

Why does Washington target a railway bridge 700 miles from battlefield?

TEHRAN- On the night of July 9, 2026, American cruise missiles struck the Aq-Tekeh Khan railway bridge near Aq-Qala in Iran's northern Golestan province. The target was not a military base, not an air defense battery, not a missile silo—it was a civilian infrastructure node more than 700 miles from the Strait of Hormuz, the conflict's primary theater of operations. Seven projectiles hit the bridge, damaging the Gorgan-Incheh Borun railway line. No casualties were reported. Yet the symbolism and strategic implications of this strike demand urgent scrutiny. ► [Page 4](#)

Yemen draws a hard line in the skies, imposes a new equation

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — The desperate Saudi bombardment of Sana'a International Airport on July 13 has backfired, exposing the deep panic of the Riyadh, Washington, and Tel Aviv axis.

Saudi warplanes bombed the runway to block a civilian Mahan Air flight carrying an Ansarul-lah delegation back from the funeral of Iran's martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

This followed a July 3 incident where Yemeni air defenses forced retreating Saudi jets to abandon their attempt to intercept the same aircraft. ► [Page 4](#)

Iran, China agree to strengthen economic ties with joint committee roadmap

TEHRAN- Iranian Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, in a meeting with Cong Peiwu, Chinese Ambassador to Iran, emphasized the determination of his country to develop sustainable and strategic relations between the two countries.

According to IRNA, Seyyed Ali Madanizadeh, the Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, on Monday evening, in a meeting with the Chinese Ambassador to Iran, while emphasizing the development and consolidation of strategic relations between Iran and China, appreciated the support of that country, especially during the aggressions of enemies against Iran, and described the four-point proposal of the President of the People's Republic of China for the return of peace and stability to the region as constructive. ► [Page 4](#)

Connecting electricity grids of Iran, Russia, an important axes of bilateral energy co-op

TEHRAN- The Minister of Energy of Iran and the Minister of Energy of Russia, in a joint meeting, while reviewing the implementation process of the roadmap for electricity cooperation between the two countries, emphasized the development of cooperation in the field of grid connection, technology transfer, equipment exports and imports, the construction of the Sirik power plant, and the formation of joint working groups to accelerate the implementation of strategic projects.

According to IRNA from the Ministry of Energy, Abbas Aliabadi, the Minister of Energy of Iran, and Sergey Tsylyov, the Minister of Energy of Russia, met and held talks on July 13 afternoon in Tehran. ► [Page 4](#)



Iranian lawmakers raise crimson flags during the first public session of Parliament following the February 28 US-Israeli war, calling for “revenge” and “retribution” over the martyrdom of Iran’s Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, in Tehran on July 14, 2026.

180 MPs Call for Terminating MoU, Demand Strategic Deterrence Over the Strait of Hormuz

Iranian lawmakers issued a statement calling for “revenge” and “retribution” against those responsible for the Leader’s martyrdom.

TEHRAN — As the United States continues to violate the newly signed memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Tehran, Iranian lawmakers have fiercely called for the immediate termination of the interim agreement, demanding a revolutionary shift in the country's defense doctrine.

The MoU, electronically signed on June 17 by Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and his American counterpart, Donald Trump, explicitly called for a permanent end to hostilities on all fronts and committed both sides to final peace negotiations within 60 days. However, in a flagrant breach of the deal, US forces have carried out bombing attacks in southern Iran over the past several days.

The aggression came shortly after Trump declared that the June agreement was “over.”

In a powerful joint statement issued on Tuesday, 180 members of the Iranian Parliament (Majlis) condemned the bad faith of the American administration and urged the heads of the three branches of government to adopt an uncompromising stance.

“Now that the foolish US president has declared this memorandum of understanding over, the nation urgently

expects the heads of the three branches of government to adopt firm and revolutionary positions on this matter,” the statement read. “This experience has once again proven the words of our Imam (martyred Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei): that Iran's issues with the United States cannot be resolved through negotiations.”

Ali Khamenei): that Iran's issues with the United States cannot be resolved through negotiations.”

The lawmakers urged the Presiding Board of Parliament to urgently establish a special commission to review the negotiations and the MoU in accordance with the Constitution and Parliament's rules of procedure. This commission would facilitate specialized parliamentary oversight to ensure strict adherence to the late Leader's strategic guidelines. ► [Page 3](#)



Ayatollah Khamenei hails massive public participation in martyred Leader’s funeral

TEHRAN — A major memorial ceremony for the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, was held on Tuesday at the Grand Mosalla of Imam Khomeini in Tehran. The massive gathering in the capital drew an immense crowd from all walks of life, highlighting the continuation of solemn mourning ceremonies across Iran and several other countries.

The spiritual event began with the recitation of verses from the Holy Qur'an, followed by the playing of the national anthem of the Islamic Republic of Iran. ► [Page 3](#)

Qomi: Retribution for Soleimani assassination must remain a national priority

TEHRAN — Hojjatolislam Mohammad Qomi, head of Iran's Islamic Development Organization, has stressed that retribution for those responsible for the assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani remains a fundamental obligation, saying broader strategic objectives such as the expulsion of the United States from the region do not replace the need to hold the perpetrators accountable. ► [Page 3](#)

Guarding nature, losing family: American airstrike leaves Iranian park ranger alone amid the ruins

By Hossein Amiri

TEHRAN — For years, veteran environmental ranger Javad Hassanzadeh dedicated his life to protecting the wildlife and fragile ecosystems of southern Iran. In the early hours of Tuesday, while standing watch over one of the country's protected natural areas, he was spared by fate. His family was not.

An American airstrike targeting an environmental guard station in the rural district of Hajjiabad, northern Hormozgan Province, claimed the lives of Hassanzadeh's two sons and daughter-in-law, transforming a place devoted to conservation into a scene of devastation and grief. ► [Page 2](#)

Iran condemns UK’s IRGC designation, warns of reciprocal measures

TEHRAN — Iran has denounced the UK's decision to designate the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as a “threat under the United Kingdom's National Security Act.”

In a statement on Tuesday, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said the decision contravenes “the fundamental principles and rules of international law, including the principles of the sovereign equality of states and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.”

The ministry stressed that the IRGC is an integral component of Iran's official armed forces. It said the IRGC, alongside the Iranian Army, is responsible for safeguarding Iran's territorial integrity, national sovereignty, and security. ► [Page 2](#)

Prehistoric Sites of the Khorramabad Valley and Iran’s deep past on UNESCO World Heritage List

By Sonia Shidrang

TEHRAN — This week marks the first anniversary of a milestone that reshaped how the world sees Iran's ancient past. On July 11, 2025, during the 47th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Paris, the Paleolithic Sites of the Khorramabad Valley were inscribed on the World Heritage List—Iran's 29th such site, and its first ever dedicated to the Paleolithic period.

A year later, the inscription still resonates, both within Iran and across the wider archaeological community, cementing the valley's place among Southwest Asia's most important prehistoric landscapes while spurring new research, conservation work, and cultural tourism throughout Lorestan province. ► [Page 6](#)

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

‘Trump’s mouth must be shut’

Kayhan, in an article discussing how to silence Trump, wrote: The heroic defense by the brave and revolutionary armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran is, these nights in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, writing a golden chapter in the history of Greater Iran. In recent days, the Persian Gulf has once again become the focal point of the global balance of power—where the US terrorist military, in strategic desperation, has turned frantically to a chain of blind acts of aggression. But the swift and forceful response of the Army and the IRGC showed that the geometry of power in the region has changed forever, and that the only way to restrain Trump now is the “language of force.” Therefore, Trump’s mouth must be shut with this same logic: through resolute defense, unwavering adherence to principles, and by delivering painful blows to US warships, infrastructure, and strategic interests in the region.

Iran: The core agreement must not be destroyed

The Iran newspaper, in an interview with Davoud Aghaei, professor of international law at the University of Tehran, examined the continuous violation of commitments by the United States and Iran’s responses from the perspective of international law. Regarding the understanding reached between Iran and the US, the reality is that if, at least in the initial phase, its main provisions had been properly implemented, it could have brought significant benefits to the Islamic Republic. But with rising tensions and the violation of the principle of fulfillment of commitments, Iran is now giving a defensive response to this breach. Nevertheless, one must not forget that although violation of commitments by one party can give the other party the right to take countermeasures, the purpose of such measures must be to bring the violating party back into compliance, not to destroy the agreement itself. For this reason, as long as implementation remains possible through negotiation and mediation, preserving the agreement and striving to enforce it should take precedence over escalating tensions and resorting to coercive actions.

Javan: The US wants Iran to retreat on Hormuz and the nuclear file

Javan analyzed the US objective behind the recent attacks. Recent developments show that the US, aiming to force the Islamic Republic to retreat on the Strait of Hormuz and the nuclear issue, has chosen a path of intensified military pressure. However, the course of events on the ground indicates that this

strategy has not only failed to change Iran’s behavior but has also expanded the confrontation to sensitive centers and US military bases in the region. What stands out most is the transfer of initiative from Washington to Tehran. While the US seeks to bring Iran back to the negotiating table through increased military pressure, the successive responses of Iran’s armed forces—from strikes on command centers, air-defense systems, strategic radars, and missile bases to continued drone operations—show that Washington’s desired equation is facing a serious challenge.

Sobh-e-No: No point or corridor is safe for the United States

Sobh-e-No interpreted the IRGC’s missile and drone attacks on the strategic port of Duqm on Oman’s southeastern coast. Duqm is a logistical hub and refueling platform for US aircraft carriers, introduced as a safe corridor and alternative route. Iran’s successful strike on Duqm and the destruction of US fuel storage facilities completely overturned this equation. The message is clear: no point and no alternative corridor outside the Strait of Hormuz is safe for Iran’s adversaries. Duqm, as a haven and alternative escape route from Hormuz, is in the line of fire. Effectively, the key to managing regional maritime security is in Iran’s hands, and no alternative corridor can provide real security for global shipping unless Iran’s central role in securing this vital waterway is recognized.

Khorasan: A dead end in US–Iran engagement

Khorasan addressed the question of why Iran and the US cannot end hostilities through any model of engagement. The reasons behind the failure of every historical attempt at engagement between Iran and the US can be explained through two points. First, the inherently contradictory nature of the two states: Iran cannot trade away its independence in negotiations with the US, and the US cannot accept an actor outside its preferred global order. Second, the difference in the two countries’ weight in political, military, and economic spheres. The unequal conditions between Iran and the US in dealings with other states create avenues for the American side to evade its commitments. The only way out of this vicious cycle is to build indigenous military and economic centers of gravity that can disrupt the prevailing imbalance in US–Iran engagement and bring Iran’s weight in global equations closer to that of the US—which, notably, is experiencing a period of historical decline.

Iran condemns UK’s IRGC designation, warns of reciprocal measures

TEHRAN – Iran has denounced the UK’s decision to designate the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as a “threat under the United Kingdom’s National Security Act.”

In a statement on Tuesday, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said the decision contravenes “the fundamental principles and rules of international law, including the principles of the sovereign equality of states and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.”

The ministry stressed that the IRGC is an integral component of Iran’s official armed forces. It said the IRGC, alongside the Iranian Army, is responsible for safeguarding Iran’s territorial integrity, national sovereignty, and security.

The ministry also highlighted the IRGC’s contributions to regional peace, security, and human dignity, particularly through its fight against the ISIL terrorist group.

The ministry also slammed Britain’s long history of interference in other countries’ internal affairs.

It said Britain “has no moral standing to level accusations against others,” pointing to how the UK had acted as “an accomplice and active participant” during the recent



US-Israeli military aggression against Iran.

Iran also warned that it reserves its rights under the UN Charter and international law to take reciprocal measures, adding that the British authorities would bear responsibility for the political, legal, and diplomatic consequences of the decision.

The statement came after British Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood announced that the IRGC would be designated a “national security threat under new powers in the National Security (State Threats) Act,” making support for the elite force “a criminal offence punishable by up to 14 years in prison.”

Guarding nature, losing family: American airstrike leaves Iranian park ranger alone amid the ruins

From page 1 ► Iranian officials condemned the attack as a violation of international humanitarian law, saying it struck a civilian environmental facility whose sole mission was the protection of wildlife and natural resources.

The strike hit the Seyyed Jowzar Environmental Ranger Station and a nearby forage warehouse belonging to the Hormozgan Department of Environment during the early hours of the morning. According to local authorities, Hassanzadeh was carrying out his routine patrol duties away from the residential quarters when the missiles struck.

“He survived only because he was on duty outside the residence,” said Habib Masihi Taziani, Director General of the Hormozgan Department of Environment. “His daughter-in-law and two sons lost their lives in the attack, while the department’s forage warehouse also sustained significant damage.”

For colleagues who have worked alongside Hassanzadeh for years, the tragedy carries a painful irony. The ranger had devoted his career to preserving life—protecting endangered species, preventing illegal hunting, monitoring protected habitats, and safeguarding one of Iran’s ecologically significant regions. Yet it was his own family that became the latest victims of the ongoing military escalation.

The deaths have sent shockwaves through Iran’s environmental community, where park rangers are regarded as front-line guardians of the country’s natural heritage. Often stationed in remote outposts far from cities, many rangers live with their families inside or adjacent to environmental stations because of the isolated nature of their assignments.

Officials stressed that such facilities are strictly civilian in-



stallations dedicated to environmental conservation rather than military activity.

Masihi Taziani described the deaths as “a clear war crime,” arguing that attacks on environmental personnel and protected natural areas violate international norms and require an immediate response from global institutions.

“The immunity of environmental areas, park rangers and conservation facilities has long been recognized under international principles,” he said. “The martyrdom of this innocent family demands a serious response from the international community.”

The tragedy has prompted an outpouring of condolences across Iran’s environmental sector.

Shina Ansari, Iran’s Vice President and Head of the Department of Environment, issued a message expressing sympathy to Hassanzadeh’s family and colleagues, describing the loss as one that had left the country’s entire environmental community in mourning.

“The sacrifice of those who dedicate their lives to protecting nature should never end in such heartbreaking circumstances,” she said, extending condolences to environmental personnel across the country.

Qom to Mashad: A counter-map in motion

By Xavier Villar

MADRID – To name a territory is to claim it. The inscription of a name upon a landscape is never a neutral act of description; it is the imposition of an order. Modern cartography and toponymy executed a foundational violence when they converted the living continuity of inhabited spaces into the rigid grammar of property.

By drawing lines and assigning new names, colonial administrations erased existing Islamic topographies. They replaced networks of affinity, mobility, and memory with static parcels of exclusive dominion, naturalizing resource extraction and bureaucratic control. The map did not reflect reality; it produced the reality it claimed to describe. Long after the colonial metropolises retreated, this inherited cartographic structure remained, operating as a ghost that continues to organize perception and delimit what is politically imaginable.

The nation-state presents itself as the natural container of political life, demanding that authority, law, and identity be exhausted within an imaginary line drawn on a map. But this supposed formal neutrality conceals a deeply racialized genealogy. Race operated as the organizing principle of this spatial division, dictating who could inhabit the territory and which forms of sovereignty were deemed legitimate. To maintain this closed system, colonial modernity had to domesticate Islamic complexity. It achieved this through a process of epistemic hijacking, systematically reducing Islam to the sphere of private religion. The vast juridical and ethical tradition that historically organized commerce, hospitality, and coexistence across continents was stripped of its political teeth. Shrines, pilgrimages, and transnational loyalties were relegated to the realm of folklore or individual devotion. Secularity, in this context, was not a neutral separation of church and state; it was a technology of containment designed to neutralize an alternative political rationality.

Today, the decolonial critique often stops at the seminar room. When efforts to de-

colonize geographic knowledge limit themselves to deconstructing imperial discourses or drawing counter-maps on paper, they remain trapped in semiotics. Decolonization runs the severe risk of becoming an academic metaphor if it dispenses with confronting the materiality of spatial violence. Settler colonialism and structures of racial supremacy reproduce themselves in the everyday reality of borders, migratory controls, and the commodification of sacred spaces. Certain currents of critical geography propose negotiated, interconnected spatialities, but this merely accepts the logic of the colonial framework. To negotiate a border is to implicitly recognize the state’s authority to define it. Radical decolonization demands the physical deactivation of the political ontology that naturalizes the division of the world into rival state entities. It requires bodily and material practices that destabilize the state on the very terrain of its exercise.

Islamic political grammar, particularly in its Shia tradition, operates under an ontology that fundamentally resists this secular partition. Western sociology typically tries to explain transnational Muslim solidarity through the concept of imagined communities, reducing affinity to a psychological or discursive construction. This fails entirely to capture the material reality of the Ummah. The Ummah precedes the colonial encounter and materializes through ritual, jurisprudence, and ethical practice. Islamic spatiality organizes itself around nodes of spiritual authority that weave a network across vast distances. The shrines of Qom, Karbala, Najaf, and Mashhad are not merely cities trapped within the rival jurisdictions of Iran and Iraq. They are autonomous gravitational centers. They update a shared memory and configure an ethics of habitation that traverses the state map, ignores it, and ultimately denies it.

This theoretical geography was vividly materialized in the transit of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei’s coffin through these very cities. Against a Westphalian cartography that produces space through closure and interstate fragmentation, the funeral pro-

cession carries significance beyond the immediate human tragedy.

Iran’s network of environmental guards plays a critical role in protecting biodiversity, monitoring endangered wildlife, combating illegal hunting and logging, preventing wildfires and preserving fragile ecosystems stretching from the Zagros Mountains to the Persian Gulf coastline. Their work frequently requires extended deployments in isolated regions where families often accompany them because of the remoteness of their posts.

Environmental organizations have long argued that conservation personnel should remain outside the scope of armed conflict, emphasizing that ranger stations serve ecological and humanitarian purposes rather than military objectives.

The deaths of Hassanzadeh’s family have therefore resonated far beyond Hormozgan, becoming a symbol, for many Iranians, of the human cost of continued hostilities.

As news of the tragedy spread, Iranian officials renewed calls for international organizations to investigate the strike and hold those responsible accountable under international law.

For Javad Hassanzadeh, however, the legal and diplomatic debates cannot erase the personal loss.

A man whose life’s mission has been to safeguard Iran’s wildlife now returns to a ranger station marked not only by damaged buildings but by the silence left behind by the family he could not protect.

In the forests and mountains where he once stood watch over nature, the cost of conflict is no longer measured only in shattered infrastructure or diplomatic disputes. It is measured in the empty home of a ranger who survived the attack, only to lose those waiting for him there.

cession deployed an ummatic counter-cartography. It was a mapping in action. The moving coffin produced a physical presence that reactivated sacred geography as an archipelago of spiritual authority overflowing the nation-state. The itinerary traced by the procession ignored customs, migratory controls, and military jurisdictions. Moving between Iraq and Iran, the body transfigured the space occupied by the shrines, articulating them within a narrative of continuity that categorically rejected subjection to the logic of the nation-state.

The collective mourning accompanying the coffin activated a memory of divine sovereignty that precedes and exceeds secular legitimacy. The millions of people congregating in the streets, crossing borders, and converging in the holy cities produced a political space irreducible to territorialized citizenship. This multitude lacked a common passport, a unified administrative language, and a shared state jurisdiction. What cohered it was a belonging to an ontology that colonialism had declared obsolete. The transit rendered borders irrelevant by making visible a loyalty operating in a distinct ontological register.

The colonial map remains drawn on paper, yet the ground beneath it is transited by a community that has recovered the capacity to name, inhabit, and move according to its own truth. The funeral procession dispensed with the recognition of the international community; its legitimacy emanated entirely from the congregation of mourners and the reupdating of shared memory. This material practice exposes the profound fragility of Westphalian sovereignty, which depends on the illusion that its borders are natural and insurmountable. When pilgrimage and collective mourning traverse those borders as mere bureaucratic fictions, the nation-state is exposed in its historical contingency. The decolonization of space does not require a new treaty. It affirms the ontological invalidity of those limits for a community that understands itself through a preexisting, indivisible geography.

180 MPs call for terminating MoU, demand strategic deterrence over the Strait of Hormuz

From Page 1 ►
Redefining Iran's defense doctrine

A central pillar of the joint statement was a demand to prioritize legislative measures aimed at strengthening Iran's deterrence capabilities, specifically targeting the security and management of the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

The lawmakers stated: "Alongside the critical responsibilities of the Armed Forces and the Supreme National Security Council, Parliament considers it its duty to introduce the necessary legal measures for decisive deterrence. These should range from upgrading and fundamentally transforming the country's defense doctrine to passing legislation governing the Strait of Hormuz. We therefore expect the esteemed Presiding Board of Parliament to give this critical issue the highest priority and place it at the top of the legislative agenda."

Expressing absolute support for the Armed Forces, particularly the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), the lawmakers pledged full parliamentary backing to ensure that the military receives all necessary resources to safeguard Iran's sovereign waters.

Vengeance for martyred Leader
The parliamentary statement also reaffirmed the nation's sacred duty to avenge the martyrdom of Ayatollah Khamenei, who was assassinated on February 28 during the opening day of the joint US-Israeli aggression against Tehran.

"The martyrdom of the Leader of the Ummah has made vengeance for his blood and retribution against the perpetrators, masterminds, and



those who ordered this grave crime inevitable and impossible to forgo," the lawmakers declared.

The initial US-Israeli war on Iran, which lasted 39 days, resulted in thousands of Iranian casualties but ultimately ended in strategic failure for the aggressors. Faced with devastating retaliatory strikes by Iran's armed forces against Israeli targets and US bases in the Persian Gulf region, Donald Trump was forced to capitulate and agree to a ceasefire on April 8.

While international observers and Western media widely characterized the US-Israeli offensive as a severe strategic miscalculation that left Iran in a stronger regional position, recent American airstrikes indicate that Washington has failed to learn from its past mistakes.

The latest escalation centers heavily on control of the Strait of Hormuz. While Tehran had previously maintained that commercial vessels could safely transit the strategic waterway under Iranian coordination, Donald Trump has sought to illegally dominate the strait. On Monday, Trump bizarrely

claimed that the US would take over the passage and impose a 20% toll on all cargo shipped through it.

Commenting on the bizarre declaration, Rob Geist Pinfold, a lecturer in international security at King's College London, told Al Jazeera that the US threat to impose tolls "is really indicative of how the US went into this conflict without any coherent or clear strategy."

"It's a really strange dynamic," Pinfold noted, highlighting that Washington continues to grossly underestimate Iran's capacity to set the regional agenda. "As a result, we see the US floundering and coming up with some of these, frankly, strange and illogical declarations from President Trump."

In swift retaliation for the renewed US airstrikes on civilian infrastructure in southern and southwestern Iran, the IRGC Aerospace Force executed highly coordinated missile and drone strikes against US military assets in the region.

According to an official IRGC statement, the retaliatory operation successfully targeted the

headquarters of the US Fifth Fleet in Bahrain, setting its critical fuel storage facilities ablaze. In addition to setting these facilities on fire, the precision strikes completely destroyed a Patriot radar system, the Fifth Fleet's air-control radar, and a C-RAM early warning radar system.

The illusion of Western treaties
The latest collapse of the June 17 MoU serves as a definitive historical lesson for the Islamic Republic and the wider region. Once again, the actions of the United States have demonstrated that Western signatures are entirely worthless and that treaties with Washington are merely stalling tactics designed to mask continued imperial aggression.

By targeting Iranian civilian infrastructure and reneging on a signed peace agreement within weeks, the Trump administration has shattered any remaining illusions regarding diplomatic engagement with aggressive powers.

As the 180 lawmakers asserted, Iran's security, its de facto control over the Strait of Hormuz, and the legacy of its martyred Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, cannot be guaranteed at a negotiating table. True security is born from the fire of self-reliance and overwhelming military deterrence.

The devastatingly precise retaliatory strikes by the IRGC against the US Fifth Fleet in Bahrain send an unmistakable message to Washington: the era of American unilateralism in the Persian Gulf is over. If the United States refuses to respect diplomatic agreements, it will be forced to respect Iran's iron on the battlefield.

Ayatollah Khamenei hails massive public participation in martyred Leader's funeral

From Page 1 ► From its very first hours, the sprawling Mosalla was packed with citizens, families of martyrs, veterans, youth, and a prominent assembly of high-ranking national and military officials who gathered to honor the late Leader's legacy.

In attendance at the solemn ceremony in Tehran were the sons of the martyred Leader, alongside key heads of state and top officials. Among those present were President Masoud Pezeshkian, First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref, head of the Judiciary Gholam-Hossein Mohseni-Eje'i, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, and senior military and political officials.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei thanked the Iranian and Iraqi people for their massive participation in the funeral and memorial ceremonies of the martyred Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

The message of gratitude was delivered by Hojjatoleslam Seyyed Mostafa Khamenei, the martyred Leader's eldest son. He said patience "is in no way incompatible with revenge and confronting the world's evildoers who were involved in these great crimes."

This significant gathering in the capital runs parallel to the deeply emotional commemorations held Monday across other key cities. In Isfahan, a major ceremony drew vast crowds to the Golestan-e Shohada Husseinieh, attended by local citizens and provincial officials. Simultaneously, a highly spiritual commemoration took place on Monday night



at the holy Imam Reza Shrine in Mashhad—the final resting place of the late Leader—where his sons stood alongside prominent religious scholars to receive condolences from a sea of grieving pilgrims in the illuminated Great Prophet Courtyard.

These concurrent national gatherings reflect the broader, historic funeral and burial ceremonies that have gripped the nation over the past two weeks. Following his tragic assassination on February 28 at the start of the joint US-Israeli war, millions of mourners initially poured into the streets of Tehran in early July for the primary funeral processions. The ceremonies then extended across borders, with massive processions passing through the holy Iraqi cities of Najaf and Karbala, where millions of pilgrims lined the streets to offer prayers. The late Leader was ultimately laid to rest in an emotional burial ceremony at the holy Imam Reza Shrine last Thursday, marking the conclusion of the official state mourning period.

Iran urges UNSC to hold US accountable for breaches of MoU

TEHRAN — Iran has formally called on the United Nations Security Council to 'immediate and decisive action against the United States,' accusing Washington of systematically violating the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding and undermining efforts to preserve regional peace following months of military confrontation.

In a letter addressed to UN Secretary-General António Guterres and the President of the Security Council, Iran's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Amir Saeed Iravani, argued that the United States has repeatedly breached the commitments it undertook under the Islamabad Memorandum, signed on June 17, 2026. Tehran contends that Washington's conduct has not only rendered the agreement largely ineffective but has also posed a serious threat to international peace and security.

The communication, which Iran requested be circulated as an official Security Council document, presents a detailed legal and political case against the United States, alleging violations of the UN Charter, the principles of international law, and the commitments enshrined in the bilateral memorandum.

According to the letter, the Islamabad Memorandum was concluded after months of conflict that began with 'unprovoked acts of aggression by the United States and Israel against the Islamic Republic.' Iran argues that the agreement was deliberately structured around the principle of reciprocal obligations rather than mutual trust, reflecting the deep mistrust between the two sides while providing a diplomatic framework for resolving outstanding disputes.

However, Tehran maintains that the United States began violating the agreement almost immediately after it entered into force.

Iran alleges that Washington failed to honor its commitments through a combination of military, political and economic measures. These include repeated military strikes against Iranian territory, the revocation of authorizations for Iranian oil exports, the imposition of new sanctions, and attempts to establish an alternative maritime route in the Strait of Hormuz outside the arrangements recognized under the memorandum.

The Iranian envoy argues that such actions constitute fundamental and material breaches of the agreement, particularly provisions related to the cessation of hostilities, respect for Iran's sovereignty, maritime security arrangements, sanctions relief, and the implementation of reciprocal obligations.

One of Tehran's principal complaints con-

cerns the Strait of Hormuz, which occupies a central place in the memorandum. Iran argues that Paragraph 5 of the agreement explicitly recognizes the Islamic Republic's responsibility for determining arrangements governing the safe passage of commercial shipping through the strategic waterway.

According to the letter, the United States violated that commitment by promoting and operating a parallel maritime corridor under American military protection, effectively bypassing the agreed mechanism and undermining ongoing consultations between Iran and Oman regarding the future administration of maritime traffic through the Strait.

Tehran further argues that subsequent statements by senior American officials, including proposals to collect transit fees and references to Washington acting as the "Guardian of the Hormuz Strait," directly contradicted the commitments contained in the agreement and challenged Iran's sovereign rights over the maritime arrangements outlined in the memorandum.

Beyond maritime issues, Iran accuses Washington of systematically undermining the economic provisions of the agreement. The letter cites the revocation of licenses permitting Iranian oil sales, restrictions on access to Iranian frozen assets, and the imposition of additional sanctions as evidence that the United States failed to fulfill commitments intended to facilitate economic normalization following the ceasefire.

Iran also argues that the United States continued military operations despite provisions calling for the permanent termination of hostilities. The letter refers repeated air strikes against Iranian territory throughout late June and early July, stating that hundreds of targets across Iran were struck during successive military operations. Tehran contends that these attacks represent clear violations of both the Islamabad Memorandum and Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, which prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of states.

The communication also highlights a series of public statements by senior American officials that Tehran characterizes as explicit threats of force. According to the letter, declarations referring to renewed military action, threats against Iranian infrastructure, and warnings of additional strikes are inconsistent with the ceasefire provisions of the memorandum and further demonstrate 'Washington's unwillingness to honor its commitments.'

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Qomi: Retribution for Soleimani assassination must remain a national priority

From Page 1 ► Speaking at a conference titled The Theology of Retribution, Qomi said those who ordered and carried out the assassination of the late commander of the IRGC Quds Force "must face retribution and be brought to justice."

Hojjatoleslam Qomi, has stressed that bringing to justice those responsible for the assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani remains a fundamental obligation and should not be overshadowed by broader strategic objectives.

Speaking at a public event, Qomi referred to remarks by the late Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, following Soleimani's assassination, saying the Leader had pledged that the Islamic Republic would avenge the martyred commander by holding his killers accountable.

Qomi said Ayatollah Khamenei had described

Iran's missile strike on the Ain al-Asad Air Base, the massive participation of people in Iran and Iraq in the funeral processions for Soleimani and his companions, and the erosion of America's aura of invincibility as significant responses to the assassination.

According to Qomi, the late Leader also emphasized that the eventual expulsion of the United States from the region would constitute a higher strategic level of retribution. However, he said Ayatollah Khamenei had made clear that this objective should never replace the obligation to punish those who ordered and carried out Soleimani's assassination.

"Even if larger strategic goals are achieved, the responsibility to seek retribution against those directly involved in the assassination remains unchanged," Qomi said.

LATEST NEWS

■ Brazil's Lula calls US plan for Hormuz fee 'piracy'

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said Monday that plans by US President Donald Trump to impose hefty fees on ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz would turn the United States into a "pirate" state.

Trump vowed earlier to reinstate a blockade of Iran's ports on the strait and slap a levy of 20 percent on all cargo shipped through Hormuz to pay for keeping the narrow waterway open, AFP reported.

Tehran started blocking the key conduit for petroleum shipments after the US and Israel launched attacks in late February.

Speaking at a public event in Sao Paulo state, Lula said: "President Trump tweeted that he would unblock the Strait of Hormuz. But for every ship unblocked, every ship removed from the strait, the oil owner must pay him 20 percent.

"This used to be considered piracy," Lula said.

"A major nation like the United States, which I believe has fought against piracy for a long time, cannot now become a pirate," he added, warning that the conflict was driving up the prices of basic foodstuffs in Brazil including beans, rice, tomatoes and onions, as well as fuel.

■ Army spokesman: Respect for Iran's rights sole way for reopening of Hormuz Strait

Respecting Iran's rights and adherence to the Islamabad MoU are the only conditions for the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, the Iranian Army's spokesman said, warning that Tehran will not accept any arrangements imposed through pressure or military threats.

Speaking at a public gathering in Tehran, Brigadier General Mohammad Akraminia said the Iranian Armed Forces would continue defending the country's interests and would not back down from safeguarding Iran's rights in the strategic waterway.

He said US acceptance of the arrangements outlined in the Iran-US memorandum of understanding is essential, adding that Washington had later sought to establish an alternative route in the Strait of Hormuz despite previously accepting Iran's proposed arrangements.

The Army spokesman warned that any action in the Strait of Hormuz outside the agreed framework would face a firm response from Iran, stressing that the waterway would not be reopened through US aggression or pressure.

■ Qalibaf extends condolences over death of former Qatari Emir

Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Ghalibaf has extended his condolences following the passing of Qatar's former emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani.

On Tuesday, Abolfazl Amouei, the Parliament Speaker's Special Assistant for International Affairs, visited the Qatari Embassy in Tehran to deliver Qalibaf's message of condolence to Qatar's ambassador.

In his message, Ghalibaf paid tribute to the late Sheikh Hamad's contributions to Qatar's development and progress and expressed his deepest sympathies to the Qatari government and people. He also wished the bereaved family and the people of Qatar patience and fortitude during this time of mourning.

■ Iran's ambassador to Russia outlines six strategic lessons Russians learned from recent wars on Iran

Iran's envoy to Moscow, Kazem Jalali, says Russian think tanks and officials have fundamentally revised their assessments of Iran following the two recent wars.

He highlighted six key lessons drawn by Russian strategists: sanctions precede war; Western pressure is a marathon, not a sprint; retreat fuels enemy appetite; the West targets leaders physically; internal divisions invite foreign intervention; and nations must rely on internal capacity, not trade partners.

Jalali added that Russia now views Iran's resistance, military performance, and political cohesion as a strategic model for non-Western front nations.

■ Oman's FM: Persian Gulf security threatened from outside, especially Tel Aviv

Oman's Foreign Minister, Badr al-Busaidi, stated that the primary threats to Persian Gulf security originate from external decisions and actions, particularly in Tel Aviv. He emphasized that ongoing negotiations aim to establish a long-term framework guaranteeing freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, with Oman cooperating alongside Iran and the international community. Al-Busaidi described the recent war as a disaster lacking UN authorization, stressing that Persian Gulf security infrastructure, built since 1979 on flawed assumptions about Iran, must be comprehensively revisited. He called for inclusive regional cooperation involving all eight Persian Gulf states.

Iran, China agree to strengthen economic ties with joint committee roadmap

TEHRAN- Iranian Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, in a meeting with Cong Peiwu, Chinese Ambassador to Iran, emphasized the determination of his country to develop sustainable and strategic relations between the two countries.

According to IRNA, Seyyed Ali Madanizadeh, the Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, on Monday evening, in a meeting with the Chinese Ambassador to Iran, while emphasizing the development and consolidation of strategic relations between Iran and China, appreciated the support of that country, especially during the aggressions of enemies against Iran, and described the four-point proposal of the President of the People's Republic of China for the return of peace and stability to the region as constructive.

The development of economic and commercial relations and the establishment of necessary arrangements for holding the joint committee of economic cooperation between the two countries by the end of this year were among the issues that the two sides emphasized on their implementation in this meeting, and it was decided that experts from the two countries would take the necessary measures in this regard.

It is worth mentioning that Ambassador Cong Peiwu in an article exclusively published by the Tehran Times on June 22, wrote:

"Recently, China released a white paper titled 'More Just and Equitable Global Governance: China's Principles, Proposals and Actions,' which Foreign Minister Wang Yi thoroughly introduced at a press conference. Having personally witnessed the healthy and stable growth of China-Iran relations over recent years, I deeply feel that China's principles and proposals on global governance highly resonate with Iran's time-honored cultural traditions, foreign policy orientation, and the aspirations of its people. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the core essence of the white paper to our Iranian friends from four dimensions and jointly explore the broad prospects for China



and Iran to march forward hand in hand."

The article elaborates on four pillars of China Iran alignment based on the white paper:

1. Opposing unilateral hegemonism – Both nations reject the "law of the jungle," unilateral sanctions, and military coercion. China supports Iran's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and both advocate for UN centered international law and dialogue over force.

2. Promoting the Global South – China and Iran, as key members of the Global South (including through SCO and BRICS), work to enhance developing countries' voice and decision making in global affairs, injecting "Southern strength" into governance reforms.

3. Advancing civilizational dialogue – Rooted in ancient Silk Road ties, both countries champion mutual learning among civilizations, supporting the Global Civilization Initiative and the UN designated International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations.

4. Implementing the Global Governance Initiative (GGI) – Iran was an early backer and a founding member of the Group of Friends of GGI. The two sides commit to translating GGI principles (sovereign equality, rule of law, multilateralism, people centeredness, and real action) into practical cooperation.

The piece concludes by noting the 55th anniversary of diplomatic ties and calls for strengthened coordination to build a more just global governance system and a community with a shared future for humanity.

Connecting electricity grids of Iran, Russia, an important axis of bilateral energy co-op

TEHRAN- The Minister of Energy of Iran and the Minister of Energy of Russia, in a joint meeting, while reviewing the implementation process of the roadmap for electricity cooperation between the two countries, emphasized the development of cooperation in the field of grid connection, technology transfer, equipment exports and imports, the construction of the Sirik power plant, and the formation of joint working groups to accelerate the implementation of strategic projects.

According to IRNA from the Ministry of Energy, Abbas Aliabadi, the Minister of Energy of Iran, and Sergey Tslyov, the Minister of Energy of Russia, met and held talks on July 13 afternoon in Tehran.

In this meeting, the development of cooperation in the energy sector, particularly within the framework of the "roadmap" agreements for electricity cooperation between the two countries, as well as examining the details of cooperation in the field of equipment exports and imports, especially power industry equipment, were among the main topics of discussion.

Also, considering the results of economic studies conducted by "Munenco" company in 2019, the economic and political conditions for implementing the project to connect the electricity grids of Iran and Russia via the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the necessity of forming a trilateral working group among the energy ministers of the three countries were examined, so that if conditions permit, the transfer of a limited capacity of electricity from southern Russia, especially in the summer season, could be made possible.

In line with the implementation of the roadmap for scientific and technical cooperation in the electricity sector, emphasis was also placed on the transfer of gas turbine technology, localization of parts production, implementation of 765 kV transmission lines, smartening of the electricity grid, supply of high-voltage equipment, development of hydropower projects with the aim of joint production, and launching a carbon market for climate change management.

In this meeting, Aliabadi, while appreciating

the presence and accompaniment of the Russian Energy Minister at the farewell ceremony for the Martyr Leader of the Islamic Revolution, stated: The importance of this meeting is because Iran and Russia have extensive and strategic cooperation in the field of electrical interconnection, supply of power industry equipment, renewable energy, and conventional energy.

He added: Regarding the joint Sirik power plant, it was decided that cooperation between the companies responsible for implementing this project should continue, and the two governments should also support the continuation of this cooperation so that the predicted goals are achieved.

The Minister of Energy counted the formation of a joint Iran-Russia working group as one of the most important achievements of this meeting and said: This working group will pave the way for advancing joint projects, including the connection of the electricity grids of the two countries.

Aliabadi also, referring to the programs of the 14th government in the field of energy storage, stated: In the past, energy storage was mainly done through hydroelectric power plants, but today, the development of storage systems in various scales, from household to industrial, is on the agenda, and cooperation between Iran and Russia in this area will also continue.

The Russian Energy Minister also, on the sidelines of this meeting, referring to the discussions held in the fields of renewable energy, electricity storage, and energy transmission projects, announced the agreement of the two sides to form a joint working group with the presence of private sector representatives to accelerate the implementation of agreements.

Sergey Tslyov also said about the Sirik power plant: Although some issues still need to be reviewed, the two companies responsible for implementing this project must continue their cooperation according to the provisions of the contract, and we hope that with the cooperation of the two ministries, the existing challenges in the path of implementing this project will be resolved.

When military strategy becomes economic terrorism against a nation Why does Washington target a railway bridge 700 miles from battlefield?

TEHRAN- On the night of July 9, 2026, American cruise missiles struck the Aq-Tekeh Khan railway bridge near Aq-Qala in Iran's northern Golestan province. The target was not a military base, not an air defense battery, not a missile silo—it was a civilian infrastructure node more than 700 miles from the Strait of Hormuz, the conflict's primary theater of operations. Seven projectiles hit the bridge, damaging the Gorgan-Incheh Borun railway line. No casualties were reported. Yet the symbolism and strategic implications of this strike demand urgent scrutiny.

This attack marks a dangerous escalation in Washington's campaign against Iran—a calculated shift from contesting maritime chokepoints to systematically dismantling the overland corridors that sustain the Iranian economy and connect the nation to its Eurasian partners. The United States is no longer fighting a military confrontation; it is waging economic warfare against a civilian population, targeting the very infrastructure that keeps food on tables and medicine in hospitals.

A bridge too far: Strategic logic behind the strike

What makes the Aq-Qala bridge attack so troubling is not simply that it targeted civilian infrastructure—though that alone should alarm the international community. It is the distance from the battlefield and the nature of the target that reveal Washington's true intentions. Previous U.S. strikes concentrated on military installations along Iran's southern coast: Bandar Abbas, Sirik, Jask, and Qeshm. The Aq-Qala bridge lies in the northeast, far from any conventional military theater.

So why this bridge? The answer lies in its geographical and economic significance. The Aq Tekeh Khan bridge is part of the China-Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran rail corridor, a vital overland route connecting Iran to Central Asia, Russia, and ultimately China. During the U.S. naval blockade of Iran's Gulf ports, this corridor became one of the few remaining arteries through which Iranian trade could flow. Chinese freight traffic along this route tripled, and Russia had been using it for cargo shipments to Iran since late 2025.

By striking this bridge, Washington is sending an unmistakable message: it will not merely contest Iran's control of the Strait of Hormuz—it will actively dismantle the alternative routes that allow Iran to survive when the strait is closed. This is not a military tactic; it is economic strangulation dressed in military uniform.

The corridor war: America's real target is Eurasian integration

The attack on Aq-Qala cannot be understood in isolation. It is part of a broader U.S. strategy to undermine Iran's role in emerging Eurasian transport networks—networks that challenge Washington's vision of regional order. The bridge sits on a route that feeds into both the North-South Transport Corridor (connecting Iran to Russia and India) and East-West corridors linking China to Europe via Central Asia.

This is precisely why the strike matters beyond Iran's borders. When the sea lanes closed, Iran's rail links north and east became the arteries of an alternative logistics architecture—one that connects directly to Chinese and Russian networks that have grown more active as maritime access narrowed. By targeting this bridge, Washington is not just hitting Iran; it is sending a warning to Beijing and Moscow that their efforts to build overland trade routes through Iran will be met with American bombs.



TEHRAN- The Minister of Transport and Urban Development of Iran and the Deputy Minister of Transport of Tajikistan, in a meeting in Tehran, emphasized the development of transportation, transit, and logistics cooperation, leveraging mutual capacities, and expanding cooperation in road, rail, air, and port sectors.

According to IRNA from the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, the meet-



As one analysis put it, the United States is shifting the conflict "from sea lanes to supply chains". The Aq-Qala strike signals that Washington is no longer only contesting Iran's control of the strait—it is starting to target the infrastructure that lets Iran function when the strait is contested. This is a fundamental escalation with profound implications for regional stability and international trade.

Civilian infrastructure as a weapon for war

The United States has attempted to justify the Aq-Qala strike by claiming the bridge had military-logistical utility. But this rationale collapses under even cursory scrutiny. The bridge is a civilian structure on a commercial railway line used primarily for moving grain, consumer goods, and raw materials. Its destruction would have no meaningful impact on Iran's military capabilities in the south. Its only significant effect would be to disrupt the supply of essential goods to the Iranian people.

This pattern is not new. Throughout the conflict, U.S. and Israeli strikes have hit civilian targets across Iran, including the Iranian Space Research Center, weather stations, and broadcasting facilities. Earlier attacks killed 168 children at a girls' school in Minab. The Aq-Qala bridge joins a growing list of civilian infrastructure targets that Washington has deemed legitimate.

Under international humanitarian law, parties to a conflict must distinguish between military objectives and civilian objects. Attacks that intentionally target civilian infrastructure—or that are disproportionate in their expected civilian harm—may amount to war crimes. When U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth was asked whether attacks on Iranian civilian infrastructure could constitute war crimes, he dismissed the question as "disingenuous". That dismissal speaks volumes about Washington's contempt for international law when it stands in the way of its strategic objectives.

The Iranian government has condemned the strikes as a "flagrant violation" of the UN Charter. Iran's Foreign Ministry has accused Washington of undermining regional stability and violating ceasefire agreements. These are not mere rhetorical flourishes—they are accurate descriptions of a campaign that systematically targets the civilian fabric of Iranian society.

Human cost: More than bricks and mortar

It is easy to speak of bridges and corridors in abstract terms—to reduce this attack to a chess move in a geopolitical game. But we

must never forget what is at stake: the daily lives of millions of ordinary Iranians.

The Aq-Qala bridge sits on a route that has been used to transport essential goods—food, medicine, and raw materials—during the naval blockade. By damaging this bridge, Washington is not striking a military target; it is threatening the food security of a nation. The Iranian provincial authorities confirmed that essential goods distribution had not been interrupted, but the message is clear: next time, it might be.

The timing of the attack—during the funeral of the late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, as millions of Iranians gathered in Mashhad—adds a layer of psychological warfare to the physical destruction. The IRGC accused the United States of targeting the bridge to disrupt traffic and exert psychological pressure on millions of Iranians. This is not collateral damage; this is deliberate intimidation.

What kind of nation targets a railway bridge—a structure that carries grain to feed children and medicine to treat the sick—simply to send a political message? What kind of leadership orders strikes on civilian infrastructure hundreds of miles from any battlefield, knowing full well that the only people who will suffer are ordinary families trying to survive?

Conclusion: A dangerous precedent for the world

The attack on the Aq-Qala railway bridge represents a dangerous new phase in the U.S.-Iran conflict—one that threatens to normalize the targeting of civilian infrastructure as a legitimate instrument of state policy. If Washington can strike a railway bridge in northern Iran with impunity, what stops it from targeting bridges, power plants, or hospitals in other nations that defy its will?

The international community must condemn this attack in the strongest possible terms. The United Nations must investigate whether these strikes constitute war crimes under international humanitarian law. And the nations of the world—particularly those that value their own sovereignty and the safety of their own civilians—must recognize that the precedent being set in Iran today will be applied to them tomorrow.

Iran has already demonstrated its resilience. The Aq-Qala bridge was reopened to rail traffic in less than 24 hours. But the fact that Iran can rebuild does not excuse the act of destruction. The question the world must ask—and the question that Washington must answer—is this: When does "military strategy" become economic terrorism against an entire nation?

Iran, Tajikistan emphasize transport, transit, logistics co-op expansion

ing on Monday, July 13 between Farzaneh Sadegh, Minister of Transport and Urban Development of Iran, and Shayesteh Saeed Moradzadeh, Deputy Minister of Transport of Tajikistan, was held in the framework of following up on the agreements from the visit of the President of Tajikistan to Tehran.

In this meeting, the two sides reviewed the latest status of bilateral cooperation and discussed solutions to strengthen cooperation in the transportation and transit of goods, the development of logistics infrastructure, and the enhancement of regional connectivity.

Furthermore, the existing capacities for expanding logistics cooperation, developing transit, and utilizing the capacity of the ports of Iran were examined, and the two sides emphasized accelerating the implementation of joint agreements and making maximum use of existing capacities in the path of developing transportation relations.

Additionally, solutions for developing cooperation in the field of transit corridors, facilitating the movement of goods, enhancing regional cooperation, and creating the necessary platforms for increasing trade and transit exchanges among regional countries were discussed and exchanged.

The two sides also emphasized the continuation of consultations and holding joint meetings at various levels, especially at the ministerial level, in order to follow up on agreements and develop bilateral cooperation in the field of transportation and transit. The development of air transport cooperation, increasing flights between cities of the two countries, exchanging technical expertise, as well as expanding rail cooperation, increasing freight transport capacity, and examining new rail routes were among other topics discussed in this meeting.

Yemen draws a hard line in the skies, imposes a new equation

The bombing of Sana’a airport drags Riyadh into a self-destructive strategic trap

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — The desperate Saudi bombardment of Sana’a International Airport on July 13 has backfired, exposing the deep panic of the Riyadh, Washington, and Tel Aviv axis.

Saudi warplanes bombed the runway to block a civilian Mahan Air flight carrying an Ansarullah delegation back from the funeral of Iran’s martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

This followed a July 3 incident where Yemeni air defenses forced retreating Saudi jets to abandon their attempt to intercept the same aircraft.

Meanwhile, a deadly July 5 operation south of Hodeidah eliminated over a dozen Saudi-backed mercenaries, proving Yemeni resolve remained lethal. By targeting vital civil aviation infrastructure, Riyadh seeks to hold millions of sick and stranded civilians hostage.

Yet, Riyadh’s attempt to restore the siege was immediately humiliated as the defiant Iranian aircraft bypassed the damaged runway to land safely at Hodeidah International Airport.

Many ecstatic Yemenis rushed to the tarmac, waving national and Palestinian flags to celebrate this physical rupture of the air blockade.

Re-writing the rules of deterrence

Hours after the Sana’a bombing, the Yemeni Armed Forces launched a retaliatory strike on Abha International Airport, neutralizing its op-



erations with a coordinated wave of ballistic missiles and drones.

This swift strike ended the de-escalation phase that had stalled since 2022 due to Saudi procrastination and bad-faith delays in paying salaries and lifting restrictions.

The target was chosen with deliberate proportionality, showing that any blow to Sana’a will be met with immediate pain on Saudi soil.

On July 14, Yemen’s armed forces issued a direct warning to global airlines to avoid Saudi airspace, effectively establishing a de facto no-fly zone.

Yemeni Military Media has released coordinates under the banner “The response is coming.” The footage mapped the vulnerability of major hubs like King Khalid Airport in Riyadh, King Abdulaziz Airport in Jeddah, and King Fahd Airport in Dammam, alongside massive maritime lifelines like the Jazan, Jeddah Islamic, and King Fahd Industrial ports, as well as the Ras Tanura refinery.

Yemen’s capabilities are fundamentally different from 2022. In past confrontations, operations targeting Abqaiq and Khurais were executed with far older technology.

Equipped with hypersonic missiles and precise solid-fuel rockets tested in Red Sea operations supporting Gaza, Sana’a can now inflict catastrophic damage.

This military evolution highlights the complete failure of the U.S.-led “Operation Prosperity Guardian.”

Having failed in its military misadventures in the region, Washington may have pushed Riyadh to reignite the domestic conflict. Senior Yemeni officials have warned that if Riyadh persists, Yemen’s military will shut down the Bab al-Mandab Strait.

A popular mandate against imperialism

The aggression triggered a massive wave of grassroots fury, drawing millions to armed rallies in Sana’a’s Al-Sabeen Square and the revolutionary heartland of Saada.

For Saada, a province that still remembers the horrific 2018 Saudi-U.S. school bus bombing that murdered 40 children, this is a deeply personal fight against a system that has weaponized famine and blockade for over a decade.

The ongoing general mobilization across Sana’a, Al-Hodeidah, Dhamar, and Hajjah proves that this resistance is a collective, grassroots phenomenon.

Popular anger has matured into organized defiance under Sayyid Abdul Malik Badr al-Din al-Houthi’s general mobilization decree, uniting powerful tribes like the Uzr to prepare for total liberation.

Axios reports that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman sought and received a green light from Donald Trump for the airport strikes, underscoring Riyadh’s subservience to the Western-Israeli agenda.

This highlights that the attack is also a proxy campaign in the broader U.S.-Israeli confrontation with Iran.

However, this axis has underestimated the strategic depth of the Resistance Front. Yemen’s military spokesman, Brigadier General Yahya Saree, publicly expressed gratitude to Iran for its unwavering diplomatic and humanitarian support.

In this new phase, Yemen has proven that the blockade is a paper tiger, and Riyadh must now choose between lifting the siege completely or watching its modern economic vision go up in flames.

Rubio declares war on international law by openly threatening the ICC



By staff writer

TEHRAN- Writing an article in The Wall Street Journal on Monday, U.S. Secretary of State issued a broadside against the International Criminal Court (ICC) that in 2024 issued arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former war minister Yoav Gallant for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza.

“The ICC’s interfering with American military and law enforcement operations isn’t just only a grave overreach of its purported authorities. It would mean the death of the U.S. as a sovereign and independent nation,” Rubio wrote.

Before the publication of the article, the U.S. had started a smear campaign against ICC chief Karim Khan and even threatened military attack against the international body. For example, in November 2024, Senator Tom Cotton, who is under the influence of AIPAC, threatened military action against the ICC after arrest warrants for Netanyahu and Gallant, invoking a controversial U.S. law known as “The Hague Invasion Act”.

In an inflammatory statement on social media, Cotton declared: “The ICC is a kangaroo court and Karim Khan is a deranged fanatic. Woe to him and anyone who tries to enforce these outlaw warrants. Let me give them all a friendly reminder: the American law on the ICC is known as The Hague Invasion Act for a reason. Think about it.”

At no point in recent decades has the United States been so brazen in violating international law and norms or so openly dismissive of internationally recognized legal and moral principles. Rubio’s public threat to dismantle the ICC “brick by brick” has sent shivers down the spines of the international community.

In 2025, Donald Trump also signed an executive order sanctioning ICC judges over investigations into top Israeli officials.

In 2024, a female ICC staff member accused Khan of sexual misconduct. Khan has consistently denied the allegations. The allegations against him may ultimately prove to be true, or they may turn out to be an attempt to discredit him. Either way, even if Khan were found guilty of sexual misconduct, it would not invalidate or negate his legal reasoning that Israel committed war crimes in Gaza.

Such pressure and the allegations against the ICC’s chief prosecutor ultimately led Khan to temporarily step aside from his duties in May 2025.

In a new move, the UK’s Bar Standards Board suspended Khan from practicing law in England and Wales while disciplinary proceedings are pending. He appealed that suspension, but the appeal was rejected.

In his opinion piece, Rubio openly threatened that the Trump administration is working to “dismantle the [ICC] brick by brick.”

“Using all the tools at our government’s disposal, working beside every ally with whom we can make common cause, we will

dismantle the ICC – brick by brick, if necessary,” he wrote.

Rubio also filmed a monologue on the issue, which was released on X on Monday, in which he accused the court of trying to take away Americans’ rights to abide by their own laws and stand in front of a jury of their peers when accused of committing a crime.

“... today powerful people in far away places want to take that away from us. They believe that they should be in charge of your laws, of your country, your life – and they don’t care whether or not you agree,” he said in the video.

Rubio said that Americans likely don’t know the names of the judges, prosecutors or presidents of the international court, and that they “shouldn’t have to”, while claiming that the ICC has waged a war against the U.S.

The ICC was founded in 2002 in response to genocides and atrocities in war zones such as Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. However, now the U.S. and its closest allies, including Britain, are demonizing the international body.

Rubio pitched the White House’s decision to destroy the court in nationalist terms, saying, “Independence is our birthright. We don’t intend to trade it for rule by a self-appointed priesthood of ‘international law.’”

Through these remarks, Rubio wants to suggest that the United States stands above international law.

To cover up his angst against the international court, Rubio claimed the ICC is “backed and run by a powerful network of leftist non-government organizations, smug globalists, and hostile Third World governments united by their enmity toward the U.S.”

The article by Rubio comes more than six years after the ICC authorized an investigation into alleged war crimes committed by all parties to the Afghanistan war, including the Taliban, Afghan government forces, and members of the U.S. armed forces and the CIA.

It is noticeable that the court did not just allege war crimes against U.S. servicepersons, but against Taliban militants and Afghan military forces.

Rubio also claimed that the ICC is “a global tribunal staffed by globalist unelected bureaucrats who claim their power is almost unlimited.” However, the court has 125 member countries, including all the members of the European Union, which is a friend of the United States.

It is not just the U.S. that does not want to submit to ICC jurisdiction. Certain other powerful countries that are not members of the court also oppose ICC rulings.

In 2002, the U.S., under President George W. Bush, formally withdrew from the ICC and pressured countries into signing bilateral immunity agreements to prevent them from surrendering U.S. nationals to the ICC.

Rubio’s tirade against the ICC strongly warrants that the U.S. is seriously angry with the ICC, which wants those who committed genocide in Gaza to be brought to book.

The United Nations, human rights bodies, and genocide scholars unanimously agree that Israel must be held accountable for its Gaza war crimes, which have been described as genocide.

From Macron to Trump to Israel: What is Syria’s share?

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – French President Macron surprised everyone by visiting Syria as the first Western leader to meet self-declared president Ahmad al-Sharaa in Damascus.

One day before the NATO summit in Ankara, Macron’s visit represented a step toward legitimizing al-Sharaa in the international community. Still, Paris’s primary interest lies in stabilizing the regime and strengthening French business interests.

Macron has not hidden his desire to turn Syria into a regional logistics hub serving as an alternative to the Strait of Hormuz.

The state visit was said to have been coordinated with Trump, whose envoy Tom Barrack brought together Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani and Israeli Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer in Paris in August 2025. This was after French generals helped transport Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces leader Mazloum Abdi from Qamishli to Damascus aboard a U.S. helicopter carrying American generals who facilitated Abdi’s meeting with al-Sharaa.

For historical reasons, Macron’s visit carries fundamental importance for Russia: between 2012 and 2014, the war on Syria was a major cause of tension in Russian-French relations, and although the Ukrainian crisis has supplanted it since 2022, Syria remains perhaps the second most important regional issue affecting Moscow-Paris ties.

France’s role has so far not clashed with British interests. The close relationship between British National Security Adviser Jonathan Powell and al-Sharaa is worth recalling, after former U.S. Ambassador Robert Ford revealed Powell’s role in “educating and rehabilitating Abu Mohammed al-Jolani” to transform into Ahmad al-Sharaa, all at Powell’s request.

The NATO summit saw a cordial meeting between Macron and his counterparts, following Macron’s statement that he and al-Sharaa discussed extending gas pipelines from the Persian Gulf through Syria, a project rejected by the former government in 2008.

Given Syria’s complex circumstances, the dominant powers are

mainly the United States, the Zionist regime, and Turkey. Both Russia and France retain influence, but within a limited scope, neither side is likely to possess sufficient resources to compete with other parties.

Trump has frequently claimed credit for bringing al-Sharaa to power, sometimes asserting he did so single-handedly, other times acknowledging the role of others, presumably Netanyahu.

The U.S. President reiterated his support for al-Sharaa during the NATO summit in Ankara, praising him in a separate meeting on the margins of the gathering. Reports indicated tension during these meetings.

There have been no statements on whether or how they agreed or disagreed on U.S. demands from al-Sharaa, whom Trump envisions playing a key role in broader American projects concerning Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran, which he threatened as usual both before and during the summit.

It was evident from al-Sharaa’s strained expression during his bilateral meeting with Trump that he was under intense pressure aimed at securing the largest share of the Syrian pie for the United States.

Turkey’s vast influence across all sectors of Syria is difficult to brush aside. Ankara had built exceptionally broad ties with militant factions since 2011, with the northwestern province of Idlib later relying on its neighbor for all its needs.

However, the most troublesome hammer hanging over al-Sharaa is Trump’s, who periodically asserts that he brought al-Sharaa to power and granted him international legitimacy through their meeting in Riyadh on May 14, 2025, followed by an invitation to the UN General Assembly and hosting him at the White House on November 10.

Trump’s primary agenda is for al-Sharaa to help realize his ambitions launched through the “Abraham Accords”, aiming to resolve their fate before his term ends. By removing Syria from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism while conveniently forgetting that he had previously designated Abu Mohammed al-Jolani as among the world’s most dangerous terrorists.



Far more alarming than the diplomatic maneuvering is the accelerating Zionist military campaign across southern Syria, a development that has fundamentally altered the security landscape since the fall of the former government in December 2024.

Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) have not only conducted occasional cross-border raids; they have established a persistent and expanding military footprint inside Syrian territory, carrying out regular invasions.

In recent days alone, the IOF launched multiple coordinated invasions across the provinces of Quneitra and, more alarmingly in Daraa. An IOF unit comprising a tank and two military vehicles advanced into western rural Daraa for the first time, opening fire before withdrawing toward occupied Syrian territories.

Local sources in Daraa also reported that three armored vehicles reached the main road between Saysoon and Jamlah in the Yarmouk Basin, where IOF soldiers set up a military checkpoint, stopping vehicles, conducting searches of passersby, and checking their identification.

In a separate operation, an IOF unit of more than 15 vehicles pushed into the village of Al-Ayshah in southern Quneitra, searching houses and a feed storage facility.

What distinguishes this aggression from previous IOF invasions is not just their frequency but their brazenness. Verified video footage that has surfaced showing IOF troops assaulting Syrian women in Daraa itself. These scenes have long been associated with the occupied West Bank and al-Quds (Jerusalem), but are now emerging from Syrian soil for the first time.

Women’s and men’s victorious at 2026 Sitting Volleyball Worlds

TEHRAN – Iran’s women’s and men’s teams emerged victorious over their rivals on Tuesday at the 2026 Sitting Volleyball World Championships.

The women’s team defeated Germany 3-0 (25-16, 25-17, 25-14). Team Melli had defeated Rwanda and Kenya and lost to China in Pool B.

Iran’s women will face the winners of France and Canada in quarterfinals.

Iran’s men also swept past Croatia in straight sets (25-17, 25-11, 25-6) to secure their fourth win in the competition.

The reigning champions had defeated Poland, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Japan.

The World Championships, hosted at the World ParaVolley Development Centre, feature 16 men’s teams and 16 women’s teams.

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.

Iran face tough Week in 2026 Volleyball Nations League

TEHRAN – Iran are set for a decisive week in the 2026 FIVB Volleyball Nations League (VNL) as Team Melli begin Week 3 with a match against Ukraine before taking on Germany, Slovenia, and Turkey in the final round of the preliminary stage.

With the battle for a place in the VNL Finals entering their closing stretch, every match carries significant importance. Iran have shown flashes of their potential throughout the tournament, combining the energy of the younger players with the experience of established internationals. However, consistency has remained the team’s biggest challenge, making Week 3 a crucial test of its progress.

The campaign opens against Ukraine, a side that has become increasingly competitive on the international stage. Iran will then face Germany, another physically strong European opponents, before meeting Slovenia, one of the tournament’s top-performing teams. Team Melli will conclude the preliminary round against neighboring Turkey in a match that could have a major impact on the final standings.

Head coach and his staff will be looking for improved serving, solid blocking, and greater attacking efficiency as Iran aims to finish the preliminary round on a positive note. The team’s ability to maintain composure in key moments will likely determine its success against four challenging opponents.

For Iran, Week 3 represents more than just four matches—it is an opportunity to prove their growth, strengthen their position among the world’s leading volleyball nations, and keep alive their hopes for the future. Fans will be hoping Team Melli can rise to the occasion when it matters most.

Iran rout Bahrain at 2026 AVC U18 Volleyball Championship

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Bahrain in straight sets (25-12, 25-18, 25-14) at the 2026 AVC Boys’ U18 Volleyball Championship on Tuesday.

The young Persians, who had defeated the Philippines 3-0 and India 3-1 in their opening matches in Pool B , will face South Korea on Wednesday.

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.

Iran learn fate at 2026 Asian Men’s Youth Handball Championship

TEHRAN – Iran discovered their opponents at the 11th AHF Asian Men’s Youth (U19) Handball Championship.

The draw ceremony was held at the Headquarters of Jordan Handball Federation (JHF), Princess Sumaya Hall, Amman, in accordance with the AHF Regulations for Competition and Organization.

The championship, which will now be held from 20 to 31 August 2026 in Amman, Jordan, will be organized by the Jordan Handball Federation after being relocated from its original host city. The tournament will also serve as the Asian qualification event for the 12th IHF Men’s Youth (U19) Handball World Championship, with the top four (4) teams securing qualification for the global championship in 2027.

The eleven participating teams have been drawn into two preliminary round groups.

Group A: Japan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Chinese Taipei

Group B: Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Iran, Jordan, Syria, India

Iran target Asian Cup final

TEHRAN – The Iranian Football Federation’s objectives for the national team suggest ambitions that may not fully reflect the team’s current reality.

Iran’s campaign at the 2026 FIFA World Cup ended in disappointment. With the tournament expanded to 48 teams and qualification from the group stage considered more attainable than ever, expectations were high that Team Melli would finally reach the knockout rounds for the first time in their history.

Instead, three consecutive draws against New Zealand, Belgium, and Egypt left Iran relying on results elsewhere to secure qualification. Those results did not go their way, and Team Melli narrowly missed out on a place in the Round of 32.

The Iranian Football Federation acknowledged that the national team’s World Cup performance fell short of expectations. At the same time, they shifted their focus to the 2027 AFC Asian Cup.

Iran have now begun preparations for the continental tournament, with the federation setting a target of reaching the final, while the national team’s stated ambition is to lift the Asian Cup trophy. However, given the team’s current situation, both objectives appear highly ambitious.

At the 2023 AFC Asian Cup, Iran fielded a younger and more energetic squad. Despite inconsistent performances against Hong Kong and Syria, Iran produced one of the tournament’s biggest upsets by defeating Japan in the quarterfinals to book a place in the last four.

Many believed that victory over Japan had cleared the path to the final. Instead, Iran suffered a painful semifinal defeat to hosts nation Qatar, extending their wait for an Asian Cup final appearance to more than five decades.

Prehistoric Sites of the Khorramabad Valley and Iran’s deep past on UNESCO World Heritage List

By Sonia Shidrang, Assistant Professor at Shahid Beheshti University

This week marks the first anniversary of a milestone that reshaped how the world sees Iran’s ancient past. On July 11, 2025, during the 47th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Paris, the Paleolithic Sites of the Khorramabad Valley were inscribed on the World Heritage List—Iran’s 29th such site, and its first ever dedicated to the Paleolithic period.

A year later, the inscription still resonates, both within Iran and across the wider archaeological community, cementing the valley’s place among Southwest Asia’s most important prehistoric landscapes while spurring new research, conservation work, and cultural tourism throughout Lorestan province.

The inscribed property—originally proposed under the broader title “Prehistoric Caves and Falak-ol-Aflak Ensemble”—was ultimately recognized in a more focused form: six of its most significant components. These are the caves of Kaldar, Ghamari, Gilvaran, Yafteh, and Kunji, along with the Gar Arjeneh rock shelter. Together, they trace a long, narrow karstic valley through the Central Zagros Mountains, forming an ecological and climatic corridor that has guided human movement and settlement for tens of thousands of years. Abundant water, rich fauna and flora, and a wealth of natural shelters made this valley a magnet for human populations as far back as 60,000 years ago—and likely longer.

The nomination rested on more than half a century of prior research, but it gained fresh momentum from investigations undertaken specifically to answer questions raised by ICOMOS, UNESCO’s advisory body.

Chief among these was the excavation at Ghamari Cave in early 2025, launched to clarify the site’s cultural sequence. What researchers found exceeded expectations: remarkably well-preserved Neanderthal occupation layers, complete with lithic assemblages and faunal remains bearing clear signs of butchery and fire use. Concentrations of charcoal offered direct evidence that Neanderthals controlled fire here, while later strata revealed Chalcolithic-era pastoral activity—a vivid record of adaptation stretched across tens of thousands of years. The excavation drew significant international attention and became a cornerstone of the UNESCO dossier.

The valley earns its Outstanding



Universal Value chiefly through UNESCO’s Criterion (iii)—bearing exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or civilization. Few places on Earth preserve so clear a record of the transition from the Middle to the Upper Paleolithic, the period when anatomically modern humans arrived in the Zagros and replaced the Neanderthals who had lived there for millennia. The Mousterian layers at Kunji Cave speak to that earlier Neanderthal presence, while Yafteh Cave holds the most complete evidence anywhere of the Baradostian culture, the region’s earliest Upper Paleolithic tradition. Here, archaeologists have uncovered some of Iran’s earliest known expressions of symbolic thought: pendants carved from red deer canines, marine shells carried from the distant Persian Gulf, and traces of ochre use. Paired with a sophisticated stone tool industry, these finds testify to the cognitive and technological depth of the people who made them.

At the heart of preserving and presenting this heritage stands the Archaeological Museum of Lorestan, housed within the historic Falak-ol-Aflak Citadel in Khorramabad. The museum functions as the primary home for the very artifacts that anchored the UNESCO nomination, and its prehistoric gallery in particular offers a direct window into the finds unearthed from the valley’s caves and rock shelters. In many ways, the museum completes the story that the World Heritage sites themselves can only begin.

Spread across four sections and 224 square meters, the museum guides visitors through more than one hundred thousand years of human habitation. The journey opens with an overview of Lorestan’s pre-

history—a detailed map of archaeological sites organized by period, a look at the valley’s geomorphology, and a striking diorama depicting a Neanderthal flaking stone beside a child. From there, the collection’s 185 paleontological and archaeological specimens take center stage: fossilized Late Miocene herbivores from the Dimeh Valley, over seven million years old, alongside Middle Paleolithic stone tools exceeding 100,000 years in age from Houmian and the UNESCO-listed caves of Ghamari, Kunji, and Kaldar—tools attributed, with high confidence, to Neanderthal populations. The Upper Paleolithic gallery showcases finely made points, scrapers, and bone awls from Yafteh Cave, dating to 30,000–40,000 years ago and marking the arrival of Homo sapiens in the region. Epipaleolithic tools from Pa Sangar illustrate the shift toward the Neolithic, evidenced by domesticated goat bones and a notably deformed human skull, some 9,000 to 10,000 years old, from Tepe Abdolhossein. Chalcolithic finds from the Seymareh Valley—including a child’s fetal burial within a ceramic vessel and painted pottery depicting a group dance—offer a rare and moving glimpse into early ritual life. To strengthen the museum’s case for the UNESCO bid, roughly eighty significant artifacts were permanently transferred from the National Museum of Iran, including pieces drawn from the very caves now recognized as World Heritage sites. This curation gave the museum the material means to demonstrate the valley’s uninterrupted occupation and its Outstanding Universal Value—playing no small role in securing Iran’s 29th World Heritage inscription in July 2025.

The redesign of the museum’s galleries drew on the expertise of leading figures at the National Museum of Iran and Lorestan ICHTO. Feri-doun Biglari, head of the museum’s Paleolithic Department, designed and arranged the Paleolithic section of the prehistory gallery. The later galleries—spanning the Neolithic through the Islamic era—took shape with guidance from Ata Hasanpour, archaeologist and director of Lorestan ICHTO and Jebrael Nokandeh, archaeologist and director of the National Museum of Iran. Under their direction, the museum’s four sections cohere into a single narrative: the story of human adaptation, from the valley’s earliest inhabitants more than 100,000 years ago to the complex societies of the historical period. The resulting institution functions simultaneously as an exhibition space for regional heritage and as a substantive educational apparatus, effectively reframing Lorestan’s past not as an isolated case study, but as an integral component of humanity’s collective cultural patrimony.

The inscription’s effects have already been felt. A commemorative stamp was unveiled at Falak-ol-Aflak Castle, featuring imagery from the 2025 Ghamari Cave excavations, the rock shelters at Gilvaran and Gar Arjeneh, and an artistic reconstruction of Upper Paleolithic hunters at Yafteh Cave. In February 2026, the National Museum of Iran held a ceremony marking the inscription, and plans are now underway for a dedicated cave museum in Khorramabad. These efforts reflect a broader ambition: to build sustainable tourism, draw cultural investment, and create employment in handicrafts and services. The listing places Iran among a distinguished group of nations safeguarding Paleolithic heritage as part of humanity’s shared legacy—alongside France’s Vézère Valley, Spain’s Altamira, China’s Zhoukoudian, and India’s Bhimbetka.

Looking forward, the World Heritage Committee and ICOMOS have urged Iran to continue its scientific research, establish an annual calendar for archaeological excavation, and adopt non-invasive technologies for standardized documentation. The successful inscription of the Khorramabad Valley reflects decades of dedicated research and national collaboration, affirming Iran’s essential place in the human story—and offering inspiration for future generations to engage with, and protect, our shared past.

Restoration work resumes at Persepolis after funding allocated

TEHRAN – Restoration workshops have resumed operations at the UNESCO-listed Persepolis complex after funds were allocated for conservation work, the site’s director said.

On Tuesday, Mohammad-Javad Jafari announced that three restoration workshops are currently active at the Persepolis complex, located at Naqsh-e Rostam, the Tachara Palace, and the museum storage facility.

Jafari said the necessary budget for restoration activities had been released, but

the funding remained limited. “The allocated funds are not sufficient to carry out all the measures we are concerned about implementing, but they are enough to address the most urgent restoration needs,” he said.

He also said a project to change the tourist route through the Persepolis archaeological site had not yet been completed. The project was delayed last year due to the outbreak of war, which interrupted its implementation.

Persepolis was the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire and is considered

one of the most significant architectural achievements of the ancient world. Built about 2,500 years ago, the site contains palatial complexes, stone columns and bas-reliefs that demonstrate advanced stone-carving techniques.

The site was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1979 and includes major structures such as the Apadana Palace and the Throne Hall, which reflect the political and artistic achievements of the Achaemenid period.

Iranian cultural institutions partner on art economy and innovation projects

TEHRAN – Dafineh Museums Institute and the Institute for Culture and Art Development signed a memorandum of understanding in Tehran aimed at expanding cooperation in scientific, cultural, artistic and social projects and strengthening museum-related activities, the Dafineh Museums public relations office said on Tuesdays.

Under the memorandum, the two institutions will cooperate on entrepreneurship and knowledge-based projects, development of joint cultural and artistic marketplaces, exchange of scientific and research information, organization of national and international gatherings, and projects related to smart equipment and the design of national products.

Hamidreza Soleimani, CEO of Dafineh Museums Institute, said during the signing ceremony that the museums institute had sought to develop products inspired by objects in its collections so that they could be used in daily life. He added that the institute currently operates 10 museum complexes across Iran and plans to launch a digital museum in the metaverse in the near future.

Seyyed Sadeq Pejman, the CEO of the Institute for Culture and Art Development, for his part, underlined that their institution had established an arts support fund to create a stable source of revenue for the cultural sector and had worked to introduce new economic concepts into the arts.

He said one of the institute’s main support projects had been

the provision of low-interest loans to the cultural, artistic and media ecosystem through a program known as “Farhang Card.”

Pejman added that the institute had developed new financing tools and undertaken projects related to empowerment and exports, including efforts to facilitate the presence of artworks on the commodity exchange, use intangible assets as collateral for bank loans, register artworks and verify their authenticity, and create a system for issuing certificates of authenticity.

Ketayoun Pelasaeidi, an expert from the museum group, for her part, proposed the establishment of mobile museums through cooperation between the two institutions. She said the “Kimia” brand had been created

to produce museum replicas using domestic manufacturers and could become part of the joint co-operation framework. She added that the Dafineh Museums group also operates several academies that train people in history, culture and restoration with the aim of helping them enter the labor market.

The Institute for Culture and Art Development was established in the late 1980s as an independent, non-profit and non-governmental organization under the auspices of Iran’s Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance to support researchers, writers and artists.

The Dafineh Museums Institute operates under the Mostazafan Foundation, which provides social services across Iran.

VP suggests initiatives to OIC to foster ties on women

TEHRAN – The Vice-President for Women and Family Affairs, Zahra Behrouz-Azar, has put forward two initiatives to boost collaborations among member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for empowering women.

Addressing the ninth Ministerial Conference on Women of the OIC, held in Islamabad, Pakistan, on July 12 and 13, Behrouz-Azar proposed the establishment of an 'OIC female rescue network' and a 'single brand for products made by Muslim women', Mehr news agency reported.

She also expounded on Iranian women's experiences in scientific, social, and crisis management fields. Iranian women comprise over 56 percent of academic communities, around 46 percent of PhD graduates, and more than 68 percent of specialists in basic sciences, while representing a significant share of faculty members, inventors, and knowledge-based companies' managers, the official noted.

Highlighting the country's experiences in managing natural hazards and wartime crises, she said women and children suffer disproportionately during crises, but their voices are often unheard. However, women's contributions in Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) relief services have proved that the 'women-for-women' approach can play a key role in supporting those affected by crises.

Accordingly, Iran's initial proposal is to establish a 'network of female relief workers of the Islamic World' to connect female physicians, nurses, psychologists, social workers, and relief workers from Islamic countries, and benefit from their capabilities to provide more effective support for women and children during crises and strengthen preparedness and cooperation among member states.

The second proposal calls for 'developing a single brand for products made by Muslim women' to facilitate access of women's products to markets in Islamic countries, enhance consumer confidence, expand dig-



ital markets, hold collaborative exhibitions, and develop training in exports and branding.

These two proposals are grounded in the shared values of the Islamic world—including human dignity, justice, cooperation, family, and social responsibility— which pave the way for boosting synergy among Islamic nations in supporting women.

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.

On the sidelines of the ninth conference, Behrouz-Azar, and Pakistan's Minister of Law and Justice, Azam Nazeer Tarar, held

a meeting and highlighted the need to enhance collaborations between the two countries in areas related to women.

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 ha-

tred 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 vice president also met the Pakistani Minister of State for the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Wajihah Qamar.

The Pakistani official lauded the country's achievements in empowering women and supporting them across various sectors of society, particularly in education and professional activities, saying that Pakistan is willing to benefit from Iran's expertise in this sector.

She proposed to promote interactions through empowering women in digital education and economy and sharing knowledge and experiences.

For her part, Behrouz-Azar suggested enhancing cooperation in AI, digital, and vocational training, as well as granting scholarships and exchanging students.

Youth: driving force for progress in martyred Leader's thought

TEHRAN – In the thought of the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, young people are not merely a demographic group; they are regarded as the country's greatest national asset and the primary driving force behind Iran's progress.

His emphasis on trusting the younger generation, fostering self-confidence, encouraging responsibility, and expanding youth participation in scientific, cultural, and managerial fields reflects a vision that places the nation's future in the hands of its youth.

In the martyred Leader's statements, young people are described as the embodiment of "real hope," "national asset," and the "engine of progress." These descriptions are not merely rhetorical; rather, they present a coherent vision of the younger generation's role in safeguarding the ideals of the Islamic Revolution and advancing the future of the Islamic-Iranian civilization.

He considered Iran's large youth population an exceptional opportunity for national development and prosperity, emphasizing that any country that invests in its young people is more likely to achieve significant progress. From this perspective, youth constitute the country's most valuable social asset and the cornerstone of building a

modern Islamic civilization.

The martyred Leader also referred to young people as the "driving engine" of the nation's forward movement, arguing that the dynamism and vitality of society depend on the energy, creativity, and initiative of its youth. Without their active participation in scientific, economic, political, and cultural spheres, the country's overall progress would inevitably slow.

At the same time, he warned that hostile powers seek to distance young people from their religious and revolutionary identity and undermine their confidence in the future and in the Revolution.

He repeatedly expressed pride in the ability of Iranian youth to preserve their religious identity despite extensive Western cultural influence, describing this identity as both a deeply held conviction and a protective shield against foreign cultural penetration and efforts to erode Islamic values.

According to the martyred Leader, young people possess unique qualities—including abundant energy, optimism, innovation, creativity, and a spirit of resistance to arrogance and domination—that enable them to overcome the nation's greatest challenges and open new horizons for society.



One of his central messages to the younger generation was the importance of self-belief and national self-confidence. He maintained that the Islamic Revolution had revived confidence among Iranian youth and that preserving and strengthening this spirit was a historic responsibility. In his view, young Iranians should believe in their own capabilities and recognize that they are capable of reaching the highest levels of scientific, technological, and cultural achievement.

He also described the country's scientific and athletic champions as symbols of hope, hard work, and national achievement. Their success in international scientific Olympiads and sporting competitions, he believed, strengthens public morale, in-

spires confidence, and serves as an effective response to the psychological warfare waged by Iran's adversaries.

Overall, the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution viewed the younger generation through a comprehensive, strategic, and deeply optimistic lens. He regarded young people not only as the hope of Iran's future but also as the nation's most important asset and the driving force of its present.

By advocating trust in youth, entrusting them with major responsibilities, and warning against external attempts to influence them, he outlined a roadmap in which the younger generation would lead the country's comprehensive development and play a central role in realizing a modern Islamic civilization.

Iran offers proposals at Global Dialogue on AI Governance

TEHRAN – The head of the Secretariat of the Headquarters for AI Technology Development and Applications has delivered a lecture at the Global Dialogue on AI Governance and put forward five proposals, and announced the country's readiness for the expansion of international cooperation.

The UN Global Dialogue on AI Governance was convened by the UN General Assembly in Geneva on July 6 and 7.

Iran is ready to have a constructive participation in shaping the future of AI governance. The country has high potential, including young scientists, researchers, and engineers in data science, to play an effective role in regional and international collaborations in the AI sector, Mehr news agency quoted Emadeddin Fatemizadeh as saying.

The dynamic ecosystem of knowledge-based companies and innovative startups highlights our determination to achieve technological progress, he added.

To help realize the objectives of this meeting, Iran proposed the following five recommendations.

The first suggestion called for the establishment of a regional AI academy to train specialized personnel and develop joint educational and research programs in universities and research institutes of the regional countries.

The second proposal focused on the development of a joint regional fund for AI innovation and development, aimed at supporting early-stage startups, facilitating the emergence of "unicorn" companies, and funding national projects.

Establishing a digital free zone to foster the development of AI-based businesses across the region was the third proposal.

The fourth recommendation highlighted the need for the development of legal frameworks and regional regulations to deter the use of AI in destructive military applications against civilians.

The development of common infrastructure and data centers dedicated to non-military applications was the last proposal offered by the country.

The official went on to say that the future gap will not be an income or industry gap but a gap in data, processing capabilities, and access to AI infrastructure. So, actions need to be taken today to narrow these disparities and place shared data centers and



computing capacities at the service of science, health, education, the environment, crisis management, and public welfare, he further noted.

Iran committed to fostering regional AI cooperation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

World Youth Skills Day highlights 'skills for a shared future'

TEHRAN – World Youth Skills Day is observed on July 15 every year; this year's theme, 'skills for a shared future', highlights the importance of adopting a strategy that combines technical, vocational, digital, socio-economic, and civic skills to help young individuals thrive in the changing world.

The world of work is changing rapidly. Artificial intelligence, the green transition and growing social complexity are transforming how we learn, work and participate in society.

This year's World Youth Skills Day activities spotlight the urgent need for innovative youth skills programs—initiatives that empower young people not only to adapt, but to lead with empathy, bridge cultural divides, build resilience, and actively shape a more sustainable and inclusive tomorrow.

AI education to expand from schools to universities

In June, the Vice Presidency for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy emphasized a comprehensive strategy to expand artificial intelligence (AI) education from schools to universities, highlighting the importance of strengthening AI-related training across the country.

According to Emadeddin Fatemizadeh, the

head of the Secretariat of the Headquarters for AI Technology Development and Applications, the future of the global economy, industry, and technology will be profoundly shaped by artificial intelligence, IRNA reported.

He noted that promoting AI literacy in schools, training teachers, incorporating AI-related subjects into university curricula, and enhancing students' specialized skills are essential to advancing the technology in the country.

These measures, he said, will help cultivate a skilled workforce, improve the country's problem-solving capabilities, and strengthen the competitiveness of indigenous technologies.

In line with these objectives, the headquarters has identified several key priorities for the current year, including supporting specialized AI training programs, expanding public awareness and outreach initiatives, strengthening collaboration with universities, schools, research institutes, and knowledge-based companies, developing indigenized educational content, identifying and nurturing young and talented students, and providing students and researchers with enhanced infrastructure required for AI research and development.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Beware! Whoever is cruel and harsh to a non-Muslim minority, curtailing their rights, overburdening them, or stealing from them, I will complain [to God] about that person on the Day of Judgment.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:10 Evening: 19:41 Dawn: 3:18 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:00 (tomorrow)

“Unfinished Homework” artistic event to honor child martyrs on Tabiat Bridge

TEHRAN- Tehran’s Tabiat Bridge—the city’s most expansive pedestrian landmark- will transform into an open-air gallery this week as it hosts “Mashq-e Nata-mam” (Unfinished Homework), a cultural and artistic event dedicated to the memory of over 400 Iranian children who lost their lives during the recent war.

The event serves as a living memorial to those whose childhood dreams and aspirations were cut short by the aggression of the United States and the Zionist regime against Iran.

Starting Wednesday evening, the bridge will become a passage into the innocent world of children whose “last school bell” rang prematurely, leaving behind unfinished games and unspoken hopes.

Produced by Mohammad Sadeq Mirkarimi and narrated by Hossein Parsai, the event features a multidisciplinary approach to remembrance. The program includes theatrical performances, live music, and special interactive activities designed for children, adolescents, and families. A centerpiece of the event is the exhibition of portraits of the 400 child martyrs, accompanied by a solemn candle-lighting ceremony.

The event brings together a collective of artists from the fields of visual arts, theater, and music, all aiming to bridge the gap between the past and the present through art and emotion.

“Unfinished Homework” is open to the general public and free of charge. The event will take place nightly from Wednesday to Saturday, between 8:00 PM and 11:00 PM. Residents and visitors are invited to walk across the Tabiat Bridge to pay their respects to the “martyr angels” of the homeland.

The tragedy of the Ramadan War left an indelible scar on the Iranian psyche, most poi-

gnantly seen in the loss of its youngest citizens. Among the most harrowing memories is the attack on the school children of Minab, where the sanctuary of a classroom was shattered by the US-Israeli air strike. These children, whose only crime was a desire to learn and grow, were transformed from students into symbols of national martyrdom. Their desks became empty, and their laughter was silenced, leaving behind a void that can never be filled, yet serving as a timeless reminder of the cruelty of war and the innocence of those it claims.

Beyond the halls of Minab, hundreds of other child martyrs across the country faced similar fates, their “unfinished homework” becoming a testament to a stolen future. Each name and portrait represents a dream interrupted—a game left unplayed or a story left untold. By honoring these young souls, Iran does more than mourn a loss; it preserves the memory of a generation that paid the ultimate price for the nation’s sovereignty. These children remain the “martyr angels” of the homeland, forever reminding the world that the deepest casualties of war are those who never had the chance to experience a peaceful adulthood.

Cartoon of Day

Toys
Cartoonist: Amorim from Brazil

100 artworks to be offered at 25th Tehran Auction

TEHRAN – The 25th Tehran Auction is set to take place on Friday, July 17, at the Parsian Azadi Hotel in Tehran, featuring 100 artworks with an estimated total value between 354 and 423 billion Tomans (\$2 to \$2.35 million).

The auction is commencing at a time when the Iranian visual arts market has experienced one of its most sluggish periods since the previous edition in October 2025, having remained almost entirely inactive for many months, ISNA reported.

Despite the market’s recent stagnation, the estimated value for the works in this 25th edition is significantly higher than the actual final sale of the previous round, which totaled over 147 billion Tomans (less than \$1 million). It should be noted, however, that the figures released for the new round are pre-auction estimates and may differ from the final sale prices.

This edition features about 80 artists, presenting a mix of modern, classic, and traditional Iranian art. Despite the diversity of artists, the concentration of works around a few prominent names is evident. Mohammad Ehsaei leads with three works, followed by Parviz Kalantari, Parvaneh Etemadi, Mansour Ghandriz, Mahmoud Farshchian, Keikhosro Khoroush, Sadegh Tabrizi, and Behjat Sadr, each represented by two works.

In the price rankings, a close competition is seen between two well-known figures: Mohammad Ehsaei’s “Mohabbat” (Affection) and Sohrab Sepehri’s “High Horizon” are the most expensive works, each estimated between 28 and 30 billion Tomans (\$155,000 to \$167,000).

The list of high-priced works remains dominated by established figures in the market. Following the 30-billion-Toman

Mohammad Ehsaei’s “Mohabbat” (Affection) is one of the highest-estimated works at the auction.

works by Ehsaei and Sepehri, Aydin Aghdashloo’s “Summer, Winter” is estimated at 22 to 24 billion Tomans (\$122,000 to \$133,000), and a work by Abolghasem Saeedi is estimated at 20 to 22 billion Tomans (\$111,000 to \$122,000). Parviz Tanavoli’s sculpture “Van Gogh’s Ear” and Mahmoud Farshchian’s “Gol-o-Morgh” (Flower and Bird) follow with estimates of 14 to 16 billion Tomans (\$78,000 to \$89,000).

From a gender perspective, the statistics continue to show a significant gap between the presence of men and women. Only six female artists are included with eight works, accounting for about 8% of the artists and less than 8% of the total works. Among them are names such as Parvaneh Etemadi, Bahjat Sadr, Farideh Lashai, Lili Matin-Daftari, Elaheh Khatami, and Leila Barzegar Yarmohammadi.

While the quality of their work is notable, there remains a significant statistical distance from the male-dominated share of the formal Iranian art market—a trend observed in previous editions and representing one of the lowest statistics to date.

A notable feature of this edi-

tion is the inclusion of several exquisite carpets and works by master calligraphers and artists from the Qajar and early Pahlavi eras. Some of these pieces are over a century old, and their sale at auction is only possible with an official permit from the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of Iran.

Under Iran’s cultural heritage regulations, registered historical artifacts or items deemed to have national cultural value cannot be freely bought, sold, or taken out of the country; any transfer is subject to cultural heritage protection laws. Consequently, works presented at the Tehran Auction must meet legal requirements regarding ownership and tradability, and their inclusion implies they are either not listed as national heritage or possess the necessary permits for transaction.

Previously, several artworks over 100 years old offered at the

Tehran Auction faced intense criticism from experts and officials at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage.

During the 22nd edition, Leila Khosravi, Director-General of Museums at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, declared the sale of such historical items “illegal” and urged relevant authorities to take immediate action to prevent their sale and export. She recalled that based on the 1930 National and Cultural Heritage Protection Law and its bylaws, the sale or export of any historical or cultural object over 100 years old without a permit from the Deputy of Cultural Heritage is prohibited and illegal.

The first of its kind in Iran, the Tehran Auction was launched in 2012 as an independent and private initiative to introduce the best in Iranian art, ranging from established and emerging Iranian artists to art collectors and the global audience.

It aims to address the increasing interest in modern and contemporary Iranian art and facilitate the acquisition of quality works in reliable ways.

“Ali, as Told by Ali” translated into Turkish to expand global reach

TEHRAN- The acclaimed work “Ali, as Told by Ali,” authored by Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Mohammadian, has been released in Turkish, marking the latest step in the book’s international distribution.

The release follows the book’s great success in Iran, where more than 120,000 copies of the Persian edition have been sold, Mehr reported on Monday.

Following a successful Arabic translation with a print run of over 3,000 copies, the work is now accessible to Turkish-speaking audiences, the report added.

The Turkish translation was executed by Mikail Gürel, the Deputy Head of the Al al-Bayt Institute in Turkey. The project is part of a strategic effort by Ma’aref Publications in Iran to facilitate the introduction of the life and character of Imam Ali (AS) to non-Persian speaking audiences worldwide.

A distinguishing feature of the book is its unique narrative approach; it presents the life of Imam Ali (AS) through first-person accounts based on authentic narrations. This stylistic choice allows global readers to connect with the ethics and justice of the influential figure through a vivid, intimate, and

personal storytelling format.

Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib, the first Shia Imam, stands as a timeless symbol of justice, spiritual depth, and unwavering courage. A central figure in Islamic history, he was not only a formidable warrior—renowned for his bravery in the battlefields of early Islam—but also a profound mystic and a master of eloquence.

His legacy is most vividly preserved in the Nahj al-Balagha, which showcases his unmatched wisdom in governance, ethics, and theology. Above all, Imam Ali is revered for his commitment to the oppressed and his strict adherence to social justice, famously emphasizing that the rights of the poor and the marginalized must be protected regardless of status.

To this day, he remains a beacon of leadership for millions worldwide, embodying the ideal balance between strength and humility, and knowledge and piety.

In Wales, an artist sews names of Gaza’s infant victims on christening gown

To Diana Williams, a Welsh artist, a baby’s christening gown signifies purity and innocence.

Last year, she chose the dress as a way to pay tribute to some of the babies killed during Israel’s genocidal war on Gaza.

She bought a vintage gown and in red thread embroidered it with the names of 300 victims.

“I’ve used it as a blank canvas, really,” she told Al Jazeera.

She immersed the hem in a harsh cleaning product to fray the ends.

“I wanted it torn and ragged to represent the conditions in which these people live under.

“When it’s actually hanging, the threads drop the viewer to the bottom where you can sense the profound loss, really, because they sort of pool at the bottom.

“It sort of resembles a bit like a pool of blood.”

Williams, a retired art lecturer, said she was “compelled” to make the artwork “for people to actually grasp the enormity of what is actually happening.”

It is titled Know Their Names after an interactive series of databases compiled by Al Jazeera naming some of the tens of thousands of victims of Israeli attacks. In January 2024, a long list included the names and ages of some of the children who were known at the time to have been killed in Gaza. Overall, Israel’s attacks since the start of its latest war on Gaza in October 2023 have killed more than 20,000 children.

The gown created by Williams features the names of babies under the age of one such as Sara, Elias, Mai and Mona.

Williams, who has three children and two grandchildren, has felt at a loss when watching mothers in Gaza mourn their daughters and sons. World leaders have failed Gaza, she said.

Holding back tears, she said, “All these politicians are fathers, mothers, aunties, uncles. They have children within their immediate family, and I can’t for the life of me understand how this is allowed to carry on.

“I find it’s the average person that’s showing sort of empathy if you like, and I don’t find that the politicians are calling it out at all.”

The gown won a people’s award in January at Galeri Caernarfon, an arts space in Caernarfon, Wales. Williams donated the prize money to Medical Aid for Palestinians. It has been exhibited elsewhere in Wales and has

been shortlisted to be displayed at the National Eisteddfod, an annual cultural festival.

The suffering of Gaza’s Christian minority moved Williams, especially after she read about parents rushing to baptize their babies, driven by fear of their deaths.

“I don’t think anything has touched me as much as Gaza, to be honest, and I feel I have to do something,” she said.

Later this year, the empty gown adorned with the names of the war’s smallest victims is to be displayed in Paris and appear on a billboard in New York.

“It’s the actual emptiness and the profound loss that you feel because of it,” she said. “I think it’s sort of opened up a wider debate really about what is actually happening.”