

Iran condemns US strike near children’s cancer hospital, calls it a ‘war crime’

TEHRAN— Iran has accused the United States of committing a ‘cowardly war crime’ after a US strike near a children’s cancer hospital in the southwestern city of Ahvaz forced the emergency evacuation of more than 200 pediatric patients, intensifying international concern over the humanitarian impact of the escalating conflict. ►Page 2

How did a needless war become Trump’s gravest economic mistake?

TEHRAN- As the United States hurtles toward midterm congressional elections with less than four months remaining, a damning portrait emerges of an administration in freefall—one that has transformed cautious economic optimism into a self-inflicted catastrophe through reckless military adventurism.

According to a comprehensive analysis by The New Yorker and subsequent reporting, President Donald Trump’s decision to bomb Iran has not only destabilized the West Asia but has systematically dismantled the very economic foundations that secured his 2024 electoral victory. What began as a summer of celebration—complete with UFC fight nights at the White House and turquoise carpets in Turkey—has descended into a nightmare of soaring prices, stagnant growth, and plummeting public confidence. ►Page 4

Why do Lebanese authorities insist on the path of surrender?

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Following the sixth round of face-to-face talks between the Lebanese and Israeli governments, critics continue to question the Lebanese authorities’ approach to issues of occupation and sovereignty.

The two-day, U.S.-mediated direct negotiations were held at the U.S. Embassy in the Italian capital Rome. According to reports citing unnamed U.S. officials, the two sides continued discussions on proposed so-called “pilot zones” in two areas of southern Lebanon. ►Page 5

Iran’s Shakibaei makes history with Asian Cadet Judo gold

TEHRAN - Iranian judoka Mahsa Shakibaei etched her name into the history books by becoming the country’s first-ever Asian Cadet Judo champion.

Competing in the women’s -52kg category at the Asian Cadet Judo Championships in Jordan, Shakibaei produced a flawless run to claim the gold medal. She opened her campaign with a victory over Ergasheva Kumushbibib of Uzbekistan before defeating Sham Almawardi of Syria to book her place in the final.

In the gold medal bout, Shakibaei overcame Pei-Hsien Lin of Chinese Taipei to secure the title, marking a historic milestone for Iranian judo as the nation’s first Asian cadet gold medalist.

Iranian women continue to redefine the nation’s sporting landscape with resilience, talent, and determination. From karate and taekwondo to football, volleyball, shooting, and swimming, they have earned medals on Asian and world stages while inspiring a new generation of athletes. Champions such as Sara Bahmanyar and emerging stars across multiple disciplines have demonstrated that dedication can overcome challenges. Every victory reflects years of hard work, sacrifice, and unwavering commitment to excellence. As participation grows and young athletes dream bigger, Iranian women are proving that success knows no boundaries, carrying their country’s colors with pride and leaving a lasting mark on international sport.



An anti-U.S. billboard featuring a burning White House is displayed on the facade of a building in Tehran's Palestine Square.

IRGC commander promises Relentless Strikes Until Peace Returns to the Southern Coast

Iranian armed forces deal ‘crushing’ blows to US military bases in West Asia in response to Washington’s ‘war crimes’

TEHRAN — As the United States continues to launch airstrikes inside Iran in direct violation of a recent interim agreement with Tehran, Iranian armed forces have delivered a strong military response, targeting American military bases and assets across the Persian Gulf region and wider West Asia.

American forces targeted civilian infrastructure across several Iranian provinces into Friday, including the destruction of the maritime control tower at Chabahar’s Shahid Kalantari Port, killing eight people. The multi-province bombardment, which stretched from late Thursday into early Friday morning, primarily struck the infrastructure-heavy coastal and border regions of Hormozgan, Bushehr, Sistan and Baluchestan, Khuzestan, and Lorestan.

Nearly 3,470 people in Iran were killed during the first phase of the joint US-Israeli war. A Pakistani-mediated ceasefire on April 8 paused the war that had begun on February 28. Now officials say a further 38 civilians have been killed and more than 400 injured in US attacks since fighting resumed following the June 22 meeting in Switzerland with the aim of advancing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) reached between

Tehran and Washington days earlier.

The latest escalation directly follows threats by President Donald Trump to target Iran’s critical civilian infrastructure, including transportation networks and power grids.

The maritime control tower in Chabahar was struck for the third time by US warplanes on Friday morning, causing its complete collapse. Chabahar holds immense strategic significance as Iran’s only deep-water port with direct access to the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, bypassing the Strait of Hormuz entirely. This gateway serves as a critical alternative trade route for Iran, gaining further significance as the US attempts to reimpose a naval blockade on Iranian ports. ►Page 3

Iran clinch record ninth sitting volleyball world title

TEHRAN - Iran’s men’s sitting volleyball team once again underlined their status as the sport’s dominant force, defeating Bosnia and Herzegovina 3-1 in the final of the Sitting Volleyball World Championships in Hangzhou to secure a record-extending ninth world title.

The championship match, held on Friday in Hangzhou, saw Iran produce another commanding display under head coach Hadi Rezaei. The Iranians team won the match 3-1 (25-21, 25-20, 20-25, 25-16) in the final match.

Guided by Hadi Rezaei, Iran not only lifted the world crown but also secured qualification for the Los Angeles 2028 Paralympic Games. For a team already regarded as a global powerhouse, this latest triumph was another emphatic statement: Iran remain the undisputed kings of men’s sitting volleyball.



Iravani: US committing ‘heinous war crimes’ in Iran

TEHRAN - Iran’s Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations said the US is committing “heinous war crimes” by the systematic targeting of the country’s civilian infrastructure.

In a letter to the UN Security Council and Secretary-General António Guterres, Amir Saeid Iravani detailed American strikes between July 8 and July 16, hitting southern provinces, coastal cities, and ports along the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. ►Page 3

Any US ground invasion would Put Kuwait, Bahrain in Iran’s crosshairs: MP

TEHRAN – An Iranian lawmaker has warned that a US ground invasion of Iran could prompt Tehran to launch ground operations against Kuwait and Bahrain.

Ahmad Bakhshayesh Ardestani, a member of the Iranian Parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, in an interview with the Iranian news outlet Entekhab, said that the US President Donald Trump had failed to adhere to the provisions of the Islamabad memorandum of understanding, particularly a clause that recognized Iran’s role in managing shipping arrangements through the Strait of Hormuz.

Bakhshayesh stated that Washington sought to establish an alternative maritime corridor through Oman to redirect commercial shipping and weaken Iran’s strategic leverage over the Strait of Hormuz during a 60-day implementation period, a move that contributed to rising regional tensions. ►Page 2

Israel failing to repair brutal reputation among Americans

By staff writer

TEHRAN- Finally, the extremism and criminality exercised by Israel are backfiring and are causing concern among the regime’s officials.

Israel, especially through the policies of its ultra-hardliners, has caused the regime to lose support among Americans, including the conservative youth.

Enjoying unwavering American backing for decades, officials in Israel have been committing numerous crimes against Palestinians. The Israeli genocidal war on Gaza, which began after Oct. 7, 2023, has awakened the people across the world, including Americans, to come to their senses.

The world has realized that Israel sees no limit to its crimes. Israel’s behavior toward Palestinian prisoners, including Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya, the chief of the Kamal Adwan hospital in Gaza, is a stain on human history. ►Page 5

Persian Garden: A masterpiece of water engineering, geometry and beauty

If Iranian architecture is regarded as the embodiment of wisdom in built form, the Persian Garden can be seen as the expression of Iranian thought in the relationship between humanity, nature and water.

Over more than two millennia, this tradition has influenced garden design far beyond Iran’s borders and remains one of the most remarkable achievements of Persian civilization. In 2011, the Persian Garden was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as Iran’s thirteenth World Heritage property, recognizing a cultural landscape that combines engineering, geometry, architecture, climatology and philosophy into a unified artistic and environmental system. ►Page 6

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

What happens if both Bab al-Mandab and the Strait of Hormuz are closed?

Kayhan, in an article, examined the events that could follow the closure of the two strategic waterways, Bab al-Mandab and the Strait of Hormuz. According to Kayhan, the convergence of security threats in these two strategic chokepoints would push global trade into a new phase—one in which rising transportation costs, disruptions in oil exports, pressure on the Suez Canal, and the spread of crisis to major world economies would be only part of the potential consequences of a simultaneous shutdown of these vital passages. Moreover, the closure of both straits would effectively disable Saudi Arabia's most important alternative route for bypassing the Strait of Hormuz. Under such conditions, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, China, and major energy-importing economies such as Europe, India, Japan, and South Korea would be among the main victims, and the scope of the crisis would expand from a regional conflict into a widespread global economic crisis.

Iran: Washington's dream; shifting the balance after the war

The Iran newspaper analyzed the goal behind the new round of US pressure and military aggression against Iran. It wrote that the main US objective at this stage is not merely to start a new conflict, but to disrupt the balance that emerged during the 40-day war. During that period, Iran—relying on offensive capability, social support, its geopolitical position, and especially the leverage of the Strait of Hormuz—managed to raise the cost of continuing the war for the US and its allies, thereby imposing a new deterrent balance on the crisis. This balance forced Washington to retreat from some of its initial goals and move toward the Islamabad understanding. From this perspective, recent attacks and threats should be seen as an attempt to test the durability of that balance—an effort to assess whether Iran can still use its strategic levers to impose costs on the other side. For Trump, displays of power are not only a tool of pressure but also a means of repairing his damaged credibility.

Donya-e-Eqtasad: Maximum pressure is a failed policy

Donya-e-Eqtasad addressed the US's unsuccessful policy toward Iran. For nearly half a century, Washington has treated "maximum pressure" as a strategic doctrine, yet the result has been nothing but failure. The core assumption of this policy is clear: sanctions, isolation, sabotage, and military pressure will eventually eliminate Iran's power. But this never happened. Iran remains a decisive actor in geopolitical equations. The recent war provided the latest opportunity to test the maximum pressure strategy. The US calculation was that sufficient pressure on Tehran would either force it into compromise or cause its collapse. But Iran did not become an obedient actor, nor did its political system fall. Although maximum pressure weakened parts of Iran's defensive capacity, it did not turn Iran into an insignificant player. The outcome is a country that has been harmed but has become more resilient against external pressure—and more inclined toward China and Russia.

Sazandegi: A war against the Persian Gulf

Sazandegi offered another perspective on the Iran-US conflict in the Persian Gulf, arguing that what is happening around the Strait of Hormuz and the strategic waterways of the Persian Gulf is not merely a military or security issue—it could become an environmental crisis with long-term consequences for all coastal states. But the issue is not only the environment; it is security itself. The Persian Gulf is now the intersection of competition among Iran, the US, Israel, Arab states, and emerging powers. Each actor speaks of energy security and balance of power, yet all ignore one reality: pollution recognizes neither borders nor power rivalries. Perhaps the greatest geopolitical mistake today is imagining that security can be preserved without protecting the environment. War can be halted with a ceasefire, but pollution cannot. The Persian Gulf today needs cooperation more than warships, because no defense system can contain the threat that arises from environmental destruction.

Iran condemns US strike near children's cancer hospital, calls it a 'war crime'

From page 1 ▶ Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said the overnight strike targeted an area close to Shahid Baqaei Specialized Hospital, a major pediatric oncology center, compelling medical staff to evacuate 211 children receiving cancer treatment, including chemotherapy patients.

In a statement posted on X, Baqaei described the attack as "barbaric," drawing comparisons with Israeli strikes on healthcare facilities in the Gaza Strip.

"This barbaric attack, reminiscent of Israel's atrocities against healthcare facilities, caused severe suffering and anxiety among hospitalized children and forced the emergency evacuation of 211 patients undergoing chemotherapy," Baqaei said. "This constitutes a cowardly war crime against the most innocent of human beings—children who are bravely fighting for their lives."

Hospital officials said the explosion occurred only a short distance from the medical complex.

Dr. Majid Bou'azar, the hospital's manager, said all 211 patients had to be relocated under emergency conditions following the strike.

"These are highly vulnerable patients, including children undergoing cancer treatment," he told Al Jazeera.

Medical staff described scenes of panic as doctors and nurses rushed critically ill children to safety.



"Some of the patients were on oxygen support and ventilators," one hospital employee said. "Parents were carrying children in their arms. Others were moved with intravenous lines still attached or transported in wheelchairs."

Hospital director Reza Bazar said the nearby explosions disrupted the facility's operations and temporarily rendered parts of the hospital unusable, according to Iran's Fars News Agency.

The incident comes amid an expanding US military campaign that has increasingly targeted civilian infrastructure alongside military facilities.

Iran's Foreign Ministry urged the international community, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations to condemn the attack, arguing that strikes endan-

gering medical facilities violate international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions, which provide special protection for hospitals and medical personnel during armed conflicts.

Iranian officials argued that attacks placing healthcare institutions at risk represent serious violations of international law regardless of whether hospitals themselves are directly struck.

The government has repeatedly accused Washington of widening the conflict by targeting civilian infrastructure and warned that such operations threaten prospects for a negotiated end to the war.

The latest incident has renewed broader international concern over the protection of medical facilities in armed conflict.

The World Health Organization

(WHO) has repeatedly warned that attacks affecting hospitals, ambulances and healthcare workers have devastating humanitarian consequences, stressing that medical facilities enjoy special protection under international humanitarian law and must never become targets of military operations.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has likewise consistently emphasized that parties to armed conflicts are obligated to distinguish between military objectives and civilian infrastructure and to ensure the safety of hospitals and patients.

While neither organization had issued a specific public statement on the Ahvaz incident at the time of reporting, both have repeatedly called for strict compliance with international humanitarian law and the protection of healthcare services in conflict zones.

The reported evacuation of pediatric cancer patients has also drawn renewed attention from humanitarian observers, who warn that interruptions to specialized treatment can place vulnerable children at immediate medical risk and have lasting consequences for their recovery.

The incident adds to mounting fears that continued attacks affecting civilian infrastructure and healthcare services could further escalate the conflict and complicate diplomatic efforts to secure a lasting ceasefire.

Iran condemns US, Israel, and Argentina over opposition to UN anti-terrorism resolutions

TEHRAN— Iran has sharply criticized the United States, Israel, and Argentina after the three countries voted against a series of United Nations General Assembly resolutions addressing terrorism, human rights, and transnational crime, arguing that the pattern of voting reflects their increasing isolation on key multilateral issues.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said the voting record of the three countries on several major UN resolutions over the past year was 'revealing,' pointing to their repeated opposition to measures that received overwhelming backing from the international community.

In a post on X on Thursday, Baqaei highlighted the General Assembly's Ninth Review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, adopted on July 1, 2026, with 140 votes in favor, 3 against, and 1 abstention. According to the official UN voting record, the United States, Israel and Argentina were the only countries to vote against the resolution. The strategy is the UN's principal framework for strengthening international cooperation against terrorism while emphasizing respect for international law, human rights, and the rule of law.

Baqaei also pointed to three other

General Assembly resolutions in which the same three countries cast the only opposing votes.

The first, adopted on March 25, 2026, declared the 'transatlantic slave trade a crime against humanity,' a measure backed by an overwhelming majority of UN member states.

The second, approved on December 18, 2025, sought to strengthen international cooperation against trafficking in persons, one of the world's most pervasive forms of organized crime.

The third, also adopted on December 18, 2025, addressed the relationship between terrorism and human rights, reaffirming that counter-terrorism measures must be implemented in accordance with international human rights obligations.

"Just a hint at what is what and who is who," Baqaei wrote, before asking: "Aren't they revealing?"

The latest vote on the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy followed weeks of difficult negotiations among UN member states over updates to the two-decade-old framework. Although a broad consensus emerged around preserving international cooperation against terrorism, Israel argued that the final text failed to reflect what it described as the changing global security environment following the October 2023 attacks, while maintaining that the strategy did not sufficiently address evolving terrorist threats.

The voting pattern has drawn attention from diplomats and international observers because the United States, Israel and Argentina have increasingly found themselves aligned on a range of General Assembly resolutions in recent months. International media have noted that the three governments have repeatedly opposed resolutions that attracted overwhelming global support, including measures on slavery, torture, trafficking, humanitarian issues and



certain human rights initiatives, while most European and other Western countries have generally chosen to abstain rather than vote against such texts.

The alignment reflects the close diplomatic relationship among the three governments under the administrations of US President Donald Trump, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Argentine President Javier Milei. International political analysts have described Argentina's foreign policy under Milei as increasingly synchronized with Washington and Tel Aviv, particularly in multilateral organizations such as the United Nations. While supporters argue that the three countries are resisting what they view as politically imbalanced or outdated UN language, critics contend that their repeated opposition to broadly supported resolutions has contributed to growing diplomatic isolation within the General Assembly.

Iran has frequently cited these voting records to argue that Washington, Israel, and Argentina are increasingly at odds with the wider international community on issues related to multilateralism, international law and the rules-based international order. At the same time, the three governments claim that their positions reflect principled objections to the wording or substance of individual resolutions rather than opposition to the underlying objectives.

Any US ground invasion would Put Kuwait, Bahrain in Iran's crosshairs: MP

From page 1 ▶ The lawmaker also said Arab states were seeking negotiations to contain the crisis and suggested that if oil prices climbed to around \$110 per barrel, the Bab el-Mandeb Strait could also face disruptions.

Asked whether the Strait of Hormuz could be bypassed, Bakhshayesh acknowledged that regional countries were pursuing alternative routes, citing the United Arab Emirates' efforts to expand port infrastructure. However, he argued that such initiatives would remain vulnerable because Iranian missile capabilities cover the surrounding region.

Commenting on speculation about a possible US at-

tempt to seize Kharg Island, Iran's main oil export terminal, Bakhshayesh said Washington might be able to capture the island temporarily but would be unable to maintain control because it lies within range of Iranian missile forces deployed across the country.

He concluded by warning that any US ground invasion of Iran could trigger a broader regional conflict.

"If the United States launches a ground attack against Iran, there is a possibility that Iran would also carry out ground attacks against Kuwait and Bahrain," Bakhshayesh said.



ADDENDUM NOTICE
INVITATION TO ONE STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER
First Announcement
568010
18/07/2026



Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture

AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT SERVICES COMPANY

Further to Tender Notice no.483124 published in Tehran Times and Savalan on 30/6/2026 and Etellat and Iran Daily on 1/7/2026, please be advised that the terms and conditions of tender for the purchase of 3×50000±5% MTS of Granular Triple Super Phosphate (GTSP) will be available from Saturday dated 18/7/2026 until Monday dated 20/7/2026 again.

All qualified and interested companies that were unable to obtain the tender documents are invited to receive them from our purchasing committee (located at the 9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi St., Tehran, Iran).

The bidders are requested to submit their letters of introduction, along with remittance bill of IRI. Rials 1,200,000 to ASSC's account no. 4001039704005791 with SHEBA no. IR250100004001039704005791 at the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran through payment order of SATNA or PAYA with the 30-character identification code of 339039782263500650000000000008.

The bidders are required to submit their sealed and stamped envelopes containing offers latest on Saturday dated 15/8/2026 (During official working hours) to our security office, located on the 8th floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelopes will be on Sunday dated 16/8/2026 at 10:00 a.m. with the presence of bidders' representatives in our purchasing committee (9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi St., Tehran, Iran).

Other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

For more information, you may refer to our website www.assc.ir, and <http://iets.mporg.ir> or contact us by phone no. 00982188776325.

PR & Intel Affairs Dept. of Agricultural Support Services Company (ASSC)

228466
1205

Relentless strikes until peace returns to the southern coast

From Page 1 ▶ Simultaneously, US aircraft targeted six bridges in Hormozgan's Khamir County during the early hours of Friday, severely damaging key transport routes linking Bandar Abbas, Bandar Khamir, and Lar, alongside arterial roads running through Latidan, Kahorestan, Keshar, and Maru village. According to the Hormozgan Governor's Office, seven people were killed in the bridge attacks.

Further compounding the logistics blitz, a railway branch station in Bandar Abbas was struck shortly after midnight. Provincial officials noted that the station is located away from residential areas and sustained limited infrastructural damage.

The coordinated highway and railway bridge strikes appear explicitly designed to isolate Bandar Abbas—Iran's primary maritime trade hub—from transit links leading into the country's central region toward the capital, Tehran. While alternative domestic supply lines remain operational, the hostile US strikes appear aimed at expanding further, clearing aiming to disrupt the movement of essential goods needed for Iranian people.

Reports of aggression extended across multiple fronts. Governor Mohammad Mozaffari confirmed that Bushehr came under two distinct US attacks within hours. In Khuzestan Province, Deputy Governor Valiollah Hayati stated that American forces attacked positions around the provincial capital of Ahvaz on Thursday night. Hayati noted that the full dimensions of the strike remain under investigation. The latest escalation near Ahvaz follows previous US strikes that forced the precautionary evacuation of Shahid Baghaei Hospital. Iran previously slammed that hospital attack as a "cowardly war crime," and the Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences confirmed the facility was temporarily taken out of service.

In western Iran, Lorestan Deputy Governor Saeed Pourali confirmed that US forces targeted an area in the Veysian district of Chegeni County on Friday, with further investigative details pending.

Iran's retaliation

In response to the economic and civilian targeting, Iran has declared the vital Strait of Hormuz closed "until further notice" and at least until "the end of US interference in the region."

Concurrently, the Islamic Rev-



olution Guards Corps (IRGC) unleashed heavy retaliatory salvos of ballistic missiles and combat drones against American military installations and equipment across Bahrain, Kuwait, Syria, and Oman. On Friday, a US special operations command center was directly hit at the al-Tanf garrison in southern Syria.

The IRGC confirmed its forces targeted US fighter jets and aerial refueling aircraft stationed at forward deployment bases in Jordan and Qatar. It noted that these regional assets were directly used by Washington to launch the overnight strikes against civilian infrastructure in southern Iran.

In three separate military communiqués issued on Friday, the IRGC announced that the latest waves of Operation Nasr 2 were carried out in direct response to US war crimes committed during overnight attacks on civilian targets in Iran. One statement specifically addressed the Jordanian population, highlighting that the US military had relocated the forward headquarters of US Central Command (CENTCOM) forces from Qatar to Al Azraq Air Base in Jordan following Iran's high-precision strike on Al Udeid Air Base last year.

The IRGC stated that the Al Azraq base hosts dozens of US aerial refueling aircraft alongside F-35, F-15, and F-16 fighter jets utilized to launch hostile operations against Iran. According to the statement, US forces utilized these Jordanian assets on Thursday night to strike civilian targets in Bandar Abbas, including bridges, residential neighborhoods, and a water pumping station.

In retaliation, the IRGC launched the 14th wave of Operation Nasr 2, firing multiple ballistic missiles and numerous drones at the US aircraft assets in Jordan. Field reports indicated that 10 aerial refueling aircraft arrived at the Jordanian base from Europe on Friday

morning—a deployment regional observers state indicates that existing refueling tankers stationed at the base were successfully neutralized during the overnight Iranian counterstrikes.

The IRGC also confirmed its forces executed a heavy, surprise bombardment against the US-operated Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar.

"The American enemy and the hosts of its bases in the region should know that crossing the red lines and attacking civilians and civilian infrastructure will carry a very harsh and devastating price," warned the IRGC. "Should the enemy continue this course, even more crushing responses are on the way—responses that will be remembered in the history of warfare."

In its third statement, the IRGC announced the launch of the 15th wave of Operation Nasr 2, confirming that its Ground Force successfully destroyed an American HIMARS launcher and its missile cache in Kuwait.

This coincides with field reports indicating that precision missile strikes targeted the headquarters of an anti-Iran Kurdish separatist group in the Zarkwezlah area near Sulaymaniyah Province in Iraq's Kurdistan Region. Local sources reported that eight members of the group were killed in the strike.

IRGC vows to continue 'effective' strikes

Vowing a sustained defense of the nation, Brigadier General Seyyed Majid Mousavi, the Commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force, issued a stern warning on Friday.

"Our effective and targeted firing from all over Iran at the enemy will continue until calm returns to the southern coastline and the Strait of Hormuz," he said.

He stressed that there is no strategic difference between the capital and the south of the country, and that any aggression on

them will be treated equally. "Our view is that land is land; Tehran to the south are unified for Iran."

US war quagmire

From the standpoint of international law, the Islamic Republic of Iran possesses an inherent and undeniable right to self-defense under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. The ongoing American military actions are a flagrant violation of the 14-point memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed on June 17, which was specifically drafted to anchor the Pakistan-mediated ceasefire on April 8.

By unilaterally breaching this MoU and aggressively targeting non-military assets, the United States has shattered the legal framework governing the pause in hostilities. Consequently, Iran's surgical strikes against American military hubs hosting hostile aircraft across West Asia represent a legitimate, proportionate legal response to continuous external aggression.

Furthermore, the deliberate targeting of critical infrastructure—including maritime traffic towers, transport bridges, medical facilities, and civilian power grids amid punishing 50-degree summer heat—unequivocally constitutes a war crime under standard international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions. These actions are calculated to inflict collective punishment on a civilian population of 90 million people by disrupting food logistics, health services, and basic electricity.

Ultimately, Washington's expanded air campaign underscores a profound strategic failure. During the initial 39 days of this conflict, the United States achieved absolutely nothing of tactical value, failing entirely to force Tehran into submission or weaken its regional posture. By attempting to mask this failure with malicious strikes on civilian infrastructure, the United States has only managed to widen the theater of war while leaving its regional assets exposed to sophisticated missile and drone technology.

By pushing this conflict beyond the boundaries of the original 39-day war, Washington has walked into a strategic quagmire. With Iran maintaining ironclad control over the Strait of Hormuz "until further notice," the US will find itself facing immense consequences, leaving its military strategy with eggs on its face and its regional presence completely compromised.

Mohammad Akraminia said strategic control of the Strait of Hormuz has become a national demand, stressing that the armed forces will defend Iran's position. He said the US must respect Iran's legal framework for managing the waterway, warning that the strait would remain closed until such arrangements are accepted. Akraminia also cautioned regional countries against allowing foreign military bases to be used for operations against Iran.

■ US MQ-9 drone intercepted, destroyed over Andimeshk

The Islamic Revolution Guard Corps announced that a US MQ-9 drone has been intercepted and destroyed in the skies over Andimeshk.

■ Oil prices climb with Hormuz closure, uncertainty in Red Sea

Oil prices have risen by about 2 percent as the US and Iran exchange tit-for-tat attacks across the Gulf, with shipping threatened by a potential Red Sea closure on top of the restricted traffic through the Strait of Hormuz.

Brent crude futures rose by \$1.53, or 1.82 percent, to \$85.76 a barrel by 09:51 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate futures gained \$1.69, or 2.14 percent, to \$80.64.

Both benchmarks have climbed nearly 13 percent this week, with Brent on track for a third consecutive weekly gain and WTI set for its second.

Iravani: US committing 'heinous war crimes' in Iran

From Page 1 ▶ "Owing to the Security Council's continued failure to act, the United States continues its acts of aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iran and perpetrates heinous war crimes against the Iranian people in blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, and international law, in particular international humanitarian law," Iravani said.

He said American attacks targeted Bandar Abbas, Bushehr, Ahvaz, Chabahar, Konarak, Jask, Sirik, Iranshahr, Abu Musa Island, Greater Tunb Island, and in the early hours of July 16, the cities of Shiraz, Khorramabad, Semnan, Urmia, and Hamedan.

The letter stipulated that the bombings caused extensive damage to ports, transportation networks, communications facilities, logistics hubs, radar installations, coastal defense systems, and "other infrastructure indispensable to the civilian population."

Dozens of people in Iran have lost their lives in the latest wave of US attacks.

Civilians, emergency responders, firefighters, park rangers, and fishermen are among those who have been killed.

Iravani pointed to President Donald Trump's public statements, including a threat to strike Iran's bridges and power plants.

Iran's UN envoy underscored Trump's admission regarding the bombardment of the country's nuclear facilities, "If I wasn't around, or Bibi (Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu) wasn't around, especially the combination, ... they would have had a nuclear weapon within two weeks had I not hit them with a nuclear."

"This statement exposes the dangerous



mindset of the US president, reflecting utter contempt for the Charter of the United Nations, international law, and the most fundamental principles of humanity," Iravani stressed.

Iravani urged the Security Council to "take immediate and effective measures to put an end to the US aggression, and to ensure accountability for all severe violations by the United States."

"As long as the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, fails to fulfill its responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Islamic Republic of Iran will continue to exercise all its rights under international law in order to protect its sovereignty, territorial integrity, people, and vital interests," he stated.

The United States and Israel began their aggression against Iran on February 28. During 39 days of war, which was paused by a Pakistani-mediated ceasefire on April 8, they killed thousands of people most of them civilians.

The US has also violated a 14-point memorandum of understanding signed on June 17.

Iran has conducted retaliatory strikes against US military bases in the Persian Gulf region.

Iran declares US presence the sole cause of instability in the Strait of Hormuz

TEHRAN – The presence of American forces is the main cause of instability in the entire West Asia region, the spokesman for Iran's armed forces told IRIB news.

"The reason for insecurity in the Strait of Hormuz is the presence of Americans. If the countries of the region join hands with Iran, we will not allow any insecurity in the region," Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi said.

Citing international law, he said territorial waters extend up to 12 nautical miles from coastlines, and only Iran and Oman have coastlines along the strait. Therefore, management of the waterway must be carried out by these two countries.

"America has come from thousands of kilometers away and has no legal right to interfere in the Strait of Hormuz," he stated.

He noted that Iran's presence in the Strait of Hormuz is solely aimed at ensuring the security of commercial shipping, oil tankers, and vessels, he said.

"The United States is trying to create insecurity by interfering in maritime routes and imposing its will on international vessels, while the Islamic Republic has acted to establish security," Shekarchi pointed out.

He said since the Americans declared the

ceasefire, their drone flights over the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz have not stopped for a single day, demonstrating their continued hostile approach.

"The main factor of insecurity in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz is America, not the Islamic Republic of Iran," the spokesman of the Iranian armed forces said.

He urged regional countries not to allow their territory to be used for American military aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

"If the Muslim countries of the region do not place their skies, coasts, and logistical facilities at the disposal of the aggressor US army, many security problems will disappear," he said.

He made clear that Iran will never retreat on the issue of managing the strategic waterway and that the situation will not return to what it was before the war that was launched by the US and Israeli on February 28.

He added that Iranian armed forces are at full readiness for any possible scenario and capable of continuing the fight for months or even years if necessary.

Shekarchi stressed that if the US targets Iran's infrastructure, all regional infrastructure will become legitimate targets for the Islamic Republic.

Hormuz Strait is Iran's 'most effective tool' for retaliation, cleric says

TEHRAN – Tehran's interim Friday prayer leader, Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Javad Haj Ali Akbari, said Iran views the Strait of Hormuz as its most effective strategic instrument for retaliating against the United States and Israel, while declaring that negotiations with Washington had effectively come to an end.

Speaking during Friday prayers in Tehran, Haj Ali Akbari said the recent nationwide public mobilization demonstrated the resilience of the Islamic Republic and reflected broad public support for the country's leadership. He described calls for retaliation over the killing of the "martyred leader" and other Iranian victims as a legitimate national demand grounded in both Islamic principles and deterrence.

He outlined four stages of retaliation: bringing those responsible for attacks against Iran to justice, removing US military bases from the region, eliminating Israel, and ending US global dominance. He argued that both Washington and Israel were entering a period of strategic decline.

Accusing the United States of violating its commitments under the Islamabad memorandum of

understanding, Haj Ali Akbari said Washington had recognized Iran's right to manage the Strait of Hormuz but later abandoned the agreement by launching attacks on Iranian infrastructure and civilian facilities.

"The negotiations and the memorandum of understanding are over," he said. "From now on, the relationship between Iran and the United States will be determined by the military power of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic."

Describing the Strait of Hormuz as a "divine blessing" and a symbol of Iran's national resistance, Haj Ali Akbari said the strategic waterway serves not only Iran's economic and security interests but is also "the best means" for taking revenge against the United States and Israel.

He further asserted that the Strait of Hormuz would not return to its previous status under any circumstances and would remain under Iranian management.

The cleric also urged regional countries to use the current situation to free themselves from 'US domination,' saying the moment offered an opportunity for greater regional independence.

LATEST NEWS

■ Former Iranian FM urges regional dialogue to end West Asia crisis

Former Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi called on regional countries to abandon the "blame game" and pursue dialogue to resolve the Middle East crisis. Speaking at Egypt's National Day reception in Tehran on Thursday, Salehi said the Islamic Republic seeks regional peace, stability, and prosperity rather than escalating tensions. He stressed that misunderstandings between nations should be resolved through diplomacy and noted that Iran, alongside Egypt, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and other partners, is working to find a peaceful solution to the current crisis.

■ China, Pakistan urge immediate Iran-US ceasefire, return to dialogue

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Pakistani Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar called for an immediate ceasefire between Iran and the United States and urged both sides to resume dialogue during talks in Shanghai on Thursday. According to AFP, the two ministers stressed the importance of honoring commitments under the war-termination memorandum of understanding. Their appeal came after renewed US military strikes on Iran, escalating tensions, and raising concerns over the collapse of the agreement and growing regional instability.

■ Diplomat: Protecting independence remains Iran's core national priority

Ali Bagheri Kani, deputy for foreign policy and international security at Iran's Supreme National Security Council, said safeguarding the country's independence and national identity remains a central legacy of the late leader of the Islamic Revolution. Speaking at a memorial ceremony in Tehran on Thursday, he said preserving independence is an ongoing responsibility requiring vigilance against external threats. Bagheri Kani stressed that Iran must prevent adversaries from undermining its sovereignty through both military and non-military means while remaining committed to the principles of the Islamic Revolution.

■ Pakistan calls on US, Iran to resume technical talks

Pakistan on Thursday urged the United States and Iran to resume technical-level negotiations under the Islamabad memorandum of understanding. Foreign Ministry spokesman Tahir Andrabi called for maximum restraint, saying dialogue and diplomacy remain the only path to lasting peace. He described the Islamabad MoU as a durable framework for reducing tensions and advancing regional stability.

■ Control of Hormuz Strait has become a national demand: Army

Iran Army spokesman Brigadier General

Iran committed to establishing a fair economic order in world, minister says at BRICS meeting



TEHRAN- Ahmad Meidari, Minister of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare, at the 12th BRICS Labor and Employment Ministers' meeting hosted by India, said: We declare our protest against warmongering to the whole world from this meeting.

Ahmad Meidari, at the 12th BRICS Labor and Employment Ministers' meeting hosted by India, addressed the UAE representative, saying: We were never the initiator of attacks on any country. Iran is a symbol of peace-seeking in the world, but if our soil and people are attacked, we will defend ourselves with all our might. The Minister emphasized: Iran believes that the security of the Persian Gulf region can be ensured by us and neighboring countries together, and there is no need for interference from other countries from other parts of the world.

The Minister of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare, at the 12th BRICS Labor and Employment Ministers' meeting, also proposed designing a fair economic order in the world by BRICS. He also emphasized consultations regarding employment development and the necessity of resisting modern colonialism and establishing a fair global order.

Ahmad Meidari, in this meeting held in Hyderabad, India, said: This meeting is a platform for exchanging national views on welfare and labor economics. He thanked India for hosting and emphasized the importance of the fundamental goals of the BRICS meeting.

The Minister of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare, also referring to the sensitive regional situation and the country's confrontation with recent aggressions, stressed that the security of the Persian Gulf can only be ensured with the participation of neighboring countries, and stated: Iran believes there is no need for the presence of extra-regional forces in the region, and neighboring countries have full capacity to establish lasting stability. Stating that my country has entered an unwanted war, and we are mourning the children and innocent people and mourning our late leader during the recent war, he emphasized: I came here because I believe the BRICS group of countries was established for a great purpose.

The Minister of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare, also referring to the declaration of the 17th BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro, considered commitment to peace, peaceful resolution of conflicts, and establishing a just order as the priority of this coalition.

Minister of Labor in a meeting with Iranians residing in Hyderabad: If we do not have power, colonizers will once again restore era of domination.

The Minister of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare, while explaining Iran's geopolitical position in global developments, considered resistance against the system of domination as a key factor for achieving sustainable development.

Ahmad Meidari, on the sidelines of the 12th BRICS Labor and Employment Ministers' meeting, announced: Iran, by utilizing its rich cultural civilization and the model of resistance economy, has followed a different path from failed global models and will never face the fate of countries like Venezuela.

During a meeting with Iranians residing in Hyderabad, Meidari paid tribute to the authenticity, religious and revolutionary spirit, and entrepreneurial capabilities of his compatriots, praising their role in maintaining cultural ties and material and spiritual support for the country.

Meidari, emphasizing that Iran's histo-

ry is the text of civilization, noted: Iran, with its government, order, architecture, poetry, and universities, reached the level of civilization-building 300 years earlier than many nations. In comparing migrants and invaders, he explained: Iranian migrants in Hyderabad did not destroy the host country's culture but contributed to its flourishing; however, in contrast, British occupiers with brutality reduced Iran's population by half after World War I. Wherever Iranians have been present, they brought prosperity, unlike some whose purpose in being present is destruction.

The BRICS Labor and Employment Ministers' Meeting was successfully held in Hyderabad under India's BRICS Chairship 2026, bringing together Ministers, Heads of Delegation, representatives of BRICS member countries, workers' and employers' organizations, and knowledge partners to deliberate on key issues shaping the future of work.

The Meeting was convened under India's Chairship theme, "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability," and focused on advancing collective action in the areas of social protection, labor market formalization, women's workforce participation, skills development, and the use of digital technologies for inclusive and resilient labor markets.

A major outcome of the Meeting was the adoption of the BRICS Labor and Employment Ministers' Declaration, reflecting the shared commitment of BRICS countries to promote decent work, strengthen social protection systems, enhance employability, support inclusive growth, and deepen cooperation in the labor and employment domain. The Declaration reaffirmed the importance of South-South cooperation, mutual learning, and practical collaboration among BRICS members in addressing common labor market challenges.

Under Priority 1 on Advancing Social Security and Formalization of Labor Markets, member states have agreed to commend the collective efforts in expanding social protection coverage and that member shall endeavor to progressively expand social protection coverage from existing levels as per nationally determined levels, based on respective circumstances, priorities, and capacities.

Under Priority 2 on Enhancing Women's Participation and Inclusion in the Workforce, Member countries committed to strengthening policy frameworks that empower women through expanded access to skills development, parental leave policies, and protection against workplace harassment and discrimination, while also working towards enhancing women's representation and participation in leadership roles across public and private sectors.

Under Priority 3 on Cooperation on Employability, Skills Mapping and Development, Member countries took note of the ongoing feasibility study on International Reference Classification of Occupations being conducted by the ILO in collaboration with India, joined by Brazil, and encourage member states to consider participation in the pilot in key sectors—Digital, Care, and Green.

Under Priority 4 on Leveraging Digital Technologies for All Workers, including Gig and Platform Workers, Member countries will work together to create opportunities to exchange knowledge and experiences, showcase our digital innovations, and help alleviate transition challenges through peer learning and South-South and Triangular cooperation with extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits.

How did a needless war become Trump's gravest economic mistake?

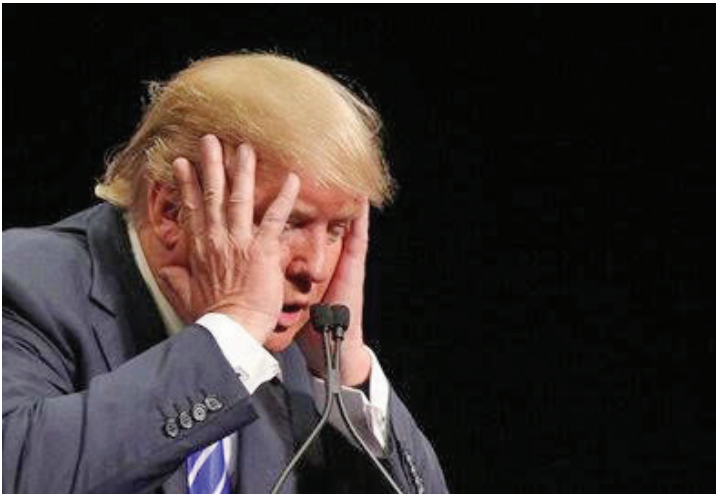
From Page 1 ▶

From economic promise to self-inflicted disaster

At the dawn of 2026, the Trump administration appeared to be riding a wave of cautious optimism. Despite widespread fears that his blanket tariffs would trigger a recession, the U.S. economy had demonstrated surprising resilience. GDP grew at a respectable 2.1% in 2025, and inflation in January stood at a manageable 2.4%—barely above the Federal Reserve's target. Artificial intelligence investments were fueling stock market records, with technology giants pouring billions into chips, servers, and software. In the first quarter alone, these expenditures added approximately 1.3 percentage points to annualized GDP growth. Seasoned economists like Joseph LaVorgna, then a Treasury Department counselor, spoke confidently of "very strong disinflationary growth" on national television.

Yet this optimism, as the reports devastatingly document, rested on the thinnest of foundations—and was obliterated entirely by Trump's reckless decision to coordinate with Israel in bombing Iran. The consequences were immediate and catastrophic: crude oil prices skyrocketed from roughly \$70 to over \$110 per barrel, while average gasoline prices nationwide surged from under \$3 to \$4.50 per gallon. Fertilizers, plastics, and countless other petroleum-dependent products saw their costs spiral upward. In a single stroke, Trump transformed an economy showing genuine promise into a landscape of hardship for millions of American families.

The reports quote LaVorgna, who left the administration in March, describing this as a "self-induced supply shock"—a stunning indictment of presidential incompetence. "The problem is this war," he told CNBC bluntly. "From a forecasting perspective,



it changed things, and changed things monumentally." This is not the language of partisan criticism; it is the sober assessment of a veteran Wall Street economist who served in the very administration he now condemns.

Desperate distractions and hollow deflections

The human cost of Trump's folly is written in the stark statistics of public opinion. According to recent polling data, only 32% of Americans approve of his economic performance, with his inflation-handling approval sinking to an abysmal 27%. A Harris poll reveals that 57% of respondents believe the economy is worsening—not improving. Even among self-identified Republicans, barely a quarter express optimism. These figures represent nothing less than a political death spiral for a president who rode the cost-of-living crisis to victory just two years prior.

The reports painfully illustrate how Trump's attempts at distraction have only deepened his humiliation. The sudden emergence of "Freedom Fuel" stations in Philadelphia—offering discounted gasoline through mysterious benefactors—represents a pathetic attempt to manufacture good news. Even the White House has been forced to deny involvement, suggesting this initiative may be the work of panicked donors or supporters

desperately trying to salvage an increasingly hopeless situation. Similarly, Trump's Red Scare tactics—branding Democrats as "communists" at the nation's 250th anniversary celebration—reveal a leader with no substantive answers, only hollow rhetoric from the last century.

Perhaps most damning is the administration's frantic diplomatic maneuvering with Iran. After initiating a war that destabilized global energy markets, Trump was forced to negotiate a conditional ceasefire and memorandum of understanding to reopen the Strait of Hormuz. When that fragile agreement collapsed, gasoline prices immediately began climbing again—exposing the profound instability that his impulsive decision-making has unleashed. Even before the latest price increases, Trump had been reduced to complaining publicly that gas prices hadn't fallen as much as oil prices, accusing major companies of price gouging. This is not leadership; it is the desperate flailing of a commander-in-chief who cannot control the consequences of his own actions.

The economic damage extends beyond the gas pump. The Federal Reserve, constitutionally mandated to ensure price stability, now faces the prospect of raising interest rates—the very policy Trump had hoped to avoid. Nine

of eighteen Fed policymakers anticipate at least one rate hike by year's end, a development that would further burden American families with higher borrowing costs. Even Kevin Warsh, the Republican financier handpicked by Trump to chair the central bank, has publicly acknowledged the need to contain inflation. When even your own appointees concede the gravity of the crisis, the pretense of competence collapses entirely.

What makes this tragedy particularly unforgivable is its avoidability. The crisis of affordability that propelled Trump to victory in 2024—the very issue he promised to solve—has been exacerbated by his own policies. Heavy tariffs on imported goods and a needless war have inflicted suffering on the very working-class Americans who placed their trust in him. The "futile war" with Iran, as the news agency report accurately characterizes it, represents not a necessary defense of American interests but a reckless gamble that has backfired monumentally.

As the Bureau of Labor Statistics prepares to release its June Consumer Price Index—expected to show inflation falling below 4% due solely to temporary gas price declines—Trump may attempt to claim a hollow victory. But ordinary Americans know better. They are not fooled by one-month fluctuations; they see grocery prices that remain painfully high, essential goods that continue to strain household budgets, and a president who seems more interested in hosting UFC matches and branding opponents as "communists" than in addressing their daily struggles.

The verdict is clear and damning: Donald Trump's needless war with Iran stands as his most profound economic blunder—a self-inflicted wound that has betrayed the trust of the American people and exposed the dangerous emptiness of his leadership.

Iran, India standards bodies discuss technical cooperation

TEHRAN- The heads of the national standards organizations of Iran and India emphasized the development of technical cooperation and the role of standardization in facilitating trade and improving the quality of goods and services.

According to IRNA, on the sidelines of the meeting of the heads of national standards organizations of BRICS member states in Bengaluru, Farzaneh Ansari, Head of the National Standards Organization of Iran, met and held talks with Pramod Kumar Tiwari, Director General

of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS).

During this meeting, the two sides explored ways to expand bilateral cooperation in the areas of standardization, conformity assessment, development of quality infrastructure, exchange of technical experiences, and educational and specialized cooperation.

Furthermore, the heads of the national standards organizations of Iran and India emphasized the importance of strengthening interactions between the two institutions, utilizing existing capacities to develop technical

cooperation, and the role of standardization in facilitating trade and improving the quality of goods and services.

This meeting was held on the sidelines of the meeting of the heads of national standards organizations of BRICS member states; a meeting that was hosted by the Bureau of Indian Standards in Bengaluru with the aim of developing technical cooperation, convergence in the field of standardization, and strengthening quality infrastructure among BRICS member states.

Tehran, Dushanbe emphasize development of railway cooperation

TEHRAN- The CEO of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways, in a meeting with the Deputy Minister of Transport of Tajikistan, emphasized the development of railway cooperation and the utilization of shared capacities to expand transport and trade relations between the two countries.

According to the news base of the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, from the Public Relations of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways, a meeting was held between Jabbar Ali Zakeri, Deputy Minister of Transport and Urban Development and CEO of the Railways, and Shaista Said Moradzadeh, Deputy Minister of Transport of Tajikistan, at the headquarters of the Railways.

In this meeting, Zakeri referring to the friendly and expanding relations between Iran and Tajikistan, considered the development of railway cooperation as one of the important areas for strengthening the economic and transport relations of the two countries, and emphasized the continuation of consultations and joint interactions to make the most of existing capacities.

He cited close cooperation among

officials and relevant institutions in both countries as a basis for facilitating communications, developing exchanges, and enhancing bilateral cooperation.

In this meeting, Shayesteh Saeed Moradzadeh, Deputy Minister of Transport of Tajikistan, also emphasizing the expanding relations between the two countries, considered the development of railway cooperation to have significant potential, and stressed the continuation of joint interactions and consultations to expand cooperation.

Shayesteh also had met Iran's Minister of Transport and Urban Development, in Tehran on July 13, when they 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 meeting 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 var-

ious 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.

Back in May 2025, Iran and Tajikistan signed a memorandum of understanding to enhance bilateral rail transport, enabling the use of Iranian freight wagons on Tajikistan's railway network, Iran's railway authority announced.

The agreement was signed by Jabbar Ali Zakeri, deputy transport minister and head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways, and Mirzoali Komil Jumakhon, head of Tajikistan's State Unitary Railway Enterprise.

Aimed at optimizing existing capacities and boosting international freight movement, the deal also allows Iranian wagons to transit beyond Tajikistan to other regional railway networks.

Israel failing to repair brutal reputation among Americans

From page 1 ► Many Americans and many Jews outside Israel were not fully aware of Israel's brutality until the Gaza war. Israel's officials and its loyalists have been misusing the term anti-Semitism to cover up and justify their illegal and criminal acts.

Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust have been key words to advance Israel's evil plans.

Israel's illegal and brutality have not remained confined to Palestinians. It is using the October 7 incident to expand Israel's occupation of other nations' lands. Just recently, Israel Katz said that the Netanyahu regime has no plan to withdraw from Gaza, Lebanon, and the lands it occupied in Syria following the fall of the Assad government in December 2024.

Under its current prime minister, Israel also dragged the Trump administration into the war against Iran in June 2025, and again in the current one that began in late Feb.

Joe Kent, Director of the U.S. National Counterterrorism Center, resigned in March in protest of the war on Iran, stating that Israel and its American lobby had pushed the United States toward the unlawful war.

Now, after it seemed that the war between Iran and the U.S. may be brought to an end under a memorandum of understanding (MOU) mediated by Pakistan, Netanyahu and his cabinet members felt unsettled and tried to kill this initial agreement, the same way that Netanyahu used his utmost influence on Republicans to provoke Trump to quit the Obama-era 2015 nuclear deal with Iran. It is again mostly due to Israel's pressure that the Trump administration has resumed the war against Iran after a lull.

In June, U.S. Vice President JD Vance lashed out at Israeli critics of the Iran-U.S. MOU, saying Trump is Israel's only ally left in the world.

Again, speaking on The Joe Rogan Experience podcast on Wednesday, Vance described a "very discreet, extremely well-funded campaign to try to derail the negotiation and try to derail the deal" with Iran.

"There are certain influencers in America who are being paid in order to attack the deal," he said, mentioning funding that came from Israel.

The vice president referenced a TIME magazine article this week which details an "Israeli influence operation targeting the MAGA base".

Brad Parscale, a digital adviser on Donald Trump's 2020 presidential campaign, is reportedly being paid \$1.5m a month to run this operation.

JD Vance says Epstein had connections to CIA and Mossad

The pedophile financier Jeffrey Epstein was connected to the "highest levels" of US and Israeli intelligence, JD Vance said on Monday.

"He clearly had connections to the upper, the highest levels of American intelligence," the US vice president told podcaster Joe Rogan, in relation to Epstein. "He clearly had connections to the highest levels of Israeli intelligence."

Told by Rogan that "most people think he was Mossad", Israel's external intelligence agency, Vance replied: "Mossad or CIA or some other deep state, whether in America or Israel or some other country... or both."

The vice president, who describes himself as "an OG Epstein conspiracy theorist", said that Epstein's connections were to "elements of the Israeli deep state that were left of centre", most notably former Israeli



Brad Parscale

According to Vance, the TIME article "lists a bunch of people who have quite literally been paid by a former Trump campaign person, who is himself paid by certain elements within the Israeli government, and those people are attacking me quite viciously."

"I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that there have been people within the Israeli government who are trying to, like, actually shift us away from that policy [the Iran negotiations] because they want to continue the military campaign," Vance said.

The vice president said that there are people "who are super-hawkish in the American system who have attacked the deal and, frankly, in some ways tried to derail the deal. And what I always say to those people is, what is your proposal?"

He said he had been widely accused of being an antisemite, "which is insane."

No amount of media campaign can heal the damaged reputation

Israeli officials are reportedly furious that Parscale has failed to halt the collapse in support for Israel among young U.S. conservatives.

Despite millions of dollars spent targeting the MAGA base, shaping social media narratives and influencing artificial intelligence platforms, polling shows that attitudes towards Israel have continued to deteriorate.

The operation aimed to prevent young conservatives from turning against Israel, according to an investigation published by TIME. Publicly presented as a campaign to combat anti-Semitism, its wider strategic purpose was to preserve support for Israel among a section of the U.S. right increasingly critical of Israel and Washington's involvement in Israel's regional wars.

Foreign Agents Registration Act filings show that global advertising agency Havas hired Parscale's firm, Clock Tower X, in September 2025 to conduct the digital campaign on behalf

of Israel. The agreement required the firm to produce 100 original pieces of content each month, with at least 80 percent directed at Generation Z audiences through TikTok, Instagram, YouTube and podcasts.

The campaign promised at least 50 million digital impressions each month and included efforts to influence how artificial intelligence tools, including OpenAI's ChatGPT, Anthropic's Claude and Google's Gemini, present Israel and its wars. Parscale also proposed integrating campaign narratives into properties and distribution channels associated with the Christian conservative Salem Media Network, where he serves as chief strategy officer.

In April, Israel had already paid Parscale's firm \$9 million and renewed its contract. The campaign included digital advertising and text-message outreach, alongside attempts to ensure that material favorable to Israel ranks prominently in the online sources used by artificial intelligence systems.

Three people familiar with the campaign said conservative influencers received suggested wording through private group chats and were compensated according to the reach and engagement generated by their posts. Clock Tower X describes its operation as an "influencer ecosystem" capable of amplifying narratives through apparently independent and trusted voices.

It remains unclear how much creators received specifically for work connected to Israel. TIME reviewed messages from another Influenceable campaign, which offered a base payment of \$2,250 and additional payments based on views, allowing participants to earn up to \$4,250 for a single post.

'Seismic shift'

One conservative influencer associated with Parscale's network was Eyal Yakoby, who has a large following on X and has testified before Congress about alleged anti-Semitism on university campuses. Influ-

enceable confirmed that Yakoby had worked as a paid influencer on several Israel-related campaigns, but insisted that he had not received Israeli government money.

The campaign also created websites, including PaxPoint.org and FactSignal.org, which TIME said appeared to be designed primarily to influence material gathered and synthesized by artificial intelligence systems rather than to attract ordinary readers.

Despite the scale of the spending, Israeli officials appear dissatisfied with the results. An Israeli Foreign Ministry official familiar with the arrangement told TIME: "We are pissed at Brad Parscale. He was supposed to make things better. We have paid him lots of money. But what did he do with it? Things have only gotten worse."

Polling supports the official's assessment that Israel has failed to reverse the decline in public support. Pew Research Center found in April that 60 percent of Americans viewed Israel unfavorably, compared with 53 percent in 2025 and 42 percent in 2022. Among Republicans aged between 18 and 49, 57 percent held an unfavorable opinion, up from 50 percent a year earlier.

The campaign has also triggered concern in Washington. Following a U.S.-Iran ceasefire, Trump administration officials noticed MAGA influencers publishing similar posts criticizing the agreement and accusing the president of surrendering to Iran.

A senior U.S. intelligence official described the possibility of American influencers receiving foreign money and then seeking to change the president's position as "a very, very dangerous thing". The official said the effort could not be dismissed as inconsequential because it targeted Trump's own political base rather than the general electorate.

The latest disclosures add to previous revelations about Israeli operations targeting U.S. public opinion. In 2024, Israel's Ministry of Diaspora Affairs commissioned a \$2 million campaign that used hundreds of fake accounts posing as Americans to pressure U.S. lawmakers into supporting military aid for Israel.

Israel has since expanded its public diplomacy budget to \$730 million as it attempts to counter its worsening global image following the genocide in Gaza. However, the continued decline in support among young Americans, Democrats and younger Republicans suggests that greater spending has so far failed to reverse the political consequences of Israel's actions.



There is, though, no categorical proof that Epstein worked actively for an intelligence agency.

The Epstein files do, however, document the financier's funding of Israeli groups, including Friends of the Israel Defense (Occupation) Forces, and the settler organisation the Jewish National Fund, as well as his ties to members of Israel's overseas intelligence services.

INTERNATIONAL

JULY 18, 2026

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

5

Why do Lebanese authorities insist on the path of surrender?



From page 1 ► Ahead of the talks, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, who is due to visit Washington on July 21, said he had instructed the Lebanese delegation "to demand the immediate withdrawal of Israeli (occupation) forces from two pilot zones before any further discussions."

However, no official statements were issued by either side following the latest round of negotiations.

Under a U.S.-brokered "framework agreement" reached on June 26, Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) are to withdraw from large areas of southern Lebanon they currently occupy, and transfer control to the Lebanese army. The Lebanese army would then clear them of any Hezbollah presence and disarm the Lebanese resistance movement.

The agreement envisioned an initial phase centered on so-called "pilot zones". Nobody has yet disclosed which areas of southern Lebanon would be designated as the proposed "pilot zones". Lebanese officials previously said the plan would encompass the towns of Froun, Ghandouriyeh, and Zawtar.

That drew widespread condemnation in Lebanon because the IOF is not currently occupying most of the areas designated under this plan, raising questions about the Lebanese government's approach to securing an IOF withdrawal.

Making matters worse, Israeli officials have categorically stated in public that the regime has no intention of ending its occupation of southern Lebanon, including under the proposed "pilot zones" arrangement.

The provisions of the "framework agreement" signed by the Lebanese authorities now clearly resemble the terms of a surrender document more than an agreement between two equal parties. Only defeated states accept the continued presence of an occupying force, allow its position to be entrenched, and refrain from explicitly demanding its withdrawal in a document bearing their own signature.

Added to this is a feature that is almost unique to the Lebanese case: a commitment to halt all forms of legal action aimed at holding an enemy accountable for war crimes that rose to the level of genocide and met the criteria for urban, cultural, and environmental genocide.

Despite this, those defending the agreement rely on contradictory arguments. On the one hand, they insist that what they have done is a major and historic decision taken by the "state" in the interest of preserving sovereignty, restoring its authority, and exercising its exclusive right to declare war and peace.

On the other hand, they respond to widespread criticism of the agreement by claiming that it was an inevitable result of the balance of power created by the most recent Israeli regime aggression. This, they argue, made it impossible to secure anything better than what the agreement contains.

In doing so, they implicitly acknowledge that the agreement suffers from significant flaws and imbalances, extending even to the relinquishment of key elements of sovereignty.

In either case, this line of argument is riddled with misconceptions and misleading claims. Not every negotiation conducted by

the "state" is evidence of its strength, especially when the "state" stays silent and takes no action in the face of occupation and aggression.

Attempting to compensate for this reality by insisting on portraying it as something other than what it is does not build a state. Instead, it undermines public confidence in both the state and the rhetoric promoting that image, and erodes its authority rather than strengthening it.

It would have been more appropriate for Lebanon's President and Prime Minister, who have positioned themselves at the forefront of confronting Hezbollah, to acknowledge Lebanon's actual condition, identify its points of weakness, and launch a serious national dialogue to address them.

They should have worked toward an agreement on a defensive strategy that draws on Lebanon's existing strengths rather than persisting with rhetoric that accomplishes nothing and, naturally, does not build a state.

Presenting the agreement as the unavoidable outcome of the "war's consequences" is likewise based on numerous misconceptions.

Hezbollah's steadfastness on the battlefield, the heavy losses it inflicted on the IOF while wearing it down over four months, together with the regional development represented by the failure of the United States and the Zionist regime to achieve their objectives in the illegal war against Iran, all contributed to reshaping the strategic landscape.

Likewise, Iran's declaration that any future agreement with the United States must end hostilities on all fronts, in particular Lebanon, cannot be overlooked when assessing the context in which the "framework agreement" was reached. Tehran made the end of the aggression on Lebanon, the preservation of its territorial integrity and sovereignty, and the withdrawal of occupying forces fundamental conditions that must be met before the start of negotiations and the signing of any deal.

Taken together, these factors placed the Lebanese negotiators in a position where rejecting an agreement that was closer to an instrument of surrender than to a balanced political settlement was entirely possible.

Surrender is not simply the outcome of battlefield developments. It is a political, strategic, and legal decision shaped by multiple factors and adopted in response to specific circumstances.

For example, a decisive military defeat that leaves the armed forces incapable of continuing the fight. This does not apply to Lebanon. Hezbollah continued resisting and confronting the aggression, inflicting severe losses on the IOF, as acknowledged by Israeli officials themselves.

Israeli officials also stated that the regime had failed to achieve its declared objectives, whether eliminating Hezbollah or restoring security to the northern settlements.

The occupation of the Lebanese capital, Beirut, also never occurred and remained far beyond reach. In 1982, the regime was able to occupy Beirut in less than a week, whereas Hezbollah held out for over four months in southern Lebanon, continued wearing down and inflicting pain on the IOF, and prevented it from achieving the ground advance it had planned.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran into 2026 AVC Boys' U18 Volleyball Championship final

TEHRAN – Iran booked their place at the final match of the 2026 AVC Boys' U18 Volleyball Championship for a record 11th time.

The young Persians defeated hosts China 3-2 (18-25, 25-14, 25-21, 23-25, 15-11) in the semifinals on Friday.

The victory keeps Iran on course for an eighth continental title, further strengthening their status as the most successful nation in the history of the competition.

Iran have won a record seven Asian U18 championships, including an extraordinary run of six consecutive titles between 2005 and 2014, in addition to their first crown in 2001. The team have also collected three silver medals (2003, 2022 and 2024) and one bronze (2018).

Led by head coach Abdolreza Alizadeh, the young Iranians delivered another impressive performance to secure a place in Saturday's championship match, where they will face the winner of the semifinal between Japan and Chinese Taipei.

Abolfazl Pasha Amiri starred for Iran with a match-high 20 points. Iran finished the contest with 106 total points, including 52 from attacks, 11 from blocks, six aces, and 37 points generated from China's unforced errors.

With history on the line, Iran now stands one victory away from claiming their eighth Asian U18 title and adding another chapter to their remarkable legacy in youth volleyball.

Karate star Bahmanyar retires from national team

TEHRAN – Decorated Iranian karateka Sara Bahmanyar has announced her retirement from the national team after 11 years of international service, following her omission from Iran's squad for the Nagoya Asian Games.

The 27-year-old, one of Iran's most accomplished female karate athletes, confirmed her decision in an emotional farewell statement, bringing an end to a national team career that included an Olympic appearance, world medals, and numerous continental titles.

Bahmanyar represented Iran continuously since 2015, dedicating what she described as the best years of her youth to national team camps and international competitions. During her career, she captained the national team, competed at the Tokyo Olympics, and established herself as one of Iran's leading karate figures.

Her impressive résumé includes two senior World Championship medals, five Asian Championship medals across individual and team events, a World Games gold medal, two medals at the Islamic Solidarity Games, as well as three world and three Asian medals at the youth level.

In her farewell message, Bahmanyar revealed that winning gold at the Nagoya Asian Games had been her primary motivation over recent months. However, after discovering that her name was absent from the national team's roster, she concluded that her international career had reached its end.

“Being left out and losing are part of elite sport,” she wrote. “But accepting that years of effort, performance and commitment could be overlooked so easily was something I could not do. I always believed selection should be based on merit, not on preferences or decisions that are difficult to understand.”

Bahmanyar also expressed her gratitude to the Iranian people, saying that representing and bringing joy to her country would

remain the greatest honor of her career, regardless of the medals she won.

She closed her statement by thanking her coaches, teammates, supporters and family, while wishing the next generation of Iranian female karate athletes every success.

Her retirement marks the end of an era for the Iranian karate athlete, with one of the country's most decorated competitors stepping away from the national stage at just 27 years of age.

Gholami storms to Asian Age Group Championships 2026 gold

TEHRAN – Iranian swimmer Mohammad-mehdi Gholami produced a sensational performance to capture the 100m butterfly gold medal at the 12th Asian Age Group Swimming Championships underway in Bangkok, Thailand.

After advancing to the final, Gholami delivered a brilliant swim, clocking 54.51 seconds to claim the Asian title. Swimmers from Sri Lanka and Vietnam finished second and third, respectively.

The triumph was all the more impressive considering Gholami had qualified for the final in fifth place with a time of 55.46 seconds. In the championship race, he slashed nearly a full second off his preliminary mark to surge to the top of the podium.

The gold medal continues the young Iranian's remarkable rise on the international stage. Gholami previously emerged as the most decorated member of Iran's delegation at the Asian Youth Games in Bahrain, winning two gold medals, and also claimed a bronze medal at the Islamic Solidarity Games.

Gholami's victory also marked Iran's first gold medal at this year's Asian Age Group Swimming Championships, providing a major boost for the country's campaign in Bangkok.

The 12th Asian Age Group Championships 2026 are being held in Bangkok, Thailand, from July 17–25, 2026, featuring swimming, diving, water polo, and artistic swimming.

The best young athletes from across Asia come together to compete, inspire, and chase their dreams on the continental stage. Bangkok is set to host a week full of passion, performance, and unforgettable moments.

2026 Asian Junior Handball Championship: Iran, UAE share the spoils

TEHRAN – Iran were held to a 25-25 draw against the UAE at the 2026 Asian Junior Handball Championship on Friday.

The Iranian team had previously defeated Kuwait and lost to South Korea in Group B.

Iran are scheduled to face Qatar on Sunday.

Group A consists of China, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Chinese Taipei, and Hong Kong.

The 19th Asian Men's Junior Handball Championship is being held in Chuzhou of China from 15 to 26 July 2026.

The event serves as qualification event for the 2027 IHF Men's Junior World Championship.

Republic of Korea hold the distinction of being the most decorated team overall, having won a total of 13 medals, comprising three gold, seven silver, and three bronze medals. The host nation China, claimed their lone championship title during the 2nd edition in 1990, which was held in Tehran, Iran.

The Asian Men's Junior Handball Championship is the official competition organized by Asian Handball Federation for junior men's national handball teams of Asia, and takes place every two years.

Persian Garden: A masterpiece of water engineering, geometry and beauty

From Page 1 ► roots of the Persian Garden reach back to the Achaemenid period. At Pasargadae, the palatial complex of Cyrus the Great introduced the mature form of the Chahar Bagh, or four-part garden, characterized by intersecting axes, geometric organization and controlled water flow. Many scholars regard Pasargadae as the earliest known example of the Persian Garden. The concept was later refined during the Sasanian, Safavid, Zand and Qajar periods, becoming one of the most enduring expressions of Iranian culture.

What distinguishes the Persian Garden from other garden traditions is the intellectual framework embedded in its design. Water is treated as the source of life and the organizing element of space. Precise geometry, architectural structures, carefully planted trees, shade, reflections and symmetry work together to create an environment that evokes the idea of paradise.

One of the most impressive aspects of the Persian Garden is its sophisticated water management system. Many of these gardens were established in arid and semi-arid regions, where creating a green landscape required exceptional technical knowledge. Through the use of qanats, natural gradients, stone channels, pools, fountains and carefully designed distribution networks, Iranian engineers transformed dry terrain into sustainable gardens. This achievement represents an important example of indigenous technology and long-term environmental management.

Oman hails Iranian expertise for restoration of historic sites



TEHRAN – Oman welcomes broader cooperation with Iran in museum management and hails the expertise of Iranian restorers and architects for the conservation of the sultanate's historical monuments, Oman's minister of heritage and tourism said during talks with Iranian officials in Muscat.

The comments were made during a meeting between Iran's ambassador to Oman, Mousa Farhang and Oman's Minister of Heritage and Tourism Sayyid Ibrahim bin Said al-Busaidi, according to a statement released by Iran's Islamic Culture and Relations Organization.

Farhang said Iran was ready to share its experience in restoring historic buildings, stone monuments, inscriptions and archaeological objects, as well as in training specialists and sending experts to Oman for conservation projects and museum cooperation.

Al-Busaidi said Oman's ministry wanted to move cooperation beyond memorandums of understanding and toward practical projects.

TEHRAN – Manouchehr Habibi, the governor-general of Iran's Kermanshah province, has said that Iran and Iraq can broaden cooperation on shared Sassanian heritage sites through joint cultural and tourism projects linked to the proposed Sassanian historical route extending from western Iran into eastern Iraq.

Habibi made the remarks on Wednesday in Kermanshah during a meeting with Farhad Azizi, director general of national and World Heritage bases at Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

He said the route includes major historical sites such as the Anahita Temple, Taq-e Bostan, and Sassanian monuments in Qasr-e Shirin, extending toward Iraq's Khanaqin.

“Kermanshah and Diyala, in addition to their cooperation on Arbäeen and religious programs, can define joint projects in the fields of cultural heritage and tourism,” Habibi said. “The historical extension of the Sassanian route from Qasr-e Shirin to Khanaqin provides a suitable basis for such cooperation.”



Iran to the deserts of the central plateau, they share the same fundamental principles: geometric axes, water as the organizing feature, a central pavilion, enclosing walls, purposeful tree planting and a carefully balanced relationship between architecture and landscape.

Natural elements and man-made components merge in the Persian Garden to create a distinctive artistic achievement. The arrangement of flower beds, the circulation of water, the placement of trees and the integration of buildings are all designed to generate a specific microclimate and sensory experience. The gardens also maintain strong connections with Persian literature, poetry, music, calligraphy and carpet design. For centuries, Iranian artists have drawn inspiration from garden imagery, while garden designers have incorporated artistic and symbolic connections into the landscape itself.

UNESCO has described the Persian Garden as an outstanding example of the exchange of cultural values and one of the most complete garden traditions in the history of human civilization. Its enduring influence can be traced across the Islamic world and beyond, where the concept of the quadripartite garden inspired numerous royal and urban landscapes. Yet the Persian Garden is not merely a historical model; it remains a living testimony to engineering knowledge, spatial planning, water management and the Iranian philosophical view of the relationship between humanity and the natural world.

Today, the Persian Gardens continue to play an important role in cultural tourism, heritage conservation, landscape architecture research and the international presentation of Iran's traditional knowledge. Visitors walking through the cypress-lined avenues of Dowlat Abad, listening to the flowing water of Fin Garden or observing the terraced channels of Shazdeh Garden encounter more than beautiful scenery. They encounter a civilization that, through knowledge, engineering and artistic imagination, succeeded in giving physical form to the idea of an earthly paradise. In an age increasingly concerned with sustainability and the responsible use of natural resources, the Persian Garden offers not only a window into Iran's past but also a timeless lesson in how human creativity can work in harmony with nature.

cal projects. He said preserving cultural heritage was a key policy of the Omani government and that the country was prepared to sign cooperation agreements with Iran, particularly in the restoration of historical sites.

“We welcome the expansion of cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran in museum management and are ready to benefit from Iran's valuable experience in various fields, especially the restoration of historical monuments,” the minister said.

The two sides discussed cooperation in cultural heritage, tourism, museums and exchanges of specialized delegations. Al-Busaidi said Oman's historical and cultural ties with Iran provided a strong basis for expanding joint projects.

Farhang said cultural cooperation had not yet matched the level of political and economic

Iran, Iraq can expand cooperation on shared Sassanian heritage sites: official



protection, support tourism development and increase visits by domestic and international tourists.

The governor said preparations for the route's World Heritage nomination should proceed under a coordinated program, noting that the historical and cultural infrastructure already exists and does not require starting a

Iran to the deserts of the central plateau, they share the same fundamental principles: geometric axes, water as the organizing feature, a central pavilion, enclosing walls, purposeful tree planting and a carefully balanced relationship between architecture and landscape.

Natural elements and man-made components merge in the Persian Garden to create a distinctive artistic achievement. The arrangement of flower beds, the circulation of water, the placement of trees and the integration of buildings are all designed to generate a specific microclimate and sensory experience. The gardens also maintain strong connections with Persian literature, poetry, music, calligraphy and carpet design. For centuries, Iranian artists have drawn inspiration from garden imagery, while garden designers have incorporated artistic and symbolic connections into the landscape itself.

UNESCO has described the Persian Garden as an outstanding example of the exchange of cultural values and one of the most complete garden traditions in the history of human civilization. Its enduring influence can be traced across the Islamic world and beyond, where the concept of the quadripartite garden inspired numerous royal and urban landscapes. Yet the Persian Garden is not merely a historical model; it remains a living testimony to engineering knowledge, spatial planning, water management and the Iranian philosophical view of the relationship between humanity and the natural world.

Today, the Persian Gardens continue to play an important role in cultural tourism, heritage conservation, landscape architecture research and the international presentation of Iran's traditional knowledge. Visitors walking through the cypress-lined avenues of Dowlat Abad, listening to the flowing water of Fin Garden or observing the terraced channels of Shazdeh Garden encounter more than beautiful scenery. They encounter a civilization that, through knowledge, engineering and artistic imagination, succeeded in giving physical form to the idea of an earthly paradise. In an age increasingly concerned with sustainability and the responsible use of natural resources, the Persian Garden offers not only a window into Iran's past but also a timeless lesson in how human creativity can work in harmony with nature.

cal projects. He said preserving cultural heritage was a key policy of the Omani government and that the country was prepared to sign cooperation agreements with Iran, particularly in the restoration of historical sites.

“We welcome the expansion of cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran in museum management and are ready to benefit from Iran's valuable experience in various fields, especially the restoration of historical monuments,” the minister said.

The two sides discussed cooperation in cultural heritage, tourism, museums and exchanges of specialized delegations. Al-Busaidi said Oman's historical and cultural ties with Iran provided a strong basis for expanding joint projects.

Farhang said cultural cooperation had not yet matched the level of political and economic

new project from the beginning. He announced the formation of a special working group to oversee the organization and World Heritage registration of the Sassanian route, with representatives from the governor's office, the provincial cultural heritage department, local governors, mayors and other relevant agencies.

The first meeting of the group should be held as soon as possible to define responsibilities, study phases, funding requirements and implementation schedules, he said.

The Sassanian period holds a central place in Iranian history, and its architecture and urban planning influenced later Islamic artistic and architectural traditions. In 2018, UNESCO inscribed the Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region in southern Iran on the World Heritage List. The property includes eight archaeological sites in the Firuzabad, Bishapur and Sarvestan areas.

Policies declared by martyred Leader serve as foundation of environmental protection

TEHRAN – The general policies declared in 2015 by the late Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, serve as the primary basis for environmental protection, Shina Ansari, the head of the Department of Environment, has said.

The Leader constantly highlighted environmental preservation, and these policies cover all environmental challenges and issues. Virtually, had they been fully implemented, the country wouldn't have been facing many of the current environmental problems, Mehr news agency quoted Ansari as saying.

Integrated management of biological resources is one of the key points of these policies; the implementation of this principle could prevent significant destruction and natural resources encroachment, she noted.

Some 11 years ago, these policies focused on issues like the green economy, which highlights the leader's progressive outlook on the environment, Ansari added.

Other key aspects of these policies include criminalizing environmental destruction, developing environmental culture, and highlighting the role of education and public participation in environmental protection.

Preventing land-use change, forest and national land encroachment, as well as combating environmental degradation, were among other key policies announced by the late Leader, she further noted.

All these policies focus on a comprehensive, multidimensional, and inclusive approach; reliance on them can mitigate many of the current environmental issues and challenges.

The official went on to say that the DOE is not the sole entity responsible for environmental



conservation; all governmental bodies, including the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, and even the armed forces, have to play a role in this regard.

Elaborating on the late Leader's mindset on the environment, Ansari said the Leader's environmental policies underlined the collective responsibility of each individual to protect the natural environment.

In the Leader's point of view, preserving natural resources and combating environmental degradation constituted a governmental, national, and religious obligation that requires the participation of all the people and all the governmental bodies, IRIB quoted Ansari as saying on July 6, on the sidelines of the late Leader's funeral procession.

From his perspective, the environment is not a luxury or a secondary issue; environmental conservation is a critical issue and a shared responsibility that must be embraced by all policymakers, planners, and citizens—regardless of their political leanings, she added.

Leader was devoted to environmental protection

Every year on the National Tree Planting Day, the martyred Leader invited people to plant trees

and protect the environment, saying that doing such important work requires national support.

In March 2025, the martyred Leader said planting trees is a beneficial act that highlights the nation's foresight for creating wealth for future generations.

All people should participate in planting trees as a good and righteous act so that with the increase of trees, the living environment will be refreshed and clean, Ayatollah Khamenei stressed.

Experts believe that in addition to planting fruit trees, trees that produce wood should be planted because the export of wood has a significant effect on the country's economy, the martyred leader stressed.

The destruction of forests and the environment and vegetation is equivalent to the degradation of national interests, and the depletion of part of the forests for construction, except in emergencies, is definitely to the detriment of the nation, he added.

He believed that planting trees is a beneficial act that highlights the nation's foresight for creating wealth for future generations. Environmental degradation poses a big threat to the future of humans, so it has to be addressed.

So, all people should participate in planting trees as a good and righteous act so that with the increase of trees, the living environment will be refreshed and clean.

The martyred leader emphasized that planting trees is a profitable and rewarding investment. He noted that trees offer numerous advantages, like increasing oxygen levels and helping to reduce pollutants, making it a profitable investment choice.

He also reminded the importance of the connection between man and nature and the preservation of the environment in Islam, noting that planting trees is not only related to young people. All people of different ages should find enthusiasm and motivation towards this important, necessary, and beautiful work.

Referring to a national plan, kicked off in December 2023, to plant up to one billion trees across the country over the course of four years to combat desertification and restore forests, the martyred leader said: "If each Iranian plants three saplings, the government's goal to plant one billion saplings over the next four years will be realized."

The National Tree Planting Day (March 5) was observed this year in the special memory of the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei who always recommended planting trees as a good and righteous act toward environmental protection.

The day is observed annually on the fifteenth day of Esfand, the last month on the Iranian calendar, marking the first day of the natural resources and watershed management week.

The occasion has been approved to be registered on the national calendar as 'Environmental Protection Education Day'.

Tehran, Astana agree to cooperate on intellectual property

TEHRAN – The head of the State Organization for Registration of Deeds and Properties, Hassan Babaei, and Kazakhstan's Minister of Justice, Sarsembayev Yerlan, have agreed to establish a joint working group to expand collaborations on intellectual property.

The officials met on the sidelines of the Sixty-Eighth Series of Meetings of the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO, taking place at WIPO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, from July 7 to 15, IRIB reported.

The joint working group aims to follow up on the implementation of the provisions of the MOU, coordinate joint programs, and expand specialized cooperation between Iran and Kazakhstan.

Both parties discussed ways to enhance technical and international interactions between the two nations. The officials expounded on measures taken by the two countries and their achievements in registration, legal protection, and development of intellectual property.

They also discussed ways to enhance technical interactions between the two nations.

During the meeting, Yerlan lauded Iran's long history and valuable experience in drafting laws and implementing an intellectual property rights protection system, and underscored the need to draw on Iran's expertise, knowledge, legal expertise, and operational achievements to enhance Kazakhstan's intellectual property system.

Highlighting the historical, cultural, and civilizational commonalities between the two countries, he expressed hope that the implementation of the MOU would pave the way for the development of specialized relations, joint research projects, and increased exchange of experiences.

The Iranian official, for his part, said the establishment of a working group will contribute to transforming bilateral agreements into operational plans and tangible results. He voiced the country's readiness to utilize all specialized, educational, and operational capacities of its Intellectual Property Center to realize the objectives of the MOU.

According to Babaei, the MOU encompasses various areas, including exchanging legal



and legislative expertise, specialized knowledge and experience in intellectual property, conducting educational courses, empowering businesses based on geographical indications, developing expert-level cooperation, and enhancing the two nations' institutional capacities.

The official went on to say that benefitting from shared capacities within committees like Standing Committee on the Law of Patents (SCP), Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs, Geographical Indications (SCT), Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP), the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC) would play an effective role in advancing the shared interests of the two countries in the international arena.

Referring to Iran's digital transformation plans, including utilizing modern technology, digitizing, automating registration processes, expanding electronic services, and improving digital infrastructure, the official said the two countries can exchange expertise and conduct collaborative projects in these fields.

On the sidelines of the Sixty-Eighth Series of Meetings, the Iranian official also held a meeting with the director general of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Daren Tang.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed recent developments in Iran's intellectual property system, ongoing joint efforts, and explored the potential for the enhancement of interactions.

Elaborating on the country's measures in 2025, Babaei stated that the signing of the

WIPO treaty on intellectual property, genetic resources, and associated traditional knowledge, and accession to the Vienna and Strasbourg Agreements, indicate Iran's determination to strengthen its participation in the international intellectual property system.

He referred to the implementation of the new Industrial Property Law in Iran as a significant legal and institutional development for the country. The new law has taken into account the standards and obligations outlined in relevant international instruments, paving the way for updating the system for the registration and protection of industrial property rights.

The official went on to say that supporting the intellectual property and innovation ecosystem is one of Iran's key priorities, and emphasized the need to develop the capacities of specialists in this sector, expand intellectual property services to small and mid-size enterprises (SMEs), and foster more effective connections between the registration system, academic institutions, businesses, and innovation stakeholders.

For his part, Tang said Iran is a country with an ancient civilization, a rich cultural heritage, and significant scientific and innovative capabilities. He underlined the significance of benefitting from these capabilities to develop the intellectual property system and strengthen ties between WIPO and Iran. The official also announced WIPO's readiness to deepen technical ties with the country.

Following high-level talks in Astana in December 2025, Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian witnessed the signing of several key intergovernmental documents, The Caspian Post reported.

Agreement on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters; protocol updating international road transport of passengers and goods; cooperation program between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs; cultural exchange program for 2026-2028; memorandum on intellectual property cooperation; strategic cooperation in transport, transit, and logistics; healthcare cooperation; and media cooperation were among the agreements.

Iran elected to OIC Women's Advisory Council

TEHRAN – Narjes Abolqasemi, an official with the Vice-Presidency for Women and Family Affairs, has been elected as a new member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Women's Advisory Council.

The two other elected members were from Turkey and Malaysia, IRNA reported.

The election was held during the 9th session of the OIC Conference of Ministers of Women's Affairs, which was held in Islamabad, Pakistan, on July 12 and 13.

It highlights the country's active and constructive role in international mechanisms concerning women's issues in the Islamic world.

The OIC Women's Advisory Council is responsible for guiding future policies, promoting women's empowerment, and advocating for their rights; it also serves as an advisory body to the OIC Ministerial Conference.

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

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 was 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.

Addressing the ninth Ministerial Conference on Women of the OIC, the Vice-President for Women and Family Affairs, Zahra Behrouz-Azar, put forward two initiatives to boost collaborations among member states of the OIC for empowering women.

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 digital 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.

'Iran's geopolitical position, capacities help SCO reinforce border security'

TEHRAN – Iran's geopolitical position and strategic capabilities enable the country to play a more effective role in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to help strengthen regional cooperation on border security, Iran's border guard commander, Brigadier General Ali Akbar Javidan, has said.

An Iranian delegation led by Javidan participated in the 12th Meeting of the Heads of the Border Services of the Competent Authorities of the SCO Member States, held on July 16 and 17 in Islamabad, Pakistan.

On the sidelines of the meeting, Javidan said Iran intends to enhance collaboration with SCO member states in different fields like expanding security cooperation, exchanging information, as well as combating drug trafficking, organized crime, and smuggling, ISNA reported.

Iran is interested in fostering cooperation with SCO member states, particularly Pakistan, which is hosting the event, he added.

Iran can become SCO regional hub for war on drugs

Thanks to the country's achievements and successful experiences in social harm reduction, prevention, and treatment, Iran can serve as a regional hub for the SCO in combating narcotics, Mohammad Narimani, an official with the Drug Control Headquarters (DCHQ), said in 2025.

Iran's role in strengthening regional security and addressing common threats, such as terrorism, drugs, and sanctions, can contribute to transforming the SCO into a powerful bloc in the world's multipolar system, IRNA quoted Narimani as saying.

"The Shanghai Cooperation Organization can help Iran identify and destroy drug trafficking networks and terrorist acts, make the Taliban destroy heroin and methamphetamine laboratories and supply, as well as facilitate access to advanced equipment for monitoring

borders," Narimani noted.

Having borne the heavy human and financial costs in the fight against narcotics, Iran has the right to expect the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to use its political, security, and economic capacities to assist the country in the fight as the cooperation will be beneficial to both Iran and the entire region, ensuring stability and security, the official concluded.

UNODC lauds Iran's achievements in fight against narcotics

Officials from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) have recently lauded Iran's achievements in seizing Afghanistan-origin methamphetamine consignments, highlighting that the country's accomplishment showcases the operational capability, professionalism, and dedication of Iranian anti-narcotics police in countering transnational drug trafficking networks.

The UNODC regional Representative in Tashkent, Alexander Fedulov, in an online meeting with the officials from Drug Control Headquarters (DCHQ) held on July 9, on the occasion of the interception of methamphetamine shipment delivered from Afghanistan to European markets, underscored the need for ongoing international cooperation to combat this global threat, and recognizing the operational realities faced by front line forces who work diligently to prevent illicit drugs from reaching communities in the region or beyond, ISNA reported.

The significant discovery of narcotics over the first three months of 2026 illustrates the complex dimensions of the challenges posed by transnational organized crimes and drug-trafficking networks, Fedulov said.

The seized drugs highlight the operational efficiency, dedication, and commitment of the personnel from agencies involved in safeguarding public health, public security, and regional stability, he added.

TEHRAN TIMES



www.tehrantimes.com

Managing Director: **Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati**
Editor-in-Chief: **Mohammad Sarfi**

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 43051601
Email: info@tehrantimes.com
Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
Advertisements Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051430
Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 43051505
Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051430



Tehrantimes79

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

JULY 18, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*Recommended prayers cannot attain the pleasures of Allah
for you when obligatory prayers are left unattended.*
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:11 Evening: 19:40 Dawn: 3:21 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:02 (tomorrow)

What’s in Tehran art galleries

Painting

* A collection of paintings by Mohammadreza Shirvanizadeh is currently on view in an exhibition at Baa Gallery.

The exhibit entitled “The Geometry of Dance” will run until July 31 at the gallery located at No. 1, Nastaran Alley, Nakhl St., Artesh Boulevard.

* Paintings by Bahareh Nourizadeh, Rozita Nosrati, Mona Khorshid-Doost and Hanieh Doostdar are on display in an exhibition at Doost Gallery.

Entitled “Passing”, the exhibit will be running until September 15 at the gallery, which can be found at No. 4, 4th St. off Eshqyar St., Khorramshahr Ave.

* An exhibition of paintings by Jahanshir is currently underway at Didar Gallery.

The exhibition will run until July 24 at the gallery located at 10 Mobini Alley, Mofatteh St.

* An exhibition of paintings by Mina Hakim is underway at Yafteh Gallery.

The exhibition named “Eager to See You” will run until July 31 at the gallery located at 8 Taleqani Dead End, Yarmohammadi St. in the Darus Neighborhood.

* Paintings by a group of artists are currently on display in an exhibit at Jaleh Gallery.

Entitled “The Familiar, Reimagined” the exhibition runs until July 24 at the gallery located at No. 3, Noshahr Alley, Iranshahr St., Karim Khan Ave.

* An exhibition of paintings by Javad Jafari is underway at E1 Gallery.

The exhibit named “Carbon-14” will run until July 31 at the gallery located at 1 Hamid Dead End, off Lesani Alley, Jebheh St., off Mahdiah St. in the Elahieh neighborhood.

* Parisa Akramian is showcasing her latest paintings in an exhibition at Vaali Gallery.

The exhibit named “Cygnus X” will continue until August 1 at the gallery located at 72 Khoddami St., Vanak Sq.

* Arthhibition Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by a group of artists.

The exhibit entitled “Face to Face, Eye to Eye” will be running until August 7 at the gallery that can be found at Qandi Alley, Sasanipur St., Gohnabi St., off Shariati Ave.

* An exhibition of paintings by Marzieh Baqai is currently underway at Homa Gallery.

The exhibition named “After Party” will run until July 28 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fourth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.

* Emkan Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Pouya Parsa Maqam.

The exhibit will be running until July 31 at the gallery that can be found at No. 3, Second Alley, Mirza Shirazi St.

Iran, Kyrgyzstan keen on developing cultural, artistic cooperation

TEHRAN – The Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi arrived at Bishkek Airport on Thursday, July 16, to attend the 23rd Meeting of Ministers of Culture of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Member States.

Salkyn Sarnogoeva, Deputy Minister of Culture of Kyrgyzstan, while welcoming Salehi, expressed her pleasure and emphasized the importance of the Iranian minister's participation in the 23rd SCO Culture Ministers' Meeting, IRNA reported.

Sarnogoeva also described the programs planned for the Iranian Minister on the sidelines of the summit as important and influential, stating that these programs will pave the way for the development of bilateral cooperation between Iran and Kyrgyzstan.

Subsequently, Salehi also expressed his pleasure in attending the summit, emphasizing the development of cultural and artistic cooperation between the two countries.

“I hope that during this trip, the grounds for developing cultural cooperation will be provided through the signing of cultural exchange agreements, attending the summit, and holding bilateral meetings and talks with officials of this country,” he said.

During his visit to the Ata-Beyit (Grave of Our Fathers) Memorial Complex near Bishkek, Salehi paid tribute to the renowned writer Chingiz Aitmatov and other national luminaries of the country.

Salehi noted his 40-year acquaintance with the personality

The Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi meets Deputy Minister of Culture of Kyrgyzstan Salkyn Sarnogoeva in Bishkek on July 16.

and works of Chingiz Aitmatov, and added that he has read Persian translations of the prominent writer's works.

While visiting various sections of Aitmatov's historic home—which has now been converted into a museum in his honor—Salehi familiarized himself with the living environment and memorials of this cultural figure.

Chinghiz Aitmatov (1928 – 2008) was a Kyrgyz author who wrote mainly in Russian, but also in Kyrgyz. He is one of the best-known figures in Kyrgyz literature.

A bilingual and bicultural writer, Aitmatov wrote his prose and plays in both his native Kyrgyz and in Russian, and was translated into more than 150 languages. Described as a “magical socialist-realist” in the Russian press, he was able to combine elements of Kyrgyz folk-tales and epics with formally traditional Russian realism.

The 23rd Meeting of Ministers of Culture of the SCO Member States is being held in Kyrgyzstan from July 16 to 20.

It is the primary mechanism for multilateral cooperation in the field

of culture. Its work focuses on intercultural exchanges, as well as the preservation and promotion of the rich tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

In accordance with the Agreement between the Governments of the SCO Member States on Cooperation in Culture in 2007, the parties cooperate in the following areas: music, theater and fine arts; cinema; archival, library and museum affairs; protection of cultural heritage sites; folk crafts and decorative arts; amateur, variety performance and circus arts; and other creative activities.

Philosophy professor to lecture at Iranian House of Cinema Book Week

TEHRAN – Thomas E. Wartenberg, a professor emeritus of philosophy at Mount Holyoke College, Massachusetts, will be one of the speakers at the Iranian House of Cinema Book Week.

He is scheduled to deliver a lecture titled “Cinema as a Form of Thinking” in a virtual session on Tuesday, July 21, Mehr reported.

The author's latest book, “Thoughtful Cinema: Illustrating Philosophy Through Film,” was published by Oxford University Press in 2025.

The session will also feature Setareh No-taj and Majid Parvanehpour, who previously translated and published Wartenberg's book, “Thinking on Screen: Film as Philosophy,” through Niloufar Publications.

Wartenberg is a familiar name to those interested in philosophical film studies. His other works previously published in the Iranian market include “The Philosophy of Film: Introductory Text and Readings,” “Thinking Through Stories: Children, Philosophy, and Picture Books,” and “Big Ideas for Little Kids: Teaching Philosophy Through Children's Lit-

erature”.

Thomas Wartenberg works at the intersection between philosophy and popular culture. His most recent work focuses on the philosophy of film, though he has written on a wide variety of topics in philosophy. In addition, his work teaching philosophy to elementary school children has garnered worldwide attention.

A former Fulbright Research Fellow, a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow, and an honorary visiting professor at the University of Auckland, Wartenberg is the author of two books on film: “Unlikely Couples: Movie Romance as Social Criticism”

Arasbaran Cultural Center to screen “Sundays”

TEHRAN- “Sundays,” a 2025 drama film directed by Spanish filmmaker Alauda Ruiz de Azúa, will be reviewed at the Arasbaran Cultural Center in Tehran on Sunday.

Film critic Kourosh Jahed is set to attend a screening of the film followed by a review session.

“Sundays” is a masterful exploration of a young woman's search for belonging and spiritual sanctuary. Set against the evocative backdrop of the Basque Country, the film delves into the psychological complexities of a teenage girl caught between the rigid expectations of her family and an intense, internal longing for a cloistered life.

The narrative centers on 17-year-old Ainara, who, during a religious retreat, feels a profound calling to join a convent. This aspiration sets off a chain reaction within her fragmented family. Ainara's father, Inaki—a widower and restaurant own-

er—is depicted as an aloof figure, more preoccupied with his business ventures than with his daughter's emotional well-being.

In contrast, her aunt Maite, an atheist cultural manager, represents the voice of worldly reason. Maite is horrified by Ainara's desire for “vocational discernment,” urging her niece to embrace the experiences of youth rather than retreating into a life of silence and prayer.

As Ainara navigates her spiritual journey under the guidance of Father Chema, the tension between her domestic reality and her divine aspirations heightens.

The film skillfully portrays the friction of the Basque household: Maite's marriage to Pablo is in crisis, and Inaki's financial instability colors his perspective on Ainara's future. The conflict reaches a boiling point during a moment of adolescent vulnerability when Ainara is caught in a romantic encounter with a fellow

choir member, Mikel. The ensuing family row underscores the deep disconnect between Ainara's internal world and the perceptions her family holds of her.

The tragedy of the film is heightened by the death of Ainara's grandmother, Maria Dolores. This loss triggers a volatile explosion of rage from Maite, who reproaches Inaki for his financial failures and his perceived indifference toward his daughter. In a devastating confrontation, Maite views Ainara's desire to become a nun not as a spiritual calling, but as a symptom of the emotional trauma following her mother's death. The tension culminates in legal battles over inheritance and a heartbreaking rift that seems irreparable.

Despite the pleas of her family and the chaos of her home life, Ainara chooses the convent, taking her vows to become a cloistered nun. Her decision is not presented as a simple escape, but as a definitive act of self-de-

termination in a world where she felt unseen.

The film was a monumental critical triumph, sweeping the awards circuit across Europe and Latin America. It debuted with a dominant victory at the 73rd San Sebastián International Film Festival, claiming the Golden Shell alongside the Irizar Basque Film, Feroz Zinemaldia, FIPRESCI, and SIGNIS awards. Its acclaim continued at the 40th Goya Awards, where it won Best Film, Best Director, and Best Original Screenplay, while Patricia Lopez Arnaiz and Nagore Aranburu were honored for their outstanding acting.

The film's success extended to the 13th Feroz Awards, the 81st CEC Medals, and the 5th Carmen Awards, cementing Alauda Ruiz de Azúa's status as a visionary director. Its international reach was further validated by nominations at the Platino and Sur Awards, and a win for Blanca Soroa for Best Actress at the 13th Platino Awards.