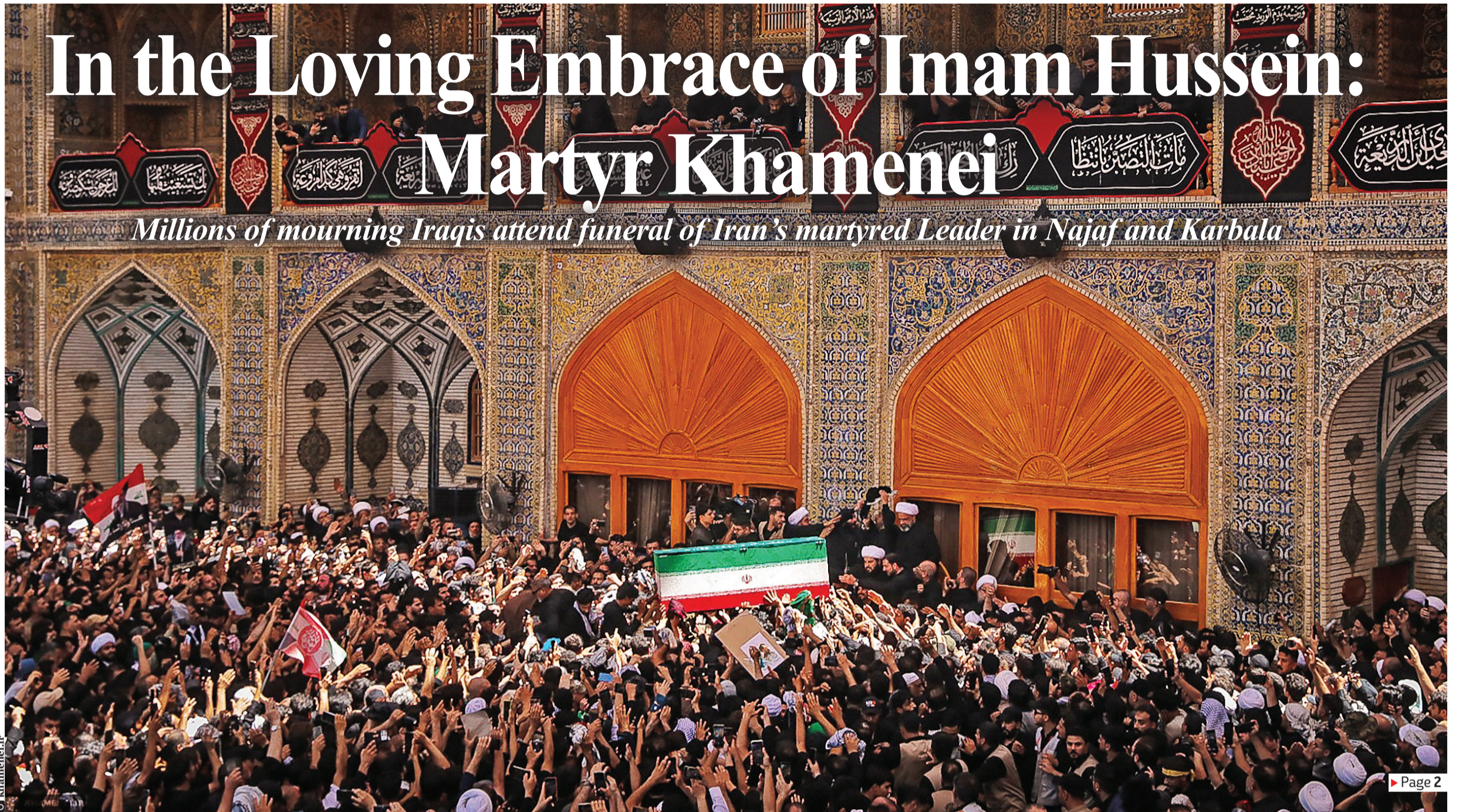


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Page 2

The King of Resistance is still alive

By Syeda Farheen Naqi Mossavi

HAFIZABAD, Pakistan - They tried to kill him. They threw everything they had. American bunker busters, Israeli precision missiles, the full military might of the world's sole "superpower" were all aimed at one man, one heart, one voice.

On February 28, 2026, the United States and Israel launched their war of aggression against Iran.

Their opening salvo was meant to be surgical: the assassination of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution. They called it a "decapitation strike."

They thought that by severing the head, the body would collapse.

They thought that by killing the King of Resistance, they would kill the resistance itself. ▶ Page 3

The funeral of power: The message of a historic farewell

By Maedeh Zaman Fashami

TEHRAN - Funeral ceremonies are not held solely to bid farewell to a prominent figure; they can also serve as a stage for redefining power, reinforcing legitimacy, and sending messages both at home and abroad. The funeral ceremonies for Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei in Tehran, Qom, and Iraq fell into this category. What unfolded across these locations was far more than a farewell to the Leader of the Islamic Republic. It became an event with political, social, security, and media dimensions that extended well beyond the scope of a traditional mourning ceremony. The participation of millions of people carrying red flags symbolizing the call for retribution, the highly organized execution of the ceremonies, the unprecedented media coverage, ▶ Page 2

Humiliation and escalation: Decoding Trump's new offensive against Iran

The renewed US strikes appear aimed at diverting attention from the historic funeral of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, which drew millions of mourners and underscored Iran's resilience and national unity in the aftermath of the war

TEHRAN - Iran's swift retaliatory response to the latest US military strikes has laid bare the high level of preparedness and combat capability of its armed forces, reaffirming their determination to safeguard the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity against any act of foreign aggression.

The United States launched attacks on sites in southern Iran, including Qeshm Island, early on Wednesday. US Central Command (CENTCOM) announced in a statement that it had "completed a new round of offensive strikes against Iran on July 7, hitting more than 80 targets with

precision munitions." Iranian military authorities said eight Army personnel were martyred while defending the country against the US aggression in Bandar Abbas and Bushehr. Separate reports also said an IRGC member was martyred in the attacks.

Washington also revoked a temporary sanctions waiver that had allowed Iran to

export oil. The move came after attacks on three commercial vessels on Tuesday. Iran has maintained that vessels may transit the Strait of Hormuz only in coordination with Iranian authorities and through designated shipping lanes.

The US attacks constitute a clear violation of the Pakistan-brokered Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Tehran and Washington on June 17. The 14-point MoU called for a permanent end to hostilities on all fronts and committed both sides to continue negotiations on a final agreement within 60 days. ▶ Page 3

Seven decades of longing: Ayatollah Khamenei's final journey to Karbala

By Mahmoud Ravi Nejad

Wednesday's farewell ceremony for Iran's Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, was held in the Iraqi holy city of Karbala, where his coffin was carried in procession around the shrine of Imam Hussein (AS). The ceremony was widely portrayed by the global media as the fulfillment of a wish that, according to accounts published by his office, had remained unfulfilled for nearly seven decades.

Several Iranian outlets ran headlines stating that the Leader had "visited the shrine of Imam Hussein after 70 years," referring to what they described as his long absence from Karbala.

According to material recently published by the Office for the Preservation and Publication of Ayatollah Khamenei's Works, his last visit to Karbala took place in 1957. From that year onward, he was unable to return to the city.

Following the 1979 Islamic Revolution, a series of political and security developments—including the Iran-Iraq War and the security considerations associated with his position ▶ Page 2

"Who Is Khamenei?" international panel discussion held in Tehran

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN - Media professionals, political commentators, and public figures from across Europe, the Americas, Africa, and West Asia gathered in Tehran on Tuesday for a forum examining international coverage of the funeral of the Martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, and what participants described as an ongoing battle of narratives surrounding recent developments in Iran.

The conference, titled "Who Is Khamenei?," was held at the Sooreh Hall of the Art Bureau and brought together journalists, analysts, and activists from countries including the United States, Ireland, Pakistan, Lebanon, Greece, Russia, Brazil, Turkey, Austria, and South Africa.

Throughout the meeting, speakers reflected on their observations during their stay in Iran, shared their assessments of international media coverage, and discussed the political and cultural significance they attributed to the funeral ceremonies.

American journalist Patrick Henningsen, who has traveled to Iran on multiple occasions, described the atmosphere in the country following recent events as one marked by resilience. ▶ Page 8

Why did millions of Iraqis mourn Iran's martyred Leader?

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - In a display of grief that surpassed all expectations, Iraqis turned out in numbers far higher than anticipated to pay their final respects to the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

The arrival of his blessed coffin and his martyred family members brought the Iraqi nation together in a profound show of loyalty, grief, and defiance, as the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala hosted what is now being circulated in Iraqi media as the largest funeral ceremonies in modern history.

The question on everyone's lips was simple: Why did millions of Iraqis, from different provinces and every background, pour into the streets of Najaf and Karbala to mourn a leader from neighboring Iran? The answer, according to those who marched, ▶ Page 5

A historic reversal of the Ba'athist legacy unfolds under the Mesopotamian sun

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN - When the glass-enclosed casket draped in the Iranian flag entered Najaf, it was riding a human tide that shattered decades of geopolitical assumptions.

Decades of schemes by malicious actors have aimed to decapitate the Resistance Front, trigger chaos, and permanently fracture the relationship between Tehran and Baghdad.

Their strategy assumed that the bond between these two nations was a brittle, top-down arrangement maintained purely by "militia muscle" and "political leverage."

But on July 8, as millions of ordinary Iraqis flooded the streets of their holiest cities, ▶ Page 5

The funeral of power: The message of a historic farewell



By Maedeh Zaman Fashami

TEHRAN- Funeral ceremonies are not held solely to bid farewell to a prominent figure; they can also serve as a stage for redefining power, reinforcing legitimacy, and sending messages both at home and abroad. The funeral ceremonies for Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei in Tehran, Qom, and Iraq fell into this category. What unfolded across these locations was far more than a farewell to the Leader of the Islamic Republic. It became an event with political, social, security, and media dimensions that extended well beyond the scope of a traditional mourning ceremony. The participation of millions of people carrying red flags symbolizing the call for retribution, the highly organized execution of the ceremonies, the unprecedented media coverage, and the uninterrupted functioning of the state's governing institutions projected an image of Iran's political system that emphasized continuity, cohesion, and authority above all else.

In many political systems, the death of a supreme leader can mark the beginning of uncertainty, internal competition, or even instability. Historical experience in various countries has shown that a transition of power is one of the most sensitive tests any political structure can face; a test that can sometimes lead to internal divisions, security challenges, or disruption in decision-making processes. In Iran, however, the developments following the announcement of Ayatollah Khamenei's martyrdom, the selection of a new leader, and the continuation of legal procedures presented a different picture. State institutions continued their activities without interruption, established mechanisms were activated, and no sign of a power vacuum emerged in the executive or security spheres. The funeral ceremony became a continuation of this orderly process, serving as a display of the endurance and continuity of the Islamic Republic's political structure.

Tehran was the first stage of this display. From the early hours of Friday, while the ceremony for foreign delegations was being held at Tehran's Grand Mosalla, the capital's main streets were filled with people who had come to pay their respects to the Leader of the Revolution. Over two days of ceremonies at the Mosalla, millions gathered to bid farewell to the late leader. During Monday's funeral procession in Tehran, aerial images and footage from the main routes showed vast crowds stretching across kilometers. The significance of these images was not only in the number of participants, but also in the message conveyed to domestic and international audiences. In politics, images can sometimes speak louder than thousands of words. The millions captured by cameras became a political message in themselves — a message emphasizing Iran's capacity for organization, social mobilization, and state management.

While the ceremony was rooted in religious tradition, it was also, from the perspective of political communication, an extraordinary event. Every element of the ceremony from the selection of the procession routes to the presence of senior officials, religious figures, military commanders, and foreign delegations contributed to a broader narrative centered on continuity, institutional stability, and cohesion. In such a narrative, a funeral does not only look to the past; it also speaks about the future. The central message was that despite the martyrdom of the Leader of the Revolution, the political system would continue its course.

Qom represented the second chapter of this narrative. If Tehran symbolizes the political power of the Islamic Republic, Qom represents its religious and theological foundations.

Holding the continuation of the ceremony in this city highlighted the connection between religious legitimacy and the political structure before public opinion. The presence of senior clerics, seminary students, and different segments of Iranian society, alongside the deeply religious atmosphere of the event, reflected the Islamic Republic's emphasis on the inseparable relationship between the two pillars of "religion" and "state." For this reason, Qom was not merely the final destination of the funeral; it was an essential part of the political message conveyed by the ceremony.

The farewell ceremonies, however, were not confined to Iran's borders. Iraq also became one of the principal venues where people gathered to pay their respects to Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei. The participation of millions in the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala underscored that the event was not viewed solely as a domestic Iranian affair, but one with resonance beyond the country's borders. The presence of senior clerics, political figures, representatives of various social groups, and pilgrims, together with extensive media coverage, further highlighted the regional dimension of the ceremonies. If Tehran symbolized the political authority of the Islamic Republic and Qom represented its religious and theological foundations, the ceremonies in Iraq reflected what the text describes as the transnational dimension of the event, illustrating how major political and religious ceremonies can extend beyond national boundaries and become part of a broader regional narrative.

According to this perspective, the funeral ceremonies held in Iraq represented a demonstration of Iran's influence at the heart of the Shiite world. The ceremonies were portrayed as displaying the ability to mobilize large regional crowds associated with what is referred to as the Axis of Resistance, drawing millions of people from across Iraq and the wider Shiite world to bid farewell to Ayatollah Khamenei.

From the same perspective, the ceremonies in Iraq carried significance beyond that of a traditional mourning event, conveying what the text characterizes as a strategic message to the United States and Israel. In this account, Iran sought to demonstrate that the Axis of Resistance had not only withstood external pressures but also retained the ability to mobilize millions of people through its religious influence and extensive social networks. The text presents this as a signal that Iran would continue to stand by its regional allies and the Axis of Resistance while maintaining what it describes as an influential role in the geopolitical dynamics of West Asia.

In political science, large collective rituals are often viewed as moments of power reproduction. Such ceremonies do not merely organize public emotions; they also provide an opportunity to demonstrate a government's capacity and institutional strength. The funeral of Ayatollah Khamenei took on precisely this function. The presence of millions of people carrying red flags of revenge, chants of "Death to America" and "Death to Israel," the highly coordinated organization of the ceremony, extensive media coverage, and the participation of various state institutions together formed a collection of symbols that projected an image of stability and authority. From this perspective, international media reports repeatedly highlighted the Islamic Republic's ability to organize such a large-scale event and the political message it carried for the regional environment.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

In the loving embrace of Imam Hussein: Martyr Khamenei

Millions of mourning Iraqis attend funeral of Iran's martyred Leader in Najaf and Karbala

TEHRAN - In an unprecedented display of regional solidarity, deep spiritual reverence, and revolutionary resolve, millions of mourners gathered in Iraq's holiest cities to pay their final, heartfelt respects during the historic funeral ceremonies for the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

The atmosphere across the region was one of profound grief but also one of heightened defiance against foreign aggression. The official ceremonies in Iraq commenced at precisely six o'clock in the morning local time on Wednesday in the holy city of Najaf, following solemn funeral prayers held over the Leader's body at the highly revered Shrine of Imam Ali. The historic procession advanced from the holy shrine, moving through the Kufa Bridge and the historic Thawrat al-Ashreen intersection toward al-Sadreen Square, drawing crowds that surpassed all modern records for the city.

According to official statements from Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces, also known as Hashd al-Shaabi, more than two point three million people participated in the Najaf procession alone within the first few hours. The numbers steadily rose throughout the day as continuous waves of mourners arrived from every corner of Iraq, including the distant southern provinces of Basra, Muthanna, and Maysan, choking all major highways and secondary roads leading into the city. Following the deeply moving rituals in Najaf, the funeral procession moved to the holy city of Karbala, where local provincial authorities registered an astounding seven million mourners entering the governorate. Mourning tents, traditional hospitality stations, and black banners lined the entire six-kilometer route as the specially prepared vehicle carrying the Leader slowly made its way through tightly packed, crying crowds toward the twin holy shrines of Imam Hussein and his brother Abbas for the final farewell ceremonies.

High-ranking international dignitaries, including Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian



and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, attended the ceremonies in Najaf, where they were warmly received by Iraqi officials and the public in a powerful display of the unbreakable bond between the two nations. To ensure the safety, security, and seamless organization of this massive turnout, Iraqi Prime Minister Ali Faleh Al-Zaidi declared Wednesday an official public holiday nationwide, allowing citizens from all walks of life to participate in the historic event. Prominent Iraqi political and religious figures attended the ceremonies, emphasizing the deep historical, spiritual, and geopolitical ties connecting the two nations. Ammar al-Hakim, leader of Iraq's National Wisdom Movement, was among the senior leadership present during the initial reception at Najaf International Airport and the subsequent procession through the packed streets. Former Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, who heads the State of Law coalition, strongly advocated for the significance of the event, describing participation in the funeral as a fundamental duty to honor a figure who fundamentally reshaped the region.

In his official remarks, which were widely carried by regional media, Maliki stated that commemorating the legacy of Ayatollah Khamenei is an absolute obligation for the global Muslim community. He praised him as a steadfast leader who endured

immense challenges and guided the Iranian nation to victory against formidable global powers. He emphasized that no matter how massive the public turnout in Iraq is today, it remains insufficient compared to the stature of a figure who built a bright, independent future for multiple countries in the region. He concluded that Iraq's overwhelming participation sends a clear and definitive message to the world that the Islamic Republic of Iran stands firmly on the side of truth and does not stand alone, possessing deep roots of support, brotherhood, and alliance throughout the world.

These emotional scenes in Iraq followed earlier, equally historic manifestations of grief and revolutionary resolve across Iran. Before crossing international borders, millions of grief-stricken mourners from every corner of Iran and neighboring countries had converged on the holy city of Qom to bid farewell to the martyred Leader in a majestic display of national unity, unwavering loyalty, and steadfast commitment to the path of resistance he championed throughout more than three decades of leadership. The sacred city, home to Iran's most prestigious Islamic seminaries and revered as a principal spiritual center of the Shiite world, witnessed an unprecedented outpouring of devotion as pilgrims, religious scholars, senior clerics,

government officials, military commanders, and ordinary citizens filled every corner of the Holy Jamkaran Mosque and its surrounding boulevards long before dawn.

Mourners began arriving in Qom days prior, many traveling throughout the night by bus, private vehicles, and even on foot to participate in the historic farewell. By sunrise, the mosque's courtyards, prayer halls, rooftops, and surrounding streets had become an ocean of black-clad mourners united in grief over the martyrdom of the Leader, who was assassinated during the joint US-Israeli aggression against Iran on February 28. Grand Ayatollah Abdullah Javadi Amoli led the funeral prayers before a congregation of millions, joined by eminent religious authorities, seminary scholars, senior government officials, commanders of the Armed Forces, and representatives of regional resistance movements, all paying tribute to a Leader whose lifelong struggle was dedicated to defending Islam, justice, and the dignity of the Muslim Ummah.

Following those prayers, the funeral cortege embarked on its solemn journey from the Holy Jamkaran Mosque toward the revered Shrine of Hazrat Fatima Masumeh, transforming the several-kilometer route into a sea of humanity. Millions accompanied the procession on foot.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Seven decades of longing: Ayatollah Khamenei's final journey to Karbala

By Mahmoud Ravi Nejad

Wednesday's farewell ceremony for Iran's Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, was held in the Iraqi holy city of Karbala, where his coffin was carried in procession around the shrine of Imam Hussein (AS). The ceremony was widely portrayed by the global media as the fulfillment of a wish that, according to accounts published by his office, had remained unfulfilled for nearly seven decades.

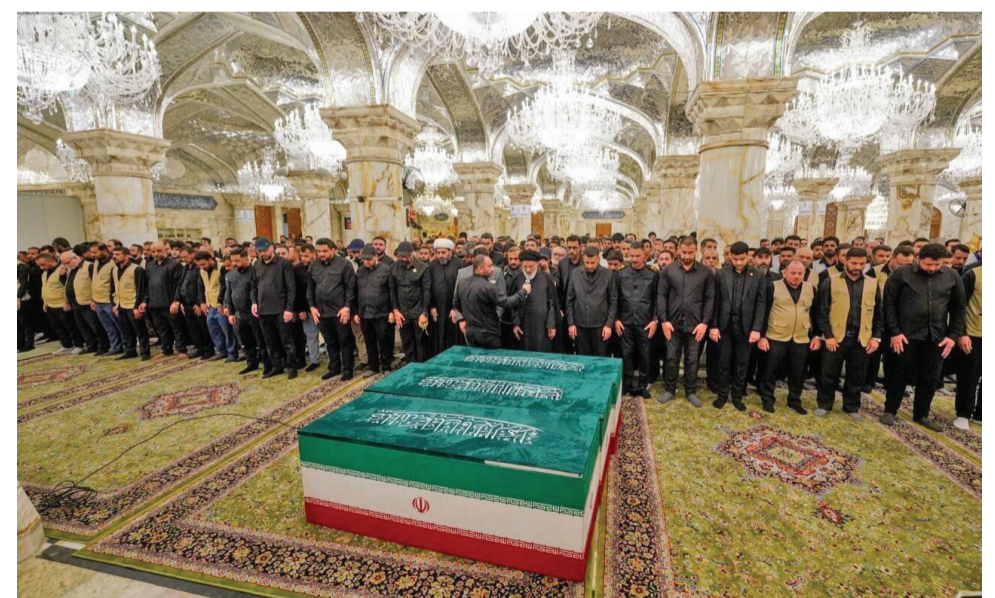
Several Iranian outlets ran headlines stating that the Leader had "visited the shrine of Imam Hussein after 70 years," referring to what they described as his long absence from Karbala.

According to material recently published by the Office for the Preservation and Publication of Ayatollah Khamenei's Works, his last visit to Karbala took place in 1957. From that year onward, he was unable to return to the city.

Following the 1979 Islamic Revolution, a series of political and security developments—including the Iran-Iraq War and the security considerations associated with his position as Iran's leader—meant that another pilgrimage to the Shiite holy cities of Karbala and Najaf did not take place during his lifetime.

Karbala occupied a prominent place in Ayatollah Khamenei's religious thought and public speeches. On numerous occasions, he described Imam Hussein's uprising as one of the most consequential events in the history of Islam, and even of humanity, portraying it as an enduring example of resistance to injustice, the preservation of dignity, and steadfastness in the face of oppression.

He also frequently expressed reverence for Imam Ali (AS), whose shrine is in Najaf and whose teachings featured prominently in his



religious and political discourse.

In one of his speeches, while rejecting negotiations or accommodation with the United States, Ayatollah Khamenei declared that "the Iranian nation... will never pledge allegiance to rulers such as the corrupt individuals who are in power in America today." Commentators in Iran and other media in the world have drawn parallels between this statement and the well-known declaration attributed to Imam Hussein before the Battle of Karbala: "Someone like me will never pledge allegiance to someone like Yazid."

Supporters have argued that this comparison reflected the profound influence of the Karbala narrative on Khamenei's worldview. In their interpretation, the events of Ashura

represented a moral framework centered on resisting oppression and refusing submission to injustice, even at great personal cost.

For many participants in Wednesday's ceremony, the procession in Karbala represented more than a farewell. They viewed it as the symbolic conclusion of a seventy-year separation from one of Shiite Islam's holiest sites and the realization—after his death—of a pilgrimage that circumstances had prevented during his lifetime.

The ceremony underscored the enduring place Karbala holds in Shiite religious memory. It highlighted how the legacy of Imam Hussein continues to shape the language, symbolism, and historical narratives used by many political and religious figures in contemporary Iran.

Humiliation and escalation: Decoding Trump's new offensive against Iran

The renewed US strikes appear aimed at diverting attention from the historic funeral of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, which drew millions of mourners and underscored Iran's resilience and national unity in the aftermath of the war

TEHRAN - Iran's swift retaliatory response to the latest US military strikes has laid bare the high level of preparedness and combat capability of its armed forces, reaffirming their determination to safeguard the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity against any act of foreign aggression.

The United States launched attacks on sites in southern Iran, including Qeshm Island, early on Wednesday. US Central Command (CENTCOM) announced in a statement that it had "completed a new round of offensive strikes against Iran on July 7, hitting more than 80 targets with precision munitions." Iranian military authorities said eight Army personnel were martyred while defending the country against the US aggression in Bandar Abbas and Bushehr. Separate reports also said an IRGC member was martyred in the attacks.

Washington also revoked a temporary sanctions waiver that had allowed Iran to export oil. The move came after attacks on three commercial vessels on Tuesday. Iran has maintained that vessels may transit the Strait of Hormuz only in coordination with Iranian authorities and through designated shipping lanes.

The US attacks constitute a clear violation of the Pakistan-brokered Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Tehran and Washington on June 17. The 14-point MoU called for a permanent end to hostilities on all fronts and committed both sides to continue negotiations on a final agreement within 60 days.

The MoU reinforced the April 8 ceasefire, which halted the joint US-Israeli aggression against Iran that began on February 28.

Speaking at the NATO summit in Ankara, President Donald Trump declared that the cease-



fire with Iran was over. He also used inflammatory language against Iran's leadership, describing them as "scum" and "sick people."

Trump further criticized NATO allies and European countries for refusing to provide military support for his campaign against Iran.

Iran retaliates

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said it struck 85 US military targets in Bahrain and Kuwait with missiles and drones in an initial response to American aggression.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, the IRGC said the strikes targeted facilities at Port Salman, where the US Fifth Fleet operates in Bahrain, and Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait.

The IRGC said the latest US strikes were intended to overshadow the massive funeral processions held in Iran and Iraq for the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

Millions of mourners attended funeral ceremonies in Tehran, Qom, and the Iraqi holy cities of Najaf and Karbala.

Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, which coordinates joint military operations between the IRGC and the Army,

warned that any source of support for the "aggressor US army" would be regarded as a legitimate target.

"The source of any support for the aggressor US army in violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran will be considered a legitimate target for the armed forces," it said.

'Flagrant violation' of the MoU

Iran's Foreign Ministry also condemned the US military strikes as a "flagrant violation" of the MoU.

"The repetition of illegal attacks against Iran, alongside last night's decision by the US Treasury to revoke the license for Iran's oil exports, which the US government had committed to under paragraph 10 of the memorandum of understanding, the violation of Iranian arrangements in the Strait of Hormuz, as well as the continuation of the Zionist regime's military aggression and terrorist acts against Lebanon, have rendered important and fundamental parts of the MoU on ending the conflict ineffective," the ministry said on Wednesday.

Senior adviser to Iran's Leader, Ali Akbar Velayati, also issued a stern warning against

US "adventurism."

"We had already warned that the region is no place for the political gambling of small states, and we have repeatedly proven that any act of adventurism will be met with an immediate response," Velayati said.

He added that "responsibility for the latest escalation, as well as the public announcement that the memorandum of understanding has been scrapped, lies with the notorious rogue politician linked to the Epstein scandal. Having repeatedly violated the MoU, he is once again pushing the region toward the brink of war."

Velayati further warned that "the Axis of Resistance will not remain silent in the face of humiliation and adventurism. Seeking justice for the blood of the martyred Leader and the cleansing of the region, it has its finger on the trigger."

The 'era of bullying' is over

Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, who also serves as Tehran's top negotiator with Washington, sharply criticized the United States for repeatedly violating the MoU.

He cited major American breaches of the agreement, including violations of Iran's arrangements in the Strait of Hormuz, continued threats of further military strikes, the reinstatement of oil sanctions, and Israeli strikes in Lebanon.

"The era of bullying and extortion is over. It leads nowhere. We don't fold," Qalibaf said.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs, Kazem Gharibabadi, also said that over the past three weeks the United States had repeatedly violated Articles 1 and 2 of the MoU through Israel's actions in Lebanon and continued threats against Iran.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

The King of Resistance is still alive



By Syeda Farheen Naqi Mossavi

HAFIZABAD, Pakistan - They tried to kill him. They threw everything they had. American bunker busters, Israeli precision missiles, the full military might of the world's sole "superpower" were all aimed at one man, one heart, one voice.

On February 28, 2026, the United States and Israel launched their war of aggression against Iran.

Their opening salvo was meant to be surgical: the assassination of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution. They called it a "decapitation strike."

They thought that by severing the head, the body would collapse.

They thought that by killing the King of Resistance, they would kill the resistance itself.

They were wrong on every count.

For nearly four decades, Ayatollah Khamenei was not merely a leader. He was the living conscience of the Axis of Resistance. He forged a doctrine not of conquest, but of unyielding steadfastness. A creed that declared: a people armed with faith and the spirit of jihad cannot be broken by the arrogance of tyrants. He lifted Iran from the shackles of crippling sanctions and transformed it into a regional colossus that could look the greatest military machine on earth in the eye and refuse to blink.

When the Americans and Zionists struck, they did so in blindness. They calculated that removing the Leader would plunge Iran into chaos. They gambled that the nation would splinter into factions, that panic would replace principle, that fear would conquer faith.

Instead, the opposite happened.

Within hours, the Iranian people became the living proof of their Leader's greatest lesson: resistance is not a strategy it is an identity. It is not dependent on any one man, because Ayatollah Khamenei did not create followers; he forged believers. And believers do not fracture when their guide falls. They rise.

What is the enduring lesson of this war? It is ancient, yet Washington refuses to learn it: You cannot bomb an idea. You cannot kill a belief. You cannot assassinate a revolution.

The United States has spent decades attempting to break Iran. Sanctions that starved children. Threats that filled the air. Military buildup that encircled our borders. And finally, direct war the desperate gamble of an empire in decline.

What did they gain?

Nothing.

Their strikes barely grazed Iran's nuclear facilities. Their "shock and awe" shocked no one. Their intelligence failed. Their military might proved hollow. And their assassination of Ayatollah Khamenei the very act they believed would end the Islamic Republic only made him immortal.

And a martyr never dies. A martyr multiplies.

Today, as Iranian are bidding farewell to the martyred Leader, the enemies of Iran are watching with hungry eyes. They are searching for cracks. For hesitation. For the first sign of surrender.

They will find none.

The Iranian people have shown the world what true resistance looks like not in slogans, but in sacrifice. Not in rhetoric, but in reality. They stood firm in the field. They confronted the enemy militarily, politically, culturally, and through the unbreakable unity of a nation that has learned, through decades of hardship, that survival is not given; it is taken.

The leadership transition was smooth. It was a ceremony of continuity.

The nation did not break. It was hardened.

The Leader himself once declared: "The Resistance is alive and will stay alive." He spoke of Gaza then. But his words echo across every front today. Hezbollah is alive. Hamas is alive. The Palestinian Resistance is alive. The Houthis are alive. The Axis

of Resistance is not merely surviving it is thriving. And Iran as the beating heart of resistance is more flourishing, more united, and more dangerous to its enemies than ever before.

They killed the man.

They could not kill what he built.

They extinguished a life.

They ignited a legend.

Ayatollah Khamenei's blood has not quenched the flame of resistance. Rather, it has become its fuel. His martyrdom has not ended the revolution. It has elevated it to an eternal symbol of global defiance. Every drop spilled has watered the tree of resistance, and its roots now run deeper than any bomb can reach.

Washington and Tel Aviv thought they were delivering a knockout blow.

Instead, they forged a myth.

They turned a leader into a martyr.

They turned a mortal into a movement.

And they proved to the world what Iranians have always known, what the oppressed have always known, what history has always known:

The King of Resistance does not die.

He lives in every Iranian who refuses to bow. He lives in every fighter who stands against oppression. He lives in every mother who sends her child to defend the homeland. He lives in every child who grows up knowing that freedom is not given. It is earned through blood, through faith, through resistance.

They came for one man.

They found a nation.

They sought to end a revolution.

They birthed an eternity.

The King of Resistance is still alive.

He always will be.

History is filled with empires that believed their power was eternal. It is also filled with the graves of those same empires. What endures is not military might, nor economic pressure, nor the arrogance of those who mistake force for legitimacy. What endures is conviction.

That is the lesson of this war.

The enemies of Iran believed they were striking at the heart of the Resistance. Instead, they revealed its true strength. A movement rooted in faith, sacrifice, and national dignity does not disappear with the loss of a leader. It grows stronger, deeper, and more determined.

They thought they were writing the final chapter.

They were only turning the page.

For the Resistance was never confined to one man, one office, or one lifetime. It lives wherever people refuse submission, wherever nations reject domination, and wherever the oppressed choose dignity over surrender.

The King of Resistance may have departed this world, but the cause he embodied marches on. He is alive in heart of every Muslim because hero never dies.

And history has witnessed the fall of empires and the rise of tyrants. But it has never witnessed the death of truth.

The Leader has not departed. He has ascended. His enemies have written their final chapter in ink. Iranian people will write theirs in fire. And when the dust of this war settles, only one name will echo through eternity: the King of Resistance. Alive. Undefeated.

Forever.

Though his pure body will depart, like that of his ancestor Imam Hussein (peace be upon him), his sacrifice will be remembered by the world until the end of time.

Long live the Resistance. Long live the martyrs. Death to America. Death to Israel.

LATEST NEWS

■ Cleric: Martyr Leader's support crucial to Palestinian resilience

Sheikh Maher Hammoud, head of the International Union of Resistance Scholars, stated that the backing of the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, was fundamental to Palestinian steadfastness in Gaza and the West Bank.

Hammoud asserted that without this support, "legendary resilience" would not have materialized. He noted the Leader's unwavering prioritization of Palestine, numerous undisclosed initiatives, and persistent calls for Islamic unity against US and Israeli dominance. Hammoud hailed Ayatollah Khamenei as an inspirational figure who reinstated Palestine within Islamic and civilizational consciousness.

■ President slams US rule-breaking, cheating traits in both politics and sports

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian says that rule-breaking and cheating are common characteristics of the US conduct in both politics and sports.

He made the remarks in an English-language post on the social media platform X, stressing that Iran firmly defends its rights.

"The US government's conduct as World Cup host follows its familiar foreign policy: bending rules, bullying rivals, creating obstacles, and cheating. This is their MAGA playbook," the president wrote in his post on Wednesday.

Pezeshkian added that Iran does not accept such conduct and it will defend its rights with determination.

■ Nasrallah's daughter: Khamenei's blood has strengthened resistance unity

Zeinab Nasrallah, daughter of late Hezbollah leader Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah, said Iran has remained the main supporter of the Axis of Resistance, adding that the blood of

Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has further strengthened unity among its allies. She described the relationship between her father and the late Iranian Leader as a strategic and ideological bond rooted in faith.

■ Iran reaffirms opposition to US sanctions on Cuba at UN

Iran has reaffirmed its strong opposition to US economic, commercial, and financial sanctions against Cuba, describing the embargo as a violation of international law and the UN Charter. Addressing a UN General Assembly session on ending the US embargo, Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations, Amir Saied Irvani, said unilateral coercive measures undermine sovereign equality, non-interference, and international cooperation. He also criticized the 'selective application of the UN Charter', arguing that such policies threaten international peace and security. Irvani reiterated Tehran's commitment to advocating the elimination of all unilateral sanctions imposed on independent states.

■ Iran calls for binding global treaty to prevent arms race in space

Iran has called for immediate negotiations on a legally binding international treaty to prevent an arms race in outer space, warning that the militarization of space threatens its peaceful and sustainable use. Addressing the UN Open-Ended Working Group on PAROS in Geneva, Iran's representative Mohammad Hossein Sayyadnejad said voluntary norms and non-binding measures cannot replace a comprehensive legal framework. He stressed that all countries, including developing nations, have the right to equal access and security in space, while urging a ban on the placement of weapons and the use of force against space systems.

■ Velayati: Resistance front ready to respond to foreign provocations

Ali Akbar Velayati, senior adviser to Iran's

Leader on international affairs, warned that the Axis of Resistance will not remain silent in the face of foreign provocations, saying the regional front is prepared to respond. In a post on X, Velayati said recent actions by Washington and its allies were escalating tensions, stressing that the region is not a venue for political adventurism. He added that any aggression would face a firm response, while emphasizing the Resistance Front's readiness to seek justice for the blood of the martyred Leader.

■ Starmer calls for return to ceasefire and deal to open Hormuz

British PM Starmer wants US and Iran to return 'back to the ceasefire' and get a deal to open the Strait of Hormuz 'implemented'

Speaking at the NATO summit in Ankara Starmer said the economic situation would worsen in the UK and elsewhere if violence dragged on.

"Household bills are likely going to be impacted if we don't get that situation as quickly as possible."

■ Erdogan hopeful on US-Iran MoU but warns against 'provocations'

Turkish president Erdogan has expressed hope the US-Iran MoU would help bring peace to the region.

"Turkey remained optimistic but cautious", he said while addressing a press conference at the NATO Summit in Ankara alongside French President Macron.

But Erdogan warned that measures "must be taken against provocations".

■ Germany's Merz urges sustainable Iran agreement

Chancellor Friedrich Merz says he has told Trump that any agreement with Iran must be lasting.

Development of alternative Persian Gulf routes continues



TEHRAN- The Director General of Logistics and Support at the Iran Trade Promotion Organization said that bottlenecks along alternative transportation routes are being resolved, and that further development of these corridors requires cooperation among domestic agencies as well as agreements with neighboring countries.

In an interview with Mehr News Agency, Ali Emami, Director General of the Logistics and Support Office at the Iran Trade Promotion Organization, was asked how long it would take for the use of the six alternative routes to increase and reduce pressure on the Persian Gulf.

He replied: "The reality is that part of this depends on the competition that transportation companies create among themselves."

Emami explained that road and rail transport companies must be able to compete with maritime shipping companies.

He added that authorities should provide incentives and advantages for rail and road freight operators so they can

remain competitive.

He continued: "During the war, the shortcomings, bugs, and bottlenecks in these routes became apparent, and they are now being addressed."

He noted that some of these issues must be resolved internationally through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while others require cooperation between counterpart agencies. For example, Iran Customs needs to strengthen agreements with the customs authorities of neighboring countries such as Turkey and Pakistan, and the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development should establish more comprehensive agreements with its counterparts abroad.

Emami concluded on an optimistic note: "We are optimistic about this issue. Previously, some cargo was routed through Iraq, some through Oman, and some via other routes. Now that the direct route has become operational again, cargo is gradually shifting away from those intermediary routes and returning to the direct route."

Over 1,800 supportive housing projects being prepared within city limits, state-owned towns

TEHRAN- The CEO of the National Land and Housing Organization announced that the organization is in the process of preparing 1,838 supportive housing projects within city limits and state-owned towns, and stated that 19 mosques, 178 schools, and 35 police stations have been built in supportive housing sites by the organization.

According to a report by IRNA from the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, Ali Nabian detailed the preparation projects currently under implementation or design within city limits and state-owned towns, saying: "A total of 1,838 preparation projects are either being implemented or designed by the National Land and Housing

Organization within city limits and state-owned towns."

The Deputy Minister of Transport and Urban Development added: "Of the 1,838 projects being prepared by the National Land and Housing Organization, 403 are in the design phase and 1,435 are under implementation."

Nabian stated that the number of units that are currently being prepared and are buildable stands at 1,422.

He also detailed the superstructure services built by the organization in supportive housing scheme sites, adding: "Nineteen mosques, 178 schools, and 35 police stations have been built by the organization or in cooperation with it in supportive housing sites."

Safe import route for animal feed from Kazakhstan to Iran reopens

TEHRAN- The head of the Iran Feed, Poultry, and Aquatic Industries Association said that the strategic agreement between Iran and Kazakhstan to establish a logistics terminal at Shahid Rajaei Port will enable the direct and lower-cost supply of livestock feed inputs by eliminating expensive intermediaries. He added that the agreement will play a key role in reducing the production costs of protein products and ensuring Iran's food security in the coming years.

The signing of a \$25 million agreement between Iran and Kazakhstan to build a logistics terminal on a 15-hectare site at Shahid Rajaei Port marks a milestone in the two countries' economic relations and the expansion of their transit cooperation. According to experts, the agreement goes beyond port collaboration, laying the foundation for increasing bilateral trade from \$500 million to \$3 billion while improving strategic industries' access—particularly the animal feed, poultry, and aquaculture sectors—to essential raw materials.

Speaking to IRNA on Wednesday, Majid Movafegh Ghadiri assessed the recent agreement following the visit to Tehran by a high-level dele-

gation of Kazakh business leaders and investors headed by Aman-Mal Gazhvarov, Director General of Kazakhstan's Trade Development Fund.

He said: "This is not merely a port contract; it is a strategic initiative that redefines Iran's role in regional and international supply chains. Implementing this agreement will strengthen the eastern branch of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and further solidify Iran's position as the bridge connecting Central Asia to the world's open seas."

He noted that negotiations and feasibility studies between Iran and Kazakhstan began in 2022, and on June 28, 2026 (7 Tir 1405 in the Iranian calendar), those negotiations culminated in a Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) agreement. Under the deal, Kazakhstan will invest \$25 million to construct and operate its logistics terminal at Shahid Rajaei Port.

According to Ghadiri, the contract spans 27 years—including 2 years for construction and 25 years of operation. Given the possibility of increased transit volumes in the future, the agreement will be subject to review every five years.

Mining in thought of Martyr Leader; from capacity, advantages of mining to replacing oil

TEHRAN- The head of the board of directors of the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), stating that one of the most important axes of the Martyr Leader's economic thought is dedicated to the position of mining in the resistance economy, wrote: Perhaps the most prominent part of his views is his repeated emphasis on replacing oil with mining. In his view, the country's mines, possessing rare and valuable reserves, are one of the best options for achieving this goal. Of course, this substitution will only be possible if the value chain is developed.

Mohammad-Masoud Samiei-Najad, Deputy Minister and head of the board of directors of IMIDRO, on the occasion of the farewell and funeral procession of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Martyr Leader of the Islamic Revolution, in an exclusive note for IRNA, elaborated on his thoughts in various fields, which is as follows:

Iran is one of the few countries in the world that simultaneously enjoys a wide diversity of minerals, massive proven reserves, and vast unexplored areas. The presence of over 65 types of minerals, tens of billions of tons of proven reserves, and numerous undiscovered capacities have turned the mining sector into one of the country's most important strategic advantages. However, what doubles the importance of this sector is the deep and forward-looking view of the Martyr Leader of the Islamic Revolution towards mining as one of the pillars of economic independence and a substitute for the oil economy. On the occasion of the farewell ceremony for the Martyr Leader of Iran and the arrival of Industry and Mining Day, it is an opportunity to take a look at the thoughts and emphases of this dear Imam and martyr in the field of mining.

A review of his statements over more than three decades shows that mining was not considered merely an economic or industrial activity, but rather a part of the system of national progress, economic justice, and national authority.

From the first years after the revolution, the subject of mines held a special place in his speeches. In the Friday prayer sermons of 1987 (Iranian year 1366), mines, alongside



lands, forests, and seas, were introduced as public wealth belonging to all people. In this view, the exploitation of natural resources should be such that the opportunity to use these divine blessings is provided for all members of society, and the monopoly of resources is not held by a specific group.

In later years, the Martyr Leader considered mining one of the main components of material welfare and national development.

In his message on the occasion of the fortieth day of the passing of Imam Khomeini, he listed mining extraction, along with reconstruction, economic prosperity, public health, and scientific development, as signs of the country's progress. This view shows that the exploitation of mineral resources is not merely about generating wealth, but is considered a tool for reducing poverty, increasing public welfare, and ensuring the country's sustainable development.

Alongside attention to mineral reserves, the Martyr Leader always emphasized the role of human capital. His visit to the Sarcheshmeh Copper Complex in 2005 (Iranian year 1384) and his appreciation of the efforts of workers, engineers, and managers of that complex are symbols of this approach.

He repeatedly emphasized that the treasures hidden in Iran's soil turn into national wealth only when accompanied by knowledge, management, innovation, and the effort of the Iranian human force. From this perspective, mining is not only a natural reserve but also a field for the flourishing of national capabilities.

One of the most important axes of the Martyr Leader's economic thought regarding mining is its place in the resistance economy. In a situation where Iran's economy has been under the influence of sanctions and limitations caused by dependence on oil revenues for years, he repeatedly emphasized the necessity of utilizing domestic capacities.

In this regard, mining was proposed as one of the country's most important internal advantages; a capacity that, in addition to generating foreign currency, can provide the ground for the development of downstream industries, extensive employment, and increased added value.

Perhaps the most prominent part of his views is his repeated emphasis on replacing mining with oil. The Martyr Leader stated in various years that Iran must reach a stage where it can continue its development path without worrying about oil revenues. In his view, the country's mines, possessing rare and valuable reserves, are one of the best options for achieving this goal. Of course, this substitution will only be possible if the value chain is developed.

Within this framework, serious opposition to the raw sale of minerals is another constant axis of his speeches. The Martyr Leader repeatedly warned against the export of raw minerals and considered it a cause for losing a major portion of the economic value of these resources.

In his belief, real wealth is created when minerals are processed domestically and turned into industrial products with high added value.

This approach not only brings more income to the country but also leads to the development of technology, specialized employment, and the strengthening of knowledge-based industries.

Alongside economic opportunities, the Martyr Leader also paid special attention to the geopolitical importance of mines. He repeatedly reminded that natural resources and underground reserves have always been factors of greed for colonial powers, and many wars and foreign interventions in the world have been formed with the motive of accessing these resources.

From this perspective, the development and proper management of mines are not only an economic necessity but also a part of preserving national independence and dignity.

Despite these emphases, the Martyr Leader at various times also complained about the governments' neglect of the country's mining capacities. He stated that he had repeatedly emphasized the importance of mines, but this sector has still not reached its true place in the national economy.

This criticism indicates that there is a considerable gap between the existing capacities and the actual extent of their exploitation.

Today, when Iran's economy needs diversification of income sources and reducing dependence on oil more than ever, revisiting the views of the Martyr Leader about mining finds special importance. The collection of these statements presents a clear roadmap for policymakers; a roadmap based on broader exploration, attracting investment, developing technology, processing minerals, supporting the private sector, and preventing the raw sale of minerals.

Undoubtedly, mining can be one of the main drivers of Iran's economy in the coming decades. Achieving this goal requires that the country's vast underground capacities be transformed into sustainable wealth through knowledge, investment, and efficient management. As the Martyr Leader repeatedly emphasized, Iran is sitting on a great treasure of mineral resources, and the proper exploitation of this treasure can create a different future for the country's economy.

Wheat production to reach 13.5 million tons this year

TEHRAN- It is projected that the country's wheat production will reach approximately 13.5 million tons in the Iranian calendar year 1405 (starting March 2026).

According to Tasnim News Agency, Majid Anjafi stated that the Deputy for Crop Production is responsible for 75 percent of the country's total agricultural output. In its latest report on the status of crop cultivation, it emphasizes the sector's success in overcoming climate challenges and energy imbalances.

According to the Deputy for Crop Production at the Ministry of Agriculture, reliance on domestic capabilities has allowed the crop sector to suffer the least damage from economic and environmental pressures.

The Deputy added that, based on current planning, wheat production is forecast to reach about 13.5 million tons in 1405, of which 10 million tons can be delivered to government purchase centers.


In this regard, support prices and bonuses have been set for wheat farmers, and the process of securing financial resources to pay their dues is a government priority. Barley production is also expected to increase by one million tons compared to last year.

Majid Anjafi said that one of the main pillars of the Deputy's program is the implementation of a five-year plan for rainfed farmlands. The target for the fifth year of this plan is to produce 6 million tons of wheat without relying on groundwa-

ter or surface water—raising the share of rainfed wheat from the current 10 percent to 40 percent of total national production. Additionally, the plan aims to produce 600,000 tons of oilseeds and increase forage production capacity by up to one million tons.

The Deputy for Crop Production also stated that, regarding agricultural inputs, the supply process is being pursued seriously for the new year. Despite international restrictions, entry points for inputs have not been affected by sanctions.

In the meantime, the urea needed by farmers is being supplied from domestic production, while phosphate and potash fertilizers are being imported from various sources, ensuring no concerns for the upcoming planting season.



شرکت معدنی و صنعتی گل گهر اصفهان
Golgohar Mining & Industrial Co.

Notice of tender for export sale No. Z/1405/09

Golgohar Mining and Industrial Company

Hereby Golgohar Mining & Industrial Co. announces selling and export 70,000 metric tons of Iron Ore Concentrate (%Fe:66.5 ave) on basis of F.O.B at Rajaei Jetty Bandar Abbas - Iran. Interested bidders should find tender documents at Golgohar website: www.ggg.ir. All bids on conformity to tender instructions must be submitted no later than 09:00 A.M. on 21. July.2026 to Golgohar complex in sirjan (50 km in shiraz road).

Bidders are invited to the transactions commission department of the seller with an introduction letter of interested buyer and personal identification of the representative. Tender results shall be announced at 09:00 A.M. on 21. July.2026 at the office of the Seller.

Analysis %	
%Fe Ave	66.5
%FeO	Min 24 Max 28
%P Max	0.04
%S Ave	1.0
%SiO2 Max	3.0
%Al2O3 Max	0.7
%CaO Max	0.9
%MgO Max	2.5
%Moisture Max	5.0
Size ave	80%<0.48 mm

Why did millions of Iraqis mourn Iran's martyred Leader?

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - In a display of grief that surpassed all expectations, Iraqis turned out in numbers far higher than anticipated to pay their final respects to the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

The arrival of his blessed coffin and his martyred family members brought the Iraqi nation together in a profound show of loyalty, grief, and defiance, as the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala hosted what is now being circulated in Iraqi media as the largest funeral ceremonies in modern history.

The question on everyone's lips was simple: Why did millions of Iraqis, from different provinces and every background, pour into the streets of Najaf and Karbala to mourn a leader from neighboring Iran? The answer, according to those who marched, lies in the powerful spiritual bond forged over two decades of shared struggle.

In a deeply symbolic moment, the Karbala governorate welcomed "the first pilgrim of this year's Arbaeen of Imam Hussein," the martyred Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution.

This was the first time in 69 years that Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei had the honor of visiting the holy shrines in Iraq as a martyr. The significance of this moment was not lost on the millions who had gathered.

The Arbaeen pilgrimage, which commemorates the martyrdom of Imam Hussein nearly 1,400 years ago, represents the ultimate expression of resistance against oppression and tyranny. By being recognized as the first pilgrim of Arbaeen, Iran's martyred Leader was symbolically placed at the forefront of this legacy of resistance, a fitting tribute for a leader who devoted his life to opposing injustice and supporting the oppressed.

The funeral processions featured a series of cultural programs and devotional events that allowed millions of mourners to express their grief. Religious scholars and clerics delivered sermons and eulogies throughout the day, while groups of mourners participated in rhythmic chanting and processions.

A poignant moment came when Sayyid Mohammad Reda al-Sis-



tani, son of Iraq's highest religious authority, conveyed a message to the office of Ayatollah Khamenei, apologizing that his father, Grand Ayatollah Sayyed Ali al-Sistani, could not lead the funeral prayer due to health reasons. "The martyred Sayyed (martyr Ayatollah Khamenei) deserved to have my father, the Sayyed (Grand Ayatollah Sistani), lead his funeral prayer, but we apologize as his health condition does not permit him to leave," the message read.

The funeral processions of the blessed body within the holy shrines of Imam Ali, Imam Hussein, and Hazrat Abbas was a deeply symbolic act, connecting Iran's martyred Leader to the legacy of Imam Hussein.

Hussein centers, also known as Mowkibs, were set up across the holy cities, offering services to the millions of pilgrims who had arrived for the funeral. These Mowkibs served as centers of cultural activity, where elegies were recited, traditional mourning rituals were performed, and food and water were distributed to the grieving crowds.

Groups were allocated to serve mourners with water amid the immense heat, while volunteers directed traffic and assisted the crowds. The air was filled with the chants of sorrow and the cries of men and women, creating an atmosphere of profound spiritual devotion.

The head of the Al-Nafakh Al-Mousawi tribe, Sayyed Safaa

Abdul Hadi Al-Nafakh, captured the sentiment of many Iraqis when he stated: "The whole world will see how we receive our Imam. We will receive the body of our Imam Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei with our souls, our children, our women, tribal elders, and noble family leaders. Whatever we offer, we still fall short, for Imam Khamenei elevated the name of the Shia of the Commander of the Faithful (Imam Ali) and raised the banner of the Islamic world."

The Iraqi government released a commemorative postage stamp to mark the historic funeral ceremonies held in the country in honor of the martyred Ayatollah Khamenei.

The Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) played a central role in organizing and securing Iraq's historic funeral ceremonies. PMF security forces arrived in Najaf and Karbala well in advance, and commanders held extensive planning meetings to secure the event.

The calls to hold the funeral in Iraq and the extensive planning by the Iraqi government and the PMF demonstrated to the entire world the depth of the spiritual bond between the peoples of Iraq and Iran.

The Secretary General of Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, currently operating the PMF's brigades 41, 42, and 43, Qais al-Khazali, was seen weeping and mourning at Najaf International Airport when the blessed body arrived. His emotional display reflected the deep respect that PMF leaders and soldiers hold for martyr Ayatollah Khamenei.

For countless Iraqis, Iran's martyred Leader was not a foreign figure but a steadfast ally who stood with their nation in its darkest hours. When Daesh swept across Iraq in 2014, his guidance ensured Tehran's unwavering support for the Iraqi people. Alongside Grand Ayatollah al-Sistani's fatwa, he helped mobilize Iraqi youth to take up arms against the terrorist group, and his backing enabled the PMF to form a powerful national force that liberated Iraqi land and restored dignity to the nation. For this, Iraqis have not forgotten.

Tribal leaders, clerics, and mourners from across the country participated, affirming that their attendance came in appreciation of the martyred Iranian Leader's supportive stances toward Iraq and its people over the past two decades.

Unified convoys set off from various provinces toward Najaf, with tribal sheikhs and dignitaries leading the way. Sheikh Ali Al-Tamimi, a prominent tribal leader, said that participation represented a stance of loyalty to the martyred Imam.

The sheer number of tribes involved reflected the deep cultural and social fabric of Iraqi society, where tribal identity remains a powerful force. The participation of nearly 1,000 tribes demonstrated the unprecedented unity of the Iraqi people in mourning the martyred Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution, a powerful display of the deep bond between the two neighboring nations.

A historic reversal of the Ba'athist legacy unfolds under the Mesopotamian sun

The transnational farewell to Ayatollah Khamenei and the blood-sealed alliance rooted in a shared soul

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — When the glass-enclosed casket draped in the Iranian flag entered Najaf, it was riding a human tide that shattered decades of geopolitical assumptions.

Decades of schemes by malicious actors have aimed to decapitate the Resistance Front, trigger chaos, and permanently fracture the relationship between Tehran and Baghdad.

Their strategy assumed that the bond between these two nations was a brittle, top-down arrangement maintained purely by "militia muscle" and "political leverage."

But on July 8, as millions of ordinary Iraqis flooded the streets of their holiest cities, that imperial script evaporated under the scorching Mesopotamian sun.

The return history tried to prevent

There is a profound, almost poetic historical irony in the geography of this mourning route.

In the winter of 1957, an 18-year-old seminary student named Seyyed Ali traveled to Najaf, falling in love with its schol-

arly atmosphere but ultimately being forced to leave because of financial hardships and the restrictive political realities of an era dominated by British intrigue.

Decades later, during the brutal eight-year Iran-Iraq War instigated by Saddam Hussein with foreign backing, the same man served as Iran's president, directing a defense while these very shrine cities were sealed behind a wall of war.

To see the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala effectively close down 40 years later to honor that same man is a total symbolic reversal of Saddam's murderous and divisive legacy.

The body of the man who could not stay as a humble student returned escorted by Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, received at the airport by high-level Iraqi authorities.

By placing the funeral within Iraq's sacred Shia geography, the event transformed from a diplomatic protocol into a shared civilizational ritual.

Dragging Saddam or his Western backers from their graves to



witness millions of Iraqis weeping over an Iranian leader would reveal a reality they deemed impossible: modern borders have failed to sever an ancient spiritual continuum.

The vaporization of a manufactured narrative

For years, Western and regional anti-Iran media outlets have flooded Iraq with a relentless stream of narratives designed to foster division.

The airwaves perniciously claimed that Tehran was "systematically plundering Iraq's resources, drying up the Hawizeh marshes, shutting off the Tigris,

and turning the Baghdad government into a helpless puppet through the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF)."

Their malicious goal was to convince the Iraqi street that their neighbor was an "occupying interloper."

Yet, the millions who lined the six-kilometer route in Najaf and packed Karbala province offered a thunderous refutation of that bogus propaganda.

They were ordinary citizens, clerics, and families who walked for hours or traveled overnight from Basra and Baghdad.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

NATO chief Rutte: A naïve sycophant who is detached from reality



TEHRAN - Mark Rutte does not deserve the post of NATO secretary general. It seems NATO has gone bankrupt in selecting figures to run the 32-member military alliance in these turbulent years.

While Iran succeeded in humiliating the U.S. in its illegal February war against the Islamic Republic and some top European politicians expressed their dismay over the justification for the war, Rutte backed the attack in an interview with Politico while NATO leaders gathered for a summit in Ankara, Turkey.

Rutte is not really representing the views of most NATO members. His injudicious remarks are rattling the world.

For example, on March 24, German Frank-Walter Steinmeier called the war on Iran a "politically disastrous mistake" that breaches "international law." Steinmeier, a former foreign minister from the center-left Social Democratic Party, added, "Our foreign policy does not become more convincing just because we do not call a breach of international law a breach of international law."

Many believed that Trump ordered the war against Iran because of his personal hatred of President Barack Obama for striking the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, and a temptation by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

In addition to providing logistical support for Israel in its 12-day war against Iran in June 2025, the U.S. flew B-2 fighters dropping bunker-busting bombs on three important Iranian nuclear sites on the last day of the war (June 22). In the new war, started on February 28, the U.S. and Israel jointly attacked Iran, while two days before, diplomats from Iran and the U.S. had met in Geneva to draw up a plan to resolve issues surrounding Tehran's nuclear program, and were going to meet again next week.

Emmanuel Macron, the French president, described the U.S. strikes on Iran's nuclear sites in June 2025 as "illegal" under international law and said they were counterproductive. Macron also explicitly criticized the legality of the U.S. strikes on Iran in the February war. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez was also a vocal critic of the war and persistently called for diplomacy.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said, "We urge all parties to step back and return to diplomacy." EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said on March 17 that Europe did not understand some of the United States' actions under Trump or its objectives in Iran but had become used to his unpredictability. Kallas also said she "absolutely" backs diplomacy to bring the war to the end." She also warned, "The problem with wars is that it's easier to start than to stop them, and it always gets out of hand."

Some other European officials, like German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, who noticed that the U.S. failed to achieve its war objectives, changed their tone and called for diplomacy. Merz also said the U.S. had no strategy for starting the war.

That the NATO secretary general is out of touch with reality is not rhetoric. It is a fact backed by reality.

In a letter posted on X on March 18, Joe Kent resigned his post as Director of the U.S. National Counterterrorism Center in protest of the Trump administration's decision to join Israel in the war against Iran.

Kent clearly revealed that the U.S. was

drawn into the war against Iran under the influence of Israel. He said Israel's influence on the U.S. is so great that it can provoke the U.S. to start a war against another country without any justification.

In his letter, Kent said that Iran posed "no imminent threat" to the U.S. and said the administration "started this war due to pressure from Israel and its powerful American lobby."

In his Politico interview, Rutte also claimed that Iran is cooperating with Russia, China, and North Korea against NATO countries.

Rutte also acknowledged NATO support for the U.S. in the war on Iran, although Trump still keeps claiming that NATO countries did not help the U.S.

The United States' codename for the war against Iran was Operation Epic Fury.

"The U.S. probably could not have done Epic Fury without using Europe as one big platform of power projection," Rutte said, noting that Romania closed its largest commercial airport to allow American planes to take off and land, and as many as 5,000 aircraft took off from European airfields this winter despite Trump's continued insistence that allies didn't help.

He added, "European nations have really been extremely helpful based on all these bilateral agreements to make Epic Fury possible."

Once again, Rutte expressed support for the U.S. attacks on Iran on Wednesday morning, telling Trump, "I think what you did last night was absolutely necessary."

While the naïve NATO chief backed renewed attack on Iran, Kallas warned that the renewed exchanges of fire "further complicate already fraught talks to end the war."

Full-throated endorsement of Trump's policies

Politico said remarks by Rutte are a full-throated endorsement of Trump's policies that have at times rankled other alliance members, many of whom question Trump's commitment to the alliance after his threats to annex Greenland, his attacks on fellow European leaders, etc.

Again, while the NATO secretary general doesn't stop flattering Trump, on the second day of the NATO summit in Ankara, Trump, in the presence of NATO leaders, again made renewed claims on Greenland, causing new cracks in the military alliance.

Greenland is a semi-autonomous territory of Denmark.

"Greenland is very important for the United States, but it's not important for Denmark," Reuters quoted Trump as saying. "In fact, when Denmark was overrun by the Nazis in less than one day - Hitler beat them out in one day, took over - they asked us to take care of Greenland. In fact, we took Greenland, and then stupidly we gave it back."

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen reiterated that Greenland was not up for grabs, saying, "We are ready to defend every inch of NATO, including our own territory."

Rutte, who shows no hesitation to air views on certain serious issues like the Iran war, when asked about Trump's remarks on Greenland, he said he is "very disappointed with NATO."

This shows that under the Rutte leadership, NATO is poised for more trans-Atlantic divisions.

Infantino, Trump mock football

TEHRAN – Football should never forget the controversy surrounding Folarin Balogun after FIFA apparently broke its own rules by allowing the U.S. striker to play against Belgium in the 2026 FIFA World Cup Round of 16.

Balogun had received a red card in the Round of 32 match against Bosnia and Herzegovina and, under the competition's disciplinary rules, should have served a one-match suspension. Instead, FIFA allowed him to take the field against Belgium.

How can FIFA ask players and teams to respect its rules when it is willing to bend them itself?

George Orwell's Animal Farm famously states, "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others." FIFA's handling of Balogun's suspension inevitably brings that line to mind.

Justice requires neutrality, and football can only maintain its credibility when the rules are applied equally to everyone, regardless of status or political influence.

Although the United States eventually lost 4-1 to Belgium and failed to advance, the result does not erase the controversy. The issue is not whether Balogun changed the outcome, but whether the rules were enforced fairly. A red-card suspension should not become meaningless because of outside intervention.

FIFA announced that Balogun's one-match ban had been lifted after U.S. President Donald Trump urged FIFA president Gianni Infantino to review the case.

The decision drew criticism from Belgium's football association, European football officials, former FIFA executives, former players and many others, who warned that it set a dangerous precedent.

When politics overturns a sporting punishment, football loses its credibility.

Football belongs to the people, not politicians.

If Infantino is right that Trump personally intervened and the suspension was lifted afterward, FIFA has set a dangerous precedent. Rules cannot depend on who picks up the phone.

Football belongs to its players and supporters, not to politicians. When political influence overrides sporting regulations, the credibility of the game suffers. Whatever the motivation behind the decision, this episode has cast a shadow over the tournament and left many questioning whether the laws of the game still apply equally to all.

Shahab Zahedi joins Malaysian side Johor Darul Ta'zim

TEHRAN - Johor Darul Ta'zim (JDT) has once again sent shockwaves across the footballing landscape of the continent.

By securing the signature of Iranian international striker Shahab Zahedi on a 2-year contract. The Southern Tigers have not merely added another forward to their ranks; they have secured one of the most high-profile, decorated foreign players ever to grace the Malaysia Super League.

What sets Zahedi apart from standard continental transfers is his elite background. The 29-year-old was a core member of Iran's national team squad at the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. Representing Team Melli—traditionally one of Asia's most formidable football powerhouses—on the absolute grandest stage in the sport immediately elevates his status. Very few players make the move to Malaysian club football while carrying recent World Cup credentials in their back pockets.

Beyond his stellar international exploits, Zahedi's domestic resume reads like a textbook definition of top-tier footballing pedigree. He has previously worn the jersey of Persepolis, one of the undisputed giants of Persian football, where he consistently absorbed the intense pressure of high-stakes continental matches. Most recently, the forward turned heads with his clinical performances in Japan's J1 League. Given that the J1 League is widely

considered by pundits to be the most competitive and technically advanced domestic division in all of Asia, his ability to thrive there proves he remains at the peak of his powers.

Esteghlal winger El Haddadi close to the Ittihad of Tangier

TEHRAN - The Ittihad of Tangier are about to make one of the most beautiful blows of the summer market by attaching the services of the Moroccan international Munir El Haddadi.

Discussions between the different parties have seen significant progress in recent days and an agreement in principle has been reached, according to our sources. At this stage, only a few administrative and financial details remain to be finalized before the formalization of the operation, unless the last-minute situation is reversed.

This file is followed with particular attention by the Tangier leaders, aware of the impact that the arrival of a player with such a prestigious course would have. In search of a new offensive breath after a half-tone season, the IRT wishes to send a strong message to their supporters by recruiting an element capable of immediately bringing quality, leadership and a true experience of the very high level.

Munir El Haddadi is coming out of a season spent under the colors of Esteghlal, Iran, where he had freely engaged in September 2025 at the end of his adventure with CD Leganés. The former Moroccan international quickly found his place within the Iranian club and maintained an interesting level of competitiveness throughout the 2025/26 Persian Gulf.

Iran defeat Egypt in Sitting Volleyball World Championship warm-up

TEHRAN – Iran's men's national sitting volleyball team made an impressive start to their preparations for the World Championship by defeating Egypt in straight sets in a friendly match ahead of the tournament in China.

The Iranian side secured a convincing 3-0 victory over Egypt, winning 25-16, 25-19 and 25-14.

The 2026 World Sitting Volleyball Championship will be held in Hangzhou, China, from July 10 to 17. Iran will begin their campaign against Poland on Friday, with the match scheduled to start at 9:00 a.m. local time.

Before the tournament gets underway, Iran will play two more warm-up matches against Brazil and Germany as they fine-tune their preparations for the global competition.

Meanwhile, Iran's women's national sitting volleyball team are also set to depart for Hangzhou on Wednesday to compete in the World Championship.

Iran too strong for Iraq at FIBA U18 Asia Cup WABA qualifier

TEHRAN – Iran overpowered Iraq 96-29 at the FIBA U18 Asia Cup WABA qualifiers on Wednesday.

Mohammadyashar Kamal Khaledi led Iran with 26 points, while Matin Manouchehri also score 24 points for the Persians.

Ali Rubaye and Hani Kareem collected seven points each for Iraq.

Iran had started the campaign on Tuesday with a 97-87 win over Palestine.

The Iranian team will face Syria, Jordan and Lebanon in the following days.

The competition is being held from July 7 to 11 in Amman, Jordan.

Restoration begins at UNESCO-listed Chehel Sotoun after blast damage

TEHRAN - Restoration work has begun on damaged sections of the UNESCO-listed Chehel Sotoun World Heritage site in Isfahan following blast damage sustained during the recent war with the US-Israeli regime, the site's director said on Wednesday.

Mostafa Hadipour, director of the Chehel Sotoun World Heritage Base, said the damage was caused by the blast wave from a US-Israeli attack on a building, which is located within the protected buffer zone of the historic complex.

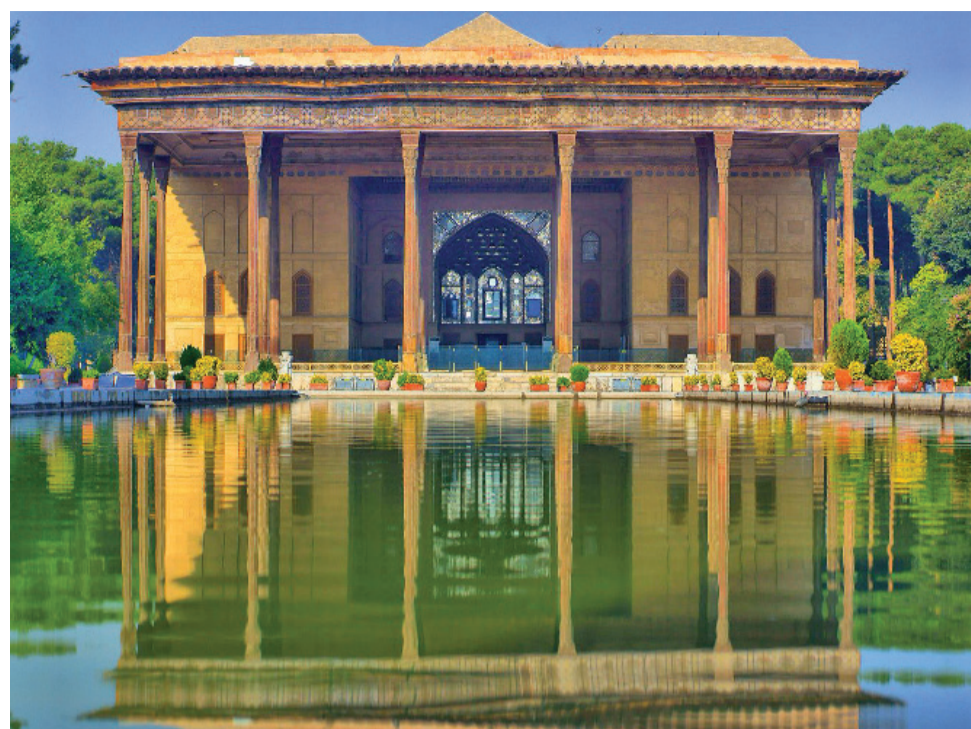
"The restoration and conservation of the damaged sections have now begun after technical assessments, damage evaluation and the procurement of the required materials," Hadipour told ISNA.

He said one of the most significant losses was the destruction of the decorative brick latticework and entrance structure of the site's ticket office. Tempered glass windows were shattered, equipment was damaged and parts of the roof above a staff room on the Sepah side of the complex collapsed due to the force of the blast.

Hadipour said the restoration was being carried out using allocated conservation funds by a team from the Isfahan provincial office of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, following scientific conservation principles.

He said the staff room is among the historic spaces within the complex, with sections dating to the first and second Pahlavi periods. Damaged wooden beams will be replaced with matching timber treated to improve resistance to termites, wood-boring insects and moisture. Other work includes installing metal lath beneath the beams, replastering walls and repairing damaged structural elements.

Hadipour said investigations conducted alongside the restoration had uncovered evidence from different historical periods.



During the removal of damaged layers, conservators found a historical wall niche that had been sealed in later periods, as well as traces of earlier painted decoration beneath plaster coatings.

He said the findings would be documented and preserved as part of the restoration process. In some areas, conservators will use a method known as "witness preservation" to retain visible historical layers and evidence of the recent damage for future research.

"Our approach is based on protective restoration and minimum intervention," Hadipour said. "Only structurally damaged elements will be replaced with compatible materials, while the remaining historic fabric will be stabilized and preserved."

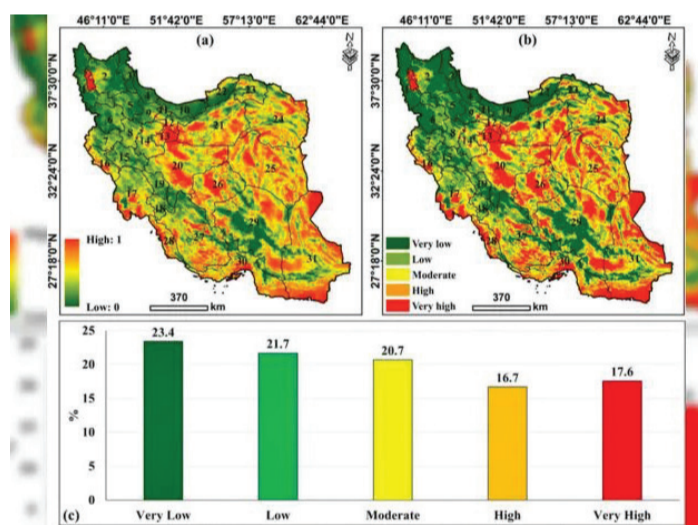
He said all stages of the project were being supervised by specialists from the Che-

hel Sotoun World Heritage Base and that the primary objective was to preserve the site's authenticity and historical identity while documenting evidence of the incident for future generations.

Chehel Sotoun, meaning "Forty Columns," is a Safavid-era pavilion built by Shah Abbas II in the 17th century in Isfahan. The palace was used to receive dignitaries and ambassadors and now operates as a museum displaying works from different periods of Iranian history.

The surrounding garden forms part of the UNESCO-listed Persian Garden ensemble, which was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2011. The serial property includes nine historic gardens across Iran and reflects principles of Persian garden design dating back to the era of Cyrus the Great.

University of Tehran study maps Iranian tourism destinations' vulnerability to dust pollution



TEHRAN - Researchers at the University of Tehran have produced Iran's first national map assessing the vulnerability of tourism destinations to dust pollution, identifying parts of central, eastern and southern Iran as the areas most at risk, the university said on Wednesday.

The study, conducted by researchers from the university's Faculty of Management, evaluated tourism destinations across the country using spatial multi-criteria decision-making models that combined environmental, infrastructure and tourism data to assess the impact of dust storms at the national level.

The research was led by Hamideh Mahmoudi and Mohammad Karimi Firouzjaei, faculty members in the Department of Tourism Management, together with graduate researchers Saman Nadizadeh Shourabeh, Mohammad Farhadi and Mehdi Rahimi, the university said in a statement on Wednesday.

Mahmoudi said the findings showed that frequent dust storms and declining air quality could affect tourists' perceptions of destinations, travel demand, length of stay and the likelihood of repeat visits.

"Tourism is one of the coun-

try's most important economic and social sectors, and its sustainability largely depends on environmental quality," Mahmoudi said. "Assessing the vulnerability of tourism destinations to dust pollution is therefore essential for sustainable tourism planning and management."

According to the study, about 40% of Iran's land area falls into high or very high exposure categories for dust pollution. The southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan and the southern provinces of Hormozgan and Bushehr recorded the highest levels of exposure, while the northern provinces of Gilan, Mazandaran and Ardabil had the lowest.

The study also found that tourism vulnerability was unevenly distributed across the country. The provinces of Qom, Sistan-Baluchestan, South Khorasan, Bushehr, Yazd and Isfahan were identified as the most vulnerable tourism regions. More than 60% of Qom province was classified in the very high vulnerability category, Mahmoudi said.

By contrast, the northern and northwestern provinces of Ardabil, Gilan, Mazandaran and Kordestan showed the lowest levels of vulnerability, Mahmoudi

attributed this to factors including forest cover, higher rainfall, denser vegetation and greater access to water resources.

The researchers said the study also revealed differences in the exposure of tourism infrastructure. While about 47% of Iran's natural tourism destinations were located in areas with very low vulnerability, a significant share of accommodation facilities, restaurants, service infrastructure and some religious tourism sites were situated in high-risk areas.

Mahmoudi said the findings highlighted the need to incorporate environmental considerations into tourism planning. She said measures such as dust monitoring and early warning systems, green infrastructure, improved water resource management and greater adaptation capacity could strengthen the resilience of the tourism sector.

The researchers said the framework developed in the study could help authorities identify priority areas, guide investment and support evidence-based policies for tourism development that is resilient to environmental and climate-related hazards.

Centuries-old caravanserai to become astrotourism hub in central Iran

TEHRAN - The centuries-old Moshajiri Caravanserai in eastern Isfahan province will be developed into an astrotourism hub, a provincial tourism official said on Wednesday, as authorities seek to expand nature- and science-based tourism in the region.

Davoud Aryan, deputy director for tourism at the Isfahan's provincial directorate of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts, announced the plan during a summer stargazing event held at the caravanserai, saying the site would serve as a base for astronomy tourism in eastern Isfahan.

He said eastern Isfahan was among Iran's most suitable regions for astronomy tourism because of its low levels of light pollution, open night skies, favorable climate and quiet desert environment.

"These conditions make the area one of the country's most suitable destinations for observing celestial objects," Aryan said, adding that the region had the potential to attract astronomy enthusiasts, nature tourists and visitors interested in scientific tourism.

Participants attended educational sessions on astrotourism, summer constellations and the structure of the Milky Way before observing celestial objects using specialized telescopes and equipment, he said.

Aryan said feedback from participants indicated that astronomy tourism could become one of Isfahan province's tourism products and help attract domestic visitors to its desert regions.

He said the provincial tourism authority

planned to continue organizing specialized astronomy events to introduce lesser-known attractions in eastern Isfahan while supporting sustainable tourism, distributing visitor flows more evenly across the province, extending tourist stays and contributing to the local economy.

Moshajiri Caravanserai is one of six historic caravanserais in Naeyn county. According to provincial officials, it is located east of the city of Anarak, between Anarak and the village of Chooapanan, about 10 km from the main road.

According to sources, the caravanserai was built by merchant Haj Mehdi Rafie Anaraki during the Safavid era. The site currently operates as a restored accommodation facility offering lodging for travelers.

From family to work: Martyred Leader's instructions on Iranian-Islamic lifestyle

TEHRAN – Over the past decade, no other topics have been emphasized by the martyred Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in his statements regarding the future of society more than the 'Iranian-Islamic lifestyle'.

On various occasions, the late Leader repeatedly referred to family, work ethic, consumption habits, reading, adherence to the law, and a sense of responsibility as components of a unified system, without which neither scientific nor economic progress would be possible.

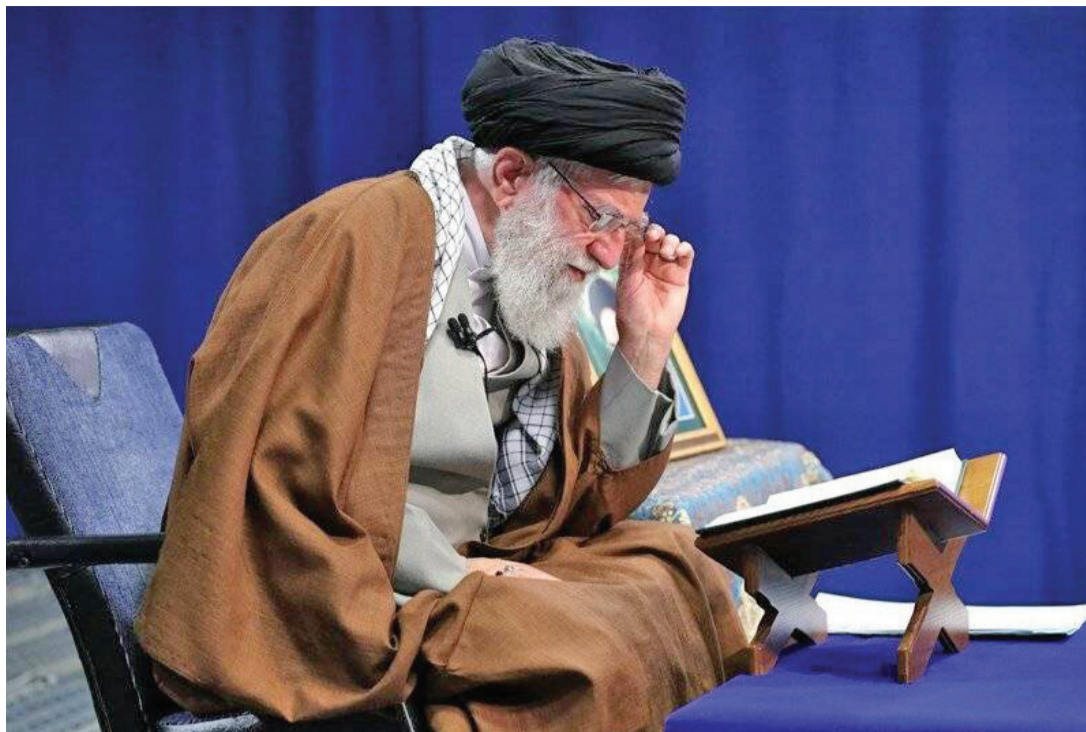
It was in the fall of the Iranian year 1391 (March 2012-2013) that the Leader delineated the concept of 'Iranian-Islamic lifestyle' for the first time while addressing the people in North Khorasan province. His statement that 'lifestyle is the core element of civilization' later became one of his many remarks cited at numerous cultural and scientific events.

According to him, social behavior, interactions within families, the kind of marriage, housing, clothing, consumption patterns, diet, leisure activities, script and language, business practices, as well as behaviors in the workplace, university, school, political activities, sports, and the media constitute the very fabric of life.

In his point of view, lifestyle was not merely a collection of ethical recommendations, but a solution to build an advanced society with a distinct identity.

Back then, in 2012, the Leader divided the advancement into two categories: the first part encompassed scientific, technological, economic, political, and military progress, while the second part referred to the quality of people's lives and the way they interacted with each other.

As stated by the Leader, a society that has achieved the highest level of technological advancement but failed to improve family relations, moral ethics, trustworthiness, and adherence to the law has not made any progress at all.



In most of his speeches, he would raise tens of questions about lifestyle routines. These questions mostly focused on the way spouses treat each other, driving culture, work ethic, respect for the rights of others, discipline, relations among neighbors, reading, consuming, leisure activities, and media consumption habits.

Family: the starting point to reform society

Among all the elements of lifestyle, family had a particular significance to the Leader. He kept underscoring that a healthy family is the foundation of a healthy society; no other institutions could play the role of family in training individuals.

He also highlighted the importance of mutual respect in couples' relations, respecting parents, proper upbringing of children, and maintaining tranquility in the family, while warning about threats to families.

Marriage was another recurring theme in the Leader's speeches. He urged the youth to facilitate the marriages by avoiding expensive ceremonies, social comparison, and lessening unnecessary expenditures, noting that the difficulty of getting married would have widespread

social and cultural impacts.

Wasting hinders progress

The Leader repeatedly invited people to avoid wasting, emphasizing that consumerism and obsession with luxury goods have negative effects on the household's economy and squander national resources.

To him, saving means proper, rational, and responsible use of divine blessing rather than depriving oneself of facilities. Saving is not just limited to the conservation of energy, electricity, and water; it also encompasses talents, time, human assets, and social opportunities.

Work culture key to progress

The work culture, as a main component of lifestyle, is not just a means to earn a livelihood, but a social responsibility and a religious value. In a society where the work culture is institutionalized, the economic, scientific, and social growth would be expedited.

Social ethics: an asset that must not be ignored

Another important part of the Leader's remarks centered on social ethics. According to him, many of the social problems stem not from a lack of resources, but from inappropriate social behaviors.

Respecting the rights of others, maintaining honesty, fairness, and trustworthiness, upholding one's commitment, observing the law, and having a sense of responsibility were among the key themes that were repeated in his statements.

The martyred leader even addressed issues such as driving etiquette, apartment-living etiquette, taking turns, interacting with neighbors, having good conversations, and refraining from gossiping as part of an ideal lifestyle.

Book, media, leisure time

Book, in the Leader's mind, is one of the most essential tools for cultural development. He always stressed the need to increase the number of book readers per capita and called for fostering a love for reading in society, particularly among the youth.

Highlighting the vast potential of social media, the Leader underlined the importance of responsible media use and literacy, noting that inappropriate use of social media results in a waste of time, erosion of family principles, and dissemination of cultural patterns that are incompatible with Iranian identity.

Seven countries to attend Iran's FIRA Open Competition

TEHRAN – More than 1,000 participants from seven countries are set to take part in the 13th edition of the Federation of International RoboSports Association (FIRA) Open Competition, scheduled to be held in Tehran from July 17 to 24.

Teams from Iran, Russia, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Oman, Cyprus, and Türkiye will compete both in person and virtually. The event will feature 392 teams competing across 21 specialized leagues.

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

The competition will be held in both student and university divisions, covering four major categories: aerial robotics, robot sports, challenge robotics, and university robotics. Participants will showcase their expertise in designing and developing robotic systems as well as artificial intelligence algorithms.

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

The 31st FIRA RoboWorld Cup & Summit will be held in the Greater Toronto Area from July 17 to July 21, bringing together competitors from more than 20 countries.

Featuring diverse leagues with international standards, FIRA CUP will serve as a competitive platform for participants to showcase their capabilities in designing, building, and implementing advanced artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms in smart



robots. However, the main objective is not holding a competition, but developing a sustainable ecosystem for the growth of robotics startups and strengthening AI infrastructure in the country.

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

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

The Iranian delegations won five championships in the Air League and Sport League (students under the age of 19), as well as Challenge and Youth League. They secured four runner-up positions and two third-places in autonomous vehicles, youth creative task, and the Sport League.

Iranian students secured first and second places in the inventions and innovative technologies area in the TEKNOFEST competition, showcasing new Iranian youths' capabilities in robotics, artificial intelligence, and technological innovations.

Hosted by Istanbul, Turkey, from September 17 to 21, 2025, the competition aimed for individuals to improve themselves in the field of robotics – electronics – coding, and to design robots suitable for specified tasks.

The Iranian team, composed of Kian Karbalei, Mehrtash Razgordani, Artin Islampannah, Seyyed Amir-Homan Tabatabaei-nejad, Samyar Reza-Soltani, Ardin Khanalizadeh, Mohammad Reivandi, and Mehdi Reivandi, Mehr news agency reported.

Competitors with 980 projects from 56 countries, including Germany, South Korea, Uzbekistan, Russia, the Netherlands, India, Iran, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Paraguay, participated in the event.

The robotics and earth science teams of Iran won different awards at the Federation of International RoboSports Association (FIRA) and the International Earth Science Olympiad (IESO) competitions, which were held in South Korea and China, respectively.

FIRA RoboWorld Cup and Summit 2025 was held from August 11 to 15. The Iranian delegations won five championships in the Air League and Sport League (students under the age of 19), as well as Challenge and Youth League. They secured four runner-up positions and two third-places in autonomous vehicles, youth creative task, and the Sport League.

Iranian students secured three gold medals and a special award in the International Science and Invention Fair (ISIF) 2025, ranking them among the top innovators worldwide.

Iran discusses fostering ICT ties with Iraq, Pakistan, Oman

TEHRAN – The head of the Information Technology Organization of Iran, Mohammad-Mohsen Sadr, has held separate meetings with Iraqi, Pakistani, and Omani officials to discuss ways to enhance collaborations between Iran and these countries in the information and communication technology (ICT) sector.

The officials met on the sidelines of the first session of the UN Global Dialogue on AI Governance, convened by the UN General Assembly in Geneva on July 6 and 7.

Holding a meeting with Iraqi Minister of Communications Mustafa Jabbar Sanad, the two sides highlighted the role of information technology and artificial intelligence in helping to address energy imbalances, developing smart infrastructure, enhancing productivity in the energy sector, and fostering cooperation in e-government and data transit.

They also discussed expanding cooperation in digital transformation, exchanging technical expertise, and implementing joint projects.

The Iranian official met Shaza Fatima Khawaja, the Pakistani Minister for IT and Telecommunications, as well.

During the meeting, both parties explored avenues to enhance cooperation between Iran and Pakistan in the fields of information technology, e-government, artificial intelligence, digital economy, cybersecurity, and the development of the innovation ecosystem.

In his X account, Sadr described the meeting with the Omani official as a constructive one, which particularly focused on e-government, artificial intelligence, digital economy, communication infrastructure, and expanding technological interactions between the two countries.

The two countries have high capacities to deepen digital cooperation and develop joint initiatives in the future of the digital economy, he added.

AI governance is the set of rules, standards, and oversight practices that determine how artificial intelligence systems are built, deployed, and held accountable, and in July 2026, it moved onto the world stage.

The official said a workshop on Artificial Intelligence and the Government Digital Ecosystem held on July 7 at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) headquarters in Geneva was very well received by the participants; it included his speech and the talks of other representatives from UNDESA's E-Government Assessment Branch and the ITU Development Sector, as well as university professors.

The UN Global Dialogue on AI Governance was the world's first intergovernmental platform where every government and stakeholder group sat at the same table to align on AI oversight.

It is a direct product of the Global Digital Compact, the digital cooperation framework adopted in September 2024.

The Dialogue brought together all 193 UN



member states alongside the private sector, civil society, academia, and the technical community. It received the first annual report of the UN Independent International Scientific Panel on Artificial Intelligence, giving member states a shared evidence base.

Crucially, the forum adopts no binding resolutions or regulations. It is a place to exchange best practices and build common approaches, and it ran alongside the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2026 and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) AI for Good Global Summit in the same week. A second session is scheduled for New York in May 2027.

Iran committed to fostering regional AI cooperation

The combination of talent, data, and innovation makes Iran a key player in the regional AI value chain, capable of driving meaningful cooperation and development. Iran is committed to fostering regional cooperation and building a future where AI drives prosperity and unity, Hashemi said in February 2025.

Emphasizing that Iran is a major stakeholder in the regional digital landscape, Hashemi said that Iran is a major player in AI in the Persian Gulf and that the country is ready to start cooperation with regional states on this matter.

The official made the remarks while addressing the Iran Corridor 2025 conference held in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates.

He stated that the country's mobile phone operators, as well as its thriving digital service platforms such as Snapp! And Digikala, each serving more than 30 million users, provides an abundance of multifaceted data – an essential ingredient for AI development, Press TV reported.

Despite facing economic sanctions, Iran has successfully developed a resilient fintech ecosystem that continues to thrive and innovate, Hashemi noted.

"Our country's academic and research capabilities have propelled us to the forefront of AI advancements. In 2023, Iran ranked second in the region in terms of the number and quality of scientific papers in AI, demonstrating our commitment to cutting-edge research and development," he added.

"Iran holds the second position in the region for AI developers, highlighting the depth of our skilled workforce, and stands fourth in the region in terms of the number of AI firms, showcasing our dynamic and rapidly growing ecosystem," the Iranian minister continued.

IRCS sends relief teams to Iraq for martyred Leader's funeral procession

TEHRAN – The Iranian Red Crescent Society has dispatched 36 relief teams, consisting of 152 members, to Iraq to provide services to mourners attending the funeral procession of martyred Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in Najaf on Tuesday and in Karbala on Wednesday.

According to the head of the IRCS, Pirhossein Kolivand, some 500 physicians and volunteers are providing essential health services to people in IRCS-affiliated centers, including Imam Ali Hospital and a clinic in Najaf, and three health facilities in Karbala, the IRCS website reported.

The health ministry has also announced readiness for the provision of health services to participants in the ceremonies. The health ministry has dispatched ambulances, rescue vehicles, and medical teams to serve

the mourners throughout the route.

The Leader and several members of his family were martyred in the US-Israeli strike on February 28.

The official mourning ceremonies commenced on Saturday morning at Tehran's Grand Imam Khomeini Mosalla, where an unprecedented sea of mourners assembled to pay their final respects to a leader whose life and legacy profoundly shaped the Islamic Republic for more than three decades.

The funeral ceremonies then were held in the holy city of Qom, where prayers were offered over the Leader's body on Monday. The procession is being held in Iraq, following requests from Iraqi tribes, scholars, and religious and political figures.

The Leader will be laid to rest at the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) on Thursday.



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JULY 9, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

One of the best noble traits is the avoidance of prohibited things.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:10 Evening: 19:44 Dawn: 3:12 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:57 (tomorrow)

Iranian artist blends graphic design and calligraphy to create Martyr Leader's portrait

TEHRAN – Iranian calligrapher and typographer Ali Minaei-Fard has created a portrait of the martyred leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, using the leader's poetry, aiming to showcase both the sorrow of his loss and the grandeur of his character through a fusion of calligraphy and imagery.

Minaei-Fard is one of the artists who has been creating visual art related to the martyred leader at Valiasr Square in Tehran. He has inscribed his work with the poetry of the Martyr Leader, blending graphic design and calligraphy to create his likeness. The piece, measuring two by one-and-a-half meters, was executed on canvas using a combination of Nastaliq and traditional scripts, Mehr reported.

Regarding the inspiration behind this work, the artist explained: "My primary motivation to continue this path was the late Leader himself. Previously, at the time of the martyrdom of Hajj Qasem Soleimani and passing of President Raisi, I had created similar works. The Leader had seen those pieces and was kind enough to acknowledge them. In one of our meetings, he asked me to explain the works and paid close attention to the details as I spoke about them. He remarked that the content, the execution, and the selection of the texts were all excellent. That very attention encouraged me to pursue this path more seriously."

Commenting on the characteristics of this latest piece, Minaei-Fard said: "The work



I have created now is drawn from the poems of our Martyr leader—poems published over various years. I have used Nastaliq and Shekasteh scripts to form the image of his face. Essentially, the audience is confronted with calligraphy and a portrait simultaneously."

Regarding the public's reaction to this style of art, he noted: "People have rarely encountered such works. They have seen calligraphy and they have seen painting, but the fusion of these two arts and the transformation of calligraphic lines into a human face is very fresh and engaging for them. In an era where most works are leaning toward artificial intelligence and computer-generated graphics, seeing a piece that is entirely handmade holds a special appeal for the public."

Cartoon of Day



Don't forget Gaza
Cartoonist: Mikail Çiftçi from Türkiye

"Who Is Khamenei?" international panel discussion held in Tehran

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN – Media professionals, political commentators, and public figures from across Europe, the Americas, Africa, and West Asia gathered in Tehran on Tuesday for a forum examining international coverage of the funeral of the Martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, and what participants described as an ongoing battle of narratives surrounding recent developments in Iran.

The conference, titled "Who Is Khamenei?", was held at the Sooreh Hall of the Art Bureau and brought together journalists, analysts, and activists from countries including the United States, Ireland, Pakistan, Lebanon, Greece, Russia, Brazil, Turkey, Austria, and South Africa.

Throughout the meeting, speakers reflected on their observations during their stay in Iran, shared their assessments of international media coverage, and discussed the political and cultural significance they attributed to the funeral ceremonies.

American journalist Patrick Henningsen, who has traveled to Iran on multiple occasions, described the atmosphere in the country following recent events as one marked by resilience. He said the scenes he witnessed went beyond what he viewed as a political event, portraying instead the steadfastness of a nation.

Irish media commentator and writer Tadhg Hickey argued that many people around the world who oppose colonialism identify with Iran's position, adding that many in Ireland admire what he described as Iran's resistance to major global powers.

For her part, media activist Bushra Shaikh offered condolences over the martyrdom of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution before criticizing Western media coverage of recent events. She argued that international outlets had presented what she called one-sided narratives and had failed to adequately report both the funeral ceremonies and civilian casualties during the recent conflict.

Shaikh also questioned portrayals of Ayatollah Khamenei in Western discourse, arguing that they differed from the image she had formed through her own observations. Referring to the large number of women attending the funeral ceremonies, she maintained that their presence reflected the late leader's relationship with Iranian society. She further contrasted her views on family values in Iran with social trends in the West, describing Iran as a model that places greater emphasis on the family institution.

Pakistani author and political analyst Mir Mohammad Alikhan said the attendance of guests from numerous countries demonstrated what he called growing solidarity among anti-war and anti-colonial movements. Having previously wondered how Iran had maintained its economy despite years of sanctions, he said his visits had led him to conclude that what he termed a revolutionary economy had con-

tributed to the country's resilience.

Khan also announced that he is writing his eighth book on Ayatollah Khamenei, adding that attending the funeral ceremonies had deepened his understanding of Iranian society.

Lebanese media activist Mustafa Shamas described the late Iranian leader as a figure belonging to all free people, recounting an anecdote in which Ayatollah Khamenei reportedly rejected a proposal to alter the route of the Tehran Metro for his personal security, asking instead, "What about the rest of the people of Tehran?" Shams said the story illustrated what he viewed as the leader's concern for public welfare.

The second half of the forum featured remarks by American political commentator Jackson Hinkle, who said it was his first visit to Iran and described the trip as "a great honor." Hinkle praised the late Ayatollah Khamenei's long-standing opposition to what he called global capitalism, colonialism, and injustice, arguing that these positions had made both Iran and its leader the target of foreign adversaries.

Hinkle further noted that the late Iranian leader had lived a modest life devoted to public service. Referring to his own relocation from the United States to Moscow, he criticized US foreign policy and questioned the use of American tax revenues in overseas military operations. He concluded by calling on US military personnel to reject participation in wars that, in his view, target civilians.

Greek media activist Leonidas expressed sympathy with the Iranian people and said he was still seeking a deeper understanding of Ayatollah Khamenei's political and religious legacy. He described the late leader as a figure whose influence extended beyond Iran's borders.

Reflecting on his participation in the funeral ceremonies, Leonidas said he wanted to witness firsthand what he described as the Iranian people's resilience and unity. He also criticized Western media coverage of the event, arguing that major outlets had failed to accurately reflect the scale of public

participation.

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Abbas Ghazi Zahedi, director of the Irani-



an House of Cartoon, described this artistic approach as something beyond mere decoration. "Executed in the form of street art, these works sought to blend the visual atmosphere of the funeral route with symbols of victory and loyalty," he said.

He emphasized that a key feature of the project was the element of surprise: the works appeared in the early hours of the morning, astonishing citizens and placing the message of resistance directly and without mediation into the urban space. Meanwhile, the identities of the artists remained concealed behind the works so that the audience's focus would rest solely on the "message."

Ghazi Zahedi said that the themes of these

political activist Dimitri Lascaris offered condolences over the martyrdom of Ayatollah Khamenei and described Tehran as "the Mecca of revolutionaries." Having visited Iran several times, he said his personal observations differed from the image of the country and its leadership often presented in Western media.

Lascaris argued that targeted killings of political leaders had become a recurring feature of US and Israeli policy and said he believed Iran continued to play an important role in shaping regional security. He added that his experiences in Iran had strengthened his conviction that the country represented an alternative model of political independence.

South African politician Mbuyiseni Ndlozi portrayed Ayatollah Khamenei as part of a broader anti-colonial tradition, comparing Iran's revolutionary discourse with historic liberation movements in Africa and Latin America. He criticized what he described as Western domination of the global political and economic order and called for a more equitable international system.

Austrian journalist Dieter Reinisch said the late Iranian leader was known well beyond the Muslim world and argued that his approach toward followers of different religions was based on respect and justice. Comparing Iran's policies with developments elsewhere in the region, Reinisch questioned portrayals that associated Iran with terrorism and said recent events had demonstrated what he viewed as the country's resilience.

The conference concluded with participants emphasizing the importance of direct engagement with Iran and encouraging greater international dialogue beyond prevailing media narratives. Speakers repeatedly argued that personal observation offered a more accurate understanding of the country than what they described as selective reporting in parts of the Western press, while stressing that the funeral ceremonies had become a focal point in the broader contest over competing narratives surrounding Iran and the region.

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Tehran walls along funeral route transformed into vast gallery of resistance

TEHRAN – On the day of the funeral procession for the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, Tehran was not merely host to the crowds; the walls of the capital, from Damavand Street to Azadi Square, were transformed into a vast gallery of resistance.

On Monday, the streets of the capital witnessed the farewell of people to their Martyr Leader. Along the magnificent funeral route, graffiti and revolutionary murals related to the 12-day war, the Ramadan War, and portraits of the Martyr Leader adorned the walls. These graffiti works were created by specialized teams under the artistic direction of the Iranian House of Cartoon, Mehr reported.

Abbas Ghazi Zahedi, director of the Irani-

an House of Cartoon, described this artistic approach as something beyond mere decoration. "Executed in the form of street art, these works sought to blend the visual atmosphere of the funeral route with symbols of victory and loyalty," he said.

He emphasized that a key feature of the project was the element of surprise: the works appeared in the early hours of the morning, astonishing citizens and placing the message of resistance directly and without mediation into the urban space. Meanwhile, the identities of the artists remained concealed behind the works so that the audience's focus would rest solely on the "message."

Ghazi Zahedi said that the themes of these

graffiti works encompassed a broad spectrum of epic subjects: from reminders of the Sacred Defense to the portrayal of the martyrdom of Ayatollah Khamenei. One of the prominent themes of these works was the depiction of the defeat of the American regime in the recent attack on Isfahan; in the designs, similarities between this event and the Tabas incident were emphasized to recall the recurring defeats of aggressors.

In conclusion, Ghazi Zahedi stressed that the widespread reactions on social media showed that this connection between modern urban art and religious-ideological concepts had succeeded in leaving a deep impact on the mood and atmosphere of the crowds along the route.