment is responsible for monitoring activities that may lead to the destruction or disruption of the environmental balance. Accordingly, the Department emphasizes the need for a scientific study of the effects of implementing the Forests Breathing Plan and similar plans, he explained.

According to the Seventh Development Plan (2022-2026), national mega-projects must go through the "Strategic Environmental Assessment" process.

However, the necessary legal coordination regarding some new forest-related projects, including the re-harvesting of wood from broken and

fallen trees, has not yet been carried out with the Department of Environment, he concluded.

The Department of Environment is scheduled to implement the first phase of the Hyrcanian forests sustainable management project in the current Iranian calendar year, which started on March 21.

The implementation of the project will contribute to ecological, social, and economic impacts as it restores the ecosystem and enhances local livelihood by providing job opportunities, ISNA quoted Kamran Pormoqaddam, an official with the DOE, as saying.

Covering more than two million hectares, the forests are divided into 104 sections. The first phase will focus on 28 areas, covering an area of 700,000 hectares, in three northern provinces. To supply the costs for the preservation and restoration of the forests, the DOE will utilize the forest parks, not the trees.

The second phase will be implemented in 64 areas during the first six months of the current Iranian year, with the rest to be completed by the end of the year.

Measures for preservation of biodiversity

On February 4, the DOE elaborated on achievements and measures taken by the administration to protect the biodiversity, ecosystem, and endangered species in the country.

The number of protected areas under the supervision of the DOE has increased from 327 to 330, accounting for 12 percent (19.8 million hectares) of the country's land area, IRNA quoted Hamid-Reza Zohrabi, an official with the DOE, as saying.

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, a total of 213 species are endangered.

The country has so far prepared plans for the preservation of 25 endangered species, such as the Persian cheetah, zebra, Asiatic black bear, yellow deer, lesser white-fronted geese, white-headed duck, Persian salamander, blind cave fish, and Luristanica Sorbus (a rare plant species that is

native to Iran). The DOE is preparing thirteen more plans.

The population of prominent herbivorous mammals in the protected areas has increased from 227,000 to more than 240,000, and the number of managed invasive species has grown by 400 percent, covering five species, including crucian carp, nutria, raccoon, and rainbow trout.

Monitoring pests and diseases, and fire outbreaks in Zagros habitats is another measure taken by the DOE, which has led to the identification of the Hyrcanian boxwood pest, the awkward silkworm moth in Gilan province, and the wood-eating pest of Aras in Khorasan Razavi province.

Given the importance of protecting biodiversity and genetic resources, the DOE is planning to prepare a plan to combat plant pests and pathogens as the main threat to the country's unique ecosystem.

To protect caves, the DOE has developed cave classification guidelines and plans for the conservation and sustainable use of the caves in the country. The number of caves with a conservation grade has increased from 7 to 41, indicating an increase of 490 percent.

There are also plans to raise individuals, local communities, and tourists' awareness of the importance of preserving caves' biodiversity and water resources. The DOE is planning to utilize the capacity of collaborative conservation to protect sensitive and important cave ecosystems.

Constant monitoring of caves, particularly tourist caves, preparing caves' database, identifying and prioritizing caves in terms of protection, assessing the capacity of tourist caves, protecting the biological and physical diversity of caves, and protecting water resources are among the plans to be conducted collectively.

The DOE has also established a working group to monitor wildlife cybercrimes and combat illegal wildlife trade. Wildlife trafficking is the third most profitable crime, following drug and weapon trafficking.

Commemoration ceremony held for Leader's martyred family members

TEHRAN – On Thursday, a ceremony was held in Tehran to commemorate family members of the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei who were also martyred during the US-Israeli strikes.

On February 28, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was martyred in a coordinated attack that targeted his office in central Tehran.

The Leader's residence was in very close proximity to his office. Two of his children also lived in nearby homes. His daughter,

Boshra, along with her husband and their two children—one of whom was a 14-month-old girl—were also killed during the U.S.-Israeli bombardment. Another home in the area belonging to one of Ayatollah Khamenei's sons was also struck, resulting in the passing of the Leader's daughter-in-law.

The wife of the Leader, Mansoureh Khojasteh Bagherzadeh, passed away two days later after succumbing to injuries she sustained during the strikes.



© Mehr / Ali Modir-Shanechi

A hub for damask rose in northeastern Iran

Farokhad, a village located in northeastern Khorasan Razavi province, is known as one of the important places for planting damask rose and producing rosewater in the country.

The village, which is famous for its quality rosewater, plays an important role in the agricultural economy of the region, directly providing the livelihoods of about 200 families.



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MAY 30, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

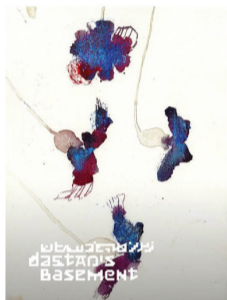
God has given man intelligence to deliver himself from distress and anxiety.
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:02 Evening: 19:34 Dawn: 3:07 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:50 (tomorrow)

What's in Tehran art galleries

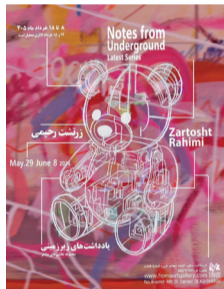
Painting

* Paintings by Fereydoon Ave are currently on view in an exhibition at Dastan Basement Gallery.
The exhibit will be running until June 19 at the gallery located at 6 Bidar St., off Fereshteh St.



* A collection of paintings by Zartosht Rahimi is on view in an exhibition at Homa Gallery.

The exhibition named "Notes from Underground" will be running until June 8 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fourth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.



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

Titled "The Dragon's Scale", the exhibition will run until June 21 at the gallery located at No. 5, Sumesara Alley, Sazesh St., Vali-e Asr Square.



* Paintings by a group of artists are currently on display in an exhibit at Jaleh Gallery.

Entitled "Mixer," the exhibition runs until June 12 at the gallery located at No. 3, Noshahr Alley, Iranshahr St., Karim Khan Ave.



* An exhibition of paintings by Mahin Monfared is currently on view in an exhibition at Dena Gallery.

The exhibition will run until June 5 at the gallery that can be found at 4 Sussan Alley off Qarani St.



* Etemad Gallery 1 is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by a group of artists.

The exhibitions will be running until June 21 at the gallery located at 25 Shirudi Alley, Mofatteh St., near Haft-e Tir Square.



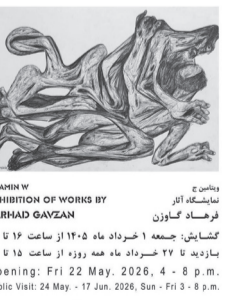
* Mehrdad Afsari, Hoda Balouti, Yasi Alipour, Zahra Qiasi and several others are putting their latest paintings on view in an exhibition at Bavan Gallery.

The exhibit named "Home: The Sun Rises in The East" will run until June 15 at the gallery located at 7 Abdo off Lareztan St. off Motahhari Ave.



* Hoor Gallery is currently playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Farhad Gavzan.

The exhibition named "Vitamin W" will be running until June 17 at the gallery located at 12 Naeimi Alley, North Mirza Shirazi St., off Motahhari Ave.



* A collection of paintings by a large number of artists is currently on display in an exhibit at Binesh Gallery.

Named "Weathering the Wind", the exhibition runs until June 21 at the gallery located at 22 Khakzad Alley, Vali-e Asr Ave.



* An exhibition of paintings by Kamran Mehrad, Mina Amani, Shiva Tabar, Mina Hakim and several others is underway at Yafteh Gallery.

The exhibition named "A Topology of Interruption and Continuity" will run until June 19 at the gallery located at 8 Taleqani Dead End, Yarmohammadi St. in the Darus Neighborhood.



Cultural institutes launch concert series to honor Red Crescent volunteers amid post-war recovery

TEHRAN- In the inaugural night of a joint concert series organized by the Cinema, Theater, and Music Houses, singer Mohsen Sharifian, alongside his band Lian, hosted a gathering of the members of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), honoring their tireless efforts during the recent conflict.

The event, titled "Nights of Empathy with Rescue Workers," took place at the Milad Hall in Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds on Wednesday evening, with the attendance of presidential social affairs adviser Ali Rabiei, Mehr reported.

The concert featured a performance by Sharifian's group, Lian, marking the first installment of a cultural initiative supported by the Federation of Iranian Chambers of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture, the report added.

Homayoun Asadian, director and CEO of the Iranian House of Cinema, spoke at the event, explaining the motivation behind the concert series.

"Over the past weeks, we have struggled to find an adequate way to express our gratitude to the rescue workers of the Red Crescent, Emergency Services, and Fire Departments for their unparalleled efforts during the recent war," Asadian said. "This event aims to provide a space where, through music, we might help alleviate the bitter memories of the



last 42 days for these heroes."

Asadian emphasized that while this social duty was facilitated by various organizations, the psychological burden on rescue workers remains significant. "These brave individuals still suffer from post-traumatic stress, often blaming themselves for not saving more lives from the rubble of destroyed homes. This haunting nightmare is a testament to their deep humanity," he noted.

The Iranian House of Cinema CEO also addressed political aspects, criticizing those who profited from the destruction. "As whispers of

ceasefire or peace emerge, some seem eager for prolonged war and destruction to maximize their construction profits. We must remember that our country is saved by these rescue workers, not by profiteers," Asadian stated, urging Vice President Rabiei to convey this message to President Pezeshkian.

Following Asadian's remarks, Mohsen Sharifian, leader of the Bushaheer-based band Lian, took the stage. Sharifian, who had been active in the music resistance during the recent conflict, performed selected energetic tracks dedicated to all

those who defended Iran's territorial integrity and national honor.

The ceremony also included a segment honoring Red Crescent volunteers, attended by Vice President Rabiei, theater writer and director Hossein Pakdel, actress Atafah Razavi, and director Kamal Tabrizi, acknowledging the critical role of rescue personnel during the crisis.

The "Nights of Empathy" series will continue with additional concerts for other emergency services, including emergency responders and firefighters, in the coming weeks.

IAF screens "Tokyo Godfathers"

TEHRAN - The Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran screened the Japanese animated film "Tokyo Godfathers" on Friday.

The 92-minute movie was shown with Persian subtitles, Mehr reported.

"Tokyo Godfathers" is a 2003 Christmas tragicomedy adventure animation written and directed by Satoshi Kon. The film stars live-action actors such as Toru Emori, Yoshia-

ki Umegaki, and Aya Okamoto as the lead voice actors.

Kon was inspired by the 1948 American film "3 Godfathers" to make the film. Unlike Kon's other films, "Tokyo Godfathers" is grounded more in realism.

However, as is typical of Kon's work, the film includes devices that are not straightforward, and Kon himself called it a twisted

sentimental story.

The story happens on Christmas Eve, when three homeless people living on the streets of Tokyo discover a newborn baby among the trash and set out to find its parents.

The animation won the Excellence Award at the 2003 Japan Media Arts Festival and Best Animation Film at the 58th Mainichi Film Awards.

Iranian animation "Dreamland" competing in Cartoons on the Bay festival

TEHRAN - The Iranian feature animated movie "Dreamland" directed by Mohsen Enayati is competing in the 30th International Festival of Animation, Transmedia and Meta-Arts, Cartoons on the Bay, which is underway in Pescara, Italy.

A 2025 production of Soureh Cinema Organization, the animation tells the story of a boy named Arat who decides to save his city from destruction. Pasha, his funny and cute friend, and Tamara, the smart girl of the story, are his companions on this path.

The 90-minute animated movie is competing with 10 other works from across the globe in the Feature Films section, Mehr reported.

Rai Com S.p.a. organizes the Cartoons on the Bay, to support and showcase the current landscape, developments and new trends in the sector of media and entertainment. The festival presents the prestigious Pulcinella Awards in nine categories.

Having started on May 27, this year's edition of the festival will wrap up on May 30.



Peter Turchin's "Ultrasociety" published in Persian

TEHRAN - The Persian translation of the book "Ultrasociety: How 10,000 Years of War Made Humans the Greatest Cooperators on Earth" written by Russian-American author Peter Turchin has been released in the bookstores across Iran.

Mohammad Khosravianian has translated the book and Taalif Publication has brought it out in 290 pages, Mehr reported.

There aren't many highly cooperative species—but they nearly cover the planet. Ants alone account for a quarter of all animal matter. Yet the human capacity to work together leaves every other species standing.

We organize ourselves into communities of hundreds of millions of individuals, inhabit every continent, and send people into space. Human

beings are nature's greatest team players. And the truly astounding thing is, we only started our steep climb to the top of the rankings—overtaking wasps, bees, termites and ants—in the last 10,000 years. Genetic evolution can't explain this anomaly. Something else is going on. How did we become the ultrasocial animal?

In his latest book, originally published in 2015, the evolutionary scientist Peter Turchin solves the puzzle using some astonishing results in the new science of Cultural Evolution. The story of humanity, from the first scattered bands of Homo sapiens right through to the greatest empires in history, turns out to be driven by a remorseless logic. Our apparently miraculous powers of cooperation were forged in the fires of war. Only conflict, escalating in scale and severity, can explain

the extraordinary shifts in human society—and society is the greatest military technology of all.

Seen through the eyes of Cultural Evolution, human history reveals a strange, paradoxical pattern. Early humans were much more egalitarian than other primates, ruthlessly eliminating any upstart who wanted to become alpha male. But if human nature favors equality, how did the blood-soaked god kings of antiquity ever manage to claim their thrones? And how, over the course of thousands of years, did they vanish from the earth, swept away by a reborn spirit of human equality? Why is the story of human justice a chronicle of millennia-long reversals? Once again, the science points to just one war created the terrible majesty of kingship, and war obliterated it.

Iraqi artist transforming war scars into art

An Iraqi artist is drawing global attention for converting the visible scars of conflict into compelling artworks, offering a new perspective on damage, memory, and resilience.

Mokhallad Habib has been creating distinctive pieces by using bullet-marked walls and war-damaged surfaces as his canvas, turning them into striking visual expressions that have resonated widely online, Daily-hunt reported.

His work recently gained traction after the popular Instagram

page Pubity featured his creations. The post read, "An artist found a way to turn signs of violence into something unexpected. Instead of covering bullet holes, he uses them as part of his artwork. Each mark becomes a design, changing how people see the damage left behind. What once represented conflict is transformed into a message about resilience and creativity."

In Iraq, the physical reminders of prolonged conflict remain embedded in daily life. Bullet-riddled walls, broken doors, and shattered

windows continue to reflect years of unrest, displacement, and instability. Over time, such marks risk fading into the background as part of everyday surroundings. Within this context, Habib's work stands out by drawing attention back to these remnants. Instead of concealing them, he integrates these elements into his art, creating visual stories that encourage viewers to reconsider their meaning.

Often likened to Banksy, Habib blends creativity with deeper social commentary. He reinterprets bullet

holes as musical notes, transforms cracked surfaces into animal forms, and reshapes damaged structures into symbols of hope and imagination. His work engages directly with the past while reflecting the broader social and political realities of Iraq, presenting a narrative of transformation and endurance.

Habib also showcases his creations on Instagram, where he has built a growing following of around 3,000 users drawn to his unique approach of turning destruction into meaningful art.