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MoU Reached. Peace? Not Sure

10 questions and answers you need to know about the results and future of Iran-US talks

FM Araghchi intensifies diplomatic outreach as int'l support grows for Iran-US MoU

TEHRAN- Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has intensified diplomatic consultations with regional and international counterparts following the announcement of the Iran-US peace agreement known as the Islamabad Understanding, stressing that Washington bears primary responsibility for implementing the accord.

In a series of telephone conversations on Monday, Araghchi held talks with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein, ▶ Page 3

Lebanon ceasefire central to Iran-US agreement: Baqaei

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said Monday that the recently finalized memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Iran and the United States establishes a framework for ending military confrontation across all fronts, including Lebanon, while emphasizing that Tehran will closely monitor implementation of the agreement and continue pursuing accountability for wartime actions against Iran.

Speaking at his weekly press conference, Baqaei described the agreement as a major diplomatic breakthrough achieved after more than three months of conflict. He said the MoU provides for an immediate and permanent halt to military operations, ▶ Page 3

Iran, Hezbollah dictate a new reality as southern Lebanese begin returning home

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — The stunning performance of Iran and its allies and marathon diplomatic sessions that produced the Iran-U.S. memorandum of understanding have forced a realignment of the Middle Eastern security architecture.

For months, Washington and Tel Aviv operated under the delusion that Lebanon could be carved out and battered into submission without triggering a broader systemic collapse.

Instead, the final text of the agreement shattered this fantasy. During the negotiations, Iranian diplomats refused to entertain any framework decoupling the Lebanese theater from the wider geopolitical equation.

Tehran stayed true to its promise and realized the integration of fronts in practice, such that the cries and groans of Israeli warmongers are now audible. ▶ Page 5

Hezbollah congratulated Iran on the MoU and warned Israel that the resistance remains committed to Lebanon's "right to defend its land, its people, and its sovereignty until a complete withdrawal is achieved and the prisoners are returned."

TEHRAN – Iran and the United States have agreed on a memorandum of understanding after Washington made further concessions following Israel's attacks on Sunday in the Lebanese capital, which could have derailed diplomatic engagement between Tehran and Washington.

Israel renewed deadly bombing of the Dahiyeh district in Beirut in violation of a ceasefire that paused the joint US-Israeli war on Iran that initially began on February 28. According to Pakistan, which helped mediate the April 8 truce between Tehran and Washington, the agreement included a halt to Israeli strikes in Lebanon. Following the bombing of Beirut's Shia-populated area, Iran

threatened to carry out retaliatory strikes against Israel.

Trump's concessions shift equation

According to a report by Fars News Agency, Iran's last-minute changes altered the outcome. Citing a source close to the Iranian negotiating team, the report said Iran's Supreme National Security Council approved the general framework

of the memorandum of understanding on Saturday.

The source said, however, Israeli attacks in the Dahiyeh area, which crossed Iran's red lines, changed the situation. Fars News added that Iran was preparing for large-scale attacks against Israel from multiple fronts, and that the negotiations were moving toward suspension.

However, President Donald Trump offered concessions in exchange for Iran refraining from attacking Israel, which convinced the negotiating team that the agreement would serve both Iran's national interests and those of the Lebanese people.

According to the report, the concessions included the immediate lifting of the US naval

blockade—replacing a previously agreed 30-day timetable—an end to war and military operations across all fronts in Lebanon, and respect for the country's territorial integrity, which removed the remaining obstacles to signing the MoU.

In this context, ten questions should be addressed.

1- How has Iran reacted to the MoU?

Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, which has been tasked with coordinating military operations between the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the Army during wartime, issued a statement after the MoU was announced. ▶ Page 2

Renowned radio veteran Behrouz Razavi passes away



▶ Page 8



Muharram commemorations begin across Iran

TEHRAN- Iran has begun observing the mourning month of Muharram, as cities across the country are draped in black to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hossein (AS).

During the mourning period, thousands of devotees gather at holy shrines, mosques, and community centers to participate in traditional elegies and chest-beating ceremonies.

This period serves as a reflection on spiritual values, with officials and religious leaders emphasizing its significance as a timeless symbol of resistance against oppression. Throughout the next ten days, culminating in Ashura, millions of Iranians will participate in rituals honoring the values of justice and sacrifice.

“The Sky Holders” book series on martyred aerospace commanders unveiled in Tehran

By Samaneh Aboutaleb

TEHRAN- “Asmandarha” (The Sky Holders), a four-volume book collection documenting the lives and silent sacrifices of four distinguished aerospace commanders, was officially unveiled during a ceremony at Tehran's Art Bureau on Sunday.

The collection highlights the pivotal roles these figures played in Iran's defensive deterrence and features a narrative focus on their strategic and personal lives. The event drew a notable gathering of martyrs' families, military commanders, and literary figures. ▶ Page 8

From page 1 ▶ In a statement, it hailed the resilience of Iranian people and the courage of the armed forces. It said Iranian forces “proved with strength that the humiliated American and Zionist enemies have no choice but to accept defeat and surrender.”

Iran’s Army Commander Major General Amir Hatami also said on Monday Israel and the US have realized they must respect the Iranian nation, their beliefs and the Islamic establishment after suffering defeats on the battlefield.

President Masoud Pezeshkian said Iran has scored a diplomatic victory over the US. “The diplomatic achievement is another source of pride for the Iranian nation, accomplished through steadfastness and resistance against excessive demands (of the US),” Pezeshkian said on Monday.

He added that “the concern and anger of the Israeli regime over this process is also a clear sign of the success and victory of the Iranian nation.”

Pezeshkian said if the US fulfills its commitments, many regional problems will be resolved and a new situation on the international stage will be created.

2- How has the United States reacted to the MoU?

The US president acknowledged that the naval blockade on Iran, which the US military imposed in mid-April, would be lifted soon upon the signing of the MoU in Switzerland on Friday.

“The Deal with the Islamic Republic of Iran is now complete,” Trump wrote on Truth Social. “Congratulations to all! I hereby fully authorize the toll-free opening of the Strait of Hormuz, and, simultaneously herewith, authorize the immediate removal of the United States Naval blockade. Ships of the World, start your engines. Let the oil flow!”

Iranian media, however, say the MoU emphasizes the issue of Iranian and Omani sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz, and that Iran will receive payments for “maritime services” in the future.

3- How has Israel acted?

Israel has been blamed for sabotaging any deals between the US and Iran. Although the deal calls for stopping the Israeli war in Lebanon, Israeli officials have adopted a defiant tone.

Defense Minister Israel Katz said Israel will not withdraw from territory it has seized in Lebanon, and if Iran attacks it over events in Lebanon, Israel will retaliate.

Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said the US-Iran agreement “is bad for Israel and for the entire free world.”

Smotrich promised to keep targeting Hezbollah in Lebanon despite US pressure to halt attacks.

“This is our war, our fighters, and the immediate security of our northern residents. I will continue to work to ensure we stand firm and allow the [military] full freedom of action to continue pushing Hezbollah back.”

Lebanon was drawn into the US-Israel war on Iran when fighting broke out between Israel and Hezbollah on March 2. An April ceasefire in Lebanon has never been observed due to Israel’s repeated violation. Since early April, Israel has killed thousands of people in Lebanon. Israel has also expanded its occupation in Lebanon despite a November 2024 ceasefire with Lebanon.

Israel’s presence in Lebanon is in line with the vision of “Greater Israel”. Based on this vision, Israel seeks to expand control and influence beyond its current borders into neighboring Arab and regional countries.

Trump has openly expressed dissatisfaction over Israel’s continued attacks in Lebanon and blasted Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. But many experts believe reports of confrontations between Trump and Netanyahu are just theatrical shows because Israel does not take military action against Lebanon without US green light.

4- What will happen after signing of the MoU?

The MoU is expected to pave the way for talks in a period of 60 days to bring a permanent end to the US-Israeli aggression.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the formal signing ceremony of the Iran-US MoU will be hosted by his country in Geneva on June 19.

The text of the MoU is based on Iran’s 14-point proposal from the very beginning of the April 8 ceasefire.

Although the details of the MoU have not been published, the withdrawal of US forces from the vicinity of Iran, the lifting of sanctions on Iran, compensations for the damage inflicted by the US-Israeli war, and the future management of the Strait of Hormuz will be discussed in up-



coming talks.

5- Will this MoU guarantee the end of war and hostilities?

On paper, the newly announced MoU offers a comprehensive blueprint for peace, but in practice, it cannot guarantee an end to hostilities due to deep-seated Iranian distrust rooted in a consistent pattern of American betrayal.

This skepticism is driven by recent history, most notably the US-Israeli strikes of June 2025 and the flagrant treachery of February 28, 2026, when Washington and Tel Aviv launched a massive joint military assault against Iran while high-stakes diplomatic talks were actively underway. Coming on top of the systemic failure of the 2015 JCPOA—where the US unilaterally walked away from a binding international treaty despite Iran’s full compliance—Tehran views this non-binding framework with extreme caution.

True regional stability cannot be achieved by symbolic signatures in Geneva while Washington continues to fund and shield ongoing Israeli aggression, but only when the United States demonstrates a permanent, verified end to both its military operations and its economic warfare.

6- How will the fate of the Strait of Hormuz be determined?

The fate of the Strait of Hormuz rests solely with the sovereign territorial states of Iran and Oman, whose overlapping territorial seas encompass the entirety of the waterway, leaving no room for international waters or foreign dictate.

Iran and Oman bear the exclusive legal right to manage and secure this vital chokepoint, including the right to collect maritime service fees from transiting vessels to compensate for search-and-rescue, environmental protection, and navigational infrastructure services.

Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said on Monday that “fees” may be charged for ships traversing the Strait of Hormuz.

“The Strait of Hormuz is very important for us, and we have adopted certain procedures according to international law in order to protect Iran’s national security,” he said. “It’s full services that will be offered... Accordingly, the fees will be there and this is clear.”

7- What will happen to Iran’s 60% uranium and enrichment?

Regarding the fate of the nuclear program, the newly reached MoU represents a significant retreat from Washington’s “zero enrichment” policy and a firm defense of Tehran’s nuclear sovereignty.

While Donald Trump previously insisted that Iran must completely forfeit its right to nuclear technology, Iran has successfully maintained its red lines, proving that it will never forego its inalienable right to domestic enrichment under international law.

Under this framework, while Iran’s stockpile of 60% enriched uranium may be diluted to lower civilian-grade levels inside the country to foster goodwill, the material itself will never be transferred out of Iranian territory, and the nation’s core enrichment infrastructure remains entirely intact on sovereign soil.

8- Will the conflict in Lebanon also end?

According to the newly finalized 14-point framework mediated by Pakistan and Qatar, Lebanon is explicitly included in the deal, with both sides declaring an immediate and permanent termination of military operations on all fronts.

However, from Tehran’s strategic perspective, while the text provides guarantees on paper, the actual cessation of hostilities depends entirely on Washington’s willingness to rein in Tel Aviv.

Following continued Israeli airstrikes on Beirut even after the announcement, Iranian officials have

made it clear that the ball is now in the US court.

Baghaei stressed on Monday that Lebanon is a critical part of the MoU and will be closely watched.

9- What if a final agreement is not reached after the 60-day negotiation window?

While the Islamic Republic has consistently demonstrated that diplomatic channels remain open, Iranian officials have made it clear that any future engagement must be based on mutual respect and recognition of Iran’s sovereignty.

Tehran views the 60-day window as a test of American compliance. If violations occur, the response will be immediate.

Iran’s armed forces remain in full readiness to respond to renewed aggression.

10- Which countries and individuals played a role in reaching this understanding?

The MoU was achieved through mediation led by Pakistan and Qatar, with support from Turkey, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif hosted the process, while Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir played a key role in coordination. Qatar’s Minister of State Mohammad bin Abdulaziz Al-Khulaifi was also involved.

On the Iranian side, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf has been the country’s top negotiator. From the US side, Vice President J.D. Vance handled coordination ahead of the Geneva signing ceremony on Friday.

Global reactions to Iran-US MoU

The announcement of the MoU has triggered a wave of international reactions, highlighting the agreement’s far-reaching implications for regional stability, energy markets, and the security of one of the world’s most vital maritime trade corridors.

Lebanese parliament speaker thanks Iran

The speaker of Lebanon’s House of Representatives praised the MoU.

In a statement, Nabih Berri “extended his thanks and appreciation to the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States of America and their leadership for their adherence and insistence on including in the agreed-upon memorandum a fundamental and binding provision to halt the Israeli aggression across Lebanon.”

He said he hoped this would preserve Lebanon’s “sovereignty over its entire territory ... and avoid falling into the trap set by the Israeli political echelon under Netanyahu’s leadership.”

Berri also commended the contributions of Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt in reaching the agreement, which, he said, “establishes the foundations of security and stability in the region, including Lebanon.”

President Joseph Aoun also issued a statement.

“I appreciate what this memorandum contains in terms of respect for Lebanese specificity and the recognition that Lebanon’s stability and security constitute an integral part of any serious endeavor to consolidate stability in the region,” he said in a statement shared by the Lebanese presidency.

Aoun hoped this agreement leads to “stability in the region, preserves the sovereignty of states and the rights of their peoples, and allows the Lebanese to focus on rebuilding what has been destroyed and restoring their normal lives under a secure and stable state.”

Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said the country would double its efforts “to secure the complete Israeli withdrawal from our lands and the release of our prisoners.”

Europe hails Iran-US MoU

European leaders issued statements hailing the deal.

Speaking to reporters, UK Prime Minister

MoU reached. Peace? Not sure

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Keir Starmer called it a “very significant breakthrough” and expressed hope that the initial deal could lead to “enduring peace that we all want to see.”

The French president also welcomed the agreement.

“I welcome the agreement reached between the United States and Iran, the result of a diplomatic effort to which several partners contributed. I call for its swift and full implementation by all belligerents. This agreement must allow for the urgent and unconditional reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, which the international mission established with the United Kingdom is ready to support,” Emmanuel Macron said.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz also said, “I welcome the agreement between the US and Iran and congratulate President Trump and the Iranian side on this diplomatic breakthrough. This can pave the way toward a reinvigorated global economy and a more secure Middle East. It is crucial to implement it with determination.”

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, for her part, said, “A heartfelt thanks goes to all the mediators, and in particular to Qatar and Pakistan, who have made this agreement possible. This is an opportunity for peace that must be seized. Italy, as in the past, is ready to support the diplomatic process toward a comprehensive agreement.”

She said it is also necessary for hostilities to cease in Lebanon, where Italy will continue to work to support Lebanese sovereignty.

Austrian Chancellor Christian Stocker welcomed the MoU on X. “I call on all parties to ensure the swift and full implementation of the memorandum, including the permanent opening of the Strait of Hormuz in order to guarantee freedom of navigation in accordance with international law,” he said.

Stocker said the deal opens a window for negotiations toward “a more stable and secure” Middle East.

China urges restoration of peace

In East Asia, China was among the countries that welcomed the MoU.

“China welcomes the US and Iran reaching agreement on the text of the memorandum of understanding for the first stage of negotiations and commends Pakistan’s mediation efforts. We hope the document will be signed according to the agreed timetable and all relevant parties will stay committed to peaceful solutions and

wrote on X.

Kuwait has expressed a “warm welcome” for the MoU.

It commended the role played by Pakistan and Qatar in contributing “to bridging viewpoints and creating the conditions for reaching this important understanding.”

In Turkey, President Tayyip Erdogan said, “I view the agreement reached between the United States and Iran as an important development for establishing peace and tranquility in our region, and I welcome it with satisfaction.

“I emphatically underscore the need to avoid rhetoric, provocations, and actions that could escalate tensions in the period leading up to the signing of the agreement, and to remain vigilant against possible sabotage.”

‘Constructive engagement is essential’

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese called for constructive engagement.

“The Australian Government welcomes the agreement between the United States and Iran. Australia has long called for de-escalation and an end to the conflict, including in Lebanon. As we have said, the longer this war goes on, the greater the impact will be. Continued restraint and constructive engagement will be essential to prevent further escalation and secure a lasting agreement.”

In New Zealand, Foreign Minister Winston Peters said:

“This pivotal, constructive deal is a step toward reducing tensions and promoting stability in a region that is critical to global economic security ... Dialogue and diplomacy remain the most effective means of resolving longstanding issues.”

Hope for returning to multilateralism

The head of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) also issued a statement.

Arsenio Dominguez said the development “signals a crucial return to peace, dialogue, multilateralism and diplomacy and, in particular, an important step toward restoring safety” in the Strait of Hormuz.

“The agreement also allows IMO to advance its plan to evacuate the thousands of seafarers stranded in the area,” he said.

Dominguez stressed that the organization is working in close collaboration with member states and partners to implement the evacuation plan safely and effectively.



Iran’s military says the resilience of people and the courage of the armed forces “humiliated American and Zionist enemies”

resolve issues through dialogue and negotiation. China stands ready to join the international community in playing an active role in restoring peace and tranquility to the Middle East and the (Persian) Gulf region at an early date,” Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said on Monday.

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi also said in a post on X that “I welcome the development as a big step toward the settlement of the situation.”

Takaichi hoped the memorandum of understanding will be steadily implemented and that free and safe navigation through the Strait of Hormuz will be ensured.

‘Turning point’ for peace

Egypt’s Foreign Ministry also welcomed the deal, saying it could be a “turning point” for peace in the region.

“Egypt hopes that this agreement will constitute a major turning point toward strengthening mutual trust, laying new foundations for cooperation, creating a supportive environment for peace, and advancing diplomatic efforts aimed at addressing remaining regional issues,” it said.

Omani Foreign Minister Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi said “the entire global community should welcome Iran-US understanding”. “It’s a timely win for diplomacy and common sense,” he

“However, its implementation will require time to ensure that all necessary safety and security guarantees are in place,” he said.

US-Israeli miscalculations

The US and Israel began the February 28 aggression with the aim of destroying Iran’s military capabilities and altering the country’s leadership in their favor. But at least according to US media, most of Iran’s military capabilities remain intact.

Israel Hayom recently said Iran has become stronger as a result of the war and Israel has weakened. It noted that Iran has been the strategic winner of the war.

American officials speaking to US media have previously questioned the US lack of strategy in the war on Iran and the repercussions of the war not only for the United States but for the world.

Iran’s full control over the Strait of Hormuz has led to rising inflation and energy prices in the US and pushed Trump’s popularity to near-record lows.

In his Truth Social post, Trump said “The Deal with the Islamic Republic of Iran is now complete.” This further suggests that his regime change policy remains an unfulfilled objective.

FM Araghchi intensifies diplomatic outreach as int'l support grows for Iran-US MoU

From Page 1 ▶ Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty, Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan, and Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi to discuss the implementation process and regional implications of the agreement.

During the discussions, Araghchi emphasized that the United States is responsible for ensuring full implementation of the memorandum of understanding (MoU), while reiterating the need for an immediate and complete halt to Israeli military operations and destabilizing actions against Lebanon. He also praised the diplomatic roles played by regional countries, including Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iraq, Egypt, Qatar, and Pakistan, in facilitating negotiations and supporting efforts aimed at reducing tensions and restoring regional stability.

The Iranian foreign minister further underscored the importance of continued diplomatic coordination and close consultations among regional stakeholders to preserve peace and prevent renewed escalation.

Saudi Arabia reaffirmed its support for the diplomatic process, with Araghchi and Prince Faisal bin Farhan emphasizing the need for sustained cooperation between Tehran and Riyadh to advance regional peace and security following the agreement.

Meanwhile, Japan welcomed the Islamabad Understanding as a significant step toward resolving regional crises. During his conversation with Araghchi, Motegi stressed the importance of the agreement's accurate and comprehensive implementation. Araghchi, for his part, expressed hope that successful



implementation of the MoU would open a new chapter in economic cooperation, trade, and investment between Iran and Japan. The two sides also discussed future consultations regarding issues related to the Strait of Hormuz.

The diplomatic contacts follow an announcement by Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who stated that Iran and the United States had reached a peace agreement after weeks of negotiations mediated by Pakistan with support from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey. According to Sharif, the accord calls for the immediate and permanent cessation of military operations across all fronts, including Lebanon, and is expected to be formally signed in Switzerland on June 19.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi later confirmed that the mem-

orandum had been finalized, stating that Tehran had successfully incorporated its key positions into the text and would assess implementation of US commitments before entering subsequent phases of negotiations. He said the agreement includes the lifting of the US naval blockade and establishes a framework for future talks on sanctions relief, reconstruction, and broader bilateral issues.

Iran's Supreme National Security Council subsequently announced that the finalized memorandum is intended to end war and military operations across all fronts, while future negotiations will proceed only after all parties fulfill their commitments. According to informed sources, Iran's final amendments to the agreement also addressed the management of the Strait of Hormuz and included guarantees concerning Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Lebanon ceasefire central to Iran-US agreement: Baqaei

From Page 1 ▶ includes provisions related to Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and outlines a process for addressing broader political, economic, and security issues.

According to Baqaei, ending the war in Lebanon is an inseparable component of the understanding reached between Tehran and Washington. He noted that Lebanon is explicitly referenced multiple times in the text, reflecting commitments to end hostilities and uphold the country's sovereignty.

The spokesman said Israel attempted to undermine efforts to reach the agreement through continued military actions, including strikes on Beirut's southern suburbs during the final stages of negotiations. However, he argued that the attacks failed to derail the diplomatic process and instead reinforced coordination among Iran and its regional allies.

"History will show that Iran and its partners did not allow these actions to distract them from securing the interests of Iran and Lebanon," Baqaei said, adding that the developments strengthened cohesion within the Resistance Front.

Baqaei stressed that while the agreement aims to reduce tensions and prevent further conflict, it does not mean Iran will overlook 'crimes committed during the war.' He said Tehran would continue documenting violations, pursuing legal and diplomatic avenues for accountability, and seeking justice for Iranian military personnel and civilians killed during the conflict.

He also criticized attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities and accused international organizations, including the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), of failing to respond adequately to those incidents.

Providing additional details about the agreement, Baqaei said arrangements are being finalized for the signing ceremony, expected to take place in Switzerland following consultations with regional partners. He noted that Tehran plans to publish both the text of the memorandum and an explanatory factsheet upon signing.

The spokesman said the agreement includes provisions related to the release of Iranian assets abroad, compensation for wartime damages, the removal of obstacles to Iran's oil and petrochemical exports, and

the launch of negotiations on sanctions relief and nuclear-related issues within a defined timeframe after the signing.

Baqaei further stated that Iran and Oman, as littoral states of the Strait of Hormuz, would continue coordinating measures to ensure secure maritime transit in accordance with international law. He added that the United States bears responsibility for ensuring compliance with the agreement, including commitments related to Lebanon, and warned that any failure by other parties to uphold their obligations would trigger a response from Tehran.

Despite welcoming the agreement as a step toward ending hostilities, Baqaei emphasized that deep mistrust remains. He said the memorandum should be viewed as a mechanism to reduce tensions and end a costly conflict rather than a sign of restored confidence between the two countries.

"The Iranian people have demonstrated their determination to defend their sovereignty, independence, and national interests," he said. "The future of the process will depend on the implementation of commitments by all sides."

LATEST NEWS

■ Pezeshkian: Iran-US MoU on ending war to be signed on Friday

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said the understanding between Iran and the US on ending the war of aggression, following coordination among relevant parties, is scheduled to be signed on Friday, June 19.

■ Source: Iran-US MoU sets framework for sanctions relief

An informed source outlined the sanctions-related provisions of the Iran-US memorandum of understanding, saying the document sets conditions for lifting all sanctions in the event of a final agreement.

Speaking to Tasnim regarding the sanctions-related provisions of the Iran-US memorandum of understanding, the informed source explained on Monday that according to Article 9, during the 60-day negotiations concerning a final agreement, the US has committed not to impose any new sanctions.

Also, under Article 7, the US is committed that following a final agreement (if such an agreement is reached), primary sanctions, secondary sanctions, United Nations Security Council sanctions, and Board of Governors sanctions will be lifted, he added.

The informed source noted that under Article 11, after the signing of the memorandum on June 19, waivers related to the sale of oil, petrochemicals, and their derivatives will be applied. These waivers will cover transportation, sales, insurance, and transactions related to oil sales.

According to the informed source, under Article 8, discussions on the nuclear issue (enrichment and stored nuclear materials) will take place during a 60-day period (extendable).

■ US-Iran deal must also apply to Lebanon: German chancellor

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz says a deal between the United States and Iran could help stabilize the global economy but warned the agreement must also apply to Lebanon.

Speaking before this week's G7 meeting in France, Merz said the agreement could have wider economic and regional consequences.

■ Oman calls US-Iran agreement 'win for common sense'

The Omani Foreign Minister Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi says, "the entire global community should welcome Iran-US understanding."

"It's a timely win for diplomacy and common sense," he wrote.

■ Israel will do its utmost to derail US-Iran deal: Lebanese politician

Paula Yacoubian, an independent Lebanese politician, says Israel will do its utmost to derail the US-Iran deal.

"Let's hope it does not become a memorandum of misunderstanding. It's obvious now there is so much at stake. It's a very fragile understanding, and I guess Israel is trying to sabotage it," Yacoubian told Al Jazeera.

She noted how the US-Israel war on Iran

"proved how important Hezbollah is for Iran."

■ Macron says there must be no tolls on Hormuz

The French president has promised ahead of the G7 summit in France that "we will do everything" to ensure Iran doesn't impose tolls on ships in the key Strait of Hormuz.

Speaking to TF1 TV hours after the Iran-US deal was announced, Emmanuel Macron said a joint France-UK mission to ensure the strait opens is prepared to deploy "very quickly".

■ Israel's Gantz slams Iran-US deal as 'strategic failure'

Benny Gantz, the head of the Blue and White party, has described the Iran-US agreement as a "strategic failure" that will have long-term consequences for Israel.

"The emerging agreement with Iran appears to be a strategic failure that will require Israel to engage in diplomatic, military, and legal struggles in the coming years," Gantz, a former war minister, said in a social media post.

"Under no circumstances - it is forbidden to agree to restrict Israel's freedom of action in Lebanon or to a withdrawal that endangers the residents of the north," he added.

■ Scouring the Strait of Hormuz for mines could take weeks

Ensuring the Strait of Hormuz is safe from mines could delay a return to normal shipping traffic by weeks following a deal to reopen the waterway, maritime security sources tell Reuters news agency.

Beyond the West: The rise of a multipolar order

TEHRAN - A recent discussion hosted jointly by Tehran Times and Sputnik featured retired U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Karen Kwiatkowski, who shared her views on U.S. foreign policy, the conflicts involving Iran and Ukraine, and the changing balance of power in the international system.

Sputnik: Why does it seem that the United States is escalating tensions on multiple fronts, from Iran to Ukraine?

Kwiatkowski: The United States is behaving like a late-stage empire. For decades, Washington has relied on military power as its primary instrument for maintaining influence abroad, and today that remains the tool policymakers reach for whenever they encounter a challenge. The problem is that this tool is becoming less effective, yet the political establishment continues to depend on it because it lacks viable alternatives.

What we are seeing in both Ukraine and Iran is part of a broader effort to preserve an international order that increasingly faces challenges from emerging centers of power. From the perspective of many policymakers in Washington, military pressure remains the quickest way to defend American interests. The result is simultaneous involvement in multiple crises, even as the economic and political costs continue to grow.

Sputnik: Some argue that Washington is trying to reduce its role in Ukraine and push responsibility onto Europe. Is that really happening?

Kwiatkowski: I don't think so. Despite public discussions about diplomacy and burden-sharing, the United States remains deeply involved. Military equipment, intelligence support, surveillance capabilities, and logistical assistance continue to flow into Ukraine. The level of involvement may have changed compared to earlier phases of the conflict, but the fundamental commitment remains intact.

Even beyond direct military aid, the United States continues to provide critical support in areas such as intelligence gathering and communications. Systems like Starlink have become part of the broader infrastructure supporting Ukraine's war effort. Washington may be attempting to reduce some of the costs, but it has not abandoned the project and remains strategically invested in the outcome.

Tehran Times: For years, American officials and analysts projected confidence that U.S. military superiority could quickly neutralize Iran. Were those assumptions ever realistic?

Kwiatkowski: No. The Pentagon has spent decades studying Iran and examining potential military scenarios. Professional military planners understood long ago that Iran presents challenges fundamentally different from those faced in many previous conflicts. Iran's geography, population, military capabilities, and political structure make it extraordinarily difficult to defeat through conventional military means.

The reality is that military professionals understood these limitations. They knew that air power alone would not achieve political objectives and that a large-scale invasion would be extremely costly and unlikely to produce lasting success. When people claimed Iran could be quickly subdued, those arguments were not coming from serious military analysis. They were driven by political assumptions rather than strategic realities.

Tehran Times: If military planners understood those limitations, who was pushing for confrontation?

Kwiatkowski: In many cases, the strongest pressure came from political and ideological actors rather than military professionals. The people shaping these policies were often motivated by broader geopolitical goals that extended beyond military calculations.

In my view, Israel's security concerns and the influence of pro-Israel political networks in Washington have played an important role in shaping U.S. policy toward Iran. The objective was often not necessarily to conquer Iran, which military experts knew would be extremely difficult, but rather to weaken, isolate, and pressure it politically and economically.

Tehran Times: Did U.S. decision-makers anticipate the possibility that Iran could disrupt the Strait of Hormuz?

Kwiatkowski: Absolutely. This is not a new scenario. Military planners have considered it for decades. Any serious assessment of a conflict involving Iran would include the possibility of disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz because of its strategic importance to global energy markets.

The question is not whether policymakers

knew about the risk. They certainly did. The more important question is why they believed the risks were acceptable. Some may have assumed the economic consequences could be managed, while others may have underestimated the broader impact on global trade and energy flows.

Sputnik: Why does Ukraine continue to enjoy such strong support within the U.S. foreign policy establishment?

Kwiatkowski: Many of the same ideological circles that advocate confrontation with Iran also support confrontation with Russia. For decades, influential figures in Washington have viewed Russia as a strategic adversary that must be contained and weakened.

This mindset extends beyond Russia. Iran, Russia, and China are often viewed as part of a broader challenge to U.S. global influence. As a result, support for Ukraine is not merely about Ukraine itself; it is connected to a larger strategic vision concerning the future international order and the preservation of American dominance.

Sputnik: President Zelensky has spoken about turning Ukraine into the "Israel of Eastern Europe." Do you see similarities between the two models?

Kwiatkowski: Yes. What Zelensky appears to admire is Israel's highly militarized security model and its ability to organize large parts of society around defense and security concerns. The vision being presented is one in which military preparedness becomes a central feature of national identity.

The challenge, however, is that such a model requires permanent mobilization and a long-term commitment to security competition. Whether that approach can create stability in Ukraine is an open question. It may strengthen military capabilities, but it also risks creating a society defined by perpetual conflict.

Tehran Times: Reports suggest that recent conflicts have been used to test advanced military technologies. Who ultimately makes decisions regarding such operations?

Kwiatkowski: The decision-making process involves a close relationship between political leaders, military institutions, and defense contractors. These actors often operate within the same ecosystem and share common interests.

One of the enduring realities of American foreign policy is the influence of the military-industrial complex. Defense companies benefit from conflict, governments seek strategic advantages, and military institutions receive resources and expanded missions. These incentives can reinforce one another and make interventionist policies more attractive than they otherwise might be.

Tehran Times: Is it realistic to expect military personnel to resist controversial orders?

Kwiatkowski: Individual resistance is always possible, but it is uncommon. Large institutions are designed to function through hierarchy and obedience. Once political leaders make a decision, the machinery of government tends to move in that direction.

There are certainly individuals who raise concerns or challenge policies, but the overall system rewards conformity. As a result, institutional resistance is often limited, even when significant questions exist regarding the wisdom of a particular course of action.

Tehran Times: If military experts, politicians, and public opinion seem unable to stop these conflicts, what can be done?

Kwiatkowski: One answer is resilience. Countries that are targeted by external pressure can continue to resist and adapt. Another answer is the gradual development of alternatives to existing structures of power.

We are already seeing countries seek greater independence from U.S.-dominated financial systems, diversify their economic partnerships, and pursue new forms of international cooperation. These developments reflect a broader shift toward a more multipolar world. In my view, that process is already underway and will continue regardless of attempts to reverse it.

Sputnik: If hostilities between Iran and the United States were to resume, which side would be better positioned for a new confrontation?

Kwiatkowski: Iran possesses several important advantages. It is operating in its own region, enjoys substantial domestic support for national defense, and understands the local strategic environment. Those factors matter greatly in any prolonged conflict.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

MOUs signed with private sector for rail transport development

TEHRAN- Five memoranda of understanding for the development of rail transport were signed in the presence of the Minister of Transport and Urban Development, the Managing Director of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways, the Head of the Mostazafan Foundation, and representatives of the private sector.

According to IRNA from the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, the signing ceremony for the MOUs on rail transport development was attended by Farzaneh Sadegh, Minister of Transport and Urban Development; Hossein Dehghan, Head of the Mostazafan Foundation; Mohammad Reza Rezaei Koochi, Chairman of the Civil Committee of the Parliament; Jabbar Ali Zakeri, Managing Director of Railways; and a group of senior private sector managers.

These MOUs were signed with the aim of developing rail transport infrastructure, increasing the share of railways in freight transport, strengthening the country's logistics hubs, expanding transit, and realizing the country's macro transport policies.

Signing of MOU for development of logistics and rail cooperation with Sarakhs Border Logistics Center

At this ceremony, an MOU was concluded for the development and strengthening of logistics, transit, and rail transport cooperation at the Sarakhs Border Logistics Center. Based on this MOU, the development of rail infrastructure in the Sarakhs Free Zone across three logistics levels over an area of more than 1,300 hectares, increasing the rail transport capacity of the Sarakhs Border Logistics Center, as well as facilitating customs processes through the supply and installation of required equipment including X-ray machines and weighbridges, will be on the agenda.

Signing of logistics cooperation MOU with Mostazafan Foundation

Also, a logistics cooperation MOU was signed between the Railways Company and the Mostazafan Foundation of the Islamic Revolution with the aim of designing, creating, developing, investing in, and operating rail freight and container logistics terminals across the national rail network. This cooperation will be implemented in logistics hubs such as Khaf, Aprin, and Zahedan, utilizing the technical and economic capacities of both parties.

Signing of MOU with shipping logistics holding

Subsequently, a logistics cooperation MOU was concluded between the Railways Company and Hopad Darya Shipping Agency and Port Services Company, representing the Shipping Logistics Holding. This MOU was signed with the aim of developing and operating rail freight and container logistics terminals at rail network logistics hubs and the country's ports, including the Aprin Logistics Center.

Signing of MOU with Iran Aluminum Company

Another MOU signed at this ceremony was a cooperation agreement between the Railways Company and Iran Aluminum Company (Iralco), aimed at developing rail transport of raw materials and products of this company. Based on this MOU, cooperation in planning for wagon supply, loading, transport, unloading, as well as determining operational mechanisms and rail transport tariffs will be on the agenda of both parties.

Signing of MOU with Jihad-e-Eghtesad Institute

Also, a cooperation MOU was signed between the Railways Company and the Jihad-e-Esteghlal Institute with the goal of developing import routes and transporting basic commodities through the rail network. This MOU was concluded in line with strengthening passive defense, diversifying sources of supply for basic commodities, increasing the resilience of the country's supply chain, and implementing government policies in the field of food security.

The Islamic Republic of Iran Railways announced: Based on this MOU, the development of rail transport of basic commodities, reduction of logistics costs and stabilization of transport rates, creation and development of storage warehouses for basic commodities adjacent to rail lines, increasing the



share of rail transport in freight transport, development of combined transport, as well as fuel savings and reduction of environmental pollutants will be pursued.

The signing of these five MOUs represents an important step in developing the country's logistics infrastructure, enhancing the position of rail transport in the supply chain, increasing transit and trade capacity, and achieving the development plan objectives of the country's transport sector.

Rail freight capacity to increase to 18 million tons: transport minister

The Minister of Transport and Urban Development emphasized the pivotal role of rail as the backbone of the country's development and announced plans to increase rail freight capacity from 6.9 to 18 million tons by utilizing existing infrastructure.

According to an IRNA report from the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, Farzaneh Sadegh made the remarks at the signing ceremony of the five MOUs in the rail transport sector.

The Minister of Transport and Urban Development at this ceremony thanked the support of the Parliament and active companies in the transport sector, calling this cooperation the main reason for encouragement and advancement of development programs.

Rail: Driver of sustainable development and complement to road network

Sadegh, emphasizing that rail transport is the backbone of the country's development, stated: To achieve development, special attention to sustainable, affordable, and international rail is a necessity.

She described rail as a driver of sustainable development and added: Rail and roads complement each other, and balanced development of these two sectors is essential for realizing the country's macro goals.

The member of the 14th government's cabinet, referring to the strategic Chabahar-Zahedan railway project, clarified: The connection of this rail line has been realized as one of the major infrastructure achievements, and the development of rolling stock and completion of rail corridors in the east of the country continues seriously.

Gaining private sector trust to strengthen support infrastructure

The Minister of transport and Urban Development, stating that the President personally follows up on the development of rail transport, said: In the 14th government, this is the fifth signing ceremony for contracts and MOUs at the Railways Company. In previous sessions, we focused on developing freight and passenger rolling stock, and now the MOUs have shifted towards upgrading rail support infrastructure.

Sadegh considered gaining investors' trust as a key role in attracting private sector capital and emphasized that through follow-ups, the process of strengthening infrastructure and developing rolling stock with non-governmental sector participation is expanding.

Enhancing transit capacity in Sarakhs Free Zone and active transport diplomacy

In another part of her speech, she introduced the Sarakhs Free Zone as one of the strategic points in developing the country's logistics and transit, adding: Improving service quality and increasing transit capacity in this area requires inter-agency coordination.

The Minister of Transport and Urban Development also referred to the active transport diplomacy of the 14th government with neighboring countries and said: This approach has created significant capacities for the development of logistics centers in Sarakhs, which can lead to attracting and directing transit freight.

Iran war shatters global markets, leaves US economy, Trump's base in ruins

TEHRAN- More than 100 days into the US-Israeli war against Iran, the economic fallout is crippling economies worldwide, but few are suffering as badly as the United States.

Global energy and fertilizer prices have exploded after the conflict throttled production across the West Asia and choked the Strait of Hormuz. Yet rather than projecting strength, Washington finds its own farm belt, a key Trump constituency, in open distress.

Long before the war began in late February, US agriculture was already broken. Trump's trade tariffs, harsh immigration policies, and deep cuts to USDA aid had left farmers reeling. Now, diesel prices are at their highest since 2022, and fertilizer costs remain punishing. Cornell economist Christopher Barrett calls it



"truly tough times," noting that farmers face skyrocketing input prices on top of labor shortages and vanishing support.

The numbers tell a story of collapse. A Purdue University survey shows two-thirds of farmers expect the war to hit their net income negatively,

only 13% see any benefit. More strikingly, the share of Americans believing the country is on the "right track" has plunged from 74% in July 2025 to just 52% in May 2026. Those seeing a "wrong track" nearly doubled to 48%. As Foreign Policy notes, farmers are "gradually losing

confidence" in Trump's policies.

Trump's response has been weak: vague promises of "good things" in 90 days and talk of more aid. But past bailouts – \$28 billion during his first term, another \$12 billion last December, failed to restore lost soybean export markets. Economist Wesley Davis calls the growing farmer discontent "striking" for a traditionally Republican base. Meanwhile, the administration admits the crisis is "artificial" but offers no real solution.

The US is not alone, Brazil, Pakistan, and India are also suffering, but for a superpower that once dominated global agriculture, the sight of its own heartland begging for relief while the war drags on is a profound downgrade. With midterms approaching, Trump's political foundation is cracking under the weight of his own war.

\$900m in resources attracted for renewables; home solar packages to be offered soon

TEHRAN- The CEO of SATBA (Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization) announced the receipt of more than \$900 million in resources for the development of renewable power plants, and spoke of plans to launch the country's first solar project fund, offer home solar packages equipped with hybrid inverters and storage, and target achieving 12,000 MW of renewable capacity by the end of the year.

According to IRNA, Mohsen Tarzatab told reporters, while explaining the latest status of financing, equipment imports, and development of renewable power plants: The National Development Fund's commitment to supply the foreign currency needed for this sector was \$1.8 billion, all of which was supposed to be allocated last year, but so far about 50% of it has been received.

He added: From the resources made available to this sector through cooperation with the National Development Fund and the mechanisms foreseen, more than \$900 million has been received so far, and there has been no particular problem in supplying resources.

The CEO of SATBA, referring to the financing program for 8,000 MW of renewable power plants to be transferred to the private sector, stated: Although the necessary approvals and earmarkings have been issued and communicated to the Central Bank, no foreign currency has yet been made available to the private sector from this source. However, coordination among SATBA, the National Development Fund, and the Central Bank has been good, and follow-ups continue to accelerate resource allocation.

Regarding the achievement of the renewable development target by the end of the year, Tarzatab said: Our plan is to reach 12,000 MW of renewable capacity within the framework of the Seventh Development Plan, and despite some delays, we still consider this goal achievable.

He cited the main reason for the recent slowdown in implementation not as a currency shortage, but as delays in the entry of purchased equipment into the country, adding: In recent months, due to restrictions and transport problems, some equipment did not enter the country on time, but now equipment is entering via land, rail, sea, and air routes, and we hope to make up for this delay in the coming months.

The CEO of SATBA emphasized: The support of the government and the Ministry of Energy for the development of renewables is serious, and we consider ourselves obligated to bring this program to fruition. If there is any shortfall in achieving the goals, it will be on our part, not due to a lack of will or support.

Launch of a solar project fund

Gas production in SP phases 22-24 to increase by 4mcm per day

TEHRAN- The project manager for the development of South Pars phases 22-24 said: With the start of drilling operations for new wells in these phases in the near future and the completion of the remaining sections, the rich gas production capacity of this project will increase by approximately 4 million cubic meters per day.

According to IRNA, Amirfarzan Fazelian, referring to the planning for the completion of the development project of South Pars phases 22-24 – which is

Tarzatab announced the launch of the country's first solar project fund and noted: In all likelihood, within the next two to three weeks, the first project fund in the solar sector will be launched, with a capacity of 500 MW.

He added: In this model, people and industries can participate in solar projects and buy shares. The aim is to increase public participation in the development of clean energy, in addition to attracting popular capital.

Plans to develop 15,000 MW of small-scale power plants

The CEO of SATBA, referring to the organization's new approach to developing household, commercial, and agricultural solar power plants, said: A proposal has been submitted to the government based on which 15,000 MW of small-scale power plants can be rapidly implemented in the country.

He explained: In this program, both domestic manufacturing of equipment and import of necessary items are pursued to enable the rapid installation of solar systems at household and branch scales.

Referring to the limitation of rial resources for the development of household power plants, Tarzatab added: So far, due to resource constraints, the payment of facilities in this sector has been limited, and banks have also needed time to adapt to new mechanisms. However, a proposal to increase rial resources to cover more applicants has been submitted to the government.

Offering home solar packages with hybrid inverter

He announced the possibility of using hybrid inverters in solar systems and said: With the permits issued, it is now possible to use inverters that allow a family or commercial complex to use its own solar power during peak load times or power outages.

The CEO of SATBA continued: At the same time, the use of storage systems in these systems has been permitted, and related packages including solar panels, hybrid inverters, and batteries have been imported into the country. These packages will be offered soon, and their development is on SATBA's agenda.

Mandating offices to install solar power plants

Tarzatab also announced regarding the status of installing renewable power plants in government agencies: Installing solar power plants for offices is mandatory, and even the assigned share has been increased from 20% to 40%.

He added: According to the President's order, if agencies fail to comply with this obligation, measures including power cuts are foreseen. SATBA has also announced its readiness to im-

plement any office's request to install a solar system on its rooftop, yard, or available space, provided that the cost is paid.

The CEO of SATBA stated that it is estimated only 25-30% of offices have taken action in this regard so far, and said: The potential capacity of offices to install solar power plants is about 1,500 MW, and if this load is removed from the grid, it will greatly help power supply and reduce pressure on the grid.

He added: SATBA is even ready to receive the cost of implementing these projects gradually from the agencies to facilitate project implementation.

Emphasis on public participation in clean energy development

The CEO of SATBA, emphasizing that the development of renewables must reach the level of public participation, said: Our goal is for people to be not only consumers but also partners in the development of clean energy; to have more reliable electricity and, if they wish, to invest in this field.

He noted: The fewer the obstacles to transport and equipment supply, the faster we can advance these programs and utilize the capacities of the people, government, industries, and available financial resources for the development of renewable energies.

SATBA's goal to train 200,000 renewable energy specialists within 5 years

The CEO of SATBA also announced that the country's renewable energy industry is entering a new phase, and said: With the development of household and branch power plants and systems equipped with hybrid inverters and storage, training skilled human resources has become one of the main necessities, and accordingly, training 200,000 people is foreseen in the five-year plan.

Tarzatab, speaking at a ceremony to equip and launch 17 specialized solar energy training centers on Monday, and referring to the accelerating development of solar power plants in the country, stated: Today, it is no longer just about installing and operating solar power plants; rather, the renewable industry is entering a new phase using hybrid inverters, grid-connected and off-grid systems, and energy storage systems.

He added: The use of these equipment creates a new chapter in education and skills training, and it is necessary for technical and vocational training centers, the National University of Skills, and the Niroo Research Institute to be equipped with new equipment such as hybrid inverters and storage systems so that trainees become familiar with the latest technologies in this field.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran, Hezbollah dictate a new reality as southern Lebanese begin returning home

The new equation proves that the resistance cannot be broken by mass destruction



From page 1 ▶ Iran recognized that accepting a fragmented peace would leave Lebanon exposed to endless Israeli aggression. By insisting Lebanese territorial integrity be explicitly guaranteed, Tehran turned a localized defense into a binding international mandate.

The sociological triumph of the border villages

This victory also unfolded on the shattered roads of southern Lebanon.

The moment the agreement was announced, tens of thousands of displaced citizens began streaming back toward their ancestral homes.

While this extensive process of returning has only just started, the opening of these arterial routes signals that a secure, comprehensive return to the border villages will be made possible despite the wreckage left behind.

Convoys of battered vehicles soon filled the highways leading into frontline hubs such as Bint Jbeil, Aita al-Shaab, and Kfar Kila.

This immediate mass movement represents a profound breakdown of the classic military doctrine that relies on severe civilian punishment to alienate a population from the resistance.

Instead of submission, the returning families brought an atmosphere of collective defiance directly into the ruined neighborhoods.

In Bint Jbeil, young men navigated motorcycles through the debris while children released white doves against a backdrop of crushed concrete.

In Aita al-Shaab, families immediately pitched canvas tents over flattened foundations, raising flags on whatever structural steel remained standing.

A local mukhtar captured the enduring nature of this attachment to the land, observing that the community resembles seeds that inevitably grow back stronger from the soil of sacrifice.

These are not defeated families crawling back seeking approval. They are reclaiming their villages as the proud, unshakable foun-

ation of the Lebanese Resistance.

The vigilant guard of the resistance

Hezbollah issued a statement on Monday describing the achievement as the direct fruit of the steadfastness of its fighters and the unwavering support of the Islamic Republic.

The resistance emphasized that the agreement is a clear admission of the enemy being unable to impose its will by force.

Additionally, Reuters quoted a Hezbollah official as confirming that while offensive operations have been halted, this posture depends entirely on strict Israeli compliance.

Hezbollah rejects any notion of unilateral disarmament or allowing the enemy freedom of movement inside Lebanese territory.

The resistance maintains a state of high alert, ensuring that the hard-won calm is backed by credible, ready firepower.

To reinforce this deterrence, Tehran established a severe new red line.

Senior Iranian officials have made it unequivocally clear that they view Israel merely as a rabid dog acting on an American leash. If that dog bites the Lebanese people, the owner will face the consequences.

Should Israel violate the terms of the memorandum, Iran will hold the United States directly responsible.

The economic chokepoints remain fully primed. The courageous Ansarallah forces in Yemen stand in suspended readiness, prepared to instantly reactivate the blockade of the Bab al-Mandab Strait to the ships of enemies and their complicit allies.

The era of cost-free Western aggression has concluded. The resistance has successfully tied the security of the Lebanese border to the stability of the global economy.

Fractures and the collapse of Israeli deterrence

While the daily bombardment has been significantly reduced, the violence has not vanished. Israel has continued to launch sporadic, desperate attacks.

According to Lebanon's National News Agency, an Israeli drone strike targeted a car

in the southern town of Kfar Tebnit on Monday, resulting in the immediate death of the driver.

In a separate assault, occupation forces deliberately targeted journalist Hadi Hoteit, who was wearing clearly marked press gear and traveling in a vehicle bearing distinct media markings. Hoteit sustained a shrapnel wound to his foot and is currently receiving treatment.

These violations are the reactionary lashes of a defeated apparatus realizing that the regional rules of engagement have been rewritten over its head.

The political reaction within Israel further highlights this structural collapse. Officials such as War Minister Israel Katz and "National Security" Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir have publicly revolted.

They insist they "are not bound" by the agreement and vow to maintain forces in self-declared "security zones."

Israeli Opposition figures and security analysts have been openly calling the campaign a catastrophic strategic failure.

They recognize Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu trapped his military in an unwinnable quagmire, supposedly "alienating" Washington and reducing the regime to an impotent "client state."

By bypassing these tantrums to protect maritime interests and safeguard its own domestic front, confronted by inflation hitting a four-year high just months before the midterm elections, the Trump administration has signaled that Tel Aviv may no longer be the supreme decision-maker regarding U.S. policy in the Middle East.

Ultimately, Washington's failures in its campaign of aggression against Iran appear to have forced it to prioritize its own interests over its proxy's localized war aims, at least in the short term.

The strategic baseline has clearly shifted, but whether the White House possesses the genuine political will to enforce this new reality against Israel's ongoing predatory misadventures remains to be seen.



as though it were the only provision contained in Trump's plan. This plan largely ignored the suffering of more than two million people in Gaza, who have endured catastrophic and inhumane conditions throughout the genocide and continue to do so.

Instead, it focused primarily on stripping the Palestinian people of their sources of strength and depriving them of any means that might help them confront an occupation that openly seeks territorial expansion and the displacement of Palestinians from Gaza, the occupied West Bank, the Negev, Galilee, and other Palestinian regions.

Regardless of the proposals

presented to overcome the current setback surrounding the Gaza agreement, the situation is not just one of stagnation preventing progress toward its second phase, as some believe. Rather, it reflects a serious and dangerous regression that threatens the agreement's complete collapse.

The occupation regime's authorities have failed to implement most provisions of the first phase and are openly working not only to evade their commitments but also to bypass the agreement altogether and return to a state of genocidal war, particularly in the lead-up to upcoming parliamentary elections.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Hegseth framed the war on Iran in explicitly theological terms: analysis

TEHRAN – A distinguished professor at American University's School of International Service says U.S. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth framed the military operation against Iran in explicitly theological terms, invoking "a direct through line from the Old and New Testament Christian gospels to the development of Western civilization."

Writing an article in *Foreign Affairs* on June 12, Amitav Acharya says, "By Hegseth's own theological standard, the assault on Iran fails the test of civilization," that the Trump administration "claims to uphold."

In his article, Acharya says Trump threatened to destroy Iran's whole civilization and return Iran to the "Stone Ages," which is "the most extreme expression of civilizational rhetoric in U.S. foreign-policy history."

The professor believes "the deeper paradox at the heart of Trump's civilizationalism is that in claiming to defend Western civilization, he has done more to fracture the Western alliance than any external adversary."

The text of the article titled "Trump Is Shattering the Illusion of the West" reads as follows:

Something unusual has entered the grammar of U.S. foreign policy. Under President Donald Trump's second term, the language of strategy has given way to a heightened language of civilization: warnings of "civilizational erasure" in Europe, invocations of a "Judeo-Christian" heritage under siege, and threats to Iran to destroy the Iranian civilization. This is not incidental rhetoric. It signals a deliberate turn toward what may be called imperial civilizationalism—the use of civilizational identity as an instrument of aggressive populist foreign policy.

The civilization-state concept has become one of the defining rhetorical tools of our era's populist leaders. In the past decade, leaders in China, India, Russia, Turkey and elsewhere have turned to civilizational identity to construct national cohesion, assert cultural distinctiveness, and justify both domestic authority and foreign-policy ambition.

President Xi Jinping invokes the idea of China as the world's oldest continuous civilization. During a visit to the Forbidden City in 2017, Xi told Trump that although "Egypt is a bit more ancient," China was "the only continuous civilization" of that age. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi draws on Hindu civilizational revival. President Vladimir Putin promotes a distinct Eurasian-Russian identity rooted in Orthodox Christianity. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan reaches back to Ottoman and Islamic heritage. Each leader cherry-picks from a selective and internally contradictory historical archive to produce a usable, politically mobilizing myth of civilizational continuity.

Now Trump has joined them full-scale. But Trump's version differs in important respects. Where the others assert distinctiveness from the West, Trump claims to defend it. His 2017 speech in Warsaw, Poland, posed what he called the "fundamental question of our time," which was "whether the West has the will to survive." His administration's 2025 National Security Strategy warned of "civilizational erasure" in Europe due to migration and the erosion of national identities, predicting that Europe risked becoming "unrecognizable in 20 years or less."

Vice President J.D. Vance delivered the sharpest version of this argument at the 2025 Munich Security Conference, warning that the greatest threat to Western civilization came "from with-

in"—from European tolerance of immigration, retreat from religious orthodoxy, and restrictions on free speech. He later spoke explicitly of European "civilizational suicide."

Some might argue that the United States under Trump does not fully qualify as a civilization-state in the sense that China, India, and Russia fit the designation.

Those cases rest on claims of ancient, pre-modern civilizational continuity—a civilizational depth that predates and exceeds the nation-state itself. U.S. identity, by contrast, has historically been constructed around the nation-state exceptionalism, liberal universalism, civic rather than ethnic or civilizational foundations, with a record of absorbing immigrants more openly than most other Western settler states.

Yet Trump's civilizationalism is more consequential, not least because it is backed by military, economic, and technological power that is yet to be surpassed by any other nation. It is not merely a defensive nationalism dressed in civilizational language.

In some respects, it is reminiscent of ancient Rome. Rome in its imperial phase was indeed a "civilization-state" of sorts: a political entity that understood itself as the carrier of a superior civilization and whose expansion was justified in civilizational terms. Modern comparisons between the United States and Rome have long circulated in both popular and academic discourse. Trump's rhetoric maps onto the late Roman pattern more than the early one—a civilization asserting its exceptionalism defensively, from a position of perceived decline rather than confident ascent.

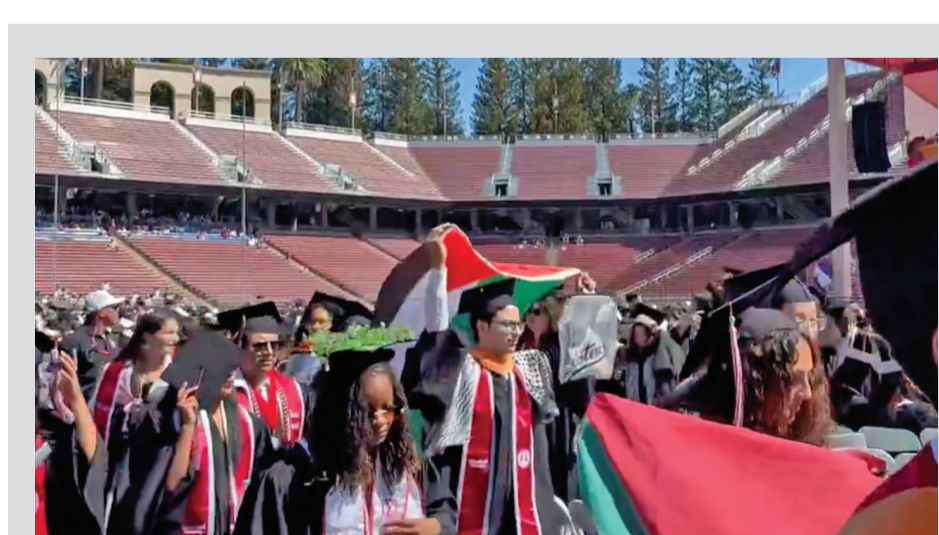
The parallel is both revealing and disquieting: Some of the loudest assertions of civilizational legitimacy, in both republican and imperial Rome, occurred during a period of strife and decline, when the ruling elite resorted to populist civilizational rhetoric to hold onto power. In 284 A.D., for example, Emperor Diocletian assumed the position of a divinely sanctioned dictator, even requiring prostration by officials before him. The glorification of civilization with its pomp and rituals became necessary for the glorification of the ruler.

But the deeper point is that all civilization-state claims—U.S., Chinese, Indian, Russian—are myths in the analytical sense: politically constructed, historically selective, and internally contradictory. Civilizations are inherently diverse, hybrid, and contested. No living civilization has been ethnically or culturally pure. Chinese civilization absorbed Buddhist, Mongol, and Manchu influences. Indian civilization blended Austroasiatic, Harappan (Indus Valley), Jain, Buddhist, Indo-European, Persian, and Islamic elements, creating layers that sometimes sit uneasily beneath any unifying Hindu narrative.

Russian civilization draws on Tatar, Byzantine, and European threads. The claim to a singular, defensible civilizational identity is, in each case, an instrument of power rather than a description of reality.

What Trump, Modi, Xi, Putin, and Erdogan share is not some real civilizational heritage, but a common political logic: the mobilization of cultural identity to deflect attention from institutional shortcomings, to consolidate domestic authority, and to assert distinctiveness in a multipolar world where the old ideological certainties of the Cold War no longer organize international competition.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)



Stanford graduates stage a walkout in solidarity with Palestinians during Google CEO Sundar Pichai's commencement address on June 15, 2026, protesting the company's Project Nimbus contract over its cloud infrastructure's support of Israel's genocidal military operations and human rights violations in Gaza.

Ghalenoei happy to represent Iran in 2026 World Cup

TEHRAN - Iran's soccer team arrived in the United States for the first time at this World Cup on Sunday, landing at Los Angeles International Airport and holding a press conference on the same day that a peace deal between the two nations was announced.

The Iran squad arrived after a short flight from Tijuana, Mexico, where they left their base camp earlier to a rousing sendoff ahead of their opening game against New Zealand at Los Angeles Stadium early Tuesday, Reuters reported.

"I am very happy to be representing the great, proud and strong nation of Iran," Iran coach Amir Ghalenoei said through a translator in a press conference at the stadium.

"I hope that football will bring about joy and enjoyment, and bring closer the cultures and countries."

The squad's Group G fixture against New Zealand will be played against the backdrop of the U.S. war with Iran and the newly-announced peace deal, adding a charged atmosphere to a contest between two nations who have never met at a World Cup.

Iran moved their World Cup base camp from a sports complex in Arizona to Mexico late last month after the U.S. and Israel conducted joint strikes on Iran beginning in late February.

Iran will now have to make the trip from Mexico to the U.S. for each of their three group matches and Ghalenoei said the travel and the denial of visas into the U.S. for some members of their soccer federation had negatively affected the squad.

Iran volleyball must learn from defeats: Piazza

TEHRAN - Iran head coach Roberto Piazza said his team is still learning how to handle the unique challenges of the Volleyball Nations League (VNL).

Iran finished Week 1 in Pool 2 with losses to Brazil, Bulgaria, and Belgium, while securing a victory over Argentina.

"This means we are still not used to playing in this tournament," Piazza said. "This is not a normal competition; it is a special and very different tournament."

When asked what he told his players after the match, Piazza refused to reveal the details.

"That will stay with the players," he said. "It certainly won't come from me. But I'm sure one of the players will talk about it — I'm 100 percent sure. In my opinion, everything should remain in the locker room. I know exactly that this is not the case here. It really isn't. That's the main problem, do you understand?"

Piazza also pointed to his team's mental lapse after falling behind early in the match against Belgium.

"We were chasing them because they managed to finish everything in the first two sets, and mentally we lost our focus and the right attitude," he explained. "After that, though, we fought our way back. We returned to the match in the third and fourth sets."

The Italian coach highlighted Iran's costly mistakes in the decisive fifth set.

"In the fifth set, if I remember correctly, we made six service errors," Piazza said. "That shows we are still not accustomed to playing in this tournament. This is not a normal competition; it is a special and different tournament."

Jahanbakhsh determined to make Iranian nation happy

TEHRAN - Iran international winger Alireza Jahanbakhsh is determined to show how they are ready to show their willpower in the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

The idea that football can unite the world in

troubled times may often sound like a cliché — but not when it comes from Alireza Jahanbakhsh.

The veteran forward and captain of Iran, playing in his fourth and possibly final World Cup, wants to put behind him the ordeal his team has endured over the past few months as they prepare to face New Zealand in the FIFA World Cup on Tuesday.

"As individuals and as a team, we would like to show that football unites the world and football unites people," Jahanbakhsh told FIFA.com.

"It doesn't matter the nation, the color of the skin or the background — we are all human. Humans don't have to suffer and hopefully we can give that message to the world through football, with our feet, and show some personality on such a big stage," the Belgian Pro League club Dender winger said.

After the opener against New Zealand, Iran will face Belgium and then Egypt. While progressing beyond the group stage remains the primary target, the veteran winger wants to keep the focus firmly on football in what is a milestone tournament for him personally.

In their previous six appearances at the World Cup, Team Melli have failed to advance beyond the group stage. However, their captain is quietly confident that a squad featuring the likes of Mehdi Taremi, Mohammad Mohebi and Saman Ghoddos can make a stronger impact this time around.

"Of course, the situation back home affects the team in a way, but we talk with our feet, and everyone is aware of that. We want to make sure we find a way to ease the difficult times our people have faced over the past few years and put some smiles on their faces," said the 32-year-old player.

Bahrouzi Rad focused on Los Angeles 2028 Paralympics

TEHRAN - Iranian paracanoe athlete Shahla Bahrouzi Rad says her primary focus is now on qualifying for the Los Angeles 2028 Paralympic Games, while also criticizing the exclusion of several sports from the upcoming Asian Para Games in Japan.

At the previous edition of the Asian Para Games in Hangzhou, Iran achieved a historic second-place finish behind China, marking the country's best-ever result in the competition. According to Bahrouzi Rad, that achievement may have influenced decisions made by the next host nation.

Speaking exclusively to Tehran Times, Bahrouzi Rad first reflected on her recent success at the 2026 Asian Paracanoe Championships.

"The Asian Championships were held in Turkistan, Kazakhstan, and I was able to win the gold medal in the women's KL3 500m while also claiming silver in the KL3 200m. The level of competition was very high, with all countries fielding their top athletes. Fortunately, I achieved my goal in the event," she said.

The Iranian paddler also expressed disappointment over the host country's decisions regarding the upcoming Asian Para Games in Nagoya.

"The Games in Nagoya will be held without paracanoe and chess. In the previous edition, Iran finished runner-up while Japan placed third. Unfortunately, the organizers have used their hosting privilege to remove several sports in which they are not strong medal contenders. Japan wants to improve its position and at least secure second place in the medal standings. In my opinion, that is one of the main reasons these events have been excluded," Bahrouzi Rad stated.

Looking ahead to the Los Angeles 2028 Paralympic Games, the Asian champion emphasized her long-term ambitions.

"The Paralympics is a major goal for every athlete. Decisions regarding participation and qualification pathways are made by the federation and the National Paralympic Committee, but our responsibility as athletes is to continue training and competing consistently. We must earn the necessary ranking points and qualification standards to secure a place at the Games. I hope all Iranian athletes achieve success on the international stage," she concluded.

Iran plans handicrafts export push, names Isfahan key hub for tourism growth

TEHRAN - Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, said on Monday that the government would pursue a program to expand domestic and international markets for handicrafts, increase exports, support artisans and develop a complete value chain for the sector, identifying Isfahan as a central hub for future growth.

Speaking at a ceremony marking National Handicrafts Week in Isfahan, attended by artists, veterans of the sector, provincial officials and cultural heritage representatives, Salehi-Amiri said handicrafts in Isfahan represented a key element of Iran's cultural identity and economic activity.

"Isfahan's handicrafts are a symbol of Iran's soft power," Salehi-Amiri said, adding that the sector encompassed culture, employment, livelihoods and lifestyle in the province.

The minister said Iranian handicrafts continued to receive international recognition and cited growing foreign interest in Iranian artistic products.

He said China's tourism minister had recently proposed establishing a permanent exhibition of Iranian carpets and handicrafts in Beijing, reflecting demand for Iranian cultural products among Chinese consumers.

Salehi-Amiri said the post-war period would mark the beginning of a new phase for Iran's handicrafts sector and called on provincial authorities in Isfahan to



prepare for expanded activity in both domestic and export markets.

He said the government aimed to establish Iranian handicrafts marketplaces in capitals around the world and was working to remove barriers to international market access.

According to the minister, strengthening the sector requires completion of the entire value chain, from raw material supply and production to marketing, sales and exports.

He said the ministry had held discussions with domestic and international companies in recent months to facilitate broader access for Iranian handicrafts to global distribution networks.

Salehi-Amiri said Iran had also advocated for the interests of its artisans during recent inter-

national meetings and stressed the need for a stronger presence of Iranian handicrafts in global markets.

The minister announced that the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts would delegate all necessary authorities related to handicrafts, tourism and cultural heritage management to provincial officials in Isfahan to accelerate development initiatives.

He then called for the creation of a special provincial task force to coordinate plans aimed at expanding the handicrafts sector.

Salehi-Amiri said Isfahan would play a significant role in Iran's tourism development plans, noting that the country's Seventh National Development Plan targets the attraction of 15 million foreign tourists and

identifies Isfahan as one of Iran's three principal tourism destinations.

He said growth in tourism would support handicrafts by increasing the number of visitors to Isfahan's artistic and traditional markets.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the minister reaffirmed government support for artisans and called for the preservation and strengthening of traditional master-apprentice training systems to transfer skills to younger generations.

The ceremony concluded with awards and honorable mentions presented to veteran artisans and leading handicrafts practitioners from Isfahan province in recognition of their contributions to preserving and promoting traditional arts and crafts.

Qeshm UNESCO Global Geopark expands digital conservation measures

TEHRAN - The manager of the UNESCO Global Geopark on Iran's Qeshm Island has said new digital monitoring and management systems will be introduced to strengthen protection of the island's geological heritage and expand the use of advanced technologies across the geopark.

Sajjad Ashgarf, manager of the UNESCO Global Geopark, on Monday said the initiative is part of a broader "smart conservation" approach aimed at improving the long-term protection of Qeshm's geosites through digital documentation, environmental monitoring and technology-based management tools.

"The development of monitoring systems, digital documentation and the use of modern technologies are among the main priorities for the sustainable protection of Qeshm Island's geological heritage," Ashgarf said.

He said the geopark, the first UNESCO Global Geopark in West Aisa, has the capacity to become



a regional center for geotourism and earth sciences education, with technology playing a central role in achieving that goal.

Among the projects under development is an enhanced conservation program for the Namakdan Salt Dome and Cave, one of Qeshm's most significant geosites. Ashgarf said authorities plan to expand natural hazard monitoring systems and introduce multi-

lingual audio guides at the site.

The measures are intended to improve visitor experiences while reducing physical interventions and potential damage to the natural attraction, he said.

Ashgarf said additional initiatives include the deployment of smart environmental monitoring systems, production of multilingual digital content, development of virtual reality-based

tours, creation of a visitor guide application and establishment of electronic communication platforms for geopark volunteers and partners.

He also announced plans to introduce management dashboards and expand the use of Geographic Information System (GIS) technologies and spatial data in planning and operational processes.

According to Ashgarf, the smart conservation strategy is designed to support sustainable management practices, improve tourism services and strengthen protection of the island's natural heritage.

Located in the Persian Gulf, Qeshm Island covers more than 1,400 square kilometers and is home to a range of geological, ecological and cultural attractions. The island's UNESCO-listed geopark forms part of the Zagros mountain belt and contains geological formations dating from the Late Precambrian to Cambrian periods.

Chogha Golan archaeological site undergoes new excavation



TEHRAN - Authorities in Iran's western Ilam province have launched the fourth season of archaeological excavations at the prehistoric site of Chogha Golan, a provincial official said.

Raed Naserifar, deputy director for cultural heritage in Ilam province, said research and archaeological programs were continuing across the province, including the latest excavation campaign at Chogha Golan.

"The fourth season of excavations at the historic Chogha Golan mound is currently underway," Naserifar told ISNA. He said the project aims to provide a more detailed understanding of the site, including the origins of sedentary life, continuity of settlement and other cultural

and historical characteristics.

Chogha Golan, located about 30 kilometers north of Mehran near the Konjan Cham River in the foothills of the Zagros Mountains, is considered one of the earliest aceramic Neolithic sites discovered in Iran.

According to prehistoric archaeology specialist Habibollah Mahmoudian, the Chogha Golan region is regarded as one of the earliest centers of agriculture in Iran and West Asia.

Mahmoudian told ISNA that numerous archaeological remains representing different periods of human occupation have been identified in the area. He said the continuous flow of the Konjan Cham River contributed to long-term human settlement in the region.

He added that excavations at Chogha Golan have uncovered evidence of early plaster production and architectural remains.

Dating from approximately 12,000 to 9,500 years ago, the site is associated with some of the

earliest evidence of agriculture and village life in Iran and beyond, according to Mahmoudian.

Previous archaeological investigations have revealed around eight meters of cultural deposits across 11 archaeological layers. Excavations uncovered red-painted plaster floors, mudbrick walls and clay animal figurines.

Research has also produced evidence of early domesticated emmer wheat dating to about 9,800 years before present, providing one of the earliest records of long-term plant management in Iran.

Chogha Golan was first excavated jointly by archaeologists from the University of Tübingen and the Iranian Center for Archaeological Research in 2009 and 2010. Archaeological work at the site has recently resumed under an Iranian team led by archaeologist Hojjat Darabi.

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FAO, Agriculture Ministry partner to empower locals, conserve indigenous livestock breeds

TEHRAN – The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and national partners, has launched a new project aimed at empowering local communities to conserve and sustainably develop endangered indigenous livestock breeds in the northwestern part of the country.

The inception workshop for the project, titled “Empowering Local Communities to Conserve and Develop Endangered Indigenous Livestock Gene Pool in the Northwest of Iran,” brought together government officials, technical experts, researchers, breeders, and local stakeholders to discuss strategies for safeguarding valuable animal genetic resources while strengthening rural livelihoods.

Opening the workshop, FAO Representative in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Farrukh Toirov, emphasized the critical role of indigenous livestock breeds in building resilient agrifood systems and addressing global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and food insecurity.

“Conserving these genetic resources is not only essential for protecting biodiversity but also for ensuring sustainable food production and resilient rural livelihoods in the future,” Toirov said.

Northwest Iran (the Islamic Republic of) is home to several valuable indigenous livestock breeds, including the Bactrian camel, Sarabi cattle, Mahabadi goat, and Markhoz goat. These breeds represent an important component of the country’s agricultural biodiversity and provide livelihoods, cultural identity, and resilience for rural and pastoral communities.

“According to FAO’s latest assessments, more than 8,800 local and transboundary livestock breeds have been reported worldwide, more than 70 percent of them are classified as being at risk of extinction, highlighting the urgent need for conservation efforts and stronger support for livestock keepers who safeguard these resources.”



Highlighting that sustainable conservation cannot succeed without the active involvement of local communities, the project places community empowerment at the center of its approach. Over the next 18 months, it will support the establishment of community-based breeding programmes, pedigree registration and performance recording systems, and conservation of genetic materials.”

The initiative will also invest in the rehabilitation of grazing areas, strengthen milk and mohair processing facilities, and provide extensive training and capacity-development opportunities for livestock keepers, technical experts, and policymakers. In parallel, efforts will be made to enhance value chains and create new market opportunities for products derived from indigenous livestock breeds, helping improve incomes and economic resilience in rural areas.

The project aligns with international efforts to promote sustainable and inclusive agrifood systems. It contributes to the objectives of the International Year of Rangelands

and Pastoralists 2026, which recognizes the vital role of pastoral communities in biodiversity conservation, food security, and ecosystem stewardship.

A key feature of the initiative is its strong focus on rural women’s economic empowerment. Women play an essential role in livestock production systems across the target areas. Through support for processing facilities, value-chain development, and targeted capacity-building activities, the project aims to strengthen the economic participation and leadership of rural women while supporting the conservation and sustainable use of indigenous livestock breeds.

Building on FAO’s previous conservation initiatives in the country, including successful projects supporting Bactrian camel conservation and innovative mobile veterinary and reproductive services for nomadic herders, the new programme expands conservation efforts to multiple indigenous breeds and reinforces the link between biodiversity conservation and rural development.

Iranian scholar receives MAB Young Scientist Award

TEHRAN – The Department of Environment (DOE) and the National Commission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) have honored the Iranian scholar Behzad Qiasi by presenting him with the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Young Scientists Award 2025 for his project ‘Develop a sustainable hydrotourism model in Iran’s Miankaleh Biosphere Reserve’.

Qiasi is a faculty member of the University of Tehran and holds a Ph.D. in Water Resources and Environmental Engineering.

His project aims to restore wetlands while supporting local livelihoods. He will work with communities, NGOs, and government agencies to design eco-friendly tourism that reduces pressure on water resources.

Through environmental and economic assessments, he will identify viable green jobs linked to cultural heritage and nature conservation. His project will empower local voices, especially youth and women, and produce a replicable model for other fragile wetland reserves.

In 2025, 11 young researchers from across the globe, including Morocco, China, Congo, the U.S., Brazil, Ghana, and Algeria, received MAB Young Scientists Awards for their outstanding efforts and contributions.

These projects focused on addressing the impacts of climate change on soils, pollinators, and wildlife; developing indigenous knowledge; promoting sustainable tourism; and analyzing the socio-environmental effects of resource extraction. They will contribute to achieving the MAB Program’s goals while offering replicable solutions to build more resilient and sustainable societies.

The prize announcement took place during the 37th session of the MAB International Coordinating Council (ICC), held in Hangzhou, China, after the fifth World Network of Biosphere Reserves’ global summit, which took place from September 22 to 26.

Through the MAB Young Scientists Awards,



the MAB program is investing in a new generation of scientists worldwide, because well-trained and committed young people are key to addressing ecological and sustainability issues. The MAB Young Scientists awards can grant up to US\$ 5,000 to young researchers in support of their research on ecosystems, natural resources, and biodiversity.

The MAB Young Scientists Award Scheme aims to encourage young scientists, in particular those from developing countries, to use MAB research, project sites and biosphere reserves in their research; encourage young scientists who already use such sites to undertake comparative studies in other sites in or outside their own country; promote and encourage the exchange of information and experience among a new generation of scientists;

involve young scientists in the implementation of the Hangzhou Strategic Action Plan 2026-2035 (HSAP); and enhance awareness among young scientists of the role of research in the implementation of the SDGs – in particular when conducted in biosphere reserves.

Granting dedicated fellowships for studies on marine, island, and coastal issues in biosphere reserves will encourage young scientists to apply for MAB YSA within this thematic area and thereby mobilize young scientists to engage actively in the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

17th cold plasma clinic for wound healing inaugurated

TEHRAN – The seventeenth cold plasma clinic in the country was inaugurated on Monday in the city of Rafsanjan, southeastern Kerman province, providing promising treatment for chronic wounds, diabetic ulcers, burns, and skin lesions under health insurance coverage.

Known as one of the world’s most innovative treatment methods, the non-thermal plasma therapy is highly effective in wound healing compared to traditional methods and ozone therapy. The treatment is performed on an outpatient basis, painlessly, without the need for anaesthesia, IRIB reported.

Cold atmospheric plasma has been shown to reduce microbial load without any known significant negative effects on healthy tissues. This issue should enhance its possible application to any microbial infection site. It has also been shown to have anti-tumour effects.

Based on the clinic protocols, patients are exposed to direct radiation for an average of 7 to 10 treatment sessions, usually twice a week, for about 20 minutes per session. Evidence and clinical findings indicate that the method is more than 70 percent effective in healing chronic wounds and skin lesions.

Iran is the fourth country to possess the technology, following Japan, South Korea, and Germany. Concerning the significance of integrating new technologies into the healthcare system, a trilateral memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed to promote the country’s

status in the plasma medicine industry in August 2025.

The MOU was signed by Saeed Sarkar, an official with the Vice-Presidency for Science and Technology, Shahin Akhoundzadeh, an official with the Ministry of Health, and Mahdiyeh Bakhtiari, the CEO of the Plasma Therapy Knowledge-Based Company, IRNA reported.

The main objectives of the MOU are to develop and implement extensive multi-center research in plasma medicine, integrate the technology in the country’s official treatment protocols, as well as conduct projects that play an effective role in treating hard-to-cure diseases, improve health services, and provide access to advanced medical technologies.

The MOU represents the collaboration of the scientific, research, and technological capabilities of the country, a national movement towards the expansion of emerging technologies in the field of medicine.

First indigenous plasma therapy clinic

In April 2025, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), in cooperation with Jahrom University of Medical Sciences, southern Fars province, launched the first cold plasma therapy clinic for the treatment of wounds using indigenous technology.

During the opening ceremony, the AEOI head, Mohammad Eslami, associated the achievement with scientific progress and national self-confidence, highlighting that nuclear technology is used in medical services and agriculture.



“The inauguration of this clinic can help expand plasma therapy technology in other medical centers in the country,” the official noted.

The chancellor of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences, Hossein Hakimelahi, for his part, expressed hope that this initiative will open up opportunities to use nuclear technologies in cancer treatment and other areas of health.

On August 26, Eslami said heavy water derivatives and plasma medicine are opening new frontiers in drug development and medical treatment, marking a major step in the application of nuclear technology to public health.

Eslami added that under a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Health, clinical trials that were previously concentrated at Tehran University will be expanded to selected universities across the country.

“This will accelerate the spread of plasma-based technologies to different provinces,” he said, “en-

suring that all Iranians can benefit equally and simultaneously from these advances.”

The remarks came during ceremonies marking National Doctors Day, where Eslami also highlighted the AEOI’s success in producing more than 70 types of radiopharmaceuticals, now supplied to over 220 nuclear medicine centers across Iran and exported abroad.

These products, Eslami said, cover three categories: diagnostic, therapeutic, and palliative.

In the diagnostic field, advances are pushing “the frontiers of knowledge,” improving precision so doctors can better examine patients’ bodies. On the therapeutic side, he added, the focus is on easing patients’ suffering while providing more effective treatments.

Eslami revealed that around 20 additional radiopharmaceuticals are currently under research and in clinical trial phases, reflecting Iran’s growing capacity to integrate nuclear science into healthcare.

Measles under control, few cases reported: health official

TEHRAN – Despite a surge in measles cases worldwide over the past few months, the illness is under control in the country, with only eight confirmed cases reported since the beginning of the new Iranian year, March 21, an official with the health ministry has said.

Measles is potentially a deadly disease. Severe complications include pneumonia, diarrhea, blindness, and encephalitis (brain swelling). The symptoms include high fever, cough, runny nose, red eyes, and a rash. Measles vaccines (two doses) are administered when children are 12 months and 18 months old.

In the first month of the spring, out of 266 suspected measles cases, only eight were identified as measles, which shows a sharp decrease compared to the same period last year, when 266 out of 828 suspected cases were confirmed as measles, Borna quoted Qobad Moradi as saying.

High vaccination coverage and an effective surveillance and tracking system have significantly reduced the risk of widespread disease transmission, Qobadi added.

The official went on to say that the World Health Organization (WHO) has verified that Iran has sustained measles elimination since 2019.

Iran, Oman, and Bahrain are the only countries in the region that have received the verification.

The measles vaccination program in Iran started in 1984, when 34 percent of the population was vaccinated in the first year, and 90 to 95 percent of the population after 6 years. Also in 2003, 33 million people were vaccinated with a national program to eradicate measles in the country.

In February, Alireza Raeisi, an official with the health ministry, said many European countries have lost WHO’s measles-free status, and measles is still prevalent in West Asia, particularly in the country’s eastern neighbours, such as Turkey.

This achievement is the result of coordinated planning, widespread vaccination, epidemiologic surveillance, and comprehensive participation of the country’s healthcare system. It is a turning point in improving public health, which will strengthen Iran’s position in achieving goals at the regional and international levels.

In April 2025, Raeisi said some 98 percent of the target population in the national program for the immunization against measles had been vaccinated.

However, ten to twenty thousand children under the age of one have yet to get vaccinated, and about five percent of the vaccinated individuals develop measles, IRNA quoted Raeisi as saying.

Disrupted vaccination programs in countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan are the main risk factor threatening Iranians’ health, Raeisi stressed.

Iran shakes with 67 earthquakes in a week

TEHRAN – A total of 67 earthquakes have been recorded across the country in a week from June 6 to 12, according to the seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran.

Statistically, 53 earthquakes with magnitudes smaller than 3, 9 earthquakes with a magnitude between 3 and 4, four earthquakes with a

magnitude between 4 and 5, and one earthquake with a magnitude between 5 and 6 have occurred in the country, isrc reported.

Of the total quakes, one had a magnitude of 5 on the Richter scale, which occurred on June 9 in Hormozgan province.

Among the provinces of the coun-

try, Fars experienced the highest number of earthquakes, with 13, followed by Kerman and Hormozgan with 6 and 5 earthquakes, respectively.

During the same period, four earthquakes hit Tehran province. No earthquakes were recorded in West Azarbaijan, Alborz, Bushehr, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, Zanjan, Semnan,

Sistan-Baluchestan, Qom, Qazvin, Gilan, Lorestan, Mazandaran, and Markazi provinces.

A total of 2,380 earthquakes with a magnitude of more than 2.5 on the Richter scale were recorded across the country over the past calendar year (March 2025–March 2026), according to the Seismological networks of the Institute of Geophys-

ics of the University of Tehran, Mehr news agency reported.

Out of recorded earthquakes, 910 had a magnitude greater than 3, 130 had a magnitude greater than 4, and 15 had a magnitude greater than 5 on the Richter scale.

The Iranian plateau is located in a very seismically active region of the

world and is known not only for its major catastrophic earthquakes but also for the disasters relating to natural hazards, especially earthquakes.

About 2 percent of the earthquakes in the world occur in Iran, but more than 6 percent of the victims of the world’s earthquakes during the 20th century are reported from Iranian earthquakes.



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JUNE 16, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The envy of a friend is a sign of the weakness of his friendship.
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:05 Evening: 19:43 Dawn: 3:01 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:48 (tomorrow)

Iranian feature animation about Ashura to hit silver screen

TEHRAN – After a successful appearance at the 42nd Fajr Film Festival and strong showings at international festivals, the Iranian animated feature film “Sword and Sorrow,” directed by Emad Rahmani and Mehrdad Mehrabi, will be released across cinemas in the country on June 17.

The animation has earlier become available to audiences worldwide through the platforms Apple TV and Amazon Prime Video as well, IRNA reported.

With a heroic, emotional, and profound story about sacrifice, identity, and hope, along with a distinctive visual design and advanced animation techniques, “Sword and Sorrow” has succeeded in earning positive attention from critics and festivals internationally.

This work was created with a focus on promoting Ashura culture and aims to present the most influential event in Islamic history from an Iranian perspective.

Given the arrival of the month of Muharram, “Sword and Sorrow” is scheduled to hit cinemas across the country simultaneously with the beginning of the mourning ceremonies.

“Sword and Sorrow” takes viewers on a journey through the history of Islam, with a particular focus on the event of Karbala.

The 92-minute film unfolds the historical period from the martyrdom of Imam Hassan (AS) to the arrival of Imam Hussein (AS) in Karbala, narrated through the perspective of an Iranian residing in Madain.

More than a thousand years ago, in one of the famous cities of Mesopotamia, Madain, when the cruelty of the Sultan was at its peak, upholding

justice was throwing one's life into death's jaw.

Karen is a seven-year-old child, with his most significant possession being a birthday gift, a wooden sword bestowed on him by his father. But on his very same birthday, things take a tragic twist; the Sultan puts all who disobeyed him and their families to the sword.

Thanks to his uncle, Karen survives. They escape the city, and his uncle entrusts him to the loving Brochim family in a small village named Mahuza. Although Mahuza is always full of love and Karen receives plenty, no second passes without him mourning for his family and dreaming of finishing what his father has started.

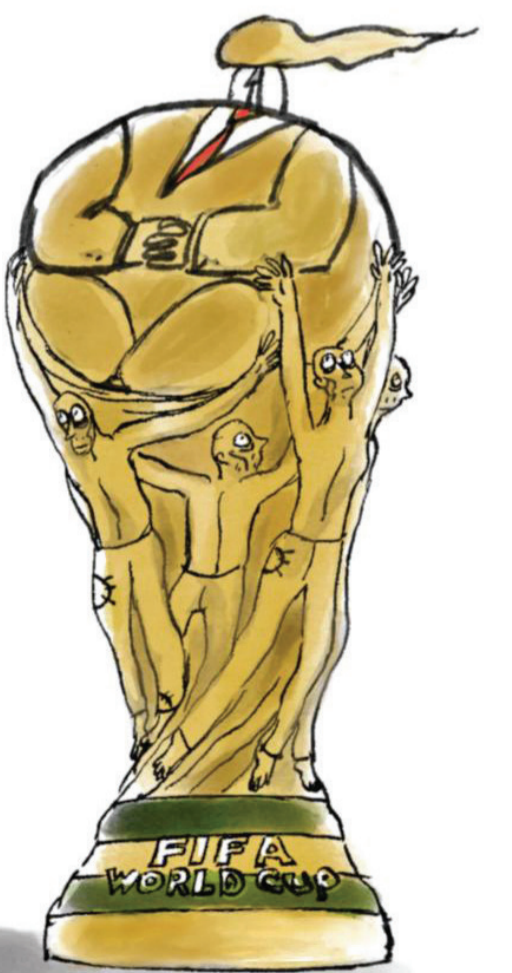
Now, after twenty years, in Madain, Karen sees an opportunity to make his father's wish come true finally, but he's also aware of what it will cost.

What sets “Sword and Sorrow” apart is its use of human scanning technology (MetaHuman) – the first time in the history of Iranian animation. The work's hyperreal and realistic atmosphere is achieved through the meticulous scanning of humans, capturing facial expressions, quality, and designing clothing.

According to the director, “the project, involving nearly two hundred contributors, required almost two years of collaborative efforts to reach completion. ‘Sword and Sorrow’ stands as a testament to the intersection of technology, history, and artistry within the Iranian animation landscape”.

Born in Kashan, Emad Rahmani, 37, holds an M.A. in politics. He has managed and directed more than 22 projects at Permanent Way Entertainment. He has also published plenty of game screenplays and essays. He is currently in the position of CEO at the studio.

Cartoon of Day



Only for Rich
Cartoonist: Doaa Eladl from Egypt

“The Sky Holders” book series on martyred aerospace commanders unveiled in Tehran

From Page 1 ▶ The ceremony also served as a platform to honor the authors for their extensive research and biographical work, including Faezeh Ghaffar-Haddadi, who penned “The Man Who Wanted to Stay Alive” about Martyr Amir-Ali Hajizadeh, and Marzieh Etemadi, the author of “The Man Who Did Not Want to Be Seen” focusing on Martyr Mahmoud Bagheri.

They were joined by Zeinab Sadat Tabatabai, who documented the life of Martyr Davoud Sheikhian in “The Man Who Cared for the Sky”, and Seyyed Mohammad-Yusef Jalali, whose work “The Man Who Could Fly” chronicles the sacrifices of Martyr Mohammad-Baqer Taherpour.

Faezeh Ghaffar-Haddadi shared insights into the project's development, describing it as a collaborative effort between the IRGC Aerospace Force, Shahid Kazemi Publishing, and the Art Bureau. “A significant portion of the interviews took place within the Aerospace Organization itself,” she explained, expressing gratitude to the martyrs' families for their “patience and trust” during the long hours of research.

Seyyed Mohammad-Yusef Jalali, speaking on the life of Martyr Taherpour, highlighted the martyr's commitment to anonymity. “Martyr Taherpour was among those unsung commanders whose names did not even appear on enemy watchlists. His quiet professionalism away from the media spotlight was a testament to his character,” Jalali remarked. He emphasized that documenting the lives of those who secured Iran's sovereignty is a “critical necessity” that deserves greater national and international attention.

Addressing the audience, Mohammad Tavakoli, CEO of the Sooreh Revayat Institute, emphasized the vital role of resistance literature in preserving historical truth.



“War literature reveals the true cost of war. Analyzing its hidden dimensions helps us understand this vast treasure and pass it on to future generations,” he noted.

Tavakoli further reflected on the shift in narrative focus following last year's 12-Day War. He stated that while debates previously existed on how to approach various subjects, the recent conflict has opened a “sea of new narratives,” placing a heavier responsibility on cultural activists.

“The martyrs of the 12-Day War were raised within the culture of the Sacred Defense. Just as the bravery of that era was recorded, we must now immortalize the sacrifices of these contemporary heroes,” he added.

He specifically lauded the Aerospace Force martyrs, noting their unique status. “Their service did not end with the Sacred Defense; they remained in the field of duty, and the fruits of their tireless efforts are more apparent to the public today than ever before.”

The ceremony also featured a

moving tribute from Mehdi Bagheri, the son of the late Martyr Mahmoud Bagheri. Expressing his gratitude to the authors who spent over a year researching the books, he stated, “Divine grace be upon the martyrs who generated power for Islamic Iran, foremost among them the martyred commander Amir-Ali Hajizadeh.”

Bagheri also underscored the indispensable role of the martyrs' families, adding, “It would be unjust to speak of the martyrs' sacrifices without acknowledging the patience and companionship of their wives.”

For his part, Hojjatolislam Ali Naderi, Deputy Head of Public Relations for the IRGC Aerospace Force, thanked the families for sharing their intimate memories with the biographers. He stressed the importance of introducing contemporary legends to the youth.

“The younger generation, who are the future-makers of this country, must become acquainted with these icons,” Naderi remarked. “These combatants elevated the Islamic Republic's

defensive capabilities from a very limited point to a position where the country can now stand firm against global powers, defending the dignity and identity of all Iranians.”

He further emphasized that Iran's defense achievements have allowed the Islamic Republic to stand firm against nuclear-armed powers without relying on nuclear weaponry. “This status is the result of the tireless efforts of individuals whose names and faces many of us are only beginning to recognize today.”

He concluded by stressing the urgent need to train a new generation of experts. “Today, we need thousands more like Hajizadeh and Bagheri to ensure the nation's progress and security. Fortunately, under the strategic guidance of the Aerospace Force commanders and General Seyyed Majid Mousavi, the process of nurturing such capable leaders is being pursued with vigor.” Naderi then read a special message from General Mousavi addressed to the Iranian people.

Renowned radio veteran Behrouz Razavi passes away

TEHRAN- Behrouz Razavi, the legendary voice of Iranian radio and a veteran broadcaster, passed away in Tehran on Sunday night following a period of illness. He was 79.

The news of Razavi's passing, whose deep, resonant voice defined decades of storytelling, was confirmed by Farhang Julai, a veteran radio producer and relative of the deceased, Mehr reported on Monday.

According to Julai, Razavi had been receiving treatment in the intensive care unit (ICU) of a hospital before he breathed his last on Sunday night.

A funeral ceremony for the late artist is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, in front of the Bilal Mosque of the IIRB (Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting) head-

quarters. Following the ceremony, Razavi will be laid to rest in the Artists' Section of the Behesht-e Zahra Cemetery.

Born on December 31, 1947, Behrouz Razavi was a multifaceted artist whose career spanned over five decades. He joined the national radio in 1968 and quickly became one of its most recognizable voices.

Razavi was widely celebrated for his narration of the “Iran Documentary” series, directed by the late Hamid Mojtahedi, and was the long-time voice of the popular radio program “Ketab-e Shab” (Book of the Night), edited by Mohammad-Baqer Rezaei.

His artistic legacy also includes significant contributions to Iranian cinema and television as a voice actor and actor. He lent his voice to



the character of Ibn Abbas (played by Ali Azad) in the epic series “Imam Ali (AS)” and narrated notable works such as the television series “The Loneliest Commander”

and the film “The Day of the Devil.” In recent years, he also showcased his acting prowess in the popular drama series “Gonah-e Fereshteh” (The Sin of an Angel).

Frances Hardinge's dark fantasy novel “Unraveller” published in Persian

TEHRAN – The Persian translation of the young adults' fantasy novel “Unraveller” by Frances Hardinge has been released in the Iranian book market.

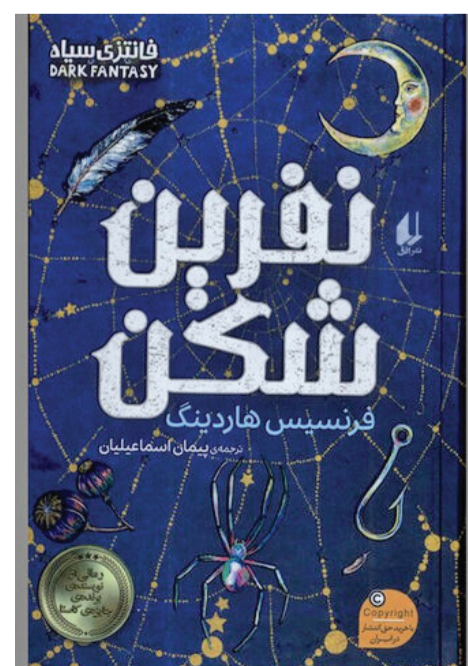
Translated by Peyman Esmaeilian, the novel has been brought out by Ofoq Books in 598 pages, Mehr reported.

Originally published in 2022 by Macmillan Children's Books, it is the tenth novel written by Hardinge.

The story happens in a world where anyone can create a life-destroying curse and only one person has the power to unravel them.

Kellen does not fully understand his talent, but helps those transformed maliciously—including Nettle. Recovered from entrapment in bird form, she is now his constant companion and closest ally.

But Kellen has also been cursed, and unless he and Nettle can remove his curse, Kellen is in danger of unravelling everything—and ev-



everyone—around him.

Frances Hardinge, 52, is a British children's writer. Her debut novel, “Fly by Night,” won the 2006 Branford Boase Award and was listed as one of the School Library Journal Best Books. Her 2015 novel “The Lie Tree” won the 2015 Costa Book Award Book of the Year, the only children's book to do so besides Philip Pullman's “The Amber Spyglass” in 2001.

In addition to her 10 novels, Hardinge has also written several short stories published in magazines and anthologies, as well as two that were published as standalone books.

She has also been shortlisted for and received a number of other awards for her novels and short stories.

Hardinge spent her childhood in a huge, isolated old house in a small, strange village, and the two things inspired her to write strange, magical stories from an early age. She studied English at Oxford University and now lives in Oxford, England.