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Thrown Under the Bus: The Fate of US-Israeli Proxies



Iranian opposition who once called the US president "Uncle Trump" now insults him with vulgar slurs like "Yellow Head"

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A protester splashed ketchup on suit of the son of Iran's deposed monarch, who heads an opposition branch abroad. Berlin, April 23, 2026.

Israel violates Iran-US MoU as global support grows

TEHRAN - Israel continues to violate the ceasefire between Iran and the United States, which includes a halt to Israeli strikes in Lebanon.

Iran and the United States reached a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on Monday, which is expected to be formally signed in Geneva on Friday. It includes not only the release of frozen Iranian assets and the lifting of the US naval blockade of Iranian ports, among other conditions, but also explicitly stipulates that Israel must halt its war in Lebanon.

The MoU came after Iran and the US agreed to a ceasefire on April 8, which paused the joint US-Israeli aggression that began on February 28. Even that truce stressed that Israel must stop its attacks in Lebanon. ▶ Page 2

Iran expands diplomatic coordination with Russia, China, and Oman following Islamabad Accord

Accord

TEHRAN - Iran has intensified diplomatic consultations with key regional and international partners following the conclusion of the Islamabad Accord with the United States, holding high-level talks with Russia, China, and Oman on the agreement's implementation, regional security, and future cooperation.

In separate telephone conversations, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi briefed his Russian, Chinese, and Omani counterparts on the details of the memorandum of understanding reached between Tehran and Washington after weeks of indirect negotiations mediated by Pakistan. ▶ Page 2

Miscalculation after miscalculation

TEHRAN - Although some great powers have been humiliated by less powerful nations in the wars they have launched against them, after some years, they unexpectedly return to the same old policies and start new wars.

These wars take place despite stern warnings by other countries and opposition at home.

The United States was forced to leave Afghanistan after 20 years in a humiliating manner in 2021. The U.S. also launched a war against Iraq in March 2003 despite the formidable denials by the UN nuclear watchdog that Iraq did not possess weapons of mass destruction. However, the George W. Bush administration did not listen and attacked Iraq, which led to indescribable human tragedy and the spread of terrorism in the region.

Yet, President Donald Trump, who was complaining about his country's endless wars, started an unwarranted war against Iran on February 28 in cooperation with Israel. This followed a 12-day Israeli war against Iran in June 2025 with the cooperation and participation of the U.S.

Why does Netanyahu fear a US-Iran agreement?

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - In response to developments in U.S.-Iran negotiations, Netanyahu's remarks express understanding of American interests in reaching an agreement, while still playing the victim card.

This reflects the Zionist concern that a U.S.-Iran agreement could go beyond the regime's core objectives, leaving it empty-handed from the aggression waged on Iran, Lebanon, and Gaza, except for limited tactical gains that come at the cost of a strategic defeat.

The reality that parties around the world have come to recognize is that a return to full-scale warfare means everyone stands to lose more than they might gain.

However, the Zionist regime appears to be the only party willing to explode the current situation and is unlikely to accept such an agreement easily. The rules of engagement that Iran successfully managed to impose after the last unprovoked war have reduced Tel Aviv's deterrence in Tehran's favor.

Creeping annexation is devouring Gaza. Washington is pouring the concrete.

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN - Peace plans rarely arrive with an olive branch; these days in Gaza, they have arrived with concrete mixers.

Near the Reim settlement, American military contractors are actively pouring foundations for a 350-acre, 5,000-person command hub, according to Israel Hayom.

This compound represents the physical infrastructure of what Washington labels a stabilization initiative, masking a broader colonial blueprint for permanent recolonization.

Replacing the facility abandoned after the recent campaign of aggression against Iran, it anchors Donald Trump's real estate scheme to displace over two million Palestinians and construct a corporate enclave dubbed "the Riviera of the Middle East."

Mechanics of creeping annexation

This construction reflects a strategy of quiet territorial expansion.

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Private sector proposals presented to parliament speaker on Iran-China economic ties

TEHRAN- The head and a group of members of the Board of Directors of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, along with a number of representatives from chambers of commerce, specialized committees, economic organizations, and joint chambers of commerce, met and held talks with Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf on Wednesday, June 17.

This meeting focused on Iran-China economic relations and took place on the eve of Qalibaf's visit to that country, during which over 30 proposals were presented by private sector to the parliament speaker.

Samad Hassanzadeh, Head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, speaking on Wednesday, at a consultation meeting of the Special Representative for China Affairs with the Iran Chamber, held under the slogan "Sustainable Economic Cooperation between Iran and China" ▶ Page 4

A story of love and endurance against US-Israeli criminality

TEHRAN - Incidents caused by the recent US-Israeli attacks on residential areas in Iran do not end the moment the explosions stop. Their consequences often stretch far beyond the initial destruction, continuing for weeks and months, reshaping the lives of those who survive.

In one of the most painful examples reported from Isfahan, an entire family's fate unfolded into a tragedy that only reached its final chapter with the passing of its last survivor.

In the early hours of Friday, March 26, a residential complex in Isfahan's Hafton neighborhood was struck by the US-Israeli forces.

In an instant, a place once filled with everyday warmth and ordinary life was reduced to rubble. Hossein Maleki, a well-known footballer in Isfahan, along with his two young children, Shahin and Shahana, were killed. ▶ Page 7



Attacking universities is a "crossing of red lines": science minister

TEHRAN - Minister of Science, Research and Technology, Hossein Simaei-Sarraf, has said that attacking universities is a crossing of red lines, highlighting that many universities and educational centers in the country were targeted by the United States and Israel during the recent war.

When a university is targeted, in fact, one of the most authentic centers of culture and civilization is attacked, and the harm is directed at the entire scientific community of the world, msrt.ir quoted Simaei-Sarraf as saying.

The official made the remarks while addressing the tenth meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Education Ministers, which took place in Minsk, Belarus, on June 16. A delegation led by the science minister attended the meeting. ▶ Page 7

Argentine lawyer from Global Sumud Flotilla reports on torture of activists in Israeli detention



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TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Hands on the trigger, eyes filled with absolute distrust toward the enemy

Kayhan wrote that Iran should place no trust in the recent Iran-US understanding. The paper argued: Signing a document on paper must never create the illusion that everything is over or that conditions have normalized. The hegemonic nature of the United States has never changed. This understanding is merely a pause — a moment to regroup. Meanwhile, the dangerous variable of the Zionist regime remains fully active. Israeli officials have openly declared that they are not bound by this understanding and that they seek to sever Iran's strategic arm, namely Hezbollah in Lebanon. To preserve national security, Iran's ring of fire around Israel must remain intact. Ultimately, with absolute distrust and full readiness, we must recognize that this understanding is not the end of the story; the threat of aggression and assassination still exists. Therefore, hands must remain on the trigger, and we must maintain full preparedness for every scenario — including a renewed war — because true victory lies in relying on internal strength and staying ready for the enemy's deceit.

Shargh: The understanding can become a platform for broader agreements

Shargh analyzed the Iran-US understanding as an opportunity to break multiple deadlocks. The initial understanding cannot be interpreted as the end of all disputes or the definite beginning of a new era, but it can certainly be seen as an important turning point — a shift from confrontation toward managing differences. The history of relations between the two countries shows that the distance between an initial understanding and a final agreement is a complex path filled with political, security, and legal challenges. Still, what makes this development significant is the return of diplomacy to the center of the equation after a costly period of tension and conflict. If both sides pursue gradual confidence-building and reciprocal implementation of commitments, this understanding could become a platform for broader agreements and more durable regional and international stability — though caution remains essential in assessing the future.

Etemad: This opportunity must be used

Reformist political figure Mirdamadi told Etemad that the understanding is an important and prudent step. From his perspective, Iran entered the negotiations from a position of strength after standing firm against all political and military pressures. In recent years, the United States tested every option on the table — including the military one — and the international consensus

now is that Iran held the upper hand in this confrontation. This creates a golden opportunity that must not be wasted. Naturally, the path ahead will not be without challenges. Internationally, Israeli lobbies and their supporters in the US will work with full force to undermine the understanding.

Javan: Regime change will happen — but inside the United States

Javan interpreted recent strategic shifts in Trump's cabinet and wrote: Reports indicate a gradual withdrawal of US forces from West Asia. The naval blockade has been lifted. Trump now says, "I was never seeking regime change in Iran because it was impossible". He is lying — that was exactly what he came for, and he repeatedly claimed he would overthrow Iran's government and destroy Iranian civilization. Now, some reports say he is seeking changes within his own cabinet — meaning regime change is happening, but inside the United States itself, just as during wartime, many US officials who opposed the war were dismissed. Now opponents of the agreement are being removed. This is a sign of Iran's strength, which is evident in every clause of the understanding. Iran has given almost nothing and has obtained nearly everything it needed. This means the architecture of West Asia must now be viewed through an Iranian-made lens. Beyond battlefield and diplomatic victories, Iran has also achieved a major success by creating divisions within Washington's leadership.

Arman-e-Emrooz: A new chapter of peace, stability, and cooperation in the Middle East and the world

Arman-e Emrooz focused on the global dimension of the Iran-US understanding. It wrote that resolving Iran's nuclear issues through this understanding significantly strengthens the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Iran's return to energy markets with substantial volume could stabilize global oil prices and prevent severe fluctuations and inflation in consumer economies. The agreement shows that even at the height of distrust, diplomacy can open a path forward. Its success, however, requires mutual goodwill, precise implementation, and avoidance of bad faith. If pursued seriously, the process could not only reduce regional tensions but also serve as a model for resolving other global crises. Iran's economy would benefit from commercial openings, and the region would be relieved of heavy military and security burdens. Signing the understanding in Switzerland could mark the beginning of a new chapter of peace, stability, and cooperation for the Middle East and the world.

Rosatom reaffirms commitment to Bushehr nuclear plant, plans phased return of specialists

TEHRAN — The head of Russia's state nuclear energy corporation, Rosatom, has reaffirmed that the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant remains a top priority for Moscow, announcing plans for the gradual return of Russian technical specialists to the facility as security conditions improve.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Russia-ASEAN Summit in Kazan on Wednesday, Rosatom Director General Alexey Likhachev stressed that the company remains fully committed to the continued development of the Bushehr project. He noted that Rosatom has maintained uninterrupted production of critical equipment required for the construction of new power units at the plant, underscoring Russia's long-term commitment to nuclear cooperation with Iran.

Likhachev also emphasized the importance of resolving issues related to Iran's nuclear program through diplomacy, welcoming ongoing international efforts aimed at achieving a comprehensive settlement. He expressed support for monitoring and verification mechanisms, including those carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), while stressing the need for the agency to act impartially and in the interests of all parties involved.



Regarding the deployment of Russian personnel, the Rosatom chief said the phased return of engineering and technical teams to Bushehr would begin once security risks are sufficiently reduced. He added that the corporation has already prepared the necessary operational plans to facilitate the process.

The Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant, located on Iran's southern coast, was among the sites targeted during recent US and Israeli military attacks against Iran. While parts of the surrounding facility were affected, Iranian authorities have stated that the reactor containment structures and key nuclear installations remained intact and sustained no significant damage.

Iran expands diplomatic coordination with Russia, China, and Oman following Islamabad Accord

From page 1 ▶ During talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Araghchi stressed that the United States bears full responsibility for the faithful implementation of the accord's provisions, particularly those related to the cessation of military hostilities. He also reiterated the need to halt Israeli attacks against Lebanon. Lavrov welcomed the finalization of the agreement and reaffirmed Moscow's support for its implementation, while both sides emphasized the importance of continued diplomatic coordination and international backing, including from the United Nations Security Council.

In a separate call, Araghchi and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi reviewed the geopolitical implications of the accord and discussed prospects for expanding bilateral cooperation, particularly in energy, trade, and investment. Araghchi highlighted the strategic nature of Iran-China relations and thanked Beijing for its support throughout the negotiation process.

Wang welcomed the agree-



ment, praised Iran's diplomatic approach, and stressed that the accord represents an important opportunity for advancing regional stability. He underscored the necessity of the precise implementation of all provisions and reaffirmed China's readiness to support the agreement's execution and facilitate constructive regional engagement.

Araghchi also held consultations with Omani Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Albusaidi, during which the two sides dis-

cussed the Islamabad Accord, bilateral relations, and regional developments. The ministers emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation based on longstanding historical and cultural ties and agreed to continue close coordination to promote regional stability.

The Iranian and Omani foreign ministers further reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring the safe and uninterrupted passage of international maritime traffic through the Strait

of Hormuz in accordance with international law, highlighting the strategic importance of the waterway for global trade and energy security.

According to officials involved in the process, the Islamabad memorandum of understanding provides for an immediate and permanent cessation of military operations across all fronts, including Lebanon, and is scheduled to be formally signed in Switzerland on June 19. The agreement is expected to be followed by 60 days of negotiations aimed at reaching a comprehensive final settlement, with reported provisions addressing the management of the Strait of Hormuz and guarantees for Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The discussions with Russia, China, and Oman reflected broad support for the implementation of the accord and underscored a shared commitment to advancing diplomacy, regional stability, and long-term peace through sustained international and regional cooperation.

Iran rejects Israeli allegations at UN, reaffirms right to self-defense



TEHRAN — Iran has firmly rejected "baseless and distorted allegations" made by the Israeli regime at the United Nations, asserting that arguing that Tehran's recent military actions were lawful and proportionate measures taken in self-defense against continued Israeli aggression and violations of international law.

Israel violates Iran-US MoU as global support grows

TEHRAN — Israel continues to violate the ceasefire between Iran and the United States, which includes a halt to Israeli strikes in Lebanon.

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The MoU came after Iran and the US agreed to a ceasefire on April 8, which paused the joint US-Israeli aggression that began on February 28. Even that truce stressed that Israel must stop its attacks in Lebanon.

Iran said on Tuesday that Israel has violated the MoU 84 times and warned of a "harsh response" if the attacks continue.

Amnesty International also said the Israeli military's repeated use of unlawful mass "evacuation" and "no-return" orders to displace and terrorize hundreds of thousands of people in Lebanon flagrantly violates international humanitarian law. The prominent rights group added that this constitutes a grave

breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention and amounts to a war crime.

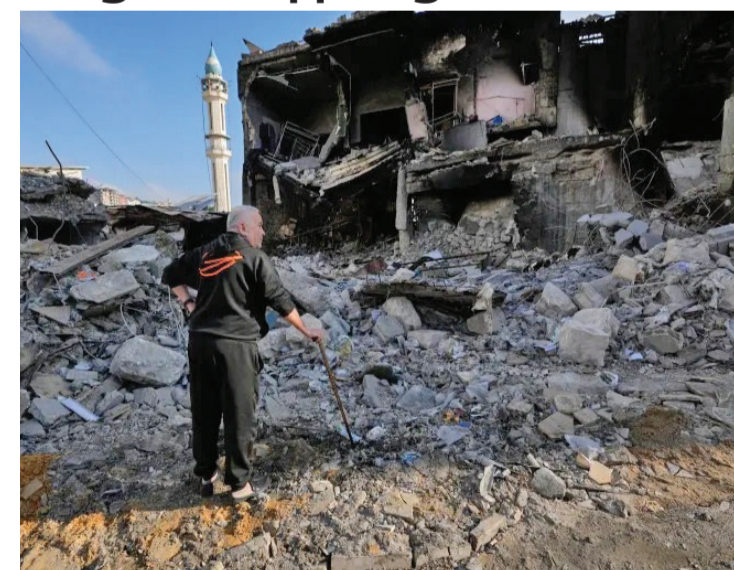
Israel stands accused of attempting to sabotage the Tehran-Washington agreement. President Donald Trump has openly criticized Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over Israel's continued attacks in Lebanon. However, some experts argue that such criticism rings hollow, as Israel does not carry out sustained operations in Lebanon without a US green light.

Despite Israel's role in undermining the agreement, countries around the world continue to support the MoU.

In a meeting with Trump on the sidelines of the G7 summit in Evian, eastern France on Wednesday, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi expressed "great appreciation" for the US-Iran MoU. He said Egypt is waiting for a final deal to be declared "so that we can react appropriately and state our positive views and perspectives."

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov also called on the international community and the UN Security Council to support the MoU, emphasizing the need for continued diplomacy to establish peace and stability.

Canadian Prime Minister



Mark Carney called the MoU a "well-structured" and "positive" agreement that he "absolutely" supports. Speaking to CNN on the sidelines of the G7 summit, Carney said, "We're very pleased with the deal that's been struck," adding that it is a "game-changer."

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has called for a firm commitment to the Iran-US ceasefire, urging all parties to work toward laying the foundation of a "sustainable security architecture in the region."

Over the past days, the MoU has received widespread sup-

The letter also referenced prior incidents, including 'coordinated Israeli-U.S. military strikes in 2025 and 2026, attacks on Iranian diplomatic personnel, and an armed strike on Iranian diplomatic premises in Damascus in April 2024,' all of which constitute serious violations of international law and diplomatic protections.

Iravani rejected Israel's claim that its actions constitute lawful self-defense, stating that a state which initiates armed aggression cannot subsequently invoke Article 51 of the UN Charter to justify further military operations.

He further dismissed Israeli references to Lebanon's sovereignty, accusing the regime of continued violations of Lebanese airspace and territory despite existing ceasefire arrangements, and describing its regional policies as part of a broader pattern of occupation and expansionism.

Iran concluded by warning that any further act of aggression or provocation would be met with a "firm and decisive response," reiterating its readiness to exercise its inherent right of self-defense under international law and the United Nations Charter.

port from many countries and global organizations.

However, as the halt to Israeli strikes in Lebanon is a central pillar of the agreement and essential to its durability, the United States is now expected to take clear and decisive action to ensure compliance by its closest regional ally. Washington's credibility as a guarantor of the deal depends on its willingness to enforce the terms it has endorsed and to compel Israel to end its attacks in Lebanon, in order to preserve the integrity of the ceasefire and prevent further regional escalation.

Iranian opposition who once called the US president
"Uncle Trump" now insults him with vulgar slurs like "Yellow Head"

Thrown under the bus: The fate of US-Israeli proxies

TEHRAN - The US-Israeli war on Iran has ended in a strategic failure for the aggressors and an even deeper humiliation for the exiled Iranian opposition groups who hoped to ride foreign intervention into power.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Tehran and Washington, set to be signed in Geneva on Friday, exposes the limits of American leverage despite President Donald Trump's attempts to present himself as victorious of the war that initially began on February 28. None of the goals Washington claimed it would impose on Iran—restrictions on the missile program, dismantling of regional alliances, or zero enrichment—were achieved.

The January unrest in Iran provided Trump with the pretext he needed to escalate military deployments under the banner of supporting the Iranian people. As protests turned into violent riots, Trump encouraged Iranians to rise up and promised that "help is on the way." That help arrived in the form of bombs. During the 39-day war, halted by a ceasefire on April 8, thousands of Iranian civilians—many of them women and children—were killed by US-Israeli airstrikes.

Mossad and CIA fuel unrest in Iran

From the beginning, Iranian officials warned that the January unrest was being fueled by foreign intelligence services, including the CIA and Mossad, and that armed provocateurs were killing protesters to manufacture a justification for intervention. Israel Hayom recently revealed that the US and Israel had indeed coordinated efforts to destabilize Iran



during the January riots, including attempts to smuggle weapons to Kurdish groups in hopes of igniting a broader insurgency. Trump himself admitted that the US had sent weapons to Kurdish factions, only to complain that they "kept them" instead of using them to attack Iran.

US-Israeli stooges

Alongside military pressure and covert operations, Washington and Tel Aviv relied heavily on exiled opposition figures to advance their regime-change agenda. Among them was Reza Pahlavi, son of the deposed Shah, who has spent nearly five decades abroad—mostly in the United States—completely detached from Iran's social, cultural, and political realities.

Western media attempted to market him as a future leader, but inside Iran he had no constituency. His repeated appeals for foreign intervention, including military pressure, alienated even many Iranians who oppose the Islamic Republic. Videos of him urging external powers to help Iran through coercive measures sparked widespread condemnation.

His credibility collapsed entirely when he openly supported the US-Israeli aggression on February 28. For Iranians, endorsing foreign aggression crosses the ultimate red line. A leader defends his homeland; a pawn applauds its bombardment.

The final blow came this week when US Vice President JD Vance stated in an interview with Megyn Kelly that Washington never intended to install Reza Pahlavi as Iran's leader. "The president of the United States never said that his goal was to install Reza Pahlavi to become the new leader of Iran," Vance said. For many Iranians, this confirmed what they had long believed: Pahlavi was never more than a disposable tool—useful only as long as he served US and Israeli interests. Once the geopolitical winds shifted, he was discarded without ceremony.

Pahlavi's fall mirrors the long-standing discredit of the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MKO) terror group. The MKO's record of betrayal is well-known in Iran. During the Iran-Iraq War, the organization openly sided with Saddam Hussein, participating in military operations against their own country

and contributing to the deaths of thousands of Iranians. Their collaboration with a foreign aggressor permanently destroyed their legitimacy among the Iranian population. Their later cooperation with US and Israeli intelligence services only deepened that stigma.

Taken together, the failed war, the failed unrest, and the failed opposition strategy have made one reality unmistakable: the United States has thrown Reza Pahlavi, the MKO, and the entire exiled opposition under the bus. Vance's remarks were not a diplomatic footnote—they were a public acknowledgment that Washington never viewed these figures as viable leaders, only as temporary instruments. Now that their usefulness has expired, they have been abandoned.

The Iranian opposition has shamelessly celebrated attacks on Iranian soil—even the killing of schoolchildren in Minab—and used to call the US president "Uncle Trump," claiming he would come and liberate Iran. But if you go on social media these days, the very same people are now calling Trump insulting names like "the real estate guy," "Yellow Head," and even using vulgar sexual slurs against him.

For the Iranian people, this episode reinforces a long-held conviction: legitimate leadership cannot be manufactured in Washington or Tel Aviv. It must emerge from within Iran's own political and social fabric, not from exiled figures who cheer foreign bombs or collaborate with past enemies. The American disavowal is not just a political embarrassment for these opposition groups—it is the final confirmation of their irrelevance.

Iran and US reach a preliminary agreement to end the war

By Xavier Villar

MADRID - After more than a hundred days of military campaigning launched by the United States and Israel against Iran, both sides have agreed to halt hostilities.

The text on the table transcends the classical notion of a peace treaty, operating instead as a precise delimitation.

The memorandum of understanding establishes a framework for future conversations, reflecting the skepticism of authorities negotiating in the shadow of decades of unilateral ruptures and Washington's historical non-compliance. The immediate contours filtered through regional channels. Pakistan's prime minister confirmed a cessation of operations across all fronts, explicitly including Lebanon. Simultaneously, Iran's Supreme National Security Council secretary detailed the most urgent material counterpart: the immediate lifting of the US naval blockade in the Strait of Hormuz. Stripped of celebratory rhetoric, these announcements map a geopolitical reality where military coercion has exhausted its utility.

Understanding the genesis of this agreement requires analyzing the anatomy of US strategic failure. The Trump administration committed three fundamental errors that demolished the illusion of uncontested primacy in the Middle East. The first dates to 2018, with the unilateral withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Far from being lamented in Tehran as the loss of an ideal framework, that deal was viewed by broad sectors as the epitome of an asymmetrical arrangement. For decades, the global non-proliferation architecture was predicated on the assumption that Tehran would eventually capitulate to Western diplomatic timelines. The abandonment of the JCPOA shattered that illusion. Its abandonment by Washington demonstrated something even more structural: an exclusive dependence on the political will of the White House. By resorting to maximum pressure, the US legitimized the Iranian thesis regarding the ephemerality of its commitments. Against that precedent, Iranian authorities value the current memorandum precisely for breaking with that dynamic. The text is perceived as balanced in its overall structure, highlighting a crucial difference from the past: compliance verification will be reciprocal, subjecting both parties to the same standards of scrutiny and dismantling the asymmetry of surveillance that hindered nuclear diplomacy for a decade.

The second error, military in nature, occurred in June 2025. Israel launched an air offensive convinced a decapitation strike would paralyze the Iranian state, a premise that collapsed before Tehran's strategic dispersion. Concurrently, the Trump administration trusted its bunker-buster bombs would destroy the nuclear program, but the subterranean infrastructure resisted. The Iranian response then revealed a profound doctrinal mutation. US military supremacy rests on the premise of the transparent battlefield: the capacity to detect, analyze, and intercept threats via advanced early-warning networks. The Iranian counter-attack targeted the cognitive nerve of those networks, blinding detection systems and dismantling the adversary's operational certainty. By deactivating the Pentagon's capacity for total awareness, Tehran altered the foundations of US air superiority doctrine. If the adversary cannot see, it cannot predict; and if it cannot predict, its technological supremacy becomes a blind asset. Deterrence ceased to be based on the volume of fire to settle instead on the capacity to induce strategic blindness and paralyze the decision cycle.

The third error was consummated on February 28, 2025, with a total war aimed at regime change. Netanyahu and Trump sought the structural collapse of the Islamic Republic, but the result was the immediate regionalization of the conflict. Iranian military doctrine operated under a logic of strategic denial: its primary objective was to prevent the adversary from achieving a decisive triumph, an equation where mere operational survival and the prolongation of time equate to victory. Upon realizing that a quick triumph was a chimera, Washington was forced to pivot toward a diplomatic exit. The current



memorandum is the materialization of that retreat.

This outcome certifies a structural mutation in the nature of the conflict. For decades, the confrontation between Tehran, Washington, and Tel Aviv remained in a gray zone of sanctions, proxy wars, and cyber operations. The recent war has dragged this rivalry into a confrontation of systems, where military architecture, energy corridors, global supply chains, and cognitive networks operate as a single interconnected board. In this new paradigm, geography has been converted into an instrument of sovereign deterrence. Historically, the Strait of Hormuz was read by Western analysts as an Iranian vulnerability. The conflict has inverted this equation. The lifting of the naval blockade transcends a mere tactical concession; it represents the implicit recognition that the cost of maintaining maritime asphyxiation exceeded the global economy's tolerance capacity. Hormuz has ceased to be a simple bottleneck to become a mechanism of systemic pressure, capable of transmitting an economic shock from Asia to Europe, effectively turning global markets into an extension of the battlefield. The geography of energy transit is no longer a neutral corridor governed by Western naval supremacy, but a sovereign instrument of deterrence.

The inclusion of Lebanon in the cessation of hostilities reveals a dimension transcending conventional security logic. In Tehran's political imaginary, the Levant operates as an essential node in the articulation of the umma, a transnational community whose cohesion rests on a sovereignty project challenging the borders of the Westphalian order. Lebanese resistance transcends the category of tactical ally to become the incarnation of a collective political subject refusing subordination. Any aggression against the southern suburbs of Beirut is processed as a direct attack on the self-determination of this shared horizon. Washington was forced to accept an integral ceasefire upon realizing that attempting to fragment these theaters meant triggering a response destined to protect a community that recognizes itself, beyond state divisions, in a common struggle against colonial hegemony.

The memorandum of understanding, ultimately, does not resolve underlying frictions. The nuclear program, the missile arsenal, and the US military presence remain open files. What has been signed is the freezing of the confrontation, a transit toward a phase of low-intensity conflict where intelligence, cyberwarfare, and economic pressure will replace conventional operations. West Asia has entered a stage where power is no longer measured exclusively by missile inventories, but by the capacity to transform geography, economy, and information into tools of attrition. Iran has demonstrated its aptitude to turn the structural sensitivities of its adversary into points of continuous friction, while Washington has verified that material supremacy does not guarantee political resolution. This new equilibrium is based on the mutuality of systemic vulnerability. The US possesses the capacity to inflict devastating physical damage, but Iran has demonstrated the capacity to inflict paralyzing functional damage. In this new architecture, deterrence does not emanate from the threat of annihilation, but from the certainty that any escalation will turn the aggressor into a hostage of its own logistical networks. Between these extremes, a more complex, fragile deterrence system consolidates itself, profoundly alien to the unipolar dictates of recent decades.

FM Tajani says Italy will reopen embassy in Tehran Friday

Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani says his country will reopen its embassy in Tehran on Friday.

"Our embassy in Tehran will reopen on Friday," Tajani said during Question Time in parliament.

The announcement comes after Italy temporarily closed its diplomatic mission in the

Iranian capital earlier this year in the wake of the US-Israeli war on Iran.

Tajani said the Italian ambassador, along with diplomats and staff from the Foreign Ministry, would return to Tehran as part of the reopening process.

He described recent memorandum of understanding between the US and Iran as an

"encouraging development" and said there was a "glimmer of peace" in the Middle East that should not be wasted.

He said Italy was ready to support efforts to turn the US-Iran MoU into lasting peace.

Washington and Tehran reached the MoU on Monday. They will officially sign it in Geneva on Friday.

LATEST NEWS

MP: Iran will not abandon nuclear knowledge

Alaeddin Boroujerdi, a member of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, stated that the 14-article memorandum of understanding between Iran and the United States does not require parliamentary ratification, emphasizing that only formal treaties must be submitted to the legislature as bills.

Boroujerdi generally approved the agreement as beneficial to Iran if implemented in good faith, yet he reiterated Iran's enduring distrust of the United States to uphold its commitments. He also stressed that Iran would never abandon its nuclear knowledge and scientific achievements.

Iran and Libya emphasize expansion of parliamentary relations

Abbas Golroo, head of the Foreign Relations Committee of Iranian Parliament, held a meeting on the sidelines of the Benghazi summit with Aguila Saleh, Speaker of the Libyan House of Representatives. The two sides underscored the importance of enhancing bilateral parliamentary ties and collective cooperation within the framework of the Asian African Parliamentary Council.

Golroo conveyed the greetings of Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf to the Libyan counterpart and expressed Iran's readiness to strengthen parliamentary engagements at both bilateral and multilateral levels.

Saleh, in turn, extended warm greetings to Qalibaf, voiced Libya's solidarity with the Islamic Republic of Iran, and commended the resilience and steadfastness of the Iranian nation in the face of American and Israeli aggressions.

He further expressed hope that the diplomatic path toward consolidating Iran's

achievements would proceed successfully.

Iran inks deal with Russia to buy 20 helicopters

The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) and the Russian Helicopters JSC have officially signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the procurement of 20 helicopters for the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The agreement was signed on Wednesday at the headquarters of the Russian state-owned enterprise by IRCS President Pir-Hossein Koulivand and Russian Helicopters Director General Nikolay Kolesov.

Speaking to a correspondent in Moscow following the signing ceremony, Koulivand stated, "Today, an agreement was signed for the direct purchase of 20 helicopters from Russia, aimed at strengthening our country's logistics and aerial rescue fleet."

Koulivand described the deal as an unprecedented milestone in the history of the Iranian Red Crescent Society. He added that the contract for the first four helicopters has already been finalized, with delivery to Iran expected before the Persian New Year (Nowruz) in March 2027.

"These helicopters are equipped with modern technology and night-vision systems, enabling night flight operations," the IRCS chief noted. "Furthermore, they are outfitted for firefighting operations as well as providing medical and emergency rescue services."

Ansarullah leader congratulates Iran on 'victory' over US, Israel

Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, leader of Yemen's Ansarullah movement, congratulated Iran's leadership and people on a "great victory" over the United States and Israel. In a statement marking the Islamic New Year, al-Houthi praised Iran's stance and called for greater unity among Muslims and resistance

groups. He also urged Yemenis to intensify efforts to end the Saudi-led blockade and occupation, while reaffirming Yemen's readiness to confront regional challenges and support the resistance axis.

Yemeni leader praises Iran's armed forces as model of resilience for Muslim world

Mahdi al-Mashat, head of Yemen's Supreme Political Council, congratulated Iran on 'its victory over US and Israeli aggression,' praising the performance of Iran's Armed Forces and the IRGC. He said Iran's military response, combined with national unity and public resilience, demonstrated strength and determination, providing an inspiring model for the Muslim world. Al-Mashat also called for greater regional cooperation and continued support for the principle of unity among resistance fronts.

China pledges continued support for Iran's post-war reconstruction

China has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Iran and Lebanon in the post-war period, announcing plans to deliver new humanitarian aid shipments to both countries in the near future.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said on Wednesday that Beijing attaches great importance to reconstruction efforts and to improving economic conditions and livelihoods in Iran and Lebanon following the conflict. He stressed that China will continue providing assistance and support to help both nations overcome the challenges of the post-war recovery phase.

Lin also reiterated Beijing's commitment to promoting dialogue and peace, emphasizing that China will continue to play a constructive role in efforts to restore stability, security, and lasting peace across the Middle East as quickly as possible.

Iran, Kazakhstan pledge to integrate logistics chains, boost bilateral trade to \$3b

TEHRAN- Farzaneh Sadegh, Minister of Transport and Urban Development of Iran, traveled to Kazakhstan to follow up on the agreements made during the President's visit.

On the first day of her trip, she met and held talks with Nurlan Sauranbayev, Minister of Transport of Kazakhstan; Serik Zhumangarin, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Economy of Kazakhstan; and Arman Shakaliev, Minister of Trade and Integration of Kazakhstan and head of the joint economic committee of the two countries.

Iran and Kazakhstan seek to establish an integrated logistics chain

According to a report by the news base of the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, Sadegh, in a meeting with her Kazakh counterpart, referred to the developments in key agreements on the sidelines of the presidents' meeting of the two countries, describing this trip as aimed at following up on the approved resolutions. She announced strategic proposals for the development of transport and transit cooperation between the two countries.

Sadegh, in her meeting with Nurlan Sauranbayev, Minister of Transport of Kazakhstan, thanked the country for its warm hospitality, described bilateral cooperation in the transport sector as highly favorable, and called it one of the main areas of bilateral cooperation.

Referring to the geopolitical trends in the region, she emphasized: "Transport cooperation between the two countries will bring significant benefits to the nations of Iran and Kazakhstan."

The Minister of Transport and Urban Development stressed: "Iran is the most cost-effective, shortest, and safest route for Kazakhstan's access to global markets."

During this meeting, Farzaneh Sadegh put forward proposals for the development of cooperation, including:

- Activating the eastern branch of the North-South Corridor and removing existing obstacles based on the roadmap signed in July 2024.

- Increasing transit capacity to 20 million tons by 2030 through the precise implementation of the roadmap.

- Connecting Chabahar Port to the railway network, which will facilitate Kazakhstan's access to open waters.

- Developing the China-Kazakhstan-Iran-Europe corridor with the aim of increasing container train traffic.

- Establishing a grain corridor and utilizing the capacity of Iran's ports for grain storage and transit.

- Developing the Afghanistan-Uzbekistan corridor for cooperation with Afghanistan in constructing the MazariSharif-Herat railway.

- Creating an integrated logistics chain for mutual investment in the ports of Iran and Kazakhstan.

- Facilitating investment by Kazakh companies in Shahid Rajaei, Chabahar, Amirabad, and Aprin ports.

According to the report, Nurlan Sauranbayev also stated in this meeting, referring to Kazakhstan's readiness to develop transport cooperation with Iran: "Kazakhstan seeks to make maximum use of the capacities of the North-South Corridor and Iran's ports."

The Minister of Transport of Kazakhstan, seriously welcoming the proposals of the Minister of Transport and Urban Development, emphasized the acceleration of the implementation of agreements and the removal of existing obstacles, and expressed hope that joint projects, including investment in the ports of the two countries, would be operationalized as soon as possible.

Obstacles to achieving 3-billion-dollar trade between Iran and Kazakhstan must be removed quickly

Sadegh, in a meeting with Serik Zhumangarin, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Economy of Kazakhstan, referring to the privileged geopolitical position of the two countries, stated: "Iran and Kazakhstan have unique capacities for cooperation in stabilizing and developing transport corridors. We are ready to provide the high capacities of our northern and southern ports for Kazakhstan's access to international markets."

She added: "Chabahar Port, as an oceanic port, can facilitate Kazakhstan's access to Southeast Asia. Also, the Chabahar-Zahedan railway will be connected to Iran's national railway network within the next two to three months, and with



this connection, Kazakhstan's access to global markets will be realized."

Sadegh, referring to the President's visit to Astana six months ago, noted: "This trip is aimed at following up on the agreements made in the fields of transport and transit. We are pleased that the two countries, with a long history of cooperation, can expand their cooperation by leveraging geopolitical trends."

The Minister of Transport and Urban Development, emphasizing that the roadmap between the two countries aims to increase bilateral trade volume to three billion dollars, said: "We are ready to allocate space for logistics centers for Kazakh companies not only in Shahid Rajaei Port but also in Chabahar, Amirabad, and Aprin ports."

Kazakhstan considers Iran its strategic partner

Continuing the meeting, Serik Zhumangarin, referring to the longstanding and strong relations between the two countries, stated: "Our bilateral cooperation entered a new phase in 2025 with the visit of the President of Iran to Astana. Your trip to Kazakhstan coincides with the sociopolitical developments in our country, but our foreign policy and its priorities have not changed, and Iran is still considered one of Kazakhstan's important neighbors and trading partners."

Emphasizing Kazakhstan's determination to develop bilateral relations and increase trade and economic ties, he added: "The North-South Corridor is very vital for Kazakhstan and has many capacities for transport development. We are cooperating with various parties, including China and Russia, in this regard."

The Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan also announced: "If the Islamic Republic of Iran wants land in Kazakhstan's ports, we can provide this space in the ports of Aktau and Kuryk to Iranian companies. There are many capacities for cooperation, and we have no doubt about the importance of the North-South Corridor."

The Minister of National Economy of Kazakhstan, noting that Kazakhstan does not have access to open waters, pointed out: "We need open sea ports, and Iran has this capacity."

Iran and Kazakhstan set a target of increasing trade exchanges to 3 billion dollars

Sadegh, in a meeting with Arman Shakaliev, Minister of Trade and Integration of Kazakhstan and head of the joint commission for economic cooperation between the two countries, while emphasizing the determination of both sides to expand bilateral relations, stated that the purpose of this trip is to follow up on the approvals of the visit of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Kazakhstan.

Finalization of logistics terminal contract in Shahid Rajaei Port

Sadegh, referring to the cooperation priorities of the two countries, stated: "The construction of a logistics and transit terminal for Kazakhstan in the hinterland of Shahid Rajaei Port is the most important bilateral agenda, and its contract has been finalized and is ready for signing."

The Minister of Transport and Urban Development added: "Given Iran's strategic position, the country's logistics facilities are available to the Kazakh side not only in Bandar Abbas but also in Chabahar Port and Aprin dry port to expand port relations."

According to her, Iran's geographical position is the easiest, smoothest, and safest route for diversifying Kazakhstan's exports to target countries and plays a key role in strengthening the North-South and East-West corridors.

In another part of her remarks, the Minister of Transport and Urban Development, referring to the country's experiences in rebuilding transport infrastructure after the imposed war, stated: "With careful planning and diversification of eastern and western borders, the country's logistics capacity overcame the maritime siege, and the damage to bridges, roads, and tunnels was rebuilt in the shortest possible time."

Private sector proposals presented to parliament speaker on Iran-China economic ties

TEHRAN- The head and a group of members of the Board of Directors of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, along with a number of representatives from chambers of commerce, specialized committees, economic organizations, and joint chambers of commerce, met and held talks with Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf on Wednesday, June 17.

This meeting focused on Iran-China economic relations and took place on the eve of Qalibaf's visit to that country, during which over 30 proposals were presented by private sector to the parliament speaker.

Samad Hassanzadeh, Head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, speaking on Wednesday, at a consultation meeting of the Special Representative for China Affairs with the Iran Chamber, held under the slogan "Sustainable Economic Cooperation between Iran and China" at the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, described the attendees at the meeting with Qalibaf as including a group of members of the Board of Directors of the Iran Chamber, representatives of chambers of commerce, representatives of specialized committees, economic organizations, and joint chambers of commerce, and said: "We wish the best of success for all the people, especially the entrepreneurs who created epics in the 12day war and the Ramadan War and demonstrated their competence to the whole world."

Proposal to establish Iran China cooperation zones in special economic zones

Ghadir Ghiafeh, Vice President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, looking at IranChina relations from a macro perspective, said: "We must first understand China's development model and see where China is headed by 2035 and 2050, and based on that, align the Iran China development document with China's future path so that for Chinese entrepreneurs, presence in the Iranian market becomes a priority."

Ghiafeh, emphasizing the formulation of a development plan convergent with China's development policies, listed artificial intelligence, advanced technologies, and electric vehicles as China's priorities. He noted: "To pursue the Belt and Road Initiative in Iran and consolidate Iran as a regional hub for the Persian Gulf and Eurasia, we must be the



connection center for China to West Asia, which requires extensive investment and inviting the Chinese to participate in this investment.

The Vice President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, proposing the establishment of special IranChina cooperation zones in special economic zones to increase exports and expand investment, emphasized the alignment of Iran's industrial and trade policies with China's 2035 horizon, and stated: "We must find a serious place for ourselves in the Chinese value chain and integrate into it."

Ghiafeh announced the preparation of the IranChina economic relations development document at the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture and said: "Today, we must address the establishment of a joint IranChina investment fund. The horizon for economic cooperation between the two countries by 2035 should focus on participation in value and logistics chains, energy, mining and mineral industries, and modern technology, so that relying on Iran's natural resources and human capital, our country transforms from an exporter of raw and semiraw materials to an exporter of processed products with high added value."

He considered a safe and stable environment for Chinese investors and Iranian economic activists as a prerequisite for expanding IranChina relations and emphasized: "For Iran to become China's strategic partner, many steps must be taken, one of the most important of which is the stability of laws in the field of foreign investment."

Iran should act as a supply bridge in East Asia centered on China

Isa Mansouri, Head of the Research Center of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, also stated that operationalizing plans requires rulemaking and institutionbuilding, and said: "For engagement with China, we need an

institution that connects Iranian and Chinese companies. There is a good opportunity for us to be a supplier of parts and equipment to China and upgrade ourselves in this process, so the proposal to establish a specific institution is put forward."

Mansouri, recalling that Western and industrial countries used to outsource their work to West Asia but now follow the policy of bringing the supply source closer to themselves, noted: "Iran can act as a supply bridge in East Asia centered on China."

He, proposing the creation of logistics towns in Iran to facilitate customs, transportation, and financial exchanges, stated: "When Chinese companies are based in these towns, they outsource work domestically, boosting economic prosperity within Iran."

The Head of the Research Center of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture also stated: "If an economic and industrial network is formed, it is proposed that in the petrochemical sector, this network has at least three players—meaning besides Iran and China, a third country such as Turkey, Pakistan, or Qatar should be present—so that this network can create synergy and Iran becomes a commercial and industrial hub."

Need for a unified command for centralized policymaking in relations with China

Majidreza Hariri, Head of the IranChina Joint Chamber of Commerce, at this meeting emphasized the need for a unified command for centralized policymaking in the field of relations with China to determine priorities, stressing the need to elevate the level of IranChina economic relations. He stated: "So far, we have mostly used China for financing, but in longterm plans, we must increase this level."

Hariri, advising Qalibaf to focus on the main policymaking of economic exchanges, stated: "The issue of institutionbuilding raised

by the Head of the Research Center of the Iran Chamber is a valid point, but care must be taken so that this idea does not lead to parallel institutions, and the focus should be on policymaking."

He considered regional cooperation as a bridge that can bring Iran and China closer together, and noted: "We should create the platform and guarantee for the Chinese to build a refinery in Makran, receive crude oil, and transport the products themselves."

The Head of the IranChina Joint Chamber of Commerce described the supply chain issue as China's current concern and emphasized: "In the supply chain field, we must introduce ourselves in a way that attracts the Chinese. We have the potential to connect China to the Arabian Peninsula and Africa via a 22kilometer sea bridge."

Domestic investors ready to import technology

Aria Haghighati, Head of the Industry Commission of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, emphasizing that private sector activists in the industry field greatly need government support and protective policies to attract investment from China, stated: "Domestic investors are prepared to transfer technology to the country instead of importing parts for assembly, replacing old technology with modern technology."

Haghighati stated that meeting the expectations of domestic and foreign investors requires stability of laws, peace, and technology transfer

Attracting Chinese investment in development of Chabahar Port as an export hub

Sajjad Gharghi, Vice President of the Mining and Mineral Industries Commission of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, referred to the necessity of enhancing the level and weight of direct investment with China in the mining sector and said: "In this regard, 37 projects have been identified in the Mining and Mineral Industries Commission, four of which have a driving role, including investments in the development of Chabahar Port as an export hub, exploration and exploitation and processing of rare earth elements, exploitation at depths of more than one thousand meters, and supply and renovation of 25,000 units of mining machinery, so that we can achieve the targeted growth in the development plan."

Iran's International Renewable Energy Conference, Exhibit to be held on July 20-21

TEHRAN- The 10th International Iran Renewable Energy Conference and Exhibition (IRAN REC 2026) will be held concurrently with the 7th edition of the National Renewable Energy Award on July 20 and 21 at the Milad Tower International Conference Center.

According to a report on Wednesday by IRNA from the Vice Presidency for Science, Technology and Knowledge-Based Economy, given the transition of renewable energy from an "alternative option" to one of the "main pillars of the country's energy planning", this event is designed to create a specialized platform for interaction among policymakers, industries, investors, knowledge-based companies, and the academic community.

The rapid development of solar power plants, the successful formation of the green

electricity market, and the legal requirements for supplying industries' electricity from clean sources indicate that this industry has entered a stage of growth and maturity, which will be specifically examined at this event.

This conference, organized in cooperation with the Iran Renewable Energy Association, the Energy Committee of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, and with the support of the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, focuses on key themes such as the development of the green electricity market, the requirements and opportunities arising from Article 16 of the Law on the Leap in Knowledge-Based Production, the role of industries in developing renewable power plants, energy storage technologies, project financing, and the localization of innovative technologies.

Concurrently with this event, the 7th National Renewable Energy Award of Iran, as the most credible performance evaluation reference in this field, will be presented to top organizations, industries, and companies to honor pioneers in technology development, investment, and the promotion of clean energy culture.

This specialized gathering will host the country's elite and industrial community on July 20 and 21 at the Milad Tower International Conference Center.

Interested individuals, specialists, and activists in this field can visit the conference website at www.irec.irrea.ir/fa for more information and registration, or contact the event secretariat at 021-66063148.

Urgent plan to increase gas production launched

TEHRAN- The Minister of Oil

has announced the implementation of an urgent plan to boost gas production in the onshore sector, stating: "Utilizing all available capacities, the program to increase gas production—alongside field development and associated gas gathering—is being pursued with

accelerated momentum."

In an interview with Shana, Mohsen Paknejad stated: "Even during the 12-day and 40-day ward, the oil industry's activities across various sectors did not come to a halt, and the development of oil and gas fields throughout the country has con-

tinued with full seriousness."

He added: "In addition to ongoing operations in the South Pars gas field and offshore platforms, an urgent plan to increase gas production has also been defined in the onshore sector and has entered the implementation phase."

Stating that this plan encompasses all fields under the jurisdiction of the Central Regions Oil Company, the Minister of Oil emphasized: "Based on the planning carried out, we will utilize all available capacities to increase gas production, and we will see output growth across all fields."

Argentine lawyer from Global Sumud Flotilla reports on torture of activists in Israeli detention

By Silvina Pacheco

BUENOS AIRES — A member of the Global Sumud flotilla, Argentine lawyer and activist Victoria Pi de la Serra, describes an ordeal marked by violence, humiliation, and psychological torture.

Her testimony forms part of a new international mission that, for the second consecutive year, attempted to reach Gaza to denounce the Israeli blockade and draw attention to the humanitarian situation in Palestine. She was detained on May 18 and released on May 21.

Talking to the Tehran Times, she says, "There was a systematic organization of violence."

Here is the full text of the interview:

Where were you held captive?

My flotilla was intercepted while we were sailing on yachts. Fast boats approached us from several military vessels. There were three vessels in total. Two of them had been converted into clandestine detention centers at sea—what could be described as floating prisons. They used shipping containers to create enclosed yards surrounded by barbed wire, and they placed people there as they intercepted them.

There were two such vessels. On ours there were two of these enclosed yards. As they intercepted people, they would transfer them onto these ships. It depended on when you were intercepted. I spent nearly 48 hours under those conditions until we arrived at the port of Ashdod. Then we were taken to Zion Prison, where we remained for another 24 hours before finally being transferred to the airport and released.

Why were you treated this way?

I assume that the constant threat was that we would remain detained at least until Sunday or Monday, but in the end, they released us on a Wednesday. What also happened was that the day before, Itamar Ben Gvir publicly disclosed the operation and the treatment we were receiving, which triggered an international scandal.

In addition, because there were so many of us, everything accumulated. Even officials such as Netanyahu had to publicly distance themselves from the situation. I do not think they wanted to keep us for too long. My impression is that they wanted to make an example of us: to create an intense, violent but brief experience in order to instill psychological terror and then get rid of us.

Was it possible to reach Gaza in the past?

Yes, at other times it was. Of the most recent missions organized by the Global Sumud Flotilla, this was the second; the first took place last



year. There had been previous attempts, such as the one from Malta, which did not succeed, and the Egyptian convoy, which also failed to reach Gaza.

However, among the earlier flotillas organized by the different groups that make up this coalition, five missions did succeed in reaching Gaza.

What did they do there? Did they stay?

Those missions organized groups of volunteers who remained for a certain period of time in order to help distribute the supplies they brought and assist in any way they could: medical personnel, educators, skilled workers, mainly people involved in reconstruction efforts and humanitarian assistance.

How do you think the international community reacted?

There seems to be more attention abroad, particularly in Europe, than in Argentina or Latin America.

How is that attention managed, given that it can appear to be a symbolic gesture with limited results?

In reality, it has several dimensions. At first, media coverage was rather limited, but after the detention of activists such as Thiago Ávila and Saif Abukeshk, the situation gained visibility. Then, with the circulation of Ben Gvir's video, the international impact exploded.

This forced various governments to issue statements, even if only minimal ones. Even without concrete action, they had to respond publicly. That is also part of the purpose of the action: to make visible

what is happening. In that sense, even though we did not reach our destination, the impact was significant.

Especially considering that these are civilians acting without government support?

Exactly. That is central. It is a direct civilian action without state backing, and that alone carries political significance. It demonstrates the capacity for collective organization in the face of governmental absence or complicity.

It is also an experience of diversity: people from different countries, cultures, languages, and political and personal backgrounds coming together in a common action.

Another very noticeable aspect is the difference between the Global North and the Global South. In the Global North, the Palestinian issue is far more present in public life. In Barcelona, for example, you can see Palestinian flags hanging from balconies on almost every block, and there is a much more constant social mobilization.

In Italy, for example, the dockworkers' strikes that blocked the departure of ships carrying military supplies generated political pressure and forced Meloni's government to take positions, however reluctantly.

In Greece, the situation was different. There was state complicity in the first interception on April 29, which took place in international waters, albeit within a rescue zone. The coast guard never appeared. Later, Greece agreed to receive some of the released volunteers, but not all of them; some were transferred to an Israeli prison.

Israeli authorities even thanked the Greek government for its cooperation. Yet the response of civil society was completely different. In Greece, people opened their homes to released volunteers, providing food, clothing, and accommodation. The contrast between governments and civil society was striking.

Did you have any contact with authorities?

No, none at all. Sometimes even port authorities, who were implementing government policies, behaved more kindly in practice because many of them agreed with what we were doing.

There was a tension between political decisions and their implementation. At times, the employees responsible for enforcing the measures were far more cooperative than expected.

Were there cases of more extreme violence?

Yes. There was a systematic organization of violence. On the vessel where I was held, we were not treated the same way as other groups. There were two enclosed yards on my ship, and each group received different treatment.

The other ship experienced greater violence. I do not know exactly why—whether because of nationality or organizational logic. I was the only Argentine on my vessel; the other Argentinians were on a different one, where they suffered more beatings and abuse.

When people were intercepted, the military formed a corridor through which they were forced to pass while being struck, groped, and stripped of clothing. In some cases, there are testimonies alleging sexual abuse.

During transfers and in detention centers, the atmosphere was one of total disorientation: people were constantly moved from one cell to another, never allowed to remain in one place for more than fifteen minutes. They were thrown to the ground, pulled back up, handcuffed with their hands either in front of or behind them, all amid constant shouting.

The soldiers wore no identification and covered their faces with balaclavas. It was a deliberate policy designed to prevent individual accountability.

Why do they do that?

It is a deterrence mechanism. The goal is to generate fear: to prevent you from accomplishing your objective, to make you unwilling to return, and to ensure that you know the next time could be worse.

It functions as a warning. However, what has actually happened is that there are increasingly more volunteers, more vessels, and greater determination.

Creeping annexation is devouring Gaza. Washington is pouring the concrete.

Israel's land grabs and a new American military base are cementing Trump's colonial framework in real time

From page 1 ► Following reports from Channel 13, the Trump administration advised against a major offensive to avoid diplomatic friction, prompting a creeping annexation on the ground.

Since the October 2025 "cease-fire," Israeli military control inside Gaza has expanded from 53 percent to approximately 59 percent.

This geographic engineering is verified by an Al Jazeera investigation, revealing that Israel has seized roughly 1,000 square kilometers of military zones across Gaza, southern Lebanon, and southern Syria.

In northern Gaza alone, the regime has swallowed 54.7 percent of the territory. Lacking genuine battlefield victory, Tel Aviv has substituted military success with permanent land theft to satisfy domestic demands for conquest.

Atrocities under a nominal ceasefire

This territorial expansion relies on the violent enforcement of a fraudulent ceasefire.

While Palestinian factions fulfilled their obligations regarding captives, Israel has used the period to consolidate outposts and execute daily campaigns of attrition.

Since October 2025, Israeli attacks have killed around 1000 Palestinians and wounded over 3,100 others.

The execution remains merciless. On June 16, Israeli forces detonated entire residential blocks northwest of Beit Lahia, preventing the return of displaced families.

On the same day, sniper fire targeted civilians in the Al-Atatra neighborhood and wounded a child inside the Al-Mawasi safe zone.

This psychological warfare is illustrated by the June 14 killing of child Rayyan Abu al-Ajin in Deir al-Balah, who was shot directly in the eye; his body was subsequently abducted by Israeli troops for hours before being returned to his wounded father.

Forensic erasure and the silent generation

While official counts exceed 73,000 dead, independent demographic models factoring in forced starvation and healthcare collapse suggest the true toll may be more than 700% higher.

The International Committee of the Red Cross reports that up to 14,000 unidentified bodies remain entombed under 61 million tons of toxic rubble.

By blocking excavators and DNA reagents, the occupation allows these bodies to decompose, deliberately erasing evidence of genocide.

Concurrently, devastating blast waves have left 40,000 children suffering from profound hearing loss, isolated from the sound of ap-



proaching military threats while the ongoing blockade denies entry to medical imports.

Rejecting the disarmament trap

Against this landscape of total devastation, Western powers and their allies are demanding that the resistance dismantle its only means of self-defense.

On June 13, following intense meetings in Cairo alongside regional mediators, Hamas delivered a unified response to the diplomatic roadmap pushed by the so-called Board of Peace.

Speaking on behalf of all unified Palestinian resistance groups, the collective political and military factions fighting on the ground, the leadership established an unalterable national position: the initial stage of the ceasefire agreement, known as Phase 1, must be fully executed before any future security negotiations can even begin.

For Palestinians, Phase 1 is the baseline for survival. This initial phase strictly mandates a total cessation of Israeli aggression, the unhindered entry of massive humanitarian aid, and a complete Israeli military withdrawal from all populated areas, including the strategic Netzarim corridor that currently slices the Strip in half.

Now, Washington and Tel Aviv are attempting a diplomatic bait-and-switch by demanding Phase 2, the disarmament of the resistance, while Israeli troops still occupy the land.

The Board of Peace functions as an instrument of imperial pacification, weaponizing critical reconstruction funds under discriminatory rules such as Article 17, which dictates that aid will only flow to neighborhoods that submit to absolute Israeli military control.

This is the ultimate trap: demanding that the victims disarm while the aggressor builds permanent concrete fortresses on their borders.

History demonstrates that no legitimate national liberation movement has ever voluntarily surrendered its defensive weapons while foreign forces occupy its sovereign soil.

By standing firm against this pressure, the unified resistance exposes the fundamental fraud of a peace process designed to enforce a quiet surrender and build a corporate colony on a foundation of Palestinian graves.

People return to devastated villages in southern Lebanon



People check their destroyed neighborhood in Nabatieh town, southern Lebanon [Hussein Malla/AP Photo]

Why does Netanyahu fear a US-Iran agreement?

From page 1 ► This is particularly important following Iran's success in incorporating Lebanon into the broader multi-front ceasefire framework. The development fuels heightened political competition against Netanyahu as the Israeli regime heads toward elections in October.

Netanyahu believes that maintaining a state of neither war nor peace between Iran and the United States is preferable to accepting a bad deal by Israeli standards. In his view, such a deal

cannot be sold domestically as a clear victory.

On the contrary, his political opponents would use it to hold him responsible for losing wars against Iran, Lebanon, and Gaza, while holding him responsible for the October 7, 2023, on top of his corruption trials that pave the way to prison.

Meanwhile, the continuation of conflict, even without resolution, allows him to maintain a false narrative of ongoing confrontation until the Islamic Republic is defeated.

The difference between what Trump sought and what Netanyahu wants is central to Netanyahu's concern. Trump is pursuing a symbolic victory that eases domestic criticism and slows political and economic decline ahead of the mid-term elections.

Netanyahu, by contrast, had been aiming to convince Trump that U.S. boots on the ground would seize Kharg Island, which handles around 90% of Iran's oil exports, or seize Iran's enriched uranium.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Miscalculation after miscalculation

From page 1 ► The Trump administration, emboldened by the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro in early January 2026, suffered from the illusion that it could easily topple the ruling system in Iran within days or weeks. The administration viewed Iran as a target that could be easily subdued, in part banking on domestic discontent over economic hardship caused by the crippling U.S.-led sanctions imposed on the country.

Mehran Kamrava, a professor of government at Georgetown Uni-

versity Qatar, says Iran has given the U.S. and Israel a "bloody nose" by stating that it managed to demonstrate meaningful leverage during the war.

"Iran has managed to give both the United States and Israel a bloody nose, and it has managed to demonstrate that it has multiple sources of leverage in the Strait of Hormuz, across the Persian Gulf and by hitting American bases," Kamrava told Al Jazeera.

"Historically, great powers have never been able to attack a weaker state and declare victory, whether

it was the Americans in Vietnam, the Soviets in Afghanistan, the Americans in Iraq, or the Russians in Ukraine," the professor noted.

In response to the illegal February war, Iran responded immediately by hitting American military bases in Arab countries on the southern shores of the Persian Gulf, firing salvos of missiles and drones at Israel, and closing the strategic Strait of Hormuz, the passageway for about a fifth of global oil and gas supplies.

The current U.S. administration soon realized that it had opened

a Pandora's box, which would be much worse than the war it had launched against Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz sent shockwaves through global energy prices. This caused the Trump administration to face sharp criticism at home and even from its closest allies, including Germany, Britain, Canada, Australia, and others. The world soon realized that they were paying for Trump's miscalculation and recalcitrance.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran face tough test after New Zealand's draw

TEHRAN - Iran's 2026 FIFA World Cup campaign began with a dramatic 2-2 draw against New Zealand at SoFi Stadium, a result that highlighted both the resilience and the vulnerabilities of Team Melli. While Iran showed character by twice coming from behind, the match also exposed defensive weaknesses that could become a major concern as tougher challenges await in Group G.

The game started in disappointing fashion for Iran. New Zealand struck early through Elijah Just, who combined brilliantly with veteran striker Chris Wood before firing a powerful volley into the roof of the net. The goal stunned Team Melli and put immediate pressure on a side carrying the hopes of millions of supporters back home.

Iran gradually settled into the contest and found an equalizer in the 32nd minute. Experienced fullback Ramin Rezaeian reacted quickest to a loose ball inside the penalty area and finished calmly to make it 1-1. The goal lifted Iran's confidence and demonstrated the value of the team's senior players in difficult moments.

However, defensive issues resurfaced after halftime. Just scored again in the 54th minute, taking advantage of space in Iran's back line to restore New Zealand's lead. The goal raised fresh questions about the organization and pace of Iran's defense, particularly against opponents willing to attack quickly in transition.

To their credit, Team Melli refused to surrender. Just ten minutes later, Mohammad Mohebbi headed home after excellent work from Rezaeian, who was arguably Iran's standout performer. The equalizer ensured Iran avoided defeat and earned a valuable point in their tournament opener.

Despite the positive spirit shown by the players, concerns remain. Iran are among the oldest squads at the World Cup, with several key figures now in the latter stages of their international careers. Experience can be an advantage in high-pressure matches, but it can also become a challenge when facing younger, faster opponents. Against New Zealand, Iran occasionally struggled to cope with quick movements and direct attacks, a warning sign ahead of the next fixtures.

The upcoming matches against Belgium and Egypt will provide a much tougher examination. Belgium possess technical quality and attacking depth, while Egypt have the pace and creativity to punish defensive mistakes. If Iran are to progress from the group stage, they will need greater defensive discipline and improved coordination at the back.

Still, Amir Ghalenoei's have shown throughout their history that determination and unity can overcome adversity. The draw against New Zealand may not have been the perfect start, but it offered a reminder that Iran remain a team capable of fighting until the final whistle.

The challenge now is turning that fighting spirit into results when it matters most.

Iran volleyball team begin training camp in Serbia

TEHRAN - Iran's national volleyball team have arrived in Belgrade to begin a six-day training camp as preparations intensify for the second week of the 2026 Volleyball Nations League (VNL).

Following a long and exhausting journey from Iran, the squad reached the Serbian capital late Tuesday and will use the camp to fine-tune their tactics and physical conditioning ahead of a challenging slate of matches in France.

Head coach Roberto Piazza has given his players a day off on Wednesday before the team resume work on Thursday with strength and conditioning sessions.

The camp is expected to play a crucial role in helping Team Melli recover from travel fatigue and sharpen their form before returning to VNL action.

Meanwhile, Ali Ramezani, Shayan Mehrabi, Mohsen Delavari, and Matin Hosseini departed Tehran early Wednesday for Istanbul and will continue on to Belgrade to join the rest of the squad.

The second week of the VNL will be held from June 24 to 28 in Orléans (France), Gliwice (Poland), and Ljubljana (Slovenia). Iran will compete in the French pool, facing a demanding schedule against some of the world's top teams.

Iran will take on hosts France on June 24 before meeting the United States a day later. Team Melli will then face Japan on June 26 and conclude the week against Cuba on June 28.

Piazza has selected a balanced squad featuring a mix of experienced internationals and emerging talents.

With four crucial matches looming, the training camp in Belgrade represents a vital opportunity for Iran to build momentum and improve cohesion as the team look to climb the VNL standings and continue their development under Piazza's leadership.

Aranda sign Iranian international Rahnama

TEHRAN - Spanish handball club Tubos Aranda Villa de Aranda have announced the signing of Iranian left back Mehran Rahnama Falavarjani as their second addition ahead of the 2026/27 season.

The Iranian international joins Javi Márquez's side on a one-year contract.

Rahnama arrives from Romanian club Potaissa Turda, where he has spent the last two seasons after making the move to European handball in 2024. The 27-year-old, who stands 1.98 meters tall, plays primarily as a left back and is expected to strengthen Villa de Aranda with his powerful long-range shooting, scoring ability, and defensive versatility, particularly in the No. 2 defensive position.

The Iranian international brings valuable European experience, having competed in the EHF European League this season with Potaissa Turda. During the group stage, he faced Spanish side Bidasoa Irun and scored four goals in the match played at Artaleku.

Rahnama will reinforce a left-back position where Hungarian player Tamás Jánosi is the only returning option for next season following the departures of Dalmau Huix, Asier Iribar, and Vicente Poveda.

Villa de Aranda continue to work actively on building their squad for the upcoming campaign. Alongside Rahnama Falavarjani and fellow new signing Robert Rosell, the club is also expected to add Barça Atlètic goalkeeper Filip Saric, pivot Jorge Romanillos, and Samuel Cordies, who becomes available following Bada Huesca's relegation.

Ehsan Hajisafi sets historic Iran record in World Cup

TEHRAN - Iran national football team captain Ehsan Hajisafi etched his name into the nation's football history books after making his 10th FIFA World Cup appearance during Team Melli's 2026 World Cup opener against New Zealand.

Iran began their Group G campaign with a 2-2 draw against New Zealand at SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles on Tuesday, but the match was memorable for more than just the result. Hajisafi became the first Iranian player ever to reach double figures in World Cup appearances, setting a landmark record for the country's football.

The veteran midfielder and defender came off the bench during the match to make his 10th appearance on football's biggest stage, surpassing every other player in Iran's World Cup history.

Hajisafi's achievement is made even more remarkable by the fact that it spans four consecutive FIFA World Cups. The 35-year-old first represented Iran at the 2014 World Cup in Brazil before featuring again at Russia 2018 and Qatar 2022. His appearance in the 2026 tournament now places him alone at the top of Iran's all-time World Cup appearance list.

Over the past decade, Hajisafi has been one of the most influential and consistent figures in the national team setup. His leadership, versatility, and experience have made him a key player across multiple generations of Iranian footballers.

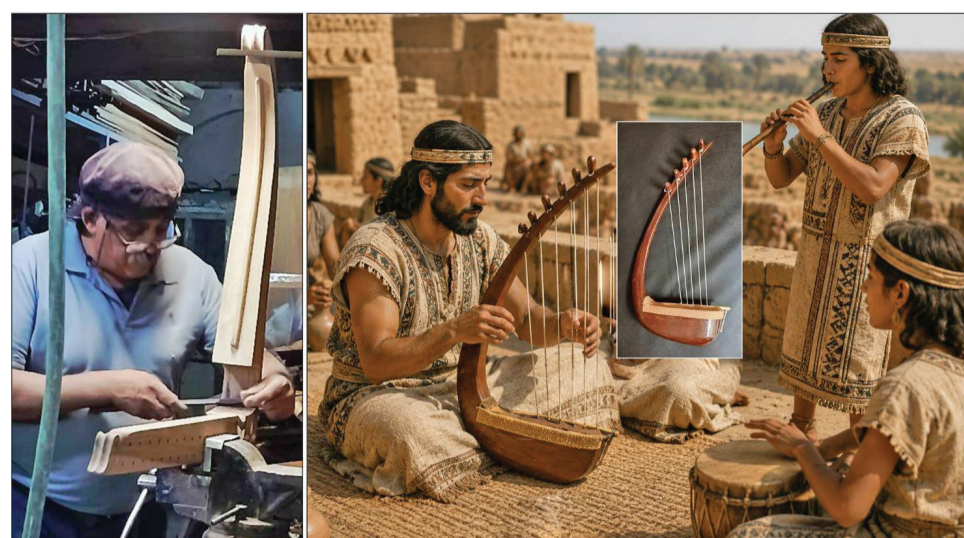
Breathing life into a 6,000-year-old instrument: the Chogha Mish harp project

TEHRAN - For more than two decades, Iranian musician, instrument maker, and researcher Abdolali Bagherinejad has pursued an ambitious goal: reviving the sound of a harp that fell silent over 6,000 years ago. The celebrated curved harp has been reconstructed through meticulous study of ancient visual evidence from the archaeological site of Chogha Mish, near Dezful in southwestern Iran's Khuzestan province.

The story begins with a small carved seal discovered at Chogha Mish by American archaeologists Helene J. Kantor and Pinhas Delougaz. Dating to the fourth millennium BCE, the seal bears an extraordinary image: a complete musical ensemble consisting of a harpist playing a curved five- or six-string harp, accompanied by a singer, a wind-instrument player, and a percussionist. Bagherinejad regards this scene as the earliest known visual representation of an orchestra, placing the Iranian plateau among the world's oldest centers of organized musical performance.

Using the seal as his primary source, Bagherinejad began his research in 1995. His greatest challenge was transforming a stylized two-dimensional image into a fully functional musical instrument. By carefully analyzing the proportions of the human figures and comparing them with average human stature, he estimated the harp's original dimensions and structure. The result is a curved harp featuring a wooden soundbox covered with stretched animal skin to amplify vibration. Silk strings, tensioned by wooden tuning pegs, complete the instrument. According to Bagherinejad, every aspect of the reconstruction—from the curve of the frame to the number of strings—was derived directly from the archaeological evidence.

The harp's history extends far beyond Chogha Mish. Bagherinejad's research traces its presence across successive periods of Iranian civilization. At the Elamite rock reliefs of Kul-e Farah near Izeh, dating to around 1800 BCE, accompanying inscriptions identify individual musicians by name. Two figures declare, "I am Sumumu, the harpist," and "I am Sumunikir, the harpist," making them among the earliest known musicians in recorded history. Centuries later, at the Sasanian royal site of Taq-e Bostan, harpists appear in elaborate courtly scenes, performing in royal boats and ceremonial gatherings. Following the advent of Islam, Persian literature continued to celebrate the instrument. One famous example is the story of the poet and musician Rudaki, whose harp playing so



moved the Sasanian ruler that he reportedly set off barefoot toward Bukhara.

What sustained Bagherinejad through twenty-five years of research was not only the harp's extraordinary antiquity but also the disappearance of its distinctive sound from modern Iranian musical life. After relocating to Karaj, he presented his first research concert on the harp's 6,000-year history in 2008, featuring performances by his wife and daughters, and donated one of his reconstructed instruments to the Kerman Museum. Since then, he has organized dozens of research concerts, lectures, and educational exhibitions in cities including Karaj, Qazvin, Mashhad, and Tehran. Among the most notable was a performance at Tehran's Vahdat Hall in August 2009. His month-long exhibition, Archaeo-Musicology of Iran, showcased reconstructed harps alongside life-sized sculptures of ancient musicians, bringing Iran's distant musical past vividly to life.

In January 2025, his efforts received official recognition when Iran's Cultural Heritage Organization registered Iranian Harp Construction as a national craft. For Bagherinejad, the designation represented not only a personal achievement but also a significant step toward preserving and promoting a shared cultural heritage.

Today, the reconstructed harps are no longer confined to museums and exhibitions. A growing number of young Iranian musicians are learning and performing on them through Bagherinejad's workshops, educational programs, and publications on the harp's history and playing techniques.

Collaborations with institutions such as

the Soleimanieh Palace Museum in Karaj have further expanded public access to this revived tradition.

For Bagherinejad, the project is far more than an academic exercise. The harp, he argues, is not merely an archaeological artifact but a living voice that carries the emotions, ceremonies, and stories of ancient communities. Reconstructing it means restoring a cultural connection that stretches back six millennia. His work stands as a powerful reminder that the music of ancient Iran—once believed lost forever—can still be heard, appreciated, and shared with the world.

Abdolali Bagherinejad (born 1967 in Kermanshah, Iran) is an Iranian master luthier, musician, and music researcher who has dedicated more than four decades to studying and revitalising Iran's musical heritage. He began learning the tanbur and daf in childhood and started building musical instruments in 1982. During the 1990s, he taught music and established a workshop in Ahvaz, where he crafted a wide range of Persian and Kurdish instruments, including the tar, setar, santur, qanun, oud, and kamancheh.

Inspired by the ancient reliefs of Taq-e Bostan, Bagherinejad embarked on historical research that led to his first reconstruction of a Sasanian harp in 1996, a design he later refined in 2007. He is also recognized as a leading specialist in the traditional one-piece tanbur, and in 2012, his distinctive craftsmanship in this field was registered as part of Iran's national intangible cultural heritage. In addition to his work as an instrument maker and performer, he has authored educational books on the history, construction, and performance techniques of the harp.

Isfahan to host world tourism film festival meeting



TEHRAN - The historic Iranian city of Isfahan will host the next meeting of the World Tourism Film Festival (CINETOUR) after member countries approved Iran's proposal during the organization's latest gathering in Istanbul, a provincial tourism official said on Wednesday.

Davoud Abyan, deputy head of tourism at Isfahan's Cultural Her-

itage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department, said the decision was made following Isfahan's acceptance as Iran's representative in the international organization.

"The next meeting of the festival will be held in Isfahan following the approval of member countries," Abyan told the state news agency IRNA.

Restoration work begins at Shah Abbasi caravanserai in Semnan

TEHRAN - Restoration and rehabilitation work has begun on a historic Shah Abbasi caravanserai in Semnan, northern Iran, focusing on the structure's northern and western sections, local cultural heritage officials said on Wednesday.

Faramarz Nasiri, head of Semnan's cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts office, said the project aims to restore and stabilize the exterior of the Safavid-era monument and address damage to parts of the building.

"The Shah Abbasi Caravanserai, as one of the city's significant historical monuments, requires continuous protection and maintenance," Nasiri said.

According to Nasiri, the current phase of restoration is concentrated on the northern and western facades of the caravanserai in an effort to repair existing damage and improve the monument's appearance within the urban landscape.



The work includes repairs to damaged walls, restoration of brick facades, treatment of surface coatings and paint layers, and conservation of the wooden entrance gate. Specialists and restoration experts are carrying out the operations with the objective of preserving the building's original architectural features.

Nasiri said the preservation of historical monuments contributes to safeguarding cultural heritage and supports tourism development in Semnan.

CINETOUR is an international tourism film platform focused on promoting tourist destinations and tourism potential through film production and screenings. The organization includes 68 member countries and is headquartered in Istanbul.

According to Abyan, the festival is the only international event dedicated exclusively to producing and showcasing content aimed at introducing tourism attractions and capabilities around the world.

He said many of the organization's members are established tourism destinations, including France, Spain, Italy, Greece and Germany.

Abyan said the organization operates through conferences and specialized meetings held throughout the year and also includes 120 international film fes-

tivals among its members.

He added that five Oscar-winning film directors presented their works at this year's CINETOUR gathering in Istanbul, where their productions were recognized among the leading tourism films.

According to Abyan, Isfahan participated in the festival in Turkey for the first time and was accepted as Iran's representative following a vote by members. He said the event is expected to take place in Isfahan in December, although the exact date has yet to be finalized.

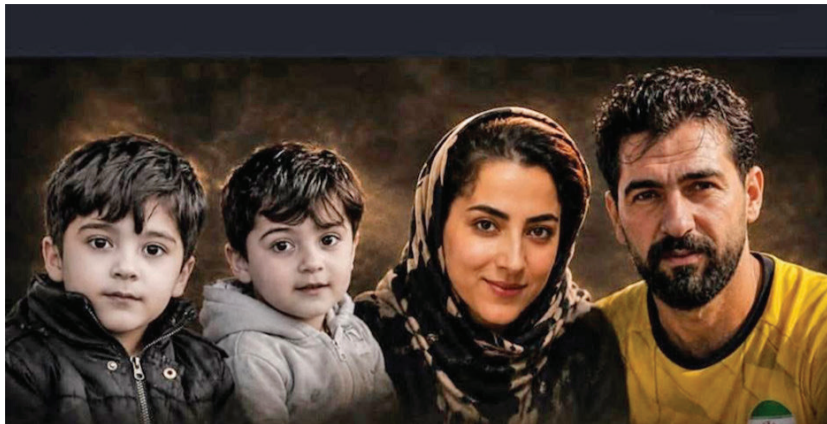
Isfahan is one of Iran's main tourism destinations and is home to around 22,000 historical and architectural sites, as well as a wide range of intangible cultural heritage, including traditional cuisine, ceremonies, festivals, handicrafts and traditional skills.

The caravanserai dates back to the Safavid period and was registered on Iran's National Heritage List in 1973. According to local authorities, the site was used as a prison for more than four decades before being fully cleared and reopened in the summer of 2025, when walls and later structures that obstructed the original monument were removed.

The monument is one of 999 caravanserais reportedly built across Iran under the orders of Shah Abbas I, the fifth ruler of the Safavid dynasty, who reigned from 1588 to 1629.

The earliest caravanserais in Iran date back to the Achaemenid Empire, which ruled from 550 BC to 330 BC. Their construction expanded significantly during the Safavid era as part of efforts to support trade and travel across the country, including along routes associated with the Silk Road.

A story of love and endurance against US-Israeli criminality



TEHRAN - Incidents caused by the recent US-Israeli attacks on residential areas in Iran do not end the moment the explosions stop. Their consequences often stretch far beyond the initial destruction, continuing for weeks and months, reshaping the lives of those who survive.

In one of the most painful examples reported from Isfahan, an entire family's fate unfolded into a tragedy that only reached its final chapter with the passing of its last survivor.

In the early hours of Friday, March 26, a residential complex in Isfahan's Hafton neighborhood was struck by the US-

raeli forces.

In an instant, a place once filled with everyday warmth and ordinary life was reduced to rubble. Hossein Maleki, a well-known footballer in Isfahan, along with his two young children, Shahin and Shahan, were killed. What had been a family's safe space turned, within moments, into a scene of devastation.

His wife, Elham Sadeghi, survived the initial strike. Reports indicate she remained trapped under the debris for nearly seven hours, struggling to endure the weight of collapsed concrete and steel until rescue teams were able to pull her from the ruins.

She was found severely injured and, at the time, unaware of the full extent of the loss that had already taken her husband and children.

The days that followed were marked by hospital stays and an increasingly heavy emotional burden. While her physical wounds were treated, the deeper pain—grief for her entire family—continued to grow.

Those close to her described a woman suspended between survival and sorrow, forced to live with an absence too vast to comprehend. A mother who had escaped death in the rubble now faced a different kind of suffering:

the quiet, persistent weight of living without those she loved most.

After approximately two and a half months, Elham passed away from injuries and the grief of losing his family. With her death, the story of an entire family came to a close—one that began in a home filled with life and ended amid destruction and mourning.

Attacks on residential areas by Israel and the United States have been met with strong condemnation by domestic and foreign humanitarian organizations, with calls urging the protection of civilians in conflict zones.



Attacking universities is a “crossing of red lines”: science minister

TEHRAN - Minister of Science, Research and Technology, Hossein Simaei-Sarraf, has said that attacking universities is a crossing of red lines, highlighting that many universities and educational centers in the country were targeted by the United States and Israel during the recent war.

When a university is targeted, in fact, one of the most authentic centers of culture and civilization is attacked, and the harm is directed at the entire scientific community of the world, msrt.ir quoted Simaei-Sarraf as saying.

The official made the remarks while addressing the tenth meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Education Ministers, which took place in Minsk, Belarus, on June 16. A delegation led by the science minister attended the meeting.

Elaborating on the US-Israeli military attacks on Iran, destruction, and assassinations of Iranian universities and scientists in the past year, he emphasized that universities should be safe havens for thought, dialogue, and hope, rather than victims of conflicts.

The official raised a question, asking par-

ticipants, “Will the international community allow the most authentic centers of civilization to fall victim to violence?”, and urged the global scientific community and international organizations to adopt a clearer, more responsible, and decisive stance in defending the security of universities, scientists, and scientific centers.

Silence in the face of these aggressions will lead to constant violence against science and civilization, he added.

Referring to transboundary challenges such as climate change, water and energy crisis, food security, and developments in artificial intelligence (AI), he stressed that cohesive scientific cooperation is critical for the future of mankind.

The official went on to highlight the unique, civilizational and academic capacities of the SCO member states in AI, basic sciences, advanced materials, and public health, and emphasized the need to transform these diverse advantages into a network of cooperation, noting the universities' success in the future will not only be measured by the production of pure knowledge, but their impacts on the

quality of people's lives.

The official went on to propose that SCO become a successful model of problem-based convergence in which knowledge is a bridge between nations and a factor for sustainable development, prosperity, and building a safer and more humane future.

Hosting more than 30 representatives of SCO member states, including ministers of education and their deputies, university rectors, and officials from relevant agencies, the tenth meeting aimed to enhance multilateral scientific and technological cooperation among SCO member states.

Belarusian Education Minister, Andrey Ivanets, held a meeting with Simaei-Sarraf. The official hoped the meeting would lay the ground for the expansion of scientific and technological cooperation between the two countries.

The Iranian minister, for his part, highlighted the strategic standing of the SCO and called for the enhancement of collaborations among member states in the technology sector to meet the shared needs of each nation.

FAO calls for stronger action on rangeland restoration, drought resilience

TEHRAN - FAO Representative in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Farrukh Toirov, highlighted the global importance of rangelands, emphasizing the need for scaling up restoration efforts, strengthening drought resilience, and promoting sustainable agrifood systems.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) reaffirmed its commitment to combating land degradation, desertification, and drought during a high-level ceremony marking World Desertification and Drought Day 2026, held on Wednesday at Imam Khomeini International Airport Conference Hall and organized by the Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization (NRWO).

Toirov, highlighted this year's theme, “Rangelands: Recognize. Respect. Restore” and emphasized that rangelands are vital ecosystems supporting biodiversity, food and water security, climate resilience, and the livelihoods of millions of pastoralists and rural communities. However, these ecosystems are increasingly under pressure from drought, climate change, land degradation, and unsustainable land use practices.

“Healthy rangelands are not only an environmental asset but a cornerstone of food security and sustainable rural development,” Toirov stated, noting that the country's extensive dryland ecosystems play a strategic role in supporting livestock production, watershed functions, and rural livelihoods.

He further stressed that addressing land degradation requires integrated solutions, including sustainable land and water management, ecosystem restoration, climate-smart agriculture, and active community participation.



Highlighting FAO's global role, Toirov noted that FAO works under the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and global restoration initiatives to reverse land degradation, which affects nearly two billion hectares worldwide.

So far, FAO has worked closely with the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad, NRWO, research institutions, and development partners to support sustainable natural resource management and strengthen resilience. Key initiatives include the GEF-supported Integrated Natural Resources Management for Sustainable Livelihoods (RFLDL) project, which has promoted community-based land management, watershed rehabilitation, biodiversity conservation, and livelihood improvement.

FAO has also supported major programmes in the Lake Urmia Basin, funded by Japan, focusing on sustainable water management, drought resilience, and climate-smart agriculture, alongside UNDP. In addition, FAO's work on sand and dust storms has strengthened national capacities through risk assessments, preparedness tools, and investment planning frameworks.

Toirov concluded by emphasizing that land degradation is not only an environmental issue but one that affects food security, health, migration, and economic development. He reaffirmed FAO's continued support to the Islamic Republic of Iran in scaling up restoration efforts, strengthening drought resilience, and promoting sustainable agrifood systems.

Iran proposes BRICS+ develop reliable computing power networks

TEHRAN - Iran's representative at the BRICS Future Network Innovation Forum 2026, held in Shenzhen from June 16 to 17, proposed the establishment of a cooperation framework for the BRICS plus partnership to develop future digital infrastructure, strengthen industrial cooperation, and promote cross-border interactions among member states.

Delivering a speech, titled ‘From connectivity to reliable computing power networks; enabling shared digital growth, industrial cooperation, and transboundary interactions’, Mohammad-Hossein Sheikhi, an official with the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), outlined Iran's views and proposals in developing future digital infrastructure, ISNA reported.

“Connectivity, network coverage, and bandwidth are essential for digital development, but meeting emerging needs requires an approach that goes beyond traditional network development,” the official said.

The expansion of technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), industrial Internet of Things (IIoT), smart logistics, smart energy systems, modern financial technologies, and digital platforms requires integrated, smart, and reliable infrastructures, he stressed.

Expounding on the concept of trusted computing power network, Sheikhi said future networks should not be simply seen as a data transmission platform, but should serve as an infrastructure for connecting networks, providing computing power, ensuring secure data flow, promoting digital trust, supporting industrial applications, and enabling interactive ecosystems.

Highlighting Iran's capacities in energy, transportation, ICT, financial technologies, and cyber security fields as well as the country's growing scientific and academic capabilities, the official voiced Iran's readiness



to play an effective, constructive, and operational role as a regional and technological partner in BRICS plus joint agenda to develop future digital networks.

BRICS Plus partnership will serve as a practical platform for cooperation among interested countries, research centers, universities, industries, and technological partners. The cooperation framework will be centered around ‘reliable infrastructure’, ‘industrial value creation’, ‘interactions, standards and digital trusts’, and pave the way for the development of joint efforts in evolving technologies, Sheikhi further noted.

The official went on to say that BRICS Plus cooperation should move beyond exchanging views and reports and lead to implementing joint projects, setting up test beds, developing technical learning, industrial applications, and cooperation.

Guided by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) of China, the BRICS Future Network Innovation Forum 2026 convened at the Wuzhou Guest House in Shenzhen.

The forum was co-hosted by the Shenzhen Municipal Bureau of Industry and Information Technology, the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology (CAICT), and the BRICS Institute of Future Networks.

IBTO serves as a role model in the region: WHO official

TEHRAN - The World Health Organization (WHO) representative in Iran, John Jabbour, has described the Iran Blood Transfusion Organization as a successful role model in the region.

“The Iran Blood Transfusion Organization is one of the most important and centralized blood transfusion centers in the region. The coherence and coordination of activities across the country have strengthened the organization, and this integrated structure plays a key role in ensuring the quality and safety of blood,” Jabbour said.

The official made the remarks on Tuesday while visiting the IBTO on the occasion of World Blood Donor Day, observed on June 14 every year.

The World Health Organization is ready to enhance cooperation with the Iran Blood Transfusion Organization and provide technical and specialized support to the organization to improve blood transfusion services, he added.

Referring to blood safety indicators in the country, the official said the safety of donated blood in Iran is comparable to that of developed countries, which highlights the high quality of services and standards of the IBTO.

Voluntary, unpaid blood donation

According to the CEO of IBTO, Iran is the first and sole country in the Eastern Mediterranean region that has been able to meet the country's need for blood and blood products, relying entirely on voluntary and unpaid blood donations.

One hundred percent of donated blood is non-remunerated; in Asia, some other countries like Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Thailand have managed to collect voluntary blood, as well, IRIB quoted Ahmad Qarah-Baghian as saying.

There are some 1.7 million regular blood donors across the country, donating around 2.4 million blood units to meet the needs of patients yearly, he added.

Lauding public participation in blood donation, Qarah-Baghian said that over the past few months, blood storage duration has increased from five to 10 and even for the first time to 12 days, despite crises.



In the last month of the past Iranian year, which ended on March 2026, women's contribution showed an increase of 79 percent compared to the same period, a year earlier. Also, the number of young individuals' (aged below 25) referrals increased by 60 percent, he noted.

The IBTO's main mission is to provide safe and adequate blood and blood products for patients so that no treatment is postponed due to blood shortage. Patients with thalassemia, cancers, and other chronic diseases need uninterrupted blood supplies, Qarah-Baghian further noted.

The official went on to say that Iran is the first country in the region that has established rare blood type bank; the bank aims to identify people with very rare blood types and expand the supply of rare blood. Currently, the bank has around 100,000 voluntary donors, and the number is planned to increase to 500,000 in three years.

World Blood Donor Day is a celebration to honor donors, an effort to raise awareness of the ongoing need for safe blood and blood products, and a call to action to inspire consistent and new voluntary blood donations to ensure the availability of safe, adequate blood supplies.

Themed ‘One Drop of Humanity. Give Blood. Save Lives.’, This year's campaign places humanity at the heart of every blood donation. It reminds everyone that each donation is more than a medical act: it is a powerful expression of solidarity, compassion, and collective responsibility. Inspired by the idea that the whole of humanity can be reflected in a single drop, the campaign highlights how every donor helps form a lifeline that connects and protects us all.



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JUNE 18, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

One who imagines himself to be all-knowing will surely suffer on account of his ignorance.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:05 Evening: 19:44 Dawn: 3:02 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:48 (tomorrow)

International section of 15th 100-Second Film Festival launched

TEHRAN- The international wing of the 15th edition of the 100-Second Film Festival has officially commenced its activities under the theme "The Battle for the World's Children."

Running alongside the main festival, this section focuses on the scars of war and its devastating impact on the future of children. With the welfare and destiny of the younger generation as its core mission, the international section has now begun its work.

To mark the occasion, Ali Akbar Jenabzadeh, Director of the International Section, has shared a poignant note titled "The Battle for the Future of the World's Children," which you can read below:

"Last year, a wound was etched into our collective memory—a wound that began with a single image. It was not an image of a military base or a command center; it was a simple sports hall in the city of Lamerd. It was a place where children competed and young athletes dreamt of championships. A place where parents sat in the bleachers, cheering for every small victory as if it were the greatest achievement in the world. It was a place built for life.

But then, war arrived. In an instant, the echoes of laughter and cheering were replaced by dust, smoke, tungsten shrapnel, and silence. The hall that was once a sanctuary for dreams was turned into ruins. It was hard to fathom, but this tragedy forced us to face chilling questions: Had this civilian space become a testing ground? Had the US deployed new weaponry there—not just to destroy, but to showcase power and measure the efficiency of war machines at the cost of human lives?

When a sports hall becomes a showroom for power, when the lives of ordinary people are reduced to mere statistics, and when destruction becomes a tool for propaganda—what remains of our humanity?

This year, drawing from the bitter events in Minab and Lamerd, we turn our gaze toward those left grieving by war. We sit with fathers who still replay the sound of bombings and the screams of the crowd in their minds. We stand by mothers who walk past the rubble, remembering the days when their children would return home tired, laughing, and full of stories. We listen to coaches whose stu-



dents never returned, and to neighbors who watched their city's vibrant spaces turn into symbols of grief and loss.

These are people who might feel forgotten outside their small town. They might fear their sorrow has been buried under headlines, statistics, and the endless cycle of global conflict. But grief does not vanish when the cameras turn away. It lingers in empty seats, in left-behind jerseys, and in photographs that now carry a weight far heavier than before.

Countless families across the globe have witnessed the destruction of their everyday lives through the violence of war. They carry memories that cannot be rebuilt as easily as walls.

The International Section of the 15th 100-Second Film Festival aims to be a home for these voices. In this edition, we open our doors to stories that reveal how 'military language' has exacted a massive human toll. These are stories that question the catastrophes inflicted upon civilian lives by the ambition and power of aggressors. They are stories that refuse to let human suffering be reduced to a marketing opportunity for weaponry.

For those gathered in that hall, the stadium was never just a building. It was where friendships began. It was where dreams were nurtured. It was where futures were imagined.

Those futures mattered. Those lives mattered. And those stories deserve to be told."

Cartoon of Day



Trampled
Cartoonist: Monero Rapé from Mexico

New Tehran mural depicts Minab's martyred children in Team Melli jerseys

TEHRAN- A new large-scale mural titled "Kids Are Not Targets" was unveiled on Wednesday at Tehran Rah-Ahan Square, featuring a depiction of the martyred children of Minab.

The artwork, designed by artists Mohaddeseh Alishah and Mahya Jafari, seeks to convey a global message regarding the innocence and shattered aspirations of children martyred in a US-Israeli attack on the Iranian soil.

The mural portrays the young victims of the Minab tragedy dressed in the kits of Iran's national football team (Team Melli). By utilizing football—a universal language symbolizing hope, growth, and the future—the designers aim to move beyond mere statistics.

The piece encourages viewers to forge a deeper emotional connection with the individual identities and stolen dreams of these children.

Visually referencing the iconic team line-up formations seen in the FIFA World Cup, the mural reinforces a bitter and thought-provoking reality: these children belonged on the playing field and the path of self-actualization, not on a list of war casualties.

The accompanying slogan, "Kids Are Not Targets," artistically highlights the stark and tragic contrast between the untainted world of childhood and the brutal reality of senseless violence.



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

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

Despite attempts by US and

Israeli authorities to distance themselves from the carnage as images of the tragedy spread across social media, detailed forensic and digital investigations have painted a starkly different picture.

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

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

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

Asghar Farhadi to hold masterclass in Portugal

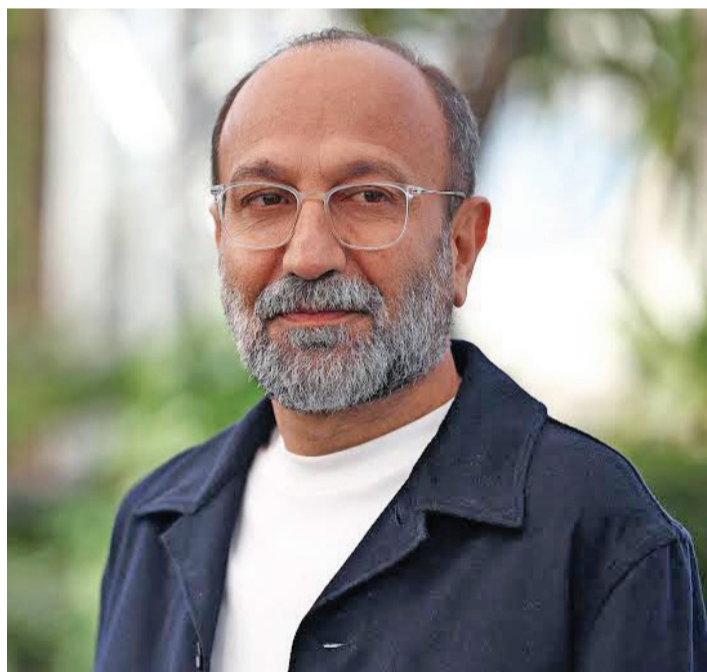
TEHRAN – Renowned Iranian filmmaker Asghar Farhadi will take part, as a guest speaker, in the 22nd edition of FEST - New Directors/New Films Festival, which is set to be held from June 20 to 28 in the coastal city of Espinho, Portugal.

Farhadi will hold a specialized masterclass in the festival's educational section, an event known as a hub for discovering emerging talent in world cinema, ISNA reported.

The workshop provides an opportunity for filmmakers from around the globe to benefit from the Iranian director's expertise in dramatic screenwriting, creating moral dilemmas, and directing actors.

In a note honoring the artist's stature, the official website of the festival has described Asghar Farhadi as "one of the most progressive filmmakers of the 21st century," highlighting his history of winning two Academy Awards for the films "A Separation" and "The Salesman".

Farhadi, 54, became interested in cinema when he was a teenager and started his education in filmmaking by joining the Youth Cinema Society of Esfahan in 1986, where he made 8mm and 16mm short films. He received his Bachelor of Dramatic Arts at the University of Tehran in 1998



and his Master's in Stage Direction a few years later. He devoted his final thesis to Harold Pinter, focusing, in particular, on the importance of silence and pauses in the playwright's work.

He made his directorial debut with "Dancing in the Dust" (2002). After the success of "About Elly" (2009), for which he won the Silver Bear for Best Director at the Berlinale, Farhadi gained international recognition and critical acclaim with "A Separation" (2011), receiving no fewer than 70 awards, including an Academy Award and a César for

Best Foreign Film.

He then left Iran for France to shoot "The Past" (2013), which won Bérénice Bejo the Best Actress Award at the Cannes Film Festival in 2013. He later returned to Iran to direct "The Salesman" (2016), which premiered in competition at the Cannes Film Festival in 2016, where the film won Best Screenplay and Best Actor (Shahab Hosseini). The film became Farhadi's biggest success and earned him the second Academy Award of his career.

His film "A Hero" (2021) won

the Grand Prix at the Cannes Film Festival in 2021. His latest film, "Parallel Tales," shot in France, was screened at the Cannes Film Festival in 2026.

In addition to Farhadi, other prominent figures including Danis Tanović (Oscar-winning director), Dan Laustsen (Oscar-nominated cinematographer for "The Shape of Water"), and Sarah Greenwood and Katie Spencer (production designers for "Barbie") will also hold masterclasses at this year's edition of the festival.

FEST is more than a film festival, it's a dynamic platform for emerging filmmakers and industry professionals, combining competitive and non-competitive film sections with conferences, workshops, masterclasses, and networking opportunities to foster a vibrant exchange of ideas across cinema and the arts.

It offers a great lineup of activities for both audiences and professionals, showcasing cutting-edge films from new filmmakers with more than 200 screenings. It also includes films for young audiences, Q&A sessions with creatives, and concerts featuring over 18 artists. Over eight days, Espinho becomes a global hub for creativity, innovation, and collaboration, attracting participants from dozens of countries.

IAF to show 1973 animation "Fantastic Planet"

TEHRAN – The Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran will screen the 1973 surrealist animated art film "Fantastic Planet," directed by René Laloux, on Thursday.

The screening is set for 6 p.m. and the science fiction animation will be shown with Persian subtitles.

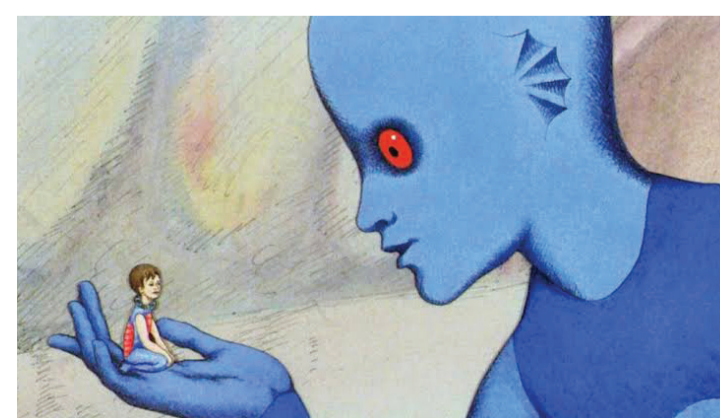
Its allegorical story, about humans living on a strange planet dominated by giant humanoid aliens who consider them animals, is based on the 1957 novel "Oms en série" by the French writer Stefan Wul.

The story, set in the far future, deals with Oms (a play on the French word "hommes," meaning "men"), tiny people from Terre

(French for "Earth"), who have been brought by the giant Draags to their home planet, Ygam.

Some Oms are domesticated as pets, but others run wild in parks, and are exterminated every two Draag years (one Draag year being roughly equivalent to 45 Earth years). The Draags' treatment of the Oms is ironically contrasted with their high level of technological and spiritual development.

The protagonist is a domesticated Om named Terr (again, playing on the French word for Earth) who runs away and joins a group of wild Oms. He has learned some of the Draags' scientific knowledge while in cap-



tivity, and uses this to forge a new, equal relationship with the Draags.

A co-production between companies from France and Czechoslovakia, "Fantastic Plan-

et" was awarded the Grand Prix special jury prize at the 1973 Cannes Film Festival, and in 2016, it was ranked the 36th greatest animated movie ever by Rolling Stone.