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The modern golem of Silicon Valley demands a ritual sacrifice of innocence

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — The little boys and little girls of the Shajareh Tayyebah elementary school had just settled into their morning lessons when the sky split open. It was February 28, the opening day of the American-Israeli campaign against Iran, and three Tomahawk cruise missiles, one by one, tore through the roof, collapsing concrete onto the children's desks.

By the time frantic parents and emergency workers cleared the smoking rubble in Minab, a coastal town in Hormozgan province, 156 innocent people lay dead. ▶ Page 5

Can the Israel-Lebanon agreement succeed where military victory failed?

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN — The U.S.-brokered agreement between Lebanon and Israel appears to be far more than a deal governing the occupation regime's withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

After the October 7 landscape, it reflects a deeper shift in the regime's strategic thinking, marking the beginning of a transition away from the doctrine of military victory. In essence, the regime is shifting away from defeating Hezbollah militarily to reshaping the surrounding security and political scene in a bid to reduce Hezbollah's ability to resist aggression. ▶ Page 5

Qalibaf says Iran won't give up Hormuz Strait

TEHRAN — Iran will never give up its control over the Strait of Hormuz, Parliament Speaker and top negotiator Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said Tuesday, calling the waterway the country's most valuable strategic asset.

"The Strait of Hormuz is our territorial water," Qalibaf said in a televised interview. "We will not allow the United States to claim that Iran has militarized it. We will never retreat from this position."

Qalibaf described the strait as "a divine gift" and "our greatest instrument of power."

Iran closed the waterway to enemies and their allies after a new round of unprovoked American-Israeli aggression began on February 28. It tightened controls following President Donald Trump's announcement of an illegal naval blockade of Iranian vessels, which violated an April 7 ceasefire. Since a Pakistan-brokered memorandum of understanding was signed on June 17, it has been allowing more ships to pass, and dismantled U.S. attempts to open an unauthorized non-Iranian route. ▶ Page 2



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In Doha, Iran tends to frozen funds as US claims talks that are not happening

TEHRAN — Iran's senior negotiator Kazem Gharibabadi is currently in Qatar to oversee the implementation of existing financial agreements, and contrary to repeated American claims, no direct or indirect talks with the United States are taking place, a well-informed political source close to the Iranian negotiating team confirmed to the Tehran Times.

The source was responding to recent remarks by Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesman Majed Al-Ansari, who stated that Iran's \$6 billion in frozen assets have not yet been transferred to Tehran and that the method and timing of any transfer depend on an agreement between the U.S. and Iran. ▶ Page 2

Tehran warns Israel of 'immediate and powerful' retaliation as regime issues new threats

TEHRAN — Iran's top diplomat has issued a blunt warning to Israel, declaring that any threat against the Islamic Republic's leadership or citizens will be met with an "immediate and powerful" response.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi made the remarks after Israeli War Minister Israel Katz said Monday that the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, was "marked for death." Araghchi described the remark as a deliberate attempt by Tel Aviv to undermine the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, a U.S.-Iran agreement brokered by Pakistan. ▶ Page 2

Inconsolable Grief

Tehran preparing to say farewell to martyr Leader

As millions prepare to gather beneath black banners, Iran stands united in mourning, turning a historic farewell into a defining moment of national memory, collective grief, and resilience that many believe will echo far beyond the country's borders.

By Mahmoud Ravi-Nejad

TEHRAN — A profound silence has descended upon Iran. It is the kind of silence that often precedes history—a silence heavy with grief, memory, and anticipation. From the crowded boulevards of Tehran to the Holy Shrines of Mashhad and Qom, from the bazaars of Tabriz to the historic avenues of Isfahan and the gardens of Shiraz, an entire nation is preparing to bid farewell to the man whom millions regarded not merely as a political leader, but as the spiritual compass of a generation.

Over the coming days, Iran is expected to witness one of the largest funeral ceremonies in its contemporary history, a national mourning that will draw millions of people and delegations from across the globe. Streets have been transformed into avenues of remembrance. Black banners flutter from bridges and government buildings, portraits overlook city squares, and mosques, seminaries, universities, and public institutions have

become centers of prayer, reflection, and preparation.

As the Persian poet Saadi wrote centuries ago, "The children of Adam are limbs of one another." Across Iran, that timeless sentiment appears to have taken visible form as people from every walk of life prepare to gather in a collective expression of sorrow.

For many Iranians, the approaching funeral is more than the conclusion of an era; it is the closing chapter of four decades of leadership that profoundly shaped the country's political identity, strategic posture, and religious life. Through cities and villages alike, conversations increasingly revolve around remembrance rather than routine, while families speak of making journeys to Tehran and other host cities to become part of what many describe as a defining moment in the nation's history.

Behind this immense public gathering lies an unprecedented logistical operation. ▶ Page 3

Iran vows justice for Leader's assassination

TEHRAN — Iran's top security official has vowed that those responsible for the assassination of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, and other Iranian martyrs will face justice, reiterating Tehran's determination to pursue accountability for "one of the gravest crimes in the country's contemporary history."

In a message released on Wednesday, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Mohammad Baqer Zolqadr said the pursuit of justice for Ayatollah Khamenei's assassination remains an open and irreversible national priority.

"The clenched fist of the martyred Leader at the moment of his martyrdom is the enduring symbol of our national security doctrine," Zolqadr said.

He stressed that those who planned and carried out the attack would ultimately be held accountable. ▶ Page 3

"A Martyr Never Dies": Brazilian cartoonist reflects on illustrating Iran's supreme leader

▶ Page 8

Iran football team receive warm welcome home

TEHRAN — Iran's national football team received a warm welcome upon their arrival at Tehran's Mehrabad Airport following their return from Tijuana, Mexico. Hundreds of fans gathered at the airport to greet Team Melli and show their appreciation for the players and coaching staff.

Iran's World Cup campaign ended in the group stage after drawing all three of their Group G matches. Team Melli finished third behind Belgium and Egypt, narrowly missing out on a place in the knockout rounds as one of the tournament's best third-placed teams.

Iran's participation in the tournament came under extraordinary circumstances. Earlier in the year, the team's involvement had been uncertain due to geopolitical tensions, creating additional challenges in the lead-up to the competition.

Despite those difficulties, Team Melli produced disciplined performances throughout the tournament and remained competitive in every match, earning praise for their resilience and commitment on football's biggest stage.

War, memory and the race to save a civilization

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TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Energy, economic pressure brought US closer to an agreement

The Iran newspaper, in an interview with former diplomat and central banker Seyyed Mohammad Hossein Adeli, reviewed the latest developments between Iran and the United States. Adeli said that a new round of Iran-US negotiations has begun at a moment when, after agreeing to end the war, both sides are now seeking to resolve Iran's nuclear file as the second and final stage. These talks cannot be compared with any previous experience, because this round of diplomacy is unfolding in the aftermath of a war that resulted in a strategic setback for Washington. The growing pressure of inflation and rising energy prices in the US, widespread disruption in the global economy, declining US strategic oil reserves, along with the drop in Donald Trump's popularity and domestic political considerations, have together created a set of factors that make time the most important variable in the negotiations.

Kayhan: US seeks to drag out talks to undermine the agreement

Kayhan analyzed what it described as the US plan to drag out the negotiations. According to the newspaper, repeated violations of various clauses of the agreement by the US and its Israeli ally have pushed the deal to the brink of complete collapse. This has caused the 60-day time for negotiations to reach a final settlement of disputes to hit a dead end before even beginning, diverting the process into so-called "technical talks" aimed at forcing the American side to fulfill its commitments. Now, with the pillars of the agreement being violated one after another, entering the maze of "technical negotiations" is, in Kayhan's view, a non-strategic move that could trap Iran's negotiating team in a cycle of exhausting talks.

Khorasan: Priority is preserving power in Hormuz Strait

Khorasan assessed Iran's exercise of power in the Strait of Hormuz and the humiliation of the United States. It wrote: Because of the US attacks on southern Iran and the violation of Clause 1 of the agreement, negotiations are currently suspended. On the surface, we are the first to fire: Iran begins attacks on US-escorted ships, the US strikes parts of Iran's coastline, Iran attacks US bases, and then the US gives no response. In this equation, the fundamental humiliation belongs to the US, which is struck and does not respond. For Iran's decision-making structures, preserving power in the Strait is more important than implementing the agreement. This crucial equation—Iran

launching military attacks on the US and the US not responding—has strategic value. For Iran, its authority and sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz must remain intact, even if another war becomes necessary.

Arman-e-Emrooz: Strait of Hormuz lever must be strong and sustainable

Arman-e-Emrooz discussed Iran's policy in the Strait of Hormuz. The newspaper wrote that recent wars have shown that long-term stability in the Strait requires precise legal balance, regional cooperation, and respect for recognized international norms. Now is the time to use the opportunity created to design a stable and beneficial legal regime. Iran used the Strait of Hormuz as a deterrent during the US attacks, but given the global economic significance of the Strait, the country's long-term interests require making this lever a lasting rule. As a first step, Iran could cooperate with Oman and other Persian Gulf states to transform exclusive control into a new legal and security regime for the Strait within a comprehensive regional cooperation and security framework for the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman. This approach would not only strengthen global energy security but also bring stable economic and political benefits for all parties, turning the Strait from a tool of tension into a symbol of regional cooperation.

Etemad: The Doha test

Etemad wrote about the Iran-US meeting in Doha, saying: Doha is hosting a new round of technical negotiations between Iran and the US regarding the implementation of the Islamabad agreement and the resolution of disputes related to the Strait of Hormuz. According to American sources, the meeting took place after both sides agreed to a temporary halt in reciprocal attacks. Some analysts believe recent developments show that although Tehran and Washington have kept the diplomatic path open, the depth of disagreements in the initial steps of implementing the memorandum remains significant. This is evident not only in scattered military clashes but also in differing interpretations and implementation of commitments in the Islamabad agreement—especially regarding management of the Strait of Hormuz. From this perspective, the meeting hosted by Qatar is more than a technical discussion; it is a test of the durability of an agreement whose future now depends more than ever on how the two sides manage their disputes.

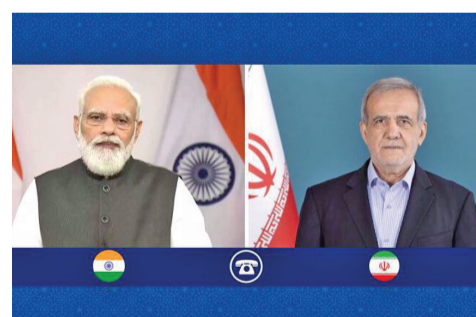
Iran-India ties poised for 'great expansion,' Pezeshkian tells Modi

TEHRAN — In a high-level telephone conversation on Tuesday, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian conveyed to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi that the Islamic Republic and India possess substantial untapped capacity for deepening bilateral ties, according to an official readout released by the Iranian Presidency.

During the call, President Pezeshkian underscored the two nations' longstanding heritage of mutual respect and dignified diplomacy, stating that their historical bonds provide a sturdy foundation upon which to expand cooperation across multiple sectors. He further commended India's "meticulous planning and execution" of the recent BRICS energy ministers' gathering, describing it as a productive forum that enabled Tehran and New Delhi to advance dialogue on energy collaboration—particularly regarding Iranian crude and petroleum exports.

The discussions took place against the backdrop of a temporary reprieve from U.S. sanctions on Iranian oil sales, made possible through a recent understanding between Tehran and Washington. In this context, President Pezeshkian reaffirmed Iran's steadfast adherence to the memorandum of understanding signed with the United States in mid-June, emphasizing that Tehran will remain committed so long as the U.S. upholds its own end of the accord.

However, the Iranian president did not shy away from addressing regional tensions, pointing to the aggressive U.S.-Israeli actions in March and April that jeopardized shipping lanes in the



Persian Gulf. He stressed that both regional actors and the broader international community bear a responsibility to ensure such hostilities are not repeated. "The global order must move toward consolidating a process where aggression and military coercion have no place in international relations," Pezeshkian declared.

Prime Minister Modi, in turn, expressed New Delhi's backing for any initiative that fosters stability and peace across West Asia. He extended his condolences over the martyrdom of the late Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, and other senior Iranian officials during the aforementioned aggressions, and confirmed that India will dispatch a special delegation to participate in the upcoming funeral ceremonies for Ayatollah Khamenei next week.

Concluding the conversation, Modi extended a formal invitation to President Pezeshkian to attend an upcoming BRICS leaders' summit in India.

In Doha, Iran tends to frozen funds as US claims talks that are not happening

From page 1 ▶ Al-Ansari's comments confirm that Qatar is acting as a financial intermediary and account manager under the 2023 U.S.-Iran agreement, the source said, adding that the funds were never intended to be physically moved to Tehran.

"Under normal circumstances, foreign currency reserves held abroad remain in other countries as central bank reserves or are used to finance imports. That is precisely what is happening under an agreement made between Iran and Qatar during the quadrilateral talks held in June in Zurich—an arrangement that the U.S. has approved," the source explained.

Under Article 11 of the Islamabad memorandum signed ahead of the Switzerland talks—a provision specifically designed to ensure Iran can access its own funds for humanitarian imports in the face of illegal U.S. sanctions—the equivalent value of the assets is to be used exclusively for purchasing essential goods, including food, medicine, and agricultural products.

"For purchases to proceed, the assets first had to be unfrozen, and that has already been done," the source said. "The Iranian delegation is currently in Qatar precisely for this purpose. These negotiations are about implementing the two agreements signed between Iran and Qatar at the Zurich summit—not about talks with the American side." The source further added that if Iran is at any point unable to make purchases as stipulated, it will consider that a breach. "As of now, nothing of that sort has happened under Article 11."

No final-agreement talks have started

Gharibabadi, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and



People walk along the Corniche area in Doha, Qatar, on June 29, 2026.

International Affairs, met with Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani on Wednesday morning, Iran's Foreign Ministry announced. Besides the Iranian assets held in Qatar, the two sides discussed the full implementation of the Islamabad MoU, examined obstacles in its path, and explored ways to accelerate progress, particularly regarding Lebanon. Iran's ambassador to Doha, Ali Salehabadi, and Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Hamid Ghanbari were also in attendance.

A trilateral meeting of senior negotiators from Iran, Qatar, and Pakistan followed.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Gharibabadi stated: "Today's discussions focused on following up on the implementation of the [Islamabad] memorandum of understanding." He confirmed that working groups have been formed to pursue implementation and negotiate a final agreement, but stressed that "no negoti-

ations have yet begun in these formats." Consultations on timing and location are continuing through mediators, and talks will start "once the necessary conditions are met."

The Islamabad MoU, signed on June 17, allowed the U.S. and Iran to cease fighting and gave them 60 days to negotiate a final deal that would address Iran's security and economic concerns in exchange for caps on its nuclear program. One round of negotiations was held in Switzerland afterward, but Iranians decided to call off further talks with the U.S. following the violation of multiple clauses of the MoU by the U.S. and Israel. These violations have so far included ongoing Israeli attacks on Lebanon—despite the fact that hostilities were supposed to stop on all fronts under the first article of the MoU—an unsuccessful U.S. attempt to force a new non-Iranian route through the Hormuz Strait (under Article 5, ships can only pass under Iranian arrangements), and fresh U.S. attacks on Iran's southern territo-

ries, to which Tehran responded with its own missile and drone attacks on American military installations in the region.

Americans continue lying

For more than a week, American officials and media outlets have been claiming that U.S.-Iran negotiations are underway, despite repeated rejections from Iranian authorities. On Wednesday, President Donald Trump, who had initially suggested that Iranians and Americans would meet directly in Doha, claimed that "indirect" negotiations had taken place and that they had been successful.

These remarks appear aimed at domestic political consumption, as well as an attempt to control global oil prices, which began skyrocketing with the start of the war after Iran restricted passage through the Hormuz Strait. Prices only began to meaningfully decrease following the signing of the Islamabad MoU, though they have yet to return to pre-war levels.

Qalibaf says Iran won't give up Hormuz Strait

Parliament speaker warns force remains an option for Tehran

From page 1 ▶ Qalibaf noted that the Islamabad MoU only provides a temporary exemption from maritime service fees, it does not change Iran's sovereign position.

Fate of negotiations

Qalibaf announced Iran will not move forward with negotiations with the U.S. to reach a final deal, until all five key provisions are fully met, adding that Lebanon is "the top priority."

The MoU requires an end to military aggression against Lebanon, withdrawal of Israeli forces, and the return of displaced civilians. Iran, the U.S., and Lebanon have agreed to set up a joint mechanism to oversee implementation, he added.

The Parliament Speaker contrasted Iran's approach with a U.S.-backed plan, saying Washington wants to normalize Lebanon's relations with Israel, while Tehran seeks to preserve Lebanon's independence.

Rejecting the idea that talks mean weak-



Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf (L) speaks during a televised interview on June 30, 2026.

ness, Qalibaf called negotiation "a method of struggle."

"Military power and diplomacy are two blades of the same pair of scissors," he said, stressing that talks should always be conducted from a position of strength. Qalibaf pointed to the U.S. naval blockade as proof. The blockade was lifted immediately after

the MoU was signed, well before the 30-day deadline. In less than two weeks, Iran exported more than 40 million barrels of oil.

Qalibaf also made clear that Iran's military capabilities are off the table.

"Our missile program and military capabilities are absolutely non-negotiable," he said. "Uranium enrichment is our legitimate and inalienable right."

He dismissed reliance on UN Security Council resolutions, noting that Trump tore up a UN-backed nuclear deal in 2017. "Strong domestic capabilities are Iran's only genuine guarantee," he said.

Negotiators have set a renewable 60-day timetable covering all 14 provisions of the MoU. Talks will continue until all U.S. and UN sanctions are removed, Qalibaf said.

But he warned: "We negotiate to achieve our objectives. Wherever the language of reason and the memorandum proves ineffective, the language of force applies."

Tehran warns Israel of 'immediate and powerful' retaliation as regime issues new threats

TEHRAN — Iran's top diplomat has issued a blunt warning to Israel, declaring that any threat against the Islamic Republic's leadership or citizens will be met with an "immediate and powerful" response.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi made the remarks after Israeli War Minister Israel Katz said Monday that the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, was "marked for death." Araghchi described the remark as a deliberate attempt by Tel Aviv to undermine the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, a U.S.-Iran agreement brokered by Pakistan.

The June 17 pact ended the joint U.S.-Israeli war against Iran and requires all sides to refrain from military action or threats. Araghchi noted that under the deal, President Donald Trump

committed to reining in Israel. "If they ignore their master, Iran will school them," he wrote on X.

The warning comes as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has also escalated his rhetoric. In recent days, Netanyahu has threatened to strike Iran's nuclear sites if Tehran resumes its defensive operations, and has signaled that Israel may act unilaterally despite U.S. pressure to uphold the ceasefire. His cabinet has also floated the possibility of expanding military operations beyond Lebanon, raising fears of a wider regional conflict.

Reports and leaked information suggest Israeli officials pressed Washington heavily to launch a new war against Iran, convincing U.S. President Donald Trump that the assassination of Iran's previous Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali



Khamenei, and a massive bombing campaign would cause the Islamic Republic to collapse in days and deliver the Trump administration a major political victory. The war, however, has cost U.S. taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars, drained Pentagon resources, fueled domestic inflation, and eroded public support for the administration's foreign policy, leaving Trump vulnerable

ahead of the midterm elections. According to most analysts, Iran has emerged in a more powerful position.

Analysts also believe that Israel's continued attacks on Lebanon, as well as its recent threats, are aimed at collapsing the current diplomatic process between Iran and the U.S. and once again dragging Washington into war with Tehran.

By Mahmoud Ravi-Nejad

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Over the coming days, Iran is expected to witness one of the largest funeral ceremonies in its contemporary history, a national mourning that will draw millions of people and delegations from across the globe. Streets have been transformed into avenues of remembrance. Black banners flutter from bridges and government buildings, portraits overlook city squares, and mosques, seminaries, universities, and public institutions have become centers of prayer, reflection, and preparation.

As the Persian poet Saadi wrote centuries ago, "The children of Adam are limbs of one another." Across Iran, that timeless sentiment appears to have taken visible form as people from every walk of life prepare to gather in a collective expression of sorrow.

For many Iranians, the approaching funeral is more than the conclusion of an era; it is the closing chapter of four decades of leadership that profoundly shaped the country's political identity, strategic posture, and religious life. Through cities and villages alike, conversations increasingly revolve around remembrance rather than routine, while families speak of making journeys to Tehran and other host cities to become part of what many describe as a defining moment in the nation's history.

Behind this immense public gathering lies an unprecedented logistical operation.

The National Headquarters for the Farewell and Funeral Ceremony, established by the Iranian government under the supervision of First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref and



coordinated through the Ministry of Interior, has mobilized virtually every major state institution. Specialized committees overseeing logistics, security, transportation, medical services, cultural affairs, international coordination, media operations, and public welfare have spent weeks preparing for an event whose scale rivals the largest national commemorations in the Islamic Republic's history.

Hundreds of volunteer service stations are being erected along funeral routes. Emergency medical teams, hospitals, rescue units, and the Iranian Red Crescent Society have entered full operational readiness. Railways, airlines, highways, and urban transportation systems have expanded capacity to accommodate millions expected to travel from every corner of the country.

Yet the preparations extend far beyond logistics.

In neighborhoods across Iran, black mourning cloth adorns storefronts and homes. Religious hymns echo from mosques. Giant banners bearing images of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei overlook public squares, while television networks devote continuous coverage to documentaries, historical retrospectives, and live reports from cities preparing for the ceremonies.

There is an unmistakable sense that an entire nation has paused.

The atmosphere recalls the words often attributed to William Shakespeare: "Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak whispers

events. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, following meetings with Iraq's senior leadership in Baghdad, described the forthcoming ceremonies as an event "that will undoubtedly be remembered by history" and one that would further strengthen the bonds between the two neighboring nations.

According to the official schedule, the ceremonies will unfold across six days in five cities, culminating in funeral prayers at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Grand Mosalla before continuing to other provinces and later to Iraq.

Officials emphasize that the commemorations are intended not only to honor the late Leader but also to reinforce national cohesion, strengthen solidarity across the Islamic world, and demonstrate continuity within the leadership of the Islamic Republic.

For organizers, the ceremonies represent a national farewell.

For many participants, they are a deeply personal journey.

For historians, they may become one of the defining public gatherings of the twenty-first-century Iran.

As dawn approaches over Tehran, workers continue arranging barriers, volunteers distribute supplies, security personnel finalize preparations, and millions prepare to leave their homes.

Soon, streets normally filled with traffic will be overtaken by mourners.

The voices of ordinary life will yield to elegies.

Black standards will ripple above an ocean of people.

And a nation, united in mourning, will write another chapter of its history—not in ink, but in footsteps, tears, prayers, and remembrance.

As Victor Hugo observed, "Great grief is a divine and terrible radiance." In the days ahead, that radiance will be reflected across Iran, where countless mourners are expected to gather in farewell to a leader whose martyrdom has become not only a national moment of mourning, but an event many believe will leave an enduring mark on the historical memory of the region.

Iran vows justice for Leader's assassination



TEHRAN — Iran's top security official has vowed that those responsible for the assassination of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, and other Iranian martyrs will face justice, reiterating Tehran's determination to pursue accountability for 'one of the gravest crimes in the country's contemporary history.'

In a message released on Wednesday, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Mohammad Baqer Zolqadr said the pursuit of justice for Ayatollah Khamenei's assassination remains an open and irreversible national priority.

"The clenched fist of the martyred Leader at the moment of his martyrdom is the enduring symbol of our national security doctrine," Zolqadr said.

He stressed that those who planned and carried out the attack would ultimately be held accountable.

"The case of avenging the pure blood of the great Khamenei and Iran's oppressed martyrs remains open, and those who ordered and carried out this crime will, in due time—which will not be long—be brought to justice by righteous elements," he said.

Iranian officials have repeatedly maintained that the country will respond to the assassination through 'lawful and decisive measures,' emphasizing that responsibility for the attack cannot be avoided by those involved.

The assassination occurred on February 28, when the United States and Israel launched a second large-scale military campaign against the Islamic Republic. The 40-day conflict involved coordinated airstrikes targeting military, governmental, and strategic infrastructure across Iran, resulting in the deaths of senior military commanders, nuclear scientists, and civilians, culminating in the assassination of Ayatollah Khamenei.

Iran has characterized the killing of its Leader as a violation of international law and state sovereignty, accusing Washington and Tel Aviv of carrying out an act of state terrorism. Since the end of the conflict, Iranian officials have consistently pledged that the perpetrators and decision-makers behind the attack will ultimately face justice, while emphasizing that the assassination has further strengthened national unity and reinforced the country's resolve to defend its sovereignty and security.

Iran's missile and drone capabilities remain 'non-negotiable,' defense chief says

TEHRAN — Iran's acting defense minister has reaffirmed that the country's missile and unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) capabilities constitute a non-negotiable pillar of national security, stressing that Tehran will continue expanding its indigenous defense programs despite mounting external pressure.

In a statement posted on his X account following a meeting with members of parliament, Brig. Gen. Majid Ebn al-Reza said he had briefed lawmakers on the strategic dimensions, military lessons, and operational outcomes of the recent 40-day US-Israeli war of aggression against the Islamic Republic.

"The Islamic Republic's defense, missile, and drone capabilities are a red line for our national security," the general said. "They are not negotiable—now or in the future."

He emphasized that strengthening Iran's missile arsenal and UAV fleet will remain a strategic priority, adding that future development will continue to rely on domestic expertise, indigenous technology, and the country's expanding defense industry.

The remarks come as Iranian officials have repeatedly ruled out any negotiations over the country's conventional military capabilities, arguing that the missile and drone programs are purely defensive and constitute an indispensable component of Iran's deterrence strategy.

During the recent conflict, Iran relied extensively on its domestically developed missile and drone arsenal in a series of retaliatory operations against Israeli military targets and US military installations across the region. Iranian officials said the operations demonstrated the country's ability to conduct coordinated long-range precision strikes using a combination of ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and loitering munitions launched from multiple directions.

According to Iranian military assessments, several waves of missile attacks successfully penetrated advanced Israeli and US-supported air defense systems, striking strategic military facilities and infrastructure.



Tehran has described the operations as evidence of the growing accuracy, survivability, and operational effectiveness of its indigenous missile force, while maintaining that the campaign significantly altered the regional military balance by proving that heavily defended targets could still be reached with precision.

Iran also claimed responsibility for missile strikes targeting US military bases in the region during the conflict, describing the attacks as a calibrated response to Washington's direct military involvement. Iranian commanders have argued that the operations underscored the strategic reach of the country's missile arsenal and reinforced its deterrence doctrine by demonstrating the capability to hold adversarial military assets at risk across the region.

Since the end of the war, senior Iranian political and military officials have consistently maintained that the experience reinforced the importance of continued investment in indigenous defense technologies. They argue that the performance of Iran's missile and drone forces during the conflict validated decades of domestic military research and development and further strengthened the country's resolve to expand capabilities that they regard as essential to safeguarding national sovereignty and deterring future military aggression.

LATEST NEWS

Iran says deadly Minab school attack must not be forgotten

Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, Ali Bahreini, said the deadly missile strike on Minab School must never be forgotten, reaffirming Tehran's commitment to pursuing justice for the victims. During a virtual meeting with survivors and witnesses, Bahreini said the February 28 attack, which Iran says killed at least 168 children and teachers during US-Israeli strikes, constituted a crime against civilians for which Washington and Tel Aviv bear full responsibility.

Container ship runs aground after leaving approved Hormuz shipping lane

A foreign container ship ran aground in the Strait of Hormuz after entering shallow waters outside the shipping corridor designated by Iranian authorities, according to Iranian state media. The report reiterated the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' warning that vessels should transit only through the approved route south of Larak Island, which Tehran identified as the sole authorized passage. The incident comes amid heightened maritime security concerns following recent attacks on commercial shipping in the Persian Gulf.

Russia to send high-level delegation to Iran for martyred Leader's funeral

Russia will send a high-level delegation led by Dmitry Medvedev, Deputy Chairman of Russia's Security Council, to attend the funeral of Iran's martyred Leader in Tehran, Iran's Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali told ISNA. Medvedev will participate as President Vladimir Putin's special envoy. The delegation will also include Russian Foreign Ministry officials, representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church, Sunni muftis, and Shia scholars, underscoring the close ties between Tehran and Moscow, Jalali said.

Pakistan PM to lead delegation to Iran for Leader's funeral

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will lead a high-level delegation to Tehran on Friday to attend the farewell and funeral ceremony of Iran's martyred Leader, according to media. The delega-

tion, accompanied by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and other senior Pakistani officials, is scheduled to arrive Friday afternoon. They will participate in the official diplomatic tribute ceremony on Friday evening, alongside foreign dignitaries attending the commemorations.

Iraqi president, parliament speaker to attend Leader's funeral

Iraqi President Nizar Amid and Parliament Speaker Haibat al-Halbousi will attend the funeral of Iran's martyred Leader in Tehran, Iran's Ambassador to Baghdad Mohammad Kazem Al-Sadeq told ISNA. He added that Iraq will also hold official and public funeral ceremonies in Najaf and Karbala next week, reflecting 'the Iraqi government's and people's readiness to honor the late Leader and the close ties between the two neighboring nations.'

Pezeshkian says recent agreements have eased some financial restrictions

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said some financial and foreign exchange restrictions on the country have been eased as diplomatic talks continue, according to the semi-official Fars News Agency. He cited continued oil exports, the relaxation of certain banking and currency restrictions, and new opportunities for economic cooperation as key outcomes of Iran's recent agreements.

End to US-Iran war a prerequisite for reconstruction talks: Germany

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz has signaled possible financial support for Middle East reconstruction but says hostilities need to fully stop before any moves are taken.

"As soon as it comes to rebuilding the destroyed infrastructure in the region, then we can discuss everything. But first of all, the fighting must stop," he said at a news conference in Berlin.

Israeli ex-army chief accuses Netanyahu of 'fabricating' Iran nuclear claims

Israel's former army chief Gadi Eisenkot has accused Benjamin Netanyahu of making up claims that Iran possessed nuclear weapons to frighten the public.

According to the Israeli daily Yedioth Ahronoth, Eisenkot made the remarks at a conference in central Israel, saying the prime minister's statements on Iran's nuclear capabilities were false.

"Netanyahu said repugnant things. Iran had no nuclear bombs whatsoever. He is fabricating reality to frighten the Israeli public," Eisenkot, who is also the head of the opposition Yashar party, was quoted as saying.

Eisenkot was referring to comments Netanyahu made on Tuesday in an interview with Israel's Channel 14, in which he said: "I entered Iran twice to save us from annihilation by atomic bombs that were already in their hands."

China urges US and Iran to implement interim deal as talks stall

China's Foreign Ministry says it hopes Washington and Tehran will implement the memorandum of understanding (MoU) they signed to move towards the next stages of negotiations.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi said the priority is to safeguard and implement the interim deal, maintain the momentum of negotiations, and work towards a long-term solution agreed by both the United States and Iran that's also accepted by Middle East nations and the international community.

Freedom of navigation in Hormuz 'most important outcome' of US-Iran talks

The "most important outcome" of the US-Iran agreement is to get commercial vessels moving again, an analyst says.

"This is of utmost importance not only to the cities on the Arab countries in the Persian Gulf but to the global economy," said Wolfgang Puszta, a security analyst and former Austrian defense attaché.

The current situation is already beneficial for Tehran "as Iran is able to export oil and this means it is able to fill up its financial reserves," he told Al Jazeera.

"So, the longer this situation lasts, the more Iran benefits from the financial revenues," Puszta said.

Iran, Turkey highlight network-based trade expansion, joint projects with third countries



TEHRAN- Network-based trade relations between Iran, Turkey, and third countries, along with the development of joint investment projects, were the central themes of a meeting between the Head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) and the Board of the Turkey's Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (MUSIAD) in Istanbul.

The Head of ICCIMA emphasized the need to translate trade discussions between ICCIMA and MUSIAD into practical cooperation, stating that Iran's provincial chambers of commerce are fully prepared to expand business exchanges and host and dispatch trade delegations with Turkey's private sector.

Speaking on Tuesday during a meeting with MUSIAD's president and board members in Istanbul, Samad Hassanzadeh, Head of ICCIMA, noted that Turkey is among Iran's top three trading partners. He said that, in line with the directives of the presidents of Iran and Turkey, the two countries have set a target of raising bilateral trade to more than \$30 billion.

Hassanzadeh added that while official sources report formal trade between the two countries at \$23 billion, the inclusion of more than \$10 billion in digital and suitcase trade means that total bilateral trade has already exceeded the targeted level.

He stressed that the combined economic and cultural capacities of Iran and its "friendly and brotherly" neighbor Turkey could create significant opportunities in various industries, modern agriculture, energy, artificial intelligence, digital trade, and other areas of mutual interest.

Hassanzadeh said that a new international environment has emerged, particularly among neighboring countries and Iran, and economic actors should make the most of these opportunities. As representatives of Iran's private sector, he said, they bear an important responsibility in activating international trade potential and creating prosperity for their citizens.

Trade ties set to expand through provincial chamber cooperation

Reiterating the importance of putting trade dialogue between ICCIMA and MUSIAD into action, he announced ICCIMA's readiness to facilitate visits by Turkish businesspeople through Iran's provincial chambers of commerce. These chambers, he said, are prepared to provide accommodation and logistical support for Turkish trade delegations, helping expand business ties and diversify the geographical distribution of commercial interactions between the two countries.

Hassanzadeh also welcomed investment by Turkish technology and knowledge-based companies in Iran's copper mines and other rich mineral resources. He expressed confidence that there is considerable potential not only for expanding bilateral trade but also for developing joint economic cooperation with third countries through shared investment projects.

Economic cooperation seen as a path to regional peace and prosperity

He further emphasized that if export and import goods cross national borders freely, there would be no need to move soldiers and military equipment to those borders. Instead, borders could become gateways for trade and economic growth rather than arenas of conflict and tension.

Thanking the Turkish government and people for their support of Iran during the recent imposed war, Hassanzadeh said that war produces nothing but destruction. He described the loss of Iran's Leader, senior military commanders, and prominent officials during the recent conflict as an immense tragedy for the country.

He also argued that the era of a unipolar world has ended, adding that the resilience and courage shown by the Iranian people during the recent war have presented the international community with a new image of Iran, one that he said contradicts previous portrayals by foreign media.

Hassanzadeh concluded by stating that Iran's government and people seek peace, security, and stability for the entire world and wish lasting

peace and security for all nations.

At the beginning of the meeting, Hassanzadeh introduced the Iranian trade delegation, which included the heads of ICCIMA's specialized commissions, business associations, and representatives from the Iran and Tehran chambers of commerce. He also referred to the long-standing relationship between ICCIMA and MUSIAD, expressing hope that sanctions and other restrictions, which have disrupted such cooperation, would eventually be eased.

Business leaders call for stronger logistics, private-sector trust

Abolfazl Roghani Golpayegani, Secretary General of ICCIMA, highlighted the Iranian president's strong support for the private sector and commitment to expanding trade with Turkey. He said that improving commercial infrastructure and resolving logistical bottlenecks are among the most important prerequisites for achieving the bilateral trade targets.

Mehrdad Saadat, President of the Iran-Turkey Joint Chamber of Commerce, praised the resilience of Iranian manufacturers, noting that production continued even during the recent imposed war. He said the key to strengthening Iran-Turkey economic relations is genuine trust by the governments of both countries in their respective private sectors.

Saadat added that greater border trade and higher value creation from commercial exchanges depend on stronger confidence in merchants and legitimate private-sector businesses. While praising the establishment of new trade institutions, he cautioned against duplication of responsibilities.

Ehsan Malekzadeh, President of the Iranian Association of International Transport Companies, noted that the association has served for nearly five decades as an advisory body to Iran's transportation authorities. He said it works closely with policymakers, foreign trade authorities, and customs officials to identify challenges and propose solutions aimed at improving the country's transport and logistics systems.

He explained that the association's member companies are active in road, maritime, rail, air, and multimodal transportation. He also described the long-shared border, common cultural heritage, and many other similarities between Iran and Turkey as exceptional opportunities for expanding cooperation in transportation and logistics.

Malekzadeh emphasized that strengthening cooperation with Turkey's private sector is one of the association's strategic priorities.

Reza Rostami, Head of ICCIMA's Transportation Commission, identified the prolonged 18- to 22-day waiting period faced by Iranian trucks at the Bazargan border crossing as one of the current concerns. Stressing that borders are meant for transit rather than delays, he expressed hope that the visit would help reduce waiting times.

Other members of the Iranian trade delegation—including Aria Haghighi, Head of ICCIMA's Industry Committee; Alireza Kiani, Head of the Investment Committee of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce; Peyman Sanandaji, President of the Association of Special Brand Manufacturers; Mohammadreza Ghafrollahi, Head of the Trade Development Committee of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce; and Poursoltani, Secretary of the Iran-Turkey Joint Chamber of Commerce in Istanbul—also introduced Iran's sectoral capacities and opportunities for expanding cooperation with Turkey.

Fakhraddin Oylum, Vice President of MUSIAD, said the association has 14,000 members and is one of Turkey's largest business organizations. He explained that MUSIAD is a non-governmental organization with representatives in every Turkish province, as well as offices in Austria, Newcastle, and several European cities, maintaining mutually beneficial relations with many countries.

Members of MUSIAD's board also outlined their activities in manufacturing and trade and presented proposals for expanding network-based trade relations with Iran and third countries, as well as launching joint investment projects.

Iran holds consultations with China for establishing SCO Development Bank

TEHRAN- The Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), while participating in the consultative meeting on establishing the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Development Bank and presenting technical and executive proposals, emphasized Iran's active role in advancing the formation of this international financial institution.

According to Mehr News Agency, quoting the Central Bank, Abolfazl Kudehi, Deputy for International Affairs of the Central Bank of Iran, participated in the fourth consultative meeting on the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Development Bank in Shenzhen, China.

During the meeting, he presented technical and executive proposals and emphasized Iran's active role in advancing the process of forming this international financial institution.



Kudehi took part in the fourth two-day consultative meeting, which was held on June 30 and July 1 in Shenzhen, China. This meeting was convened with the aim of synergizing efforts and advancing the stages of establishing the "Shanghai Cooperation Organization Development

Bank," with representatives from member states and some observer countries in attendance.

According to this report, in this specialized meeting, discussions and exchanges of views were held regarding the technical, executive dimensions, and the necessary mechanisms for launch-

ing the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Development Bank, and strategic decisions were made to accelerate the process of its establishment.

The Deputy for International Affairs of the Central Bank, while explaining the approaches of Iran, presented his operational proposals to enhance the efficiency of this bank in economic interactions among member states.

It is worth noting that Iran, with active participation and the presentation of expert perspectives in the process of establishing this financial institution, seeks to strengthen monetary and banking cooperation within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and to utilize its capacities for the development of economic exchanges.

'Iran reshapes trade map with greater focus on northern transport corridors'

TEHRAN- The Deputy Head of Iran's Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization (RMTO) has announced a strategic shift in the country's road infrastructure priorities, saying that northern transport corridors have become the focus of development and rehabilitation efforts as Iran gradually redirects its trade from southern ports to northern ports.

In an exclusive interview with IRNA, Hassan Jahaniyan, Deputy Head of RMTO, discussed the latest developments in Iran's road corridor network, stating that recent changes in transportation and trade have underscored the growing importance of gradually shifting the country's commercial activities from southern ports to northern ports. As a result, the western, northwestern, and northern corridors—alongside the North-South Corridor—have assumed greater strategic significance.

He added that a substantial portion of the organization's operational focus is now directed toward the country's northern and western corridors. Provincial road maintenance teams, he said, are making special efforts to upgrade these routes in response to changing trade patterns, ensuring that freight—particularly shipments destined for provincial capitals—is transported with minimal disruption and maximum efficiency.

Ten key transport corridors prioritized for rehabilitation

The deputy head of RMTO said the organization has placed ten major national transport corridors at the top of its technical and budgetary priorities.

He noted that 282 operational teams are currently carrying out road patching, asphalt resurfacing, installation of traffic signs, and road marking along these routes to facilitate the movement of freight and passengers and improve transit operations.

Jahaniyan explained that corridor highways serve as the country's main arteries for transporting goods and passengers, linking industrial, manufacturing, agricultural, and border centers in each province with the rest of the country while integrating provincial road networks into the national transportation system. Consequently, RMTO's technical planning and budget allocation give special priority to these strategic routes.

He added that developments in Iran's road transportation sector over the past year have highlighted the growing need for more comprehensive technical studies, higher road quality standards, and improved services for road users, particularly along the country's land transport corridors.

Referring to the strategic role of these corridors, Jahaniyan said Iran currently has ten principal transport corridors connecting the north to the south, east to west, as well as linking the country's ports and land and maritime borders. These corridors, he said, have become a primary focus of the organization.

Provincial governors play greater role in project implementation

Jahaniyan also highlighted the role of provincial governors in advancing infrastructure projects. He said that following the delegation of greater authority from

the president—particularly to governors of border provinces—the implementation of projects, administrative procedures, and the signing of new contracts have accelerated significantly.

He added that RMTO is making every effort to maximize public satisfaction with road services. In this regard, he thanked the Iranian people for their patience and noted that the organization's 141 hotline remains available to receive public suggestions, complaints, and requests.

Tehran-Bazargan corridor transferred to RMTO

In another part of the interview, Jahaniyan discussed the latest developments regarding the Tehran-Bazargan transport corridor. He said that in response to expectations surrounding this strategic route, as well as following directives from the president and continued follow-up by the governors of East Azerbaijan and Zanjan provinces and members of parliament, the Qazvin-Zanjan-Tabriz Expressway has recently been transferred to the Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization.

He added that the necessary funding has been allocated for rehabilitation of the route and that implementation is progressing seriously. At present, approximately six operational teams are working continuously on the project, and according to the organization's schedule, two additional teams will be deployed within the coming week to strengthen operational capacity and accelerate maintenance work along the corridor.

Iran, Belarus to expand agricultural cooperation

TEHRAN- Iran's Minister of Agriculture emphasized the expansion of bilateral agricultural cooperation, increasing trade exchanges between Iran and Belarus, and accelerating the holding of the joint agricultural committee of the two countries.

According to IRNA from the Ministry of Agriculture, Gholamreza Nouri Ghezleji, in a meeting with Dmitry Kaltsov, the Ambassador of Belarus in Tehran, examined the solutions for developing bilateral cooperation in the agricultural sector and related industries.

The two sides, referring to the extensive capacities of Iran and Belarus in the fields of agricultural production, livestock, and machinery, emphasized the necessity of increasing the level of trade exchanges and facilitating economic cooperation between the two countries.

The development of imports and exports of agricultural and livestock products, expanding cooperation in the field of agricultural machinery, especially combine harvesters, and examining new areas of cooperation in various agricultural sectors were among the most important axes of the meeting between the Minister of Agriculture and the Be-

larusian Ambassador in Tehran.

Nouri and Kaltsov also agreed to accelerate the process of holding the joint committee on agricultural cooperation between the two countries and considered this commission a suitable platform for following up on agreements, removing existing obstacles, and elevating the level of technical, economic, and trade relations between Tehran and Minsk.

The two sides emphasized the continuation of consultations and the strengthening of bilateral cooperation with the aim of utilizing mutual capacities in the agricultural sector and food security.

Also, in early June, the Deputy Minister of Agriculture and head of the Agricultural Research, Education and Extension Organization, during a trip to Minsk, met with the Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Belarus and discussed the development of relations between the two countries.

According to a report by IRNA from the Iranian Embassy in Belarus, Gholamreza Golmohammadi and Yuri Gorlov exchanged views on common areas of cooperation between the two countries in agriculture, applied

research, modern technologies, and development of scientific and technical interactions.

In this meeting, which was held in the presence of Alireza Sanei, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Belarus, the two sides emphasized the need to utilize existing capacities to enhance the level of bilateral cooperation and develop agricultural relations between Iran and Belarus.

The Deputy Minister of Agriculture, who traveled to Minsk to participate in the Agriculture Summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organization member states (AgroSCO-2026) and the 36th International Specialized Agricultural Exhibition Belagro-2026, also met with some other senior scientific and agricultural officials of this country during the trip.

Golmohammadi met and held talks with Piotr Kazakevich, Deputy Chairman of the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus (NASB), at the academy's premises.

In this meeting, the two sides examined the scientific and research capacities and capabilities of Iran and Belarus in agriculture and emphasized the expansion of joint cooperation in

various fields.

Soil mechanization and development of smart agriculture, utilization of modern technologies and equipment to increase crop productivity, exchange of genetic resources and seeds, introduction and development of climate-resistant varieties, restoration of damaged and degraded soils, and implementation of joint research projects were among the most important topics discussed in this meeting.

According to another report, visiting the international specialized exhibition "Belagro 2026" of Belarus at the BELEXPO international exhibition center in Minsk was another item on the Deputy Minister of Agriculture's agenda.

On June 18, Hossein Simaei-Sarraf, the Iranian Minister of Science, Research and Technology, and Denis Korzhitsky, the chairman of the Belarusian State Committee on Science and Technology, signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to expand educational, research, and technological collaborations.

The MOU was inked at the 8th meeting of the Joint Belarusian-Iranian Commission on Co-operation in Science, Technology and Higher Education, which took place in Minsk.

Can the Israel-Lebanon agreement succeed where military victory failed?

From page 1 ▶ This is being achieved by distributing responsibility among the Lebanese government and the United States.

It does not mean Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) are abandoning aggression. Rather, it represents a redefinition of its role. Military power is no longer the sole means of eliminating resistance, but a tool for creating a new political and security environment, jointly managed by the Lebanese government and the U.S., while allowing the IOF to illegally intervene should that system fail.

Following the October 7 attack, the Israeli government's rhetoric escalated toward eliminating the sources of resistance, whether in Gaza or along the northern front, under the banner of achieving "decisive victory."

In Lebanon, the objective was no longer deterring Hezbollah or pushing it away from the Lebanese border. The stated aim became dismantling its military capabilities and eliminating the threat it posed once and for all.

When the November 2024 agreement was announced, it was presented within Israel as evidence that this approach had succeeded, with military pressure having imposed a new reality on both Hezbollah and the Lebanese state.

Yet the 15 months that followed demonstrated that even significant battlefield successes do not eliminate the Lebanese resistance. Hezbollah's renewed engagement in resistance operations in March 2026, amid the illegal war on Iran, illustrated that resistance movements rooted in popular support and regional alliances cannot easily be removed permanently from the equation through military force alone.

Such organizations retain the capacity to regroup, reposition themselves, and capitalize on regional shifts, making the objective of "total victory" far more complicated than wartime Zionist political rhetoric had initially assumed. Against this backdrop, the new framework agreement is not an outright abandonment of the military victory doctrine, but rather an indication of growing recognition within Israel that military force alone is insufficient to achieve lasting political objectives.

The provisions of the agreement clearly reflect this shift. The objective is no longer for the regime alone to eliminate Hezbollah. Instead, the Lebanese government assumes the legal and security responsibility for maintaining a monopoly over arms, while the Lebanese Army is tasked with asserting control over border areas.

The United States oversees implementation, and reconstruction assistance is tied to progress along this path. In this way, the regime moves from trying to eliminate Hezbollah directly to-



ward restructuring the security environment within which that threat operates.

This does not represent a retreat from the use of force. Under the agreement, the IOF retains its occupation, along with the right to resume aggression should it determine that Hezbollah is rebuilding its capabilities or that the Lebanese state has failed to meet its obligations.

It is a formula that combines military deterrence with political agreement, making military power an instrument for enforcing the agreement rather than a substitute for it.

The framework agreement grants the United States a role that extends well beyond traditional mediation. Washington becomes an active partner in redesigning the security environment, supervising implementation, verifying disarmament, leading security coordination mechanisms, and linking aid and reconstruction to compliance with the new arrangements.

This reflects a significant convergence between American and the Zionist regime's interests.

Since the expansion of the Israeli aggression, the U.S. has publicly questioned whether the IOF alone could eliminate Hezbollah. Washington consistently advocated an approach that combined military pressure with strengthening state institutions, political agreements, and international oversight. Following its experience with the limitations of military victory, the regime appears increasingly willing to adopt this approach, without abandoning its aggression.

Viewed within its broader political context, the agreement does more than establish a new security framework. It also offers Netanyahu's government an opportunity to address strategic dilemmas simultaneously at both domestic and international levels.

In recent months, Netanyahu faced a difficult choice: either clash with a U.S. administration pushing for new political and security arrangements or appear to be yielding to American pressure, which would have weakened him among his right-wing coalition partners.

The Lebanese government's agreement offered a third option.

Netanyahu can present him-

self as a partner in crafting a joint American-Israeli vision for reengineering Lebanon's security environment rather than as a leader who capitulated to U.S. demands. It also helps restore his image as the architect of the regime's special relationship with Washington, a reputation that had come under strain.

Iran has sought to keep Lebanon integrated into its broader negotiations with Washington, linking Beirut's fate to Tehran's and making any IOF withdrawal from southern Lebanon dependent upon progress in the U.S.-Iranian talks.

The framework agreement offers the regime an olive branch to separate these two tracks. Any withdrawal, if it occurs, will be presented as the product of a direct agreement with the Lebanese state under American sponsorship, not as a concession to Iranian demands or the price of a U.S.-Iran memorandum of understanding.

The final dilemma concerns the Zionist regime's stated objective since the beginning of the war: dismantling Hezbollah and disarming it.

Achieving that objective would require considerable time, enormous human and economic costs, and even success would remain uncertain if the regime alone bore responsibility for carrying it out.

The agreement changes this equation. Disarmament becomes the responsibility of Lebanon itself primarily, with the U.S. also assuming responsibility. This is while the regime transitions into the role of monitoring implementation and retaining the right to aggression should the process fail.

In doing so, the framework agreement redistributes the political, security, and economic burden of Hezbollah's disarmament rather than leaving it solely on Israel's shoulders.

Yet the success of this security architecture ultimately depends upon the Lebanese state's actual ability to wrest the option of armed resistance from Hezbollah, something that cannot be achieved through legal texts and American guarantees alone. It also requires parallel regional and domestic transformations.

Regionally, concerning the future of the Axis of Resistance, and internally, through rebuild-

ing Lebanese political consensus around the state's exclusive right to bear arms. Without those developments, the agreement is nothing more than a temporary truce that offers the IOF some breathing space.

Despite transferring much of the responsibility to the Lebanese state and the U.S., Israel has not relinquished its core instruments of leverage. Withdrawal remains conditional. The so-called "pilot zones" allow the regime to monitor developments on the ground. On Tuesday, Netanyahu said the IOF won't even withdraw from the first two "pilot zones".

Essentially, the occupying regime also retains the final say in determining whether the new security framework has succeeded.

The timing of the framework agreement cannot be separated from Israel's domestic political landscape. With Knesset elections approaching, Netanyahu needs to redefine what "decisive victory" means.

Having initially raised public expectations by equating victory with military defeat of the Lebanese resistance, it has become politically more realistic to present voters with a different achievement, not the complete destruction of Hezbollah, but the creation of a new security architecture. Netanyahu is therefore going to present the agreement not as a political compromise but as the direct outcome of military success. According to this narrative, the IOF did not withdraw under Hezbollah's resistance operations that killed dozens of IOF troops and injured more than 1,000 others since March 2 in south Lebanon.

The agreement provides Netanyahu with a more defensible political narrative at home because it shifts the debate away from the question: Has Hezbollah been eliminated? Toward a different one: Has Israel's surrounding security environment become safer?

If this agreement truly marks the beginning of the post-military victory era, then the real challenge will not lie in drafting security arrangements but in implementing them.

The success of this model will ultimately depend on the Lebanese state's ability to establish a genuine monopoly over arms, despite growing public anger over its deal with Israel. It will also depend on the continued American commitment to overseeing the agreement, and Israel's own willingness to adhere to a long-term strategy centered on managing the security environment.

That leaves the central question unanswered: does this framework agreement truly inaugurate a new Israeli security doctrine, or is it simply a temporary pause imposed by the limits of IOF power before yet another round of wide-scale Israeli regime aggression on Lebanon?

The modern golem of Silicon Valley demands a ritual sacrifice of innocence



From page 1 ▶ Most of them were young schoolchildren aged 7 to 12, alongside their teachers and desperate parents.

Pentagon officials have told a few of their favorite stenographers masquerading as reporters that it was a "targeting error" and have claimed they are "investigating" it. Their mentally ill commander-in-chief said on June 25 that he does not know "that they are ever going to solve that problem in terms of whose fault was."

The underlying truth is darker. The missiles were guided by a Silicon Valley golem, designed, funded, and morally laundered by tech oligarchs who behave as though they are summoning modern gods.

The automated assembly lines of death

What occurred in southern Iran was the calculated export of a mass-assassination apparatus perfected in Gaza and Lebanon.

For years, Western technology firms have provided the digital substrate for an unprecedented campaign of automated slaughter.

The Israeli systems carry chillingly clinical names. "Lavender," an advanced machine-learning database, parsed mass surveillance feeds to flag 37,000 Palestinian men as targets, openly accepting a ten percent error rate while allowing human operators a mere twenty seconds to authorize each automated kill.

"The Gospel" automated target generation, transforming military destruction into an industrial assembly line.

Most diabolical is "Where's Daddy," a tracking software designed to monitor targets until they enter their family residences, deliberately maximizing civilian casualties by turning ordinary living rooms into execution chambers.

This pipeline of industrialized murder runs on American corporate infrastructure.

"Project Maven," the Pentagon's algorithmic surveillance brain, sits at the epicenter of the kill chain that leveled the schoolhouse in Minab.

Built on Palantir's "Gotham" platform and integrated with Anthropic's famous Claude language model, Maven crunches data streams at hyper-speed.

During this regional campaign, Pentagon documents revealed that the military relied on a specialized Grok Gov Model from Elon Musk's xAI to deploy over 2000 munitions within a single 96-hour window.

The Shajarah Tayyebah school was one of the first targets processed. Although satellite feeds proved the building had been converted into a school a decade ago, the AI processed legacy data blindly.

By compressing the evaluation timeline, the machine overrode human sanity (assuming that any sanity exists in the Pentagon), proving that when algorithms vomit targets at an industrial pace, the human operator becomes a mere rubber stamp.

The tech priesthood and the occult golem

Another aspect that renders this synthetic killing machine uniquely terrifying is the perverse theological framework cultivated by its architects.

In traditional Jewish folklore, the Golem was a mindless automaton molded from clay to protect the vulnerable, which inevitably spiraled into catastrophic, indiscriminate violence.

Today's tech oligarchs have built a digital golem out of server racks and neural networks, treating its destructive appetite with a chilling sense of technocratic worship.

OpenAI's Sam Altman frequently discusses

artificial intelligence in quasi-religious terms, treating it as a transcendent force operating within high archetypes.

Former colleagues have noted strange rituals where the birth of general machine autonomy is anticipated, like the arrival of a computational deity, completely detached from the human blood required to optimize its algorithms.

This ideological inversion deepens inside the worldview of the highly influential Palantir co-founder Peter Thiel.

In late 2025, Thiel delivered a series of private lectures in San Francisco titled "The Antichrist."

In his twisted political theology, Thiel perverted apocalyptic prophecy to argue that the true adversarial force is not the automated slaughter of innocents, but international regulatory bodies, climate activists, and ethical researchers who attempt to constrain technological expansion.

By framing human rights laws and civilian protection protocols as tools of a global tyranny stalling human destiny, Thiel provides a pseudo-religious defense for his sinister supremacist motives.

In this dark cosmology, the unholy alliance of transnational hyper-capitalism and military AI becomes a messianic force that must never blink, demanding the systematic sacrifice of children to maintain Western technological hegemony.

The strategic evaporation of guilt

When the physical consequences of this architecture become undeniable, Silicon Valley relies on a highly sophisticated strategy of distributed culpability.

Following the public exposure of Claude's integration into the targeting loops that struck Minab, Anthropic chief executive Dario Amodei, who has falsely been labeled "ethical" because of minor disagreements with the Trump administration, offered a display of sociopathic indifference during a Bloomberg interview.

Amodei nonchalantly dismissed the horrendous massacre during the interview, asserting that the strike did not violate his company's strict ethical red lines because a human made the final decision to fire, reductionistically treating a civilian catastrophe as an unfortunate statistical error.

Amodei displayed the ultimate moral deception of the tech elite. They knowingly write the optimization loops, secure multi-million-dollar military contracts, and construct the data factories, yet claim absolute innocence the moment the trigger is pulled.

The liberal boardrooms of California remain adorned with progressive slogans, but their cloud infrastructure has underwritten the Holocaust of our time.

Amazon and Google, through their joint Project Nimbus contract, have supplied the foundational cloud power that has mapped civilian landscapes in Gaza, while Microsoft Azure has stored mass surveillance feeds and has suppressed internal employee dissent regarding these operations.

The entire system is engineered to scatter responsibility until guilt evaporates entirely.

The data vendor blames the model, the model maker points to the platform integrator, the integrator defers to the military command, and the military blames a database error.

Meanwhile, innocent children get slaughtered by an automated empire that values computational velocity over human life.

The golem is functioning precisely as its creators intended, making mass murder frictionless, profitable, and entirely anonymous.

Israel is carrying out 'reproductive genocide' against Palestinians, new report finds

Israel has for decades carried out a "reproductive genocide" of the Palestinian people, obliterating medical institutions, executing women and children and degrading the lived environment to such a point that it results in infertility, a new report says.

This practice, the Palestinian Feminist Collective report contends, has accelerated since Israel's genocide in Gaza began following the Hamas-led attacks of 7 October 2023, with the intention of making it impossible for Palestinian life to continue, Middle East Eye reported on Wednesday.

Last week, the UN's top investigative body on Palestine and Israel concluded that Israeli forces had deliberately targeted Palestinian children as a central element of their assault on Gaza.

The UN's report examined the full scope

of harm inflicted on children, from precision shootings by snipers and drones, to torture in detention, reproductive violence and the destruction of schools and hospitals.

Israel has killed more than 21,000 Palestinian children since October 2023, with a further 5,160 children estimated to be buried under rubble, according to the UN report. As of October 2024, at least 15,000 children had lost their mothers.

Energy minister vows '100 percent' control over Gaza

Meanwhile, Israel's energy and infrastructure minister says Israel will continue expanding its control over the Gaza Strip until it reaches "100 percent."

Speaking to Galei Israel radio, Eli Cohen said Israel could not allow Hamas "to raise its head even by a millimeter".

Cohen said Israel controlled 53 percent of Gaza two months ago, about 60 percent one month ago and "close to 70 percent" today, MEE said.

He added that Israel's control over the enclave "will only continue to grow".

Israeli forces have also arrested at least 20 Palestinians across the occupied West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem, since Tuesday evening, according to the Palestinian Prisoners' Society.

The society said Israel has sharply escalated arrests and field interrogations since the start of the Gaza genocide in October 2023, targeting different sections of Palestinian society as part of a policy of collective punishment and revenge.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Alipourian: Our goal is to secure a 2028 Paralympic berth

TEHRAN - Davoud Alipourian, captain of Iran's men's sitting volleyball team, says the squad's objectives at the 2026 World Sitting Volleyball Championships are to claim the world title and secure qualification for the Los Angeles 2028 Paralympic Games.

Iran's men's team will begin their campaign on July 10, facing Poland in their opener and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Japan in the group stage in the following days.

The top two teams in the tournament will earn direct qualification for the Los Angeles 2028 Paralympic Games.

Speaking exclusively to the Tehran Times, Alipourian said: "This tournament is extremely important because it is the World Championship. In addition, Paralympic qualification spots will be awarded here. These two factors together make the event, which will be held in Hangzhou, China, even more significant."

He added: "Over the years, Iran's sitting volleyball team has consistently performed at the highest level, and naturally that has raised expectations. We will enter this competition with full strength. Our objective has always been clear—we want to win the championship once again, just as we have done in the past."

On Bosnia and Herzegovina match, Alipourian said: "As everyone knows, Bosnia and Herzegovina have always been a tough and formidable rivals for us. They are not a team that can be underestimated. They have consistently been our biggest rivals over the years. In most of our meetings, either we have beaten them or they have beaten us."

"I believe our match against Bosnia and Herzegovina will be a very high-quality contest. Since we haven't played any warm-up matches, this game will be an excellent opportunity for us to assess their new-look squad and gain valuable insight for the future. At the same time, our own team have undergone some changes, so this tournament will help our players build chemistry and gain valuable international experience," Alipourian concluded.

Legendary Iranian wrestler Mollaghasemi dies

TEHRAN - Mahmoud Mollaghasemi Tabrizi, the first Iranian wrestler to win an Olympic medal, passed away on Tuesday at the age of 97.

Mollaghasemi etched his name in Iranian sports history by claiming the silver medal at the 1951 World Wrestling Championships in Helsinki. A year later, he secured the bronze medal in freestyle wrestling at the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games, becoming Iran's first Olympic wrestling medalist.

Born as the eldest child in a large family, Mollaghasemi faced hardship from an early age. Following the death of his father, a shoemaker, he was forced to work to help support his family. Despite these challenges, he discovered his passion for wrestling at the age of 18 and went on to become one of the pioneers of the sport in Iran.

After retiring from competition, Mollaghasemi remained devoted to wrestling, serving as both a coach and an international referee. In that role, he represented Iran at the 1964 Olympic Games, continuing to contribute to the development of the sport beyond his competitive career.

The Tehran Times extends its deepest condolences to the family of Mahmoud Mollaghasemi, as well as to Iran's wrestling community, on his passing. May he rest in peace.

Infantino praises unbeaten Iran at 2026 World Cup

TEHRAN - FIFA President Gianni Infantino praised Iran's unbeaten run in the World Cup

2026 group stage. Despite being eliminated, Iran remained unbeaten in all three games in Group G.

Infantino lauded Team Melli's quality, teamwork, passion, and determination in an Instagram post.

The FIFA President said that Iran demonstrated outstanding quality, teamwork, passion and determination throughout the tournament. Although they fell short of progressing, he thanked the players for competing with heart and giving their supporters plenty to be proud of.

Iran's FIFA World Cup 2026 campaign saw Iran draw all three of their group-stage matches, but they were eliminated after finishing third in Group G behind Belgium and Egypt, and also missing out on qualification as one of the best third-placed teams.

Iran's participation in the tournament came under extraordinary circumstances. Their involvement had been uncertain earlier in the year due to geopolitical tensions, adding further pressure on the squad.

Despite these challenges, the team delivered disciplined performances and remained competitive in every match.

One of Iran's standout matches came against Egypt, where Ramin Rezaeian equalized after Mahmoud Sabre had put Egypt ahead following a rebound from Mohamed Salah's attempt.

Iran had earlier missed a penalty through Mehdi Taremi, which proved costly. A dramatic late goal from Shoja Khalilzadeh was also ruled out after a VAR review, denying them a crucial win.

Iran's World Cup 2026 journey may have ended earlier than hoped, but their unbeaten record and determined performances have earned global respect. Infantino's tribute has ensured that their efforts have not gone unnoticed, even as debates continue over what defines success on football's biggest stage.

Iran to send 282 athletes to 2026 Asian Games

TEHRAN - Iran will send a delegation of 282 athletes to compete at the 2026 Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games.

Following several rounds of technical and expert meetings with the national sports federations, the National Olympic Committee (NOC) of Iran has finalized the list of sports and the number of athletes who will represent the country at the 2026 Asian Games.

The final decision was made after comprehensive technical evaluations, including assessments of each federation's performance, the athletes' level of preparedness, medal prospects, and the NOC's overall strategy for the Games.

The registration process for the final squad of 282 athletes—comprising 191 men and 91 women—nominated by the respective federations is currently underway through the official registration portal of the Organizing Committee for the 20th Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya.

Aichi-Nagoya 2026 will be a multi-sport event which will be held from 19 Sept. to 4 Oct. 2026 around Aichi Prefecture in Japan.

Persepolis close to appointing Dragan Skocic

TEHRAN - Persepolis have finalized negotiations to appoint Dragan Skocic as the club's new head coach after weeks of discussions.

The club are expected to send a draft contract to the Croatian coach on Thursday for his signature. Once the agreement is signed, the date of Skocic's arrival in Iran will also be confirmed.

Skocic is expected to travel to Iran shortly to officially take charge of the Tehran-based club ahead of the new season.

Meanwhile, reports suggest that Tractor are considering appointing former Persepolis head coach Osmar Vieira as their manager for the upcoming season of the Iran Persian Gulf Pro League.

War, memory and the race to save a civilization

An interview with Dr. Jebrael Nokandeh, Director of the National Museum of Iran

TEHRAN - What happens when one of the world's oldest civilizations is confronted with the realities of modern warfare? How do museums prepare for conflict, protect irreplaceable artifacts, and respond when cultural institutions come under threat? And what lessons have museum professionals learned from navigating these extraordinary challenges?

Across Iran, archaeological sites, museums and historic monuments preserve a cultural legacy that spans millennia. Yet during recent war involving Iran, and the combined forces of the United States and the Israeli regime, even these symbols of humanity's shared past were not safe. According to Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, 149 historical buildings and structures across 18 provinces sustained damage.

In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, Dr. Jebrael Nokandeh, Director-General of the National Museum of Iran and one of the country's leading archaeologists, discusses emergency museum operations, wartime conservation strategies, digital preservation, and why safeguarding cultural heritage is ultimately a responsibility shared by all humanity.

According to official data, 149 historical buildings and archaeological sites across 18 provinces were damaged during the recent conflict. What does this scale of destruction tell you?

Before answering, I would like to express my appreciation to the Tehran Times for consistently paying attention and covering cultural heritage issues.

When damage occurs at 149 historical sites spread across 18 provinces, it goes far beyond coincidence or collateral damage. In my view, it represents a deliberate assault on Iran's historical memory.

Iran possesses more than ten thousand years of continuous cultural development. Many civilizations have disappeared from history, but Iran's cultural tradition has endured uninterrupted. Sites such as the Golestan Palace, the Saadabad Cultural Complex, museums and many other historic monuments represent not only Iranian history but an important part of human civilization.

I believe these attacks were deliberate and organized, and I strongly condemn them.

It is also important to remember that Iran's cultural heritage is not solely Iran's heritage—it belongs to humanity. Every nation shares responsibility for safeguarding this common inheritance. The international community has both a legal and moral obligation to protect it.

The world should recognize Iran as one of the cradles of civilization, and understand that preserving this legacy is a responsibility shared by all.

During both the 12-day war with the Israeli-regime and the more recent hostilities, museums were forced to take emergency measures rarely seen in recent decades. What lessons did these experiences teach you about museum management during wartime?

Although these recent conflicts presented extraordinary challenges, they were not entirely without precedent. During the Iran-Iraq War, particularly in 1988 when Tehran came under missile attacks, the National Museum was also evacuated as a protective measure.

International museum protocols require institutions to assess risk continuously. Depending on the level of threat, some collections are transferred to secure storage, while others remain in place under specialized protective measures.

The 12-day war came as a tremendous shock. At the time, much of Tehran had effectively been evacuated, and access to equipment and logistical support was extremely limited. Nevertheless, those difficult



Dr. Jebrael Nokandeh, Director-General of the National Museum of Iran (L), speaks during an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times in Tehran, June 23, 2026.

days became an invaluable practical exercise for museums across the country.

When later hostilities erupted, we were significantly better prepared.

Our staff had already experienced emergency operations. They had received additional training, practiced evacuation procedures and understood their responsibilities much more clearly. That previous experience allowed us to respond more efficiently and with greater confidence.

We held numerous professional meetings to review artifact transportation, emergency documentation procedures, storage logistics and wartime conservation methods.

Some protocols that had existed only in manuals and regulations proved highly effective in practice. Others, however, were no longer suitable under modern wartime conditions and clearly required revision.

These findings were documented and shared with Iran's National Committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), which subsequently reported the experience to UNESCO and the international museum community.

For the first time, many wartime museum protocols were tested under real operational conditions, allowing us to identify both their strengths and their weaknesses.

Some artifacts cannot simply be moved into storage. How do museums protect large monuments or objects that are impossible to relocate?

At the National Museum alone, we transferred approximately 3,508 movable artifacts into secure storage.

These included coins, sculptures, ceramics and numerous archaeological objects.

But many collections simply cannot be moved.

Some stone monuments weigh two or three tons. Others are permanently integrated into the architecture of the museum itself, having been installed when the building was constructed.

International museum practice has developed specific protocols for protecting such immovable heritage.

The first step is usually applying fire-resistant protective materials. After that, temporary defensive structures are built around the objects.

In our case, we erected scaffold frameworks and reinforced them with large sandbags. These barriers help absorb the impact of flying debris, shattered glass and blast fragments.

We also constructed sloping protective roofs above vulnerable objects. If part of the museum's roof were to collapse during an attack, the angled structure would disperse falling debris rather than allowing its full weight to strike the artifact directly.

Eventually, the monuments are

almost completely enclosed beneath layers of sandbags.

This method is relatively inexpensive, relies on materials that are readily available and can be implemented very quickly during an emergency.

Many of these methods were developed after the Second World War and continue to be used today. We have seen similar protective measures employed during the war in Ukraine, where museums safeguarded not only indoor collections but also public monuments in city squares.

National monuments often symbolize a country's identity, and protecting them becomes an important cultural responsibility during wartime.

"Frankly, if people such as [the US President Donald] Trump had truly understood the depth of this country's history and culture, they would not have made such a grave mistake."

You mentioned relocating thousands of artifacts. How did you determine which objects should be moved first?

Everything begins with risk assessment. Museum professionals evaluate the nature of the threat before making any decisions.

One of the first concerns during wartime is the possibility of theft or looting.

Therefore, objects made of gold or silver generally receive the highest priority. We also prioritize fragile materials such as manuscripts, paper documents and organic artifacts that could be rapidly destroyed by fire.

Each object is evaluated according to several factors: its vulnerability, its national significance, its historical value and the practical feasibility of moving it safely.

Many archaeological artifacts had already survived thousands of years underground before being excavated. Some had been recovered in fragments and painstakingly restored. Moving them again under wartime conditions required extraordinary precision.

Our colleagues performed this work with exceptional professionalism and dedication.

Thanks to their efforts, all 3,508 objects were safely relocated, while the remaining collections were protected in situ according to the latest international conservation standards established by ICOM.

As a result, the National Museum of Iran suffered no damage during either conflict.

However, other historic sites—including Golestan Palace, Chehel Sotoun Palace and the Saadabad Cultural Complex—did sustain damage.

In my opinion, one of the most important decisions made by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage was ordering the immediate evacuation of museum collections as soon as the outbreak of war became certain.

During the recent conflict, the National Museum of Iran was among the institutions that displayed the Blue Shield emblem. How effective do you believe that symbol is in protecting cultural heritage during war?

The Blue Shield is rooted in the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. Under that convention, museums, historic monuments, archives and libraries are recognized as protected cultural sites, and states are encouraged to identify them with the Blue Shield emblem.

The principle is straightforward: these places should never become military targets. Once they have been clearly identified, all parties to a conflict are expected to respect that protected status.

We installed the Blue Shield at the National Museum as soon as the conflict began, in accordance with international obligations.

Some people ask whether such a symbol has any practical value if the opposing side chooses not to respect international law. That is a fair question.

The emblem may not physically stop a missile, but it serves another essential purpose. It establishes that the institution fulfilled its legal responsibilities under international conventions. It creates documentary evidence that internationally recognized protective measures were taken.

For that reason, I view the Blue Shield not only as a protective symbol but also as a diplomatic, legal and documentary instrument.

Even if an aggressor ignores international humanitarian law, we still have a responsibility to uphold it.

The international community must be able to distinguish between those who respected international conventions and those who violated them.

I found it particularly encouraging that the US Committee of the Blue Shield publicly criticized attacks affecting Iranian cultural heritage. It demonstrated that professional cultural organizations continue to defend international principles regardless of political circumstances.

We have seen that modern warfare can pose significant indirect threats to cultural heritage sites, even when they are not directly targeted. How do you view these risks?

Yes. One of the important lessons from this conflict concerns the destructive effects of modern weapons. Even when a missile does not strike a historic monument directly, the blast wave can affect considerable distances.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

Benefactors support IRCS to boost health services in Afghanistan

TEHRAN – With support from benefactors, the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) has enhanced health services for Afghans at its branch in Nimruz province, Afghanistan.

The development of charitable partnerships serves as a symbol of empathy, social responsibility, and the expansion of humanitarian cooperation, the IRCS website quoted Hamid-Reza Dehqan, an official with the IRCS, as saying.

Besides offering health services, the IRCS health facility plays an important role in reinforcing human ties, developing health-oriented cooperation, and alleviating human suffering, he added.

Benefactors' contributions will help improve the quality of medical and diagnostic services, reflecting local community trust and support for the IRCS humanitarian measures.

As part of humanitarian initiatives, the benefactors have donated an advanced color ultrasound system, worth 500,000 Afghani, to the IRCS medical facility in Nimruz province. It will help enhance the center's diagnostic capabilities and provide more accurate, faster services to patients.

Referring to the historical, cultural relationships between the two countries, Dehqan said any medical services provided to the people in this center are not merely a health measure but a manifestation of solidarity, compassion, and shared responsibility of the two nations in safeguarding human dignity. The expansion of humanitarian assistance will elevate health services and deepen friendly ties between Iran and Afghanistan.

IRCS proposes UN bodies set up humanitarian training center in West Asia



ter in West Asia

The head of the IRCS has proposed that the United Nations resident coordinator and the director of the Regional Office for West and Central Africa launch a humanitarian training center in West Asia, announcing readiness to take the leading role in this regard.

The IRCS head, Pirhossein Koolivand, offered the proposal in a meeting with the UN resident coordinator, Christine Weigand, and the director of the Regional Office for West and Central Africa at the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Charles Bernimolin.

Benefiting from 110,000 specialized and trained staff, as well as six million young volunteers, the Iranian Red Crescent Society has a high capacity in providing relief, educational, and humanitarian services, IRNA quoted Koolivand as saying.

The IRCS has an active presence in offering rescue and relief services to people in accidents and natural disasters. It is the only national society in the world that utilizes mounted vol-

unteers to provide rescue services in insurmountable areas. The IRCS also has significant achievements in air rescue and the use of drones in rescue missions, he added.

Currently, the IRCS is cooperating with 19 countries across the world in manufacturing artificial and smart organs. The society has also developed the capacity to produce medical and pharmaceutical products.

The official highlighted that the IRCS measures during the recent US-Israeli war against Iran have drawn the attention of the international community and humanitarian institutions, which has paved the way to the expansion of collaborations.

He went on to say that the IRCS is ready to foster cooperation with the UN and its affiliated agencies in sharing relief experiences, holding joint educational courses, developing regional cooperation, enhancing human capacities, and even establishing a UN regional coordinating office in Iran.

For her part, Weigand lauded the IRCS efforts and accomplishments in concurrent man-

agement of the recent war and floods in the country, noting that the IRCS's precise and up-to-date reports and documents on the war have been a key factor in reflecting the realities, making humanitarian demands, drawing the attention of the international community, and attracting their support and aid for impacted individuals.

Bernimolin, for his part, said the activities and capabilities of the IRCS have been recognized internationally for years; the IRCS is known as a professional, capable, and respected society.

The IRCS's accurate reports and documents have greatly contributed to monitoring humanitarian conditions, assessing needs, and planning humanitarian responses, he added.

He said that the future collaborations between UN and IRCS will be centered around promoting educational cooperation, sharing expertise, and benefiting from reciprocal capacities. The official called for enhancing joint efforts in addressing the needs of those affected, and strengthening humanitarian actions.

DOE chief attending CED9 session in Bangkok

TEHRAN – An Iranian delegation led by Shina Ansari, the head of the Department of Environment (DOE), is participating in the ninth session of the Committee on Environment and Development (CED9) being held from July 1-3 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Ambassador of Iran to Thailand, Nassereddin Heidari, welcomed the delegation on Wednesday, doe.ir reported.

The official is scheduled to expound on the country's measures in the environment sector, participate in specialized meetings, hold meetings with her counterparts from other countries, and explore ways to boost regional and international interactions in the environment sector.

Bringing together ministers, leaders, and policymakers, the event aims to reinforce regional cooperation to address key environmental and development challenges, including climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, sustainable resource management, and disaster risks.

The session will consist of a ministerial segment on the first day, followed by a senior official segment on the second and third days. A series of associated events, side events, and exhibitions will be organized to foster in-depth dialogue and facilitate substantive exchanges among participants.

It will review progress in the priority areas outlined in the Ministerial Declaration, on Protecting Our Planet through Regional Cooperation and Solidarity in Asia and the Pacific, adopted by the Committee at its seventh session in 2022, as well as standing issues to be addressed by the Committee, with an added focus on promoting synergistic policymaking and integrated implementation to advance the Sustainable Development Goals and address the triple planetary crisis — climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

The CED is a subsidiary body of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). It is convened every two years to review regional trends, identify priorities for action, promote dialogue, consider common regional positions, and promote a collaborative approach to addressing the development challenges of the region between Governments and civil society, the private sec-

tor, and the UN System and other international organizations. The Committee provides recommendations to the Commission. Every four years, the Committee is convened at the ministerial level to provide high-level guidance.

Measures to strengthen preservation of natural habitats

To strengthen the preservation of natural habitats and protected areas, the DOE has taken different measures, such as inaugurating a national committee for the smart protection of the environment, revising protected areas management, combating drought impacts, and developing fire extinguishing infrastructure.

The national committee for smart protection of the environment consists of university professors and experts. It has so far held four sessions discussing plans for the smart protection of Golestan National Park, Tandooreh National Park, a protected area located northeast of Iran, the DOE monitoring center, and ecological drought, IRNA quoted Vahid Kheirabadi, an official with the DOE, as saying.

The event aims to reinforce regional cooperation to address key challenges, including climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and disaster risks.

The inauguration of a knowledge-based 'satellite fire observations system (known as the Sahn System) in the past Iranian year 1404 (March 2025 – March 2026) was one of the main achievements of the department, the official added.

Satellite data provided by the system has enhanced fire detection and monitoring and made it possible to prepare specialized reports for areas under management.

The DOE has recently launched the Bushehr fire station and has kicked off the construction of two new fire stations in Bemo National Park and the Miankaleh peninsula, Kheirabadi further noted.

Moreover, the department has developed



a national drought and ecological monitoring system, which is planned to be unveiled in the near future.

To combat drought, some 150 billion rials (about 87,000 dollars) have been allocated to sensitive ecosystems. The fund will be spent on repairing springs, canals, water troughs, and reservoirs, as well as the purchase of modern equipment for storing water and transporting it to provinces affected by drought.

The official went on to say that over the past Iranian year, the DOE revised and prepared management plans in numerous areas, and the revised plans are being implemented in 30 key regions.

The protected areas under the DOE's supervision now account for 12 per cent (19.8 million hectares) of the country's land area. To preserve these areas, the DOE has developed smart, specialized protection plans, IRNA quoted Hamid Zohrabi, an official with the DOE, as saying in January.

Referring to frequent wildfires in the country's forests, the official said the plans include holding specialized training courses on extinguishing wildfires in cooperation with local communities.

To make environmental protection smarter, the DOE has signed a memorandum of understanding with a knowledge-based company. Accordingly, the DOE will be equipped with a system that provides early warnings before a fire outbreak, the official added.

Since most protected areas are impassable and inaccessible, the DOE aims to install cameras and sensors to detect heat and fire sources early, Zohrabi noted.

Preparations underway to host people at martyred leader's funeral



TEHRAN – As the funeral ceremony of the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, approaches, many volunteers along with government organizations and the private sector are being prepared to host participants.

Ayatollah Khamenei was martyred on the first day of the joint US-Israeli aggression on February 28 in his office in Tehran. Many of his family members, including his daughter, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, and grandchild, were also martyred. Several senior military commanders were also assassinated in the same strike.

The main funeral procession in Tehran is scheduled for July 6. On July 7, funeral ceremonies will be held in the holy city of Qom, where prayers will be offered over the Leader's body.

The procession is then expected to travel to Iraq on July 8, following requests from Iraqi tribes, scholars, and religious and political figures. Funeral rites are planned in the cities of Najaf and Karbala, with Iraqi authorities set to announce specific timings and locations.

The farewell ceremony is scheduled to kick off on Saturday in Tehran's Imam Khomeini Mosalla. So, security, relief, and medical forces in the capital are fully prepared to host the attendees by setting up different committees and coordinating among governmental agencies and the private sector.

Ensuring the security of the participants is the main priority, so the security, law enforcement, and military forces are working round the clock to make sure everyone will be safe during the ceremony.

To manage the crowd in Mosalla, specific corridors have been designated for people's entrance and exit to prevent any accidents. The main goal is to lower the length of individuals' presence at the scene, so that all others could have the chance to say farewell to the leader.

Over 6,000 mawkibs (voluntary stations to serve the crowd) have registered to provide services to people free of charge. Moreover, universities of medical sciences have established a health committee, and tens of hospitals and medical centers in Tehran will offer services all day and night.

More than 700 ambulances, each with specific missions, will be on the funeral route, as well

as accommodation centers.

Because of hot weather and the possibility of heatstroke, cool rooms have been considered around densely populated locations, where people could be transported to receive treatment.

The municipality with the capacity to accommodate one million people is responsible for the nutrition and accommodation of people. In addition, the schools, mosques, governmental places, stadiums, inns, and other public places are ready to host the people.

The management of traffic is one of the most complicated parts of the program. However, the police forces have made traffic plans to improve the movement and manage the crowd.

Over 500 to 600 foreign reporters from all over the world will attend the ceremony to reflect the Iranians' solidarity, unity, and their loyalty to the ideas of the Islamic Revolution's founder, Imam Khomeini, and the martyred leader.

Benefiting from its experiences in crowd management, like the Arbaeen pilgrimage, the IRCS will utilize its rescue, relief, and medical capacities, as well as its volunteers, to provide services during the ceremony. The operational teams, rescue helicopters, and emergency accommodations have been all made available throughout the route.

The services are not limited to Tehran; the IRCS has divided the provinces of the country into three groups: provinces where the funeral ceremony will take place, including Tehran, Qom, and Khorasan Razavi, assistant provinces, including North Khorasan, South Khorasan, Semnan, Alborz, Markazi, Gilan, Mazandaran, and Zanjan, and the rest are considered supporting provinces.

Over 50 percent of the whole IRCS capacity, involving 350 relief centers, 1,556 operational teams, and 7,000 rescuers, will cover rescue services in Tehran, Qom, and Khorasan Razavi. The IRCS will also help provide emergency shelters for the crowd in these three cities and assist provinces.

Some 1,650 families in Tehran have volunteered to host the crowds in their homes, joining a campaign titled 'I am the host'. 250 other groups will serve the participants in Tehran.

87 earthquakes hit Iran in a week

TEHRAN – A total of 87 earthquakes have been recorded across the country in a week from June 20 to 26, according to the seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran.

Statistically, 78 earthquakes with magnitudes smaller than 3, nine earthquakes with a magnitude between 3 and 4, and no earthquake with a magnitude over 4 have occurred in the country, IRNA reported.

Of the total quakes, one had a magnitude of 3.9 on the Richter scale, which occurred on June 21 in Kerman province.

Among the provinces of the country, Khorasan Razavi experienced the highest number of earthquakes, with 11, followed by Kerman and Semnan, each with nine earthquakes, Yazd and Ilam, each with 8 earthquakes.

During the same period, no earthquakes were recorded in Tehran, East Azarbaijan, Alborz, Zanjan, Sistan-Baluchestan, Qom, Qazvin, Kordestan, and Hamedan provinces.

A total of 2,380 earthquakes with a magnitude of more than 2.5 on the Richter scale were recorded across the country over the past calendar year (March 2025–March 2026), according to the Seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran, Mehr news agency reported.

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

The Iranian plateau is located in a very seismically active region of the world and is known not only for its major catastrophic earthquakes but also for the disasters relating to natural hazards, especially earthquakes.

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



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JULY 2, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Richness is not having many belongings, but richness is contentment of the soul.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:08 Evening:19:45 Dawn:3:07 (tomorrow) Sunrise:4:53 (tomorrow)

Martyr Leader's farewell, funeral ceremonies to be covered by 14,000 domestic, foreign media professionals



TEHRAN – The farewell and funeral ceremonies for the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei and his family will be extensively covered by both domestic and foreign media outlets, the spokesperson for the Farewell, Funeral, and Burial Headquarters for the Martyr leader said.

"14,000 journalists, photographers, and documentarians have registered in the media registration system to cover the 'Mr. Martyr of Iran' event, and final processing for the issuance of their credentials is currently underway," Iman Attarzadeh announced.

"Furthermore, more than 900 foreign journalists will be present at the event, including 300 journalists from media outlets based abroad, 350 foreign journalists residing in Iran, and approximately 300 foreign influencers and bloggers," Honaronline reported him as saying.

"This number of journalists, photographers, and media professionals covering a single event in the history of the Islamic Republic of Iran is an unprecedented and unique figure that has no parallel," he added.

"Moreover, senior officials from around 40 countries will attend the farewell and funeral ceremonies, alongside public gathering of religious, political, academic, and cultural figures in Tehran," he noted.

Attarzadeh noted that the body of the Martyr Leader and members of his family has been pre-

served with the utmost respect and in full compliance with religious and legal standards, and that no burial or interment has taken place so far.

Attarzadeh further said that detailed and coordinated arrangements have been made for the farewell ceremony at the Tehran Prayer Grounds (Mosalla).

"From 6 am on Saturday, July 4, until the end of the ceremony, the venue will remain open 24 hours a day for mourners and will not be closed," he explained.

He added that a variety of programs, including Quran recitation, elegy reading, poetry, and mourning rituals, have been planned.

"Given the anticipated large turnout from across the country as well as foreign guests, attendees have been requested to leave the prayer grounds within 10 to 15 minutes after entering and paying their respects, in order to allow greater numbers of mourners to participate," he said.

The spokesperson also stated that the Martyr Leader will once again be honored with a pilgrimage to the holy shrines in Iraq. He said the late Leader's last visit to Karbala and Najaf dates back to 1957.

He added that on July 8, the body of the martyred Leader will be taken to the holy shrines of Imam Ali (AS), Imam Hussein (AS), and Abbas ibn Ali (AS) in Iraq, marking a long-awaited pilgrimage after 69 years.

"A Martyr Never Dies": Brazilian cartoonist reflects on illustrating Iran's supreme leader

Carlos Latuff says the assassination of Ayatollah Khamenei will strengthen, not intimidate, the Iranian people

TEHRAN – Carlos Latuff has spent more than three decades documenting the Middle East through the lens of political cartooning, becoming one of the most widely shared and re-produced satirists covering US and Israeli policy in the region. Speaking to the Tehran Times following the assassination of Ayatollah Khamenei in coordinated US-Israeli strikes, Latuff reflects on the moment he learned the news, why he chose to center his response on the Supreme Leader himself, and how decades of drawing Iran have shaped his view of Western media coverage.

Below is the full text of the interview:

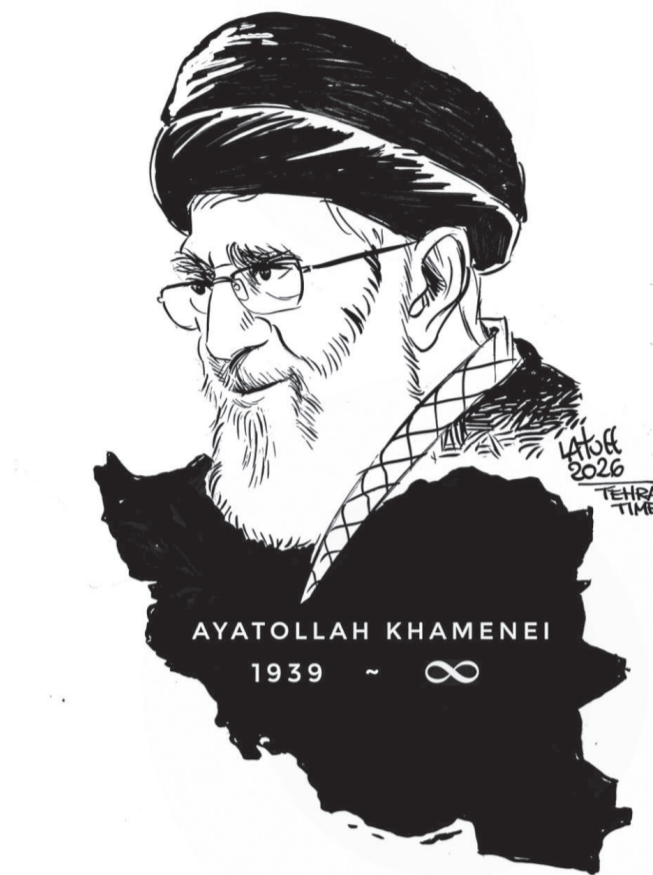
Where were you, and what was your first reaction, when news of the assassination of Ayatollah Khamenei reached you? How long passed between hearing the news and picking up your pen?

I must have received that news while checking social media. Two things crossed my mind at that moment. First, the US and Israel started this war. Second, this barbaric act would not intimidate the Iranian people—quite the opposite. By assassinating Ayatollah Khamenei, they made him even stronger. They turned him into a martyr! I make a habit of following the news on short-wave radio, and to illustrate one of my listening sessions, I created an illustration of Ayatollah Khamenei.

Of everything happening that day — the strikes across Tehran, the killing of multiple senior officials alongside Ayatollah Khamenei — what made you choose to center your cartoon specifically on the Supreme Leader rather than the broader attack?

I have been following the acts of aggression by the US and Israel against Iran since last year, but for a long time I have been producing cartoons addressing the moves made by various Tel Aviv governments—with Washington's backing—against the Iranian nuclear program. I chose the image of Ayatollah Khamenei precisely because he is a leader—not merely a politician elected to a four-year term, but a legitimate representative of an entire people.

How has the reaction to this piece to other major cartoons you've produced over your career — in terms of how widely it spread, who shared it, and



where it ended up being reproduced?

I have been a cartoonist since 1990, and I notice that some cartoons not only have a greater impact but have also become historical documents. When I address the issue of Iran, I feel that these cartoons play a historical role; they serve as records for history—specifically, telling the story from a perspective different from the one told by the West.

I believe that in this second term, Donald Trump bet on the rise of the far-right worldwide, the apathy of Western leaders, and US economic and military might to impose his will. This strategy worked in the Western world but failed against powers like Russia and China—and now Iran—given that none of Trump's objectives regarding the Persian nation were achieved. Regarding Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu relies on historic support from the White House, as Israel acts



You've spent decades documenting what you see as Washington following Israeli strategic interests. Does this assassination feel like confirmation of that pattern, or did it surprise you in its scale or method?

as a satellite for US interests in the Middle East; under Trump, he sought to pursue riskier paths. Not content with bombing a densely populated region like Gaza—an act the UN has already labeled genocide—he capitalized on Washington's support to

attack Iran and, now, Lebanon. There is, however, an interesting aspect to this situation: for Netanyahu, peace means prison. As long as he maintains this permanent state of war, he remains free from the courts, where he faces numerous corruption charges. It is therefore in his interest to keep fueling the war in order to remain free and unpunished. It is also worth noting the contrast regarding sanctions: while Russia faces all manner of sanctions over Ukraine, Israel faces none for its own actions.

Do you think there's a double standard in how Iran is held accountable by international media and institutions? Where do you see it most clearly?

There is not the slightest doubt about this. The impression I get when receiving news about Iran is that the Western mainstream media acts as a sort of public relations arm for Washington and Tel Aviv. When it comes to Iran, what takes place is not journalism, but rather propaganda aimed at demonization.

You've turned your attention to the 2026 World Cup, a subject far from war reporting on its surface. What political story did you want to tell through a sporting event, and how does covering something like football change your visual approach compared to conflict reporting?

Every now and then, I hear someone say, "Let's not mix politics with soccer." Yet politics is present in all human activities—even the simplest ones—so why should soccer be an exception? And how could anyone imagine that a figure like Trump wouldn't use the World Cup as a political tool? Naturally, the Iranian team would become a target of this. This World Cup has become a stage for the worst kinds of practices, thanks to Trump's alliance with FIFA President Infantino, who is utterly subservient to Trump's dictates.

If you were to create one more image specifically for the funeral period, what would it show — would it look backward to the assassination itself, or forward to what comes next for Iran?

A martyr never dies. Someone who gives their life for a cause—for their country—will live forever in the hearts of their people and inspire them in the struggle against their enemies.

New memoirs chronicle resilience of former POWs

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN— Two new literary works on Iranian Prisoners of War (POWs) from the Iran-Iraq War, "War in Al-Rashid" and "Sanam," were unveiled during a ceremony held at Tehran's Art Bureau on Tuesday. The event was attended by authors, former Iranian Prisoners of War (POWs), and cultural enthusiasts.

The two publications offer intimate glimpses into the lived experiences of former prisoners. "War in Al-Rashid" chronicles the decade-long ordeal of Colonel Mohammad Hassan Hassan-Shahi, while "Sanam" preserves the memories and testimonies of Third Lieutenant Seyyed Mohammad Reza Tadayyon Nabavi.

Opening the ceremony, Sasan Nateq, Director of the Office of Art and Literature of Captivity, contextualized the releases within the current national atmosphere of mourning and resistance, referencing the martyrdom of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Khamenei and the echoes of the Ramadan War.

He emphasized that the Office prioritizes artistic quality and the creation of exemplary models over the mass production of titles. "The former war prisoners are people of patience and few words," Nateq remarked. "Our

mission has been to translate their silence into words—words that will endure as a legacy for future generations."

During the event, Colonel Mohammad Hassan Hassan-Shahi, the narrator of "War in Al-Rashid," shared harrowing reflections on his ten years in captivity. He spoke of the psychological warfare waged by captors who attempted to erase their identities by listing them as missing in action. However, he noted that the darkness of imprisonment was punctuated by moments of unexpected light. "Our weapon was faith; it was the one thing no one could strip from us," Hassan-Shahi stated, adding that amidst the torture, there remained space for beauty, humor, prayer, and the solace of poetry and literature.

The author of "War in Al-Rashid," Nabiollah Kohan, recounted the serendipitous origin of the book. Initially intending to write about the martyrs of the Army, Kohan was led to Colonel Hassan-Shahi while researching the life of Martyr Alireza Ayin-Mehr. Following the advice of peers who described the Colonel as a "treasure trove of memories," Kohan conducted over 40 intensive interview sessions in Shiraz to document the Colonel's journey.

For his part, Seyyed Mohammad Reza Tadayyon Nabavi, the narrator of "Sanam," dis-

cussed the particular agony of being "missing in action." He described the void left in the hearts of families who had no knowledge of their loved ones' survival—a state of limbo that lasted until his eventual return to Iran.

Ebrahim Omid, the author of "Sanam," noted the exceptional clarity of Nabavi's recollections. After consulting several other former prisoners of war who were reluctant to share their trauma, Omid found in Nabavi a witness with a meticulous memory. The resulting book is the product of fifteen hours of deep dialogue, capturing the intricate details of a life lived under the shadow of enemy captivity.

During the Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988), thousands of Iranian soldiers and civilians were taken as prisoners of war by Iraqi forces. These captives were held in various camps where they faced harsh living conditions and frequent abuse. The process of their repatriation was complex and protracted, with many remaining in captivity for years after the 1988 ceasefire. The experience of these POWs, and the subsequent struggle for their release, has left a significant mark on the social and political landscape of post-war Iran, leading to the establishment of various support systems for the survivors.

Cartoon of Day

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Cartoonist: Fahd Bahady from Syria