

The illusion of victory: Why America cannot bomb its way out of the war

By Syeda Farheen Naqi Mossavi

HAFIZABAD, Pakistan – The American people were never asked if they wanted the war against Iran. They never heard a single speech explaining why their sons and daughters must fight and die in the Persian Gulf.

Instead, they woke up one morning to news of a decapitation strike, a “kinetic” ▶ [Page 5](#)

Trump’s regional agenda to serve Israel

By Behnam Molayee

TEHRAN – The United States appears to be coordinating with some countries to re-arrange the regional landscape by applying pressure on Syria, Lebanon and Iraq to serve Israeli interests.

Ever since U.S. President Donald Trump publicly appealed to Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa to intervene militarily in Lebanon and complete the mission that the war criminal Benjamin Netanyahu failed to achieve against Hezbollah, numerous political and media circles have been discussing various scenarios.

Analysts believe these include American, Turkish, French, Saudi, and Israeli maneuvers aimed at finding a reasonable and practical way to fulfill Trump’s call. ▶ [Page 5](#)

US raids on civilian infrastructure are purely barbaric

By staff writer

TEHRAN – The U.S. military has not only targeted military facilities in Iran’s southern coastal provinces. It has also been striking wheat silos, water desalination plants, and electricity infrastructure.

It is difficult to imagine the suffering endured by thousands of people in the scorching heat of summer along the shores of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, whose access to drinking water and electricity has been cut off by the U.S. military on the orders of Donald Trump.

To understand the gravity of the situation, it should be noted that cities such as Bandar Abbas, Bushehr, Mahshahr, Assaluyeh, and Chabahar on Iran’s southern coast experience one of the hottest and most humid summer climates in the world. ▶ [Page 5](#)

Traditional clothing of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari: A rainbow of ethnic heritage

TEHRAN – The traditional clothing of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari is among the most distinctive expressions of Iran’s cultural heritage. Characterized by vibrant shades of pink, green, red, orange, purple, blue, yellow, and white, these garments form a living rainbow that reflects centuries of artistry, craftsmanship, and ethnic diversity.

Worn by the Lori, Turkic, and Persian communities of the province, this attire has deep historical roots and is believed by many scholars to have served as formal dress since the Safavid era. It has traditionally been worn by women at weddings, funerals, religious gatherings, and social ceremonies, while also remaining part of everyday life in many communities.

Today, traditional clothing continues to be widely used, particularly in the Bakhtiari and Qashqai nomadic regions, the cities of Shahrekord and Farokhshahr, and numerous villages across the province. Men also preserve elements of traditional dress, although women’s garments remain the most recognizable symbol of the region’s cultural identity. ▶ [Page 6](#)



Donald Trump signs a Memorandum of Understanding between Iran and America at the Palace of Versailles, France on June 17, 2026.

Leader of the Revolution: US President’s Signature Is Worthless and Invalid

Iran hits US positions in response to raids on civilian facilities

Militarily, Tehran is enhancing its defense capabilities to protect its sovereignty and secure its population against external threats.

TEHRAN — Iran on Saturday reported a series of missile and drone operations against US military facilities across the region, as the US military is targeting civilian infrastructure in Iran’s southern coastal provinces.

Iranian authorities said a US strike on a desalination plant in southern Hormozgan Province disrupted drinking water supplies to nearly 30 villages.

Abdolkarim Hashemi, a member of parliament representing Jask, said the attack targeted the Monji Jask desalination facility, damaging seawater intake systems and pumping stations.

Hashemi said Washington is targeting civilian infrastructure, including public utilities, roads and bridges, as part of pressure against Iran, describing such actions as violations of humanitarian principles and international law.

In response, the IRGC said its Aerospace Force targeted the US military base at Al Azraq in Jordan as part of “the 20th wave of Operation Nasr-2.”

In a statement, the IRGC said missiles and drones hit aircraft shelters and parking areas, destroying at least two fighter jets and three other aircraft while damaging additional military assets.

The IRGC Ground Force also said it targeted US positions in Bahrain and Kuwait, including Camp Arifjan and Ali Al Salem Air Base, and destroyed a radar system, weapons maintenance facility, and drone hangar at Ali Al Salem.

The IRGC also said two oil tankers caught fire after attempting to navigate through a mined route south of the Strait of Hormuz. ▶ [Page 3](#)



Government spokesperson visits Ahvaz hospital after US strike

TEHRAN — Iranian Government Spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani visited Shahid Baqaei Specialized Hospital on Friday night to inspect the severe damage caused by a nearby US airstrike and to express solidarity with the victims. Walking through the heavily affected wards of the major pediatric oncology center, Mohajerani met face-to-face with hospitalized children and their families, offering comfort to those traumatized by the attack. She also extended her deepest gratitude to the facility’s medical staff, praising the doctors and nurses for their heroic efforts in safely evacuating more than 200 pediatric cancer patients in the middle of the night under active bombardment. ▶ [Page 3](#)

Pezeshkian calls for strengthening Iran’s legal deterrence on global stage

TEHRAN – President Masoud Pezeshkian has described a systematic examination of the legal and judicial dimensions of the Israeli and US military aggression against Iran as an undeniable necessity to establish international deterrence.

“Systematically addressing the legal and judicial dimensions of the recent wars is an undeniable necessity—not only for raising public awareness and vigilance, but also for laying the foundation for Iran to build legal influence and deterrence in international forums,” Pezeshkian said on Saturday morning. ▶ [Page 2](#)

IRCS urges intl. community to hold US accountable for targeting civilian infrastructure

TEHRAN – The head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society, Pirhossein Kolivand, has condemned the recent US attacks on the country’s civilian infrastructure, urging the international community to conduct prompt, independent, impartial, and effective investigations to hold perpetrators accountable for their war crimes.

Documented reports and information received from reliable authorities highlight that these attacks have not only resulted in casualties and financial loss for civilians, but also targeted a wide range of properties, facilities, and vital infrastructures used by the public, Kolivand said in a statement, the IRCS website reported. ▶ [Page 7](#)

Leader’s military advisor: Iran will shift to full-scale war if US strikes continue

TEHRAN – A senior military advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution has declared that Washington’s duplicitous strategy of “both war and negotiation” has reached its final dead end, warning that Iran is fully prepared to transition into an aggressive and destructive phase if American aggression does not immediately cease.

Major General Mohsen Rezaei, the former chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), condemned the United States for systematically breaching its commitments under the Islamabad memorandum of understanding (MoU). Rezaei noted that he had previously predicted US leadership would tear up the MoU just as they foolishly dismantled the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). ▶ [Page 2](#)

Most complex overhaul of South Pars platforms underway

TEHRAN- As the annual overhaul season begins at the shared South Pars gas field, planning is underway to maintain stable gas production. Following damage to several domestic gas refineries during recent conflicts, ensuring maximum readiness of South Pars platforms for this winter has become more critical than ever.

Alireza Sarmadi, Production and Operations Manager at Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC), which is in charge of developing the giant gas field, outlined this year’s unique approach to maintenance, operational challenges, and the program’s role in securing over 70% of Iran’s gas supply. ▶ [Page 4](#)

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Strategic message to the US and its allies

Khorasan analyzed the shutdown of the UAE's Fujairah port following the IRGC missile strike, writing that this port had been the most important hub for tanker traffic in the region. One point stands out above all: US protection failed to safeguard the tankers and the UAE's strategic port. For the Emirates, this is not merely an operational setback; it is a security blow to a system that for years had been built under Washington's protective umbrella. If a port of such importance — backed by international support — can be knocked out of service, it means the regional energy-security equation has entered a new phase. This message carries deterrent and strategic dimensions both for the UAE and its extra-regional supporters. Fujairah has now shifted from being a symbol of bypassing constraints to a symbol of the vulnerability of the UAE's oil strategy — an event that imposes costs on Abu Dhabi and sends a clear signal to the global oil market about the fragility of energy security in the southern Persian Gulf and Iran's ability to redefine the security equation in the region.

Jam-e-Jam: Containing the US is only possible through military means

Jam-e-Jam analyzed how the war might end and how to prevent renewed attacks. According to this analysis, the Americans now want Iran's oil. They have two main reasons for attacking Iran, one of which is generating revenue for the US government. They want to seize Iran's oil and profit from it. The opposing side must understand that not only will it fail to take Iran's oil, but the entire region's oil could be removed from the global market. Confronting the US cannot be resolved with paper, signatures, or memoranda; it can only be resolved through military power and imposing military costs. Conditions must be managed in a way that stops the war. The cost of attacking Iran must be raised so high that no one considers repeating it. There is no other path. If the attacks continue and we imagine that issuing a statement or signing a document solves the problem — and even call it an achievement — we will ultimately return to the same point.

Iran halts MoU commitments over US violations

TEHRAN — Iran has suspended all of its commitments under the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), declaring that Washington's persistent acts of military aggression have effectively trampled on and halted the bilateral diplomatic framework.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi announced the decisive strategic move on Saturday, stating that Tehran will no longer adhere to the obligations of the agreement given the outright refusal of the United States to honor its own signature.

Questioned by reporters regarding the future of diplomatic engagements with Washington, Gharibabadi revealed that Iran had been actively participating in talks when the United States abruptly breached its commitments under the Islamabad memorandum by launching unprovoked military strikes.

"The United States has effectively trampled on and halted all of its commitments under the Islamabad MoU," the deputy foreign minister stated. "Consequently, we have also suspended our commitments under the Islamabad memorandum of understanding and are no longer implementing them."

Gharibabadi emphasized that the absolute priority for the Islamic Republic at the present moment is the country's resolute defense. He noted that the powerful response already delivered by the Iranian Armed Forces serves as a clear message to Washington that its hostile military actions will completely fail to achieve their geopolitical objectives.

"If they are wise, they should choose other solutions," Gharibabadi warned, stressing that Iran's immediate course of action is to defend its sovereignty decisively and "teach

Arman-e-Emrooz: Moving beyond extremism to strengthen the battlefield and diplomacy

Arman-e-Emrooz examined how to navigate this historic turning point and the crisis of war. It argued that at a time when the country's political atmosphere is shaped by regional developments, external pressure, and growing internal divisions, moving beyond extremism and adopting a rational, national-interest-based approach is an undeniable necessity. Accordingly, strengthening both the battlefield and diplomacy should not be seen as contradictory; rather, they are complementary components that can serve national goals. In this view, defense and maintaining military capabilities are essential, but negotiations can also provide opportunities to reduce costs, prevent escalation, and secure necessary advantages for the country. Historical experience shows that a smart combination of field power, active diplomacy, and rational decision-making can pave the way for overcoming challenges and improving conditions.

Javan: J.D. Vance's rhetoric against Iran

Javan discussed J.D. Vance's remarks. While the US claims that the cancellation of the memorandum and the resumption of attacks were due to Iran violating the ceasefire, statements by senior Washington officials suggest other factors behind the scenes that are provoking tensions. Vance, referring to Israel's long-standing efforts to influence US political and social dynamics — a topic frequently raised in media — openly spoke of the regime's advertising campaigns and financial spending aimed at preventing an agreement with Iran, telling those aligned with these campaigns to "go to hell." In his recent comments, Vance has tried to strike a peace-seeking pose, suggesting that Washington does not seek to interfere in Iran's internal affairs. He considers continuing the war with Iran inappropriate — but his concern, he claims, is not rising human casualties, but the potential consequences for Western countries.



the aggressors a lesson."

The Islamabad MoU was originally finalized as a critical 14-point interim agreement aimed at de-escalating regional hostilities, establishing an immediate ceasefire, unfreezing blockaded Iranian assets, and managing security parameters in the strategic Strait of Hormuz. The accord was achieved through intensive, high-level mediation hosted by Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, alongside vital diplomatic facilitation from the Emir of Qatar and security guarantees supported by Pakistani Chief of Defense Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir.

However, in flagrant violation of the MoU reached on June 17, the United States has launched deadly military strikes deep inside Iranian territory, killing dozens of civilians and military personnel. Washington's deliberate targeting of critical civilian infrastructure has drawn fierce condemnation from Tehran, as the destruction of non-military facilities constitutes an egregious war crime under established international law.

Pezeshkian calls for strengthening Iran's legal deterrence on global stage

From page 1 ► He emphasized that the latest legal expertise and the views of leading scholars in this field must be communicated to the public through accurate and transparent information.

He made the comments while chairing a specialized high-level meeting convened to develop a comprehensive strategy for pursuing legal action in domestic, international, and foreign jurisdictions over crimes committed against Iran. The session was attended by the justice minister, senior officials from the executive branch, and leading legal and judicial experts.

The legal initiative directly addresses two separate waves of unprovoked, unilateral military



aggression launched against Iran by the US and Israel.

The first conflict, known as the 12-Day War, occurred between June 13 and June 24 last year. It

began with a series of hostile, surprise airstrikes targeting sovereign Iranian military command centers, civil infrastructure, and defensive facilities.

Washington's moral credibility is crumbling, says Iran

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei has accused the United States of deliberately targeting civilian infrastructure during its ongoing military campaign against Iran, saying Washington's actions have undermined its claims of defending international law and combating terrorism.

In a post published on the social media platform X, Baqaei said the United States deliberately struck the Chabahar Maritime Surveillance Tower, a civilian facility used for maritime safety and navigation, on June 16. He alleged that the attack was part of 'Washington's continuing aggression against Iran,' which began on February 28.

According to Baqaei, the US Secretary of War publicly released footage showing the destruction of the surveillance tower, describing the move as evidence of Washington's pride in attacking civilian infrastructure.

The Iranian spokesman also accused the

United States of carrying out missile strikes on a school in Minab and civilian targets in Lamerd, stating that Washington would have publicized those attacks with similar pride if it had been able to do so.

Baqaei further alleged that US forces attacked electricity facilities and desalination pumps at the Bunji village pier in the southern city of Jask on the previous night, leaving more than 10,000 residents without access to drinking water.

He said the attacks reflected a sharp contrast with the image the United States has long sought to project as a defender of the international order, liberal values, and the fight against terrorism.

"With the destruction of every bridge, tower and civilian facility, it is not only steel and concrete that is collapsing, but also America's moral standing and the credibility of the international legal order and the West's civilizational claims," Baqaei said.



The Iranian diplomat concluded by questioning the difference between the US actions in Chabahar, Minab, Lamerd, and Jask and the acts of terrorism that Washington has historically cited to justify its military interventions and overseas operations.

Leader's military advisor: Iran will shift to full-scale war if US strikes continue

From page 1 ► According to General Rezaei, Washington never intended to honor the memorandum, utilizing it solely to pressure Tehran.

In violation of the MoU, the US has launched operations by bombing civilian infrastructure and military installations across the provinces of Khuzestan, Bushehr, Hormozgan, and Sistan and Baluchestan, targeting hospitals, barracks, and vital bridge-

es. General Rezaei emphasized that Iran's powerful Armed Forces have already responded with decisive, heavy, and successive strikes—a trend that will only intensify.

Rezaei highlighted Iran's strategic patience, noting that during last year's 12-day war, Tehran purposefully acted to prevent regional escalation, deliberately refraining from targeting US bases in Kuwait and neighboring



countries. However, because the enemy resumed its hostilities, the conflict has inevitably evolved. The former IRGC commander

further exposed Washington's underlying geopolitical desperation, stating that the US is trying to forcibly insert itself into the management of the Strait of Hormuz—the world's premier energy bottleneck—to control global oil prices. He said this is a malicious overreach that neither Iran, Russia, China, nor Europe will ever accept, as it risks triggering a global conflagration.

'US military transfers through Omani side threatening'

TEHRAN — A member of Iran's Expediency Council has defended Tehran's actions regarding maritime security in the Strait of Hormuz, saying restrictions imposed on certain movements in the waterway were aimed at preventing the transfer of US military equipment that poses a threat to Iran's national security.

Hossein Mozaffar said the issue was not related to restricting Oman's sovereignty over its territorial waters, but rather to preventing 'the use of those routes for military operations against Iran.'

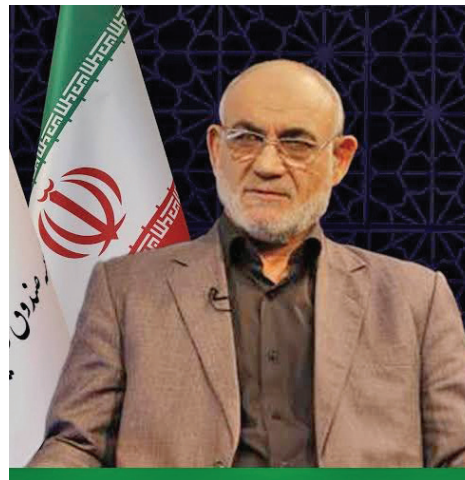
'Some ask why we prevent passage through the Omani side of the Strait of Hormuz, arguing that this part belongs to Oman,' Mozaffar said. 'Yes, the Omani side belongs to Oman, but the enemy uses that route and Omani waters to transport military equipment that threatens our national security.'

In an interview with IRNA, Mozaffar said, "Every time our enemies have increased their pressure and attacks, our nation has become more aware and more resistant."

He argued that attempts by Iran's adversaries to create divisions between the people and the government, or to exploit ethnic differences, had failed and instead contributed to greater solidarity among various groups across the country.

Addressing the issue of diplomacy and negotiations with foreign powers, Mozaffar said negotiations were neither inherently positive nor negative, but their value depended on the circumstances, objectives and terms of any agreement.

"Negotiation is acceptable when it is based on mutual respect and protects national interests," he said. "However, if it becomes a tool for imposing demands, humiliating a country or undermining its sovereignty, such negotia-



tions cannot be accepted."

Mozaffar said no country had the right to dictate Iran's decisions regarding areas such as nuclear technology, defense capabilities or scientific development.

According to Mozaffar, Iran entered negotiations after setting clear conditions and ensuring that its national interests and sovereignty were protected.

He mentioned that although Tehran met its obligations under prior agreements, the other party did not reciprocate. He further noted that errors in the drafting of certain agreements also led to subsequent challenges.

Mozaffar said recent developments demonstrated that the United States had sought to return to negotiations after facing pressure and challenges, rather than Iran initiating the process.

Mozaffar accused the United States and its allies of using periods of negotiations and ceasefires to rebuild their military capabilities.

"One of their major deceptions was the use

of a promised agreement and ceasefire to create an illusion of calm. Meanwhile, they were secretly working to strengthen their forces and replenish their equipment," he said.

He stressed that Iran needed to remain vigilant and avoid internal divisions, arguing that weakening unity among political and military institutions was among the objectives of Iran's enemies.

Discussing the presence of US military bases in neighboring countries, Mozaffar said Iran did not seek confrontation with Arab states in the region and supported peaceful relations with its neighbors. However, he described the presence of American military facilities in the region as a source of instability and a potential threat to Iran's security.

According to Mozaffar, Iran reserves the right to respond if foreign military facilities are used to threaten its territory or national interests.

Mozaffar said Iran has sovereign rights over the parts of the Strait of Hormuz under its jurisdiction and, like other countries around the world, has the right to monitor activities that affect its security.

He stressed that Iran's concerns were not related to ordinary commercial shipping, but rather to 'the misuse of maritime routes for military purposes.'

Mozaffar rejected criticism that Iran should ignore activities taking place in waters under another country's jurisdiction, arguing that security threats could have consequences beyond territorial boundaries.

He stated that Washington had attempted to persuade Oman to facilitate alternative routes for moving military equipment and said Iran had been forced to respond to 'violations of its security.'

US President’s Signature Is Worthless and Invalid

TEHRAN – New Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei issued a statement on Saturday saying that the United States’ violation of a bilateral understanding with Tehran has once again demonstrated that the U.S. president’s signature is “worthless and unreliable,” while urging Iranians to preserve national unity and maintain confidence in state institutions.

In a message marking the “historic epic” surrounding the farewell ceremony for the “Martyr of Iran,” the Leader praised the massive public turnout across Tehran, Qom, Mashhad, and other cities, saying the gatherings reflected the Iranian nation’s loyalty, political awareness, and commitment to its Islamic-Iranian identity.

Millions of people took part in the week-long funeral processions for Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was martyred in the joint U.S.-Israeli airstrike on his office and residence on Feb. 28.

He thanked the Iranian people, senior grand ayatollahs, scholars, intellectuals, cultural and political activists, civilian and military institutions, as well as representatives of the Resistance Front for their participation in the ceremonies.

Addressing relations with Washington, Ayatollah Khamenei said the United States’ breach of the agreement signed between the presidents of Iran and the U.S. had once again proven that commitments made by American leaders could not be trusted.

He accused Washington of pursuing coercion, unilateralism, and aggression, arguing that recent developments had exposed the United States’ “true face” and provided fur-



ther evidence of its unreliability.

Ayatollah Khamenei also warned that if the United States sought to escalate the conflict further, Iran and the Resistance Front would deliver “unforgettable lessons,” pointing to the bravery of Iranian forces and residents of the country’s southern regions in recent days.

Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei stressed that preserving national solidarity remains one of the country’s highest priorities, calling on both officials and the public to safeguard unity to protect Iran’s independence and confront external threats.

He urged Iranians to avoid political division and social discord, saying criticism of government officials, while legitimate and potentially constructive, should not result in injustice against innocent individuals or undermine national cohesion.

Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei concluded his remarks by saying that maintaining public confidence in the country’s executive, legislative, and judicial branches will help safeguard Iran’s national interests, adding that the country’s foes “must not perceive any sign of weakness” from Iran.

Iran hits US positions in response to raids on civilian facilities

From Page 1 ▶ Iran’s Army separately announced drone operations against US military facilities in Kuwait and Jordan under the name Operation Thunderbolt. The Army said the attacks targeted ammunition depots, logistics facilities, command centers, and defense systems. According to the statement, Iranian drones struck US ammunition storage facilities at Camp Al Udairi in Kuwait, military facilities at Ali Al Salem Air Base, and fuel storage sites at Al Azraq Air Base in Jordan.

Iranian media released footage showing Iranian missiles striking the Muwaffaq Salti Air Base in Jordan, a facility reported to have hosted US military personnel.

US officials cited by American media acknowledged that several US military personnel had been injured following attacks on American bases in Jordan.

Tehran urges UN action over attacks on civilian targets

In addition to military action, Tehran has also called on the United Nations Security Council

to act in response to US attacks on civilian infrastructure in Iran.

Iran’s UN Ambassador Amir Saeed Iravani said recent strikes in Hormozgan Province damaged transportation infrastructure, including bridges and railway facilities, and caused civilian casualties. He accused Washington of violating international humanitarian law and urged the Security Council to intervene.

Iran launches legal cases against US and Israeli officials

On Saturday, Iran’s judiciary announced that legal proceedings had been initiated against US and Israeli officials over crimes during the war against the Islamic Republic.

Judiciary spokesman Asqar Jahangir said investigations had been conducted and indictments issued against several individuals.

Iranian authorities had documented damages and filed more than 3,000 civil claims related to losses and injuries, Jahangir stated.

Iranian officials said they were



pursuing both domestic and international legal avenues, saying the US and Israel are committing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Iran’s High Council for Human Rights has also condemned recent US military strikes on Iranian territory, describing them as “grave violations” of the United Nations Charter and international humanitarian law.

In a statement, the council said the attacks on July 8 and 13 resulted in civilian casualties and

extensive damage to public infrastructure, despite a reported understanding between Tehran and Washington aimed at reducing tensions and pursuing dialogue.

The council said more than 250 locations, mainly in southern Iran, have been targeted, resulting in the deaths of 20 people and injuries to around 150 others. It also accused the United States of damaging civilian infrastructure, including railway lines, ports and other public facilities.

LATEST NEWS

■ Russia’s Lavrov speaks with Emirati counterpart about Persian Gulf developments

Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has spoken by phone with his Emirati counterpart Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Russia’s Ria Novosti news agency cited Russia’s foreign ministry as saying.

The ministry said the two officials exchanged views on the situation in the Persian Gulf, and both stressed the need for an immediate ceasefire between the US and Iran and a return to negotiations.

■ Three US strikes hit Iran’s Hormozgan province

Three US air strikes have targeted areas near Sirik in Iran’s Hormozgan province today, Mehr news agency reported.

Hormozgan’s governor said that no civilian casualties had been recorded.

■ Passenger trains resume at Bandar Abbas

Passenger trains have resumed from southern Iran’s Bandar Abbas railway station, two days after the US military had hit and damaged railway lines, reported the country’s IRIB news agency.

■ New Iraqi ambassador arrives in Tehran ahead of PM’s visit

The newly appointed Iraqi Ambassador to Tehran, Yaser Abdul-Zahra al-Hajjaj, arrived in Iran on Saturday to officially begin his diplo-

matic mission, ahead of an upcoming visit by the Iraqi Prime Minister.

Al-Hajjaj was welcomed upon arrival by officials from the Iranian Foreign Ministry and the General Directorate for Persian Gulf Affairs.

Iraqi media outlets and official sources have reported that Iraqi Prime Minister is scheduled to visit Tehran later this week.

Al-Hajjaj previously served as Iraq’s cultural counselor to the Islamic Republic of Iran. He succeeds Naseer Abdul-Mohsen Abdullah, the former Iraqi ambassador to Tehran.

■ Judiciary chief: US plot thwarted via failure of southern corridor project

Iran’s Judiciary Chief, Gholam-Hossein Mohseni-Ejei, said the failure of the so-called “Southern Corridor” project had foiled what he described as US efforts against Iran, turning Washington’s objectives into a strategic setback.

In a post on social media, Mohseni-Ejei wrote: “What is unfolding in the Persian Gulf is the clearest evidence of the US enemy’s strategic failure. With the collapse of the Southern Corridor project, their sinister scheme was thwarted, and the dream of encircling Iran’s borders turned into a nightmare for the aggressors.”

He said recent acts of aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran should be viewed

within the same context.

■ Tehran warns UAE against supporting adversaries at BRICS meeting

Iran’s Minister of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare, Ahmad Meidari, warned the United Arab Emirates against allowing its territory to be used by Iran’s adversaries during the 12th BRICS Labor and Employment Ministers’ Meeting in Hyderabad, India. Stressing that Tehran seeks peace but will respond decisively to any aggression, Meidari rejected what he described as the UAE representative’s “interventionist remarks” and called for regional security to be ensured solely by neighboring states without foreign military involvement. He also urged BRICS members to oppose neo-imperialism and strengthen cooperation for a more just international order.

■ Iran warns of escalating strikes on regional infrastructure if US attacks continue

An Iranian military source said Tehran has launched a phased retaliatory strategy targeting regional energy and water infrastructure if US attacks on Iran continue. The source said the plan was adopted in response to US strikes on Iranian civilian infrastructure and warned that power plants and desalination facilities in Kuwait have been added to Iran’s target list. The source added that broader regional infrastructure could be targeted unless Washington immediately halts its military operations against Iran.

Government spokesperson visits Ahvaz hospital after US strike

From Page 1 ▶ Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei confirmed that the strike targeted an area immediately adjacent to the specialized hospital, compelling medical staff to pull children directly out of cancer treatments, including active chemotherapy sessions. In a statement posted on X, Baqaei described the attack as “barbaric,” drawing direct comparisons to recent military strikes on healthcare facilities in the Gaza Strip.

Hospital officials confirmed that the explosion occurred only a short distance from the primary medical complex, shattering windows and causing panic. Dr. Majid Bou’azar, the hospital’s manager, told Al Jazeera that all 211 patients had to be relocated under extreme emergency conditions. “These are highly vulnerable patients, including children undergoing intensive cancer treatment,” he emphasized.

Medical staff described chaotic scenes as they rushed critically ill children to safety. “Some of the patients were on oxygen sup-

port and ventilators,” one hospital employee recalled. “Parents were carrying children in their arms, while others were moved with intravenous lines still attached or transported rapidly in wheelchairs.”

Hospital director Reza Bazar told Iran’s Fars News agency that the nearby explosions disrupted vital operations and temporarily rendered multiple sections of the hospital entirely unusable. The incident comes amid an expanding US military campaign that has increasingly targeted civilian infrastructure alongside military installations.

Iran’s Foreign Ministry has urged the international community, the United Nations, and global humanitarian organizations to formally condemn the attack. Iranian officials argue that strikes endangering medical infrastructure violate international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions, which provide explicit, special protections for hospitals and medical personnel during armed conflicts regardless of whether the buildings are directly or indirectly targeted.

Iran vows relentless legal action over US and Israeli crimes

TEHRAN — The Iranian Judiciary has launched comprehensive legal proceedings against the United States and Israel, seeking international prosecution and financial reparations for war crimes and military aggression against the country.

Judiciary Spokesperson Asghar Jahangir announced the measures during a press conference on Saturday. Jahangir stated that according to international law, any aggressor and initiator of war must be prosecuted, tried, and forced to compensate for the damages inflicted upon the targeted country.

Following the war that the US and Israel launched against Iran on February 28 and the 12-day aggression in June 2025, provincial prosecutors across Iran have fully documented physical and infrastructural damages. The Judiciary spokesperson said the International Affairs Prosecutor’s Office has formally opened criminal cases against US and Israeli officials, and indictments have already been issued for a number of the accused alongside more than 3,000 registered civil petitions.

The Judiciary’s Human Rights Headquarters has categorized the documented strikes into three classifications under the Rome Statute, specifically focusing on war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, Jahangir said. He added that the evidence compiled involves direct and deliberate attacks

targeting civilians, hospitals, schools, nuclear facilities, and critical national infrastructure. The documentation regarding the 12-day conflict in June last year has already been officially submitted to the United Nations as a registered document, he noted.

Providing a statistical breakdown of the active files, Jahangir explained that Branch 55 of the Tehran Civil Court has registered 260 civil lawsuits against the US and Israel, representing over 300,000 natural and legal entities. Furthermore, the International Affairs Prosecutor’s Office is handling 21 criminal cases pertaining specifically to the 12-day war, which include 137 cases filed on behalf of 800 individual Iranian citizens and 65 cases filed by government ministries, agencies, and public institutions. An additional 90 active cases have also been established regarding the February 28 aggression and are currently undergoing judicial review.

The spokesperson said pursuing these international files has been elevated to a primary operational priority for the Judiciary following explicit guidelines issued by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution. The Presidential Legal Department and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are concurrently pursuing the execution of these files through international tribunals to ensure the accused do not enjoy continued impunity.

Lord of the straits

The role of Makran’s coastal dwellers in Iran’s maritime border defense

By Soroush Ramezanifar

Throughout history, the land of Iran has consistently drawn significant attention due to its abundant resources and strategic geographic location. This land has been inhabited by people who, in every era, have acted as responsible guardians, striving to maintain the purity and integrity of their homeland.

The presence of these particular communities has always gained prominence in their respective historical periods. History has repeatedly witnessed the pattern of foreign aggression against the possessions of the people—a deplorable behavior that stands in stark contradiction to the innate nature of this land. Consequently, the inhabitants have always resisted such incursions, a struggle rooted deeply in history. However, imperialists and colonizers have historically sought to undermine this resistance through “forced forgetting,” attempting to drive a wedge between various ethnic groups to prevent them from uniting in defense of the nation’s integrity. By instilling a sense of disunity based on ethnic and racial differences, they have pursued a form of historical vengeance against this land.

The Baloch people, the inhabitants of the Makran coasts, have stood as guardians of this territory, much like the legendary hero Rostam, refusing to tolerate incursions and confronting the forces of “Western savagery” well before they were formally recognized in history. It is imperative today that this chapter of Iranian history is not consigned to oblivion, but rather serves as a tribute to these ancient and resilient people.

The arrival of European colonizers in the Indian Ocean, the Sea of Oman, and the Persian Gulf at the beginning of the 16th century introduced new dynamics to regional and international relations. The rise of the Safavid Dynasty in Iran, coupled with the fundamental conflicts between the Safavid and Ottoman Empires, coincided with the presence of Portuguese colonizers in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman. This was further complicated by the strategic importance of various southern Iranian coasts and islands, which at that time had not yet come under the full sovereignty of the Safavid state. These factors created complex and multifaceted geopolitical relationships in the region. With the Portuguese gaining control over certain southern islands and ports of Iran, continuous and extensive relations were established between Iran and Portugal during this period.

Various variables influenced the nature of Safavid-Portuguese relations. One critical factor was the role played by the inhabitants of the Makran coasts. At the onset of Safavid-Portuguese relations during the reign of Shah Ismail (907–930 AH), Makran was not yet fully integrated into the Safavid domain. Historical records suggest that it came under Safavid sovereignty during the reign of Shah Tahmasp (930–982 AH). Furthermore, Makran served as a vast buffer zone situated between the primary Portuguese holdings in the Persian Gulf and their ports and islands in India.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Caspian port can offset pressures on southern Iranian ports: official

TEHRAN-The CEO of the Anzali Free Zone Organization has announced a significant 58% growth in loading and unloading operations at Iran's Caspian Port, emphasizing that the development of this northern port is crucial for securing essential commodities and enhancing the country's transit capacity.

Speaking at a press conference, Mostafa Ta'ati-Moghaddam outlined the port's potential to reduce pressure on Iran's southern ports, which have faced severe disruptions due to recent U.S. military aggression and maritime blockades.

According to the official, the port recorded approximately 760,000 tons of cargo handling in the Iranian year 1403 (ending March 2025), which surged to 1.2 million tons in 1404. This year alone, performance has grown 35% compared to the same period last year.

A port born from strategic vision

Ta'ati-Moghaddam explained that the Caspian Port project faced significant opposition from its inception in the early 2000s. Some viewed it as a competitor to existing ports in the Caspian Sea. However, a group of experts concluded that Iran urgently needed a modern, internationally standardized port on its northern shores.

"Before the Caspian Port, Anzali and Nowshahr were the main traditional ports in the north," he said, "while some others were originally fishing ports later converted to commercial use. The Caspian Port was designed with new standards and has greater capacity for operational expansion."

The official further emphasized the port's growing importance in light of U.S. attacks on Iran and the imposition of a naval blockade on southern waters. With restrictions on commercial shipping in the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman, the Caspian Port has emerged as a vital alternative route.

Since the beginning of the current Iranian year (March 2026), nearly 110,000 tons of essential goods have entered the country through this northern port. "Considering the current warehouse capacity, we have almost reached saturation," Ta'ati-Moghaddam warned. "To increase import volumes, we need to simultaneously expand storage capacity, ground transport, and rapid cargo clearance."

The organization has signed an agreement with an operator to use the previously dormant Pier No. 1 for direct "one-stop" cargo handling—prioritizing the swift movement of essential goods without lengthy storage in the port area. This approach reduces warehousing costs, accelerates cargo turnover, and enables the port to accept more vessels.

In the area of liquid bulk imports, approximately 75,000 tons of vegetable oil have been imported through the Caspian Port to date, with over 100,000 tons entering the country last year.

However, Ta'ati-Moghaddam noted that changes in Russia's fuel export policies have redirected many tanker vessels from carrying vegetable oil to transporting fuel, causing shipping costs to spike from \$35 to \$105 per ton. Such volatility, he argued, undermines the ability of traders to plan for cost and delivery timelines, reducing competitiveness.

One of the most critical challenges facing maritime transport in the Caspian Sea is the absence of regular shipping lines, the official stated.

"The issue isn't just about the number of vessels," he explained. "For a sustainable trade flow, we need proper planning for regular routes with fixed schedules, origins, destinations, cargo types, and capacities. Without this, cargo owners cannot predict transport times and costs, making it difficult to attract stable cargo volumes."

While over 100 Iranian-flagged vessels now operate in the Caspian Sea—compared to none after the Soviet collapse—the official stressed that quantity alone is insufficient.

Ta'ati-Moghaddam highlighted a critical shortage of specialized vessels, particularly tankers, container ships, and Ro-Ro (roll-on/roll-off) ships capable of carrying trucks directly to ports.

"We have fewer problems with bulk carriers for grains and dry cargo, but to adopt modern shipping methods, serious investment and planning are needed," he said.



The official pointed out that while the Ro-Ro infrastructure exists at the Caspian Port, the absence of suitable vessels has prevented full utilization. "If we had Ro-Ro ships, we could move trucks through the Caspian Port to Dagestan's ports like Makhachkala, reducing pressure on the Astara land border," he added.

The CEO stressed that infrastructure development must be coordinated with fleet expansion. "If we build a pier but don't have the matching vessels, part of the investment remains unused," he noted, citing the example of the Ro-Ro railway pier at Amirabad Port, which is near completion but lacks an appropriate vessel.

He argued that northern port development must be viewed as an integrated chain: piers, hinterlands, warehouses, tanks, fleet, rail and road networks, handling equipment, and regular shipping lines.

Caspian port as a complement, not a replacement

Addressing the possibility of replacing southern ports with the Caspian Port, Ta'ati-Moghaddam emphasized that northern and southern ports serve distinct functions and should not be seen as rivals.

"It's not about complete replacement," he clarified. "The Caspian Port can serve as a complementary and strategic route, covering a portion of the country's cargo—especially essential goods, grains, oil, transit cargo, and trade with Russia and Caspian Sea states."

The recent disruptions in southern routes, he noted, have underscored the necessity of diversifying import and export pathways. A developed standard port in the north can enhance economic and logistical resilience.

The official also addressed the importance of completing the Caspian Port's railway connection. When the port was first inaugurated, it lacked a train station—the nearest being 15 kilometers away in Khomam. Plans to integrate a shunting yard with the main station are underway, and two additional kilometers of railway track have been completed even during the recent conflict period.

"The internal railway lines of the Caspian Port are expected to become operational this year," Ta'ati-Moghaddam said. "Once completed, we will no longer face serious concerns about cargo transport, especially when road fleets are constrained."

International corridors and economic diplomacy

The official emphasized that activating international transport corridors requires more than just infrastructure—it demands active economic diplomacy.

"We've discussed the North-South and East-West corridors since the 2000s, but the question is how far these have progressed in practice," he said.

He noted that during the tenure of former Roads Minister Rostam Ghasemi, approximately \$300 million was allocated from the National Development Fund to accelerate railway projects. The hope is that renewed focus under the current minister will bring these initiatives back to the forefront.

"If the economy stabilizes, the Caspian Port can become a highly effective container transport route," Ta'ati-Moghaddam said. "With its rail connection, cargo could even be sent onward to India."

The port's current container volume is unprecedented among Iran's northern ports, he claimed. Operational space has become extremely limited, with Piers No. 1 and 2 now operating at near-full capacity.

Looking ahead, the official noted that with proper planning, the Caspian Port could play a significant role in rail transport of goods to Iraq—particularly through the Khosravi border crossing—supplying essential commodities and grains from Kazakhstan and Russia.

From border crossing to strategic hub: Mehran Free Zone's vision for Iran-Iraq economic integration

TEHRAN- The member of the board of directors of the Mehran Free Zone Organization, stating that the advantage of this region is not limited merely to being border-adjacent, emphasized that Mehran must transform from a commercial passage into a strategic hub linking Iran's and Iraq's economies—a goal achievable through establishing efficient governance, developing value chains, strengthening production, and attracting investment.

Ali-Asghar Alameh said in an interview with IRNA: After more than three decades since the establishment of free and special economic zones in the country, the time has come to evaluate their performance and revise their missions.

He said: Although these zones were formed with the aim of developing production, employment, exports, and attracting investment, past experience shows that achieving these goals requires redefining their role based on successful global models.

The board member of Mehran Free Zone, explaining that today's economy is no longer managed solely based on geographical borders, elaborated: Successful free zones in the world have now moved beyond purely commercial activities and, by linking production, commerce, transportation, investment, technology, innovation, and services, have paved the way for value creation and sustainable economic growth.

Alameh continued: The Mehran Free Zone must also develop with this same strategic outlook, and in addition to facilitating trade exchanges, it should lay the groundwork for joint production, investment, and economic cooperation between Iran and Iraq.

The board member of the Mehran Free Zone Organization, referring to the region's privileged position adjacent to Iraq, stated that being located at the zero point of the border is an important capacity, but geography alone does not create a competitive advantage. What turns a geographical location into a development opportunity is the quality of management, legal stability, intelligent policymaking, and the avail-



ability of infrastructure required by the private sector.

He stated: Mehran can play its strategic role only when, in addition to being a border crossing, it transforms into a center for production, processing, packaging, logistics, and distribution of goods; because the real value of trade is created in adding value before the goods cross the border.

Alameh, referring to Iraq's economic developments, stated: This country is no longer just a consumer market; with the process of reconstruction, infrastructure development, and increasing investment, it has become one of the most important economic partners of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the region.

He said: The strategy of the Mehran Free Zone must move beyond mere export of goods towards developing joint production, investment cooperation, and providing technical and engineering services between the two countries, so that it becomes a link between the economic capacities of Iran and Iraq.

Engine of employment and economic dynamism – The board member of the Mehran Free Zone Organization, emphasizing the importance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in economic development, said that the experience of successful free zones in the world has shown that sustainable employment, innovation, and economic flexibility are more the result of the activity of small and medium-sized enterprises than large capital-in-

tensive projects.

Alameh stressed: The Mehran Free Zone must provide an environment where entrepreneurs can expand their production and exports by reducing administrative barriers, having appropriate access to infrastructure, and benefiting from financial and transportation services.

He enumerated food and agricultural conversion industries, wood and furniture industries, downstream petrochemical industries, transportation and logistics services, packaging industries, technical and engineering services, information technology, and the digital economy as among the most important fields for the economic growth of the Mehran Free Zone.

This board member of the Mehran Free Zone stated that the development of these sectors can elevate Mehran's position in the regional value chain.

Alameh, emphasizing the necessity of linking the Mehran Free Zone with Ilam's economy, stated: This zone should not become a separate entity detached from the province's capacities; rather, its success depends on the participation of farmers, industrialists, universities, knowledge-based companies, elites, and entrepreneurs of the province.

He added: Synergy between the capacities of the free zone and the economic capabilities of Ilam can pave the way for sustainable development of the province and surrounding areas.

The main advantage of the Meh-

ran Free Zone – The board member of the Mehran Free Zone Organization explained that investors today pay more attention than anything else to legal stability, transparency, speed of decision-making, electronic services, and the quality of the business environment.

Alameh stressed: Agile, transparent, and accountable management must become one of the most important advantages of the Mehran Free Zone; because without investor confidence, the realization of development plans will not be possible.

The board member of the Mehran Free Zone stated: The vision for this region is to become the axis and focal point of economic interactions of western Iran with Iraq, where production, trade, transportation, pilgrim economy, conversion industries, technical and engineering services, and knowledge-based economy contribute to economic development in a coordinated path.

He added: Mehran must transform from a physical crossing into the economic pivot of Ilam and western Iran; a hub where value creation replaces raw material sales, joint Iran-Iraq cooperation replaces traditional trade, and modern management replaces administrative structures.

Alameh continued: Under such conditions, the Mehran Free Zone can become one of Iran's most important economic gateways to Iraq and a driving force for the development of the western region.

The Mehran Free Zone, whose initial plan dates back to 2010 (1389), was finally approved after years of follow-up in 2021 (1400), and its statute was confirmed by the Guardian Council in January 2023 (Dey 1401). The board members of the Mehran Free Zone were appointed by presidential decrees in December 2025 (Azar 1404), and with the approval of the comprehensive plan of the zone in October of the same year (Mehr 1404), a new chapter of executive and development activities has begun for this region, aiming to transform Mehran into one of the country's most important economic, commercial, and pilgrimage hubs in the foreseeable future.

Most complex overhaul of South Pars platforms underway

From Page 1 ► He stated that the overhaul of offshore platforms, a key operational program during the warm season, began as scheduled and is proceeding according to the approved timeline. However, this year's plan has a distinguishing feature: due to damage sustained by some gas refineries during the conflicts, the need to maintain stable gas supply and manage production capacity has made timely overhauls doubly important. Thus, it is necessary to reduce platform downtime while executing maintenance with greater precision, quality, and operational discipline.

"We face two simultaneous missions this year: maintaining stable gas production to meet national grid demand, and preparing all production platforms for maximum operational readiness in the cold season," Sarmadi emphasized.

The overhaul operations began in early April and are expected to conclude by mid-September. A total of 20 gas platforms are scheduled for maintenance, with several already successfully completed and the rest proceeding according to plan. Activities include technical inspections, repair of process and rotating

equipment, safety tests, instrumentation calibration, electrical system repairs, and preventive maintenance to ensure equipment reliability.

This year's overhaul is more compressed due to limited processing capacity following refinery damage—long platform shutdowns are not possible. The program has been redesigned to reduce production downtime while maintaining quality and safety standards.

Logistical constraints pose additional challenges. Continued air travel restrictions, especially helicopter flights to offshore platforms, complicate personnel and equipment movement. Gulf weather conditions also affect operations at times. Despite these hurdles, precise planning and dedicated staff have kept the program on track.

Timely supply of parts and strategic equipment was another critical focus. Relying on domestic technical expertise, Iranian manufacturers, and proper supply chain management, the company has successfully managed these challenges.

Sarmadi stressed that energy supply stability depends not only on production capacity

but also on demand management. Consumer cooperation in consumption management is essential for navigating the winter season successfully.

Coordinated efforts are underway between the Oil Ministry, National Iranian Oil Company, Pars Oil and Gas Company, and National Gas Company to restore damaged refineries to operation, with part of their capacity already restored. However, full recovery of lost capacity in the short term is not feasible, making the readiness of South Pars production platforms more vital than ever.

This year's overhaul program is precisely designed to ensure all operational platforms enter the peak consumption season with maximum reliability and technical readiness.

South Pars remains responsible for over 70% of Iran's gas supply, playing a decisive role in energy security, grid stability, and the continuation of economic activities. All technical, operational, and management capacities are being deployed to sustain production, enhance facility reliability, and maximize platform readiness for the challenging winter ahead.

'TPO puts emphasis on development of regional trade, export'

TEHRAN- The Deputy of Commercial Services at the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran described the signing of the protocol for regional connectivity and transit facilitation between the Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan as an effective step in developing regional trade, increasing non-oil exports, and strengthening Iran's position in regional transit corridors.

According to the Public Rela-

tions Department of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, Seyyed Mohammad Sadegh Qanadzadeh, referring to the importance of this regional transit agreement, stated: The development of transit cooperation between Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan is a significant step towards strengthening regional trade, reducing transportation costs, and increasing the country's export capacity to target markets.

He emphasized the role of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran in creating the necessary infrastructure to facilitate trade, remove obstacles facing economic actors, and strengthen the presence of Iranian exporters in regional markets. He added: Establishing sustainable transportation routes and facilitating transit processes are crucial factors in increasing the competitiveness of Iranian goods and developing non-oil exports.

The Deputy of Commercial Services at the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran continued: This trilateral agreement can provide the groundwork for utilizing shared economic capacities, developing trade cooperation, increasing exports of goods and engineering and technical services, as well as creating new opportunities for joint production and exports to third countries.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Trump’s regional agenda to serve Israel

From page 1 ► Although President al-Sharaa allegedly rejected military intervention in Lebanon, he sent his foreign minister, Asaad al-Shaibani, to examine the positions of Lebanese parties, except for Hezbollah. Al-Shaibani conducted a publicity tour in the northern Lebanese city of Tripoli, which is also considered a stronghold of Sunni political forces supported by Turkey.

Despite reports that circulated after French President Emmanuel Macron visited Damascus indicating French rejection of U.S. plans for Syrian militants to fight Hezbollah, Trump did not hesitate to raise it again during his meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the sidelines of the NATO summit in Ankara on July 7 and 8.

This came after Trump repeatedly praised the strength of the Turkish army, which boasts the second-largest military in NATO after the United States. Analysts have noted this may signal the need to leverage that army to serve the shared objectives between Ankara and Washington. Turkey holds significant influence over the Syrian government.

All of this prompted Trump and Erdogan to invite President al-Sharaa, who arrived at the NATO summit and met with them, and where signs of discomfort, and even tension, were apparent on his face during their bilateral meetings.

Reports at the time spoke of American pressure on al-Sharaa to play an active and swift role in U.S. plans for Lebanon. Otherwise, Washington would reconsider its relations with Syria, which would not have received any international recognition without direct U.S. support.

Analysts also pointed to American-Turkish coordination regarding regional developments, particularly in Lebanon and subsequently Iraq, clarifying Trump's efforts to finalize his regional project, which to some extent relies primarily on Erdogan's backing.

Trump has praised Erdogan on more than one occasion, noting that the Turkish President carries out everything America asks of him, and also indicated that he and Erdogan brought al-Sharaa to power.

Analysts further anticipated that Trump would settle his regional projects and plans following his talks with Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi at the White House. The U.S. President is also scheduled to host Lebanese President Joseph Aoun on July 21, and finally, Netanyahu, whom he may invite to the White House before the Israeli elections on October 27.

In Iraq, there is heavy U.S. pressure to dismantle the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), whose factions seek Iraqi sovereignty from America's interference in domestic affairs. In Lebanon, the government is under pressure to disarm Hezbollah, the only source of power for the Lebanese nation.

These meetings, along with the outcomes of Erdogan's discussions with Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam in Istanbul on July 10, and Trump's phone call with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on July 11, are expected to chart the trajectory of the upcoming U.S. phase in the region.

At the same time, Turkish intelligence chief Ibrahim Kalin had concluded his tour of Iraq, meeting with various Iraqi factions amid talk of a new and broader Turkish role in Iraq alongside cooperation with Washington. The



United States assigned its ambassador to Turkey, Tom Barrack, this task, alongside his roles in Syria, Iraq and, indirectly, in Lebanon.

All of this helps explain Trump's remarks during his meeting with Ahmad al-Sharaa about his "absolute commitment to defending Israel," as well as his recognition of al-Quds (Jerusalem) as the regime's capital city, along with recognizing the occupied Syrian Golan Heights as Zionist territory, without any objection from al-Sharaa.

The self-proclaimed Syrian President appears to be hoping that Saudi Arabia and Turkey will help him withstand the pressure, or rather, the openly declared and brazen American threats before the media.

After al-Sharaa returned from the NATO summit, his government alleged that it had confiscated arms heading to Hezbollah. No evidence was offered to back up the allegations.

Hezbollah's media relations office once again denied claims that the Lebanese resistance is carrying out any activities inside Syrian territory, stressing that these allegations and accusations "are nothing more than fabricated stories with no basis in fact."

In a statement, Hezbollah pointed out that these allegations "resurface from time to time with the aim of discrediting Hezbollah, while serving the Zionist-American project in the region."

It emphasized that Hezbollah has repeatedly and categorically denied these allegations in the past, affirming that they are entirely false and baseless.

Al-Sharaa appears to be making these public accusations to keep Trump on his side and demonstrate that he is advancing the U.S. president's current and future agenda. These efforts are aimed at redrawing the region's geopolitical map once the course of U.S.-Iran relations is determined, along with the resulting implications for Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq, and the broader region.

This also helps explain Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan's remarks to an Emirati newspaper on July 11, in which he ruled out any armed confrontation with the Israeli regime and accused Tehran of having "proxies" destabilizing regional security "just like the Israelis."

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei responded: "It is astonishing that someone like Mr. Fidan would make such an incorrect comparison. He himself knows that the Zionist regime is inherently expan-

sionist and seeks to undermine the entire region, including Turkey. We wonder how he arrived at such a strange comparison." Baghaei added, "Iran has no proxies in the region. The only proxy in the region is the Zionist regime."

Iran certainly has allies, but Fidan's remarks lend weight to the analysis suggesting a potential shift in Turkey's regional policies, aligning them more closely with the U.S. agenda in coordination with the governments of Riyadh, Damascus, Baghdad, and Beirut.

Experts argue that Trump wants these parties to finalize their decisions in favor of his plans before the end of this month, enabling him to possibly secure additional military and political victories, as well as economic gains, ahead of the U.S. midterm elections in November. Those elections are expected to be pivotal, as losing the Republican majority in both the House of Representatives and the Senate could have significant political and personal consequences for him.

With the renewed U.S. aggression against Iran and the Saudi bombing of Sanaa International Airport, it has become clear that some actors in the region have failed to draw lessons from everything they have experienced over the past three years.

The genocide in Gaza, the aggression against Lebanon and later Iran, and before that the fall of Syria's government all unfolded within the framework of a regional and international agenda that ultimately served only the interests of the Israeli regime.

The regime sought to achieve its objectives in Lebanon and, through it, across the region. Those efforts were thwarted by the firm stance of Iranian negotiators during the Islamabad talks, which blocked the plans of those coordinating with Tel Aviv in Lebanon. However, these efforts continue under the American-Lebanese-Israeli "framework agreement".

Trump's agenda would exploit Lebanon and Iraq's religious, sectarian, and political divisions, seeking to deepen those fractures in pursuit of what he blindly views as a decisive blow against Iran following its recent diplomatic, political, and military gains.

What Washington fails to understand is that Tehran has never asked its allies in Iraq, Lebanon, or Yemen to act militarily on its behalf. These countries all have their own deep grievances with the United States and the Zionist regime, a matter lost in the region's geopolitical landscape.



the regime cut off food and water supplies to the Palestinian population.

The attacks on civilian infrastructure have also alarmed UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, his spokesperson said on Friday.

"He is particularly concerned about attacks on civilian infrastructure in Iran and across the region," said Farhan Haq. "Such attacks are unacceptable."

It is deeply regrettable that

Trump, whose country claims to be a defender of human rights, has ordered attacks that deprive people of drinking water and electricity during the extreme heat of summer.

Human conscience should recoil at the fact that a person like Trump, who has even denied the reality of climate change, would order airstrikes against infrastructure projects that civilians depend on for their survival. Such acts are profoundly barbaric and inhumane.

The illusion of victory: Why America cannot bomb its way out of the war



From page 1 ► solution to a problem that has festered for decades. Americans were told the ruling system in Iran would collapse, that their nuclear program would be obliterated, that American air power would decide the outcome in an afternoon.

This was the same kind of arrogant bluster that led the British Cabinet in 1914 to believe that a single naval victory in the North Sea would decide the fate of Europe. They were catastrophically wrong, and so are the Americans.

After months of conflict, the reality is stark and humiliating for Washington. The ceasefire signed in Islamabad with such ceremony has crumbled into dust. American strikes have hit Iranshahr, Bandar Abbas, Bushehr, and some other cities. Iran has responded by striking American military assets in Kuwait, Bahrain, and Jordan. The sirens wailing in Manama and Kuwait City are the sound of a strategy that has failed. The fundamental premise of this entire campaign was to prevent Iran from controlling the Strait of Hormuz. Yet today, that is precisely what has happened. The world's most powerful navy, a force Americans have boasted about for generations, has been effectively neutralized by a combination of persistent surveillance and precision-guided weapons.

Just as the British reluctantly accepted Turkish control of the Bosphorus after the First World War, Americans must accept Iranian control of their own waters.

The image of American naval supremacy is shattered, and with it, the guarantee of free passage for the oil that powers the global economy. Gas prices in the United States have spiked by 42 percent, the largest increase since 2022. The American farm sector is being crushed under a diesel and fertilizer cost shock. Farm bankruptcies are up 46 percent. Americans are hurting themselves more than they are hurting Iran.

The architects of this war in the Pentagon and the White House believed that overwhelming air power would break the Iranians' will. They were wrong. Iran is not a weak opponent like Iraq or Afghanistan. It is a nation of 90 million people, living in a fortress surrounded by mountains, armed with an inexhaustible quantity of missiles and drones. Iranians have survived the maximum punishment America can deliver, and they are still standing. The Leader of the Islamic Revolution was martyred on the first day of the war on Feb. 28, yet the establishment has not collapsed.

When you corner a state and threaten its existence, you do not force it to capitulate. You force it to fight harder, to hide its capabilities, and to seek revenge. This is not a matter of Iranian stubbornness; it is the simple logic of survival that any state would follow. The Chinese are watching this closely. They see the United States trying to impose a global blockade. They understand that the American presence in the Strait of Hormuz is a precedent they cannot tolerate. The Strait of Malacca is vital to their survival. If Americans believe they can check ships in the Persian Gulf, the Chinese know Washington will eventually try to do the same in the South China Sea. This war is not just about Iran. It is about the global order. And by escalating, Americans are driving the rest of the world into the arms of China and Russia.

The American administration is trapped. They cannot walk away because of the do-

mestic political cost. The same interests that pushed Americans into this war now demand they stay. The loss of American prestige would be immense. But to continue is to waste billions of dollars

and countless lives on a war Americans cannot win. The only rational path is to admit that the initial premise was flawed and seek a negotiated exit. The United States cannot dictate terms to Iran. It must accept that Iran has legitimate interests in the region, including control over the Strait of Hormuz. This is not an admission of defeat; it is a recognition of reality. Just as the British reluctantly accepted Turkish control of the Bosphorus after the First World War, Americans must accept Iranian control of their own waters.

The world should hear this from the Iranian people: Iranians have endured war, sanctions, and the destruction of hospitals, bridges, and vital infrastructure. They were told peace would come only if they surrendered, but they refused to give up. Americans are also questioning whether this war truly served their security or broader geopolitical interests, as its costs are measured in lives, economic hardship, and global instability. Douglas Macgregor, advisor to the Secretary of Defense in the first Trump administration, has argued that "Congress is on the hook for the Israel lobby. The Israel lobby controls the House, it controls the Senate, and also obviously controls Donald Trump and the White House."

The path forward requires courage. It takes courage for American officials to admit they were wrong. It requires the courage to end the blockade and the strikes. It requires the courage to negotiate not from a position of threat, but from a position of mutual respect. The United States must realize that its power is not infinite and that the rest of the world will not simply follow its commands. The era of American unipolar dominance is over. The sooner Washington accepts that reality, the sooner a new foundation for peace can be built.

The war must end now, on Iran's terms, because the alternative is a wider conflict that will drain American resources and leave the United States weaker than it has ever been. America has made many mistakes in the Middle East, but the greatest mistake would be to continue a war that has no end.

Let there be no confusion about the fundamental truth of this conflict. Donald Trump cannot win this war. He has already lost it in Iran. The missiles, the blockade, the threats, none of it has brought Iran to its knees. Instead, it has forged a nation more unified, more determined, and more dangerous than the one that existed before a single bomb dropped. Every strike Americans launch only deepens Iranian resolve. Every day this conflict continues only proves that the American president is powerless to shape the outcome he promised. The war is lost not on the battlefield, but in the very logic of the conflict itself. There can be no victory for the aggressor. The only choice remaining for Donald Trump is to admit defeat and withdraw, or to drag the American people further into a quagmire from which there is no honorable escape. The sooner he accepts this reality, the sooner the killing can stop.

The lesson of 1914 is clear: arrogance begins wars, but reality ends them. Donald Trump has already lost this war's political objective. Every bomb dropped now changes nothing except the cost. History will remember not who fought the longest, but who had the courage to end a war that could not be won. Iran has not been broken. It has been hardened. Iran did not surrender. It survived. And in war, survival is often the first victory.

Iran crowned champions of 2026 AVC U18 Volleyball Championship

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Japan 3-2 (23-25, 25-22, 25-17, 25-22) on Saturday to win the AVC Boys' U18 Volleyball Championship for the eighth time.

The victory underlined Iran's continued dominance in Asian youth volleyball, with the team producing a composed and resilient performance to overcome a determined Japanese side. After dropping the opening set, Iran responded strongly by taking the next two sets with disciplined defense and effective attacking play. Japan forced a deciding fifth set by winning the fourth, but the Iranians held their nerve in the closing stages to seal a memorable triumph.

Iran reached the final with an impressive unbeaten run, overcoming the Philippines, India, Bahrain, South Korea and China. Throughout the tournament, the team displayed consistency, tactical maturity and remarkable teamwork, reinforcing the country's reputation as one of Asia's leading volleyball nations.

Earlier on Saturday, Chinese Taipei secured the bronze medal by edging China 3-2 (20-25, 25-23, 14-25, 25-21, 15-13) in another closely contested encounter.

The title adds another chapter to Iran's remarkable history in the competition. The country first won the championship in 2001 and enjoyed an extraordinary streak of six consecutive titles from 2005 to 2014. Iran's record in the tournament also includes three silver medals (2003, 2022 and 2024) and one bronze medal (2018), highlighting its sustained excellence at the youth level.

Roberto Piazza: we need to learn how to finish sets

TEHRAN – Iran national volleyball team head coach Roberto Piazza admitted his side paid the price for the energy spent in the previous match, following a straight-sets defeat to Slovenia.

After Iran's 3-0 loss, Piazza reflected on his team's performance and the physical demands of the tournament.

"We came into this match after a very tough five-set win against Germany. That match could have been finished much earlier. In tournaments like this, when you have to play on consecutive days, every bit of energy you lose is gone. You simply cannot recover it all before the next match," Piazza said.

Despite the defeat, the Italian coach praised his players' commitment.

"This was all the energy we had, and I'm proud of my team because the players left everything they had on the court."

Piazza highlighted Iran's inability to close out tight sets as a recurring issue, pointing to the narrow losses of 27-25 and 26-24 against Slovenia.

"I want to review how many sets we've lost by just a couple of points. Today we were only one point away from winning several times. In the third set, for example, we were leading 24-23."

Piazza believes the team's mentality in key moments needs to change.

"The first thought is always that we have to finish the set on the very first opportunity. But we don't have the patience to accept that maybe we won't score on the first attack and that we'll need a second or even a third chance," the Italian coach added.

He believes that missed opportunities immediately increase the pressure on his players.

"When we fail to finish it the first time, we start putting ourselves under pressure because the first attempt didn't work. That's not the right mindset, and it's my responsibility to change that habit."

The 56-year-old coach stressed that responsibility lies with the team as a whole rather than any individual player.

"I'm not looking to blame anyone or point fingers. This is about the entire team. After the match I told the players that you can always look at a glass in two ways—half empty or half full. For me, it's always half full."

Piazza concluded by returning to the issue of physical fatigue.

"You asked me about our energy. Yes, we gave everything we had, but we were playing with limited reserves because we had spent so much against Germany. If we had managed that match better and finished it earlier, we would have been in a much better condition against Slovenia. That's how I see it."

Iran water polo defeat Thailand at Asian Age Group Championships 2026

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Thailand 17-8 at the 12th Asian Age Group Championships on Saturday.

Iran had started the campaign with a 17-11 loss against Japan on Friday.

The Iranian team will play Hong Kong on Sunday.

The competitions 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.

Shahriyar Moghanlou joins Tractor

TEHRAN – Iran international striker Shahriyar Moghanlou has officially completed his move to Tractor after parting ways with UAE side Kalba.

Following weeks of speculation, Tractor finally confirmed the signing of the 31-year-old forward with a teaser animation before unveiling him as the club's latest summer recruit. Moghanlou becomes the fourth major addition to Mohammad Rabiei's squad after Hadi Habibinejad, Mohammad Daneshgar and Parsa Jafari, and is expected to replace former Croatian striker Domagoj Drozdek in the attacking line.

Moghanlou returns to the Iranian Pro League after an impressive spell with Kalba. Having won back-to-back Golden Boot awards during his time at Sepahan, he spent two seasons in the UAE, where he established himself as a regular starter. He also retained his place in the Iranian national team and featured in all three of Iran's matches at the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Interestingly, Moghanlou recorded identical statistics in each of his two seasons at Kalba, finishing both campaigns with eight goals and two assists.

The experienced striker had been linked with several top Iranian clubs in recent weeks, but Tractor ultimately won the race for his signature, securing one of the stand-out signings of the summer transfer window. Moghanlou left Sepahan after scoring 16 league goals in his final season and now returns to the Persian Gulf Pro League determined to reclaim the Golden Boot.

Over the course of his career, Moghanlou has scored 46 goals for Sepahan, 23 for Malavan, 18 for Peykan, 17 for Kalba, eight for Persepolis and one for Portuguese side Santa Clara.

His arrival is considered a major boost for Tractor, especially after Persepolis failed to sign him last summer despite making a strong push, including club president Reza Darvish's trip to Dubai.

Traditional clothing of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari: A rainbow of ethnic heritage

From Page 1 ► The enduring attachment of local people to their traditional attire is evident in the continued demand for these garments despite rising production costs and broader economic pressures. Interest has remained strong not only within Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari but also in other Iranian provinces and among international admirers.

Traditional women's clothing is especially prevalent in the counties of Lordegan, Khanmirza, Kuhrang, Ardal, Farsan, and Borujen, where large Bakhtiari and Qashqai populations reside. The craft has developed into an active local industry, with workshops throughout the province producing garments for domestic and foreign customers.

The cost of a traditional outfit varies according to the design, the quantity and quality of fabric, and the complexity of decorative work. To support producers, local authorities have offered low-interest loans for rural and nomadic artisans, facilitated participation in national and international exhibitions, simplified licensing procedures, and provided assistance with insurance and raw-material supply.

Traditional clothing from Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, particularly women's attire, has attracted growing interest abroad, and producers receive orders from various countries. However, because many garments are sold through informal channels or transported as personal luggage, the exact value of exports remains difficult to measure.

Experts have called for greater involvement by Iranian textile manufacturers in producing fabrics and raw materials specifically suited to traditional clothing. The use of local-



ly produced natural materials could improve quality, expand variety, and strengthen the sustainability of this cultural industry.

One of the most significant challenges facing producers is the rising cost of gold and other raw materials. Gold has traditionally been used in the lachak (headdress) of Bakhtiari women and in the crown-like adornments of Qashqai women's dress. As prices have increased, many artisans have turned to gold-colored substitutes while attempting to preserve the traditional appearance of the garments.

Despite these challenges, enthusiasm for traditional clothing has not diminished among Bakhtiari, Qashqai, and other local communities. The higher cost of fabrics and decorative materials has affected foreign

orders and purchases from other provinces, but local demand remains resilient.

Although all ethnic groups of the province wear traditional clothing, regional variations appear in the choice of fabrics, patterns, and decorative details. The attire of the Bakhtiari and Qashqai communities is often regarded as the most elaborate and visually striking.

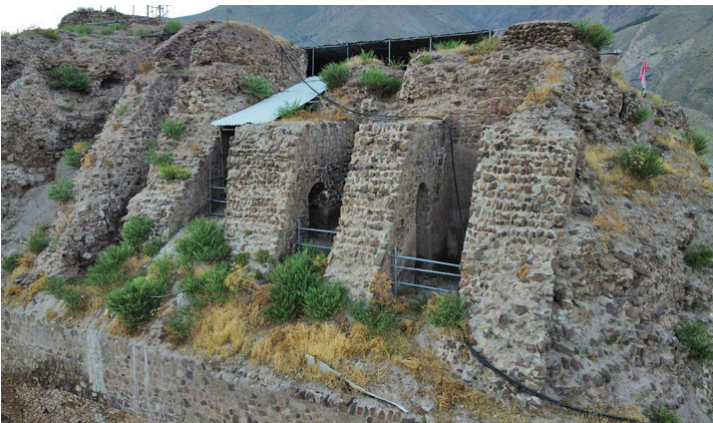
A defining feature of these garments is their harmony with the province's lush mountain landscape. Bright, cheerful colors dominate the designs, while embellishments such as embroidery, coin work, beadwork, filigree, and metallic-thread decoration add richness and individuality.

Beyond clothing, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari is also renowned for a

wide range of handicrafts and traditional arts, including felt making, hat making, lock making, khatam inlay work, givesh shoemaking, kilim weaving, chogha weaving, jajim weaving, blacksmithing, traditional design, pottery, wood lattice work, wood-turning, traditional jewelry making, filigree embroidery, stone carving, metal engraving, dyeing, plaster-work, and knitting.

Located in southwestern Iran, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari is known for its rugged Zagros Mountains, glaciers, nomadic heritage, and the high-altitude city of Shahrekord, Iran's highest provincial capital. The province's traditional clothing stands as one of its most enduring cultural symbols, linking the natural landscape, tribal traditions, and artistic legacy of the region.

Research suggests Alamut Castle's role extended beyond military functions



contained scientific books and astronomical instruments, including armillary spheres, full and half astrolabes and other devices used for astronomical calculations.

The presence of such instruments in a mountain fortress with a defensive function suggests that astronomy and cosmology held an important place in the Ismaili intellectual tradition, Majidi said, while cautioning that the evidence was insufficient to prove the existence of a formal observatory.

"No definitive report has yet emerged regarding an observation tower, regular astronomical obser-

vation programs or the compilation of astronomical tables at Alamut itself," he said.

Majidi also referred to archaeological discoveries at the site, including a room with unusual architectural features and an opening toward the sky. Some researchers have proposed that the space may have been connected to observational activities, though he said further study and documentation were needed.

He cited the presence of the Persian polymath Nasir al-Din al-Tusi among the Ismailis as another indication of Alamut's scholarly role. Tusi spent about 35 years in the Ismaili environ-

ment and composed or revised several major works on logic, philosophy, mathematics and astronomy during that period, Majidi said.

Among the works associated with that period are Sharh al-Isharat, Tahrir al-Majisti and Tahrir Uqlidis, which Majidi said indicate that Tusi had access to extensive scientific resources and suitable conditions for research.

"The collection of evidence – from the famous library of Alamut and the astronomical instruments reported by Juvayni to the scholarly activities of Nasir al-Din al-Tusi – strengthens the hypothesis that Alamut was a center of knowledge, thought and scientific production during the Ismaili period," he said.

Majidi added that continued archaeological excavations, interdisciplinary research and renewed examination of historical sources could reveal further aspects of Alamut's scientific and cultural identity.

The Cultural Landscape of Alamut, nominated for UNESCO World Heritage status, comprises seven strongholds and related fortifications associated with the Nizari Ismaili state of the 11th to 13th centuries.

Tourism delegation from Afghanistan visits Iran's barberry capital to expand cooperation

TEHRAN — Tourism officials in Iran's South Khorasan province introduced the village of Afín, known as the world's capital of seedless barberry, to tourism industry representatives from Afghanistan's Herat and Farah provinces during a two-day familiarization tour aimed at strengthening cross-border tourism cooperation, a provincial official said on Saturday.

Mohammad Arab, deputy for tourism at the South Khorasan provincial tourism department, said the tour was organized to promote tourism diplomacy, showcase the province's tourism assets and create opportunities for cross-border cooperation between Iran and Afghanistan.

The Afghan delegation visited Afín village to explore its natural, agricultural and cultural attractions as part of the program, according to Arab.

Arab said Afín, located in eastern Iran, has potential for agricultural tourism, ecotourism and rural tourism due to its role as a major producer of seedless barberry.

He said the participation of Afghan tourism professionals would help introduce the village's tourism offerings to regional markets and support tourism cooperation between the two neighboring countries.

During the tour, the visitors were introduced to the cultivation and production process of seedless barberry, traditional farming methods, the village's natural attractions, its historic rural fabric and the capacity of its eco-lodges, Arab said.

He added that promoting Afín's internationally recognized barberry brand among Afghan tourism operators could encourage tourist arrivals,

strengthen cultural exchanges, increase sales of local products, support handicraft markets and benefit farmers and tourism businesses in the area.

Arab said the development of agricultural tourism in villages such as Afín forms part of the South Khorasan tourism department's strategy to diversify tourism products, promote sustainable development and introduce the province's regional brands to international markets.

Iran is the world's largest producer of barberry. South Khorasan accounts for about 97% of the country's barberry cultivation area and produces around 95% of global barberry output. The counties of Zirkuh and Qaenat are the main production centers, with Qaenat barberry regarded as one of the region's leading agricultural products.

Refugees benefiting from UNIDO solar projects in Torbat-e Jam

TEHRAN – Funded by the Government of the Republic of Korea and in partnership with the Center for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (CAFIA), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) implemented a project in Torbat-e Jam settlement, expanding its solar energy capacity, creating economic, environmental and social benefits for both Afghan refugees and the surrounding host community.

Torbat-e Jam, a refugee settlement in north-eastern Iran, is demonstrating how renewable energy can improve daily life while supporting national sustainability efforts.

The solar power expansion has significantly improved essential services, cut emissions, and supported sustainable development for refugees and hosts, the UN website announced in a press release on July 15.

The initiative is part of the project Scaling up Sustainable Settlements for Afghan Refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran, which aims to improve living conditions, expand access to sustainable infrastructure and strengthen livelihood opportunities for refugees while supporting local communities.

Building on the achievements of the project's first phase, UNIDO expanded the settlement's photovoltaic power plant from 52.25 kilowatts to 200 kilowatts. The upgraded facility became operational in July 2025, enabling the settlement to generate sub-



stantially more clean electricity from one of the country's most abundant natural resources: sunshine.

The results have been immediate. Within one year, electricity drawn from the national grid declined by nearly 36 per cent, while peak electricity demand fell by almost 60 per cent. These improvements have lowered energy costs for settlement management, reduced pressure on the national electricity network during periods of high demand, and helped provide a more reliable power supply for schools, health facilities and other community services.

The environmental benefits are equally significant. Each year, the expanded solar plant is expected to generate approximately 432 megawatt-hours of clean electricity, avoiding an estimated 285 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions. It will also reduce natural

gas consumption and save water that would otherwise be used in conventional electricity generation—an important contribution in the arid climate of Torbat-e Jam.

Beyond the technology itself, the project is investing in people. UNIDO organized hands-on training for settlement personnel on operating and maintaining the photovoltaic system, helping build local technical expertise and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the investment. The training also strengthens community ownership of the system and equips participants with practical skills that can support future employment opportunities.

“The training gave us hands-on skills and confidence to maintain and optimize the PV system,” said Mohsen, a 29-year-old participant. “I can already see how our teamwork makes power more reliable for our families and com-

munity services.”

The solar expansion also contributes to Iran's efforts to increase the use of renewable energy, which can simultaneously advance humanitarian assistance, environmental sustainability, and national development priorities.

As the project continues, the experience in Torbat-e Jam offers a strong foundation for scaling similar interventions across other refugee settlements in Iran. With continued collaboration among UNIDO, CAFIA, Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA), the Government of the Republic of Korea, and national and local partners, this initiative offers a replicable model for delivering reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy solutions that strengthen both refugee communities and their hosts while advancing national climate and development goals.

IRCS urges intl. community to hold US accountable for targeting civilian infrastructure

TEHRAN – The head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society, Pirhossein Kolivand, has condemned the recent US attacks on the country's civilian infrastructure, urging the international community to conduct prompt, independent, impartial, and effective investigations to hold perpetrators accountable for their war crimes.

Documented reports and information received from reliable authorities highlight that these attacks have not only resulted in casualties and financial loss for civilians, but also targeted a wide range of properties, facilities, and vital infrastructures used by the public, Kolivand said in a statement, the IRCS website reported.

The US forces have deliberately targeted wheat storage facilities in Hoveyzeh, mineral water facility production in Musian, Dehloran, the desalination plant in the Bomi district, Sirik County, environmental protection station in Haji-abad, communication regulatory authority in Bandar Abbas, Kish harbor, Kish search and rescue station, fishing and commercial piers in Sirik county, fishing pier in Bandar Abbas, Hengam Island, telecommunication tower in Qeshm Island, the wastewater treatment plant at the Bandar Abbas Bird Garden, railways in Khorasan Razavi and Golestan, the fishing pier in Asaluyeh, Tohid-Jam airport, Semnan Airport, and facilities adjacent to Ahvaz hospital.

Attacks on civilian infrastructure, including water treatment facilities, food storage and distribution centers, ports, transport networks, communication systems, and environmental protection facilities, disrupt public access to essential services, which jeopardize fundamental rights such as the right to life, health, access to drinking water, food security, communication, and a healthy environment.

All these crimes had happened a few months into the US brutal attacks on Minab, martyring innocent children, parents, and teachers, which the US authorities have refused to shoulder the responsibility and its consequences. The issue has raised serious concerns over adherence to fundamental rules of IHL and the heightened risks facing the civilian population.

The statement underlines that under IHL, deliberate or indiscriminate attacks against civilians, civilian property, and facilities are prohibited. States and military forces are required to direct their military operations exclusively against military objectives, in accordance with the fundamental principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution.

Referring to the US president's recent statements threatening to bombard bridges and other civilian infrastructure, Kolivand underscored that the threats are a clear violation of fundamental requirements of IHL, international obligations of states, and exacerbate concerns over the safety and lives of civilians.

Recalling the obligation outlined in Common Article 1 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, ‘to respect and ensure respect’ for IHL, the statement urges the states Parties to the Geneva Conventions, the United Nations, the UN Human Rights Council, the International Committee of the Red Cross, relevant international and regional organizations, and international civil society not to remain silent in the face of reports on alleged violations of IHL and to take effective measures to ensure compliance with the rules of IHL, the protection of civilians, and the safeguarding of civilian property and infrastructures.

US committing ‘heinous war crimes’ in Iran

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.

“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.

ANF Summit: Iran puts forward proposals to foster regional co-op

TEHRAN – Iran has offered three proposals to expand regional cooperation in advanced technologies, human capital development, and international standardization at the Asia Nano Forum (ANF) Summit, held in Hsinchu, Taiwan, on July 16 and 17.

ANF Summit 2026 brought together representatives from member states, including Japan, South Korea, Iran, Taiwan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Chinese Taipei, and Vietnam. The Iranian delegation attended the meeting online, IRNA reported.

Held annually, the summit aims to examine evolving technology trends, foster scientific and industrial cooperation, and develop joint regional programs. This year, it was held concurrently with the Taiwan Nano-medicine Society's annual meeting.

Iran's first proposal focused on boosting regional collaborations in micro and nano-electronics. The country proposed that the universities, research centers, and leading industries of the member states establish a network to implement joint development research projects, exchange experts, and organize scientific events.

Also, the Transformative Technologies Symposium was offered to be held in 2027 with the participation of member states. The symposium will focus on topics like neuromorphic computing, smart sensors, bio-electronics, and emerging technologies in smart mobility; it will provide a platform for knowledge exchange and the development of technological collaborations among Asian countries.

The country's second proposal concentrates on education and human capital development. Drawing on Iran's successful experience in designing and organizing the International Nanotechnology Olympiad for High School Students (INO-HS), ANF members were invited to actively participate in organizing the future editions of the event.

As the permanent secretariat of the International Nanotechnology Student Olympiad, Iran invited member states to attend the third edition of the event, which is scheduled to be held from December 6 to 12 in Chinese Taipei, to help identify top talents, enhance specialized training, and foster a network of young nanotechnology elites across Asia.

The third proposal emphasized the expansion of regional cooperation in the development of international ISO standards for nanotechnology. Iran suggested three specific topics for the development of international standards:

1. A standard for technical specifications and performance evaluation methods for graphene and other two-dimensional materials in energy storage systems, aimed at establishing unified criteria for the assessment of the quality of these materials
2. A standard for the specifications and



test methods of thermal-insulating nano-coatings, aimed at harmonizing the performance and durability assessment methods for these products, and

3. A guide to the application of fine and ultrafine bubble technology in aquaculture, aimed at expanding the use of the technology to boost productivity and improve the quality of water within the aquaculture industry.

These proposals reflect Iran's approach to the enhancement of regional cooperation, development of strategic technologies, and human capital, as well as constructive contribution to developing international standards. Laying the basis for conducting joint projects, these initiatives will help strengthen the position of Asian nations within the global nanotechnology ecosystem.

Nanotech progress in Iran beyond just a scientific achievement

With over 430 companies operating in the nanotechnology sector and more than 1,960 nanotech products receiving nanoscale certificates, the advancement of the nanotechnology sector in the country proves to be more than just a scientific achievement.

Relying on domestic capacity, nanotechnology in Iran is not merely measured by scientific rankings and published articles, but by products that have been manufactured and entered the industry and the market, IRNA reported.

The total sale of these products amounts to over 970 trillion rials (about 554 million dollars), indicating that the scientific achievement has become an economic and industrial capacity.

Nanotechnology in the country is a typical example of the successful development of a tech ecosystem. From the very beginning, a long-term roadmap was developed to strengthen all aspects of the technology development chain, from education and research to commercialization and market development.

Over the past years, the role of Nano headquarters has not been limited to macro-policy-making, but has included fostering coordination among universities, research institutes, industries, knowledge-based companies, and supporting institutions.

Establishing a strategic technological laboratory network, developing standards for the evaluation of Nano products, supporting start-up companies, and designing industrial programs are among the factors that help transfer nanotechnology from laboratories to the country's industries.

Over 80 earthquakes hit Iran in a week

TEHRAN – A total of 83 earthquakes have been recorded across the country in a week from July 3 to 10, according to the seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran.

Statistically, 71 earthquakes with magnitudes smaller than 3, 10 earthquakes with a magnitude between 3 and 4, and two earthquakes with a magnitude between 4 and 5 have occurred in the country, irsc reported.

Of the total quakes, one had a magnitude of 4.1 on the Richter scale, which occurred on July 10 in Kerman province.

Among the provinces of the country, Khorasan Razavi experienced the highest number of earthquakes, with 10, followed by Semnan, Kerman, and Fars each with 8, and Mazandaran with 7 earthquakes.

During the same period, three earthquakes were recorded in Tehran. No earthquakes were recorded in Alborz, Khuzestan, Zanjan, Sistan-Baluchestan, Qom, Qazvin, Kordestan, Markazi, and Hamedan provinces.

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

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

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

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



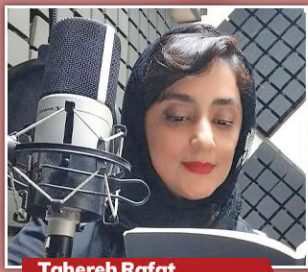
JULY 19, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

When you get ill do not get nervous about it and try as much as possible to be hopeful.
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:11 Evening: 19:39 Dawn: 3:22 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:03 (tomorrow)

Avaye Chirok releases audio edition of “Aafrat”



Tahereh Rafat



Bahman Vakhshour



TEHRAN — The audiobook version of Iranian writer Tahereh Rafat’s novel “Aafrat” has recently been released.

Produced and published by the Avaye Chirok, a major institute that produces audiobooks in Iran, the work features the voices of Bahman Vakhshour and the author herself.

Based on the print edition previously published by Shalgardan Publications, “Aafrat” is a nuanced exploration of an ostensibly ordinary life. Rather than relying on grand plot twists or dramatic events, the narrative delves into the psychological depths of its protagonist, focusing on the silent turmoil and intricate emotions that simmer beneath the surface of daily existence.

The story follows a woman who spends much of her time in solitude, confined within the narrow parameters of her own life. She finds herself trapped in an ambiguous relationship—one that has neither fully blossomed nor completely dis-

solved—leaving her in a state of emotional limbo.

As the narrative unfolds through a series of repetitive days, the protagonist begins to scrutinize her own behaviors and choices. Simple acts, such as smoking, pacing the house, or staring out at the street, become conduits for deep introspection. Gradually, fragments of the past emerge, revealing relationships and events that continue to haunt and shape her present.

The tension of the novel lies in the protagonist’s precarious position on the threshold between complacency and change. The story progresses organically, driven by the internal decisions she makes—or fails to make—rather than sudden external shocks.

The audiobook production was managed by Bahman Vakhshour, with editing and sound design handled by Hasti Sadeqi, with a total runtime of 4 hours and 38 minutes.

Cartoon of Day



Lamine Yamal
Cartoonist: Gilmar Fraga from Brazil

Sohrab Sepehri’s painting breaks all-time sales record of Tehran Auction

TEHRAN – The 25th Tehran Auction, titled “Modern, Classic, and Traditional Iranian Art,” was held on the evening of Friday, July 17, at the Parsian Azadi Hotel in Tehran, recording a total sale of more than 464 billion Tomans (over \$2.4 million).

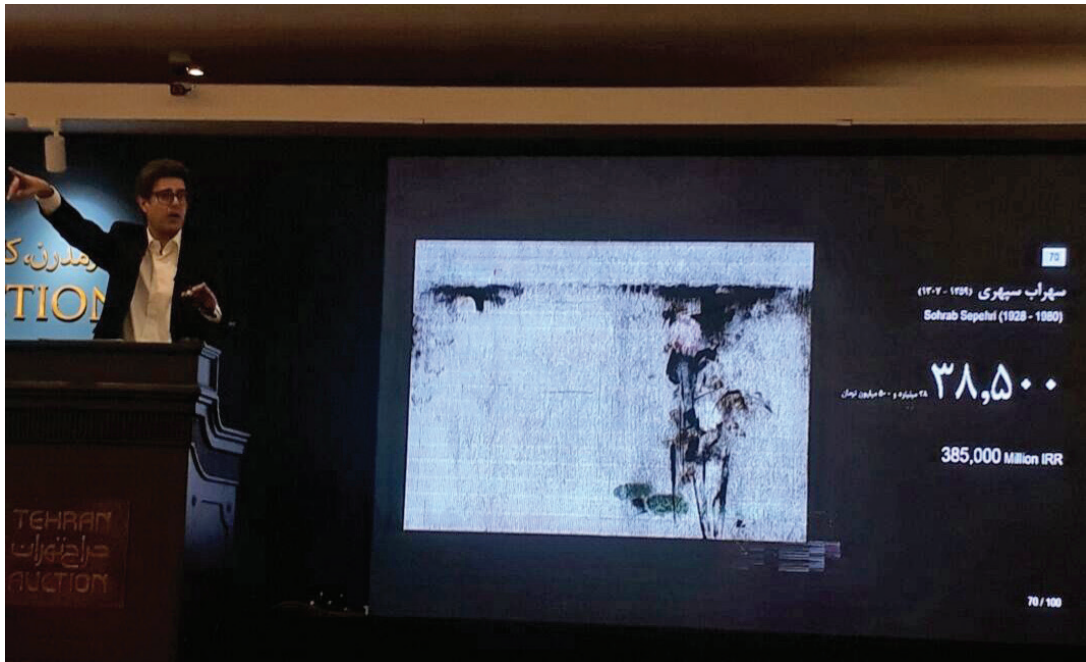
In this edition, Sohrab Sepehri emerged as the artist with the most expensive work, setting a new record for the auction, IRNA reported.

In the 25th edition, 100 works by 80 artists were presented for sale. The total value of the works in this auction was estimated at a base price range between 354 and 423 billion Tomans (\$1.86 million to \$2.23 million). In total, 96 out of the 100 works were sold for 464 billion and 266 million Tomans (\$2.44 million) amidst fierce competition among art collectors.

The most expensive piece in this edition was Sohrab Sepehri’s work titled “High Horizon,” which had a base price of 27.5 billion Tomans (\$145,000) and sold for 38.5 billion Tomans (\$203,000), breaking the all-time sales record for the 25 editions of the Tehran Auction.

Sohrab Sepehri was an Iranian artist known for his painting that often depicted nature. He was associated with the modernist movement. Born in 1928 in Kashan, Isfahan province, he pursued his education at the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Tehran.

In the 1960s, Sepehri began painting stark close ups of tree trunks—which perfectly combined Western modernism and Japanese



Sohrab Sepehri’s “High Horizon,” was sold for 38.5 billion Tomans (\$203,000), breaking the all-time sales record for the 25 editions of the Tehran Auction.

minimalism into a Persian aesthetics. The tree paintings have become iconic canvases in the Iranian modernist canon.

To Sepehri, trees symbolized munificence and permanence in a world tainted by malevolence. Tree trunks served as icons of abundant strength. His fascination in depicting sections of the trunk, rather than the entirety of the tree, was intentional and draws on Taoist principle of absolute truth.

In his works, it is the imagery that is not depicted which alludes to the mystery of a unified cosmos while reflecting the limits of our perception. Sepehri passed away in 1980 in Tehran.

Following Sepehri, a piece by calligrapher-painter Mohammad Ehsaei titled “Affection,” with a base price of 27.5 billion Tomans (\$145,000), was hammered at 33.5 billion Tomans (\$176,000), marking the second-highest record in the auction’s history.

Of the total works, only six female artists — Parvaneh Etemadi, Bahjat Sadr, Farideh Lashai, Lili Matin-Daftari, Elaheh Khatami, and Leila Barzegar Yarmohammadi — were represented with a total of 8 works, constituting a negligible share of female representation in the Tehran Auction.

The most expensive female artist of the 25th auction was Lili

Matin-Daftari, whose untitled work reached a sale price of 8.2 billion Tomans (\$43,0000, up from a base price of 6.8 billion Tomans (\$36,000).

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

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

Culture Minister proposes cataloging of manuscript collections in Iran, Kyrgyzstan

TEHRAN – During his official visit to Kyrgyzstan, Iran’s Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi visited the National Library of Kyrgyzstan and met with the library’s director, Eldar Attokurov, proposing that a precise cataloging of the manuscript collections in both countries be conducted.

In the meeting, which focused on cultural and academic exchanges, Sahehi emphasized the importance of identifying and utilizing the valuable treasures of Persian manuscripts housed in Kyrgyz libraries, IRNA reported.

“The first step is for us to at least see each other’s catalogs to determine in which areas we can gain new information regarding the

available manuscripts,” he noted.

Salehi, while pointing to the necessity of utilizing modern technologies in library management, stated, “Currently, with the environment provided by new technologies and the capabilities of artificial intelligence, the process of searching and accessing data can be significantly expedited.”

The Iranian Minister asserted that by using advanced tools, information regarding manuscripts could be extracted with higher speed and precision and made available to researchers worldwide.

Eldar Attokurov welcomed the Iranian Minister’s proposals and emphasized the im-

portance of preserving written heritage and strengthening joint cooperation between the two countries.

Following the discussions, various strategies for further interaction between the two institutions were proposed.

The National Library of the Kyrgyz Republic is the legal deposit and copyright agency for Kyrgyzstan. Founded in 1934, it has a collection of 6 million documents in 89 languages from around the world. Some of the primary functions of the National Library in Kyrgyzstan are preserving the cultural wealth and traditions of the peoples of our country, collecting and accumulating human knowledge.

Kiarostami commemoration highlights art diplomacy as tool for international relations

TEHRAN- A special commemoration event honoring the late master filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami, titled “Abbas Kiarostami: Beyond Borders,” was held on Thursday at the Cinema Museum of Iran.

The event aimed to examine the global standing of Kiarostami’s cinematic legacy and introduce a new approach to art diplomacy to enhance international relations through culture and the arts, Mehr reported.

Organized by the Nations’ Diplomacy Think Tank and coinciding with the launch of its Art Diplomacy Department, the ceremony was attended by museum officials, prominent artistic figures, members of the press, and cultural attachés from Japan, Italy, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, the United Kingdom, Malaysia, and Romania, the report added.

Fatemeh Mohammadi, Director of the Cinema Museum of Iran, referred to Kiarostami as the “Master of Poetic Cinema,” noting that the event served as an opportunity to further introduce the global artist to new audiences.

Addressing the strategic goals of the gathering, Seyyed Mohammad Ali Seyyed Hanai, President of the Nations Diplomacy Think Tank, stated that the Art Diplomacy Department was established to create a sustainable platform for dialogue between diplomats and artists. He emphasized that in the

modern era, art serves as a universal language and a form of “soft power” capable of bridging political divides and humanizing diplomacy. He described Kiarostami as a “passport-less ambassador” whose authenticity and humanism projected a profound image of Iran to the world.

In the artistic analysis segment, Seyyed Mohammad Beheshti described the contribution of Iranian cinema to the world as “cinematic poetry,” naming Kiarostami its most significant poet. Recalling an incident from 1999, Beheshti explained how the then-foreign minister of Saudi Arabia’s admiration for “Taste of Cherry” turned a brief 20-minute meeting into a four-hour discussion on Iranian cinema, citing this as a concrete example of art diplomacy in action.

Ebrahim Haqiqi, analyzing Kiarostami’s cinematic elements, suggested that the zigzagging roads prevalent in his films symbolize the human struggle for transcendence and love, noting the Khayyam-like intellectual dialogues and human subtleties in his work.

Furthermore, Seifollah Samadian distinguished Kiarostami’s cinema from commercial streams, such as Hollywood, by its enduring impact. He attributed this vision to Kiarostami’s active inner child, which allowed him to perceive the world through a unique lens.

Concluding the event, Shadmehr Rastin remarked on the global academic presence of Kiarostami’s work in the textbooks of developed nations, expressing regret over the lack of such cinematic discourse in Iranian educational texts. He extended his gratitude to the attending cultural attachés and ambassadors, acknowledging that diplomatic support plays a vital role in facilitating the presence of Iranian filmmakers at international festivals.

Abbas Kiarostami (1940 – 2016) was an Iranian film director, screenwriter, poet, photographer, and film producer. An active filmmaker from 1970, Kiarostami had been involved in the production of over 40 films, including shorts and documentaries.

Kiarostami attained critical acclaim for directing the “Koker” trilogy (1987–1994), “Close-Up” (1990), “The Wind Will Carry Us” (1999), and “Taste of Cherry” (1997), which was awarded the Palme d’Or at the Cannes Film Festival that year.

In later works, “Certified Copy” (2010) and “Like Someone in Love” (2012), he filmed for the first time outside Iran: in Italy and Japan, respectively.

His films “Where Is the Friend’s House?” (1987), “Close-Up,” and “The Wind Will Carry Us” were ranked among the 100 best foreign films in a 2018 critics’ poll

by BBC Culture. “Close-Up” was also ranked one of the 50 greatest movies of all time in the famous decennial Sight & Sound poll conducted in 2012. He is widely regarded as one of the greatest and most influential filmmakers of Iran, and of all time.

Kiarostami had worked extensively as a screenwriter, film editor, art director, and producer and had designed credit titles and publicity material. He was also a poet, photographer, painter, illustrator, and graphic designer. He was part of a generation of filmmakers in the Iranian New Wave, a Persian cinema movement that started in the late 1960s and emphasized the use of poetic dialogue and allegorical storytelling dealing with political and philosophical issues.

Kiarostami had a reputation for using child protagonists, for documentary-style narrative films, for stories that take place in rural villages, and for conversations that unfold inside cars, using stationary mounted cameras. He is also known for his use of Persian poetry in the dialogue, titles, and themes of his films. Kiarostami’s films contain a notable degree of ambiguity, an unusual mixture of simplicity and complexity, and often a mix of fictional and documentary elements. The concepts of change and continuity, in addition to the themes of life and death, play a major role in Kiarostami’s works.