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Behind the new Lebanon framework lies the trap of demographic erasure, endless war

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — The document signed in Washington on June 26 under American “mediation” was celebrated in Western capitals as a historic breakthrough, even though it is a crude instrument of asymmetric warfare designed to secure an indefinite Israeli military presence.

By conditioning the end of hostilities on the disarmament of the Lebanese resistance, Washington and Tel Aviv have engineered a strategic snare.

They demand Lebanon surrender its only deterrent force while foreign troops remain firmly entrenched on its soil. ▶ Page 5

Gaza thwarts seditious plot, renews allegiance to resistance

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN — The devastated and besieged Gaza Strip, a small, impoverished territory, has endured, for more than two years and eight months, one of the worst humanitarian crises in modern history.

Reduced by relentless bombardment and siege to a place no longer fit for human habitation, Gaza is gripped by an array of crises affecting the lives of more than 2.25 million people. Every hour, they struggle to survive, enduring severe hardship while death lurks around every corner in the face of Israeli occupation. ▶ Page 5

The Iran war was intended to remove obstacle to Trump’s new world order

By Batool Subeiti

LONDON — It is clear that the hidden objective declared at the beginning of the February war on Iran, namely the elimination of the government through decapitating leaders and creating overwhelming chaos, failed. The reason for the failure is that Iran is a rising power carrying the flame of liberation in the region and seriously defying American hegemony, where no other country dares to do so.

These hidden strategies were wrapped in titles that were repeated tirelessly, such as: “Iran intends to obtain a nuclear weapon” and “Iran will not obtain a nuclear weapon.” These were policies and objectives based on pre-war strategies that concealed the real strategic objectives beneath secondary objectives and illusory propaganda, which served as a bridge to the primary objective. ▶ Page 5



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Iran Says ‘No Final Deal’ Until US Does Its Part

Officials announce talks with Washington will not resume until all provisions of the June 17 memorandum are fully upheld

Following the recent exchange of fire over the control of the Strait of Hormuz, Iran appears to have called off sending a delegation to Doha to meet with American negotiators.

By Faramarz Kouhpayeh

TEHRAN — Iranians are delaying the resumption of talks toward a final deal—one that would address Iran’s security and economic concerns in exchange for limits on its nuclear program—until the United States fully upholds the Memorandum of Understanding that made the talks possible in the first place, Iran’s Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei announced during his weekly press briefing on Tuesday.

“Negotiations on a final agreement with the United States will begin only after progress is made on several key provisions of the U.S.-Iran memorandum of understanding,” the spokesman told reporters.

Baghaei noted that Iran will assess developments in the coming days before deciding when and in what format to resume negotiations.

The MoU was signed on June 17 thanks to mediation efforts by Pakistan. Since then, its first clause—which required a halt to hostilities on all fronts—has been repeatedly violated by the U.S. and its ally Israel, which has continued attacking Lebanon with American support and refused to withdraw its forces from occupied Lebanese territories.

Last week, the U.S. violated another clause of the agreement by attempting to route ships through the Strait of Hormuz via a non-Iranian corridor. Iran had restricted passage through the strait at the outset of the war on February 28, and under the MoU, it agreed to allow shipping to return to pre-war levels within 30 days, provided that passage took place under Iranian arrangements.

After Iran dismantled the unauthorized route by firing warning shots at violating vessels, the U.S. struck targets along Iran’s southern territories. Tehran responded with its own missile and drone attacks on eight American military installations in the region.

Ebrahim Azizi, head of Parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said on Tuesday that the Strait of Hormuz is an “inseparable” part of Iran’s national sovereignty and its management is exclusively the responsibility of the Islamic Republic. Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi has also rejected a bid by France to demine the Strait of Hormuz in collaboration with its allies, saying the operation will exclusively be carried out by Tehran. ▶ Page 3

Defense chief vows ‘decisive’ response to any ceasefire breach by US

TEHRAN — Iran’s acting defense minister has warned that the country’s armed forces remain on a war footing and will strike back forcefully against any violation of the current ceasefire, as the United States appears either unable or unwilling to fully uphold its commitments under the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, signed in mid-June.

Brig. Gen. Majid Ibn Reza made the remarks during a phone call on Tuesday with Qatar’s Minister of State for Defense Affairs, Sheikh Saoud Bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, expressing gratitude for Doha’s role in mediating the truce. ▶ Page 2

Internal divisions will weaken national strength, president says

TEHRAN— Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said internal divisions will undermine the country’s national strength and embolden its adversaries, stressing that national unity and cohesion remain Iran’s greatest strategic asset.

Speaking during a meeting with representatives of senior Shiite clerics’ offices in Qom, Pezeshkian reviewed the country’s key political, economic, social, and cultural challenges, emphasizing the need to strengthen social capital, uphold justice, improve livelihoods, and preserve national solidarity.

Referring to the aftermath of the 12-day war, the president said Iran’s adversaries had expected pressure and insecurity to trigger domestic instability and state collapse. However, he said, the unity, solidarity, and Iranian’s being on the ground thwarted those calculations and prevented their objectives from being realized. ▶ Page 2

Iran bolsters border security as IRGC thwarts terrorist cell in northwest

TEHRAN — Iranian security forces have intensified counterterrorism operations along the country’s western and northwestern borders after dismantling an armed terrorist cell in West Azerbaijan Province. At the same time, senior military officials underscored the Armed Forces’ readiness to repel any potential ground threat against the country.

The Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) announced that its Hamzeh Seyyed al-Shuhada Base dismantled ‘an armed terrorist-separatist cell’ during an operation in the mountainous areas between Mahabad and Piranshahr in northwestern Iran. ▶ Page 3

Experts discuss strategies to protect cultural heritage and historic cities during wartime

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN — Iranian experts on Tuesday examined international approaches to safeguarding cultural heritage and the historical identity of cities during armed conflict, calling for stronger documentation, digital preservation, legal protection, and broader international cooperation while emphasizing the role of cultural resilience in the aftermath of war.

The expert panel, titled “International Strategies for Preserving the Historical Identity of Cities,” was held at the UNESCO World Heritage site of Golestan Palace in downtown Tehran and focused on cultural heritage damaged during war, bringing together scholars, legal experts, urban planners and cultural heritage officials to discuss international experiences, challenges and strategies for protecting historical assets in times of crisis. ▶ Page 6

Art installation in Minab becomes symbol of collective remembrance

▶ Page 8

Scan this QR code to watch the video.



Araghchi: Iran launches legal action over attack on IRIS Dena

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi announced that Tehran has begun legal proceedings, in coordination with the Iranian Navy, over the attack on the IRIS Dena, describing the incident as a “war crime” that will be pursued through international legal channels.

Speaking after visiting an exhibition displaying personal belongings recovered from the vessel’s fallen crew, Araghchi said the Foreign Ministry responded immediately after the incident, overseeing the transfer of the victims’ remains, the evacuation of the wounded, and other necessary measures. ▶ Page 3

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Setting the rules of ownership in the Strait of Hormuz

Sobh-e-No analyzed the recent exchange of fire between Iran and the United States. The region has now entered a new phase of low-intensity but continuous tensions. Under such circumstances, a return to the previous situation seems highly unlikely. The most probable scenario is the continuation of an unstable ceasefire accompanied by limited clashes and reciprocal economic pressure. Both sides use these confrontations as leverage in negotiations. Iran has turned sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz into a "red line," while the United States, due to domestic pressure, needs to project strength. In short, the recent exchange of fire is a battlefield for determining the ownership of the rules governing the Strait of Hormuz. The US seeks to change these rules through economic and military tools, while Iran aims to consolidate new rules through asymmetric warfare. In this game, implementing the memorandum of understanding has become a secondary goal, and the final victory belongs to the side that can impose its will on the other.

Jam-e-Jam: From a fragile truce to first test of the agreement

Jam-e-Jam analyzed the recent clashes in southern Iran, arguing that when the events of the past few days are juxtaposed, they form a picture beyond a temporary confrontation. Past agreements have shown that the main dispute sometimes arises not from the text of the agreement but from how it is interpreted and implemented. What is happening today in the Strait of Hormuz is not merely a legal disagreement over a single clause. From the outset, Washington defined its most important expected outcome of the agreement as restoring the Strait of Hormuz to its pre-war conditions. In this framework, the release of part of Iran's financial assets, increased oil exports, and the facilitation of certain economic exchanges are not the end of pressure but part of a larger equation in which economic incentives are used alongside security pressure to push Tehran toward accepting the arrangements desired by the United States regarding the Strait of Hormuz.

Arman-e-Emrooz: New diplomatic opportunities

Arman-e-Emrooz highlighted the new diplomatic opportunities and the need to make maximum use of them. Quoting political analyst Abdolreza Kahani, the paper wrote: Military strength, national cohesion, political management, and active diplomacy together created this opportunity for the Islamic Republic of Iran, and now the most important issue is how to use this capacity to secure national interests. The current regional environment—including the shift in approach by some neighboring countries and their in-

creased willingness to expand relations with Iran—is the result of the change in balance of power and Iran's enhanced regional standing. If this capacity is not used at the right time, it may gradually fade. Therefore, the foreign policy apparatus and decision-making institutions must, with coordination and strategic vision, use this moment to secure national rights, reduce external pressure, and expand regional and international cooperation.

Ettelaat: Iran's valuable achievements

Ettelaat interviewed Mohammad Hashemi Rafsanjani, a member of the central council of the Executives of Construction Party, about the dimensions of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Iran and the U.S., which sets the roadmap for an agreement following the Feb. war against the Islamic Republic. The veteran politician says: Today, not only Iran but all regional countries need stability, security, and new economic opportunities. This agreement paves the way for significant gains in trade, the energy market, and especially oil. Politically, it has also had positive effects. Iran's position, coupled with its regional and even global power, has increased. Today, Iran is recognized as one of the influential regional powers, and no one can easily think of weakening or eliminating it. Moreover, the Islamic Republic has clearly stated its positions on various issues, including negotiations, security, energy, and missile capabilities, and these issues have been addressed within the framework of the agreement. Therefore, we hope to see valuable achievements and favorable conditions for the country, the region, and even the world.

Farhikhtegan: US is creating parallel tracks to the agreement

Farhikhtegan examined the US approach after the recent agreement and wrote: The US Navy's Joint Information Center announced the expansion of a maritime corridor near Oman's coast—a route that, according to the US, increases the possibility of ships traveling in both directions. In response, Iran's armed forces declared that the only safe and legal route for ships is the one managed by Iran, and vessels using unauthorized routes will be confronted. When these developments are placed alongside the clauses of the agreement, the message becomes clear: the United States is creating parallel tracks to the agreement. The Trump team is trying to define alternative routes to reduce international shipping's dependence on Iran's management in the Strait of Hormuz. Even if such actions are presented as facilitating passage, they can be interpreted as moves contrary to the agreement and as efforts to limit one of Iran's most important leverage points.

Internal divisions will weaken national strength, president says

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Referring to the aftermath of the 12-day war, the president said Iran's adversaries had expected pressure and insecurity to trigger domestic instability and state collapse. However, he said, the unity, solidarity, and Iranian's being on the ground thwarted those calculations and prevented their objectives from being realized.

Pezeshkian said his administration has consistently called for setting aside political differences and focusing on common national interests, warning that internal discord weakens national power and encourages hostile actors.

Addressing the country's economic situation, he acknowledged that the recent



war had damaged parts of Iran's economic, energy, and industrial infrastructure. Nevertheless, he said the government had worked to prevent disruptions to the supply of essential goods and public services while safeguarding people's livelihoods despite mounting pressures.

The president added that Iran is now entering dialogue and international engagement from a position of strength, which he attributed to the resilience of the Iranian people, the capabilities of the country's Armed Forces, and the preservation of national unity. He reaffirmed that improving living standards, creating jobs, supporting vulnerable groups, and addressing economic challenges remain the government's top priorities.

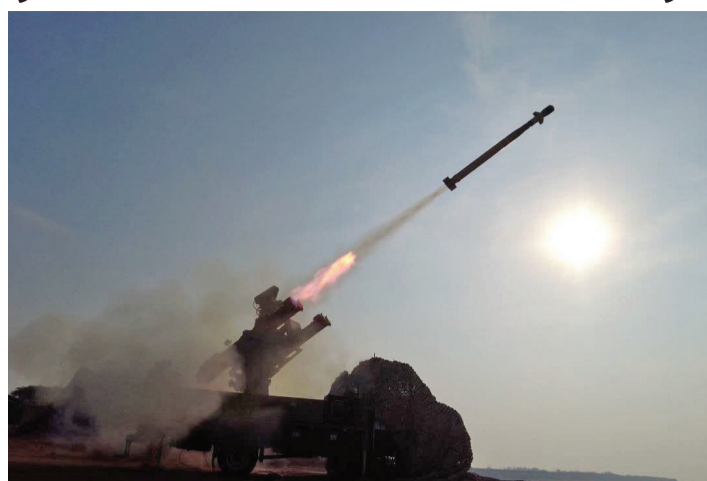
Defense chief vows 'decisive' response to any ceasefire breach by US

From page 1 ▶ "We trust our brothers, but we do not trust the enemy," General Ibn Reza said, according to a readout of the call. "Our fingers remain on the trigger, and without any doubt, if any provision of the cease-fire is violated, we will take necessary and proportionate action."

The general pointed out that the United States has "violated its commitments on several occasions even during this short period."

His comments came days after Iran's armed forces launched missile and drone strikes against eight U.S. military installations across the region overnight Saturday—a retaliatory response to renewed attacks on Iranian territory. Those U.S. strikes, which CENTCOM acknowledged as "operations" conducted inside Iran, followed Tehran's decision to prevent vessels from transiting the Strait of Hormuz via an unauthorized route. Under the terms of the MoU, all shipping through the strait is required to operate under Iranian arrangements.

General Ibn Reza said the lat-



est exchange of fire was part of six to seven decades of American "interference and broken promises."

"The Islamic Republic of Iran will never forget the assassination and martyrdom of its highest political and religious leader, military commanders, innocent people, and especially the schoolchildren of Minab," he said. "These crimes will remain forever in America's black record."

Turning to regional security, the acting defense chief rejected any foreign military role in

the Persian Gulf, noting that the presence of extra-regional forces "increases misunderstanding, mistrust, and insecurity" rather than stability.

"The Strait of Hormuz must not be exploited by extra-regional countries," he said.

The recent escalation followed a U.S.-Israeli war of aggression, which was halted by a Pakistan-brokered cease-fire and later reinforced by a memorandum of understanding between Tehran and Washington. That accord, which includes provisions for the reopening of the

Strait of Hormuz, also requires the United States and its allies to fully cease military action against Iran and its regional partners, including Lebanon. Israel has yet to stop attacking Lebanon or withdraw its soldiers from Lebanese territories.

General Ibn Reza also condemned Israel, asserting that U.S. support has enabled the "continued existence and growing audacity" of Israel, whose survival, he said, "depends on creating crises and tensions in the region."

He reaffirmed Iran's interest in deepening defense ties with neighboring states, particularly Qatar, and suggested that bilateral cooperation could form the basis for broader regional security mechanisms.

"The more the defense and military cooperation between our two countries expands, the more mutual trust and the region's collective security will be strengthened," he said.

The two ministers concluded their conversation with an emphasis on expanding bilateral defense relations.

The twilight of American empire in Persian Gulf

By Xavier Villar

MADRID – On June 16, the US President signed a memorandum of understanding with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Adopting a triumphalist tone to mask the magnitude of the defeat, Donald Trump urged the ships of the world to start their engines and let the oil flow once again. This epilogue, marked by the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz and the lifting of the naval blockade, represents the empirical confirmation of the structural exhaustion of US foreign policy in the region.

By celebrating an agreement with the very country it swore to eradicate just six months prior, Washington has silently renounced its initial demand for regime change. This reversal reveals the bankruptcy of an imperial paradigm that believed it could subjugate geography and history through sheer military coercion.

To comprehend this failure, one must dissect the material foundations of the US presence in the Persian Gulf. For decades, Western understanding of this body of water has been articulated around a strictly extractivist and logistical logic. The Persian Gulf was conceived fundamentally as a transit corridor, a maritime highway designed to guarantee the uninterrupted flow of hydrocarbons to the consumption nodes of global capitalism. Roughly 20% of global oil used to pass through this strait daily, revealing the systemic vulnerability of an economy dependent on a single logistical node. This reductionist vision transformed the region's geography into a vast spatial engineering project. Entire cities, deep-water ports, artificial islands, and free trade zones were erected to serve as an efficient interface between subsoil rent and international financial markets, compressing time and space in favor of capital accumulation.

This spatial apparatus required a parallel security architecture, a martial urbanism superimposed upon the local landscape. US military bases, anti-missile defense systems, and deep-water ports for aircraft carriers functioned as nodes in a control network designed to protect commercial flows. In practice, it produced a security architecture that turned the region into a permanent target. Military bases, arms sales, sanctions regimes, intelligence cooperation, and Israeli freedom of action formed the central pillars of a Pax Americana in West Asia. Yet, in this war, those very same pillars transmitted violence across the entire region. The Persian Gulf states that initially opposed the conflict were struck precisely because they hosted US forces. A system ostensibly designed to secure the Persian Gulf ultimately turned it into a battlefield.

Faced with this mercantile conception of space, the Islamic Republic has maintained a radically distinct understanding of its environment. For Tehran, the northern coast of the Persian Gulf transcends the condition of a mere commercial chokepoint; it is a territory imbued with civilizational continuity and deep socioeconomic integration. This ontological divergence explains Washington's strategic blindness. The illusion that the state apparatus would collapse under external pressure materialized on the morn-



ing of February 28. In an eight-minute video, Trump announced the launch of Operation Epic Fury, a joint military campaign with Israel's Operation Roaring Lion. US and Israeli forces struck nuclear facilities, missile sites, military centers, and critical infrastructure. In one of the most devastating attacks, the Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, was assassinated alongside other top commanders. As the bombs fell, Trump addressed the Iranians, telling them that when it was all over, they should take over their government. The message was unequivocal: America and Israel were seeking regime change.

The Iranian response was swift and devastating. Ballistic missiles and drones struck US military bases across the Persian Gulf, while Tehran announced the restriction of passage through the Strait of Hormuz. By controlling the strait, Iran interrupted the very heart of global capitalist logistics, demonstrating that supply routes can be severed by those who inhabit their shores. The closure of this energy node strained global supply chains and exposed the vulnerability of the US security architecture. Far from producing the institutional disintegration Washington anticipated, the Islamic Republic demonstrated remarkable resilience. This reconfiguration was the material result of decades of investment in autonomous military and social infrastructure. While distant powers rely on vulnerable extraterritorial bases, Iran has built a defense apparatus deeply rooted in its own topographical and human fabric. Underground bunkers, encrypted communication networks, and an asymmetric warfare doctrine transformed the country's geography into an effective containment device. The command structure was redistributed through an institutional framework forged over forty years of resistance to imperial coercion. This strategic depth demonstrates that national sovereignty, when materialized in tangible infrastructures, possesses a density that hegemonic powers are incapable of destroying.

For weeks, Washington's rhetoric oscillated between verbal escalation and coercive paralysis. After demanding unconditional surrender on March 6, Trump issued his most severe ultimatum regarding power plants on March 22. Iran did not yield, and before the deadline expired, Washington changed its tone, announcing productive conversations. This pattern of confrontation followed by retreat repeated itself throughout April: pauses in the bombings, claims about Iranian ceasefire requests, and social media messages that contrasted with the reality of a conflict overflowing its operational management capacity. On April 7, when Trump announced that an entire civilization would

die that night and decreed complete and total regime change, the disconnect between maximalist rhetoric and actual military possibilities reached its limit of strategic coherence. Hours later, the announcement of a bilateral ceasefire confirmed that Washington had exhausted its coercive options.

However, the material reality of the conflict had already subordinated rhetoric to operational limitations. Throughout April and May, negotiations accelerated. In early June, Trump canceled another planned bombing. The negotiations had expanded beyond the immediate crisis, focusing on maritime access, the nuclear future, sanctions relief, energy security, and long-term guarantees over Hormuz. By mid-June, the memorandum of understanding was reached. The agreement sought to ensure freedom of navigation, establish a framework for the nuclear program, and create a pathway for sanctions relief in exchange for Iranian commitments. On June 16, Trump celebrated the completion of the deal, authorizing the toll-free opening of the strait and the immediate removal of the naval blockade. "Ships of the world, start your engines. Let the oil flow!" he ordered on his social media. While Trump proclaimed that the agreement would bring peace and security, one issue had silently disappeared from Washington's public messaging: regime change. He began this crisis by encouraging the overthrow of the government, oversaw a military campaign that assassinated the Leader, spoke repeatedly of toppling the Islamic Republic, and warned that hell would break loose. Yet, he ended it by celebrating an agreement with the very Islamic Republic he once appeared determined to overthrow.

This shift transcends mere tactical contradiction to manifest a historical exhaustion. US policy in the Persian Gulf, based on the premise that the region can be managed as a global gas station and a military backyard through military coercion, has reached its limit. The logistical urbanism of the Arab coast and the massive naval presence can no longer guarantee absolute hegemony. By resisting and forcing a negotiation on its own terms, Iran has demonstrated that control of the straits and the capacity to interrupt logistical flows provide a decisive strategic advantage against distant powers. The special relationship with Israel, which drove Operation Roaring Lion and the initial escalation, proved to be a liability rather than a strategic asset for Washington, acting as a chain that dragged the United States into a conflict it could not win. The colonial vision underlying the threat to erase a civilization crashed against the reality of a state with profound historical cohesion and capacity for resistance. Washington is forced to navigate a Persian Gulf that, in its historical and spatial complexity, no longer belongs to it. Ultimately, the Persian Gulf emerges from this conflict as a postcolonial territory in resistance, debunking the fiction of a space pacified by the empire, a scenario where the materiality of geography has ended up imposing itself over the abstractions of military power. The logistical asphyxiation attempted by the empire has become the evidence of its own obsolescence.

Iran says 'no final deal' until US does its part

Officials announce talks with Washington will not resume until all provisions of the June 17 memorandum are fully upheld

By Faramarz Kouhpayeh

TEHRAN – Iranians are delaying the resumption of talks toward a final deal—one that would address Iran's security and economic concerns in exchange for limits on its nuclear program—until the United States fully upholds the Memorandum of Understanding that made the talks possible in the first place, Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmail Baghaei announced during his weekly press briefing on Tuesday.

"Negotiations on a final agreement with the United States will begin only after progress is made on several key provisions of the U.S.-Iran memorandum of understanding," the spokesman told reporters.

Baghaei noted that Iran will assess developments in the coming days before deciding when and in what format to resume negotiations.

The MoU was signed on June 17 thanks to mediation efforts by Pakistan. Since then, its first clause—which required a halt to hostilities on all fronts—has been repeatedly violated by the U.S. and its ally Israel, which has continued attacking Lebanon with American support and refused to withdraw its forces from occupied Lebanese territories.

Last week, the U.S. violated another clause of the agreement by attempting to route ships through the Strait of Hormuz via a non-Iranian corridor. Iran had restricted passage through the strait at the outset of the war on February 28, and under the MoU, it agreed to allow shipping to return to pre-war levels within 30



Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei addresses reporters during a weekly press conference

days, provided that passage took place under Iranian arrangements. After Iran dismantled the unauthorized route by firing warning shots at violating vessels, the U.S. struck targets along Iran's southern territories. Tehran responded with its own missile and drone attacks on eight American military installations in the region.

Ebrahim Azizi, head of Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said on Tuesday that the Strait of Hormuz is an "inseparable" part of Iran's national sovereignty and its management is exclusively the responsibility of the Islamic Republic. Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi has also rejected a bid by France to demine the Strait of Hormuz in collaboration with its allies, saying the operation will exclusively be carried out by Tehran.

Following the recent exchange of fire over the control of Hormuz Strait, Iran appears to have

called off sending a delegation to Doha to meet with American negotiators this week. Officials have said that only a team will be dispatched to speak with Qatari officials and discuss the release of Iranian assets from Qatari banks—assets previously held by the U.S. that were supposed to be returned to Tehran in 2023.

"The next round of talks depends on the implementation of clauses 1, 5, 10, and 11 of the memorandum, which relate to the lifting of the U.S. naval blockade, the restoration of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, sanctions relief, and the enforcement of ceasefire arrangements," Baghaei said, adding that Washington must fully implement its commitments before a comprehensive agreement can be reached.

Iran and the U.S. have so far held one round of negotiations in Switzerland since the MoU was signed. The Iranians had already entered the talks with deep skepticism, given that both

the recent war and the earlier U.S.-Israeli campaign launched against the country in 2025 began in the midst of diplomatic negotiations—with surprise attacks by the U.S. and Israel. The second round of U.S.-Israeli aggression has proven even more brutal and replete with war crimes. It commenced with the assassination of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, who has now been succeeded by one of his sons—along with several other family members, including his 18-month-old granddaughter. Among the most harrowing attacks to date were those carried out on the very first day of the war, when American missiles struck a girls' elementary school in two separate strikes, killing 168 children. Bridges, residential homes, universities, roads, banks, power systems, and water desalination facilities have also been targeted by U.S. and Israeli strikes across Iran.

Washington's failure to uphold the Islamabad memorandum has further deepened mistrust among Iranians and intensified domestic pressure on Iran's negotiating team to withdraw from the talks. Segments of the public are now calling for Iran to change its nuclear doctrine, rather than continue engaging in what they view as futile negotiations. Analysts say that the longer the U.S. fails to honor its commitments, the more opposition will grow—both among the Iranian public and among the country's conservative political factions, which have traditionally opposed talks with the United States and have reacted angrily to the current negotiations.

Iran bolsters border security as IRGC thwarts terrorist cell in northwest



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The Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) announced that its Hamzeh Seyyed al-Shuhada Base dismantled 'an armed terrorist-separatist cell' during an operation in the mountainous areas between Mahabad and Piranshahr in northwestern Iran.

According to the IRGC, its forces engaged the militants with support from heavy weapons fire, killing four members of the group and seizing a cache of weapons and military equipment. The operation was presented as part of ongoing efforts to maintain security in Iran's border regions and prevent the infiltration of armed groups.

PJAK terrorist group confirms death of 4 of its members in a statement.

In a separate incident in western Iran, two locally recruited IRGC personnel were martyred and two others wounded in a terrorist attack in Paveh city on Monday evening.

The fallen personnel were identified as Borhan Karisani and Khaled Khaledi, who lost their lives while responding to the attack.

The developments come amid heightened security measures along Iran's borders, where military officials say surveillance and operational readiness have been significantly strengthened.

During an inspection of Army units deployed in border areas, Commander of the Islamic Re-

public of Iran Army Ground Forces, Brigadier General Ali Jahanshahi, said the deployment of rapid reaction units, special forces, and assault brigades has effectively deterred any attempt by hostile forces to launch a ground operation against Iran.

Jahanshahi stated that the continuous presence and combat readiness of Army Ground Forces, operating alongside the IRGC and the Law Enforcement Command, have "eliminated any enemy audacity" to carry out a ground offensive against the Islamic Republic.

He also argued that countries that once viewed the establishment of US military bases as a guarantee of their security have increasingly concluded that such installations instead contribute to regional insecurity and instability.

Reaffirming the Armed Forces' preparedness, the commander said Iran's border regions remain secure due to the vigilance of military personnel and the coordinated capabilities of the security forces and emphasized that rapid reaction forces and special operations units remain on full operational alert.

In a related development, the female victim of Monday night's terrorist attack in Saravan County, southeast of Iran—who had been wounded after gunmen opened fire on her family's vehicle, resulting in the martyrdom of her husband—succumbed to her injuries on Tuesday.

The terrorist act, perpetrated by Zionist and American mercenaries, serves as yet another document of the crimes committed by these elements against the people of Sistan and Baluchestan.

Araghchi: Iran launches legal action over attack on IRIS Dena

From Page 1 ▶ He argued that the attack targeted personnel conducting a routine mission far from any battlefield, who were neither engaged in combat nor aware of any imminent threat, making the strike "a clear war crime."

Araghchi said the Foreign Ministry's legal department, working alongside the Iranian Navy, has begun collecting evidence and preparing

legal documentation to pursue accountability, pledging that Iran "will neither forget nor forgo the blood of the martyrs."

The IRIS Dena, one of the Iranian Navy's most advanced domestically built frigates, was returning from the multinational MILAN 2026 naval exercise hosted by India when it came under attack by a US submarine in international waters

off the southern coast of Sri Lanka on March 4, 2026. The vessel was on a routine return voyage, far from the active battlefield, when it was struck without warning by a torpedo fired from an American submarine.

Iran's Army said 104 sailors were killed, 32 were injured, and several others were reported missing after the attack.

LATEST NEWS

■ German and US top diplomats hold talks on Iran-US MoU

German Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl has held talks with his American counterpart, Marco Rubio, in Washington, DC, and reaffirmed support for the US-Iran MoU.

In a statement on X, Wadepuhl said the deal was an "important step" and that "it creates an opportunity for diplomacy in what remains a highly fragile situation."

■ Oman says responsibility for Hormuz demining 'primarily rests with Iran'

According to the country's Foreign Ministry, Badr bin Hamad Albusaidi told France's Monte Carlo Doualiya radio on Monday that "responsibility for ensuring the strait and internationally recognized shipping lanes are free of any mine-related hazards primarily rests with Iran" as per the US-Iran MoU.

He also affirmed Oman's openness to contributing to regional and international efforts whenever requested.

■ Iranian and French FM's discuss MoU

Iran's foreign minister has discussed Islamabad memorandum of understanding and its implementation during a phone call with his French counterpart.

Abbas Araghchi and Jean-Noel Barrot "reviewed and exchanged views on the latest regional and international developments" regarding the US-Iran MoU, with "the aim of ending the war imposed by" the US and Israel against Iran, according to the IRIB broadcaster.

The report comes after Iran's deputy foreign minister criticized comments by French President Emmanuel Macron, who said Paris was working with Oman to demine the Strait of Hormuz.

Kazem Gharibabadi said demining in the strait is solely Iran's responsibility and that "we fundamentally do not permit such a thing."

■ Traffic in Strait of Hormuz 'continues amid security threats'

MarineTraffic, a global provider of ship tracking, says vessel movements in the Strait of Hormuz continued over the weekend despite security concerns, including attacks on two ships on Friday and Saturday.

It said 108 verified transits were recorded over three days.

"Activity was highest on 26 June [Friday], with 48 crossings, followed by 38 crossings on 27 June [Saturday] and 22 crossings on 28 June [Sunday]."

■ Qatari, Iranian defense ministers 'review security developments'

Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defense Affairs Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan Al Thani received a phone call from Iran's acting defense minister, Majid Ibn Reza, on Monday evening, according to the Qatari Defense Ministry.

"During the call, they reviewed the latest developments and security developments in the region and discussed aspects of joint coordination amid the current circumstances," according to the ministry.

■ Only two South Korean ships remain in Strait of Hormuz

South Korean President Lee Jae-myung says all but two South Korean ships in the Strait of Hormuz have now exited the waterway.

A total of 26 South Korean-linked vessels were stranded in the strait when Iran closed the strategic waterway on February 28, the day the US-Israeli war began.

■ US lawmakers press Rubio, Witkoff on Iran nuclear program and sanctions relief

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Special Envoy Steve Witkoff faced sharp questions from House lawmakers during a congressional briefing on the Trump administration's memo-

randum of understanding with Iran, according to Politico. Legislators sought clarification on Iran's enriched uranium stockpile and the easing of oil sanctions. Rubio and Witkoff said the MoU is intended to launch negotiations toward a final agreement that would bar Iran from retaining highly enriched uranium. They also said technical teams will meet in Qatar, while assuring lawmakers that Iran has not yet received any funds under the agreement.

■ Hormuz disruption may have lasting impact on vulnerable economies, UN trade agency says

The UN Trade and Development agency has warned that while the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz will bring immediate relief to energy markets, vulnerable economies remain at risk from prolonged increases in food and fuel costs.

Food and transport systems are likely to take longer than energy markets to recover, as disrupted supply chains need more time to reset following more than 100 days of severe disruption to shipping through the strategic waterway, a UN conference on trade and development said in a new report.

The strait, which normally carries about one-fifth of global oil and gas supplies, was paralyzed during the war triggered by joint US-Israel attacks on Iran in late February.

■ China urges US, Iran to sustain talks momentum

China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi is calling for the momentum of talks between the US and Iran to be sustained, speaking during a meeting in Beijing with his Saudi counterpart, state news agency Xinhua reported.

"The current ceasefire remains fragile, but talking is better than fighting, and dialogue is better than confrontation," Wang said today, adding that Beijing was ready to work with Saudi Arabia to help ease regional tensions and promote lasting peace.

Iranian woman scholars issue formal indictment against US and Israeli war crimes

TEHRAN – A coalition of Iranian women scholars has released an open letter to international legal bodies, human rights organizations, and academic institutions, formally documenting systematic war crimes committed by the United States and Israel during their recent military aggression against Iran.

The letter, dated June 22, catalogs attacks that killed 3,519 Iranian citizens, including scientists, military commanders, teachers, rescue workers, and a significant number of children. The scholars place special emphasis on the strike against Shajareh Tayyebbeh Elementary School in Minab, where a U.S. missile attack killed 168 civilians, including at least 140 schoolchildren. The school had operated as a civilian educational institution for more than a decade before it was struck.

The document enumerates specific violations of international law. It cites the U.S. use of force against Iran as a breach of Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, which prohibits wars of aggression. It further details attacks on universities, research centers, hospitals, and energy infrastructure, arguing these constitute violations of the Geneva Conventions and customary international humanitarian law.

"We believe that the crimes committed by the United States and the Israeli regime cannot be regarded merely as isolated incidents," the letter states. "Rather, these crimes must be understood as part of a systematic pattern of genocide and impunity."

The scholars note that Iran has invoked its inherent right to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter in response to the aggress-



sion. They describe the attacks as part of a broader pattern of violence extending from Gaza and Lebanon to Iran, arguing that the repeated failure to hold perpetrators accountable has normalized conduct once regarded as a clear violation of international law.

The coalition calls for independent fact-finding missions, the prosecution of U.S. and Israeli officials responsible, and the adoption of boycott measures against the Israeli regime and complicit institutions. They further state that armed resistance against colonial aggression across West Asia must be explicitly supported.

"Neither commit injustice nor submit to injustice," the letter states, quoting the Quran.

"This letter is not written for today alone. If justice is delayed, it will remain as a record for history. Future generations should know that these crimes were documented, that warnings were issued, and that voices were raised in protest against them," the document concludes.

Iran, Turkey eye deeper economic cooperation as ICCIMA pushes economic diplomacy

TEHRAN- During a meeting with the Head of the Turkey-Iran Parliamentary Friendship Group, the Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) said that expanding economic, social, and cultural cooperation among nations can help prevent conflicts and wars. He stated that economic diplomacy should be employed as an instrument for promoting peace.

On Monday, Samad Hassanzadeh welcomed the Head of the Turkey-Iran Parliamentary Friendship Group and a delegation of Turkish parliamentarians.

Expressing his pleasure at hosting representatives from Iran's friendly and brotherly neighbor, Turkey, he thanked the Turkish government and people, on behalf of Iran's private sector and industrial community, for their support during the COVID-19 pandemic, the recent 12-day war, and the Ramadan conflict, and for standing by the Iranian people during difficult times.

Referring to the devastating consequences of wars and conflicts around the world, Hassanzadeh described the martyrdom of senior Iranian officials and citizens as a significant loss for the Islamic Republic of Iran. He stressed that the Iranian government and people have always sought to promote peace, stability, and security among all nations.

He also praised the resilience of Iran's Armed Forces and the solidarity shown by the Iranian people during the recent imposed war, saying that Iran's steadfastness has strengthened the country's image in global public opinion. He expressed hope that all nations would enjoy lasting peace and stability.

Economic diplomacy as a foundation for regional peace

Hassanzadeh emphasized that throughout the recent conflict, Iran's primary objective was to preserve peace and prevent bloodshed in the region and neighboring countries. He reiterated his belief that expanding economic, social, and cultural cooperation among countries can prevent disputes and armed conflicts, adding that economic diplomacy should be harnessed to serve peace initiatives.

He further noted that when countries become economically interconnected, there is less reason for military confrontation. Economic integration, he argued, creates incentives for cooperation instead of conflict.

Highlighting the historical and cultural ties between Iran and Turkey, Hassanzadeh described Turkey as an important partner for expanding bilateral economic relations. He pointed out that despite years of sanctions and restrictions, Iran has developed substantial capacities in petrochemicals, refining, modern agriculture, medicine, pharmaceuticals, artificial intelligence, and the digital economy. These sectors, he said, provide valuable opportunities for joint investment between Iran and Turkey.

Welcoming the Turkish delegation's announcement of its readiness to participate in Iran's post-war reconstruction, Hassanzadeh described the proposal as a reflection of the Turkish people's genuine friendship, cultural affinity, and goodwill toward Iran.

Trade, investment, and post-war reconstruction in focus

Mohammad Hassan Habibollahzadeh, Iran's Ambassador to Turkey, also addressed the meeting, describing Turkey as one of Iran's most important neighbors and strategic partners. Although Iran shares borders with fifteen countries, he stated that Turkey ranks among its two most significant neighbors because bilateral relations encompass strong cultural, social, economic, and political dimensions.

The ambassador noted that Turkey is currently Iran's third-largest trading partner and could become the second-largest this year. He added that Iran currently has three border crossings with Turkey, with a fourth expected to become operational during the year with the cooperation of Turkish authorities.

Habibollahzadeh also highlighted the importance of transit relations between the two countries, noting that more than 250,000 trucks cross the Iran-Turkey border annually. He affirmed both governments' determination to further expand bilateral cooperation, emphasizing that political will exists at the highest level and that both presidents have called for deeper cooperation.

He praised Turkey's support during the recent imposed war, stating that the Iranian people had



facied an unequal and unjust conflict and appreciated the solidarity shown by their Turkish friends. Such support, he said, has left a lasting positive impression on the Iranian people, adding that true friends are recognized during difficult times.

Ghadir Ghiyafeh, Vice President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, noted that the Chamber's delegation to Turkey had been named "Minab 168" in memory of the students martyred in Minab. Honoring the victims of all wars and violence worldwide, he remarked that if merchants' goods do not cross borders, soldiers inevitably will. Therefore, expanding economic relations among countries provides a solid foundation for peace.

He described strengthening bilateral relations through economic diplomacy as the shared responsibility of the business communities of both countries. Thanking the Turkish President and Parliament for supporting the Iranian people during the three imposed wars, Ghiyafeh stressed that after more than five centuries of relations between Iran and Turkey, both sides should expand their network of shared interests and open a new chapter in commercial, industrial, and technological cooperation.

Referring to Turkey's impressive technological and innovation achievements, which were observed during visits by representatives of chambers of commerce from Islamic countries to the TOBB University of Economics and Technology, Ghiyafeh noted that Iran ranks fifth globally in natural resource reserves while making significant progress in technology and knowledge-based industries.

He argued that closer Iran-Turkey cooperation would generate regional synergy and strengthen neighboring countries. Expressing confidence in the commitment of both governments, peoples, and private sectors, Ghiyafeh said he believed bilateral trade could reach the long-envisioned target of \$30 billion and subsequently increase to \$50 billion within five years.

He concluded by emphasizing that expanding cooperation between Iran and Turkey would benefit not only the two nations but also contribute to the stability, security, and prosperity of the entire West Asian region.

Kayhan Turkmenoglu, Head of the Turkey-Iran Parliamentary Friendship Group, also expressed his appreciation for the hospitality extended by the President and Vice President of the Iran Chamber and the Iranian Ambassador at the Turkish Parliament. He stressed the importance of continuing negotiations to resolve the remaining outstanding issues between the two countries.

Turkmenoglu described the lifting of sanctions against Iran as a major opportunity for accelerating Iran's development and expanding bilateral relations. He also expressed hope that the 29th session of the Iran-Turkey Joint Economic Commission would be held in the near future.

Announcing Turkey's readiness to participate in Iran's post-war reconstruction efforts, he noted that all three Iran-Turkey border crossings remained fully operational throughout the recent conflict and that work on opening a fourth border crossing continues with determination.

He expressed optimism about the future of trade between Iran and Turkey, particularly through greater cooperation between the private sectors of both countries, concluding with the hope that the friendship and brotherhood between the two nations would remain everlasting.

Members of the Turkish Parliament attending the meeting also highlighted the significant opportunities for joint investment between Iran and Turkey. They emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation between the border provinces of both countries, while the Iranian Chamber's delegation presented several proposals aimed at expanding bilateral economic relations.

Mehran emerges as Iran's western logistics powerhouse

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN- The Mehran border crossing, located in Iran's Ilam Province just 85 kilometers from the provincial capital, is undergoing a rapid transformation from a routine customs point into a strategic logistics and trade hub.

Newly released data for the first quarter of the current Iranian year (March 21-June 20) paints a compelling picture of this ascent, with the crossing recording \$150 million in exports—a 37% surge compared to the same period last year—despite prevailing economic headwinds.

Over 524,000 tons of goods moved through Mehran during these three months, ranging from agricultural produce and construction materials to ceramics, steel rebar, live fish, and tiles. This diverse export basket underscores the breadth of Iran's industrial and agricultural capacity, while the 54% rise in provincial customs revenue, ex-



ceeding 375 billion tomans, signals robust fiscal returns.

Even more telling is the 90% jump in transit cargo volumes, with more than 23,000 freight trucks passing through—confirming Mehran as the busiest commercial artery between Iran and Iraq.

This momentum is no short-term spike. Last year, total exports via Mehran surpassed \$1.318 billion, placing it among the country's top export terminals.

Its strategic location—roughly 150 kilometers from Baghdad and within easy reach of major

Iraqi markets—gives it an inherent advantage over other border crossings.

The recent inclusion of Mehran within a Free Zone framework has opened new horizons. Authorities are now fast-tracking customs digitization, expanding warehousing and cold-storage facilities, and upgrading road networks to attract export-oriented manufacturing.

With streamlined procedures and improved logistics infrastructure, the crossing is poised to handle significantly higher volumes in the coming years.

As trade integration with Iraq deepens, Mehran is steadily shedding its peripheral status and emerging as a central node in Iran's non-oil export strategy—one that promises sustainable growth, job creation, and a stronger competitive foothold in one of the region's most lucrative markets.

Aras Free Zone, Railways sign agreement to turn Jolfa into a transit hub

TEHRAN- The Aras Free Zone Organization and the Railways of the Islamic Republic of Iran (RAI) have signed an agreement to transform Jolfa into a major transit and logistics hub, IRIB reported.

Under the strategic memorandum of understanding (MoU), the two sides agreed to jointly pursue the development of railway infrastructure, modernization of the rail fleet, upgrading of the Jolfa International Railway Station, construction of freight terminals and logistics centers, and increasing the share of rail transport in international transport corridors. The agreement is expected to further strengthen the Aras Free Zone's position as an international transit and freight hub.

The MoU was signed in recognition of the strategic location of the Jolfa International Railway Station at the intersection of regional and global rail corridors. Its objectives include promoting sustainable development, improving economic efficiency, expanding rail transport capacity, and enhancing Iran's role in the North-South and East-West International Transport Corridors.

Under the agreement, both parties will cooperate in developing and rehabilitating the active rail fleet serving the Jolfa corridor to increase passenger and freight transport capacity, expand transit operations, boost exports, and establish new rail transport routes.

The agreement also covers the modernization, upgrading, and expansion of the Jolfa International Railway Station, with a focus on digitalization and smart technologies, the establishment of modern freight terminals and logistics centers, and the expansion of combined rail-road transport services.

In addition, the parties agreed to develop and strengthen supporting infrastructure to maximize the use of international transport corridors. This includes digitizing and automating freight loading, unloading, and rail traffic management processes within the

Jolfa station area.

Another key objective is to increase the share of rail transport in passenger travel, freight movement, and the transit of goods through the Aras Free Zone to domestic and international destinations. This is expected to reduce transportation costs while reinforcing the Aras Free Zone's role in international logistics and trade.

The two sides also agreed to examine legal mechanisms for opening access routes through railway lands, facilitating traffic, organizing land use, and assessing the feasibility of constructing additional branch railway lines to support transportation infrastructure development and expand the operational capacity of Jolfa International Station.

Implementation of the agreement is expected to pave the way for rail fleet modernization, expanded logistics infrastructure, improved multimodal transport services, greater economic efficiency, and a stronger role for the Aras Free Zone as one of Iran's leading international transit, logistics, and freight centers.

Jolfa is one of Iran's most important opportunities for rail transit development

The CEO of the Iranian Railways stated that Jolfa Railway possesses significant potential for expanding cargo transit, international transportation, and cooperation with neighboring countries because of its location along one of northwestern Iran's most important rail corridors.

According to Mehr News Agency, Jabbar-Ali Zakari, CEO of the Railways of the Islamic Republic of Iran, visited the Jolfa Railway Station at the end of his one-day trip to Jolfa County and emphasized making full use of the station's strategic capacities to develop international transit, freight transportation, and regional economic growth.

During the field visit, he reviewed the latest status of the station's infrastructure,

operational capabilities, logistics capacity, and development plans. Referring to Jolfa's prominent position in Iran's railway network, he said: "Jolfa Railway Station, due to its location on one of the country's most important northwestern rail corridors, has substantial capacity for expanding international transport, increasing freight transit, and strengthening rail cooperation with neighboring countries."

Emphasizing the need to fully utilize existing capacities, Zakari added: "Improving the efficiency of border railway stations and expanding logistics services are among the railway's primary priorities, and Jolfa Station can play an important role in achieving these objectives."

He noted that rail transport development is one of the pillars of Iran's economic growth, stating: "Strengthening the infrastructure of border railway stations and expanding their operational capacity will facilitate greater trade, increased exports, higher transit volumes, and an enhanced position for Iran within international transport corridors."

Zakari also stressed the importance of coordination among different railway departments to maximize existing capacities, saying that careful planning to improve efficiency, enhance service quality, and expand logistics activities at Jolfa Station should remain a priority.

The Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development further visited various sections of the station, emphasizing the need to identify new investment opportunities, improve operational processes, and increase private-sector participation in development projects.

He concluded: "Making full use of all existing capacities at Jolfa Station can increase the share of rail transport in freight movement, strengthen international transport corridors, and contribute to the region's economic development."

Developing exploration standards, expanding private sector participation, top priorities of IMIDRO

TEHRAN - The head of the executive board of the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) emphasized the need to transform the country's mineral exploration policies, saying that developing national exploration standards, expanding private sector participation, attracting foreign investors, and training specialized human resources will be the main pillars of Iran's mineral exploration development program.

According to IMIDRO, speaking at a meeting on Tuesday to review the exploration activities and plans of the organization's major subsidiaries and affiliated companies, Mohammad Masoud Samiei-Nejad described the expansion of mineral exploration as one of the mining sector's highest priorities this year.

He said IMIDRO's policy is focused on implementing devel-

opment programs in the exploration sector, with a target of completing one million meters of drilling by its subsidiary companies.

Referring to the need for a unified approach to exploration procedures, Samiei-Nejad stated that standardized and integrated policies should be developed for mineral exploration and the issuance of discovery certificates based on the type of mineral, the scale of exploration operations, and the conditions of drilling sites. Once finalized, these standards will be communicated to companies and provincial authorities across the country to ensure that all stakeholders operate within a common regulatory framework.

The IMIDRO chief also stressed the importance of establishing a dedicated exploration working group. Given the prominent role of exploration development in

Iran's Seventh National Development Plan, he said, the necessary executive guidelines should be prepared, and—with the participation of the private sector—exploration challenges and obstacles in different provinces should be examined and addressed through specialized reviews.

Samiei-Nejad noted that investment models in the exploration sector require revision, explaining that the current investment structures within IMIDRO's subsidiaries are relatively closed and should be reformed to facilitate the entry of new investors, particularly from the private sector. Accordingly, he said, all subsidiary companies are required to submit operational plans within the next six months outlining how they intend to increase private sector participation in mining activities, especially exploration projects.

He also emphasized the im-

portance of utilizing foreign investment in major mining projects, saying that planning should be undertaken to attract foreign investors—particularly for large-scale mines. At the same time, he called for a thorough study of the experiences of Eurasian countries in advancing mineral exploration, especially in the copper and gold sectors, over the past decade.

Concluding his remarks, the IMIDRO head announced the launch of a specialized workforce training program for drilling operations. He said that expanding mineral exploration would not be possible without skilled personnel. Therefore, through specialized training courses and the participation of leading domestic and international experts, IMIDRO will begin training drilling technicians, with the initial goal of preparing 100 specialized drilling technicians.

Gaza thwarts seditious plot, renews allegiance to resistance

From page 1 ▶ They have lost their livelihoods, their homes, and their possessions, in addition to tens of thousands of their sons and daughters who were killed en masse by Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF), which should shame all humanity. Yet the conscience of the world has remained unmoved, turning a blind eye and a deaf ear to the suffering of Gaza's oppressed people.

Gaza faces acute shortages of food and medicine, as well as an inability to provide even the minimum supply of safe drinking water, or enough water for basic personal hygiene. At the same time, the housing crisis has become nearly insurmountable. More than 80 percent of Gaza's homes have been completely destroyed by the IOF, while most of the remaining buildings have sustained severe damage.

Amid the U.S.-backed Israel genocide, another crisis is the near-total collapse of the healthcare system, with virtually no modern or adequately equipped hospitals or medical centers remaining. Schools, universities, and educational institutions have likewise all but disappeared, having been transformed by the genocidal war into overcrowded and deteriorating shelters housing hundreds of thousands of people forcibly displaced from their homes and lands.

Gaza's financial sector has also suffered a profound crisis that continues to weigh heavily on the homeless. Paper currency has become increasingly scarce after the Zionist regime barred its entry into the Strip since the beginning of the genocide.

Against this harsh and complicated backdrop came suspicious calls for demonstrations demanding the overthrow of Palestinian resistance forces, urging them to withdraw from public life and even surrender their weapons to prevent the resumption of the genocidal campaign.

Many of those leading these protests had left Gaza at the outset of the war and later established media groups whose declared objective was to enable the Israeli regime and its local proxies to gain full control over the Gaza Strip after failing to achieve that goal through the U.S.-backed genocidal war.

Alongside groups using social media as a tool to advance plans formulated with the intelligence services of certain regional actors, similar appeals were issued by leaders of Israeli-backed militias operating inside the so-called "yellow zone" along Gaza's north and east.

They called on locals to confront Palestinian resistance forces by every possible means, including violence, while pledging financial, military, and even direct operational support to anyone willing to do so.

These militias benefit from extensive IOF backing, including air cover, armored protection, and advanced technological capabilities



used to fuel incitement against the Palestinian resistance and its fighters.

According to sources close to the Palestinian resistance, the calls for demonstrations on Friday (June 26) aimed at toppling the resistance front coincided with extensive preparations on the ground. These included plans for coordinated attacks against security and civilian sites, including mosques and displacement shelters, as well as operations targeting figures associated with the Palestinian resistance.

The plans also involved deep incursions by IOF-backed militias toward the centers and western districts of several cities in Gaza, accompanied by military displays intended to secure at least a symbolic victory.

Based on numerous indicators, several principal reasons have been identified behind these calls, which highlight how the planned acts of sabotage were carried out under the direct supervision of the IOF and its intelligence agencies.

The first objective was the Israeli regime's attempt to ignite internal conflict within Gaza by encouraging public protests and demonstrations while simultaneously sowing discord between prominent Gazan families and the Palestinian resistance.

Throughout the genocidal war, IOF agents carried out numerous assassinations and kidnappings targeting members of well-known Palestinian families before attributing responsibility to Palestinian resistance forces. These incidents initially generated tensions and confrontations. But the Palestinian resistance's experience enabled it to uncover the truth behind these operations, defuse the resulting crises, and thwart attempts by the regime and its collaborators to provoke internal conflict.

Israel believed that popular demands for improved living conditions and other legitimate rights would ultimately bring civilians into confrontation with the resistance, leading them to blame it for Gaza's deteriorating situation and potentially sparking an internal conflict that the IOF had sought repeatedly, even before the recent genocidal war.

The second reason was to distract Palestinian resistance forces

and prevent them from rebuilding their capabilities and reorganizing their ranks by forcing them instead to deal with widespread protests and internal unrest. Had such unrest materialized, it would have destabilized what remained of Gaza's urban areas.

Despite the daily bombings, killings, and assassinations carried out by IOF aircraft, these areas still experience a degree of relative stability that allows civilians to recover at least some elements of everyday life denied to them since the outbreak of the genocide.

The Israeli occupation regime understands well that Gaza's resistance forces perform numerous responsibilities beyond confronting the IOF and its allied militias. They operate under exceptionally dangerous security conditions. The regime therefore sought to impose additional pressure on them, forcing them to abandon their existing plans and redirect their efforts toward confronting disturbances that it believed would fundamentally alter the situation inside Gaza.

The third objective was the Zionist regime's attempt to absolve itself of responsibility for Gaza's blockade, starvation, and widespread killing by shifting the blame onto the Palestinian resistance, particularly because it has refused the regime's demands to surrender its weapons.

Disarmament is a non-negotiable red line for the resistance movement, regardless of the hardships.

Since the beginning of the genocidal war, the regime has sought to distance itself from responsibility for the devastation inflicted upon Gaza's population.

Israel has repeatedly attempted to blame some of its most significant war crimes on the Palestinian resistance.

Following numerous journalistic investigations, legal inquiries, and documented evidence, the falsity of the IOF's version of events was exposed. Furthermore, after growing international calls for the regime to comply with international law and fulfill its obligations under the ceasefire agreement, Israel has reverted to its earlier strategy of holding the Palestinian resistance responsible for Gaza's worsening humanitarian conditions, using calls for protests and demonstrations to

reinforce that narrative.

On the other hand, public awareness among the Gaza population, combined with the extensive efforts undertaken by the Palestinian resistance on multiple fronts, served as a bulwark against attempts to spread disorder and undermine security.

Public calls to mobilize against the resistance found virtually no response across most of the Gaza Strip, except among small and socially isolated groups, which Palestinians accuse of being a fifth column operating from within society and exploiting people's difficult living conditions to sow discord and encourage rebellion.

Despite the extensive media campaign accompanying the calls to spread unrest and disorder, which relied heavily on social media, as well as on Palestinian media figures who had previously left Gaza and were accused of links to foreign intelligence agencies, participation reportedly did not exceed one percent. Instead, many towns witnessed rallies expressing support for the Palestinian resistance, particularly during funeral processions for those killed by the IOF.

Strict security measures were implemented by the resistance forces throughout Gaza, particularly in areas near the "Yellow Line" where information indicated preparations for incursions by IOF-backed militias. Such incursions did occur in places, including Beit Lahia in northern Gaza, the Tuffah neighborhood northeast of Gaza City, and the southern outskirts of Khan Younis.

But Palestinian resistance forces confronted the IOF-trained militias in all of these areas despite the regime's air support, ultimately forcing them to retreat after inflicting heavy losses upon them.

The Palestinian resistance also used its media platforms to broadcast messages warning people against being deceived by the slogans promoted by those calling for protests. These campaigns attempted to exploit Gaza's humanitarian suffering by emphasizing the hardships endured by civilians while deliberately avoiding any mention of the Israeli regime's responsibility for the humanitarian crisis.

In the end, a day that was intended to bring down the Palestinian resistance, strip it of its popular support, and hold it responsible for Gaza's suffering passed without achieving its objectives. Israel's efforts, together with those of its local collaborators, failed to weaken Palestinian internal cohesion or damage Gaza's social fabric.

The people of Gaza have reflected their allegiance to their land and holy sites while reminding the world that their cause is just, and that the rights taken from them under IOF occupation neither expire with time nor can be abandoned, regardless of the sacrifices required or the war crimes they continue to face.

Behind the new Lebanon framework lies the trap of demographic erasure, endless war



By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — The document signed in Washington on June 26 under American "mediation" was celebrated in Western capitals as a historic breakthrough, even though it is a crude instrument of asymmetric warfare designed to secure an indefinite Israeli military presence.

By conditioning the end of hostilities on the disarmament of the Lebanese resistance, Washington and Tel Aviv have engineered a strategic snare.

They demand Lebanon surrender its only deterrent force while foreign troops remain firmly entrenched on its soil.

Their imposed text is null and void. Sovereignty is never granted by a signature on a foreign document. True sovereignty is the physical capacity to defend borders and deter ongoing aggression.

The illusion of restored authority

The agreement operates on a fundamental contradiction regarding national authority. It requires the Lebanese government to exercise sovereignty by dismantling the very infrastructure that prevented total territorial annexation over the past decades.

Western analysts invoke the concept of a state monopoly on arms, but this abstract doctrine ignores the historical inability of central authorities in Beirut to protect citizens from external invasions.

The framework shifts the entire burden of proof onto the victim. The reality on the ground has exposed the emptiness of the accord.

Days after the document was signed, Israeli forces continued their illegal, aggressive operations. Artillery units shelled Beit Yahoun, and a drone dropped a sound bomb to intimidate farmers in Aita al-Jabal.

This belligerence was transparent when Netanyahu visited the "security zone" to explicitly command troops to act preemptively against "any threats."

By declaring that Israeli forces would remain on Lebanese soil indefinitely to enforce these "buffer zones," the regime stripped away any remaining veneer of a temporary arrangement, confirming that the framework is a mandate for permanent occupation.

Instead of halting violence, the agreement provides diplomatic cover for permanent "security zones," subjecting the local population to unlawful transfer.

Demographic weapons and internal traps

The introduction of experimental pilot zones and a designated yellow line in the south goes beyond simple security arrangements.

These mechanisms serve a deliberate policy of demographic engineering. The framework conditions the return of displaced Lebanese civilians on the complete political capitulation of the resistance.

Holding a devastated population hostage fits a long historical pattern of population displacement aimed at serving Israeli security interests.

Furthermore, the architects of this scheme

seek to fracture the delicate internal social fabric of the country.

By pressuring the ineffective Lebanese Armed Forces to implement these pilot zones and confront local defensive networks, the United States plants the seeds for severe civil strife.

The plan attempts to turn the national army into a proxy enforcement wing for the occupier. Attempting to forcefully strip the resistance of its weapons without credible guarantees against reoccupation is a recipe for domestic disaster.

The indivisible regional architecture

Regionally, the crisis must not be separated from the broader geopolitical war. The resistance operates within a unified regional defensive framework.

Attacks on Lebanon are inherently linked to the wider aggression against the Resistance Front. The text of the recent Iran-U.S. memorandum highlighted this reality by linking a comprehensive cessation of hostilities to the Lebanese front.

While Tehran and its regional allies honor the indivisible nature of this peace, Tel Aviv refuses to accept these terms.

Israel seeks to reshape the regional security order by crushing the resistance militarily, treating the current situation as an opportunity.

Washington and Tel Aviv are desperately trying to achieve through diplomatic coercion what they failed to accomplish on the battlefield.

Despite immense pressure, severe damage, and heavy leadership casualties, the Lebanese resistance holds firm: operationally capable, morally driven against the occupiers, and constantly adapting. Its innovative drone warfare in recent months is a clear example. Those who have predicted its collapse have been proved wrong, over and over.

Legal immunity and the perpetual quagmire

Adding to the egregious nature of the pact is Article 13, which shields Israel from international legal accountability.

This provision commits both parties to cease adverse actions in legal forums, forcing the Lebanese state to abandon its right to seek reparations for documented war crimes.

Depriving victims of justice in exchange for a highly conditional withdrawal is a profound violation of fundamental rights.

Far from being about ending hostilities, the deal appears to be a bid to control how the aftermath is perceived. Going forward, a protracted attritional conflict seems the likeliest scenario.

As long as Israeli boots remain on Lebanese land, the resistance treats these occupied territories as active combat zones.

By tying withdrawal to impossible conditions, Israel has secured a perpetual and bloody quagmire for itself.

Authentic stability will only arrive when the foreign occupation unconditionally ends, restoring genuine dignity to a heavily scarred but unyielding nation.

The Iran war was intended to remove obstacle to Trump's new world order

From page 1 ▶ The fundamental animosity toward Iran was not, in reality, about Iran's military capabilities or its nuclear program. Rather, the fundamental reason was Iran's position opposing Western policies in the region. Among the results of this Iranian position was the resurgence of resistance movements in the region and the degree of their influence on public opinion. This policy will also help create other anti-imperialist movements to the detriment of the American long-term strategies.

American calculations and assessments on the ground were flawed, reflecting a failure to understand the principled and strategic nature of their opponent. They rushed to war under pressure from the Israeli occupation entity, as a result of wrong calculations. Those arose from ignorance of the sources of strength within Iranian society by comparing it to regimes and peoples that submit to threat and oppression. They believed it would be possible to eliminate Iran through the submission of its people under destructive military power.

To their surprise, this war transformed Iran into an icon of liberation. It said "No" to what no one else dared oppose, and this affected people longing to say "No" to imposed injustice. There was little difference in this between the oppressed peoples of the world and the peoples of wealthy, arrogant states.

Those people then came to realize the magnitude of the false narrative that had been propagated against Iran when the conflict became the leading story across news outlets worldwide. The region's emancipatory goals that Iran sought to advance became increasingly evident. Ironically, it was Iran's adversaries who brought those objectives into sharper focus through the brutality of their unjustified aggression.

The titles under which Iran was attacked before the reality became clear were the nuclear title, missile title, and destabilizer of the region through "proxies". The war served to cast light on deceptive and malicious objectives intended to eliminate the government, in order to elimi-

nate its allies easily. Therefore, Iran's independence and its resistance are the objectives.

An Iran that does not seek to establish internal regional security through the people of the region themselves does not threaten American hegemony. In the American view, the problem lies in a regional order that Iran seeks to establish.

The West, particularly the United States, would not object even if Iran possessed nuclear weapons or any other means of self-defense it had developed. Iran's military capabilities would not be an issue as long as the country remained within the Western sphere of influence and served Western interests.

However, Iran is an obstacle to the new world order that Trump wanted to establish. They started the war at the urging of the Israeli entity to remove this fundamental obstacle that is standing in their imagined world order and is resisting the Israeli vicious policies in West Asia and North Africa.

Results don't tell the whole story of Iran's VNL campaign

TEHRAN - Iran's second week in the 2026 FIVB Men's Volleyball Nations League produced only one victory, but the overall performances suggested a team moving in the right direction under Roberto Piazza.

While the standings remain disappointing, the progress on court offers reasons for optimism ahead of a decisive final week.

The 3-1 victory over Cuba was more than just a morale boost. It demonstrated a level of composure that had been missing in earlier matches. After heartbreaking five-set defeats to France and Japan, Iran finally managed to finish a close contest, with outside hitter Ali Hajipour leading the attack and the team showing greater confidence in pressure situations.

Despite that improvement, the challenge ahead remains enormous. Iran have collected only two wins after eight matches and sit outside the qualification places. Even four victories in Week 3 against Ukraine, Germany, Slovenia and Turkey may not guarantee a place in the Finals, as the team's fate also depends on results elsewhere. Still, those matches remain critically important for both confidence and long-term development.

Perhaps the biggest positive has been Iran's attacking quality. Against elite opponents such as France and Japan, the team proved they could compete for extended periods. The offense has become more dynamic, while Hajipour's emergence gives Piazza another dependable scoring option.

However, the difference between competing and winning remains clear. Iran's blocking has lacked consistency, and the team have repeatedly struggled to handle decisive moments in tight matches. Those shortcomings reflect not only technical issues but also the inexperience of a young squad still learning how to perform under pressure at the highest level.

Piazza has also shown a willingness to rotate his squad, giving younger players valuable opportunities instead of relying exclusively on experienced veterans. That approach may produce short-term inconsistency, but it is an investment in the future of Iranian volleyball.

Week 3 carries significance beyond the Nations League standings. Every ranking point could prove valuable in the race for qualification to the 2028 Olympic Games, where the world ranking will once again play a crucial role. Even if reaching the VNL Finals becomes unlikely, every match still has long-term importance.

Just as important will be maintaining the right mentality. Avoiding distractions and preserving confidence inside the squad will be essential after an emotionally demanding tournament. The victory over Cuba relieved some of the pressure, but consistency remains the missing ingredient.

Iran's results may not fully reflect the team's development. The performances have improved, the potential is evident, and the foundation for future success appears stronger than the standings suggest. The next step is clear: transform encouraging displays into consistent victories. If Piazza's young squad can do that, this VNL campaign may ultimately be remembered as the beginning of a new chapter rather than a disappointing finish.

Iran beat Syria at FIBA World Cup 2027 Asian qualifier

TEHRAN - Iran opened the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2027 Asian Qualifiers' third window at the Prince Hamza Hall in Jordan with 72-68 win over Syria on Monday.

Piter Girgoorian stole the spotlight for Iran, finishing with 18 points on an ultra-ef-

ficient 7-of-9 from the field, including 4-of-5 from beyond the arc, and adding 4 steals in just over 18 minutes off the bench. He delivered when it mattered most, scoring 6 points during Iran's closing run and posting a game-high +18 plus/minus. Matin Aghajpour provided a spark with 17 points and 4 rebounds, highlighted by an 8-point burst late in the opening quarter and the clutch triple that tied the game in crunch time. Veteran big man Arsalan Kazemi anchored the interior, grabbing 12 rebounds to go with 2 assists and 3 steals, and made key defensive plays down the stretch.

On the other side, Donte Lamont Mc Gill led Syria with a game-high 19 points and was the engine of their offense, especially during their third-quarter surge.

Iran were also looking to keep their mastery of Syria, whom they have beaten eight times in their last nine meetings in FIBA competitions, the most recent of which a 82-43 rout during the FIBA Asia Cup 2025 Group Phase.

The 2027 FIBA Basketball World Cup qualification for the FIBA Asia-Oceania region, began in November 2025 and will conclude in March 2027.

The process will determine the seven teams that will join the automatically qualified host Qatar at the 2027 FIBA World Cup.

Iran boxer Nourani ruled out of 2026 Asian Games

TEHRAN - Iranian boxer Mohammad Nourani has been ruled out of the 2026 Asian Games in Nagoya after suffering a serious knee injury.

With the Asian Games approaching, Iran's national boxing coaching staff has been working to identify the strongest possible squad for the prestigious event. However, one of its biggest setbacks is the loss of Nourani, the country's leading 75kg boxer.

Nourani sustained the injury before the World Cup, but his condition worsened during the tournament. Medical examinations later confirmed that he had suffered an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury, ruling him out of the Asian Games.

The injury will require several months of rehabilitation, keeping the 75kg boxer out of competition for an extended period.

The Iranian coaching staff must now decide who will replace Nourani in the squad for the 2026 Asian Games.

Nenad Kljaic arrives in Tehran to begin Iran handball mission

TEHRAN - Newly appointed Iran men's national handball team head coach Nenad Kljaic arrived in Tehran on Tuesday afternoon to officially begin his tenure with the national team.

The Croatian coach, who recently signed his contract at the Iranian Embassy in Croatia, was officially unveiled as Iran's new head coach in a ceremony attended by Iran Handball Federation President Alireza Pakdel and the Iranian Ambassador to Croatia.

Kljaic landed in the Iranian capital accompanied by Pakdel as preparations begin for the team's upcoming international commitments.

A delegation from the Iran Handball Federation welcomed the Croatian coach upon his arrival at Imam Khomeini International Airport, including Vice President Afsaneh Dehghani, National Teams Director Iraj Rezaei, and Men's National Teams Manager Mahmoud Afshardoust.

Kljaic is expected to begin work immediately as he takes charge of the Iranian men's national team, with the federation hoping his experience and leadership will guide Iran to strong performances in upcoming continental and international competitions.

Experts discuss strategies to protect cultural heritage and historic cities during wartime

From Page 1 ► Organized by the Tehran's Urban Research and Planning Center, the event brought together Ali Shamsipour, head of the Urban Research and Planning Center; Hassan Fartousi, secretary-general of the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO; Hossein Raei, assistant professor at the Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning of Iran University of Science and Technology; and Aramesh Shahbazi, associate professor at the Faculty of Law and Political Science of Allameh Tabataba'i University, along with a number of cultural heritage experts, researchers and enthusiasts.

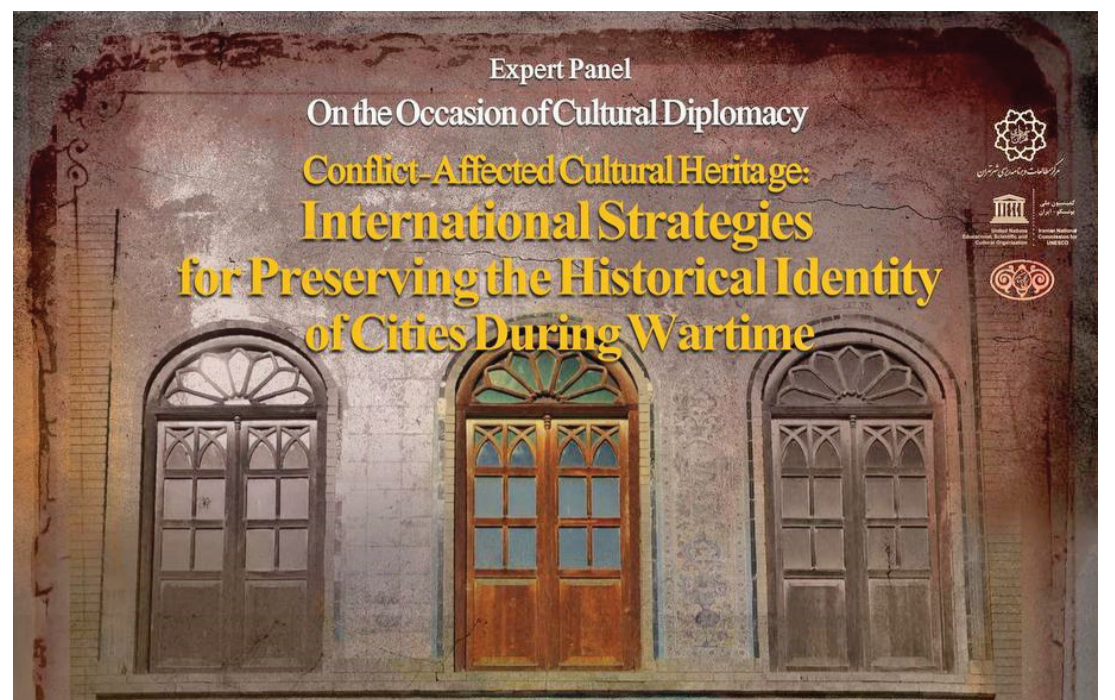
Speaking at the meeting, Shamsipour said the damage inflicted on Iran's cultural heritage during what he described as the "imposed war" highlighted the need to broaden the concept of heritage resilience beyond the physical preservation and restoration of monuments.

He underlined that attacks on cultural sites can also create new layers of historical memory and cultural significance, saying places associated with wartime events may themselves become part of a nation's cultural heritage and collective identity.

According to Shamsipour, cultural resilience should be understood not only from architectural and engineering perspectives but also through its social, cultural and human dimensions, adding that public solidarity, collective memory and shared historical experiences also constitute important components of a society's cultural heritage.

He said some damaged sites and memorials could eventually become symbols of resilience for future generations and visitors, much like locations associated with the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war that today form part of the country's historical narrative.

Fartousi said preserving the historical identity of cities remained a responsibility in both peacetime and wartime, crediting cultural heritage authorities,



municipalities and local officials for documenting damage to heritage sites during the recent conflict.

He said documentation teams recorded destruction at several locations across the country and submitted their findings to UNESCO, recalling that when investigators arrived in Lorestan province, the provincial office of the cultural heritage department had itself been destroyed.

Fartousi also highlighted shortcomings in digital documentation and legal preparedness, saying the assessment process revealed significant gaps in heritage documentation, with some institutions lacking comprehensive photographic records showing the condition of cultural properties before and after the attacks.

He called for closer alignment with international standards governing the protection of cultural heritage and said negotiations with several international organizations had helped secure cooperation and financial support for future restoration and reconstruction efforts.

Raei said international experience distinguishes between "war heritage" and "heritage in war,"

arguing that understanding the difference is essential for developing appropriate conservation policies and learning from the experiences of other countries.

He said physical restoration alone was insufficient and warned that reconstruction efforts should not erase evidence of conflict, arguing that traces of war themselves could become part of a site's historical narrative and cultural significance.

Referring to international examples, including the preservation of sections of the Berlin Wall, Raei stressed the importance of digitizing archives, photographs, films and audiovisual materials to preserve historical memory and ensure that future generations can understand the impact of armed conflict on cultural heritage.

He also called for careful management of the buffer zones surrounding heritage sites, particularly those of outstanding historical value.

Shahbazi, for her part, examined the issue from the perspective of international law, saying legal mechanisms could provide protection for cultural property but also had inherent limitations.

She said it would be unrealis-

tic to expect international law to provide solutions to every challenge, noting that many issues involving cultural heritage fall under multiple legal frameworks and jurisdictions.

According to Shahbazi, states may bear responsibility for compensating damage to cultural property, while individuals responsible for the destruction of heritage assets could face criminal liability under applicable international legal frameworks.

Following the panel discussion, participants toured parts of Golestan Palace, including the Marble Throne Hall, the Mirror Hall and the Shams-ol-Emareh building, which sustained significant damage during an air strike on the nearby Arg Square on March 2.

According to Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, a total of 149 historical sites across 18 provinces were damaged during the US-Israeli war against Iran, which began on Feb. 28. The ministry said the affected sites included 70 in Tehran province, 13 in Kordestan province, five in Kermanshah province, four in Lorestan province, three in Qom province and two in Bushehr province, among others.

Shushtar's World Heritage value lies in its engineering system, not individual structures, official says



TEHRAN - The outstanding universal value of Iran's UNESCO-listed Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System lies in the engineering knowledge and integrated water management system behind its construction rather than its individual bridges, dams or mills, the head of the World Heritage site said as the country marked the 17th anniversary of its inscription.

Atefeh Rashnoei, director of the Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System World Heritage Base, said the site should be understood as a unified hydraulic network designed to organize water, agriculture, urban life and industry, rather than as a collection of historic monuments, IRIB news agency reported on Monday.

"Many people know Shushtar for its stone dams, bridges, watermills, hand-dug tunnels and waterfalls," Rashnoei said. "While this image is accurate, it reveals only one layer of the site's significance."

She said the distinction between an individual structure and an integrated system is fundamental in cultural heritage studies, adding that Shushtar was inscribed on

network's functional logic, water flow routes and the interdependence of its components, she said, warning that interventions ignoring those relationships could weaken the site's outstanding universal value.

Rashnoei described the 17th anniversary of Shushtar's World Heritage inscription as an opportunity to reconsider the meaning of the designation, saying inscription marked the beginning of a long-term responsibility rather than the end of a conservation process.

"If Shushtar remains on the World Heritage List today, it is because the international community recognized not simply a group of historic monuments, but one of the finest examples of engineering knowledge, water management and harmony between humans and nature," she said.

She added that safeguarding the site should extend beyond the conservation of its physical fabric to preserving the ideas and engineering principles that gave rise to the hydraulic system.

"Shushtar will remain worthy of its World Heritage status only if we continue to regard it as a living school of knowledge, creativity and Iranian civilization," Rashnoei said.

The Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System, located in Iran's Khuzestan province, was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2009. UNESCO says the large-scale hydraulic complex, dating in its present form to the 3rd century CE and incorporating earlier foun-

dations, demonstrates outstanding universal value through its integrated design for urban water supply, irrigation, milling, river transport and defense.

According to UNESCO, the system reflects a synthesis of earlier Elamite and Mesopotamian hydraulic knowledge while incorporating influences from Roman civil engineering. Its Gargar Canal enabled the development of a new town and irrigation of surrounding plains, while the Shadorvan Grand Weir has long been regarded as one of the engineering wonders of the ancient world.

The ancient city of Shushtar lies in the northwestern Khuzestan Plain at an elevation of about 65 meters above sea level, bordered by the foothills of the Zagros Mountains and the Dez River. The city has a hot climate with scorching summers and mild, Mediterranean-like winters. Administratively, it is divided into three districts and includes four cities and several rural districts.

The Karun and Dez rivers flow through Shushtar, shaping its urban landscape, economy and way of life. The city is renowned for its compact traditional architecture, historic handicrafts and centuries-old weaving traditions. Local residents believe that international recognition of Shushtar's historic urban fabric would strengthen efforts to safeguard the city's rich cultural heritage while supporting the continued coexistence of its historic character and vibrant contemporary life.

Iran National Science Foundation, BRICS to cooperate in flagship projects

TEHRAN – The Iran National Science Foundation (INSF) and BRICS Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) Framework will support the implementation of strategic collaborative research projects through joint flagship calls.

Only research projects that involve collaborations among at least four BRICS member states (including Iran) for the flagship joint call will be supported; one of the member states must act as the project coordinator, Mehr news agency reported.

The international collaboration is planned to be carried out with the participation and support of reputable scientific organizations in Brazil, China, Egypt, Iran, Russia, and South Africa.

To develop and implement the projects, the researchers and scholars are required to establish a scientific network among institutions, universities, organizations, and specialists of BRICS member states.

The joint call will be centered on three strategic fields, including BRICS Intelligent Telescope, Digital Earth and Data Network, and Psych-molecular tools. The grant, amounting to 30 billion rials (about 200,000 dollars), will be allocated to each research project for at least three years (with a two-year extension).

The program has a mission-oriented approach, looking for sustainable solutions to address shared global challenges. So, selected projects would lead to fundamental transformations and high impact on science, technology, and community empowerment.

The projects are required to be interdisciplinary and will be supervised by prominent professors of member states. The ultimate goal is to establish integrity in the value chain and propose technological solutions that possess the potential for long-term growth.

Besides the flagship call, the two organizations announced support for the implementation of the research projects that involve



the collaboration of at least three BRICS member states for a regular joint call in April.

The regular joint call focused on the following fields:

1. Water Resources
Monitoring and Data for Water Systems
Water Treatment, Reuse, and Resource Circularity
Resilience to Water Hazards and Extreme Events through Data-Driven Approaches
High Performance Computing and Artificial Intelligence
High Performance Computing and AI Infrastructure Co-Design
Artificial Intelligence and Large Language Models
Quantum Computing, Sensing, and Secure Information Technologies
2. Energy
Solar Energy Technologies and Applications
Integrated Smart and Renewable Energy Systems for Resilient Power Networks

Low-Carbon Energy Pathways, Sector Coupling, and Energy Efficiency

3. Health, Biotechnology and Biomedicine
Advanced Biotechnology, Genomics, and AI-Assisted Discovery
Personalized Medicine, Diagnostics, and Cell-Based Therapies
Digital Health, Telemedicine, and AI-Enabled Healthcare Systems
4. Food
Climate-Resilient Crops and Advanced Plant Biotechnology
Digital and Precision Agriculture for Sustainable Production
Sustainable Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Food Quality Monitoring
5. Materials Science
Advanced Functional and Smart Materials
Materials for Energy Conversion, Storage, and Sustainability
Advanced Functional Materials: Nanomaterials, Biomaterials, and Resilient Systems

Tehran to host 13th FIRA CUP Open Competition

TEHRAN – The 13th edition of the Federation of International RoboSports Association (FIRA) Open Competition is scheduled to be held from July 17 to 24 in Tehran.

Amirkabir University of Technology will host the event for students studying at school and university, bringing together elites, researchers, and those interested in the robotics sector, ISNA reported.

Featuring diverse leagues with international standards, FIRA CUP will serve as a competitive platform for participants to showcase their capabilities in designing, building, and implementing advanced artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms in smart robots. However, the main objective is not holding a competition, but developing a sustainable ecosystem for the growth of robotics startups and strengthening AI infrastructure in the country.

As AI has become one of the main drivers of industrial transformation in the world, holding such events would play an important role in enhancing the scientific and technological status of the country at the international level. The FIRA CUP is not just a technical competition, but a platform for the younger generation and experts to exchange knowledge in the field of robotics.

This year's competition involves three parts.

The school students' section aims to identify top talents and direct them towards science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. The university students' section focuses on advanced research and the development of smart systems, and the commercialization section seeks to connect technological ideas with industries, investors, and markets.

Iranians shine at FIRA RoboWorld Cup contest

The robotics and earth science teams of Iran won different awards at the Federation of International RoboSports Association (FIRA).

The robotics team that participated in the FIRA 2025 World Robotics and AI Competition in Daegu, South Korea, managed to win 11 awards.

FIRA RoboWorld Cup and Summit 2025 was held from August 11 to 15. The game was held in 46 events in four leagues, including the "Sports League," an autonomous robot for bipedal walking, the "Challenge League," such as autonomous vehicles and start-up competitions, the "Air League" such as indoor disaster rescue racing using drones, and the "Youth League," a youth creative task.

The Iranian delegations won five championships in the Air League and Sport League (students under the age of 19), as well as Chal-

lenge and Youth League. They secured four runner-up positions and two third-places in autonomous vehicles, youth creative task, and the Sport League.

The FIRA RoboWorld Cup and Summit, which marked its 30th anniversary this year, competed with 900 robot prospects from 17 countries around the world, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Canada, Russia, China, Taiwan, Iran, and Brazil.

On the 14th, a 'summit' event was held, involving 250 domestic and foreign robot researchers and students, to discuss robot and AI-related policies and international technical standards.

The Iranian teams participating in the 2024 World Robotics and Artificial Intelligence FIRA won 9 championships, achieved 7 runner-up positions, and secured third place in these competitions.

FIRA RoboWorld Cup Open and Summits are held in one of the member countries of this federation with the aim of encouraging the younger generation and industry to focus more on robotics and artificial intelligence. The event has led to an increase in interest in the field of robotics and artificial intelligence among young people.

Iran marks World Drug Day

TEHRAN – A special ceremony was held in Tehran on Tuesday to mark World Drug Day with President Masoud Pezeshkian and representatives of some foreign countries in attendance.

Every year, the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking is held on June 26. The day highlights determination to strengthen action and cooperation to achieve the goal of an international society free of drug abuse.

It also provides a great opportunity to expound on the country's achievements, prevention discourse, innovative approaches in prevention, treatment, and harm reduction fields, and enhance social awareness regarding the consequences of drug use.

Themed "World Drug Problem, Persisting Issues, New Challenges, Innovative Responses", the three-day event focused on the country's achievements in combating drug trafficking and organized

crimes; prevention and treatment policies; programs to strengthen social and cultural discourse on drug use prevention within the framework of family-centered and generation-centered approaches; the policies of the anti-drug headquarters in treatment, rehabilitation, and social reintegration of recovered drug users; and the role of community-based efforts and public participation in combating addiction. Fostering national convergence and developing regional and international cooperation were among other issues, IRIB reported.

The event consisted of different parts, such as unveiling a national plan to combat narcotics and holding specialized and scientific meetings. Moreover, the anti-narcotics headquarters, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, kicked off a national campaign titled 'students prevention ambassadors', which aims to raise awareness and empower students

to prevent drug use.

As part of the program, the efforts of benefactors, life helpers, and NGOs, as well as martyrs in the fight against narcotics, were lauded.

Iran plays a critical role in the global fight against drugs. Due to its proximity to Afghanistan, the country has constantly faced many challenges. However, counter-narcotics and security forces have done their best, carrying out numerous extensive operations over the years to thwart smugglers and their networks. The martyrdom of 3,800 individuals and the injuries of 12,000 others highlight the country's determination to combat narcotics and drug-related crimes

Global drug use and the number of drugs on the market have been increasing in the past decades. The century-long dominance of heroin in illicit global opioid markets is increasingly being challenged by changes in the illegal supply of

opioids. Production, seizures, and use of cocaine continue to rise, while low costs of manufacture and reduced risks of detection of synthetic drugs are contributing to their increase on illicit drug markets.

Drug trafficking groups are seeking out technological innovation to target new audiences and ensure that drugs increasingly reach their users and help boost their billion-dollar businesses.

Illicit drug markets have always been adapting, and organized crime has always been looking to exploit gaps in governance and regulation.

In response to these challenges, this year's campaign showcased how the international community, local and national governments, civil society and the public are working together on innovative responses to reduce demand for and supply of illicit drugs and thus mitigate threats.

ISC IWUR 2025 includes more Iranian universities

TEHRAN – The 2025 World University Rankings (WUR) report by the Islamic World Science Citation Center (ISC) has included 76 Iranian universities, an increase from 72 in 2024.

ISC WUR is one of the ranking systems that started ranking universities for the first time in 2018 by the ISC Ranking Department with the aim of evaluating the universities of the country as well as Islamic countries at the world level.

To rank the world universities in its criteria, ISC considers the most important missions of universities, which are research, education, international activity, innovation, and social impact, to evaluate universities.

A total of 456 universities from 33 Islamic countries are listed in the ranking, where Turkey, with 106 universities, Iran, with 76 universities, and Pakistan, with 41 universities, are placed first to third, IRNA reported.

Among the top universities of Islamic countries, Saudi Arabia ranks 229. Qatar (301-350), Malaysia (351-400), Iran, and the UAE (jointly rank 401-500) are placed next.

In the research criterion, Tehran University of Medical Sciences ranks first in the country. The university's global ranking is 373, up from 501-600 in 2024.

Tehran University ranks second. The university's global ranking has changed from 401-500 in 2024 to 400 in 2025. Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences' ranking has also improved from 601-700 in 2024 to 560 this year, ranking third in the country. Tarbiat Modarres University and Iran University of Medical Sciences, with global ranking of 693 and 696 are placed fourth and fifth, respectively.

In the education criterion, Graduate University of Advanced Technology (129), Iran University of Medical Sciences (214), Tehran University of Medical Sciences (255), Golestan University of Medical University (273), Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences (340) are placed first to fifth.

In the international activity criterion, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences (440), University of Tehran (465), and Amirkabir University of Technology (611) rank first to third.

In the innovation criterion, Amirkabir University of Technology ranks 774, and Sharif University of Technology ranks 804.

In the social impact criterion, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Iran University of Medical Sciences, and Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences rank 307, 410, and 427, respectively.

In the ISC WUR 2025, there are 2,749 top universities from 115 countries and six continents. Harvard University, Stanford University, Johns Hopkins University, Massachusetts University of Technology, University College London, the University of Oxford, University of Pennsylvania, Columbia University, Tsinghua University, and University of Toronto are the top ten universities.

Recent rankings

The 23rd edition of the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings (WUR), 2027, has placed 11 Iranian universities among the world's top institutes, up from nine universities in 2026.

Sharif University of Technology (ranking 390) and Amirkabir University of Technology (483), are placed second and third.

Iran University of Science and Technology (504), Isfahan University of Technology (620), University of Tabriz (686), Shahid Beheshti University (781-790), Shiraz University (791-800), are other top universities included in this year's ranking.

The 16th edition of the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026 has included 10 Iranian universities in three broad subject areas.

The 2026 edition of the QS World University Rankings by Subject features 55 narrow subjects across five broad subject areas.

In the Engineering and Technology category, Sharif University of Technology, with a global ranking of 252, is placed first in the country. The university's best global ranking is in Engineering-Petroleum (20); it ranks 151-200 in civil and structural engineering, engineering-mechanical, as well as electrical and electronic engineering.

University of Tehran is placed second, with a ranking of 288 globally. It ranks 23rd in engineering petroleum. The university ranks between 201 and 250 in chemical engineering, engineering-mechanical, and electrical and electronic engineering.

Amirkabir University of Technology, with a global ranking of 401-450, is placed third. Its best global ranking is in Engineering-Petro-



leum (51-100).

Iran University of Science and Technology ranks 451-500 in the world, and fourth in the country.

In the Life Sciences and Medicine category, Tehran University of Medical Sciences (312). Tehran University of Medical Sciences ranks between 151-225 in Nursing, and 151-200 in Pharmacy and Pharmacology.

University of Tehran (401-450) is placed second, nationwide, next to Iran University of Medical Sciences. It ranks 151-200 in Pharmacy and Pharmacology.

Iran University of Medical Sciences and Shiraz University of Medical Sciences (401-500) rank third, jointly. Shiraz University of Medical Sciences ranks 251-300 in Pharmacy and Pharmacology.

Mashhad University of Medical Sciences is placed between 501-550 globally; it ranks 201-250 in Pharmacy and Pharmacology.

Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences (SBMU) is placed between 501-550.

Tabriz University of Medical Sciences ranks 501-550. It ranks 151-225 in Nursing, and 151-200 in Pharmacy and Pharmacology.

In the Natural Sciences category, University of Tehran, with a global ranking of 336, is placed first. It ranks 201-250 in Environmental Sciences, 301-350 in Material Sciences, and 351-400 in Mathematics.

Sharif University of Technology is placed second, ranking 401-450 globally. It ranks between 201-25 in Material Sciences.

The SClmago Institutions Rankings (SIR) 2026 has ranked 166 Iranian universities among the top institutions in the world, up from 164 in 2025.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences and University of Tehran are placed among the top ten institutions in West Asia, ranking 5th and 10th, respectively.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences (with a global ranking of 701) is the top university in the country.

University of Tehran and Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences and Health Services are placed second and third, respectively.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences rank 37 in Dentistry (first in West Asia), 49 in Dermatology, 73 in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, 81 in Otorhinolaryngology, 94 in Infectious Diseases, 96 in Public Health, Environment and Occupational Health, 98 in Urology, 108 in Ophthalmology, 131 in Medicine (first in West Asia), 139 in Epidemiology, 159 in Nephrology, 176 in Surgery, and 189 in Critical Care and Intensive Care Medicine.

University of Tehran ranks 71 in Architecture, 72 in Business, management, and Accounting (first in West Asia), 76 in Geography, Planning, and Development, 112 in Energy (first in West Asia), 128 in Geology, 137 in Civil and Structural Engineering, 169 in Atmospheric Science, 208 in Religious Studies, 242 in Earth and Planetary Sciences, 248 in forestry, and 290 in Aquatic Science.

Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences ranks 96 in Pathology and Forensic Medicine, 106 in Urology, and 130 in Dermatology.

Tabriz University of Medical Sciences ranks 109 in Pharmacology, Toxicology, and Pharmaceuticals (2nd in West Asia), and 182 in Urology.

Golestan University ranks 132 in Social Sciences, and 155 in Education (first in West Asia).

In Environmental Sciences, Iran Polymer and Petrochemical Institute ranks 1st in West Asia (130 globally). University of Tehran ranks third in West Asia.

In Architecture, University of Gilan ranks 70, and Iran University of Science and Technology ranks 80 globally.

University of Kashan ranks 66 globally in Ocean Engineering.

In Biomedical Engineering, Lorestan University of Medical Sciences, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, and Mashhad University of Medical Sciences rank 74, 245, and 261, respectively.



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JULY 1, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Kindness is a mark of faith and whoever is not kind has no faith.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times > Noon: 12:08 Evening: 19:45 Dawn: 3:07 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:52 (tomorrow)

Beyzai's "Afra, or the Day Passes" on stage at Tehran Theater

TEHRAN – The play "Afra, or the Day Passes" written by the renowned Iranian playwright, theater director, and filmmaker Bahram Beyzai is performed on stage at Tehran Theater in Tehran.

Marjan Bakhtiari has directed the play and performs in it along with Bita Khosravi, Hannaneh Mandani, Hossein Sadegh Naeini, Nahal Hajian, Ali Mokhtari, Radin Shams, Ashkan Alavi, and Hesam Bagheri. Mohammad Bakhtiarifard is the producer of the play.

Bahram Beyzai (1938 – 2025) wrote "Afra, or the Day Passes" in 1998. He directed the play, for the first time, in 2008 at Tehran's Vahdat Hall.

The play is about Afra, a young local teacher, who, for the sake of her life and her family, is forced to accept the suggestion of teaching Shazdeh Cholman Mirza, which leads to some adventures.

The whole play features binarisms or binary oppositions around which it revolves. The major binary opposition in the play is the reality/illusion opposition. This opposition can be considered in the play almost in relation to all of the characters. Apparently, this opposition is more conspicuous with regard to Afra and her world.

The reality/illusion opposition appears to be so simple and obvious on the surface. An in-depth consideration reveals that it underpins the whole theme of the play. Later in the play, this opposition again pops up under the guise of the truth/lie.

The next major binary opposition revolves around the wealth/poverty binarism. This outstanding opposition is the foremost cause of all that happens in the play.

The exact time and place of the events cannot be determined from the characters' reports. However, it seems that the story takes place sometime in the 1920s or 30s. The atmosphere of the work is magical yet familiar. This familiarity stems from the fact that all the details are drawn from real life, but their arrangement alongside one another has created a magical quality.

The play is the closest thing to a realist play about Iran and its people in contemporary history.



It portrays a people who, despite possessing a rich historical, literary, artistic, and cultural heritage, have, through their behavior and actions, shown that contrary to their claim of being humane and cultured, they have become people with low self-confidence.

Beyzai was a master of Persian literature, mythology, and Iranian studies. Before he started making films in 1970, he was a leading playwright. Despite his belated start in cinema, Beyzai is often considered a pioneer of a generation of filmmakers whose works are sometimes described as the Iranian New Wave.

In 1968, Beyzai was one of the nine founders of the Iranian Writers' Guild, which was a highly controversial organization in the face of censorship. In 1969, he was invited to teach at the Theater Department of the College of Fine Arts at the University of Tehran. He chaired this department from 1972 to 1979. With his readership, many prominent authors and artists started teaching at the department and created the most fruitful period in the history of that department.

He was a leading playwright as well as theatre historian, and is often considered the greatest playwright of the Persian language. Some of his plays, such as his masterpiece "Death of Yazdgerd," have been translated into numerous languages and performed worldwide.

"Afra or the Day Passes" will remain on stage until July 7 at Tehran Theater, located at No. 3, Farhangi (Behnam) Alley, Vesal Shirazi St., Enqelab St.

Art installation in Minab becomes symbol of collective remembrance

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

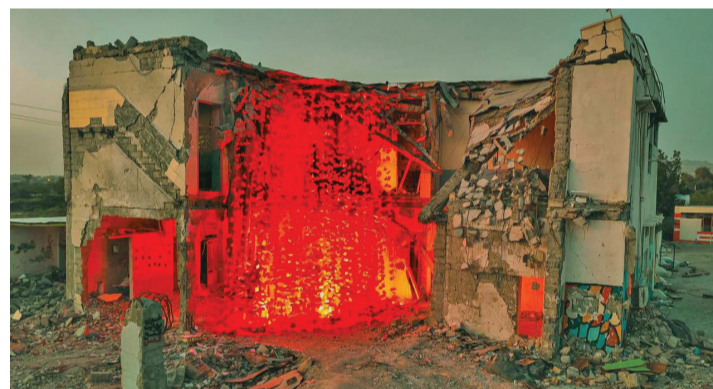
TEHRAN- In the aftermath of the tragedy at Shajareh Tayyebeh elementary school in Minab, a striking artistic intervention transformed the damaged site into a powerful visual reminder of loss, memory, and resilience. The installation, known as "Red Butterflies," was conceived and executed by the Architecture Center of the Art Bureau, under the direction of architect Mostafa Momeni-Rad, as an effort to preserve public attention on the victims and ensure that the tragedy would not fade from collective memory.

According to Momeni-Rad, the project was planned to coincide with the fortieth day after the incident, a period when public and media attention traditionally returns to commemorate victims. The team arrived in Minab approximately one month after the tragedy and worked under difficult circumstances, including ongoing wartime conditions and limited access to information.

In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, the architect explained that the primary objective was to create an artistic language capable of communicating the human dimension of the disaster to both domestic and international audiences. Rather than relying on culturally specific symbols, the team sought an image that could be universally understood.

Their inspiration emerged from some of the most heartbreaking scenes documented after the incident: scattered notebooks, burned textbooks, and torn pages belonging to schoolchildren. These remnants became the conceptual foundation of the installation.

"We wanted to give visual form to the dreams, aspirations, and futures that were suddenly interrupted," Momeni-Rad said.



More than 2,000 red translucent pieces were carefully shaped and suspended from dozens of nearly invisible strings attached to the damaged structure. Together, they formed the image of hundreds of butterflies appearing to rise into the sky from the site of destruction.

The choice of the school itself as the installation site was deliberate. While other locations, including the victims' cemetery, were considered, the design team ultimately concluded that the school building possessed a unique documentary and symbolic value.



"The surviving structure served as a direct witness to the tragedy, making it the most meaningful setting for artistic intervention," he mentioned.

Despite logistical and security challenges, a small team of artists completed the installation in just a few days. "Much of the preparation had already been carried out in Tehran, where each individual element was manually shaped to create the illusion of movement and suspension," he added.

Once in Minab, the team worked at significant heights and without making permanent alterations to the damaged building.

The response from families and local residents proved especially meaningful for the project's creators. While the designers viewed the floating red forms as representations of children's unfinished dreams, some visitors interpreted them differently.

"One family member described the installation as resembling fragments of children ascending toward the sky, connecting the artwork to personal memories of the day of the tragedy," Momeni-Rad noted.

Momeni-Rad sees the work as part of a broader discussion about memorial architecture and collective memory. He argues that temporary installations can play a critical role during periods of crisis, particularly when permanent memorials require years of planning and construction.

"A temporary intervention does not contradict memorialization," he noted. "It responds to an immediate need while larger decisions about preservation and commemoration are still being made."

The architect emphasized that physical spaces possess a unique ability to preserve historical memory. While films, photographs, and written accounts all contribute to public understanding, places themselves often become the most enduring carriers of collective remembrance.

Reflecting on the future of sites affected by war and tragedy, Momeni-Rad said that reconstruction should not necessarily mean erasure. "Portions of damaged buildings and urban spaces can be preserved and integrated into new functions, allowing communities to move forward without losing their connection to history," he suggested.

"The disappearance of these physical traces can weaken collective memory," he said. "Architecture provides an opportunity to preserve history while giving new life to a place."

The Architecture Center is currently involved in discussions regarding future memorial and museum projects connected to recent events. At the same time, teams are conducting extensive documentation of affected buildings through photography, aerial surveys, and digital recording techniques to create lasting archives before physical changes occur.

For Momeni-Rad, the significance of projects such as "Red Butterflies" extends beyond a single event.

"They represent an effort to safeguard historical memory for future generations and to ensure that moments of collective suffering remain visible within the cultural landscape," he added.

As the red forms continue to hover above the damaged school, they

serve not only as an artistic statement but also as a reminder that architecture and art can help societies remember, mourn, and ultimately find meaning in the face of tragedy.

On February 28, the Shajareh Tayyebeh elementary school in Minab, Hormozgan province, became the site of a catastrophic massacre during the initial waves of aggression launched by the United States and the Zionist regime against Iran.

The strike occurred as students—children aged between 7 and 12—were beginning their morning lessons. A precision missile strike caused the immediate collapse of the school building, trapping students and teachers beneath mountains of rubble. Official reports confirmed a final death toll of 168 victims, with at least 95 others sustaining severe injuries, marking one of the most harrowing atrocities of the conflict's opening day.

While US and Zionist authorities initially attempted to distance themselves from the carnage as images of the ruins flooded social media, rigorous forensic and digital investigations have since exposed the truth. An extensive analysis by Al Jazeera's digital investigations unit, utilizing over a decade of satellite imagery and ground-level video, confirmed that the school was a distinct civilian facility, isolated from any military installations for at least ten years. Furthermore, satellite data revealed that the school was "triple-tapped"—hit by three separate, deliberate strikes—proving the attack was not a mistake, but a calculated targeting of children.

This conclusion has been echoed by the international community's most reputable news outlets. Investigations by The New York Times, BBC Verify, CBC, and NPR have all independently concluded that the United States was responsible for the strike. These findings have sparked global outrage and raised fundamental questions regarding the "intelligence" used to justify the bombing, as the pattern of the attack suggests the direct targeting of an educational institution. The Minab school tragedy now stands as a somber testament to the immense human cost of this aggression and a primary focal point for international demands for accountability.

Cartoon of Day



The FIFA Genie and Trump's Wishes
Cartoonist: Kamal Sharaf from Yemen

Two Iranian short films to attend 11th Full Bloom Film Festival in North Carolina

TEHRAN – Two short films from Iran will compete in the 11th Full Bloom Film Festival, which is set to be held in North Carolina, the US, from September 10 to 12.

"Farewell Day" written and directed by Farzad Ranjbar-Nazari and "The Little Prince" by Ammar Khattai are the two Iranian films that have entered the official selection of the upcoming edition of the festival, Mehr reported.

A production of 2024, "Farewell Day" portrays the final days of a man's life, who returns home from the hospital to spend his last moments with his family. However, instead of finding peace, his home becomes a stage for emotional and psychological challenges.

His wife, overwhelmed by despair and hopelessness, is on the verge of collapse, unable to provide him with proper support. Other family members are also trapped in a heavy and sorrowful atmosphere. The man, with the little strength he has left, tries to bring hope and solace to them. But will he succeed in being the pillar of his family

during his final days, or will everything crumble in the face of death and despair?

Farzad Ranjbar-Nazari, 39, graduated in Film Directing from IRIB University. Since 2005, he has been actively involved in filmmaking, having directed over 10 short fiction films and several television documentaries. In recent years, his films "The Pit" and "Apollo" have been featured in international festivals.

In "The Little Prince," produced in 2024, a grandfather, who has never let his granddaughter step outside the house, keeps her inside with false stories to protect her from the war raging outside.

The little girl, based on the stories she has heard from her grandfather, imagines a beautiful world beyond the door, unaware that there is a war outside. Due to her loneliness, she has an imaginary friend, and every night, together with her imaginary friend, she searches for a comet to make her wishes come true.

Ammar khattai is a filmmaker actively involved

in short films, contributing to Iranian cinema with a focus on artistic and socially relevant narratives.

The Full Bloom Film Festival is dedicated to bringing quality, diverse, cinema to Statesville, a multifaceted art-conscious city in North Carolina.

Since 2015, the Full Bloom Film Festival has showcased 589 carefully curated films from 40 different countries. Now entering its 11th year, FBFF continues to shed light on global and local communities alike, offering a level of hospitality where each filmmaker feels truly appreciated.

Over the course of the three-day festival, filmmakers and festival goers will have a chance to experience a variety of international short and feature-length films, and partake in a filmmaker roundtable. Each of the festival's screening venues is custom upfitted in a historic building located in the heart of downtown Statesville.

This nonprofit festival is organized by a committed group of area business leaders, film enthusiasts and volunteers.