

TEHRAN TIMES



Heads of the three branches of government



The Hezbollah loyalists, including Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah's family



The Pakistani delegation



The Omani delegation



The Georgian delegation



The Tajik delegation



The Palestinian religious scholars



The Turkmen delegation

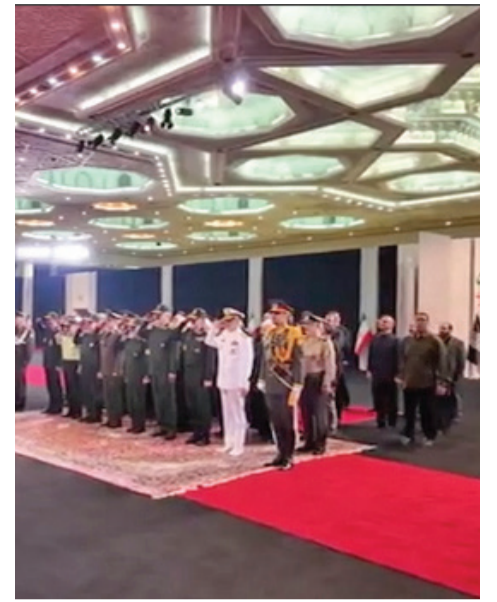


Global Tribute to Martyred Leader Ayatollah Khamenei

Nearly 100 countries send official delegations, high-ranking officials, or popular groups and figures to Tehran to participate in the farewell ceremony for the martyred Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. At least eight heads of state — presidents and prime ministers alike — alongside parliamentary speakers from 12 countries attend the ceremony. A substantial number of nations are represented at the ministerial level, including foreign ministers or other cabinet members, and special envoys. Additionally, prominent figures from approximately 100 countries take part in the ceremony.

© khamenei.ir

The coffins of Iran's martyred Leader, Grand Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, and members of his family—Martyr Seyyedeh Boshra Khamenei (the Leader's daughter), Martyr Mesbah al-Hoda Bagheri Kani (the Leader's son-in-law), Martyr Zahra Haddad Adel (wife of Grand Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, the new Leader), and Martyr Zahra Mohammadi Golpayegani (the Leader's granddaughter)—are displayed at Tehran's Mosalla for the official farewell ceremony, July 3, 2026.



The Iranian military commanders



The Russian delegation



The Chinese delegation



The Iraqi delegation

Qalibaf turns funeral diplomacy into a platform for regional engagement

TEHRAN — The funeral ceremonies for the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, have become more than a moment of national mourning. They have also provided Iran with a significant diplomatic opportunity, as senior officials and high-level delegations from across Asia and the Middle East gathered in Tehran for a series of talks on regional security, post-war diplomacy, and strategic cooperation.

At the center of these engagements was Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, who met separately with senior officials from China, Iraq, Belarus, Bangladesh, Lebanon, and Iraq's Kurdistan Region. The discussions focused on the implementation of the recently concluded Iran-US memorandum of understanding (MoU), regional stability, and strengthening political and parliamentary ties.

A recurring issue throughout the meetings was the future management of the Strait of Hormuz following the ceasefire agreement.

In talks with He Wei, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress, and Iraqi Parliament Speaker Haibat al-Halbousi, Qalibaf said Iran is consulting neighboring countries and Persian Gulf littoral states on implementing maritime arrangements contained in the memorandum of understanding. He stressed that, under international law, responsibility for managing the strategic waterway rests with its two coastal states—Iran and Oman—and reiterated that Tehran would not accept any US involvement in its administration.

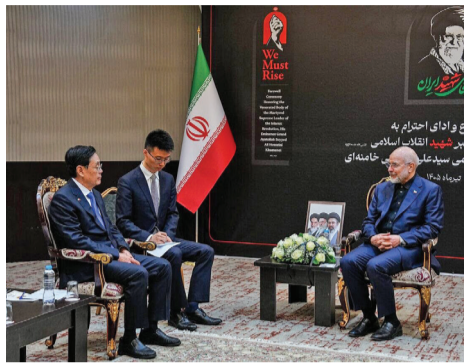
Qalibaf also accused Israel of seeking to undermine the Iran-US agreement, saying Tehran's deterrent capabilities would prevent any renewed military confrontation. While reaffirming Iran's commitment to the agreement, he warned that the country would take "appropriate and proportionate measures" if either Washington or Israel failed to uphold their obligations.

Throughout his meetings, the Iranian parliament speaker argued that the recent conflict demonstrated the limits of military pressure against Iran, maintaining that the ceasefire ultimately resulted from Iran's defensive capabilities and diplomatic approach.

Expanding regional cooperation was another key theme of the diplomatic consultations.

During his meeting with the Chinese delegation, Qalibaf called for closer strategic coordination between Tehran and Beijing, describing stronger political, economic, and parliamentary cooperation as increasingly important amid shifting regional and global dynamics. He highlighted collaboration within multilateral organizations such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as an effective means of promoting stability and countering unilateral policies.

Chinese officials reaffirmed Beijing's commitment to deepening its comprehensive strategic partnership with Iran, noting that this year marks the 55th anniversary of diplomatic relations and the tenth anniversary of the two countries' strategic partnership.



In separate talks with Iraqi Parliament Speaker Halbousi, both sides emphasized the deep historical, political, and religious ties between the neighboring countries. Halbousi congratulated Iran on 'its success in the recent conflict' and welcomed the memorandum of understanding, expressing hope that it would contribute to regional stability and facilitate the resumption of energy exports through the Strait of Hormuz.

Qalibaf also met Nechirvan Barzani, President of Iraq's Kurdistan Region, where discussions focused on bilateral cooperation and regional security. Reaffirming Iran's approach to diplomacy, Qalibaf said the Islamic Republic "negotiates with logic and stands against force," while emphasizing Tehran's determination to defend its national interests.

Meetings with Belarusian House of Representatives Speaker Igor Sergeenko and a Lebanese delegation representing Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri likewise centered on strengthening cooperation among countries opposed to unilateralism and enhancing political coordination in the wake of the recent regional conflict.

Sergeenko reaffirmed Belarus' support for Iran, condemning attacks on civilian infrastructure and expressing Minsk's readiness to expand cooperation with Tehran across political, economic, parliamentary, and multilateral frameworks.

In his meeting with the Lebanese delegation, Qalibaf said preserving Muslim unity and resisting foreign domination would be the most meaningful tribute to the legacy of the martyred Leader. He also revealed that Lebanon had been a key issue during negotiations surrounding the recent conflict, with Tehran seeking provisions intended to safeguard the country's stability.

Bangladesh Parliament Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmad also met Qalibaf on the sidelines of the ceremonies, reflecting the broad international participation in an event that has attracted official delegations from across Asia, the Middle East, and beyond.

Taken together, the meetings underscored Tehran's effort to leverage the funeral ceremonies as a forum for regional diplomacy. Alongside commemorating the martyred Leader, Iranian officials used the gathering to strengthen strategic partnerships, expand dialogue with neighboring states, and advance a regional security vision centered on cooperation among regional powers, multilateral engagement, and reduced external intervention.

Thousands mourn Leader at site of his martyrdom

TEHRAN — Thousands of mourners, including families of Iran's martyrs, gathered on Thursday night at the site where Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei was martyred in U.S.-Israeli strikes on February 28, in an emotional farewell ceremony held beside the Imam Khomeini Husseiniya.

The Husseiniya — a traditional Shia religious hall used for mourning ceremonies, lectures and congregational gatherings — is named after the founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeini. It was the place where Ayatollah Khamenei held many of his meetings with the Iranian people and officials after becoming the Leader in 1989.

The ceremony took place at the very location where the Leader of the Islamic Revolution fell alongside members of his family, commanders, officials, scientists and innocent citizens.

Elegy reciters chanted in mourning for Imam Hussein (AS), while mourners wept openly and beat their chests in remembrance



of the martyred Leader.

Thursday night's farewell marked the beginning of funeral proceedings that have drawn delegations from nearly 100 countries to Tehran, as world leaders and officials arrived to express solidarity with the Iranian people.

The public funeral service for the martyred Leader is scheduled to take place in the coming days, with millions expected to line the streets of Tehran to pay their respects.

Pezeshkian, in talks with world leaders, vows Iran 'will not bow to any bully'

TEHRAN — President Masoud Pezeshkian held a series of meetings on Thursday with foreign leaders and officials who traveled to Tehran for the funeral of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution martyred in U.S.-Israeli strikes on February 28. With delegates from nearly 100 countries in attendance, Pezeshkian used the gatherings to thank Iran's allies for their solidarity and to reaffirm that the nation will not waver in the face of foreign aggression.

"The enemies believed that by targeting the Leader and applying intense pressure, the Islamic Republic would falter and collapse," Pezeshkian said in one of the meetings. "But the result of this action was nothing but increased cohesion, solidarity and national unity among the Iranian nation."

He added: "The Islamic Republic of Iran will not bow to any bully. They want to impose their will on nations, but our people will not submit to force."

Tajikistan: 'We felt this aggression was against all of us'

In a meeting with Tajik President Emomali Rahmon, Pezeshkian expressed gratitude for the sympathy and support shown by the Tajik government and people, emphasizing the deep historical, cultural and linguistic bonds between the two nations.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Tajikistan are more than two friendly and neighboring countries — they are two nations with shared cultural and civilizational roots," Pezeshkian said. "Iran is the second home of the Tajik people, and Tajikistan is the second homeland of the Iranian nation."



President Pezeshkian meets with Iraqi President Nizar Amidi on July 3, 2026.

The Iranian president condemned the recent U.S. and Israeli aggression against Iran, describing the attacks as lacking any legal legitimacy and violating fundamental principles of international law. He noted that the strikes martyred the Leader, along with commanders, scientists, officials and innocent citizens, including schoolchildren, and targeted civilian infrastructure.

President Rahmon expressed deep sorrow over the martyrdom of Ayatollah Khamenei, stating that he had enjoyed the honor of friendship and cooperation with him for over three decades.

"The news of the martyrdom of the Leader deeply saddened the people and government of Tajikistan," Rahmon said. "The people of Tajikistan share in the grief of the Iranian nation and consider this sorrow their own."

He added: "I personally followed the developments concerning Iran day and night with concern. We consider ourselves one nation and one family with the Iranian people. We felt that this aggression was not only against Iran but against all of us."

Rahmon said he had repeatedly told American officials that "the language of force, threats and war can never force the Iranian nation to retreat. The Iranian nation is a civilization-building people with a deep and brilliant history."

Iraq: 'Security of region and security of Iran are intertwined'

In a separate meeting, Pezeshkian



President Pezeshkian and Tajikistan's President Rahmon shake hands as they meet in Tehran.

welcomed Iraqi President Nizar Amidi, thanking him for his government's condolences and solidarity.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran considers Iraq not merely a neighbor, but a brotherly and close country," Pezeshkian said. "The deep cultural, religious, historical and social ties between the two nations are such that geographical borders can never create distance between the Iranian and Iraqi peoples."

Pezeshkian described the U.S.-Israeli aggression as a violation of all recognized principles of international law. "The crimes committed, including the martyrdom of the Leader, officials, commanders and innocent citizens, as well as the targeting of civilian, educational and scientific infrastructure, are clear examples of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law," he said.

President Amidi expressed solidarity with the Iranian people, saying that "the people of Iraq consider themselves partners in this great sorrow."

he said.

Pashinyan, expressing deep condolences, noted that he had met the martyred Leader on two occasions. "The news of his martyrdom was deeply moving for the people and government of Armenia, and we consider this grief our own," he said.

The Armenian prime minister offered assurances regarding Iran's security concerns. "The Republic of Armenia has repeatedly and explicitly stated that the security of the Islamic Republic of Iran is of particular importance to us," he said. "We assure that Armenia has not and will not participate in any plan, project or action against the interests and security of Iran."

He added: "We have no secrecy in our interactions with various countries and are always ready to discuss any concerns with our Iranian friends. We will not allow this friendly and constructive relationship to be tarnished under any circumstances."

Pashinyan described current relations between Iran and Armenia as being at "the highest level since Armenia's independence," with cooperation expanding across political, economic and infrastructure sectors.

Turkmenistan: 'War has never been a sustainable solution'

In a meeting with Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, the National Leader of Turkmenistan, President Pezeshkian thanked the Turkmen government for its expressions of solidarity since the first days of the crisis.

"The late Leader always emphasized that Iran and Turkmenistan are two friendly, brotherly countries with relations based on good neighborliness, mutual trust and respect," Pezeshkian said. "The shared border between Iran and Turkmenistan is among the most secure and stable borders in the region."

Pezeshkian called for accelerated implementation of bilateral agreements in areas including energy, transportation, transit, trade and investment.

Berdimuhamedov expressed condolences and praised the character of the martyred Leader. "He was an enlightened, visionary figure respected by the peoples of the region and held a special place in the hearts of the Turkmen people and government," he said.

"War has never been a sustainable solution to problems," the Turkmen leader said. "We hope the Iranian nation will endure these difficult days with patience and resilience, and that our region will soon move out from under the shadow of war and insecurity."

Berdimuhamedov recalled his last meeting with the late Leader, during which Ayatollah Khamenei had spoken warmly about building mosques and religious education centers in Turkmenistan. "A memory that will remain forever in my mind and heart," he said.

Georgia: 'Ready to remove obstacles to relations'

In a meeting with Georgian President Mikheil Kavelashvili, Pezeshkian expressed gratitude for Georgia's condolences and described the U.S.-Israeli aggression as a violation of international law and the U.N. Charter.

The Iranian president condemned the destabilizing actions of the Israeli regime in the region, stating that Iran has always sought to expand friendly relations with neighboring countries and that Georgia holds an important place in that approach. He called for expanded cooperation in political, economic, commercial, scientific, academic, cultural and tourism sectors.

President Kavelashvili expressed deep condolences, stating that Georgia followed the tragedy with great sorrow and stood by the Iranian people during these difficult days.

"Relations between Iran and Georgia have a deep historical, cultural and human background spanning centuries," Kavelashvili said. "After Georgia's independence, the development of bilateral relations has been pursued seriously."

He added: "Georgia is determined, in cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran, to open a new chapter in bilateral relations and turn the relationship into a successful model of cooperation and friendship in the region."

The Georgian president also expressed his country's readiness to remove obstacles in the path of developing relations and praised Iran's support for Georgia's territorial integrity.

Turkey: 'The entire world witnessed resistance of Iranian nation'

In a separate meeting with Turkish Vice President Cevdet Yilmaz, Pezeshkian thanked Turkey for its support during the war, describing the U.S.-Israeli aggression as a violation of the U.N. Charter and international humanitarian law.

"The martyred Leader, along with commanders, officials, scientists and innocent citizens were martyred in these attacks," Pezeshkian said. "Yet the perpetrators of these actions continue to brazenly appear on the international stage claiming to defend human rights and humanitarian values."

Pezeshkian emphasized the need to strengthen Islamic unity, stating that Muslim countries share deep religious, cultural and civilizational bonds and can work together to bring development, prosperity and lasting stability to the region.

"The more cohesion and cooperation among Islamic countries increases, the less room there will be for the intervention and influence of destructive actors in the region," he said.

The president also thanked Turkey for its positions and cooperation during the recent war and expressed hope that the political will in both countries would translate into concrete programs and tangible achievements across various sectors.

Vice President Yilmaz conveyed Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's condolences and expressed deep sympathy over the martyrdom of the Leader and Iranian citizens, particularly the schoolgirls of Minab.

"These incidents deeply saddened the Turkish nation, and our people consider themselves partners in the grief of the Iranian people during these difficult days," Yilmaz said.

He noted Turkey's diplomatic efforts to prevent the escalation of conflict and support the ceasefire process, coordinating with regional countries including Qatar and Pakistan. He expressed hope that the process would lead to lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

"The entire world witnessed the steadfastness and resistance of the Iranian nation in these difficult circumstances," Yilmaz said.

The Turkish vice president stressed the importance of developing bilateral relations in economic, commercial, energy, transit and investment fields, stating that "the stronger and closer the relations between Iran and Turkey, the less room there will be for extra-regional interventions and the creation of divisions among regional countries."

Global Tribute to Martyred Leader Ayatollah Khamenei

Nearly 100 countries send official delegations, high-ranking officials, or popular groups and figures to Tehran to participate in the farewell ceremony for the martyred Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. At least eight heads of state — presidents and prime ministers alike — alongside parliamentary speakers from 12 countries attend the ceremony. A substantial number of nations are represented at the ministerial level, including foreign ministers or other cabinet members, and special envoys. Additionally, prominent figures from approximately 100 countries take part in the ceremony.



By Mahmoud Ravi-Nejad

TEHRAN — History is often remembered through the moments when nations fall silent.

On Friday, Tehran became the stage for one of those moments.

Millions of mourners poured into the Iranian capital from every corner of the country, while aircraft carrying presidents, parliamentary speakers, ministers, religious scholars, and political delegations continued landing at Mehrabad Airport throughout the day. They came from the East and the West, from neighboring capitals and distant continents—not merely to attend a funeral, but to witness farewell to a leader whose influence had extended far beyond Iran's borders.

The ceremony honoring the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, evolved into one of the largest international gatherings Iran has hosted in decades, transforming a national mourning into an event of profound diplomatic, political, and historical significance.

A city draped in black

Long before dawn, Tehran had already surrendered to grief.

The city's broad avenues became rivers of mourners. Black banners stretched across bridges and public

squares. Qur'anic recitations echoed from mosques while elegies filled the air around the Imam Khomeini Grand Mosalla, where the body of the martyred Leader rested alongside those who were killed with him during the February 28 US-Israeli airstrike on his office and residence in Tehran.

Every arriving delegation added another chapter to an extraordinary day.

Airport protocol teams worked around the clock as official escort team continued bringing foreign guests to the hotels. Inside the Mosalla, diplomats, clerics, military officials, parliamentarians, and ordinary citizens stood shoulder to shoulder in quiet reflection.

The world pays its respects

The funeral drew representatives from across Asia, the Middle East, Europe, Africa and Latin America, reflecting the international attention surrounding the ceremony.

Among the highest-ranking visitors was He Wei, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress, who reaffirmed Beijing's commitment to its strategic partnership with Tehran while extending condolences to the Iranian people.

Iraqi Parliament Speaker Haibat

al-Halbousi described his presence as both an honor and a duty, emphasizing the deep historical, religious, and political ties linking Iraq and Iran.

President Nechirvan Barzani represented the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, while Belarus sent House Speaker Igor Sergeenko, who praised Ayatollah Khamenei as a leader who strengthened his nation's sovereignty and resilience.

Bangladesh's Parliament Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmad, senior representatives from Lebanon's Amal Movement, religious scholars from Indonesia, Afghanistan, Qatar, Morocco, and Turkey, together with official delegations from Russia, Turkmenistan, Spain, Ecuador, Bolivia, and numerous other countries, joined the ceremonies in a rare display of international participation.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry said representatives of religious institutions from more than 90 countries and political figures from over 30 nations attended the commemorations.

Iran's leadership stands united

Alongside foreign dignitaries stood the leadership of the Islamic Republic.

President Masoud Pezeshkian, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, Judiciary Chief Ghol-

am-Hossein Mohseni-Ejei, senior members of the Assembly of Experts, the Expediency Council and the Guardian Council, cabinet ministers, lawmakers, military commanders, and prominent clerics all joined millions of ordinary Iranians in paying their respects to the Leader who attained martyrdom.

Senior commanders of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps, the Army, the Basij, and other branches of the Armed Forces attended alongside the families of those killed during the war.

It was a gathering that reflected not merely the institutions of the Iranian state, but a cross-section of Iranian society itself.

A legacy beyond borders

Many visiting officials described Ayatollah Khamenei as a figure whose influence reached well beyond Iran.

Messages of condolence repeatedly pointed to his support for regional resistance movements, his advocacy of national sovereignty, and his rejection of foreign intervention.

For many among the mourners, the loss was deeply personal.

For visiting leaders, it was a moment to acknowledge the passing of a statesman whose decisions and

even his words shaped the politics of the Middle East for more than four decades.

Yet the immense crowds in Tehran seemed determined to convey a different message—that some legacies are carried not to the grave, but forward by those who remember them.

Ahmad Massoud, the son of Ahmad Shah Massoud, said after paying his respects to the martyred Leader: "I do not think I could find a more fitting description of him than this: he lived a life worthy of Paradise, and he departed this world as a martyr destined for Paradise."

There is a Persian saying: "Great men never truly die. They live on through time, and the current of their ideas continues to flow through the heart of history." Ayatollah Khamenei is, for many, the very embodiment of that saying. For supporters of Ayatollah Khamenei, that memory was written not only in speeches and policies, but in the millions of footsteps converging on Tehran.

History written in footsteps

As evening descended over Tehran, the flow of mourners showed little sign of slowing down.

Families continued entering the Grand Mosalla carrying flowers, Qu-

rans, and portraits of the late Leader.

Elderly men walked beside children too young to remember the beginning of Ayatollah Khamenei's leadership but old enough to witness its final chapter.

In the end, the funeral became more than a ceremony.

It became a portrait of a nation in mourning, a convergence of international diplomacy, and a reminder that the measure of a leader is often revealed not only in the years of his leadership, but in the silence that follows his departure.

On this day, Tehran spoke to the world—not through speeches or declarations, but through millions of footsteps, countless prayers, and the solemn dignity of farewell.

Do not read me like Arabic—
from right to left.

Do not read me like Latin—
from left to right.

Do not read me like Chinese—
from top to bottom.

Read me simply.

Just simply read me.

As the sun does—
reading the grass,

and the sparrow—
reading the book of flowers.

Iran, Turkey emphasize regional security cooperation

TEHRAN — Senior defense officials from Iran and Turkey have underscored the importance of strengthening regional security cooperation and expanding bilateral defense ties during a high-level telephone conversation that focused on the regional security landscape, the implementation of the ceasefire agreement, and the need for greater coordination among regional powers.

Iran's caretaker Defense Minister, Brigadier General Majid Ebn al-Reza, and Turkish Defense Minister Yasar Guler reviewed the latest developments across the region and explored avenues to deepen defense and security cooperation between Tehran and Ankara.

According to the Iranian readout, Ebn al-Reza said Tehran accepted the ceasefire framework at the request of friendly and neighboring countries and with the objective of contributing to regional stability. He nevertheless expressed skepticism over Washington's commitment to the agreement, citing "the United States' longstanding record of failing to honor its obligations."

The Iranian defense chief stressed that the country's Armed

Forces remain fully prepared to deliver a proportionate response to any violation of the ceasefire, while reaffirming Tehran's commitment to preserving regional peace and stability.

Addressing broader regional developments, Ebn al-Reza accused Israel of pursuing destabilizing policies across Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, and Iran, arguing that continued US support has enabled those actions. He called on Islamic nations to strengthen political unity and practical security coordination in response 'growing regional challenges.'

He also renewed Iran's proposal to establish a "Security Union of the Islamic World," bringing together regional powers including Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. According to Ebn al-Reza, recent conflicts have reinforced the need for regional countries to assume primary responsibility for their own security, warning that the presence of extra-regional military forces has contributed to mistrust and instability.

The Iranian minister further warned against 'Israeli plans to establish so-called security zones in Syria and Lebanon,' saying such



measures could fuel wider regional instability. He also expressed concern over recent US statements regarding the possibility of opening a new front against Hezbollah in Lebanon, cautioning that such developments could further escalate tensions.

Ebn al-Reza reiterated Iran's long-standing position that security in the Persian Gulf should be maintained by the region's littoral states, arguing that dependence on outside powers cannot provide sustainable stability. He affirmed Tehran's readiness to continue consultations with Turkey and other regional partners to advance durable regional security arrangements.

For his part, Turkish Defense Minister Yasar Guler reaffirmed Ankara's support for the full im-

plementation of the ceasefire agreement and the continuation of diplomatic efforts aimed at preventing further escalation. He emphasized that lasting regional security can only be achieved through dialogue, cooperation, and regional ownership, while reiterating Turkey's support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of neighboring states.

The Turkish defense minister also expressed Ankara's willingness to expand cooperation with Iran in areas including counter-terrorism, border security, and broader regional affairs, stressing that closer coordination among regional countries remains the most effective path toward reducing tensions, combating terrorism, and promoting long-term peace and stability.

Iran tells UN that US aggression, not Iranian action, is threat to peace

TEHRAN — Iran's ambassador to the United Nations on Thursday rejected American accusations against his country as "baseless" and "disinformation," insisting that Tehran's military responses to U.S. strikes were lawful exercises of self-defense under the U.N. Charter.

Speaking at an emergency Security Council session convened after recent exchanges of fire between Iranian and U.S. forces, Ambassador Amir Saeid Iravani placed the blame for the escalating crisis squarely on Washington and its allies.

"Once again, the representative of the United States has resorted to lies and disinformation against Iran in a desperate attempt to justify the U.S.'s unlawful acts of aggression," Iravani told the Council.

The Iranian envoy described two separate U.S.-led military campaigns against Iran—one in June 2025 and another between February and April 2026—as "unjustified and unwarranted wars of aggression" that violated international law. He said more than 4,800 civilians, including women and children, were killed in the attacks, with the deaths of schoolgirls in Minab standing as a particularly "horrific" example.

"The Security Council's failure to discharge its responsibilities has reinforced impunity and emboldened further unlawful acts," Iravani said. "The United States and the Israeli regime bear full responsibility for all the consequences of these wars of aggression and must be held fully accountable."

Iravani also accused the United States of violating the April ceasefire and the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, a diplomatic agreement signed on June 17 and brokered by Pakistan and Qatar. He pointed to U.S. airstrikes on June 27 as a "material breach" of the accord.

"The MoU clearly requires the United States to negotiate in good faith and, in particular, to refrain from any threat or use of force against Iran," he said. "Yet, by launching another act

of aggression and relying on a unilateral and legally unfounded interpretation of the MoU, the United States committed a material breach of its commitments and seriously undermined the diplomatic process."

Defending Iran's recent military actions, Iravani said they were directed solely at U.S. military facilities and bases from which attacks against Iran were launched. "Should aggression against Iran continue, or should the United States continue to violate the MoU, Iran will continue to exercise this inherent right to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity," he said.

On the Strait of Hormuz, Iravani reiterated Iran's commitment to implementing the MoU's provisions, which place responsibility for demining and managing maritime navigation with Iran. "The implementation of these arrangements is currently underway in accordance with the MoU, and Iran has launched technical dialogue with the Sultanate of Oman," he said. He warned that "any external interference or attempt to establish parallel arrangements would violate the MoU, undermine its implementation, delay the restoration of normal commercial navigation, put at risk safe maritime navigation and increase regional tensions."

He also pushed back against the U.S. role in regional security, noting that "the U.S. has no coastal border in our region. It is not their waters. It is not their neighborhood." Security in the Persian Gulf, he said, is "the exclusive joint responsibility of the neighboring countries."

In a response to Bahrain's representative, Iravani said that regional states facilitating U.S. military operations bore clear responsibility. "There is no doubt that certain regional countries, including Bahrain, facilitated this aggression by allowing their territory and airspace to be used by aggressors," he said. He added that "the presence of American bases and forces in their countries not only does not bring security to their countries but also makes those countries vulnerable."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Citizens, officials mourn son-in-law of martyred Leader at Tehran funeral

TEHRAN — Scores of mourners gathered in Tehran on Friday afternoon to bid farewell to Martyr Mesbah al-Hoda Bagheri-Kani, the son-in-law of the martyred Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, who was killed alongside him in U.S.-Israeli strikes on February 28.

The funeral procession began at 5:00 p.m. at Second Shahrān Square in the Kān neighborhood of northern Tehran — the late martyr's ancestral home — with crowds gathering from 4:30 p.m.

onward. The body was then carried through Second Shahrān Square, past the home of Ayatollah Bagheri-Kani, and across Martyr Ahmad Kashani Bridge.

Bagheri-Kani, a close family member of the Leader, was also the nephew of the late Ayatollah Mahdavi-Kani, the former head of the Assembly of Experts. His martyrdom alongside the Leader has been deeply felt by the Iranian public, who turned out in large numbers to honor his memory.

The funeral came just one day after a separate farewell ceremony was held at the Imam Khomeini Husseinia in Tehran, where thousands had gathered to pay their respects to the Leader himself. The presence of large crowds at both events has been widely seen as a display of national unity and resilience in the face of foreign aggression.

Bagheri-Kani's body will be laid to rest later, though officials have not yet announced the burial location.

Shakeri appointed as acting head of NPC



TEHRAN- The Minister of Oil, in a decree, appointed Omid Shakeri as the acting head of the National Petrochemical Company (NPC).

According to Shana, the text of Mohsen Pajknejad's decree states:

"Considering your valuable experiences, commitment, and record, by this decree, while retaining your previous position, you are appointed as the acting head of the Na-

tional Petrochemical Company.

It is expected that, with trust in Almighty God and utilizing the capabilities of respected colleagues in the petrochemical industry, the precise administration of affairs and the company's missions will be pursued with seriousness.

I wish you success in performing your duties and assigned tasks from the Almighty."

Flare gas collection plays vital role in reducing Iran's gas imbalance in winter

TEHRAN- Increasing the collection of flare gases in Iran's oil industry can compensate for part of the gas shortage in winter; a capacity that both prevents resource wastage and helps sustain energy supply.

According to Mehr News Agency, flare gases are among the most well-known symbols of oil regions worldwide. Flames that have been seen for years in Iran's oil fields were a sign of burning associated petroleum gases; gases produced during oil extraction but inevitably burned if the necessary infrastructure for collection, processing, and transmission is lacking. This process, in addition to causing environmental pollution, means losing a significant volume of energy resources.

In Iran, over the past decades, a large volume of associated petroleum gas has been flared. This has not only had significant environmental impacts but has also been economically detrimental; because gas that could have been used as petrochemical feedstock, power plant fuel, or even as an export commodity has effectively turned into smoke.

With the development of technologies and the expansion of oil and gas industry infrastructure, a new approach to managing these resources has emerged. Now, collecting and utilizing flare gases is on the agenda as one of the key solutions for increasing energy efficiency. Energy experts believe this is one of the lowest-risk and most economical paths for reform in the energy sector; because it simultaneously reduces resource wastage, decreases environmental pollution, and increases the country's gas supply capacity.

In fact, flare gases are a potential energy source that, if invested in necessary infrastructure, can be returned to the consumption cycle and meet part of the country's domestic needs. From this perspective, collecting these gases, besides its environmental effects, also has significant importance in managing gas supply and demand.

Increasing flare collection capacity; a shift in energy policies

In recent years, Oil Ministry has placed special focus on reducing flaring and collecting flare gases. This approach is being pursued through the implementation of numerous projects, the most important of which are the development of NGL units, construction of new processing facilities, and upgrading gas refineries.

According to announced plans, the macro-goal in the Seventh National Development Plan is to significantly reduce flare gas burning and increase the collection rate to about 16 billion cubic meters per year. Achieving this goal requires developing infrastructure capable of collecting, processing, and transferring associated petroleum gases to the consumption network.

Available statistics show that before the establishment of the 14th government, about 7 million cubic meters per day of flare gases were being collected in the southern oil-rich regions, the Central Iran Oil Company, and the Arvandan Oil and Gas Company. However, with the com-

missioning of new units and the completion of some infrastructure projects, this figure has now reached over 16 million cubic meters per day.

At the same time, according to officials of the National Iranian Oil Company, about 80 million cubic meters of associated petroleum gas are currently produced daily in the country. Part of this gas is transferred to NGL units and downstream facilities, but a significant portion is still burned in flares due to infrastructure limitations. Estimates indicate that the amount of flare gas in the country ranges between 40 and 50 million cubic meters per day, depending on crude oil production conditions.

Planning shows that with the development of ongoing projects, it is possible to reduce this figure by up to about 35 million cubic meters per day. Such a reduction would mean freeing up a significant volume of gas that could be used in various sectors of the economy.

One of the most important challenges in Iran's energy sector in recent years has been the gas imbalance in winter. During this season, gas consumption in the household sector increases dramatically due to heating needs, and in many cases, priority for gas supply is given to this sector. As a result, industries, power plants, and some petrochemical units face gas restrictions or cutoffs.

Collecting flare gases can play an important role as a new source of supply in reducing this imbalance. If we assume the amount of collected gas has increased from about 7 million cubic meters per day to over 16 million cubic meters per day, in practice, nearly 9 million cubic meters of additional gas enters the consumption cycle daily. On an annual scale, this amount is equivalent to over 3 billion cubic meters of gas.

Although such a capacity alone cannot completely resolve the gas imbalance in the country, it can compensate for part of the supply shortage during the cold months of the year. For example, this amount of gas can provide more stable feedstock for some energy-intensive industries or help supply fuel for power plants to reduce the need for liquid fuels such as diesel and fuel oil.

On the other hand, injecting recovered gas into the national gas network can also help increase the stability of feedstock supply for petrochemicals. Many petrochemical units face feedstock restrictions in winter, and their production capacity decreases. Using collected flare gases can compensate for part of this production decline and prevent economic losses caused by the shutdown or reduced activity of industrial units.

Overall, collecting flare gases can be considered one of the fastest and most cost-effective solutions for increasing gas supply in the country. In addition to reducing pollution and preventing resource wastage, this measure can help improve the country's energy balance and reduce some of the pressure on the gas network during the cold months. If ongoing projects are fully operationalized, this hidden energy source can play a more prominent role in managing Iran's gas imbalance in the coming years.

Replacement of oil revenues with mining resources should be pursued: minister

TEHRAN- Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade Seyyed Mohammad Atabak stated that the ministry's outlook is "smart value creation," focusing on securing and modernizing machinery, transforming underground wealth into national economic power, and replacing oil revenues with mining revenues, Mehr News Agency reported.

The full text of the Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade's message is as follows:

Industry and mining are value-creating capacities for the national economy and a powerful arm of the country on the path to self-sufficiency and economic authority. Industry and Mining Day is an opportunity to honor the status of this field while commemorating the memory of the dear martyrs of the imposed American-Zionist war, who, by sacrificing their lives on the production front, built a steel barrier against the enemy's conspiracies.

The coincidence of Industry and Mining National Day with the funeral ceremony for the "martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution" reminds us of the foresight and profound vision of that martyred Imam regarding the country's progress. He always emphasized the necessity of shifting from traditional reliance on oil revenues to



replacing them with vast mining capacities.

Now, following his jihadi approach, all activists in this field, with firm resolve and relying on indigenous knowledge, stand on the front line of the economic battle to enhance Iran's share in the global supply chain and meet domestic needs through smart value creation. The Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade, understanding the current critical circumstances, places special focus on the reconstruction and modernization of industries by utilizing the capabilities of knowledge-based companies, so that the path to productivity and the use of modern technologies is further paved in line with building

a "prosperous Iran".

On the path to achieving sustainable development and economic authority, industry and mining should be regarded not merely as production sectors, but as strategic pillars of national sovereignty.

Today, Iran's industry and mining, possessing a "comprehensive and operational strategic document," have begun a clear and purposeful path—a document drafted with unprecedented participation from all stakeholders, from the government to the private sector and specialized associations, to transform from a theoretical document into an operational, mission-oriented road-

map aligned with the Seventh Development Plan.

In the mining sector, the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade's outlook is "smart value creation," with efforts focused on securing and equipping mining machinery, activating geoscience databases for transparency, facilitating investments, and concentrating on the extraction and processing of rare earth elements and strategic elements, aiming to transform underground wealth into national economic power and replace it with oil.

This year, by operationalizing "leading industry, value-creating mining, and smart trade," we have embarked on the path of smartization, modernization, and global competitiveness, and relying on the perseverance of the indigenous knowledge of activists in this industry, we will move step by step toward achieving our goals.

We hope to have a dynamic industry and leading mining sector relying on national capabilities. I congratulate all private sector activists, industrialists, miners, and specialists in this field on the occasion of Industry and Mining Day, and I pray to Almighty God for dignity and honor on the path to the exaltation of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran Chamber presents 200 investment opportunities to Turkey's DEIK

TEHRAN- Samad Hassanzadeh, Head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), in a meeting with the head of the Turkey-Iran Business Council at the Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEIK), and the head of the Iran-Turkey Joint Chamber of Commerce, in Istanbul, enumerating investment opportunities in Iran and areas of joint cooperation between Iran and Turkey, announced: Through the efforts of the International Affairs Department of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, more than 200 investment opportunities have been prepared in Iran to attract non-Iranian investors, and we are interested in Turkey and its private sector having extensive and sustainable participation in these projects.

The ICCIMA head referred to the long history of economic and trade relations between Iran and Turkey and said: Turkey, with a very rich civilization since ancient times, is the largest economy in the West Asia and Asia and has been one of Iran's biggest partners, and Turkey, as a connection point to Europe, is a very important country for Iran.

The Head of Iran Chamber called for security, peace, and tranquility for all nations and countries and said: For several years, Iran has faced problems due to some sanctions restrictions and international disputes, but the Turkish government and nation have always stood by the Iranian people; for this reason, as an Iranian citizen and a representative of Iran's private sector, I appreciate Turkey's support for Iran during the Sacred Defense era, the coronavirus period, the 12-day war, and the recent imposed war.

While condemning the aggressive attacks that led to the martyrdom of the Leader, senior commanders, and prominent officials of Iran, he stated: In this war, we suffered very heavy losses, but it was proven to the world that the hypothesis of power concentration in the region and the bullying of countries over others is over, and unipolar power has ended forever.

He praised the efforts of the sacred system of the Islamic Republic of Iran for security, peace, and tranquility in the world and expressed hope: Iran and Turkey should be together more than before; we believe that if economic programs between countries flourish more, borders will no longer be places of conflict.

The Head of Iran Chamber, enumerating investment opportunities in Iran and areas of joint cooperation between Iran and Turkey, announced: Through the efforts of the International Affairs Department of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, more than 200 investment opportunities have been prepared in Iran to attract non-Iranian investors, and we are interested in Turkey and its private sector having extensive and sustainable participation in these projects.

Hassanzadeh, welcoming the support of Turkey's private sector for helping to rebuild and renovate factories and production units damaged in Iran during the recent imposed war, emphasized: Given the history of economic activities

between Iran and Turkey, today we need to multiply this experience and activities several times over.

Referring to the emphasis of the presidents of Iran and Turkey on raising the trade between Iran and Turkey to 30 billion dollars, he noted: This year, despite the restrictions of the war, the official trade volume between Iran and Turkey has reached 23 billion dollars.

The Head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, noting that Turkey is among the top three countries in terms of trade volume with Iran, said: We are confident that it is possible for Turkey to hold the second rank in trade volume after China.

The Head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture also emphasized the establishment of joint industrial towns in free zones and the development of logistics and transit programs between Iran and Turkey, especially in the petrochemical and refining industries.

Qadir Ghiyafeh, Vice President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, also referred to more than five centuries of continuous political, economic, and cultural relations between Iran and Turkey and said: This long history shows that our two nations, despite the ups and downs of history, have always preferred dialogue, cooperation, and good neighborliness over confrontation. This valuable legacy is our greatest asset today for building the future.

Appreciating the responsible stances of the government and nation of the Republic of Turkey regarding recent regional developments and their solidarity with the Iranian people, he added: The experience of the eight-year imposed war, regional crises, and the recent aggression once again showed that war has no winner; rather, war only takes the lives of innocent people, destroys infrastructure, ruins capital, and sets back the development process of nations for years. Therefore, we believe the best response to war is the development of economic cooperation, the expansion of investment, and the creation of shared interests among nations.

Ghiyafeh stated that today, more than ever, the borders of Iran and Turkey should be a route for the passage of capital, technology, goods, tourists, and ideas, and added: Iran and Turkey are two complementary economies, not rivals! Iran, with its vast energy resources, mines, steel industries, petrochemicals, agriculture, specialized human resources, and distinguished transit position, and Turkey, with its industrial capabilities, technology, logistics, contracting, and extensive access to global markets, can create one of the most successful models of regional economic cooperation.

The Vice President of Iran Chamber stated that from the perspective of Iran's private sector, the time has come for the economic relations of the two countries to go beyond traditional trade and enter the stage of joint investment, joint production, and joint presence in regional and global markets. He said: We invite Turkish companies

and investors to actively participate in Iran's major projects, especially in the fields of mining, steel, downstream industries, petrochemicals, refining, energy, transportation, logistics, ports, agriculture, food industries, tourism, pharmaceuticals, advanced technologies, artificial intelligence, and the digital economy.

He added: We also believe that cooperation in technology transfer, establishing joint research and development (R&D) centers, exchanging technical knowledge, supporting knowledge-based companies, and developing high-tech industries can create a new chapter in the economic relations between the two countries.

According to the Vice President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, the development of transit corridors, strengthening logistics infrastructure, increasing the capacity of border crossings, developing rail, road, and maritime transport, and establishing joint logistics centers will further strengthen the position of Iran and Turkey as the axis connecting Asia, the Caucasus, the Persian Gulf, and Europe.

The Vice President of Iran Chamber stated that achieving 30 billion dollars in economic exchanges is a completely achievable goal and noted: We believe that if joint investments, technology transfer, development of logistics infrastructure, banking and financial cooperation, and support for the private sector are prioritized, achieving 50 billion dollars in economic cooperation in the medium-term horizon will also be entirely possible.

He added: To achieve this goal, it is necessary to remove banking and financial obstacles, provide effective legal protection for investors from both countries, facilitate customs processes, develop trade agreements, complete transit corridors, and strengthen permanent dialogue mechanisms between the private sector and the governments of the two countries.

Ghiyafeh, emphasizing that the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture is fully prepared to develop and implement a joint roadmap alongside Turkey's Foreign Economic Relations Board and TOBB for the development of investment, technology transfer, development of advanced industries, and implementation of major joint projects, concluded his remarks by saying: We do not see Turkey merely as a trade partner; we see Turkey as our strategic partner in investment, technology, production, and building the future of the region. The more the economic interests of our nations are intertwined, the more sustainable peace, security, and prosperity will be for future generations.

Mehrdad Saadat, head of the Joint Chamber of Commerce of Iran and Turkey, as another speaker of the Iranian delegation in this meeting, stating that we consider Turkey our partner for victory in the war, referred to the realities of Turkey's trade and said: Preferential trade between the two countries is practically an outdated method in the world, so our proposal is free trade.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

The clenched fist and the geometric fusion of Resistance

The martyred Leader's final blueprint lies in his blood



By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — The bodies lay at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Grand Mosalla on July 3; yet another spectacle was the people paying their respects.

The U.S.-Israeli war of aggression, launched with the February 28 assassination of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, sought to paralyze Iran and its allies.

Washington and Tel Aviv falsely assumed decapitating the leadership would shatter the Resistance Front.

Rather than crumbling, the Resistance has emerged as an indestructible, living organism. Imperial forces sought a fractured region, but met the manifestation of the Unity of the Arenas.

A geography of defiance

The arriving delegations delivered an operational message. Lebanese Hezbollah envoys paid their respect, as well as the families of martyrs Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah and Imad Mughniyeh. Iraqi Resistance commanders honored the doctrine of unified retaliation.

Palestinian leaders from Hamas and the Islamic Jihad reaffirmed al-Quds remains the struggle's beating heart.

Afghan Fatemiyoun and Pakistani Zainabiyoun fighters completed the transnational corps, recognizing no imperial boundaries.

Yemen's Ansarullah delegation defied ag-

gressive enemy jets and the brazen attempt to make them cancel their trip.

Furthermore, dozens of shadow commanders attended anonymously. Unseen by media, their presence confirmed the operational command structure remains thoroughly intact.

These figures represent the vanguard; millions more will pledge allegiance in ceremonies across Tehran, Qom, Baghdad, Najaf, Karbala, and Mashhad.

The architecture

This gathering was the fruit of a strategic doctrine.

The unity of the arenas is not a coercive Western military cartel like NATO. It is a voluntary synergy of independent fronts retaining local autonomy but converging during civilizational crises.

The martyred Leader and the martyred Major General Qasem Soleimani meticulously designed this network, building it on deep field trust.

Ayatollah Khamenei spent his life shielding this ecosystem from Western mischaracterization.

He rejected the "proxy" label, insisting Hezbollah fights because the pure power of faith draws it into battle.

From Gaza to Yemen, he recognized these movements are driven by belief and an unyield-

ing refusal to bow to Israel.

The book and the wage

Far from a defeat, this assassination represents a divine ascension.

As his brother, Hojjatolislam Seyyed Hadi Khamenei, declared on July 3, martyrdom was "his most fitting reward."

For a revolutionary who navigated prisons, exile, and multiple assassination attempts, achieving martyrdom while battling the world's most evil forces was the only crown worthy of his sacrifices.

This devotion was fundamentally rooted in the holy text. Sayyed Mohammad Mahdi Nasrallah, the son of the martyred Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, offered profound testimony in an article published on July 3, noting the Leader was intimately bound to the Quran since age five.

His final gatherings involved deep recitation, and he met his creator with the words of Allah actively on his lips. This mirrors the sacred continuum of Imam Hussein (AS).

It validates the Quranic promise: "Do not think of those who have been killed in the way of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision."

The fist and the smile

It has remained agonizing for the Ummah to accept his physical absence. Millions have missed their spiritual father, whose serene smile calmed the region during its darkest hours.

The grieving masses plead for him to hold their hands once more and heal their restless hearts.

However, this sorrow has transformed into unstoppable mobilization. His body represents an awakened nation that refuses historical humiliation.

While his smile is hidden, the final image of his clenched fist at the moment of martyrdom has become a permanent command.

Despite the U.S.-Israeli axis imagining an easy endpoint, the defiant clenched fist ensures the battlegrounds of resistance endure.

The architect has achieved martyrdom, but the blueprint is now drawn in blood, and there are too many hands holding the pen for any empire to wrest it away.

Sedition in Lebanon, or a calculated agenda of betrayal?



By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - Throughout history, political turmoil and national betrayal have often been linked, and Lebanon today is no exception. It faces a dangerous moment where its own officials are making deals that serve Israeli interests.

No sooner had Israeli Ambassador to Washington Yechiel Leiter embraced Lebanon's Ambassador, Nada Maalouf, during the ceremony marking the signing of the U.S.-brokered framework agreement between the two sides than Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament Nabih Berri declared his firm opposition to the deal, warning that it could provoke internal strife in Lebanon.

The Lebanese government's official surrender document to the Israeli regime is met by the sincere fear of patriots that Lebanon could descend into internal strife. Can genuine warnings against sedition protect the country's barrier of resistance?

A resistance that shields Lebanon, the Levant, and the other nations from entering the Israeli regime's project through the gateway of the "Greater Israel" project, whose foundations are paving the so-called "David's Corridor" and knocking on the doors of Syria's Daraa, Jabal al-Druze, and the Badiya Desert, extending into Iraq along the Turkish border after having already taken Palestine.

Today, even if only the Lebanese hills of Ali al-Taher are still fighting, they do so amid Arab neighbors largely emptied of resistance against the Israeli regime's expansion plots.

Historically, sedition usually raises its head when leaders, tribes, sects, and parties begin dividing the spoils and surrender to greed. But when war is raging, and the enemy is violating the homeland without restraint, this is not sedition; it is outright treason, and the distinction could not be more critical for those who still cherish their nation's sovereignty.

Those involved seem to have forgotten May 7, 2008, when Hezbollah's communications network was challenged and the response was the decisive takeover of Beirut before it was handed over swiftly to the Lebanese Army to restore order according to the Lebanese resistance's priorities in confronting the ever-watchful Zionist regime.

Yet, today the government in Beirut is pressuring the same Lebanese army to confront the Lebanese resistance, highlighting that their intentions have moved beyond the realm of internal strife and toward falling into the traps of the Israeli regime.

Hezbollah understands that internal conflict is the greatest threat of all, because once a nation turns against itself, nothing can save it from destruction. Those who remain loyal to Lebanon find themselves in a difficult position: they see betrayal happening around them, yet they cannot act forcefully without risking civil war.

This is the cruel trap that has been set for them by both the Lebanese government and Israel backed by its American guarantor. Any move to expose traitors could shatter the unity that remains, but staying silent only allows the Zionist regime to grow bolder.

The Lebanese government delegation that traveled to Washington has effectively handed the regime a diplomatic victory while pretending to care about Lebanese sovereignty,

and, in the same stroke, they were fleeing the Iran-U.S. memorandum of understanding, which called for an Israeli ceasefire and full withdrawal from Lebanon under Iranian pressure.

They also carried with them Hezbollah's fear of civil war, yet these same officials have forgotten their own history. This signals that their goals have shifted from avoiding internal strife to actively working with both near-by and distant enemies.

Meanwhile, Hezbollah continues to defend the country's borders, knowing that the real battle is not just against Israeli Occupation Forces, but against those inside who are quietly dismantling the nation from within. These internal actors remove small pieces of national strength one by one, convincing themselves that each concession is insignificant.

Yet the cumulative effect is devastating. As the Israeli regime exploits these openings to extend its influence over Lebanese land and resources, the loyalists are forced to calculate every step carefully, because a single miscalculation could ignite sectarian fighting and destroy any remaining hope of resisting foreign occupation. This is the very kind of strife that wise leaders have long warned against when they advised staying out of domestic turmoil entirely.

On a theoretical level, the gap between political strife and national betrayal seems wide when judged by moral and patriotic values. In practice, however, that gap narrows considerably when sectarian loyalties, party interests, and personal ambitions come into play.

The framework agreement with the Israeli occupation regime has brought this tension to its most decisive point. The Lebanese government endlessly lamented violations of Lebanese sovereignty by alleged Iranian involvement, even when the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) waged missile salvos at the Israeli military, after it struck Beirut, for the sake of Lebanese sovereignty.

These are the same officials serving in the government who have called for the expulsion of the Iranian ambassador and claimed that the Iranian operation against the Israeli regime, the first of its kind that changed the regional equation, violated Lebanon's national sovereignty.

Today, however, those same officials are prepared to grant the Zionist regime legitimacy over its occupation of Lebanese territory because Hezbollah has not surrendered its weapons aimed at Tel Aviv.

At the same time, Tehran has established a clear principle: unity in wartime means shared destiny with every inch of Lebanese soil. This principle links the security of Israeli settlements directly to the safety of southern Lebanese towns and, equally importantly, the safety of the Lebanese capital, Beirut.

While the government in Beirut continues its collaboration with the Zionist regime, a growing number of Lebanese figures, politicians, political parties, and activists are deeply concerned about their country descending into internal fighting. They recognize that national unity, once fractured by competing factions, cannot easily be restored.

This episode reveals a deep political and moral decline among Lebanon's official representatives.

Two egos, one war: Why Iran understands Trump and Netanyahu better than they understand themselves

By Syeda Farheen Naqi Mossavi

HAFIZABAD, Pakistan -For months, the entire world has watched two egoistic leaders, Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu, make decisions that shake the Middle East to its very foundations. But perhaps the real key to understanding them is not politics. It is psychology.

Both men are driven by the same illness: an egoism so deep that they genuinely believe they are writing history with their own hands. Trump was raised with wealth, sent to military school to be "toughened up," and has spent his life desperately seeking approval from those he claims to despise. Netanyahu grew up in the shadow of a father who taught him that Jews are forever surrounded by enemies and that only ruthless force can ensure survival.

One is a reckless bully who

loves to swing a hammer; the other is a cunning survivor who prefers a scalpel. But both share the same delusion: that they are the most unique figures in the world with the power to control anything they wish.

Their relationship has never been a partnership of equals. It is a brutal dance of dominance and submission. Trump has publicly yelled at Netanyahu, called him "crazy and ungrateful," and even hinted that without American support, Netanyahu could end up in prison. In one heated phone call, Trump reportedly told the Israeli leader he was "crazy" for sabotaging the peace deal with Iran. And Netanyahu, for all his posturing, just takes it. He needs tension to keep his far-right coalition happy; Trump needs de-escalation to address inflation and present voters with economic progress. They are



using each other, but neither is really in control. The one who thinks he is the master is actually the puppet.

Now here is the part that should make every Iranian proud. While Trump and Netanyahu were busy posing for photos and making threats, Iran was doing something far smarter. According to a recent report by Drop Site News, Tehran quietly added senior psychologists to its negotiating

team. Their job was to study Trump's mind, his patterns, his triggers, his weaknesses, and then craft every single message Iran sent to him through Qatari and Omani mediators. And guess what? It worked. According to the Drop site report, Trump's reactions improved noticeably once Iran started incorporating the psychologists' recommendations into its messages.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Sports community pledges to continue the legacy of Palestinian goalkeeper killed in Gaza

Saleem Khader al-Ashqar, an established 32-year-old Palestinian goalkeeper, stepped out of his home last Monday in search of cooking gas following a request from his pregnant wife. He never returned. Al-Ashqar was shot and killed by Israeli forces in the town of al-Qarara, northeast of Khan Younis, southern Gaza, ending a life dedicated to football and family.

His death is the latest devastating blow for the Palestinian athletic community, with about 1,009 members killed since Israel's genocidal war on Gaza began,

the official Palestinian Football Association (PFA) reported.

Al-Ashqar is among 567 Palestinians to be killed by Israel in the football sector alone since October 7, 2023, when the war on Gaza began.

But for his grieving family, al-Ashqar is far more than a statistic. He was the only son among six sisters and had recently celebrated his wedding on January 26, 2026. He and his wife were eagerly awaiting the birth of their first child when tragedy struck.

"He went out like any other young man, just trying to provide a gas cylinder for his wife and family, but the treacherous bullets of the occupation struck him," said his uncle, Captain Farid Al-Ashqar, a member of the PFA referees committee who had helped raise Saleem.

From a young age, al-Ashqar was deeply devoted to goalkeeping and dreamed of defending the net for the Palestinian national team. Throughout his career, he played for several local clubs, including Al-Aqsa, Shabab Khan Younis, Al-Masdar, and

Khadamat Khan Younis.

"When club managements would sit with us to negotiate his contract, Saleem would tell them, 'I don't need money; I need to be a player who represents my homeland, my people, and the State of Palestine,'" his uncle recalled.

Abdulghani al-Sheikh, president of Khadamat Khan Younis, described the news of al-Ashqar's killing as a "shocking and harsh" blow to the players, coaching staff, and fans.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran beat Jordan at FIBA World Cup 2027 Asian qualifier

TEHRAN - Iran led for more than 37 minutes and never allowed Jordan to mount a serious response after the opening exchanges, securing a comfortable 49-67 victory on Thursday, 2026, at Prince Hamza Arena in Amman.

This Group C game marked the first round of the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2027 Asian Qualifiers, with Iran controlling the tempo from start to finish, fiba.basketball.

The pivotal moment arrived early in the opening quarter. With 7:07 remaining, forward Arsalan Kazemi finished a fast break layup under the basket to tie the game at 2-2. Just over a minute later, with 6:05 left, Mahdi Jafari drove baseline and converted a reverse layup to give Iran a 2-5 lead—a lead they would never relinquish.

During that decisive stretch from 8:36 to 5:30 of the first quarter, Iran outscored Jordan 2-7, dominated the glass with five rebounds, and committed zero turnovers. Jordan, meanwhile, managed just one field goal in five attempts and failed to register an assist or a turnover in that span. Iran's early composure set the tone for the rest of the game.

Kazemi anchored Iran's effort on both ends, finishing with 7 points, 11 rebounds, and 7 assists in 32:04 of action. His 20 index rating and +11 plus/minus underscored how Iran controlled the game whenever he was on the floor.

Guard Mohammadmehdi Heydari provided the main scoring punch, pouring in 17 points to go with 2 rebounds and 4 assists in 28:41. He was highly efficient, knocking down 7-of-11 from two-point range. Wing Mobin Sheikhi added 13 points, 4 rebounds, 1 assist, and 3 steals in 26:14, connecting on 4-of-9 from deep. Off the bench, Salar Monji contributed 5 points, 7 rebounds, an 11 index rating, and a game-best +20 in just 15:41.

For Jordan, center Ahmad Al Dwairi battled inside for a double-double, tallying 17 points and 11 rebounds in 34:44, along with 1 assist, 1 block, and a 20 index rating. But his efforts were not enough to spark a comeback.

Iran's biggest run came in the first quarter, when they reeled off seven unanswered points over a span of 1:37 to turn a 2-0 deficit into a 2-7 lead. Kazemi led the charge with 5 points on 2-of-2 shooting and grabbed a rebound during the surge.

Jordan's largest lead was just 2 points, achieved with 8:36 remaining in the first quarter at 2-0. Iran's biggest advantage came with 4:37 left in the second quarter, when they pushed the margin to 16-25. Despite holding an early edge, Jordan could not keep pace as Iran steadily widened the gap.

Iran led for 37:07 in a strong and imposing performance, dictating the flow of the game from the early stages. Jordan spent just 1:29 in front, while the score was tied for 1:24.

Iran jumped out to a 11-17 lead after the opening quarter, then extended their advantage to 22-29 at halftime. The visitors broke the game open in the third period, building a double-digit cushion that Jordan never seriously threatened. Although Jordan managed to win the final quarter, Iran's control was never in doubt as they closed out a comfortable road win.

With this result, Iran demonstrated their ability to dictate the pace and impose their will on the road, taking a significant step forward in Group C of the Asian Qualifiers.

Iran handball team to participate in 2026 Asian Games

TEHRAN - Iranian men's handball has received a major boost ahead of the 2026 Asian Games, with the confirmation of the national team's participation in the Games.

The Iran Handball Federation recently appointed Nenad Kljajic as the new head coach

of the Iran men's national team. The former Croatian international and Olympic gold medalist brings decades of coaching experience in Europe and Asia, having previously guided clubs and national teams, including Saudi Arabia. His appointment reflects Iran's ambition to strengthen its position among Asia's leading handball nations.

The coaching change comes at an important time for Iranian handball. After initially being left off the country's delegation for the 2026 Asian Games, the men's national team have now been approved to compete. The decision followed the support of Ahmad Don-yamali, whose efforts ensured that the team would be included in the continental event.

With the uncertainty over participation resolved, Kljajic can now focus on preparing the squad for one of the most prestigious competitions in Asian sport. The Asian Games will provide Iran with an opportunity to challenge the continent's top teams and improve on its recent performances on the international stage.

The combination of an accomplished new head coach and confirmation of the team's place at the Asian Games marks the beginning of a promising new chapter for Iranian handball. Expectations are now high that Kljajic's international experience, combined with Iran's talented squad, can help the national team compete for a top finish when the Games begin in Japan in September 2026.

Duhok football club complete signing of Sina Asadbeigi

TEHRAN - Iranian midfielder Sina Asadbeigi has officially joined Iraqi club Duhok FC ahead of the 2026-27 season.

Duhok FC announced the signing of Asadbeigi, confirming that the 29-year-old will represent the club in the upcoming Iraqi Stars League campaign.

Duhok finished 10th in the 20-team Iraqi Stars League last season and will begin the 2026-27 campaign under the guidance of Iranian coach Yahya Golmohammadi.

Asadbeigi brings extensive experience in Iranian football, having previously played for Paykan, Sorkhpooshan Pakdasht, Zob Ahan, Havadar, Persepolis, and Foolad. The midfielder spent the past two seasons with Foolad before making the move to Iraq.

The transfer marks a new chapter in Asadbeigi's career as he embarks on his first spell outside Iran, with Duhok looking to strengthen their squad for the new season under Golmohammadi.

Iran suffer three straight defeats at 2026 AVC Girls' U18 Volleyball Championship

TEHRAN - Iran suffered three consecutive defeats at the 2026 AVC Girls' U18 Volleyball Championship, currently underway in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand.

The Iranian girls opened their Pool C campaign with a 3-1 loss to the Philippines before falling to Indonesia and Japan in their remaining group-stage matches.

Iran will now face Australia on Sunday in the 9th-16th place quarterfinals.

The 2026 AVC Girls' U18 Volleyball Championship is the 16th edition of the biennial tournament organized by the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC) in collaboration with the Thailand Volleyball Association (TVA). The competition is being held in Nakhon Ratchasima from July 1 to 7.

The tournament also serves as the Asian qualification event for the 2027 FIVB Volleyball Girls' U19 World Championship, with the top four teams securing places at the global tournament as the AVC's representatives.

Persepolis through the eyes of Iran's martyred leader

TEHRAN - As Iran prepares to bid farewell to its martyred leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, one of the defining moments reflecting his vision of the country's cultural identity has once again come into focus: his historic visit to the UNESCO-listed Persepolis in 1988, where he described the ancient site as a "valuable treasure" that must be safeguarded for future generations.

Ayatollah Khamenei was martyred in his office on February 28, the first day of the recent war imposed on Iran by the United States and the Israeli regime. Farewell ceremonies and funeral processions are scheduled to take place from July 4 to July 9 in Tehran, Qom, Mashhad, and Iraq.

As the nation prepares to honor his memory, his visit to Persepolis has been revisited as one of the clearest examples of his views on the relationship between Iran's history, national identity, and cultural heritage.

The visit took place during an official trip to Fars province in December 1988, when Ayatollah Khamenei was serving as Iran's president. Earlier that day, he addressed a large gathering in Marvdasht, emphasizing national unity, vigilance against foreign domination, and the country's post-war reconstruction following the end of the Iran-Iraq War.

Later, accompanied by provincial officials, he toured Persepolis, the monumental ceremonial capital of the ancient Achaemenid Empire. At the conclusion of the visit, he signed the site's guestbook, leaving behind a message that has since become one of the most significant statements outlining his



approach to Iran's historical and cultural heritage.

According to Miras-e Aria, in the note, he identified what he called two bright aspects of Persepolis. The first was the extraordinary creativity, artistic talent, and craftsmanship of the Iranian people, whose achievements have continued to inspire admiration after more than two millennia. The second was the enduring historical lesson embedded in the site: that governments founded on domination and tyranny ultimately disappear, while the cultural and civilizational achievements of nations survive.

Referring to the divine laws governing history, he wrote that oppressive powers fade away, but the legacy of civilizations remains as a source of knowledge, reflection, and inspiration.

Ayatollah Khamenei concluded by emphasizing the importance of protecting historical monuments, describing them as a valuable treasure and reserve in which one can observe history, humanity, and the divine traditions governing societies, and stressing that they must be preserved for future generations.

His remarks have long been viewed as a concise articulation of his cultural vision—one that regarded Iran's historical monuments not merely as archaeological remains, but as enduring symbols of the nation's identity, civilizational continuity, and collective memory.

Persepolis, also known as Parseh or Takht-e Jamshid ("Throne of Jamshid"), is situated on the fertile plain of Marvdasht in Fars province. Founded by Darius the Great around 518 BCE, it

served as the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire and hosted Nowruz celebrations as well as delegations from across the empire.

Renowned for its monumental palaces, audience halls, towering columns, and intricate stone reliefs, Persepolis ranks among the world's greatest archaeological treasures. It was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1979 in recognition of its Outstanding Universal Value. Although the city was sacked by Alexander the Great in 330 BCE, its majestic ruins continue to attract scholars and visitors from around the globe, standing as a lasting testament to the artistic, architectural, and cultural achievements of ancient Persia.

Researcher highlights

Isfahan's enduring role in Ta'zieh heritage



TEHRAN - Iran's ritual dramatic art of Ta'zieh continues to thrive across the country, with central Isfahan province widely regarded as the nation's leading center for the centuries-old tradition, according to Iranian researcher and Ta'zieh scholar Esmail Mojallali.

Speaking to IRNA on Thursday, Mojallali described Ta'zieh as a uniquely Iranian performing art whose literary, musical and theatrical elements are deeply rooted in the country's indigenous culture.

He explained that Ta'zieh combines Persian poetry, traditional Iranian music and dramatic performance, and is traditionally staged in venues known as tekyehs, where performers reenact religious narratives, most notably the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS), the third Shia Imam, and the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

According to the researcher, while mourning ceremonies with dramatic elements can be traced back to the Safavid dynasty, the art form evolved into its recognizable and organized structure during the Qajar dynasty in the 19th century.

Mojallali said royal patronage during the Qajar era played a decisive role in the flourishing of both literature and music associated with Ta'zieh. He noted that under Fath-Ali Shah Qajar, literary circles encouraged leading poets to compose works centered on religious themes, including the events of Ashura, while traditional music gained renewed recognition.

He added that during the reign of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, the codification of Iran's classical musical system by Mirza Abdollah Farahani, together with the emergence of pioneering playwrights such as Mirza Fath-Ali Akhundzadeh, helped shape Iran's theatrical traditions.

Highlighting Isfahan's historical importance, Mojallali said the province has remained one of the country's foremost centers of Ta'zieh since the 19th century and today hosts the largest number of performances nationwide.

He attributed the province's prominence to generations of distinguished poets, musicians, performers and playwrights who contributed to the development of the art. Among them, he cited poets such as Sabahi Bigdeli and Shahab Isfahani, as well

as renowned ney player Nayeb Asadollah Isfahani.

Mojallali also referred to prominent Ta'zieh writers and directors associated with Isfahan, including Mirza Baqer Moein al-Boka, saying their contributions created an enduring link between the province and the evolution of the ritual drama.

Historical records, he added, show that Zell-e Soltan, a Qajar prince who was the son of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, encouraged the expansion of Ta'zieh in Isfahan by inviting accomplished poets and vocalists from across the province, laying the foundations for its emergence as Iran's principal Ta'zieh hub.

Iranian officials say expanding rail connectivity would not only increase trade volumes but also reinforce the country's goeconomic position along key regional transit corridors.

Today, Mojallali said, Ta'zieh remains an integral part of Muharram mourning ceremonies throughout Isfahan province. Its geographical diversity and varied ethnic communities have also produced a rich tradition of scriptwriting, resulting in numerous locally distinctive versions of Ta'zieh texts.

He identified the province as one of Iran's leading centers for contemporary Ta'zieh scriptwriting, noting that many valuable manuscripts by Isfahan-based po-

ets have survived, some of which differ significantly from versions found elsewhere in the country.

Mojallali also highlighted the role of local masters in preserving authentic performance traditions, particularly through training younger generations, and said Isfahan has long been recognized for producing specialized Ta'zieh equipment such as armor and helmets, reflecting the close relationship between craftsmanship and the performing arts.

Among the province's notable Ta'zieh centers, Mojallali singled out Khansar, saying the town has become a major destination for religious tourism during the month of Muharram thanks to its well-established performance traditions and historic tekyeh. He noted that many tekyehs built elsewhere in Iran have drawn inspiration from the architectural and performance model of Khansar's venue.

At the same time, he cautioned against allowing elaborate horseback performances to overshadow the spiritual and artistic essence of Ta'zieh, stressing that visual spectacle should not come at the expense of the ritual's philosophical and religious message.

Ta'zieh, also known as Shabihkhani, is a traditional Shia ritual drama that primarily depicts the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS) at Karbala and other religious narratives. In 2010, UNESCO inscribed Ta'zieh on its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, recognizing its significance as a performing art that combines poetry, music, song and movement while helping preserve traditional craftsmanship, oral transmission, cultural identity and social cohesion.

TEHRAN – In an effort to ensure the legal protection of wetlands, prevent encroachment, and establish state sovereignty over these valuable ecosystems, the Department of Environment (DOE) has issued titled deeds for 22 wetlands, covering an area of 1.34 million hectares, across the country.

Issuing title deeds for the rest of the wetlands is on the agenda, ISNA quoted Ahmad-Reza Lahijanzadeh, an official with the Department of Environment, as saying.

The effort will serve as a more effective measure to conserve wetlands, prevent unlawful land acquisition, unauthorized change of land use, and infringement of public rights, while paving the way for exercising legal authority over wetlands, as well as facilitating legal pursuit of water rights and proper management of water resources, the official highlighted.

Iran's geography is distinct, teeming with diverse landscapes. In Iran, 141 wetlands with ecological value, with an area of over 3 million hectares, have been identified, 27 of which were listed in the International Ramsar Convention.

In 2025, the DOE started a new phase of the wetlands conservation project (2025–2028) to strengthen sustainable livelihoods and alleviate pressure on the wetlands ecosystem.

Backed by successful experiences in Lake Urmia, the basins in Gilan, Fars, Parishan, and those in East and West Azerbaijan provinces, the project has provided the basis for promoting wetland protection and improving sustainable resource utilization, IRIB quoted Fereshteh Jadori, an official with DOE, as saying on November 25.

The pilot implementation of the project in Shadegan and Behbahan in the previous phase yielded significant results, and these achievements led the project to enter a new phase with the support of international institutions and domestic agencies, she added.

The official went on to highlight the role of technical and vocational education and training in empowering local people to protect wetlands and improve their income.

The most recent strategies taken for the conservation of the wetlands are as follows. In June



2025, the DOE and the Ministry of Agriculture signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to launch a national plan for empowering local communities to protect and promote the sustainable use of wetlands.

The main objective of the MOU was to turn wetland protection from a government initiative into a comprehensive social responsibility by focusing on training, empowering, and involving local communities.

In February 2025, the DOE and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) extended their partnership by signing a three-year memorandum of understanding (MOU) to conserve Iranian wetlands projects in the country.

The MOU was signed by the head of DOE, Shina Ansari, and Resident Representative ad interim for UNDP in Iran, Ayshanie Medagangoda-Labé, in a meeting in Bushehr province, ISNA reported.

Wetlands most threatened ecosystems on earth

Wetlands represent a vital ecosystem and are known as the kidneys of the Earth. These ecosystems, among other things, provide clean water, protect against floods, restore underground aquifers, and maintain surface water flow during dry periods.

However, they are among the ecosystems with the highest rates of decline, loss, and degradation; they are disappearing three times faster than forests and are Earth's most threatened ecosystem.

In just 50 years — since 1970 — 35 per cent of the world's wetlands have been lost. Human activities that lead to loss of wetlands include drainage and infilling for agriculture and construction, pollution, overfishing and overexploitation of resources, invasive species, and climate change.

Wetlands are ecosystems in which water is the primary factor controlling the environment and the associated plant and animal life. A broad definition of wetlands includes both freshwater and marine and coastal ecosystems, such as all lakes and rivers, underground aquifers, swamps and marshes, wet grasslands, peatlands, oases, estuaries, deltas and tidal flats, mangroves and other coastal areas, coral reefs, and all human-made sites such as fishponds, rice paddies, reservoirs, and salt pans.

These lands are critical to people and nature, given the intrinsic value of these ecosystems, and their benefits and services, including their environmental, climate, ecological, social, economic, scientific, educational, cultural, recreational, and aesthetic contributions to sustainable development and human wellbeing.

Although they cover only around 6 per cent of the Earth's land surface, 40 per cent of all plant and animal species live or breed in wetlands. Wetland biodiversity matters for our health, our food supply, for tourism, and for jobs.

Wetlands are vital for humans, for other ecosystems, and for our climate, providing essential eco-

system services, such as water regulation, including flood control and water purification. More than a billion people across the world depend on wetlands for their livelihoods — that's about one in eight people on Earth.

World Wetlands Day is annually celebrated on February 2nd. World Wetlands Day 2026, under the theme "Wetlands and traditional knowledge: Celebrating cultural heritage," explores the deep-rooted connections between wetlands and cultural practices, traditions, and knowledge systems of communities across the world.

Human activities that lead to loss of wetlands include drainage and infilling for agriculture and construction, pollution, overfishing and overexploitation of resources, invasive species, and climate change.

Indicators of current negative trends in global biodiversity and ecosystem functions are projected to continue in response to direct and indirect drivers, such as rapid human population growth, unsustainable production and consumption, and associated technological development, as well as the adverse impacts of climate change.

This vicious cycle of wetland loss, threatened livelihoods, and deepening poverty is the result of mistakenly seeing wetlands as wastelands rather than life-giving sources of jobs, incomes, and essential ecosystem services. A key challenge is to change mindsets to encourage governments and communities to value and prioritize wetlands.

Iranian, Russian experts ink MOU to combat SDSs in Khuzestan province

TEHRAN – The natural resources and watershed management department of Khuzestan province has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with MA VOSTOK, a Russian company, to combat desertification and mitigate the impacts of sand and dust storms (SDSs) in the province's industrial regions, particularly the Shadegan oil field.

The MOU is also targeted to expand cooperation between industries operating in the province and contribute to the fulfilment of their social responsibilities, IRIB reported.

The proposed projects will primarily focus on runoff water management and improving environmental conditions in areas surrounding oilfields.

According to the agreement, MA VOSTOK is committed to sharing expertise and providing required support to expedite the implementation of the plans to combat desertification and expand vegetation coverage, and reduce airborne contaminants.

"Deserts cover around 1.27 million hectares, equaling 20 per cent of the province's land," IRIB quoted Ali Chaman-Nezhadian, an official with DOE, as saying.

Poor management, oil-related activities, and road construction have sped up desertification in the province, the official further noted.

Dust storms are significant environmental challenges that adversely affect food security, human health, and the sustainable development process at national and regional levels.

Being located in an arid and semi-arid area,

Iran has been negatively impacted by climate change. The rise in temperatures and drop in precipitation, intensified droughts, and frequent SDSs have not only threatened the ecosystem and biodiversity but also jeopardized the country's food security by exacerbating soil erosion, expanding desertification, and declining agricultural productivity.

In consequence, the national specialized working group on SDSs, in cooperation with other governmental bodies, approved a comprehensive plan to address dust storms in August 2025. It is used as a national reference document to enhance the country's resilience against one of the most acute environmental threats.

Tehran, Moscow underline development of environmental ties

In 2025, the head of the DOE, Shina Ansari, and the deputy chairmen of the Federation Council of Russia, Konstantin Kosachev, explored the potential of enhancing joint efforts in environmental fields.

The officials met on the sidelines of the 11th Nevsky International Ecological Congress.

Highlighting that the two chambers of the Russian parliament (the State Duma and the Russian Federation) are willing to expand ties with Iran, Kosachev voiced Russia's readiness to promote environmental cooperation with Iran, IRNA reported.

The official went on to emphasize the expansion of parliamentary collaboration between the two nations, saying that the Russia-Iran parliamentary friendship group within the Federation Council is one of the most active groups, which reflects the sig-



nificance of the relationship between Russia and Iran.

Referring to the comprehensive strategic partnership treaty with Russia, Ansari, for her part, expressed optimism for the implementation of environmental agreements achieved under the treaty.

Referring to the Caspian Sea as a shared environmental challenge, the official called on Russia to further boost cooperation with the country in addressing the Sea's problems.

Also, she highlighted the exchange of experiences between legislative institutions of Iran and Russia, and the two parliaments play a critical role in preserving the environment.

Attending the 11th Congress, Iranian officials used the opportunity to raise and discuss the Caspian Sea's major environmental and ecological challenges, such as water level reduction, pollution, fishing, and fisheries, IRNA reported.

Participation in the meeting of Environment Ministers of the Caspian Sea, as well as the BRICS panel, was among the other programs of the Iranian delegation.

'Inaction to environmental devastation resulting from conflicts exacerbates war impacts'



TEHRAN – Shina Ansari, the head of the Department of Environment (DOE), has highlighted that remaining silent in the face of environmental destruction caused by warmongers is the same as accepting a threat that will, sooner or later, impact everyone.

"The environment is the first silent victim of war and the last to recover from its consequences. Nature does not recognize the end of armed conflict. Environmental destruction may continue to undermine human health, food security, water resources, and biodiversity for decades after the guns fall silent," the official noted.

She made the remarks while addressing the ninth session of the Committee on Environment and Development (CED9) held from July 1-3 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Elaborating on transboundary environmental challenges such as climate change, air and marine pollution, biodiversity loss, land degradation, dust and sand storms, and waste management challenges, Ansari underlined that environmental destruction resulting from war and military aggression is the most severe and inhumane damage to the environment, as the impacts of these brutal attacks trigger a profound threat to the entire planet.

"When war targets the environment, the victim is not merely one nation—it is the shared heritage of humanity. Therefore, protecting the environment must become a common global responsibility; the aggressors must be held accountable for their crimes and provide full compensation for the environmental damage they have caused. Effective implementation of this principle not only serves justice for the affected State but also plays an essential role in preventing the recurrence of such devastation."

Referring to some of the gravest war crimes and environmental catastrophes caused by the warmongering of major powers in the region in the past decades, she said that over the past year, the US-Israel coalition has imposed two illegal wars against Iran.

They deliberately targeted Minab School, the girls' sports club in Lamerd, oil facilities, drinking water infrastructure, and residential areas, which constitute grave crimes that demand a unified response from the civilized and freedom-loving nations of the world, Ansari highlighted.

"The very initiation of these acts of aggression constituted a blatant violation of the fundamental principles of the civilized international order. Equally disturbing has been the silence and inaction of the international institutions entrusted with safeguarding peace and justice.

Carbon emissions equivalent to the annual emissions of sixty countries generated within only the first two weeks of the attacks, serious damage to the ecologically sensitive waters of the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, reckless attacks against peaceful nuclear facilities, and widespread destruction of biodiversity are only some of the most significant consequences, whose impacts will extend far beyond Iran's borders.

For this reason, protecting the environment during armed conflicts is not merely a moral obligation; it is a binding obligation under international law that must be respected and implemented with greater determination.

The international community needs to recognize environmental security as an essential pillar of international peace and security. Lasting peace cannot exist without a healthy environment, and environmental destruction anywhere in the world can generate consequences

that transcend national boundaries," Ansari further noted.

The official urged the international community to strengthen international mechanisms to prevent environmental destruction during armed conflicts, assess environmental damage, document environmental impacts, ensure accountability of aggressors, and secure effective compensation.

She went on to announce Iran's commitment to regional cooperation for conserving biodiversity, combating climate change and air pollution, protecting marine ecosystems, sustainably managing natural resources, addressing dust and sand storms, and promoting the exchange of knowledge and technology despite these immense challenges, and decades of unjust unilateral sanctions that have deprived my country of access to the financial and technological mechanisms established under international environmental conventions.

The CED9 brought together ministers, leaders, and policymakers 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 consisted 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 was organized to foster in-depth dialogue and facilitate substantive exchanges among participants.

It reviewed 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 sector, 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.

Environment remains a victim of violations of international law

United Nations experts say that beyond immediate destruction, armed conflicts disrupt ecosystems, deplete natural resources, contaminate the environment, and jeopardize the health of the planet for future generations.

The Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques (ENMOD) was adopted in 1976 to prohibit the use of environmental modification techniques as a means of warfare. In addition, Additional Protocol I (1977) to the Geneva Conventions includes two key provisions — Articles 35 and 55 — prohibiting methods or means of warfare that are intended, or may be expected, to cause widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)



Managing Director: **Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati**

Editor-in-Chief: **Mohammad Sarfi**

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 43051601

Email: info@tehrantimes.com

Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000

Advertisements Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051430

Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 43051505

Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051430



No. 18, Moghadasi Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran P.O. Box: 14155-4843 Zip Code: 1599814713

JULY 4, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Unfortunate is he who cannot gain a few sincere friends during his life and more unfortunate is the one who has gained them and then lost them (through his deeds).

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon: 12:09 Evening: 19:45 Dawn: 3:09 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:54 (tomorrow)

Foundation for Preservation of Sacred Defense Works condemns Western silence on Flight 655 anniversary

TEHRAN- The Foundation for Preservation of Sacred Defense Works and Values has issued a statement commemorating the anniversary of the brutal US naval attack on Iran Air Flight 655, condemning the enduring silence of Western societies regarding the atrocity.



In its statement, the Foundation described the events of July 3 as a reminder of one of the most painful and inhumane crimes of contemporary history. The statement highlighted that 290 innocent lives were martyred in an act of extreme cruelty and a blatant violation of all international legal norms.

"This crime is not only a shameful stain on the forehead of those who falsely claim to champion human rights, but it stands as a clear symbol of the oppressive and violent nature of the US imperialist system against independent nations," the statement read. "It shall never be erased from the historical memory of the Iranian people and will remain as an undeniable document of American brutality and lawlessness."

The Foundation further emphasized that the Iranian nation, guided by the wisdom of the Great Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini, and following the visionary path of the martyred Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, will never allow the blood of the oppressed to be shed in vain.

The statement cast sharp criticism on the "deadly silence" of Western nations during and after the attack, asserting that such indifference served as a tacit endorsement of the "criminal behavior" of the United States. This silence, the Foundation argued, provided the emboldened hegemonic powers with the confidence to pursue further military interventions and massacres of oppressed peoples across the globe.

Concluding the statement, the for Preservation of Sacred Defense Works and Values honored the memory of the martyrs and condemned the global community's apathy toward the successive crimes committed by oppressive regimes, specifically the "criminal United States and the occupying, child-killing Zionist regime."

The Foundation asserted that the only path toward dignity and resilience against these corrupt governments lies in the unity of the Islamic Ummah and the cohesion of the honorable Iranian nation under the enlightening guidance of the new Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei.

On July 3, 1988, during the Iran-Iraq War, the USS Vincennes, a US Navy warship, shot down Iran Air Flight 655 over Iranian territorial waters in the Persian Gulf, killing all 290 people on board. As the deadliest aviation disaster in Iranian history, the incident led to a prolonged dispute: the United States claimed the Airbus A300 was misidentified as an F-14 fighter jet, while Iran maintained that the shootdown was a reckless violation of international law.

The tragedy was eventually settled in 1996 at the International Court of Justice, with the US providing \$61.8 million in ex gratia payments to the victims' families and two replacement aircraft to Iran Air, although it did not formally admit legal liability.

Cartoon of Day



Martyred Leader

Cartoonist: Carlos Latuff from Brazil

New Tehran mural honors Martyred Leader amidst farewell ceremonies

TEHRAN- In convergence with the final farewell and funeral ceremonies for the Martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, a new mural was unveiled at the intersection of Jomhuri and Valiasr avenues on Thursday, featuring the image of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

The artwork depicts the evocative phrases "Ya Latharat al-Hussein" (O Avengers of Hussein's Blood) and "Ya Latharat al-Khameini" (O Avengers of Khamenei's Blood), intertwining the legacy of the Imam of Hussein (AS) with the contemporary martyrdom of the Leader.

According to the Public Relations Office of the Art Bureau, the piece is the latest work by artist Danial Farrokhi. The mural titled "Mr. Martyr of Iran," draws deep inspiration from the spiritual atmosphere and the mourning rituals of the month of Muharram, serving as a visual tribute to the resilience and sacrifice of the leadership.

In a note accompanying the unveiling, Farrokhi wrote:

"This year, the cry of 'Our Revenge' has echoed more resonant than ever. The mourning rituals have found a new life, and grief flows through the alleys and hearts more vividly than in years past.



The quest for justice for the blood of Hussein (AS) has today become a quest for justice for the blood of Seyyed Ali. We etch your image upon the city's walls, as a reminder that history has placed the responsibility of seeking your justice upon our shoulders."

This latest installation follows the global acclaim of Farrokhi's previous work, the "Clenched Fists" mural, which was unveiled at the same site back in May.

The piece depicted the Martyred Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, using imagery of clenched fists and a Quranic verse on divine victo-

ry to symbolize national resilience and solidarity. This artistic tribute coincided with the historic surge of the JANFADA grassroots campaign; initiated in response to US-Israeli threats, the movement saw over 31 million volunteers—including more than 60 percent women—pledge their devotion to safeguarding the homeland.

Following the coordinated US-Israeli attack on February 28, which targeted key national facilities in Iran, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, was martyred. Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei has since been

appointed as the new Leader by the Assembly of Experts.

The martyrdom of the Ayatollah Khamenei was not merely the loss of a political figure, but the departure of a spiritual guide whose entire life was dedicated to the pursuit of justice and the liberation of the oppressed. This ultimate sacrifice, born from the depths of a conflict fueled by imperialist ambitions, has left an indelible mark on the collective soul of the Iranian people and the wider Muslim world, transforming a moment of profound grief into a catalyst for renewed resistance and steadfastness.

As the nation prepares for the official farewell ceremonies, a wave of solemnity and devotion is sweeping across the country. These ceremonies, which will see millions of mourners gather in a sea of grief and pride, are expected to transcend mere ritual, serving as a grand manifestation of the people's loyalty and unwavering bond with their leader. The funeral processions will not only be a final goodbye but a powerful testament to the enduring legacy of the Martyred Leader, reaffirming the nation's commitment to the path of truth and dignity in the face of external threats.

Iranian films, series receive awards at Spain's FICIMAD 2026

TEHRAN - Several Iranian films and series were among the winners of this year's edition of FICIMAD (Festival Internacional de Cine Independiente de Madrid), an international film festival held annually in Madrid.

The series "Aban" directed by Reza Dadooi received two awards at the festival, which was held late June in the Spanish capital, ILNA reported.

Renowned Iranian pop singer Mohsen Chavoshi received the FICIMAD Altisidora's Serenade Award for Best Original Song for "The Wall Clock and the Gypsy," the standout musical piece from the series "Aban".

In this haunting composition, Chavoshi delivers a work of striking emotional density, where music becomes narrative, memory, and moral reflection at once. Built upon his unmistakable vocal intensity and poetic sensibility, the song transforms the internal world of the series into something deeply lyrical, capturing the tension between ambition, collapse, and redemption that defines the journey of the main character.

The series received another award for actress Laleh Marzban as she won the Best Actress Award (TV & Web Series) for her extraordinary performance.

In this intense and layered Iranian drama, Marzban embodies Aban Esfandiari, a brilliant AI expert whose groundbreaking financial algorithm brings her both extraordinary success and devastating consequences. When a dispute with her investor leaves her drowning in debt and legal danger, Aban is forced into a high-stakes negotiation with powerful figures in the financial world. What unfolds is not only a battle over money and power, but a deeply human descent into moral pressure, emotional collapse, and impossible decisions that affect her family life, her identity, and her sense of survival.

The Honorary Award 2026 went to Hemat Mohseni, in recognition of his unique artistic vision and his dedication to an extraordinary form of artistic expression.

Mohseni is known for creating paintings and drawings directly on rocks and stone surfaces in the mountains of Iran. Rather than bringing nature into a studio, he transforms the mountain itself into a canvas, creating artworks that exist in dialogue with the landscape that surrounds them.

His creative journey is portrayed in the documentary "Penosar," directed by Hossein Fatahi, which offers an intimate portrait of the artist and explores his relationship with the mountains, his artistic process, and the passion that drives his work.

By choosing the natural world as both his inspiration and his canvas, Mohseni has developed a distinctive artistic practice that blurs the boundary between art and landscape. His work reflects creativity, perseverance, and a deeply personal connection to the environment in which he creates.

Hadi Hejazifar was awarded the FICIMAD Knight of the Mirrors Award for Best Actor, the highest acting distinction of FICIMAD 2026, for his extraordinary performance in "Guardian of the Field" directed by Seyed Mohamadreza Kheradmandan.

In the 2025 feature film, Hejazifar embodies

Ahmad Piran, a wildlife guard in a remote Iranian village whose world collapses when a young girl disappears. What begins as a community search soon transforms into an emotional and moral journey through fear, responsibility, and collective memory. As tension rises and suspicion spreads through the village, Ahmad becomes the fragile center of a story where truth, grief, and duty constantly collide.

Hejazifar delivers a performance of remarkable depth and control. With a presence that is both restrained and intensely human, he carries the emotional weight of an entire community without ever overplaying it. Every gesture feels lived-in, every silence charged with meaning. His interpretation of Ahmad Piran turns the character into something larger than narrative function—he becomes a symbol of dignity under pressure, and of leadership shaped by compassion rather than authority.

Mohammad Kazemzadeh Mojdehi received the Outstanding Achievement Award (Featurette Movies) for "The Birth of a Girl," a delicate and powerful work of social reflection and human observation.

The film follows Reyhan, a young girl navigating identity, longing, and freedom in a world that feels both restrictive and uncertain. In search of a life that aligns with who she feels she is, Reyhan travels to the city, where she spends a night in a multi-story parking structure. There, she encounters another young runaway girl living in an abandoned public space—an unexpected meeting that opens a fragile window into companionship, vulnerability, and shared solitude.

With quiet intensity, the film explores themes of identity, gender perception, and emotional survival, focusing on the invisible lives that exist at the edges of society. Rather than approaching its subject with grand gestures, "The Birth of a Girl" builds its impact through stillness, atmosphere, and deeply human moments between its characters.

Saharnaz Omran received the Best Costume Design Award (Short Movies) for her outstanding visual contribution to "Ramy" directed by Pouyan Rostami.

Set in the heart of a haunting forest landscape, the film follows a group of women carrying a coffin toward a cemetery, while a grieving woman follows behind in deep emotional collapse. As silence and ritual dominate the atmosphere, the film unfolds as a poetic meditation on mourning, separation, and the collective weight of loss. The stark simplicity of the narrative is elevated through its powerful visual identity, where costume becomes an essential storytelling language.

Omran's costume design plays a crucial role in shaping the emotional and symbolic tone of the film. Through carefully constructed silhouettes, textures, and a restrained palette, the costumes reflect both ritualistic unity and individual emotional fracture. Each garment contributes to the sense of timelessness and gravity that defines the journey, turning movement through space into a deeply symbolic procession.

Sahar Mirzaei won the Best Makeup Award (Student Movies) for her exceptional work on "Supplementary Judgment" directed by Sonia

Nouri.

Directed by Sonia Nouri, the film tells the unsettling story of a young nurse working in a nursing home who, surrounded by institutional indifference and emotional decay, begins to exact a quiet and disturbing revenge on the elderly residents. Beneath its restrained surface lies a powerful psychological study of trauma, neglect, and moral ambiguity.

Mirzaei's makeup design is essential to the film's emotional and visual language. Through subtle, realistic, and deeply expressive work, she gives remarkable authenticity to the elderly characters, reinforcing the atmosphere of physical fragility and emotional exhaustion that permeates every frame. Rather than seeking spectacle, her artistry serves the story with precision, allowing every wrinkle, expression, and detail to become part of the film's psychological landscape.

Artemis Bakhshi won the Best Upcoming Actress Award (Student Movies) for her heartfelt and powerful performance in "Cow Killer," directed by Farhad Mohamadzadeh.

In the film, Bakhshi portrays Khazar, a young girl whose innocent wish sets in motion a fragile miracle: a dying cow unexpectedly recovers. What begins as a moment of wonder soon becomes a quiet obsession, as Khazar accompanies her grandfather in a journey to repeat the miracle, confronting the blurred line between faith, hope, and reality.

Artemis delivers a performance marked by subtle emotional intelligence and natural presence, capturing childhood wonder with remarkable sincerity. Her chemistry with veteran actor Yousefali Daryadel, who plays her grandfather Naser with outstanding depth, gives the film its emotional core and elevates every scene they share.

Nima Tabandeh won the Best Thriller Award (Student Movies) for his gripping film "Homicide".

Set during the tense journey of a family on their way to witness the execution of their son's murderer, "Homicide" is a haunting meditation on grief, justice and revenge. The film explores how the pursuit of vengeance can become an endless night from which there is no escape.

Parsa Farjadmanesh received the Achievement in Casting Award (Student Movies) for "Ker" directed by Sajad Soleymani.

At the heart of the film are the remarkable performances of Prahm Khakzad as Mohammad and Niusha Shahrivari as Sahba. Their chemistry, restraint, and emotional vulnerability bring extraordinary authenticity to a story built on secrecy, love, fear, and resilience. Through their performances, the audience experiences the constant tension of two young people seeking refuge while living under the threat of discovery.

Directed by Sajad Soleymani, "Ker" tells the story of a young mosque guardian who secretly shelters his lover inside a sacred space, forcing both characters to navigate personal desire, social restrictions, and the risk of devastating consequences. The film tackles sensitive themes with courage and humanity, creating a deeply affecting cinematic experience.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)