

Yemen’s air siege was bravely broken despite Saudi bombardment

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN - The brutal aerial embargo that has suffocated the Yemeni people for over a decade has finally collapsed.

Saudi forces rained desperate fire upon civilian infrastructure in a frantic attempt to maintain control on July 13, yet an Iranian Mahan Air flight carrying a returning Yemeni delegation successfully breached the blockade. ▶ Page 5

Demon has gone to hell, Netanyahu and Trump are next

By Syeda Farheen Naqi Mossavi

HAFIZABAD, Pakistan – Now, Senator Lindsey Graham is in a dark grave. The man who spent decades screaming for the destruction of Iran is silent. And the world is better off without him and other like-minded persons.

As an American politician, he was one of the biggest supporters of the illegal Zionist regime in Congress. He called himself a “great friend of Israel”. He visited the occupied territories many times, even just before the American-Zionist war on Iran. He pushed for war against Iran and wanted to destroy Iran’s economy. He suffered from the illusion that the Islamic Republic system in Iran would fall. ▶ Page 5

80 Iranian universities in U.S. News Best Global Universities Rankings

TEHRAN – The 2026-2027 edition of the U.S. News Best Global Universities Rankings has included 80 Iranian universities among the world’s 2,250 top universities.

The institutions from 105 countries have been ranked based on 13 indicators that measure their academic research performance and their global and regional reputations, which helps students to explore the higher education options that exist beyond their own countries’ borders and to compare key aspects of schools’ research missions.

University of Tehran (with a global ranking of 314), Islamic Azad University (460), Sharif University of Technology (578), Tehran University of Medical Sciences (585), University of Tabriz (663), Mashhad University of Medical Sciences (783), Tarbiat Modares University (783), Amirkabir University of Technology (791), ▶ Page 7

The Terrible Tehran?

By Asqarjon Ismoilov

In my youth, I read “The Terrible Tehran” by Iranian author Morteza Moshfegh Kazemi. From that time on, an image of the city filled with fear and mystery had remained in my mind. When I set out for Tehran, I asked myself: how much does the Tehran described in that book resemble the Tehran of today?

On the way from the airport to the city center, photographs of war victims along the roadside caught my attention. Behind each picture lay a family, a destiny, and a sorrow. It was there that I felt the reality of war not through statistics and numbers, but through the eyes of human beings.

Yet Tehran surprised me in another way as well. It is a modern metropolis, with broad streets, a vibrant urban life, and people moving about in haste. Although the country has lived under sanctions for nearly forty years, life continues. I realized that impressions formed from a distance do not always match reality. ▶ Page 6



Children play on the northern shore of the Strait of Hormuz in Bandar Abbas as a column of smoke from U.S. strikes rises in the distance, July 13, 2026.

“Hormuz Belongs to Us, Not Foreigners,” Iran Says

By Mahoud M. Ravi-Nejad

TEHRAN — Iran on Monday announced a significant expansion of its retaliatory military campaign against United States forces across the Persian Gulf region, saying coordinated missile, drone, and air-defense operations targeted American military infrastructure in Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, and Oman in response to “continued US aggression against Iranian territory.”

The latest escalation marks one of the most extensive exchanges between the two countries in recent years, with Iranian officials warning that continued American military operations would invite broader retaliation while reaffirming that security in the Strait of Hormuz should remain the responsibility

The Islamic Republic has repeatedly maintained that ensuring security in the Strait of Hormuz is the sovereign responsibility of the coastal states.

of regional states rather than outside powers.

In a series of statements, the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) and the Iranian Army said the operations were launched after new US strikes on military positions and infrastructure in southern Iran, describing the attacks as violations of Iran’s sovereignty and international law.

Iranian military officials portrayed the campaign as a coordinated response carried out in multiple phases by the IRGC Aerospace Force, Ground

Force, Navy, and units of the Army, saying the operations demonstrated Tehran’s ability to strike US military assets across West Asia.

According to the IRGC, the first phase targeted Prince Hassan Air Base in Jordan, where missile and drone strikes hit fuel depots, ammunition storage facilities, and missile warehouses supporting US military operations.

The second phase focused on Sheikh Isa Air Base in Bahrain, where the Guard Corps said it struck helicopter maintenance facilities, a hangar housing a P-8 electronic warfare aircraft, and a command-and-control center used for US drone operations. ▶ Page 3

Iran vows justice for martyred leader as it balances defense and diplomacy

TEHRAN — Iran has declared that it will pursue retribution for the martyrdom of its late Leader, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, and other victims of US-Israeli aggression through every available legal, diplomatic, and judicial mechanism, while simultaneously reaffirming its readiness to defend its sovereignty and keep the door open to diplomacy.

In a weekly press briefing on Monday, Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmail Baqaei outlined the Islamic Republic’s dual-track approach to the evolving regional crisis, framing the pursuit of justice as both a national imperative and a legal obligation under international law. ▶ Page 3

Is Netanyahu headed for war as Israeli elections approach?

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – With Israel’s elections approaching, will Netanyahu’s government attempt to escape its strategic predicament by pushing forward and returning to an intense war? Or will it return to politics, seek compromises, and cooperate with more realistic initiatives?

Across all levels within the Israeli regime, there is consensus that the war ignited more than a thousand days ago remains unresolved on every front, Gaza, Lebanon, and Iran. Despite the overwhelming military might the regime has wielded, with full American backing and partnership, it has failed to secure victory or subdue the resistance to its aggression. ▶ Page 5

The story behind Zilou coverings in the martyred Leader’s office

TEHRAN – For years, viewers of official meetings and public ceremonies questioned why the floors of the Imam Khomeini Housainiya and the office of Iran’s late Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei were covered with blue-and-white Zilou floor coverings rather than precious Persian carpets.

Ayatollah Khamenei’s office, better known as Beit-e Rahbari, served as his official residence, administrative office and principal workplace from 1989 until it was damaged in an airstrike on Feb. 28, 2026.

According to Mehr news agency, people close to the Leader’s office said the use of Zilou was not based solely on personal austerity. They said the decision was also intended to support traditional Iranian craftsmanship, preserve the centuries-old weaving tradition and encourage domestic production. ▶ Page 6



From right to left: Meysam Khamenei, Mohammad Javad Mohammadi-Golpayegani, Masoud Khamenei, and Mostafa Khamenei attend the commemoration ceremony at the Great Prophet Courtyard of the holy Imam Reza Shrine in Mashhad on Monday night.

Commemoration ceremonies continue to honor martyred Leader

TEHRAN – People in Iran and several other countries continue to hold solemn mourning ceremonies for the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, marking a period of profound national grief and reflection.

As part of these widespread commemorations, a major ceremony for the martyred Leader was held on Monday, drawing vast crowds to the Golestan-e Shohada Husseinieh in the historic city of Isfahan. The event was attended by various segments of the public, local citizens, and prominent provincial officials who gathered to pay their respects and honor his legacy. ▶ Page 3

Wall Street veteran Mir Mohammad Alikhan: ‘Ayatollah Khamenei’s martyrdom united the Muslim world’



TEHRAN PAPERS

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

The shocking death of the main anti-Iranian Zionist lobbyist

Hamshahri published an analysis clarifying the political character of Lindsey Graham, the Republican senator from South Carolina, in relation to Iran. According to Hamshahri, Graham's death has left Zionist groups and anti-government Iranian activists more grief-stricken than anyone else, as he had been one of the most aggressively anti-Iranian figures in Congress for nearly two decades and never hesitated to show hostility toward the Iranian people. In recent years, he has been a staunch supporter of military action against Iran and has consistently pushed for harsher sanctions, increased political and economic pressure, and deeper security and military cooperation with Israel. In recent months, under the guise of "helping the Iranian people," he advocated expanding the scope of military strikes against Iran. His death has shocked and saddened Zionist circles most of all, because he was considered one of the regime's principal anti-Iran lobbyists within the US governing structure for roughly the past twenty years.

Etemad: Negotiation is part of war

In an article, Etemad discussed the necessity of negotiations in the midst of conflict. According to the paper, at a time when the nuclear file, sanctions pressure, regional tensions, and the risk of military miscalculation simultaneously overshadow Iran's foreign policy, the debate over negotiating with the United States has once again become a central point of political contention inside the country. Supporters of dialogue—representing a broad group of Iranians—argue that negotiation does not mean trusting Washington or normalizing relations or forgetting the blood of martyrs. Rather, it can serve as a tool to reduce the risk of war, manage crises, gain concessions, ease economic pressure, and prevent the formation of a full international consensus against Iran. In later stages, Iran could, through a durable agreement, achieve the strengthening of the Islamic Republic—an aspiration the martyred Leader considered fundamental.

Siasat-e-Rooz: Scattered clashes between Iran and the US

Siasat-e-Rooz dedicated its editorial to the causes of scattered clashes between Iran and the United States following the signing of the recent memorandum. The editorial states that the Americans attempted to create a passage for ships south of the Strait of Hormuz, within Oman's waters, in violation of the agreement. Iran, exercising its legal rights, blocked the passage of vessels, and the Strait of Hormuz is now effectively closed under the authority of Iran's armed forces. According to the paper, the limited clashes initiated by the US are intended not only to test Iran's military capabilities

in response to American attacks, but also to identify the locations and bases of Iran's armed forces for potential large-scale strikes at a later time. Senior Iranian commanders still view the situation as wartime and remain skeptical of diplomacy—though not opposed to it—because their presence on the ground gives them a clearer understanding of the realities.

Donya-e-Eqtesad: Saudi Arabia does not want its relations with Iran to deteriorate

Donya-e-Eqtesad analyzed the visit of a Saudi delegation to Tehran, writing that the visit challenges viewpoints claiming that regional relations with Iran are unrealistic and should move toward conflict and non-cooperation. Escalating tensions in the Persian Gulf would dramatically increase the cost of regional crises. The paper argues that relations between Persian Gulf states and Iran can only advance through Saudi Arabia, the region's major power. In recent years, Riyadh has sought to balance Iran, a strategy requiring a containment-based approach. Countries that advocate heightened political confrontation with Iran lack the capacity for direct confrontation; therefore, balanced political solutions must be pursued. Today, Saudi Arabia prefers to engage Iran pragmatically, without tying this engagement to interpretations related to the outcomes or conditions of a war against Iran.

Ettelaat: How long can the "patience and threat" game continue?

Ettelaat examined the uncertain dynamic of patience and threat between Iran and the United States. The paper writes that neither Tehran can endure a prolonged economic limbo accompanied by new sanctions, nor can Trump—given his campaign promises to quickly resolve international crises—remain in a state of prolonged tension. This ambiguous situation can continue only until the deadline set in the memorandum. After that, only two scenarios remain: either Washington, recognizing Iran's red lines (including arrangements in the Strait of Hormuz and halting new sanctions), takes a practical step to build trust and negotiations move toward a comprehensive agreement in Switzerland; or, if Trump insists on maximalist conditions and continues aggressive rhetoric, the memorandum collapses entirely. In the event of collapse, the region will likely enter a new phase of direct military and cyber confrontation, with consequences for financial markets and economic stability far more severe than before.

The E3's double standard: Condemning Iran, shielding the US

TEHRAN - The joint statement issued by the foreign ministers of the United Kingdom, France, and Germany (the E3) regarding the escalation in the Strait of Hormuz exposes a glaring double standard in European foreign policy. By condemning what they termed Iran's "reckless attacks" on commercial shipping and regional countries, the E3 has chosen to enforce international law selectively, completely ignoring the flagrant violations committed by the United States.

Under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, the inherent right to self-defense is a foundational tenet of international law. Iran's actions against US military installations in the region are a direct, proportional response to severe American military aggression. Over the past days, the US has conducted intensive bombing campaigns targeting southern Iran, resulting in tragic civilian casualties and massive destruction to infrastructure. Striking the bases from which these deadly assaults are launched is a legitimate exercise of territorial defense.

Furthermore, the European powers have failed to address the root cause of these renewed hostilities: Washington's unilateral breach of the recently signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This agreement, signed

by President Donald Trump to establish a formal framework for peace, was systematically upended by the resumption of aggressive US air operations and naval provocations. By treating the US disruption of a signed peace accord with total silence, the E3 demonstrates a profound hypocrisy.

The E3's statement stresses that "respect for sovereignty over territorial seas and freedom of navigation are fundamental principles of international law." Yet, by refusing to condemn US bombings that violate Iranian territorial sovereignty and slaughter civilians, the E3 signals that international rules only apply when it suits Western geopolitical interests.

True regional stability cannot be achieved through a framework of selective legalism. By shielding the United States from accountability for its blatant violations of the signed MoU and its lethal strikes on Iranian soil, the UK, France, and Germany undermine the very international law they claim to defend. For a lasting peace to be realized, European diplomacy must discard its hypocritical double standards, recognize Iran's legitimate right to defend its territory under international law, and hold Washington accountable for its reckless and destabilizing aggression.

Wall Street veteran Mir Mohammad Alikhan: 'Ayatollah Khamenei's martyrdom united the Muslim world'

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN - Mir Mohammad Alikhan, an internationally renowned investment banker and Wall Street veteran who traveled to Tehran for the funeral of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, described the massive public mourning as an unprecedented global turning point. Reflecting on the aftermath of the joint US-Israeli strikes, the former chairman of Wall Street's KMS Investment Bank office argued that the conflict has exposed deep fractures in the Washington-Tel Aviv alliance and signaled the definitive decline of US hegemony.

"It was the biggest honor for me to be here, to attend the funeral, to pay my respect and to witness what I have never witnessed before. Never in my life have I witnessed such a crowd. Grown men crying like little kids for the love of their Leader," Alikhan told the Tehran Times last week, reflecting on the Leader who was assassinated on the first day of the joint US-Israeli strikes on February 28.

Alikhan, also the author of five books and over 800 articles, stated that the world had never seen a funeral of such magnitude, noting that no comparable images exist from the past 200 years. He argued that while political gatherings can be engineered, gathering such immense crowds to genuinely mourn a deceased leader is far more profound. He added that he traveled to Iran because he firmly believes the country is on the right path.

Global and regional implications

Reflecting on the deeper geopolitical and spiritual implications of the assassination, Alikhan emphasized that the Leader's martyrdom transcended Iran's borders. He noted that Ayatollah Khamenei sacrificed his life for the entire Muslim Ummah (community), a sacrifice that has already begun to reshape global dynamics.

"I think he did not die for Iran. I think he was martyred for the entire Muslim Ummah," Alikhan observed. "I made up my mind recently, in the past month, month and a half, that Shaheed Ayatollah Ali Hussaini Khamenei knew that his martyrdom would change the world. And that is exactly what has happened."

Pointing to the massive public outpouring of grief across the country, Alikhan emphasized that these scenes directly mirrored the Iranian people's deep love, respect, and unwavering devotion to their late Leader.

"The people of Iran have shown their immense love, immense love for their Leader," he said, referring to the funeral of Ayatollah Khamenei, which was attended by millions of people.

Alikhan further expressed his belief that Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei's true stature has yet to be fully recognized by the international community. He voiced confidence that future literature, documentaries, and scholarly works will eventually introduce the Leader to the West as one of the most peaceful and influential figures of modern history.

"Slowly and slowly the world will come to see Ayatollah Khamenei's books," he explained. "Documentaries and articles will make the West realize that he was one of the most peaceful people of this century, and I don't think there was a bigger leader than him in modern history. But it's a sad thing that the world will realize this after he's gone. I would have loved to see it happen during his lifetime. Ayatollah Khamenei's martyrdom united the Muslim Ummah."

Turning his attention to the



regional impact, Alikhan stated that the tragedy has left Pakistanis deeply saddened, while simultaneously strengthening the foundational bonds between the two neighboring nations.

"I think I can speak on behalf of most Pakistanis. We are a sad nation at his demise, at his martyrdom. Pakistanis effortlessly and wholeheartedly stand with Iran," he said, adding, "And we are not just neighbors; we are brothers now. Earlier, we were just neighbors. Now the hearts of the Pakistani people meet with the Iranian people, and that is a very big thing I am saying, especially regarding the younger generation."

He further noted that the Pakistani people, much like Iranians, share a profound aversion to what he termed American "bullyism."

'Iran forced aggressors to capitulate'

Shifting the conversation to the military conflict involving the US and Israel that began on February 28, Alikhan asserted that Iran's resilience forced the aggressors into a strategic deadlock.

"I don't think that if you look at the history of American wars—from Vietnam to the Iraq war to 19 years of the Afghanistan war, or their involvement fighting in Lebanon and Syria—no other war has seen America capitulate within a matter of 90 days," Alikhan analyzed. "On the one hand, you recently had Afghanistan, where 19 years and \$1.2 trillion were wasted, and here, within 90 days, they capitulated. Where does that come from? That comes from the power of Iman (faith)."

Alikhan praised Iran's retaliatory operations during the conflict, which lasted for 39 days before being paused by a Pakistani-mediated ceasefire on April 8.

"In my view, Iran's response was very decisive, very accurate, very precise, and executed with immense courage," Alikhan stated. "It defied what the world expected based on the lies Netanyahu has sold to the Americans and to the world—that everybody in Iran would come out against the government. That didn't happen, and we all knew it wouldn't."

The conversation then turned to the devastating US missile strike on a school in the southern Iranian city of Minab on the opening day of the aggression, an attack that claimed the lives of approximately 168 people, mostly schoolchildren. US media reports have since acknowledged the site was struck by a US Tomahawk cruise missile.

Condemning the incident in the strongest terms, Alikhan argued that the targeting of a civilian educational facility pointed directly to a "genocidal" intent.

"They [the Americans] said it was a mistake; how could that be a mistake?" Alikhan questioned. "You can find the head of the IRGC in an apartment and martyr him, and on the other hand, you hit a school this big and say it was a mistake. What should I be-

lieve? Either you're incompetent, or you're genocidal."

Exposing the falsehood of the logistical error claim, Alikhan added: "How can that be a mistake? Was there an IRGC flag there? Were there tanks in the school classrooms? Were the teachers in IRGC uniforms? What was it? It's a lie. They wanted to do this."

Wall Street and Zionist influence

When asked about the background of his insights, Alikhan pointed to his extensive professional history within the upper echelons of the American financial system.

"I've spent a long time in America in a very powerful position, being the chairman and CEO of an investment bank on Wall Street," Alikhan explained. "It's a very powerful position, and I say 'powerful' with humility. I have seen the Machiavellian designs of Zionism firsthand. Not many Muslims have had the experience of fighting with Zionists in the financial world for more than a decade and a half, two decades, or two and a half decades. So, I know they do nothing by mistake."

In response to a question regarding Israel's role in pushing President Trump to launch the war against Iran, Alikhan rejected the notion that Washington acted out of sheer ignorance, emphasizing that institutional documentation on Iran is vast.

"I don't think Americans are that naive, because the American system works in such a way that the president is advised by 18 different intelligence and defense agencies, especially the Pentagon," he noted. "I am sure the Pentagon has billions of pages worth of documents on Iran and everything about the country."

However, Alikhan highlighted the financial influence of major political donors in shaping specific executive choices, pointing to a key figure behind the administration's alignment.

"President Trump received \$250 million from Miriam Adelson, one of the staunchest Zionists and AIPAC's largest donors," Alikhan said. "Miriam Adelson told Trump that he is the most Israeli-loving president. So, I think Netanyahu and Netanyahu's agencies like Mossad misled the American agencies, and he misled the president."

Despite this coordination, Alikhan pointed out that Iran's subsequent military retaliation completely disrupted Washington's calculations.

During the conflict, Iran launched roughly 100 waves of missile and drone attacks targeting Israeli assets and American bases across the Persian Gulf region. According to US media reports, these strikes dealt severe blows to US military installations and hardware, ultimately compelling Washington to seek a diplomatic pause.

"American military might is the largest in the world, and we all have to admit that," Alikhan observed. "But nobody realized the scale at which Iran would retaliate against American interests in

the region. So, I believe that yes, Netanyahu fooled them; he mis-guided the administration and the American people."

Widening rifts in the alliance

Alikhan further argued that the structural strain between Washington and Tel Aviv has caused internal political fractures that will only expand over time.

"There is a lot of rift between the two administrations right now because Netanyahu was talking against JD Vance, and Smotrich and Ben-Gvir spoke against JD Vance and Trump," Alikhan pointed out. "This is the first time I have ever seen this in my life. I have never witnessed an American vice president having to tell the Israeli prime minister that 'we are the only ally you have right now in the world.'"

According to Alikhan, these diplomatic rifts are being actively accelerated by shifting domestic views within the United States.

"This rift will widen because of the pressure that the American people will exert," Alikhan predicted. "For the first time, ordinary Americans are realizing that Washington has turned Iran into a perceived enemy solely on behalf of Israel."

Alikhan suggested that the growing volatility between Israel and its Western backers is an inevitable outcome of the political relationship itself.

"The rift will widen because it is in the nature of a Zionist that the moment you stop feeding him, he becomes a snake, bites you," Alikhan asserted. "I've dealt with this firsthand. You can feed a snake for 100 years, five times a day, but the one time you say no, it will bite you. And that is exactly what is happening now. You saw Ben-Gvir, all his ministers, and Netanyahu openly criticizing the hand that fed them."

He reminded that Israel remains profoundly tethered to American institutional infrastructure.

"The Israeli financial system is supported by Wall Street. Israeli tech innovations are supported by Silicon Valley. What is Israel without Silicon Valley support? Zero. How else do you think all these Israeli companies are listed on NASDAQ or the New York Stock Exchange?" Alikhan noted.

He emphasized that the American electorate is growing weary of underwriting foreign military campaigns, a shift he witnesses within his own professional circles.

"People are getting sick and tired of it, and once that happens, they will pull their hand back from supporting Israel," Alikhan stated. "I don't think it will happen in the next two months, five months, or even a year and a half, but it will happen slowly and gradually. My friends on Wall Street openly criticize Israel, and the average American is deeply frustrated."

Alikhan noted that America has provided \$382 billion in cumulative aid to Israel, alongside roughly \$8 billion in annual cash and military assistance. "But that is \$8 billion too much in the eyes of everyday Americans," he added. "Why are we giving it to them while they are killing people in Palestine?"

These observations align with recent public data, including an AP-NORC poll showing that US public opinion toward Israel has grown increasingly negative, particularly among Democrats critical of the military campaign in Gaza. Similarly, a Gallup poll tracking long-term trends found that for the first time in over two decades, more Americans expressed sympathy with Palestinians than with Israelis, marking a 41 percent to 36 percent shift.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

“Hormuz belongs to us, not foreigners,” Iran says

By Mahoud M. Ravi-Nejad

TEHRAN — Iran on Monday announced a significant expansion of its retaliatory military campaign against United States forces across the Persian Gulf region, saying coordinated missile, drone, and air-defense operations targeted American military infrastructure in Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, and Oman in response to “continued US aggression against Iranian territory.”

The latest escalation marks one of the most extensive exchanges between the two countries in recent years, with Iranian officials warning that continued American military operations would invite broader retaliation while reaffirming that security in the Strait of Hormuz should remain the responsibility of regional states rather than outside powers.

In a series of statements, the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) and the Iranian Army said the operations were launched after new US strikes on military positions and infrastructure in southern Iran, describing the attacks as violations of Iran’s sovereignty and international law.

Iranian military officials portrayed the campaign as a coordinated response carried out in multiple phases by the IRGC Aerospace Force, Ground Force, Navy, and units of the Army, saying the operations demonstrated Tehran’s ability to strike US military assets across West Asia.

According to the IRGC, the first phase targeted Prince Hassan Air Base in Jordan, where missile and drone strikes hit fuel depots, ammunition storage facilities, and missile warehouses supporting US military operations.

The second phase focused on Sheikh Isa Air Base in Bahrain, where the Guard Corps said it struck helicopter maintenance facilities, a hangar housing a P-8 electronic warfare aircraft, and a command-and-control center used for US drone operations.

Subsequent phases shifted toward Kuwait, where the IRGC announced that it had destroyed a US HIMARS missile base, while the Iranian Army announced separate drone attacks against locations hosting American personnel, air defense systems, missile batteries, and logistical facilities.

Iran later said the campaign expanded to Oman, where the IRGC Navy reported coordinated missile and drone strikes against American long-range air-surveillance and maritime detection radar sys-



tems. The force also announced additional attacks on US military facilities in Bahrain, saying fires broke out following the strikes.

Air defenses activated

Alongside its offensive operations, Iran’s integrated air-defense network intercepted and destroyed a hostile US drone over the southern port city of Bandar Abbas, using a surface-to-air missile.

The announcement came a day after the IRGC said one of its newly deployed air-defense systems had intercepted a US cruise missile near Khorramabad.

Iranian commanders said the interceptions demonstrated the continued effectiveness of the country’s layered air-defense capabilities despite ongoing US military operations.

Strait of Hormuz emerges as central flashpoint

The Strait of Hormuz has become the principal arena of the latest confrontation.

Iranian officials said the escalation began after the IRGC Navy intercepted two vessels that had switched off their tracking systems and attempted to transit the strategic waterway through unauthorized routes.

The vessels posed a threat to maritime safety. At the same time, subsequent US military strikes against Iranian coastal positions were an unlawful response to Iran’s maritime enforcement measures.

Iran has repeatedly maintained that ensuring security in the Strait of Hormuz is the sovereign responsibility of the coastal states and that the presence of foreign military forces has become the principal source of instability in the waterway.

The IRGC reiterated on Monday that restoring normal commercial shipping depends on the cessation of US military intervention in the Strait and respect for the sov-

eighty of regional countries over their territorial waters.

It warned that continued foreign military interference could have broader consequences for global oil and gas markets.

Trump advocates US control of waterway

The military developments coincided with fresh remarks by US President Donald Trump, who suggested that Washington should assume long-term control over the Strait of Hormuz.

Speaking in a telephone interview with Fox News on Monday, Trump said the United States would likely “take over” the Strait and become its “guardian,” claiming that other countries benefiting from the waterway should compensate Washington financially for protecting maritime traffic.

“We’re going to keep the strait, and we’ll probably run it,” Trump said. “We’re going to guard it, and we’re going to get paid for guarding it.”

Trump also claimed that Iran has been repeatedly violating previous agreements, saying Washington would respond forcefully to Tehran’s actions and insisting that the United States could not be expected to secure international shipping without financial reimbursement from allied countries.

His remarks came as Iran continued to suspend navigation through the Strait of Hormuz following “unauthorized vessel movements” that threatened maritime safety.

Trump’s comments reinforce longstanding Iranian concerns that the United States seeks to establish a permanent military role in one of the region’s most strategic waterways.

Iranian officials argue that such statements confirm Washington’s intention to expand its military presence rather than contribute to regional stability, insisting that maritime security should be managed exclusively by the countries

bordering the Persian Gulf.

Iran’s Armed Forces, including the IRGC, on Monday reaffirmed that Tehran will not allow the United States to interfere in the management of the Strait of Hormuz, warning that any regional support for Washington’s military activities would be regarded as an act of hostility against Tehran.

Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters spokesperson Colonel Ebrahim Zolfaqari said repeated US efforts to intervene in the strategic waterway had endangered regional security, international trade, and the safe passage of commercial vessels and oil tankers.

Zolfaqari warned that any logistical or military cooperation by regional countries with US forces would be considered an act of war against Iran.

Separately, IRGC spokesperson Brigadier General Hossein Mohebbi said the United States had seriously jeopardized global oil and gas security through its intervention in the Strait of Hormuz, stressing that Iran would continue to exercise its sovereignty and maintain control over the strategic waterway with “strength and determination.”

Mohebbi added that Iran would compel foreign powers to respect the will of the Iranian nation, asserting that previous US objectives regarding the Strait had already been thwarted and warning that any further attempts to challenge Iran’s position would end in greater failure for Washington.

Escalation raises regional stakes

The widening exchange of missiles, drones, and air strikes has heightened fears of a broader regional conflict involving several Persian Gulf states hosting US military installations.

Iranian officials have emphasized that their military campaign targets American military infrastructure involved in attacks against the Islamic Republic, while warning that any continuation of US operations would trigger more comprehensive retaliatory measures.

With military exchanges now extending across Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, and Oman, and with competing narratives emerging over the future security architecture of the Strait of Hormuz, the confrontation has entered a more complicated phase that threatens not only regional stability but also global energy markets and international maritime trade.

LATEST NEWS

Foreign Ministry supports pilgrims’ consular, diplomatic affairs

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has reiterated that the ministry is prepared to support and follow up on consular and diplomatic matters concerning Iranian Hajj pilgrims.

During a meeting with Alireza Rashidian, the Head of Iran’s Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization on Monday, Araghchi emphasized the importance of coordination among relevant organizations to facilitate the affairs of Hajj pilgrims.

The officials further discussed and exchanged views on the latest planning and coordination processes for the Hajj and pilgrimage sector to provide the best possible services to Iranian pilgrims.

No action against Iran should remain unanswered: Official

Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi reiterates that every act of aggression against Iran will be met with a response, stressing that no hostile move can go unpunished.

Kazem Gharibabadi made the remarks early Tuesday morning on his official X (formerly Twitter) account, in a post that signals Tehran’s heightened vigilance amid ongoing regional tensions.

Continuation of the strategy of crushing response to any military aggression against the

country is essential, he said.

It is necessary that the Supreme National Security Council (SNCS) or the Parliament approve an operational resolution stipulating a decisive and regret-inducing response by the system in the event of any assassination attempt against the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, military, or civilian officials, he added.

AEOI dismisses reports of attack on Bushehr nuclear power plant

The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) has dismissed reports claiming that the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant was attacked, stating that the facility remains safe and fully operational.

In a statement issued on Sunday, the AEOI rejected allegations circulating on social media that parts of the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant had been targeted.

“The Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant remains in a completely normal, safe, and stable condition, and all of its units and facilities are operating continuously in accordance with established safety and operational standards,” the statement said.

Analyst: Low-cost warfare gives Iran the strategic edge

The reason why the US-Iran agreement has failed is down to the economics of war, says Patrick Bury, a senior lecturer in security studies at the University of Bath.

“As long as Iran has these low-cost weapons such as cheap drones there is an asymmetry between the costs it can impose on global oil traffic versus the price of the US retaliatory cost on Iran,” Bury told Al Jazeera.

“Whenever the Iranians don’t like some development or what they consider to be a violation of the MoU – for example this new shipping route that most of the ships were trying to sail through closer to the Gulf and Oman, rather than the Iranian coastline – Tehran can impose costs by attacking vessels,” he said.

At least 2 killed in US strikes on Iran’s Abadan

US missiles hit three locations in the city of Abadan in the western province of Khuzestan.

Mehr news agency, quoting the deputy governor, reported the attack took place at 1:45pm (09:45 GMT).

At least two unidentified people were killed and three wounded in the attack, it said.

Memorial ceremony for Iran’s martyred Leader held in Hungary

A commemoration ceremony was held at the Iranian embassy in Budapest, Hungary, to honor the martyrdom of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the late leader of the Islamic Revolution.

A mourning ceremony for the martyred Leader and his family was held in Hungary, attended by Iranians residing there.

Iran vows justice for martyred leader as it balances defense and diplomacy



From Page 1 ▶

‘No statute of limitations’ for war crimes

Baqaei emphasized that the atrocities committed during the 40-day US-Israeli war of aggression against Iran represent crimes that are not subject to any statute of limitations. He stressed that combating impunity for war criminals is a well-established principle of international jurisprudence, and that holding perpetrators accountable is a political, moral, and legal duty.

“The pursuit of justice and revenge for the martyred Leader and every single martyr who fell during the US and Israeli attacks is a serious national demand,” Baqaei told reporters.

The spokesman confirmed that the Foreign Ministry is actively engaged in a broader national effort to bring those responsible to justice and will deploy all available international legal and diplomatic means to achieve that end. Domestically, he added, significant judicial measures are being pursued, including the filing of lawsuits on behalf of the families of those martyred or injured during the attacks.

Baqaei’s remarks came just days after the funeral and burial ceremonies of Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, following which his successor, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, declared that avenging the blood of the martyred leader and all those martyred in the recent conflicts had become an irreversible national commitment.

Defense without aggression

On the security front, Baqaei reiterated that Iran has never attacked any country in the region and has no intention of doing so. He clarified that Iranian military operations have been strictly limited to US military facilities used to launch attacks against the Islamic Republic.

“We have not attacked, and will not attack, any country in the region,” Baqaei stated, urging observers to “use words precisely.”

The spokesman said Tehran has repeatedly

called on neighboring states not to permit the United States or the Israeli regime to use their territory for military operations against Iran, describing such restraint as an obligation under international law. He warned that any part of the region used as a platform for aggression against Iran “will be subject to Iran’s defensive measures.”

Regional security without foreign interference

Addressing US claims regarding the escort of commercial vessels through the Strait of Hormuz, Baqaei asserted that lasting security in the strategic waterway can only be achieved through regional cooperation—without the presence of foreign powers.

“Our principled policy is that the region will not become secure unless the regional countries establish their own security mechanisms without foreign interference,” he said, arguing that recent instability in West Asia has been fueled by the continued US military presence.

He reiterated that Iran will not allow the Strait of Hormuz to become a base for threats against its national interests, and denounced Washington for obstructing Tehran’s sincere efforts to ensure safe maritime navigation.

The art of strategic choice

On the prospects for diplomacy, Baqaei emphasized that the rapidly evolving regional situation demands flexibility in selecting the most effective means of safeguarding Iran’s interests.

“The art is to choose the best method to help secure our national interests,” he said. “Where circumstances require, we use the war, and where circumstances require, we use the diplomacy.”

With both a firm commitment to justice and a pragmatic openness to dialogue, Iran appears to be charting a calculated course through one of the most volatile periods in recent regional history—one that balances the imperative of national honor against the exigencies of realpolitik.

Commemoration ceremonies continue to honor martyred Leader

From Page 1 ▶ Simultaneously, another significant commemoration ceremony was held on Monday night at the holy Imam Reza Shrine in Mashhad, the final resting place of the late Leader. This gathering at the holy shrine held a particularly deep spiritual resonance, drawing massive crowds of pilgrims and residents from across Khorasan province. In Mashhad, the late Leader’s sons were present at the shrine, standing alongside high-ranking religious scholars and local officials to receive condolences from the sea of mourners gathered within the illuminated courtyards.

These concurrent gatherings in Isfahan and Mashhad reflect the broader, massive funeral and burial ceremonies that have gripped the nation over the past two weeks. Earlier this month, millions of mourners initially poured into the streets of Tehran for the primary funeral processions, creating an unprecedented sea of black as the public bid farewell to their longtime Leader. The ceremonies then extended across borders, with historic processions passing through the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala in Iraq, where millions of pilgrims lined the streets to offer

prayers. The late Leader was ultimately laid to rest in a highly emotional burial ceremony at the holy Imam Reza Shrine on Thursday, an event that drew dignitaries from across the region and marked the conclusion of the official state mourning period.

Though the central burial has concluded, the atmosphere at both the Golestan-e Shohada Husseinieh in Isfahan and the Imam Reza Shrine in Mashhad demonstrated that the impact of his passing remains fresh. Inside the crowded halls and courtyards, the rhythmic chanting of traditional elegies filled the air as speakers recounted Ayatollah Khamenei’s decades-long leadership and emphasized the themes of resilience, spiritual steadfastness, and unity moving forward. For the provincial officials and everyday citizens packed into these sacred spaces alongside the late Leader’s family, the concurrent ceremonies served as both a deeply personal farewell and a collective pledge of continuity during a momentous transition for the country. Ayatollah Khamenei was assassinated on the first day of the US and Israeli war on February 28.

Martyr Leader’s economic thoughts in housing sector

TEHRAN- The head of the Think Tank of Intelligent Governance, referring to the importance of revisiting the economic thoughts of the Martyr Leader of the Revolution, said: Housing is one of the topics to which the Martyr Leader always paid special attention.

According to the Mehr News Agency, Seyyed Taha Hossein Madani added: In this regard, the General Policies of the System on Housing Affairs, which were communicated by the Martyr Leader, can be considered a general outline of the housing issue in his thought, as well as a roadmap for executive, legislative, and supervisory bodies, and the system’s policy and direction in this area.

Outlining policy in housing sector

The head of the Think Tank of Intelligent Governance continued: The issues included in this policy encompass matters such as land management for housing supply and urban and rural development within the framework of land capacity and urban planning policies and regulations and national development and construction plans, the creation and development of new cities, the revitalization of deteriorated urban and rural textures through efficient methods, government planning to provide housing for low-income and needy groups, support for the establishment and strengthening of charitable institutions and popular initiatives to provide housing for underprivileged strata, comprehensive planning to improve the rural housing situation with priority given to areas vulnerable to natural disasters and in accordance with local characteristics, the establishment and reform of the tax system and the creation of a land and housing database, support for the production of mass and industrial housing plans, making construction standards, national building regulations, and energy-saving plans mandatory, observing cultural values and preserving the dignity and prestige of the family in housing architecture, and strengthening research and elevating the level of scientific knowledge in the housing field.

Housing in words of Martyr Leader

Madani noted: In addition to these General Policies communicated by him, the issue of housing has been the focus of the Martyr Leader of the Revolution in his remarks over recent years. In one of his speeches, he stated: “Those in charge of housing affairs must increase their efforts to produce as much housing as possible at reasonable prices, especially for the low-income classes of society, because this is an important and necessary measure on the path to the country’s development and construction.”

He added: The Martyr Leader of the Revolution also stated in another speech: “We are very behind in the housing issue, and you can see the results: house prices and rents are exorbitant, and people are truly suffering. One of the definite priorities in economic issues is the housing sector.”

The head of the Think Tank of Intelligent Governance noted: Ayatollah Khamenei also said about the housing issue: “In the category of social issues and others, housing is a seriously important and key issue; in the household expenditure basket, housing has a very large share, and the housing issue is very important.”

Madani added: Apart from the Martyr Leader’s emphasis and his demand for movement toward improving this challenge, he considered housing one of the drivers of the economy and stated in a speech: “One point in the economic issue is paying attention to the driving sectors of the economy. Some sectors are truly driving. For example, suppose the housing sector – which experts say if the housing sector gets going, numerous other sectors will get going – or important industries such as the steel industry, the automotive industry, energy and petrochemical sectors, and the like, when they become operational, they have a driving aspect; these must be set in motion, and in these sectors, especially, coordination among those in charge is very important.”

Emphasis on reducing government involvement and increasing supervision

The head of the Think Tank of Intelligent Governance, referring to the Martyr Leader’s emphasis on reducing government involvement in economic affairs, stated: In his New Year’s speech in 2023, at the gathering of pilgrims and visitors at the holy shrine of Imam Reza, he declared: “Important sectors of the



economy should be in the hands of the people. We have repeated many times that state-owned enterprises, government companies, and semi-government companies should not compete with private enterprises, and let the people carry out production. The government should reduce its involvement and increase supervision; reduce intervention and increase supervision.”

He noted: This demand of the Martyr Leader can also be extended to the housing sector, because the experience of direct government intervention in housing construction shows that the entry of large state-owned and semi-state-owned companies into the construction sector has disrupted this vast and important market. Therefore, the government’s role in the housing sector should be defined as facilitating, providing the grounds, and carrying out precise supervision to prevent the deviation of resources.

General overview of country’s housing economy

The head of the Think Tank of Intelligent Governance added: Considering the status of housing in the thought of the Martyr Leader, the General Policies communicated by him, the transformation of housing from an economic issue into a socio-economic mega-challenge, and the role and responsibility of scientific and research institutions in helping to solve this mega-challenge, the Think Tank of Intelligent Governance over the past few years has made its proposals available to the responsible institutions and public opinion to reduce the scope of this problem.

Madani then presented a general picture of the housing situation in the country and stated: According to the latest statistics, the country’s housing market faces 5 to 6 million accumulated demands. Also, the number of deteriorated and in-need-of-reconstruction units is estimated at about 8 million units. Thus, to achieve balance in supply and demand, the country needs to construct 1.5 million new residential units annually, and if this target is not met, the housing sector imbalance will double by 2031, reaching 12 million units.

The head of the Think Tank of Intelligent Governance noted: Weakness in financing and the low speed of implementing mass-construction projects compared to inflation are among the most important factors for the accumulation of demand in the housing market. Although efforts have been made to address these challenges through instruments such as the Building Pre-Sale Law and gradual purchase models, due to the lack of specialized scientific and research institutions, these legal capacities have not been able to have a significant impact on the housing economy.

Madani noted: In conclusion, it must be said that the housing issue in Iran has gone beyond a merely civil engineering challenge and has become a socio-economic mega-challenge rooted in supply shortages, a weak financing system, inefficiency of some executive mechanisms, and inflationary pressures. In this framework, considering the General Policies communicated by the Martyr Leader of the Revolution and his demands in the housing sector, the path to balancing the market can be paved with a set of combined policies, including precise differentiation of demand types and focusing support on needy groups, along with reducing government involvement and increasing its supervisory role, reforming key laws such as pre-sales, targeted use of government lands, developing modern financing instruments, utilizing data, technology, and precise decision-making, and strengthening private and popular sector participation.

The head of the Think Tank of Intelligent Governance said in conclusion: Special attention to the recommendations of the Martyr Leader and, subsequently, the statements of the third Leader of the Revolution, can certainly be instrumental in improving the country’s housing situation.

Tehran, Moscow agree to fast-track removal of energy co-op obstacles

TEHRAN- The Russian Energy Minister has announced that Tehran and Moscow have agreed to accelerate the removal of obstacles to cooperation between companies of the two countries, stating that despite special circumstances and recent developments, the results of joint cooperation in the energy sector have been satisfactory.

According to SHANA, Sergei Tsilyov, speaking on Monday, July 13, on the sidelines of his meeting with Mohsen Paknejad, Iran’s Oil Minister, referred to the close and continuous relations between the two sides and stated: “We hold regular meetings with Iran’s Oil Minister, and very positive working relations exist between the two countries.”

He added: “In this meeting, the implementation process of agreements reached at the 19th Joint Economic Cooperation Committee between Iran and Russia, held in February in Tehran, was reviewed, and reports from representatives of companies from both countries were presented, with important decisions made on each issue.”

The Russian Energy Minister, stating that they also agreed to pursue and resolve all issues and questions of Iranian and Russian companies in the shortest possible time, emphasized: “We hope that in the near future, Iran’s Oil Minister will also travel to Moscow so that the cooperation process can con-



tinue with greater speed.”

Tsilyov, emphasizing the satisfaction of both sides with the co-operation process, said: “Despite all events and special circumstances that have occurred in recent months, today we reached a joint decision and expressed satisfaction with the results of the activities of companies from both countries.”

Regarding damage to part of Russia’s energy infrastructure, he also stated: “As mentioned, some energy infrastructure and especially Russian refining facilities have been targeted contrary to international conventions and protocols, but now, relying on domestic capabilities, we are trying to fully supply the market’s need for gasoline and ensure all needs of the Russian people are met.”

Tehran and Moscow close to finalizing gas trade agreement

Iran Oil Minister has announced

progress in gas trade negotiations between Iran and Russia and Tehran’s demand from Moscow to accelerate its implementation process, stating that the main clauses of the final gas trade agreement between Iran and Russia have been concluded, and planning for finalization in the shortest possible time has been made.

According to SHANA, Mohsen Paknejad, speaking on Monday, July 13, on the sidelines of his meeting with Sergei Tsilyov, Russia’s Energy Minister, referred to the meeting as a continuation of previous consultations between the two sides and stated: “In this meeting, the implementation process of understandings reached at the 19th session of the Joint Economic Cooperation Committee between Iran and Russia, held in February last year, was reviewed, and the progress of implementing 146 agreed clauses

between the two countries was assessed.”

He added: “In this meeting, obstacles to the implementation of understandings were examined, solutions for their removal were summarized, and it was decided that necessary follow-ups for implementing the adopted decisions would be carried out.”

Paknejad, stating that the development of energy cooperation was among the most important axes of the negotiations, emphasized: “The issue of investment by Russian companies in Iran’s oil and gas fields was reviewed, and solutions were developed for some existing problems, the implementation of which has been placed on the agenda.”

The Oil Minister stressed: “One of the most important issues of this meeting was gas trade between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation—a matter whose negotiations have made significant progress over recent months.”

Referring to Tehran’s demand from Moscow to accelerate the signing of the final gas trade agreement between the two countries, he emphasized: “Agreement has been reached on the main clauses of this contract, and only two clauses remain that require supplementary negotiations, which we hope will be finalized in the near future.”

Tehran hosting intl. exhibit of detergent, cosmetic, cellulose products

TEHRAN- The 33rd International Exhibition of Detergent, Hygienic, Cellulose and Related Industries (Beauty & Clean) has commenced its work at the Tehran Permanent International Fairground with the participation of over 160 domestic and foreign companies.

According to IRNA, this edition of the exhibition, which will run for four days, showcases the latest achievements, technologies, products, and services of the detergent, cosmetic, hygienic, cellulose industry, and related machinery for industry professionals, specialists, traders, and enthusiasts.

At this exhibition, participating companies are presenting their newest productions and technologies in the fields of detergents and cleaning products, cosmetic and hygienic products, cellulose products, raw and intermediate materials, machinery, equipment, production lines, and related specialized services.

Alireza Kiani, head of the Iran Detergent, Hygienic and Cosmetic Industries Association, stated at the exhibition’s opening ceremony, referring to measures taken to secure raw materials for the detergent industry under current conditions: “At present, there is no shortage in the production of detergent products, and the market has achieved stability.”

Noting that part of the raw materials for this industry is supplied through the petrochemical chain, he emphasized: “What is fundamentally important for the detergent industry is the continued access to raw materials, stability in the currency allocation process, and facilitation of supply procedures so that producers can oper-

ate with more precise planning.”

Kiani stated: “Due to its direct connection with the household consumption basket, this industry holds particular importance, and through the efforts made, the supply of raw materials needed by production units is in an acceptable condition.”

He added: “Despite the problems and limitations that existed in recent months in various areas, especially in the currency supply and some raw materials sectors, conditions have been managed over the past three months in such a way that producers have been able to continue their production process without serious shortages. Accordingly, no shortage is currently observed in the country in the production of detergent products.”

The head of the Detergent Industries Association, referring to the prioritization established for industrial currency allocation, said: “Including raw materials for the detergent industry among the main priorities has been a necessary and effective decision, because this industry both plays a role in public health and hygiene and has a significant share in supplying high-consumption household goods.”

He added: “In a situation where different levels of currency priority have been defined for various commodity and tariff groups, producers expect that for vital and essential industries—especially those directly related to people’s needs—currency supply should be pursued with greater continuity and speed.”

The head of the Iran Detergent, Hygienic and

Cosmetic Industries Association, welcoming the government’s new policies in the currency supply sector, stated: “Facilitating the use of export proceeds—whether from one’s own exports, others’ exports, one’s own deposits, or others’ deposits—can resolve part of producers’ problems and create greater flexibility in meeting the needs of industrial units.”

He said: “Providing the possibility of using export proceeds through the Comprehensive Trade System is a positive step to support production, and it is expected that the infrastructure for other currency supply methods will also be implemented as soon as possible so that production units can meet their needs with greater ease.”

The head of the Detergent Industries Association emphasized: “The detergent industry, like many other production sectors in the country, faces challenges, but through proper interaction among producers, the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade, the Central Bank, and other relevant bodies, these problems can be managed at the lowest possible cost.”

He noted: “The most important issue for activists in this industry is maintaining production continuity, preventing shortages in the market, and ensuring stable supply to consumers, and we hope this process continues with strength in the coming months.”

The 33rd International Exhibition of Iran Beauty & Clean, from July 13 to 16, is open daily from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM at the Tehran Permanent International Fairground, welcoming industry professionals, producers, specialists, traders, and enthusiasts.

Cabinet approves support for war-affected businesses

TEHRAN- Support for war-affected economic enterprises, assistance for the resilience of business owners, and protection of existing employment were approved in the Cabinet meeting.

According to IRNA, in the Cabinet meeting on Sunday, July 12, the Ministries of Health, Treatment and Medical Education and of Agriculture were tasked with prepar-

ing, within one week from the date of notification of this approval, the list of customs tariff codes for basic goods and medicines to apply exemption from paying twelve per thousand of the customs value, and to communicate it to the Customs Administration of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Amendment of the approval regarding the method of spend-

ing resources under Clause (15) of the national budget law for the year 1404 (2025-2026) to support war-affected economic enterprises, assist the resilience of business owners, and protect existing employment was among other issues approved in the Cabinet meeting.

Measures related to strengthening and continuing health-oriented services were also proposed

and approved in this meeting.

Also, in the meeting of the Council of Ministers, a permit was issued for referring certain disputes arising from the execution or interpretation of contracts related to development projects of executive bodies with contractors and consultants to arbitration by the Supreme Technical Council and the Provincial Technical Councils.

Tourism Bank ranked among Iran’s top 5 banks under CAMELS assessment Banking system evaluation based on international indicators

TEHRAN – Tourism Bank has secured a position among Iran’s top five banks based on the internationally recognized CAMELS assessment model, underscoring the institution’s financial strength and stability.

According to the latest evaluations:

Top 5 Ranking

Tourism Bank positioned among leading financial institutions based on key financial ratios and risk management.

Return on Equity

Tourism Bank achieved second place in Return on Equity (ROE) among all listed banks



and credit institutions on the Tehran Stock Exchange, highlighting its superior profitability performance.

Tier 1 Capital

Furthermore, the bank secured fourth place in Tier 1 Capital, demonstrating exceptionally high financial capacity and capital strength.

CAMELS Assessment

The bank’s strong performance, financial health and stability based on one of the most credible global standards, confirms its position among the country’s leading financial institutions.

Tourism Bank’s achievement in the CAMELS assessment is expected to further enhance depositor and investor confidence, reinforcing the bank’s reputation as a stable and reliable player in Iran’s banking sector.

Yemen's air siege was bravely broken despite Saudi bombardment

Hostile Saudi warplanes fail to stop a historic civilian lifeline

From page 1 ► The commercial aircraft touched down safely at Al-Hudaydah International Airport, marking a victory for the Resistance Front and delivering a shattering blow to the aggressors.

For years, the Saudi-led aggression maintained a draconian blockade that caused mass starvation and the tragic death of countless innocent civilians denied medical supplies.

Riyadh has weaponized the skies to collectively punish a proud nation.

But now, what is done is done. The arrow has left the bow.

A miracle of defiance in the skies

The dramatic breakthrough unfolded as the civilian airliner approached Sanaa International Airport.

In a desperate bid to preserve their crumbling embargo, hostile Saudi warplanes launched six consecutive airstrikes, cratering the runway and sending plumes of smoke over the capital.

Faced with a ruined landing strip and looming aerial threats, the pilot executed a series of evasive maneuvers, charting an unprecedented zigzag route through hostile skies.

A passenger aboard the flight captured the raw defiance of the moment in a broadcast recorded immediately after touchdown.

"We are reporting now at the exact moment of our arrival at Al-Hudaydah airport and the landing of the plane," the passenger stated.

"This flight was one of Yemen's miracles, a struggle for the sake of Allah, and a challenge that overcame land, air, and sea obstacles. It took an unprecedented zigzag path with tight turns that no commercial flight has ever entered before. We were informed in the air that a number of



raids targeted Hudaydah, but nothing broke us."

The passenger made it clear that the criminal siege would no longer be tolerated, declaring the end of the de-escalation phase.

"They [Saudi Arabia] started the aggression and they bear the responsibility. We cannot accept being besieged by the Americans and Israelis via the Saudis. Even if it means war, even if we are martyred in the path of Allah, we will not back down from breaking the siege. We thank the Islamic Republic [of Iran], which stands alongside the Yemeni people and sends aircraft. These flights will continue, and we will not retreat until the siege is broken and all Yemeni lands are liberated."

Shattering the truce and the right to respond

The political and military fallout from this cowardly attack has unfolded rapidly.

Fearing consequences from its reckless warmongering, Saudi Arabia attempted to escape accountability by shifting blame to local mercenary proxies, who absurdly claimed responsibility for airstrikes they cannot execute.

Ansarullah sees through this pathetic facade.

Yemeni Armed Forces spokesman Brigadier General Yahya Saree announced that the air blockade has been decisively smashed and that direct flights between Sanaa and Tehran will continue regardless of the consequences.

Saree warned "the criminal Saudi enemy" that any renewed aggression would be met with a comprehensive response targeting their airports and vital ground and maritime facilities.

He also said that Saudi Arabia ended "the de-escalation phase" and bears "full responsibility for the consequences of its aggression." "This aggression will not go unanswered or unpunished," Saree warned.

Ansarullah holds a clear, legitimate right to respond to this blatant violation of national sovereignty.

Political bureau member Hizam al-Assad reinforced this doctrine of deterrence, declaring an eye for an eye, an airport for an airport, and a plane for a plane, warning that future Saudi aggression will completely paralyze the kingdom's aviation network.

Nationwide mobilization and available options

This aerial triumph does not stand in a vacuum. It represents a vital

component of a comprehensive Yemeni decision to decisively break both the aerial and naval blockades, liberate all occupied territories, and permanently expel foreign forces from the homeland.

Ansarullah leader Sayyid Abdul Malik Al-Houthi has issued a decree of general mobilization, placing hundreds of thousands of tribal forces and the regular army on full military alert.

Massive armed gatherings have swept northern provinces like Sana'a, Al-Hodeidah, Dhamar, Hajjah, and Amran, where the Uzr tribes recently declared their absolute readiness to purge the country of occupiers.

Within this grand strategy, different levers of power are converging to dismantle the enemy's coercive matrix.

Sanaa's strategic options are not theoretical; the leadership retains the undeniable leverage to hit southern Saudi airfields and shut down critical infrastructure hubs inside Riyadh itself.

Meanwhile, lifting the suffocating naval blockade relies on the readily available option of blocking the strategic Bab al-Mandab Strait to all enemy maritime traffic, effectively paralyzing the aggressors' economic lifelines at sea.

Ultimately, the liberation of Yemen is actively manifesting through this massive mobilization of grassroots and military forces.

Riyadh must immediately halt its horrendous aggression, abandon its short-sighted warmongering miscalculations, and stop blindly aligning itself with the hostile geopolitical interests of Washington and Tel Aviv.



tory," aiming to win the upcoming election. This is regardless of the regime's internal and external strategic dilemmas caused by closing the door on diplomacy and rejecting compromise tracks. However, within various Israeli research centers and circles, alternative thinking is emerging.

Many now view the current political and battlefield impasse as a strategic dead end from which Israel must exit through the gateway of politics, not the beating of war drums.

A number of Israeli researchers and analysts argue that the current crisis management is dictated by Netanyahu's short-term tactical policies, tied primarily to his electoral prospects.

They highlight that he shows little interest in building regional pathways that would afford the regime political and economic advantages, even through the expansion of the so-called "Abraham Accords". This is provided the government agrees to end the war on all fronts, withdraw from occupied territories, and initiate comprehensive regional political processes.

Such tracks, they contend, would serve the Zionist regime and deliver more than it has achieved through years of initiating wars.

At this stage, Netanyahu will

not listen to anyone discussing ways out of the current crisis or a transition from military and political stagnation to a phase of overcoming the crisis facing the regime and creating long-term strategic courses of action.

Diplomatic options hold no appeal for him, and he will not waste time or effort examining them, because they would simply cost him the upcoming election, owing to their unpopularity with his far-right electoral base.

Netanyahu's options until the elections in October will likely remain limited to efforts to escalate the military situation on various fronts. He will deploy all his tools, skills, and intelligence assets to convince Trump during their upcoming White House meeting to abandon any form of negotiations with Iran, by leveling false accusations of non-compliance by Tehran.

He will also seek Trump's approval to expand the scope of aggression on Lebanon, including the southern suburbs of Beirut. If Trump maintains any diplomatic track with Iran alongside controlled military aggression, Netanyahu will intensify his efforts to pressure Trump into giving him cover to resume a large-scale war in Gaza, under the pretext of disarming Palestinian resistance forces. This will essentially take the regime back to square one.

INTERNATIONAL

JULY 14, 2026

Straight Truth

TEHRAN TIMES

5

Demon has gone to hell, Netanyahu and Trump are next

Lindsey Graham spent his entire life selling his soul for dirty money

From page 1 ► Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, a man who is wanted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza, is now mourning Graham's death. He had said, "Lindsey is a great friend of Israel and a cherished friend of mine". Now, he said Israel lost "one of its greatest friends". Of course, it is natural that Netanyahu is sad. He has lost his biggest supporter in America. Graham helped him kill Palestinian commit genocide in the Gaza Strip.

The people of Gaza and Lebanon will never forget who this terrorist in a suit really was. He was an accomplice in the massacre of 168 innocent schoolchildren and teachers in Minab, southern Iran, on the first hours of the February U.S.-Israeli war on Iran. He stood on American television with that ugly smirk and said: "We're killing all the right people" in Iran. He indirectly suggested that the schoolchildren in Minab were the "right people" to kill. He was a bloodthirsty monster who worshipped the Zionist regime.

He spent his entire life selling his soul for dirty money. All those mansions, luxury cars, and the power he wielded are now nothing but memories. He left this world just like every other tyrant before him. And now his dear friend Benjamin Netanyahu is crying over his dead bulldog. The criminal prime minister has lost his loudest voice in Washington. But the people of Gaza know that Netanyahu is next. They all fall eventually.

In Iran, people are happy today. This is the joy of the Iranian people seeing an enemy fall. Iranian media mocked the dead senator. Tasnim News Agency said Graham "dies, taking the destruction of Iran to the grave". Professor Seyed Mohammad Marandi from Tehran University said, "It's a shame. I wanted him to see oil prices on Monday before he went to hell". The Iranian people know that Graham was one of the biggest advocates of the war against their country.

Lindsey Graham ran against Donald Trump in the Republican primary during the 2016 presidential election. He officially announced his candidacy on June 1, 2015, but he struggled to gain traction in the crowded field and ultimately suspended his campaign on December 21, 2015. Graham was critical of Trump during the primary season, but he later supported him in the general election.

And what about Donald Trump? During the 2016 presidential elections, Graham ran against Trump in the Republican primary, the same Trump who surrounded himself with filth like Jeffrey Epstein, the notoriously sex offender who died in his cell. They are all the same rotten circle demons who feast on the blood of Muslims while pretending to be righteous.

UN warns 825,000 children in Sudan face severe malnutrition

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has warned that an estimated 825,000 children under the age of five in Sudan are expected to suffer from severe malnutrition in 2026, placing them at high risk of death without timely treatment.

The warning comes as Sudan's humanitarian crisis continues to worsen amid the conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which has been ongoing since April 2023.

According to the UN, the conflict has caused widespread displacement, disrupted essential services, and significantly increased humanitarian needs across the country.

In its report, OCHA described the situation for Sudanese children as among the worst in the world, with millions affected by violence, hunger, and the collapse of basic services.

The agency estimated that approximately 825,000 children under five will experience



Graham wanted to turn Iran to glass. He wanted to burn that country to ashes. He promised Netanyahu he would destroy the country. But look at him now. Now, Graham's tongue is being silenced, the same tongue that once praised the killing of innocent people in Iran.

Iranian people now see how God judged him. Justice is clear when it strikes. He pushed for sanctions that starved the people of Lebanon, who called martyrs "terrorists" and murderers "allies". Such a man is exactly where he deserves to be. In hell, reuniting with Epstein, with all the other American criminals, with every Zionist who spilled Muslim blood. Let them burn together.

But this is not the end. This is only the beginning.

The demon has gone to hell, but his masters are still walking the earth. Netanyahu still breathes. Trump still schemes. The American empire still pumps weapons into the hands of murderers. A dead snake does not kill the nest. But let this death be a warning that lights the path.

Every tyrant who laughs at the blood of innocents will taste the same dirt. Every Zionist who drinks the tears of Palestinian mothers will choke on his own spit. Every American warmonger who dreams of bombing Tehran will wake up in a coffin, just like Graham.

So let Netanyahu cry. Let Trump tweet. Let the Zionists tremble. The demon is gone, and the rest of them are on borrowed time. The people of Gaza will rise. The people of Lebanon will resist. The Iranian people will never bow.

When the day of reckoning comes, when the tyrants stand before God who sees everything, there will be no lawyers and no lies to hide behind.

One down. Two to go. And hell is still hungry. In the brutal theater of Middle Eastern politics, Trump and Netanyahu have always played for keeps. But as the dust settles on Graham's body, the world must ask: at what point does the victory become a condemnation? The two men may see a finish line, but history sees a crime scene.

Death to warmongers and criminals in the U.S. and Israel.

Is Netanyahu headed for war as Israeli elections approach?

From page 1 ► The regime has also been drawn into a protracted and exhausting war of attrition, which has eroded its social and political cohesion. The governing coalition's prospects in the upcoming elections have dimmed, Israel's international standing has substantially declined, and even its influence and relationships within official U.S. institutions, along with its popular support base in America, are steadily waning.

Moreover, the trust between Trump and Netanyahu has reportedly not remained what it was since the latter lured the U.S. into an illegal war with Iran that has exhausted the American public and achieved zero objectives.

After more than a thousand days of regional aggression, Netanyahu's government has no strategic gains. It has not translated its supposed military superiority or its very close alliance with the United States into political achievements or a decisive battlefield triumph.

All fronts remain open, and Israel faces an extraordinarily complex political and security landscape. So, will Netanyahu's government flee its strategic dead end by charging forward into intensified aggression? Or will it return to statecraft, seek more illegal settlements, and cooperate with more realistic plans for the post-war era?

In the Gaza Strip, the occupying regime's objectives seem unlikely to be realized at the negotiating table, having already been thwarted on the battlefield. A political horizon for resolving the Gaza dilemma appears distant. In Lebanon, the military aggression has not concluded, and the door remains wide open for its resurgence. Meanwhile, the unprovoked Israeli-American war on Iran has not subsided with a ceasefire agreement, and its political repercussions remain unclear.

On the domestic front, the Israeli Occupation Forces are exhausted,

and society is strained and divided over nearly everything. From the dispute over forming a commission of inquiry into the failure to predict Operation al-Aqsa Flood, to disagreements over the conscription law. As elections approach, the crisis has translated into a sharp erosion of public confidence in all state institutions, from the prime minister's office to the army, police, judiciary, and others.

This crisis of confidence has surpassed even the acute polarization over the regime's identity and judiciary that preceded October 7, 2023. In stark contrast to all this, the rhetoric of the governing coalition and its leader, Netanyahu, continues to tout achievements, though they insist these require further completion.

Netanyahu still banks on returning to war under the pretext of finishing the job, achieving his delusional mindset of "absolute victory", and subduing the Zionist regime's enemies. Such a move, he calculates, would help him reclaim the seats he lost due to the lack of decisiveness and the absence of a clear victory on the battlefronts.

Notably, Meir Ben-Shabbat, former head of the National Security Council and a Netanyahu confidant, has spoken of the need to resume full-scale genocidal war in Gaza, arguing that the occupying regime remains far from victory in the tiny coastal enclave.

He hinted at the necessity of persuading the United States not to shift to reconstruction in Gaza before returning to high-intensity combat, because without military control over all of the Strip's territory and population, the primary war goal, dismantling Palestinian resistance forces and neutralizing the arena where it all began, cannot be achieved.

Netanyahu and his chorus speak of endless war under the banners of decisiveness and "absolute vic-

Iran victorious over India at 2026 AVC U18 Volleyball Championship

TEHRAN – Iran defeated India 3-1 (29-27, 22-25, 25-17, 25-22) at the 2026 AVC Boys’ U18 Volleyball Championship on Monday.

The young Persians, who had defeated the Philippines 3-0 in their opening match, will play Bahrain Tuesday in Pool B.

Pool A features defending champions China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, and Indonesia. Pool C is composed of Pakistan, Thailand, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan; while Pool D includes Japan, South Korea, Australia, and Saudi Arabia.

The 2026 AVC Boys’ U18 Volleyball Championship is the 16th edition of the Asian Men’s U18 Volleyball Championship, a biennial international volleyball tournament organized by the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC) with China Volleyball Association (CVA).

The tournament is scheduled to take place at Haikou Wuyuanhe Gymnasium in Haikou, China from 12 to 18 July.

This tournament will serve as the qualification tournament for the FIVB Volleyball Boys’ U19 World Championship. The top four teams of the tournament will advance to the 2027 FIVB Volleyball Boys’ U19 World Championship as the AVC representatives.

China are the defending champions after beating Iran 3–2 at the final in Manama.

Iran are the most decorated team in the competition, having won seven times, followed by Japan with three titles.

Women lose to China at 2026 Sitting Volleyball World Championships

TEHRAN – Iran’s women’s team lost to China 3-0 (26–24, 25–22, 25–18) at the 2026 Sitting Volleyball World Championships on Monday.

The Iranian women had previously defeated Rwanda and Kenya.

Iran’s men team also defeated Japan 3-0 (25–14, 25–16, 25–7) later in the day.

Reigning men’s world and Paralympic champions defeated had previously defeated Poland 3-1 and Bosnia and Herzegovina 3-1.

The World Championships, hosted at the World ParaVolley Development Centre, feature 16 men’s teams and 16 women’s teams. The competition opens with a three-day pool stage from 10 to 12 July, with teams divided into four pools of four in each tournament. All teams will then progress to the Round of 16 on 13 July.

The tournament is the first opportunity for teams to secure qualification for the LA28 Paralympic Games, with the men’s and women’s champions earning direct qualification places.

Persepolis rule out move for former winger Ramin Rezaeian

TEHRAN – As Iran’s summer transfer window gathers momentum, speculation surrounding high-profile moves continues to dominate the headlines.

Recent reports claimed that Persepolis were interested in bringing back former defender Ramin Rezaeian following his impressive performances for Iran at the 2026 FIFA World Cup. The rumors suggested that head coach Mehdi Tartar had requested the signing of the experienced right-back, who previously played for both Persepolis and Esteghlal.

The reports also alleged that negotiations broke down after Rezaeian’s financial demands exceeded the club’s expectations.

However, IRNA has learned that the rumors are unfounded. Despite his strong World Cup campaign, Rezaeian has never been a transfer target for Persepolis and does not feature in Tartar’s plans for the upcoming season.

A Persepolis club spokesperson also confirmed the club’s position in a brief statement to IRNA, saying that there are no plans to sign Rezaeian during the current transfer window.

Since taking charge of the Tehran giants, Tartar has already strengthened the right side of his defense by signing Majid Eydi from Gol Gohar Sirjan. The former Gol Gohar coach is believed to have strong faith in his former player, making Eydi a key part of Persepolis’ plans for the new campaign.

With the club’s stance now made clear, speculation linking Rezaeian with a return to Persepolis appears to have been put to rest.

Alipour signs one-year contract extension with Persepolis

TEHRAN – Persepolis have officially announced that striker Ali Alipour has extended his contract with the club for another season.

The 29-year-old forward, who first joined the Tehran giants in the winter of 2015, has spent virtually his entire domestic career wearing the famous red shirt. Since his arrival, Alipour has made 275 appearances for Persepolis and is on the verge of another major milestone, needing just a handful of goals to reach 100 goals for the club.

Alipour remains Persepolis’ all-time leading scorer in the Iranian Pro League and has also won the league’s Golden Boot during his career.

His trophy-laden spell with the club includes four Iranian Pro League titles, the Hazfi Cup, the Iranian Super Cup, and a place in Persepolis’ historic domestic treble-winning campaign.

The contract extension ensures one of the club’s most accomplished forwards will continue to lead the line as Persepolis prepare for the upcoming season.

Sepahan secure Hossein Hosseini with contract extension

TEHRAN – Sepahan have officially announced the contract extension of goalkeeper Seyed Hossein Hosseini, keeping the Iranian international at the club for another two seasons.

Under the new agreement, Hosseini will continue to guard Sepahan’s goal as the Isfahan-based side prepares to compete in both domestic competitions and continental tournaments.

The extension comes after weeks of speculation surrounding the goalkeeper’s future. Reports had linked Hosseini with a potential departure, with several Iranian Pro League clubs reportedly expressing interest in signing the experienced shot-stopper.

Following successful negotiations, however, Sepahan confirmed the agreement by unveiling an official contract extension poster, bringing an end to the transfer rumors and securing Hosseini’s place in Moharram Navidkia’s squad for the next two seasons.

Hosseini was one of Sepahan’s standout performers last season, and his renewal is considered a major boost for Navidkia’s rebuilding project as the club targets success in the Iranian Pro League and the Hazfi Cup in the upcoming campaign.

The story behind Zilou coverings in the martyred Leader’s office

From Page 1 ▶ Zilou, a hand-woven cotton floor covering traditionally produced in central Iran, has long been associated with mosques, religious schools and public gathering places because of its durability and ease of maintenance.

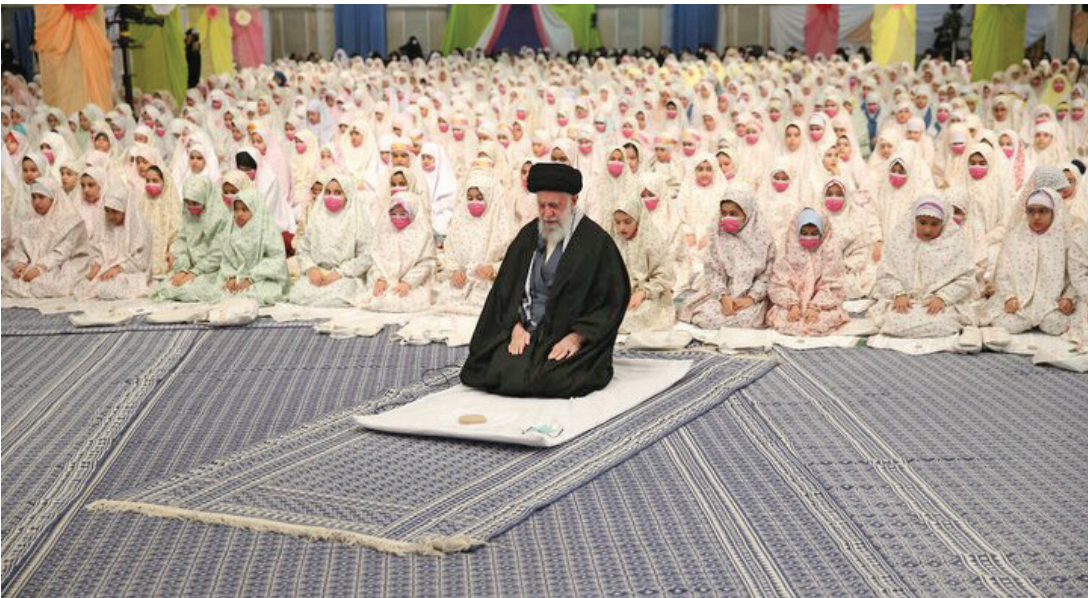
A story that remained untold for years

Abbas Mowzoon, an Iranian television presenter and documentary filmmaker, said that valuable carpets donated by admirers and benefactors were repeatedly offered for use in the Imam Khomeini Hussainiya and the nearby leadership office. However, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei consistently instructed that none of the donated carpets should be used there, Mehr news agency reported on Monday.

One account says that a [hand-woven] carpet was once placed in a corner of the Hussainiya to test whether the Leader would notice the change. Upon entering, he immediately saw the carpet and asked why it had been laid there. When told that it was a donated carpet and had cost the office nothing, he reportedly ordered that all such carpets be donated to mosques, hussainiyas and religious gathering places, while the blue-and-white Zilous should remain in place.

Support for production in practice

According to Mehr, people familiar with the office said Ayatollah Khamenei believed that many Iranian artisans had supported their families through



Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei leads congregational prayers at the Imam Khomeini Hussainiya in Tehran, while dozens of teenage girls pray behind him in an undated photo. The floor of the hussainiya is covered with traditional Zilou coverings.

Zilou weaving for generations. If the market for the craft disappeared, both a traditional Iranian industry and the livelihoods of numerous families would be threatened.

In this view, support for national production was meant to begin with personal practice rather than remain only a slogan.

The question in Yazd

The issue became more prominent during a visit to Yazd province. In a meeting with local elites, an elderly master Zilou weaver complained that Iranian Zilou was not receiving sufficient support.

Ayatollah Khamenei reportedly replied that people could not be

forced by administrative order to buy Zilou, but a cultural initiative could encourage interest in it. He then decided to cover the Hussainiya, his workplace and his residence with Zilou, hoping that others would follow the example.

A traditional craft regains attention

After official images repeatedly showed the blue-and-white Zilous in meetings and ceremonies, public attention turned toward the traditional floor covering. Many mosques, cultural institutions and private buyers began ordering Zilou, particularly from the workshops of Meybod in Yazd province.

Veteran weavers say that many customers later requested

“the same Zilou that is used in Beit-e Rahbari,” a development that helped revive an industry that had been close to being forgotten.

About Zilou

Zilou is a traditional handwoven floor covering made mainly from cotton yarn and produced primarily in desert and agricultural regions of Iran. The city of Meybod is widely known for its Zilou weaving tradition.

Unlike luxurious silk or wool carpets, Zilou is valued for its durability, simplicity and practical use. It commonly features geometric patterns and a limited color palette, with blue and white among the most recognizable combinations.

The Terrible Tehran?



From Page 1 ▶ The next morning, I looked out of the hotel window. The streets were crowded. Thousands of people carrying placards and photographs were making their way toward a mourning ceremony. Alongside

grief, I could see firmness and resilience on their faces.

We then visited Sharif University of Technology. Seeing the destroyed classrooms, shattered windows, and dust-covered

books, I came face to face with the true nature of war. Founded in 1966, the university is considered one of Iran’s most respected academic institutions. It was deeply painful to witness the marks of war in a place that had once been a center of scientific and intellectual achievement.

At that moment, I understood that war does not destroy only buildings; it also destroys dreams. The future of a student, the efforts of a scientist, and the hopes of a human being can all become targets of war.

We worked alongside journalists from different countries. Our languages were different, and our perspectives were not identical, yet we all agreed on one truth: war has no winners.

It is not without reason that our people say, “Where there is peace, there is blessing,” and “No land prospers through war.”

In Tehran, I saw a determination that could not be broken. A people who, throughout thousands of years of history, have made major contributions to science, literature, and world culture are still continuing with their lives today.

When I left Tehran, I carried home only one truth: buildings can be destroyed, but the will of a nation cannot. In my memory, Tehran will remain not as a war-torn city, but as the city of a people who, despite all their trials, have preserved their resilience and still have much to say to the world.

Isfahan tourism specialist wins medal at Geneva innovation competition

TEHRAN – An Isfahan-based tourism specialist has won a silver medal at the 6th Geneva International Exhibition of Inventions in Switzerland for an artificial intelligence-based tourism platform, a provincial tourism official said on Sunday.

Davoud Abyan, deputy head of tourism at the Isfahan Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, said the NASTE AI smart tourism system, developed by researcher and inventor Ehsan Aghajani-Rizi, received the silver medal at the competition, which was attended by representatives from 50 countries.

Abyan said the achievement focused on the application of artificial intelligence in the tourism industry and could help introduce new technologies into tourism destination management in Isfahan.

“In today’s world, the use of artificial intelligence in tourism is an undeniable necessity, and failing to use this technology could lead to the loss of significant opportunities in marketing, content production and tourist



guidance,” Abyan told IRNA.

He said the Geneva competition had international standing and that judging in a third country reflected adherence to international standards.

Abyan added that the presence of an Isfahan specialist at the event could help present the province as a center for smart tourism to foreign audiences.

He said artificial intelligence should play a role across tourism infrastructure, including destination management, event organization, hotel services, transportation and the marketing of inbound tour packages.

“The presence of AI specialists alongside managers is essential for improving services for incoming tourists and strengthen-

ing tourism diplomacy,” he said.

The official also said Isfahan was expected to host several international events in the Iranian years 1405 and 1406, adding that equipping tourism management with AI-based processes was among the province’s strategic priorities.

The ancient city of Isfahan, which serves as the provincial capital as well, is situated at the crossroads of Iran’s north-south and east-west trade routes. It reached its zenith between the 9th and 18th centuries. During the Safavid era, it became Iran’s capital under Shah Abbas the Great.

Isfahan was once a crossroads of international trade and diplomacy in Iran and now it is one of Iran’s top tourist destinations for good reasons. It is filled with many architectural wonders, such as unmatched Islamic buildings, bazaars, museums, Persian gardens, and tree-lined boulevards. The Persian proverb “Isfahan nesf-e-jahan ast” (Isfahan is half the world) reflects the city’s cultural and historical prominence.

80 Iranian universities in U.S. News Best Global Universities Rankings

TEHRAN – The 2026-2027 edition of the U.S. News Best Global Universities Rankings has included 80 Iranian universities among the world's 2,250 top universities.

The institutions from 105 countries have been ranked based on 13 indicators that measure their academic research performance and their global and regional reputations, which helps students to explore the higher education options that exist beyond their own countries' borders and to compare key aspects of schools' research missions.

University of Tehran (with a global ranking of 314), Islamic Azad University (460), Sharif University of Technology (578), Tehran University of Medical Sciences (585), University of Tabriz (663), Mashhad University of Medical Sciences (783), Tarbiat Modares University (783), Amirkabir University of Technology (791), and Tabriz University of Medical Sciences (801) ranked first to tenth in the country, respectively, Mehr news agency reported.

The following is the ranking of these universities based on their global subject standings.

University of Tehran: Polymer Science (5), Green and Sustainable Science and Technology (17), Water resources (35), Pharmacology and Toxicology (59), Agricultural Sciences (65), Energy and Fuels (66), Engineering (68), Food Science and Technology (76), Plant and Animal Science (77), Mechanical Engineering (78), Civil Engineering (92), and Artificial Intelligence (94).

Islamic Azad University: Polymer Science (12), Green and Sustainable Science and Technology (26), Energy and Fuels (44), Mathematics (47), Mechanical Engineering (56), Food Science and Technology (59), Civil Engineering (66), Water Resources (69), Engineering (77), Pharmacology and Toxicology (77), Public, Environmental and Occupational Health (102), and Artificial Intelligence (107).

Sharif University of Technology: Mechanical Engineering (73) and Civil Engineering (109).



Tehran University of Medical Sciences: Polymer Science (32), Pharmacology and Toxicology (49), Public, Environmental and Occupational Health (86), and Food Science and Technology (96).

University of Tabriz: Water Resources (55), Polymer Science (66), and Food Science and Technology (69).

Mashhad University Medical Science: Public, Environmental and Occupational Health (77), and in Pharmacology and Toxicology (97).

Tarbiat Modares University: Water Resources (90); Amirkabir University of Technology: Polymer Science (49).

Tabriz University of Medical Sciences: Polymer Science (21), and Pharmacology and Toxicology (94).

Recent rankings

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The 23rd edition of the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings (WUR), 2027, has placed 11 Iranian universities

among the world's top institutes, up from nine universities in 2026.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Iran studies applying WHO New Vaccine Introduction Prioritization and Sequencing Toolkit

TEHRAN – The health ministry and the National Immunization Technical Advisory Group (NITAG), with technical support from the World Health Organization (WHO) Country Office, have carried out a study applying WHO New Vaccine Introduction Prioritization and Sequencing Toolkit (NVI-PST) to help establish a transparent, evidence-based roadmap for introducing new vaccines over 2025–2030.

NVI-PST helps countries make transparent, evidence-based decisions about which new vaccines to introduce and in what order. It provides a structured, multicriteria decision-making framework that guides NITAGs through a step-by-step process of (1) identifying candidate vaccines, (2) selecting and weighting assessment criteria, (3) collecting and synthesising relevant evidence, and (4) ranking and sequencing vaccines based on importance and feasibility.

Iran's immunisation program has long performed strongly, with near-universal Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) coverage and recent introductions of pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) for high-risk adults, seasonal influenza, acellular pertussis (aP) vaccine, hexavalent vaccine, Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and varicella (chickenpox) vaccines, documenting both the benefits and the implementation challenges encountered during the process, ISNA reported.

The process was nationally led, adapted to context and implemented through two work-

shops that finalised 17 criteria, compiled comprehensive evidence dossiers, scored vaccine candidates on importance and feasibility, and then developed priority tiers and sequencing scenarios.

The 17 criteria included the significance of the disease—such as mortality rates, incidence, long-term complications, and vaccine efficacy—and some others assessed the feasibility of program implementation, encompassing vaccine cost, the capacity to ensure a stable supply, compatibility with the national vaccination program, and the procurement of financial resources.

The hexavalent vaccine had been approved by Iran's NITAG prior to the start of this project, but had not yet been implemented; it was later excluded from the implementation framework due to its ongoing national rollout.

The two proposed sequencing scenarios, in terms of importance and feasibility, placed HPV first, with either PCV or influenza third after the already-approved hexavalent vaccine. Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and varicella vaccines were classified as low priority for the 5-year horizon.

Iran following developed countries in national vaccination program

The national vaccination program in Iran includes 13 vaccines, and the country is following developed countries with an average of 17 vaccines in their national vaccination programs, Mostafa Qanei, the secretary general of the Biotechnology Development Headquarters, said in January.

Knowledge-based companies are operating to produce the four vaccines that are not included in the national vaccination program, he added.

Uterus, influenza, meningococcus, and pneumococcal conjugate are the four vaccines

that have not been produced domestically.

In May, the health ministry started distributing domestically made pentavalent vaccines across the country.

“So far, about 800,000 units of the vaccine have been developed, and this number is expected to reach 1.2 million units in the next 2 to 3 days,” IRNA quoted Mehdi Pirsalehi, head of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), as saying on May 5, 2025.

The pentavalent vaccine was integrated into the national vaccination programme in November 2014. According to the national vaccination program, each child must receive the pentavalent vaccine 3 times at intervals of 2 months. The first is usually at the end of the second month of life.

The vaccination program to combat pneumococcal and rotavirus kicked off in the country in February 2024 after being omitted from the immunization schedule for a decade.

According to the deputy health minister, Alireza Raeisi, children can get free pneumococcal and rotavirus vaccinations in all medical centers across the country.

Pneumococcal vaccine can be injected when babies are 2, 4, and 12 months old; babies can get three doses of the rotavirus vaccine at the 2nd, 4th, and 6th months of life. The vaccine is administered by putting drops in the child's mouth.

Rotavirus and pneumococcal vaccines were added to the national immunization program in 2024.

The measles vaccination program in Iran started in 1984 when 34 percent of the population was vaccinated in the first year and 90 to 95 percent of the population after 6 years. Also in 2003, 33 million people were vaccinated with a national program to eradicate measles in the country.

Tehran, Islamabad underline boosting ties on women

TEHRAN – The Vice-President for Women and Family Affairs, Zahra Behrouz-Azar, and Pakistan's Minister of Law and Justice, Azam Nazeer Tarar, have highlighted the need to enhance collaborations between the two countries in areas related to women.

The officials met on Sunday on the sidelines of the ninth Ministerial Conference on Women of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held in Islamabad, Pakistan, on July 12 and 13, Mehr news agency reported.

Both parties agreed to develop the historic, religious, cultural and brotherly relations between Pakistan and Iran and to undertake joint initiatives to promote women's rights and empowerment.

Lauding Iran's achievements in empowering women, Nazeer Tarar voiced Pakistan's readiness to develop cooperation with Tehran and benefit from the country's expertise in this sector.

The official highlighted Iran's role in advancing OIC objectives, which aim to support women in addressing shared challenges, noting that “We need to work together to counter the Western media's biased portrayal of women in Islamic nations”.

He called for the enhancement of ties between the two countries to convey the voice of women living under oppression, from Gaza, Palestine, Afghanistan, to Kashmir, to the international community.

For her part, Behrouz-Azar commended Pakistan's unwavering support for the country during the US-Israeli imposed war, and said that the West constantly seeks to incite hatred against Islamic countries and portray a negative image of Muslim women; hence, we need a unified and coordinated strategy to restore the status of women in the Islamic world.

She also elaborated on Iran's accomplishments in supporting women, their capacity, and their empowerment in various fields, highlighting their participation in the political, economic, educational, health, and social sectors.

The official went on to propose establishing a network of female rescuers in the Red Crescent in cooperation with Pakistan and other OIC member states.

The ninth Ministerial Conference on Women of the OIC, titled “Socio-Economic and Political Empowerment of Women in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Countries: Challenges and Way Forward”, brought together some 190 delegates from the 57 OIC member states.

The conference aimed to boost cooperation among member states on women's empowerment by enhancing greater socio-economic and political participation across OIC member countries.



It is built on the outcomes of previous OIC ministerial meetings on women, particularly the one held in Cairo in 2021, which focused on women's empowerment, protection frameworks and enhancing their socio-economic participation.

Women's economic, social empowerment

The administration pays special attention to empowering women in social and economic areas, as well as improving their access to social services and facilities through implementing certain national programs.

According to Behrouz-Azar, more than 2,700 female managers were appointed in the country as deputy ministers, director generals, deputy director generals, governors, district governors, and heads of research institutes in the past two years.

“President Masoud Pezeshkian's administration has always highlighted the importance of national unity and empowering women. As a result, for the first time, we have Sunni female governors in the country,” IRNA quoted Behrouz-Azar as saying in August 2025.

The official went on to say that in Iranian year 1403 (2024 – 2025), efforts were made to identify and address harmful issues to women, including the bill on the elimination of violence against women, the hijab, and women riding motorcycles. Moreover, the vice-presidency for women and family affairs has offered loans and other facilities for childbearing.

Iran has always focused on programs that empower women, particularly those who are heads of household, economically and socially. Actions taken by the country have always aimed to promote women's status by observing the principles of the constitution and Islamic teachings, she further noted.

Referring to the country's remarkable achievements in education, health, science, technology, and entrepreneurship, she underscored the prominent role of Iranian women in these fields, Mehr news agency quoted Behrouz-Azar as saying in November 2024.

The official further said the seventh National Development Plan has stressed the need to overcome barriers to women's professional development. Accordingly, the current administration has put supporting women's entrepreneurship and home business growth on the agenda despite unfair sanctions.

Some 100 earthquakes hit Iran in a week

TEHRAN – A total of 99 earthquakes have been recorded across the country in a week from June 27 to July 3, according to the seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran.

Statistically, 88 earthquakes with magnitudes smaller than 3, nine earthquakes with a magnitude between 3 and 4, and two earthquakes with a magnitude between 4 and 5 have occurred in the country, irsc reported.

Of the total quakes, one had a magnitude of 4.1 on the Richter scale, which occurred on July 3 in Fars province.

Among the provinces of the country, Semnan experienced the highest number of earthquakes, with 16, followed by Fars and North Khorasan with 12 and 8 earthquakes, respectively.

During the same period, three earthquakes were recorded in Tehran. No earthquakes were recorded in East Azarbaijan, West Azarbaijan, Alborz, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, Zanjan, Qazvin, Gilan, Lorestan, Markazi, and

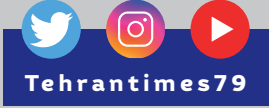
Hamedan provinces.

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

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

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

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



JULY 14, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

He who constantly jests, exposes a part of his intelligence to destruction.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:10 Evening: 19:42 Dawn: 3:17 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:00 (tomorrow)

2nd Iranian Cinema Night held in Montreal

TEHRAN – The second edition of Iranian Cinema Night, featuring a selection of short films from Iran's independent cinema, was held in Montreal, Canada, on Sunday.

The event showcased five short films that were produced in 2024 and 2025 and have successfully participated in and won awards at prestigious international film festivals, Mehr reported.

The goal of the program was to present the latest achievements of independent Iranian cinema and create an opportunity for international and Persian-speaking audiences to become familiar with the diverse narratives and perspectives of Iranian filmmakers.

The films featured in this edition included "Conex" directed by Dina Rezaei, "American

Dream" by Houra Kian, "Farewell Paris" by Ebrahim Shahbazi, "A Single Woman" by Golnaz Iza-dan, and "Haza Over" by Seyed Ali Ghasemi.

The first edition of Iranian Cinema Night took place last October at Carleton University in Ottawa. The event was met with strong audience interest, and the theater was completely packed.

This edition's selected films combined realism with social dilemma undertones and personal struggles, offering a nuanced window into life inside Iran. All films were subtitled in English.

The works were intimate yet universal, often set in rural or marginalized settings, reflecting the complexities of Iranian society.

The tone ranged from musical to darkly dramatic, with minimalistic and cinematic visual styles and emotionally charged narratives.

Palestinian Embassy in Oman organizes Heritage Day to promote cultural awareness

The Embassy of the State of Palestine in the Sultanate of Oman, in cooperation with the UNESCO Chair for World Heritage Management and Sustainable Tourism in the Arab Region at the German University of Technology in Muscat, organized a Heritage Day at the embassy's headquarters to highlight Palestinian cultural identity and promote awareness of Palestinian heritage and folk traditions.

The event was held under the patronage of Palestinian Ambassador to Oman Ahmed Al-Ruwaidi, with the participation of members of the Palestinian community and university representatives. It featured presentations on elements of Palestinian heritage inscribed on UNESCO lists, including traditional Palestinian embroidery, folk tales, traditional songs, and the dabke dance, Yaffa News Network reported.

Ambassador Al-Ruwaidi said the event is part of efforts to strengthen awareness of Palestinian cultural heritage and introduce Palestinian and Arab generations to Palestine's historical narrative. He stressed that preserving national cultural identity is a key component of Palestinian diplomatic efforts.

He added that Palestinian heritage, with its rich arts, customs, and cultural practices, re-

flects the historical connection of the Palestinian people to their land, emphasizing the importance of preserving it in the face of attempts to erase or distort its components.

The ambassador also reviewed the latest developments related to the Palestinian cause and efforts to end the war on the Gaza Strip, enhance humanitarian response, support relief and reconstruction efforts, and protect Palestinian legitimacy and institution-building, while praising Oman's support for the Palestinian people and their cause.

The event also honored students from the Gaza Strip residing in Oman after completing the first session of the Palestinian General Secondary Education Examination, organized by the embassy in coordination with the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education. The ambassador congratulated the students and affirmed the embassy's continued support for their educational needs.

The Heritage Day concluded with an exhibition of traditional Palestinian handicrafts and a cultural performance presented by the Al-Reef Palestinian Folk Arts Troupe, affiliated with the Palestinian Community Social Club, showcasing aspects of Palestinian cultural heritage and arts.

Cartoon of Day



FIFA
Cartoonist: Sajith Kumar from India

Prominent Swedish Iranologist Bo Utas granted honorary membership in Academy of Persian Language and Literature

TEHRAN – The Academy of Persian Language and Literature in Iran has elected Bo Utas, a prominent Swedish Iranologist and Professor Emeritus of Iranian Languages at Uppsala University in Sweden as an honorary member in recognition of his scholarly contributions.

Hojjatollah Faghani, the Ambassador of Iran to Sweden, visited Bo Utas's home to convey the appreciation of the Iranian scientific and literary community for his services to the Persian language and literature, and officially presented him with the certificate of honorary membership in the Academy of Persian Language and Literature, Mehr reported on Sunday.

During the meeting, which was also attended by Mojtaba Norouzi, the Cultural Attaché of Iran in Sweden, Bo Utas described his honorary membership in the Academy and the Dr. Mahmoud Afshar Literary-Historical Award as a sign of Iranian gratitude toward his efforts and those of all who cherish Iranian culture.

Referring to the positive relations between Iran and Sweden, he stated, "We must not allow certain transient issues to affect the brilliant history of cultural and scientific relations between the two countries."

The Iranologist emphasized that focusing on culture and paying attention to the cultural community is the key to maintaining friendly



Swedish Iranologist Bo Utas (R) and the Ambassador of Iran to Sweden Hojjatollah Faghani

bilateral relations between Iran and Sweden.

Bo Utas, 88, is a scholar on Persian historical linguistics and classical Persian literature. He got acquainted with Persian literature in secondary school. In 1959, he started to study Persian at Uppsala University under his mentor Henrik Samuel Nyberg and defended his PhD thesis in 1973.

Utas travelled extensively in Iran and Afghanistan in the 1960s and 1970s. From 1988 he became the

first professor in Iranian languages at Uppsala University, a chair that he held until he retired in 2003. Under his supervision, no less than eight PhD candidates defended their theses successfully.

He is a member of several learned societies, including the Royal Danish Academy of Science and Letters, Societas Iranologica Europaea, and the Royal Society for the Humanities in Uppsala.

Bo Utas knows several languages, including Avestan, Old Persian,

Middle Persian, Sanskrit, Chinese, Russian, Greek, Latin, Turkish, Hebrew and Arabic.

A full list of his publications shows his broad and diverse scholarship on Middle Persian and New Persian language and literature, manuscript tradition and text edition, culture and religion in Greater Iran.

He has translated several Persian classical and modern literary works into Swedish, including "Blind Owl" by Sadeq Hedayat.

Iranian artists showcase works in Oman online exhibition

TEHRAN- A collective exhibition of visual arts and handicrafts titled "Panah" (Shelter), featuring the works of 18 prominent Iranian artists, is set to be displayed online in the Sultanate of Oman.

The event, scheduled for Tuesday, is organized by the Aytist Art Group in collaboration with Oman's Pioneers of Global Trade and Production Institute. The exhibition is curated by painter Aynaz Zarei, who also serves as the director of the Aytist Art Group.

The showcase aims to bridge cultural gaps through art, presenting a diverse array of 26 artworks that blend traditional Iranian handicrafts with contemporary visual arts. By utilizing a digital platform, the exhibition allows audiences in Oman and beyond to engage with the richness of Iranian creativity and artistic heritage.

The contributing artists include Atousa Absalan, Afruzeh Golshan Khavas, Azam Qaleh, Asal Haqparast, Ainaz Ramakchi, Babak Zirak, Faezeh Shamsizadeh, Hanieh Zare, Kioumars Pilehchian Langaroudi, Maryam Haqiqat, Mahboubeh Rastgari, Masoumeh



Rashidi Khosrobeigi, Melika Mansourabadi, Mehdi Fayezi, Sara Kian, Seydeh Zahra Qalandari, Tayyebeh Alikhan Rabaz, and Zahra Navabi.

This international collaboration highlights the ongoing effort to promote Iranian art on the global stage, leveraging technology to overcome geographical boundaries.

Staged reading of Chekhov's "The Bear" to be held at Tehran center

TEHRAN- Aria Art House in Tehran is set to host a staged reading of Anton Chekhov's acclaimed play, "The Bear: A Joke in One Act," on Saturday.

Directed by Touran Ebadi, the production features a cast including Samira Maafi, Salar Habibi, Elham Kalantari, and Alireza Abedi.

"The Bear" unfolds entirely in the drawing room of the estate belonging to Elena Ivanovna Popova, a young widow who has secluded herself since the death of her husband seven months earlier. Popova insists on remaining in deep mourning, determined to prove eternal fidelity to her late spouse. She refuses to leave the house or engage with society, believing that her isolation is a testament to her unwavering devotion. Her elderly footman, Luka, who is loyal but somewhat naïve, gently urges her to abandon her excessive grief. He reminds her that life continues outside the estate and suggests that such rigid mourning may not be healthy. Popova, however, remains resolute, asserting that she promised her husband she would remain faithful to his memory for the rest of her life.

Their quiet exchange is abruptly interrupted by the arrival of Grigory Stepanovitch Smirnov, a middle-aged landowner with a volatile temper. Smirnov insists on seeing Popova despite Luka's attempts to

turn him away. Once admitted, he bluntly explains the purpose of his visit: Popova's late husband owed him 1,200 roubles, and he requires immediate repayment. Smirnov is under financial pressure, as he must make an interest payment on his mortgage the following day. Popova calmly replies that she does not have the money available and cannot settle the debt until her steward returns the day after tomorrow. Her response, though polite, infuriates Smirnov, who has already endured numerous frustrations with other debtors.

Smirnov's irritation quickly transforms into open hostility. He mocks Popova's mourning as theatrical and self-indulgent, dismissing her "state of mind" as irrelevant to his urgent financial needs. In his view, grief does not excuse her from meeting legal obligations. He declares that he will not leave the estate until he receives the money, even if it means remaining there for days. The conflict intensifies as Smirnov demands refreshments and treats the household with increasing rudeness. What begins as a dispute over money evolves into a broader argument about love, loyalty, and the nature of men and women.

The quarrel soon shifts from finances to ideology. Smirnov claims that women are incapable of genuine, steadfast love, asserting

that they are fickle and prone to melodrama. Popova vehemently rejects this accusation, insisting that she loved her husband deeply and sincerely, even though he was unfaithful and often unkind to her. The irony of her devotion to a flawed husband underscores Chekhov's satirical tone. As tempers flare, the insults grow sharper. In a moment of fury, Popova calls Smirnov a "bear," and a "monster," attacking both his manners and his character.

Smirnov, stung by the insult and priding himself on his honor, challenges Popova to a duel. In a comic twist that heightens the absurdity of the situation, Popova immediately accepts. She refuses to be intimidated and leaves the room to retrieve a pair of pistols once owned by her husband. Luka, overhearing this alarming development, becomes frantic and rushes off to seek help from the gardener and coachman, fearing bloodshed.

Left alone briefly, Smirnov undergoes an unexpected emotional transformation. Instead of remaining angry, he finds himself admiring Popova's courage and spirit. Her fiery temperament and refusal to submit impress him deeply. By the time she returns armed and prepared to fight, Smirnov realizes that his feelings have shifted from rage to admiration—and then to love. The sudden reversal is central

to the play's farcical structure, as intense hostility gives way to romantic attraction.

When Smirnov confesses his love, Popova reacts with confusion and indignation. She orders him to leave, yet simultaneously hesitates. Her emotions fluctuate between outrage and fascination. The duel is forgotten as the argument dissolves into a charged exchange of declarations. Ultimately, the former adversaries succumb to their mutual attraction and embrace.

The play belongs to a group of short comic works Chekhov referred to as "farce-vaudevilles," including "The Proposal" and "The Anniversary." These pieces rely on exaggerated emotion, rapid dialogue, and sudden reversals to generate humor. Though Chekhov sometimes dismissed such works as trivial, "The Bear" proved immensely successful.

The play has enjoyed enduring appeal, with numerous adaptations across different media. It inspired operatic versions by composers such as William Walton and Dominick Argento, as well as reinterpretations for radio, television, and stage revivals worldwide. Its compact structure and universal themes of pride, passion, and unexpected love continue to resonate with audiences.