

Yemen declares naval blockade on Saudi Arabia in response to ‘oppressive siege’

Yemen announced on Monday it was imposing a naval blockade on Saudi Arabia, a move that opens a new front against the United States in its war on Iran and widens the threat to global oil supplies and trade beyond the Persian Gulf.

In the statement, Yemen's armed forces said they were declaring “a maritime embargo against the criminal Saudi enemy, based on the equation of ‘an eye for an eye’, effective immediately...”

They said the decision was in response to “an unjust and oppressive siege” imposed on Yemen by the Saudis, NBC News reported.

There was no immediate response from Saudi Arabia. ▶ [Page 5](#)

Khalil al-Hayya named new Hamas leader

Hamas has named senior figure Khalil al-Hayya as its new leader, the Palestinian resistance group announced on Monday.

The veteran figure replaces former leader Yahya Sinwar, who was killed in battle by Israeli occupation forces in October 2024.

Hayya has long been one of Hamas’ top leaders living abroad, and has been a central figure in negotiations over the past three years.

Sinwar was killed on October 17, 2024, during direct combat with the Israeli army in Rafah, southern Gaza. ▶ [Page 5](#)

Fate of Palestinians in Gaza: emigration or death?

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – It is impossible to say with confidence that Palestinians in Gaza can endure much longer without solutions that remain nowhere in sight.

This raises troubling questions about what the Gaza Strip's future will look like if the current humanitarian catastrophe continues unabated.

More than a thousand days after the genocidal war, the overpopulated and tiny enclave is experiencing a humanitarian disaster on every level. Humanitarian workers say the reality has become so devastating that it is nearly impossible to convey to anyone who is not living inside the Strip.

Statistics reveal only part of the bleak picture. These numbers alone cannot capture the true depth of the suffering. ▶ [Page 5](#)

Iranian students win six medals at Intl. Mathematical Olympiad

TEHRAN – Iran grabbed two gold medals, one silver medal, and three bronze medals at the 67th International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO) held on July 15 and 16 in Shanghai, China.

Alireza Joonbakhsh-Najafabadi and Alireza Sharifi won the gold medals, Amirhossein Tayyeb clinched the silver medal, and Arsha Azizeddin, Radin Nik-Eqbali, and Arian Zandi received the bronze medals, IRIB reported.

The IMO is the World Championship Mathematics Competition for high school students and is held annually in a different country. The first IMO was held in 1959 in Romania, with 7 countries participating. It has gradually expanded to over 100 countries from 5 continents. The IMO Board ensures that the competition takes place each year and that each host country observes the regulations and traditions of the IMO. ▶ [Page 7](#)



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IRGC Vows ‘Unforgettable Lesson’ for US

Two US soldiers killed in Jordan were identified as Iran escalates strikes, raising total US war deaths to 17.

By Mahmoud M. Ravi-Nejad

TEHRAN — Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) on Monday vowed to deliver an “unforgettable lesson” to the United States, while announcing a series of military operations and maritime security measures amid escalating tensions across the Persian Gulf and neighboring countries.

Brigadier General Ahmad Vahidi, commander-in-chief of the IRGC, said Iran would respond decisively to continued US aggression against the country.

Addressing a recent strategic message by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, Vahidi said the IRGC would not “tie the destiny of this land to the promises of a child-killing enemy whose record is

IRGC would not “tie the destiny of this land to the promises of a child-killing enemy whose record is marked by betrayal, deception, and hostility toward the Iranian nation.”

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“Now that the criminal United States has once again chosen the path of aggression, violation, and adventurism, we reaffirm this pledge: with strength, resolve, wisdom, and power, we will teach it the ‘unforgettable lesson’ that the Leader promised,” he said.

Vahidi also emphasized the importance of preserving national unity, saying the IRGC and other branches of the Armed Forces considered strengthening the do-

mestic front and preventing enemy infiltration among their most important responsibilities.

IRGC announces three-phase operation

In a separate statement, the IRGC Navy said it had carried out a coordinated three-phase operation targeting US military facilities in Bahrain and Kuwait.

According to the statement, the first phase targeted drone maintenance and repair hangars used by US forces at Al-Sakhir Air Base in Bahrain. The second phase reportedly struck facilities associated with Task Force 59 at Salman Port in Bahrain, while the third phase targeted support and equipment facilities for US special naval forces at Camp Arifjan in Kuwait. ▶ [Page 3](#)

Iran urges IAEA to condemn US nuclear site strike

TEHRAN – Iran on Monday accused the United States of deliberately targeting civilian infrastructure and peaceful nuclear facilities during its ongoing military campaign, while confirming that it has received mediation proposals aimed at reducing tensions with Washington but insisting it will continue to defend its national interests through both diplomacy and military action.

Speaking at his weekly press briefing, Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei condemned US attacks on civilian infrastructure across several Iranian provinces, saying Washington had once again exposed its “destructive logic” by targeting facilities essential to public safety and daily life. ▶ [Page 2](#)

Can Trump swallow his pride and back down from Strait of Hormuz?

TEHRAN- Nearly five months into a war that Washington arrogantly assumed would be a quick victory, the Trump administration finds itself trapped in a strategic dead end of its own making.

According to data from the prestigious American business magazine Fortune, the US president now faces a humiliating binary choice: plunge deeper into an endless quagmire reminiscent of Vietnam or Afghanistan, or capitulate and hand over effective control of the world's most vital energy artery—the Strait of Hormuz—to the very nation he vowed to crush. This is not the outcome of a strongman's masterstroke; it is the spectacle of a blundering administration outmaneuvered, outlasted, and outwitted by a far more resilient adversary. ▶ [Page 4](#)

Tehran, Minsk move to expand tourism ties

TEHRAN – Iran and Belarus are moving to strengthen tourism cooperation, with direct flights between Tehran and Minsk set to be launched after Belarus granted the necessary aviation approvals, officials from both countries said at a meeting in Tehran.

The meeting, attended by Belarusian Ambassador Dmitry Koltsov, officials from Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, the Foreign Ministry, members of parliament, representatives of the Iran Chamber of Commerce and tourism industry stakeholders, focused on expanding tourism links and removing barriers to travel between the two countries, ILNA reported on Monday.

Participants said the lack of direct flights, limited awareness of each country's tourism attractions and weak links between tourism businesses have been the main obstacles to increasing travel between Iran and Belarus.

A tourism cooperation memorandum signed by the presidents of Iran and Belarus had already established a framework for bilateral cooperation, but the absence of direct air services had remained the main challenge, the report said. ▶ [Page 6](#)



Palestinian amputee footballers gather to watch Spain in the 2026 FIFA World Cup Final in Gaza.

Palestinians celebrate Spain's World Cup victory

Hundreds of Palestinians across Gaza and the Occupied West Bank celebrated Spain's World Cup victory, gathering around makeshift screens, cheering in stadiums and taking to the streets in celebration of Spain's victory and the support its government has given to Palestine.

They gathered in cafes across different areas of the war-ravaged Gaza Strip, where large screens were set up to watch the match in an atmosphere of excitement.

With electricity cut off and individual viewing nearly impossible inside what remains of homes and tents in Gaza, many Palestinians found in these gatherings a chance to watch the match together. By the final whistle, the screenings had turned into spontaneous celebrations. ▶ [Page 5](#)

A display of power and a call for revenge



▶ [Page 3](#) Scan this QR code to watch the video.



TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Asymmetric deterrence in practice

Hamshahri pointed to Iran's strategic victory against Trump's blockade. According to the paper, Trump announced a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, but it was Iran that broke through it and showcased a strategic win to the world. Four vessels linked to Iran, as reported by the BBC, passed through the claimed blockade, while oil prices simultaneously surpassed \$100, pushing the global economy to the brink of a new shock. This was not a tactical victory but a manifestation of asymmetric deterrence in action—a strategy in which Iran, by threatening to close the Strait of Hormuz, raised the cost of war for its adversaries to such an extent that even Israeli security analysts openly admitted: “The damage to the United States and the international economy would be greater than to Iran.” The surge in oil prices and the global economy's vulnerability demonstrate Tehran's success in implementing asymmetric deterrence. Any calculation that ignores Iran's capabilities and resolve is doomed to fail.

Shargh: The US fears a major operation

Shargh devoted its editorial to Trump's miscalculation, which it argues stems from fear. The editorial states that miscalculation arises more from human psychology than intellect—either from fear or recklessness. Fear of war increases miscalculation. After the agreement, the US forced ships to pass through the lower part of the Strait of Hormuz. This move, the paper argues, was meant to test Iran's fear of renewed conflict and use that fear-induced miscalculation to permanently remove the strait from Iran's control. Similarly, the US seeks to gradually inject fear into Iranian decision-makers by slowly degrading southern infrastructure, hoping to avoid a major operation and force quicker concessions. In reality, the US itself fears a major operation because it cannot predict its consequences. Fear leads to underestimating one's own power or the impact of strikes against the enemy.

Resalat: Countdown to a new phase of conflict

In a commentary, Resalat warned of worsening wartime conditions, writing that the Middle East is experiencing one of the most volatile periods in its modern history. The attacks have entered a new, complex, and highly unpredictable phase. Field dynamics signal tougher days ahead. Military experts believe these conditions may indicate the imminent entry of the confrontation into a far more costly phase. This new phase could include the use of unknown weapons, crippling cyberattacks on vital US infrastructure

Judiciary chief: Iranian officials united against US hostility

TEHRAN — Judiciary Chief Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejei has reiterated that there is absolute alignment among the country's high-ranking officials regarding resistance against foreign hostility, dismissing any claims of internal division over the necessity of defending the nation.

The top judge made the remarks during a high-profile meeting of the Judiciary's Supreme Council on Monday, which President Masoud Pezeshkian also attended.

Emphasizing the collective resolve to counter external aggression, Mohseni-Ejei stated, “The fact that the Iranian people, driven by a profound sense of duty, remain steadfast and continue to stand firmly against an aggressive and treacherous enemy is undoubtedly a righteous stance. We, as officials, must remain resolute in upholding and reinforcing this position.”

He further underscored that the entire establishment stands as a monolithic front against external threats. “There is no disagreement whatsoever among the country's officials on this matter. Our American adversary is utterly untrustworthy. We will not back down in the face of hostility, and we will stand firm until our last breath,” the Judiciary chief added.

The head of the Judiciary clarified that

in the region, broader activation of resistance networks across West Asia, and even a complete and practical closure of the Strait of Hormuz—an apocalyptic scenario with irreversible consequences for the security and economic architecture of the region and the world. The Middle East is now holding its breath, waiting to see whether diplomacy's voice will prevail over the roar of missiles or whether the region will plunge into a full-scale regional war.

Arman-e-Melli: The secret behind the Iraqi PM's trip to Tehran

Arman-e-Melli analyzed the upcoming weekend visit of Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi to Iran. According to the paper, the visit is part of Iraq's diplomatic initiative to strengthen Baghdad's role in reducing regional tensions. Al-Zaidi will carry an Iraqi proposal aimed at helping end the ongoing military tension between Iran and the United States and opening channels of dialogue between the two sides. He presented this idea during his meeting with US President Donald Trump in Washington, where it was welcomed as a step that could help contain the crisis and prevent escalation. Al-Zaidi's initiative may pave the way for direct or indirect talks between the two sides as part of Iraq's efforts to reduce tensions and prevent further escalation that could threaten regional stability.

Etemad: The crisis is moving toward a war of attrition

Afshin Zargar, associate professor of international relations, discussed the current regional tensions in an interview with Etemad. He argued that as tensions between Tehran and Washington enter a complex phase, the main issue becomes managing pressure tools and preventing the crisis from turning into a widespread confrontation. The Strait of Hormuz, regional depth, and asymmetric capabilities remain key factors shaping both sides' calculations and can influence Persian Gulf security dynamics. In this context, the future of the crisis depends less on confrontation and more on the ability of both sides to control tensions, maintain deterrence, and prevent broader coalitions from forming. As the shadow of tension grows heavier over the Persian Gulf, the central question concerns not only the reasons for conflict but also its form and scope. Zargar emphasizes that differences in the strategic cultures of Iran and the United States could push the crisis toward a prolonged war of attrition, where geography and geopolitical leverage play decisive roles.

there is not the slightest hesitation within any branch of the establishment—particularly within the executive administration and from the president himself—about continuing the path of dignified resistance.

Describing President Pezeshkian as a sincere, devoted, and revolutionary figure, Mohseni-Ejei noted, “The president is doing everything within his power to advance what is in the best interests of Islam, Iran, and the Iranian people. The entire establishment should extend full support and cooperation to the administration.”

He added that President Pezeshkian firmly holds that the Leader's directives are final and binding, and that the country's Armed Forces must receive the strongest possible backing—a stance the Judiciary fully endorses and praises. Mohseni-Ejei's comments come amid an escalation in the direct military confrontation between Iran and the United States, following the recent breakdown of the Pakistani-mediated Islamabad memorandum of understanding. Washington resumed its campaign of targeted airstrikes against Iranian infrastructure and military facilities after accusing Tehran of violating maritime protocols in the Strait of Hormuz.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Spain's World Cup glory denies Trump and Bibi their dream finale

By Fardin Molaei

TEHRAN — The curtain fell on the 2026 FIFA World Cup in the United States with an ending that few in Washington had hoped to witness. Instead of Argentina lifting the trophy at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey, Spain emerged victorious after defeating the defending champions 1-0 in extra time, turning what many expected to be a political celebration into a night of disappointment for President Donald Trump and his closest international allies.

The tournament, jointly hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico, concluded with its most important matches—the semifinals and the final—played on American soil. Yet the image that ultimately defined the competition was not one of political triumph for the host nation but of Spain celebrating its second World Cup title, 16 years after its first.

Ferran Torres etched his name into Spanish football history with the decisive goal in extra time, ending Argentina's reign as world champions and silencing tens of thousands inside MetLife Stadium. For Lionel Messi and his teammates, who had dreamed of defending the title they captured four years earlier, it was a heartbreaking finale. Their quest to cement one of football's greatest dynasties ended with tears instead of triumph, leaving an unforgettable image of a champion forced to surrender its crown just one step from history.

Yet beyond football, the outcome carried unmistakable political symbolism.

Spain's victory represented far more than sporting success. Madrid has emerged as one of Europe's strongest critics of Israel's military campaign in Gaza and has openly op-



posed the US-Israeli military offensive against Iran. The government of Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez recognized the State of Palestine, repeatedly condemned Israeli actions in Gaza, and has sought to strengthen restrictions on arms exports to Israel.

Trump, by contrast, had repeatedly criticized Spain's foreign policy, accusing Madrid of undermining Western unity through its positions on Gaza and Iran. During recent remarks, the US president criticized Spain's refusal to align fully with Washington's Middle East strategy, portraying the Spanish government as an unreliable partner whose positions benefited America's adversaries.

Against that backdrop, Spain's triumph acquired political significance that extended well beyond the football pitch.

Throughout the tournament, Trump made no secret of his admiration for Argentina and its President Javier Milei, one of Washington's closest ideological allies. An Argentine victory on American soil would have provided a symbolic gift to Milei while reinforcing the political alignment among Buenos Aires, Washington

and Israel.

Victory for Lionel Messi's side could also have been celebrated by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Trump as a symbolic success for a network of political allies whose partnership has deepened during recent regional conflicts.

Instead, that narrative collapsed with Ferran Torres' extra-time winner.

The disappointment was compounded by the United States' own underwhelming campaign, which ended well before the decisive stages despite hosting the tournament's showcase matches.

In Tehran, however, Spain's victory prompted an entirely different reaction.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian congratulated Spain on what he described as a “well-deserved” World Cup triumph.

“The joy of the friendly nation and government of Spain is the joy of the Iranian nation and government,” Pezeshkian wrote on X.

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf also praised Spain,

Iran urges IAEA to condemn US nuclear site strike

From page 1 ► “An attack on infrastructure is not merely an attack on a few points on a map; it is an attack on human security and on people's lives,” Baqaei said, describing the strikes as evidence of a policy aimed at undermining the welfare of ordinary Iranians.

He praised residents of southern Iran as “the guardians of the Persian Gulf and the Makran coasts,” saying they had demonstrated resilience in the face of the attacks and deserved the nation's appreciation. Baqaei also commended Iran's armed forces for protecting the country while stressing that attacks on civilian infrastructure would not weaken national unity.

The spokesman also urged the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to explicitly condemn a US attack on the construction site of the Darkhovyn nuclear power plant in Khuzestan Province, calling



the strike a blatant violation of international law.

“Iran expects the IAEA Director General himself to clearly state his position in condemnation of the US crime,” Baqaei said.

He criticized the UN nuclear watchdog's silence over the incident, warning that such

inaction would further undermine Tehran's confidence in the agency.

“The essential issue is the attack on a country's peaceful nuclear facilities, which is a violation of international law,” he said, adding that the Darkhovyn project was intended solely for civilian electricity generation.

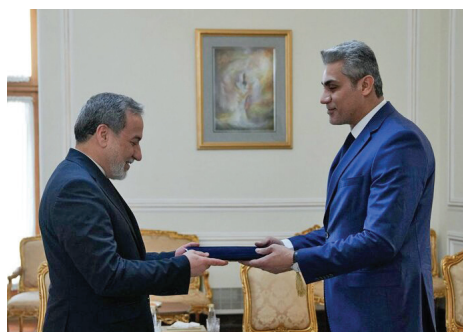
According to Baqaei, the attack demonstrated that Washington's dispute extends beyond Iran's nuclear program and instead targets the country's scientific and industrial development.

Responding to questions about Iran's future commitments under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Baqaei said Tehran remains a member of the treaty while continuously reviewing all matters related to its national interests.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

New ambassadors of Pakistan, Iraq, Sri Lanka, and Ireland present credentials to Iran's FM

TEHRAN — The newly appointed ambassadors of Pakistan, Iraq, Sri Lanka, and Ireland officially commenced their diplomatic missions in Iran on Monday, presenting copies of their credentials to Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The diplomatic arrivals mark a significant expansion of bilateral engagements for Tehran across South Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. Joining the diplomatic cohort on Monday was Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, Pakistan's newly appointed ambassador to the Islamic Republic. Siddiqui, a senior diplomat with extensive experience in multilateral cooperation, national security, and United Nations affairs, previously served as Islamabad's envoy to Bangladesh. His posting follows high-level directives from Islamabad aimed at removing bottlenecks in bilateral trade and strengthening regional connectivity along the shared border. Among the other new envoys is Yaser Abdul-Zahra al-Hajjaj, the incoming Iraqi Ambassador to Tehran. Al-Hajjaj, who previously served as Iraq's cultural attaché in Iran, assumed his duties just ahead of an expected official visit by the Iraqi Prime Minister to the Iranian capital later this week. Also presenting her credentials was Prof. Fazeeha Azmi, making history as Sri Lanka's first female ambassador to Iran. A former professor of geography at the University of Peradeniya with extensive international academic experience, Prof. Azmi outlined plans to expand bilateral



Yaser Abdul-Zahra al-Hajjaj, Iraq's newly appointed ambassador to Iran



Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, Pakistan's newly appointed ambassador to Iran

engagement in trade, employment, education, pharmaceuticals, and tourism—specifically targeting a renewal of Iranian travel to Sri Lanka. Completing the group of new appointments is Ireland's Aidan Cronin. His



Aidan Cronin, Ireland's newly appointed ambassador to Iran



Prof. Fazeeha Azmi, Sri Lanka's newly appointed ambassador to Iran

arrival signifies a notable milestone in European-Iranian relations, following Dublin's decision to restore full diplomatic normalization and station a resident ambassador in Tehran after a hiatus of more than a decade.

IRGC vows “unforgettable lesson” for US

Two US soldiers killed in Jordan were identified as Iran escalates strikes, raising total US war deaths to 17.

From Page 1 ► The IRGC added the attacks caused heavy damage and destroyed several facilities. The United States had not publicly commented on the issue at the time of publication, and the reported damage could not be independently verified.

The invading army admits its casualties

The US military on Monday identified two soldiers killed in action recently as part of the war with Iran.

The Defense Department said in a statement that 1Lt Tyler James Feehan, 25, of Ewa Beach, Hawaii, and Pvt Isabella Gonzales, 19, of Carrollton, Texas, were killed in Jordan.

On Saturday, the US Central Command said two service members were killed in Jordan while defending against Iranian ballistic missile and drone attacks.

The US military has said the total number of deaths in the war with Iran, which was started in late February, is 17.

Tensions spread across Persian Gulf and beyond

The IRGC also announced a series of operations and security developments extending beyond Bahrain, underscoring ‘an expanding regional campaign.’

In a separate statement, the Guards stated to have targeted multiple US facilities at Kuwait’s Ali Al-Salem Air Base during the 22nd phase of Operation Nasr-2. According to the statement, Iranian drones destroyed an American early-warning radar, struck a warehouse containing aircraft equipment and spare parts, and hit



a hangar housing MQ-9 drones. The IRGC also urged the Kuwaiti public to oppose the continued presence of US forces in the country.

The IRGC has also taken responsibility for ballistic missile strikes against US military assets in Jordan, saying C-17 transport aircraft and P-8 surveillance planes were targeted at Aqaba Airport during the 21st phase of the operation. It further added that earlier intelligence had enabled strikes on shelters housing US personnel at Al-Azraq Air Base.

Meanwhile, regional tensions were heightened by reports of four explosions off the coast of Ras Al Khaimah in the United Arab Emirates. Initial Arab media reports suggested vessels operating in the area may have been targeted, although Emirati officials had released no details at the time of publication.

In neighboring Iraq, explosions were reported in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah, prompting warning sirens at the US consulate in Erbil. Iraqi media also reported drone activity over Sulaymaniyah.

Strait of Hormuz warning

Iran also issued a warning regarding maritime traffic in the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world’s most important energy transit routes.

The IRGC said two oil tankers exploded and were disabled after attempting to use ‘an unauthorized and unsafe route’ through the southern part of the strait.

According to the statement, the vessels had been encouraged by the United States to use the route. The IRGC warned that any future violations would face punitive measures and said continued US military actions in the region would make the passage unsafe for the transit of oil, gas, and other cargo.

Escalating regional confrontation

The latest developments come amid a sharp deterioration in relations between Tehran and Washington following months of military confrontation, mutual accusations, and disputes over maritime security in the Persian Gulf.

Iran has accused the United

States of violating a war-termination understanding and of carrying out attacks on Iranian territory and civilian infrastructure. Washington has not publicly responded to the latest IRGC statements.

At the same time, military and strategic analysts have increasingly warned that a prolonged confrontation between Iran and the United States could rapidly evolve into a wider regional conflict with consequences extending far beyond the Persian Gulf. They argue that any sustained escalation would heighten the risk of miscalculation, draw additional regional actors into the conflict, and threaten critical maritime corridors through which a significant share of the world’s energy supplies passes.

Security experts also caution that an expanded conflict could place US military installations and personnel across the Middle East under greater pressure while disrupting global energy markets, international shipping, and commercial supply chains. Such a scenario, they say, would carry substantial economic and geopolitical costs not only for the immediate parties to the conflict but also for Europe, Asia, and other regions dependent on stability in the Persian Gulf.

Many defense specialists contend that preventing further escalation remains in the strategic interest of all sides. They warn that once a conflict spreads across multiple fronts, political leaders may find it increasingly difficult to control its trajectory, raising the prospect of a broader confrontation with unpredictable consequences and far greater costs than the current crisis.

just and unacceptable—it cannot and will not be allowed to continue.”

He firmly reasserted Iran’s sovereign authority and strategic control over the critical maritime chokepoint, issuing a stern warning to complicit regional regimes.

“Countries that have aided the US terrorist military in its illegal acts of aggression will undoubtedly face severe consequences when navigating the Strait of Hormuz,” he warned. “We will never allow military hardware or equipment intended for use against the Iranian people to pass through these waters.”

tanker north of Kuzmar, Oman. It had been stranded for months in the offshore of Saudi Arabia.

■ Canada urges US and Iran to ‘exercise restraint’

Foreign Minister Anita Anand called on Tehran and Washington to pursue dialogue and ensure the safety of civilians during ongoing hostilities between the two sides.

Speaking alongside Pakistani counterpart Ishaq Dar in Islamabad, Anand said Canada is concerned about attacks on civilian infrastructure, particularly water desalination plants.

“We are troubled by the attacks on civilian infrastructure, including power and water desalination facilities, which place the civilian population at risk,” she said.

■ Iran’s ‘national interests’ fully covered in deal with US, says president

President Masoud Pezeshkian says the memorandum of understanding signed with the US largely favors Iran.

“In none of the 14 clauses ... have we backed down from our rights, principles, national interests, revolutionary values, and beliefs,” he said.

“A major part of the achievements has been in favor of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and practically no clause can be found that has created a unilateral benefit for the American side,” Pezeshkian said.

■ Iran’s interior minister arrives in Islamabad with president’s message

Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni departed for Islamabad on Monday at the head of a high-ranking delegation to hold bilateral talks with his Pakistani counterpart, Seyed Mohsin Naqvi.

Following his engagements in Pakistan, Momeni will travel to New Delhi, India, at the invitation of his Indian counterpart. The minister is scheduled to attend the BRICS Meeting of Ministers for Disaster Management.

warmongering stance—it is a strategic decision grounded in hard experience and logic.”

Turning his attention to regional geopolitics, the Army spokesperson strongly condemned the collaboration of certain neighboring states with Washington’s hostile campaigns against the Islamic Republic.

“Several southern Persian Gulf nations, which have benefited from the capacity of the Strait of Hormuz for years to export billions of dollars in oil and bring in imports, are today collaborating with the criminal United States in strikes against Iran,” Gen. Akrami-Nia noted. “This move is entirely un-

LATEST NEWS

■ Iran MP warns US over killing of civilians in south

A senior Iranian lawmaker warned the US that Iran’s armed forces “will not ignore the spilled blood of innocent people” and would avenge the killing of civilians in recent US attacks on southern Iran.

Ebrahim Azizi, chairman of the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission of parliament, wrote on social media that US “crimes” in southern Iran — including the Minab school attack, the strike near the Ahvaz children’s cancer hospital, the hitting of a sports hall in Lamerd, and repeated attacks on residential and civilian areas — demonstrated the inability and desperation of the American army in confronting Iran.

“The proud south has always been the bastion of Iran’s defence, and the hearts of all our compatriots are there,” Azizi said.

He warned the “enemies of the brave Iranian nation” that the armed forces would not overlook the blood of innocents and “will blacken their days.”

■ Iran condemns US strike on Darkhoveyn nuclear plant, criticizes IAEA’s silence

Iran has condemned a US strike on the under-construction Darkhoveyn Nuclear Power Plant in southwestern Khuzestan Province, calling it a violation of international law and criticizing the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for failing to explicitly denounce the attack.

Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi described the strike as a “dangerous act of aggression” against Iran’s peaceful infrastructure, warning that Washington bears full responsibility for its consequences. He said Tehran would take “appropriate measures” to safeguard its national interests and security.

The IAEA said it was reviewing reports of the attack but stopped short of condemning it.

‘A display of power and a call for revenge’

Political analyst Ehsan Salehi discusses the significance of the massive funeral processions mourning Ayatollah Khamenei



TEHRAN – Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the late Leader of the Islamic Revolution, was laid to rest in the holy shrine of Imam Reza in the city of Mashhad on July 9, four months after he was assassinated in a U.S.-Israeli strike on his residence. The attack also claimed the lives of several of his family members, including his 18-month-old granddaughter.

The long-awaited funeral concluded in Mashhad after several days of processions in Tehran, Najaf, Karbala, and Qom, drawing tens of millions of participants—an estimated 43 million people. Before the Leader’s body began its journey across these five cities, representatives from dozens of countries paid their respects during a ceremony in Tehran.

To unpack the domestic and geopolitical significance of these events, we sat down with political analyst Ehsan Salehi. During the interview, Salehi examines the deeper currents beneath the public grief and explores what this historic moment means for the future of Iran and the region.

Below is the full text of the interview, edited for clarity and conciseness:

The funeral processions of the martyred Leader were highly extraordinary from a demographic perspective, and one could even call them unprecedented in contemporary history. What do you consider to be the roots and reasons for this?

This war has seen many ups and downs. The phase we just passed through last week—the farewell and funeral of your martyred Leader—was, as you correctly noted, an unprecedented event. We have rarely seen anything like it, either in Iran or anywhere else, and this phenomenon needs to be discussed.

Two points come to mind regarding the massive crowds that attended this funeral and the immense gratitude the people showed for the Leader of the Revolution. First, this war, which began on its very first day with the martyrdom of the Leader, had various underlying contexts. Perhaps one of the most important was the events of last January. Those incidents were somewhat predictable; after the 12-day war, many believed that because the enemy’s invading air force failed to achieve any results on the ground, they needed a new strategy. If you look at Netanyahu’s interview on the first day of the 12-day war, he spent almost half of it inviting the Iranian people to join them, trying to incite unrest.

When that didn’t happen during the war, everyone guessed that any new war would require a social pretext. The enemy sought to intervene in Iranian society, hoping to spark riots and chaos that would both legitimize a military invasion and serve as a distraction for a ground offensive. The recent unrest gave the enemy false hope that there would be infantry on the ground ready to join them. Furthermore, the enemy continuously tried to legitimize their military intervention under the guise of “humanitarian intervention,” claiming the Iranian people needed to be saved.

However, when Iranian society suddenly found itself in a war where its Leader was martyred on the very first day—and despite Trump and Netanyahu once again inciting the public to join them and “take matters into their own hands”—the Iranian society did the exact opposite. They displayed an extraordinary reaction that we didn’t even see during the 12-day war. To use a term from the martyred Leader of the Revolution, we witnessed

an “awakening” and massive self-awareness. The people felt a historic duty to stand alongside the armed forces, safeguarding the social and soft-war fronts while the military handled the hard war.

The public understood that they had to stand firm to protect the country. They viewed the funeral as a continuation of that very war—a vital link in generating power for the nation. It was a battlefield where their presence generated national strength. Alongside this, there was the intense emotion and grief of losing the Leader, which only intensified over the past four months. This grief evolved into a sense of victory because the enemy failed to achieve its goals. Why did the enemy fail? Largely because the Leader, who is no longer with us, had spent years building institutions, systems, and a society prepared for such a day. This power stood up against two nuclear superpowers and created a historical marvel. Unlike the past 200 years of pre-revolution history, where Iran always lost something in wars, this time we pushed the aggressors back. The combination of self-awareness, the ongoing sense of duty to project national strength, and deep, intensifying emotional devotion resulted in this massive turnout.

For years, Iran’s enemies have made various claims about the Iranian people’s relationship and feelings toward Ayatollah Khamenei. What is your perspective on these claims in relation to the martyred Leader’s funeral?

According to reports from American media itself, the current ruling body in the White House is intellectually and strategically short-sighted. Over the past 47 years of enmity toward Iran, various U.S. administrations have shared a common goal: overthrowing the Islamic Republic and installing a puppet regime, or at least containing it. They have utilized strategies ranging from supporting the opposition to economic sanctions and Trump’s “maximum pressure” campaign.

However, a major reason for their recent failures, particularly during the 12-day war and this recent conflict, is that the current U.S. administration and key apparatuses like the Pentagon and intelligence agencies lack the caliber of their predecessors. Reports from early in Trump’s administration noted that his team was mostly composed of “yes-men” who would merely verify and rubber-stamp his ideas rather than critically evaluating them.

This led to disastrously flawed calculations. We saw four-star generals purged from the Pentagon because their strategic foresight clashed with the administration, alongside the dismissal of thousands of experts to “shrink the government.” Furthermore, non-governmental channels connected to the administration, such as the FDD or Jewish think tanks like JINSA—which essentially act as the Israeli regime’s lobbyists in Washington—gained massive influence. Their agenda was to push the U.S. toward maximum hostility and aggressive actions against Iran.

This combination of a gutted, inexperienced decision-making body and the amplified influence of Israeli-aligned pressure groups led the U.S. to drastically misjudge the internal situation in Iran. They wrongly believed Iran was weak, on the verge of collapse, and would not retaliate in places like the Strait of Hormuz.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Renewable power plant capacity exceeds 5,400MW

TEHRAN- An official, announcing that the country's renewable power plant capacity has surpassed 5,400 MW, stated: If equipment, foreign currency, and financial resources are provided, the target of exceeding 7,000 MW by the end of summer will be achieved.

According to Mehr News Agency, Jafar Mohammadnejad Sigaroudi, Deputy for Investment at the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA), said on Monday, July 20, on the sidelines of 10th edition of the International Iran Renewable Energy Conference and in a gathering of reporters: The installed capacity of the country's renewable power plants has exceeded 5,400 MW, and SATBA's plan remains to achieve over 7,000 MW of capacity by the end of summer.

He added: Despite the limitations in supplying equipment, especially imported equipment, we are trying to make this plan a reality, and if obstacles are removed, the capacity of renewable power plants will reach even higher figures.

Mohammadnejad Sigaroudi stated that currently between 1,000 and 1,500 MW of renewable power plants are under construction, and said: The bulk of the equipment for these projects has already been supplied or is being supplied domestically, and this very issue increases the likelihood of achieving the development plans. Any potential delay is due to shortages of equipment and foreign currency.

The Deputy for Investment at SATBA emphasized: If the development plans face delays, the cause is not technical issues; because permits, contracts, and site selections for the projects have been carried out across the country. Rather, the most important challenges are equipment supply, financing, and foreign currency allocation for equipment imports.

He added: The bulk of the processes for issuing permits, land allocation, and grid connection have been delegated to the provinces since the second half of last year, and this has resolved many administrative obstacles. A permit for selling electricity from branch power plants on the Energy Exchange has been issued.

Mohammadnejad Sigaroudi announced the issuance of a permit for selling electricity from branch power plants through aggregators on the Green Board of the Energy Exchange and said: This permit was obtained last week and will be communicated soon.

He explained: Accordingly, owners of residential, commercial, administrative, and agricultural solar power plants can offer their generated electricity through licensed companies on the Energy Exchange; a model that is implemented in many countries around the world and provides the ground for the participation of micro-capital.

The Deputy for Investment at SATBA also re-

Iran-Russia cooperation in developing oil, gas fields continues

TEHRAN- The Manager of Engineering and Development at the National Iranian Oil Company, referring to the meeting between Iran's Oil Minister and Russia's Minister of Energy, emphasized the continuation of cooperation between the two countries in developing oil and gas fields.

Reza Aghebati, in a conversation with Shana News Agency, stating that major Russian companies have invested in and are active in seven Iranian oil fields, said: In the near future, we hope the share of these companies in the development of oil and gas fields and production will increase.

Referring to the special attention of the oil minister to the presence of Russian investors in the development of oil and gas fields, he added: Given the willingness of these companies to increase investment in Iran's oil and gas fields, efforts to remove obstacles and expand cooperation in the development of the country's oil and gas fields continue.

The Manager of Engineering and Development at the National Iranian Oil Company reminded: Aban, Paydar-e Gharb, Paydar-e Shargh, Dalpari, Cheshmeh Khosh, Shadegan, and Kupal are the fields where the Russians have invested for their development.

Aghebati emphasized: So far, major Russian companies have invested in the development of seven oil fields, of which Paydar-e



ported the request for allocating \$600 million in foreign currency to supply equipment for renewable power plants and said: This request was submitted to the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade after reviewing the applicants' files, and it has been promised that between \$100 to \$150 million in foreign currency will be allocated to this sector monthly.

He added: SATBA, in cooperation with the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade, will oversee the currency allocation so that foreign currency resources are allocated only to licensed projects, approved equipment, and standard prices, and to prevent any misuse.

The 10th edition of the International Iran Renewable Energy Conference and Exhibition, held alongside the 7th National Renewable Energy Award ceremony, is being held on July 20 21 at the Milad Tower International Conference Center.

Given the transition of renewable energy from an "alternative option" to one of the "main pillars of the country's energy planning," this event is designed to provide a specialized platform for interaction among policymakers, industries, investors, knowledge-based companies, and the academic community.

The rapid expansion of solar power plants, the successful formation of a green electricity market, and the legal requirements mandating the supply of industrial electricity from clean sources indicate that the industry has entered a phase of growth and maturity a development that will be specifically examined during this event.

Held in collaboration with the Iran Renewable Energy Association and the Energy Committee of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, and with the support of the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, the conference focuses on key themes including the development of the green electricity market, the requirements and opportunities arising from Article 16 of the Law on the Leap in Knowledge-Based Production, the role of industries in developing renewable power plants, energy storage technologies, project financing, and the localization of innovative technologies.



Gharb and Aban are shared fields, and negotiations are underway to increase the participation of these companies as well.

It is worth mentioning that Sergey Tsivilov, Russia's Energy Minister, visited Tehran last week and met and talked with Mohsen Paknejad, Iran's Oil Minister. Reviewing the implementation process of the agreements reached at the 19th meeting of the Joint Economic Cooperation Committee between Iran and Russia, and the progress in implementing 146 items agreed upon by the two countries, and accelerating the implementation process of oil field development projects and gas trade were among the most important axes of the talks between Iran's Oil Minister and Russia's Energy Minister.

Can Trump swallow his pride and back down from Strait of Hormuz?

TEHRAN- Nearly five months into a war that Washington arrogantly assumed would be a quick victory, the Trump administration finds itself trapped in a strategic dead end of its own making.

According to data from the prestigious American business magazine Fortune, the US president now faces a humiliating binary choice: plunge deeper into an endless quagmire reminiscent of Vietnam or Afghanistan, or capitulate and hand over effective control of the world's most vital energy artery—the Strait of Hormuz—to the very nation he vowed to crush. This is not the outcome of a strongman's masterstroke; it is the spectacle of a blundering administration outmaneuvered, outlasted, and outwitted by a far more resilient adversary.

A humiliating choice for a self-proclaimed strongman

The irony is as bitter as it is poetic. The same Donald Trump who once boasted of "maximum pressure" and regime change now has his options reduced to two: escalation or surrender. Gregory Brew, a senior analyst at Eurasia Group, bluntly tells Fortune that "there is no military option for reopening the Strait of Hormuz." No surgical strike, no show of naval force, no bluff—just the stark reality that Iran holds all the cards in its own backyard. The Islamic Republic has demonstrated, time and again, that it will not break under pressure; rather, as Brew notes, the more the US attacks, the more Iran's "determination to hold their ground and refuse any concessions" hardens into an unshakeable resolve.

Trump's earlier gamble—that a quick, devastating bombardment would force Tehran to its knees—has collapsed into a farce of nightly airstrikes that have failed to cripple Iran's defensive posture. Instead, the US has bombed civilian bridges, provoked Iranian counterstrikes on Persian Gulf Arab states. Meanwhile, Iran's Revolutionary Guards



have calmly destroyed US radar installations in Kuwait and targeted American military support centers, proving that they are not merely surviving but striking back with precision and defiance.

The Trump administration's strategic genius? It proposed—then quickly retracted—an absurd 20 percent toll on Hormuz traffic for US benefit, a move so laughably cynical that even Fortune highlights its swift shelving. Yet Washington insists that Iran cannot charge fees for passage, while simultaneously admitting it cannot reopen the strait by force. This is not policy; it is panic dressed in diplomatic garb.

Unraveling of American pressure: Oil, elections and desperation

The economic data laid out by Fortune paints a picture of a US administration bleeding credibility and leverage. Global oil prices have rebounded above \$88 per barrel after briefly dipping to \$68, and the US Strategic Petroleum Reserve is at a 43-year low—a staggering vulnerability for a nation that claims to lead the world. Analysts warn that "all signs point to higher prices and a longer duration," and with US midterm elections looming, Trump's obsessive focus on inflation and gasoline prices makes his position even more precarious. The American voter, already paying \$4 a gallon at the pump, is not interested in foreign adventures that yield nothing but pain at the cash register.

Developing trade with Africa depends on market understanding: official

trade partners, and strengthening trade ties and creating cooperation networks can pave the way for increasing Iran's economic exchanges with African countries.

In this regard, Akbar Khosravinejad, Assistant Minister and Director General of Africa Desk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in an exclusive interview with IRNA, discussed the importance of holding this summit and examining various issues, including providing a set of infrastructure and requirements in the areas of transportation, banking communications, insurance, logistics, and understanding African markets, which are as follows:

Despite the efforts made, Africa's share of Iran's foreign trade is still limited; what do you see as the most important obstacle in this area: lack of knowledge of the target market or the lack of financial and logistical infrastructure for exports?

The reality is that developing trade with African countries requires a set of infrastructures and requirements to be in place, and one cannot point to a single factor as the main obstacle. Market knowledge, transportation, banking communications, insurance, logistics, and the continuous presence of economic activists all go hand in hand, and each has its own importance. However, if we must emphasize one issue, it is the knowledge of African markets. Africa is not a single market but comprises 54 countries with different economic conditions, laws, business cultures, and needs. The more economic activists know about these capacities, the greater their chances of successful and sustainable presence. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, within its mandate, tries to use the capacity of the Islamic Republic's representations, hold numerous meetings with private sector activists, and pursue specialized meetings for better market understanding, facilitating communication and cooperation, while simultaneously following up on trade infrastructure issues in coordination with relevant bodies.

What plans does the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have to remove these obstacles and facilitate trade for the private sector?

Khosravi Nejad: One of the priorities of the country's economic diplomacy is to support the effective presence of the private sector in target

tion that they have the right to play a more permanent role in managing the Strait of Hormuz." In their eyes, the war has validated their claim that the strait is essentially theirs. Trump's bluster, his threats, his bombings—all have only reinforced that conviction. Every US strike is met with Iranian retaliation; every American ultimatum is ignored; every hope of breaking Tehran's will evaporates into the Persian Gulf's humid air.

Dan Pickering, another energy analyst, drily notes the irony: before this conflict, all parties used this valuable waterway for free. Now, after billions spent on bombs and billions more in lost trade, everyone is worse off. "Will everyone ultimately end up worse off? The answer is yes," he concedes. That is the sum total of Trump's strategic triumph: a costly, unnecessary war that has empowered Iran, fractured Persian Gulf alliances, depleted US reserves, and left the President with no honorable exit.

So the question hangs unanswered, dripping with derision: Can Donald Trump—the man who promised "America First" and "fire and fury"—really bring himself to hand over the world's most critical maritime chokepoint to the Islamic Republic? Or will he double down on folly, dragging the region into an even wider inferno? Either way, the spectacle is pathetic. The self-proclaimed dealmaker has been out-dealed; the bully has been outlasted; the superpower has been reduced to begging for a face-saving formula that does not exist. As Brew predicts, Trump will likely choose escalation first, fail spectacularly, and then—with tail between his legs—come crawling to the same surrender he swore to avoid. For the world, that means more volatility and more pain. For Iran, it means vindication. For Trump, it means history will remember him not as a strongman, but as the president who lost the Strait of Hormuz.

markets. In this regard, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with economic agencies, uses the capacity of embassies, joint commissions, trade delegations, specialized meetings, and communication with chambers of commerce to identify opportunities and establish connections among economic activists. The consultative meeting on the economic cooperation of Yazd province and Africa is also being held in this framework. The goal of this meeting is to establish direct communication among economic activists, introduce mutual capacities, and define practical cooperation fields so that the private sector can enter African markets with greater knowledge and confidence.

Why was Yazd chosen as a pilot province for economic diplomacy with Africa?

Yazd province has significant capacities in areas such as mining industries, steel, tiles and ceramics, textiles, technical and engineering services, new energies, and knowledge-based companies, and its private sector also has valuable experience in export activities. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs aims to purposefully utilize the capacities of the provinces for the development of the country's economic diplomacy. Accordingly, Yazd has been considered as one of the provinces with high potential for developing cooperation with African countries, and we hope the experience of this cooperation will pave the way for further utilization of the capabilities of other provinces.

Which African countries are a priority for Iran's economic cooperation?

The African continent has high economic and geographical diversity, and for this reason, the policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is based on a balanced view of different regions of this continent. Cooperation priorities are determined based on indicators such as economic capacities, mutual needs, the level of political relations, the potential for developing trade and investment cooperation, and the readiness of the other party to expand relations. In this framework, important countries in East, West, North, and South Africa are on the agenda for economic cooperation, and efforts are made to develop joint cooperation according to the capacities of each country.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Ben-Gvir’s crocodile prison guards reflect his bloodlust

TEHRAN – Israel’s Environmental Protection Minister Idit Silman from the Likud Party has acted in accordance with the wishes of National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir to use crocodiles as prison guards where Palestinians are kept.

Silman’s legally questionable decision, reported on by several Hebrew outlets, was made on July 15 despite longstanding protest from the Nature and Parks Authority against Ben-Gvir’s plans to surround detention facilities with the large reptile, The Times of Israel reported.

Ben-Gvir, a notoriously blood-thirsty minister, first proposed jailing Palestinian security inmates in crocodile-surrounded facilities in a December meeting with Prison Service chief Kobi Yaakobi.

Reclassifying crocodiles as tamed, which, in this instance, refers to providing some level of management or care to an otherwise wild species, will allow them to be held in facilities other than licensed zoos or sanctuaries.

“We need to protect them; they don’t need to protect us. This isn’t the spirit of the law,” one official in the environment ministry told the two right-wing ministers, according to Ynet.

According to Hebrew reports, Ben-Gvir is seeking to first introduce the crocodiles to Ketziot Prison, a facility in southern Israel,



holding Palestinian inmates.

A few weeks ago, Ben-Gvir and Silman met with Nature and Parks Authority chief Raya Soraki and the Environmental Protection Ministry’s legal adviser, where they insisted on the plan to use crocodiles in prison facilities.

According to Ynet, the ministry’s legal adviser warned Silman that she had no authority to unilaterally lay the groundwork for the use of crocodiles in prisons, but the Likud minister issued a decision nevertheless.

Israeli extremists leave no stone unturned to terrorize Palestinians psychologically. They seek to keep Palestinian prisoners in a constant state of fear by exposing them to the threat of attacks by these wild animals.

While prison guards have used dogs to sexually assault Palestinian prisoners, it is not far-fetched to imagine them deliberately placing detainees in situations

where they could be mauled by crocodiles.

Also, given that Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya, director of Kamal Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza, has been held in detention for 18 months without charge or trial and has reportedly been subjected to routine beatings with hammers and batons, the decision to use crocodiles as prison guards is not entirely unexpected.

In an opinion piece on July 18, the Israeli newspaper Haaretz said, “Ben-Gvir is taking Israel to the next stage in its development: barbarism as a legal and explicit state policy. In tandem, the minister of national security is bringing sadism out of the closet as well. Sadism is no longer just for deviants; it is the new political correctness.

“After years in which barbarity and sadism toward Palestinians were hidden as something shameful and repressed – and

mainly as the exception to the rule – Ben-Gvir is moving them to center stage to great applause from some of the crowd and silence from the rest.”

The newspaper added, “Ben-Gvir has passed his latest crackpot idea of employing crocodiles as part of the Israel Prison Service’s roster through all the required legal stages. In regimes in which characters such as Ben-Gvir are cabinet members, anything could be made completely legal.”

The legal adviser at the Environmental Protection Ministry did oppose the move, but her minister, Idit Silman, managed to change the status of the crocodile into a “wild animal fostered for security purposes.” This is an important breakthrough for her partner in the cabinet, who wishes to inaugurate the first crocodile prison in Israel.”

The newspaper also compared Ben-Gvir’s decision to introduce crocodiles as prison guards to Theodor Herzl’s convening of the First Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897. “Herzl founded the Jewish state in Basel and Ben-Gvir improved it at Ketziot Prison,” it said.

The newspaper also said Ben-Gvir’s crocodile prison has nothing to do with national security, saying, “This is but one more display of evil for the sake of evil, a performance meant to satiate the darkest impulses of the masses, orchestrated by Ben-Gvir.”



much of that hesitation, and people are now actively searching for mental health specialists.

The catastrophic conditions in Gaza are not ones that people can endure indefinitely, and many remain uncertain about what the future holds. Given these circumstances, one might assume that Gazans are considering emigration to preserve what remains of their humanity, and few would blame them if they did.

Yet what is striking is that the overwhelming majority do not want to leave Gaza. Quite the opposite: many of those who managed to leave during the early stages of the genocide are desperate to return, willingly bearing heavy financial and emotional burdens to reunite with those making their way back.

It is no exaggeration to say that many people would rather die in the Gaza Strip than emigrate. This is a reality known only to those who have sacrificed everything in a broader struggle to return to their homes, now occupied by Israeli settlers.

Perhaps they feel that when the occupying regime takes away their freedom, resisting that enemy becomes a source of honor, dignity, and national duty. And if they are killed by its aggression, they die as martyrs.

What they fear more is losing their freedom and dignity in exile, where they may feel powerless to resist or express their suffering, forced to live a life without purpose, identity, or a sense of self-worth.

The people of Gaza live under crushing material and psychological hardship. They are not thinking about emigration, nor do they fear death. Some may even welcome it, having lost so many of those they loved and longing to be reunited with them.

They have lost hope in Arab solidarity, in humanity, in the Islamic and Muslim world, in governments, and in people. They no longer place their hope in anyone on earth; their hope is fixed only on heaven.

They would rather die than seek safety through emigration. So what if the extremely superior and highly sophisticated Zionist regime’s military launches another genocidal campaign on Gaza and sheds even more of its blood? The consensus from Gaza appears to be that its population will resist with whatever strength they have left rather than abandon their homeland.

Yemen declares naval blockade on Saudi Arabia in response to ‘oppressive siege’

From page 1 ▶ The full closure of the Bab el-Mandeb strait would reduce global oil supply by 7% as it would leave most of Saudi oil exports unable to leave the region. The disruption would add to the massive cut to global oil flows from the war in the Persian Gulf, which has already reduced shipments by 10% of global supply.

The announcement followed signs from both Iran and the U.S. that they wanted to resume diplomatic efforts to end an escalating cycle of attacks that has all but wrecked a fragile interim agreement signed last month.

A senior Iranian official told Reuters on Monday that Tehran had received a proposal from mediators for a 10-day ceasefire in an effort to salvage the interim deal, intended to pave the way to a lasting agreement to the war that began on February 28 with U.S.-Israeli attacks on Iran.

Oil prices briefly jumped above \$90 a barrel earlier on Monday after renewed disruption to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. They later pared gains after Iran’s Foreign Ministry said mediators had recently pre-



sented proposals to Tehran, signaling that diplomatic contacts remain active.

Neither the ministry nor the official who spoke to Reuters gave any further details on the putative ceasefire discussions.

Iran’s Interior Minister, Eskandar Momeni, was making a second visit to Islamabad in less than a week.

A 14-point memorandum of understanding (MOU) that was signed between Iran and the U.S. on June 18 with Pakistan’s mediation was aimed at finding a lasting solution to the conflict between Iran and the U.S. and re-opening the Strait of Hormuz.

Khalil al-Hayya named new Hamas leader



From page 1 ▶ His martyrdom came after previous leader Ismail Haniyeh was assassinated by Israel in July 2024 in the Iranian capital Tehran.

After Sinwar’s death, Hamas decided not to elect a new leader, but to form a cabinet of five leaders, led by Muhammad Ismail Darwish, the head of the movement’s Shura Council.

Hayya himself was targeted by an Israeli assassination attempt in September last year in Doha.

Born in Gaza in 1960, Hayya is first reported to have met Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin in 1980, some seven years before Hamas

was formed.

One of the earliest members of Hamas’ political wing, Hayya held several positions in student and workers’ unions, and was elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) in 2006.

In 2007, during a botched Israeli assassination attempt against him, a number of his family members, including his wife and three children, were martyred.

Since then, he has played a key role in negotiating a ceasefire with Israel during the 2014 war on Gaza, as well as during the ongoing genocide which began in October 2023.

In 2022, he travelled to Damascus to formalise the restoration of ties with the Syrian government after they frayed following the Arab Spring uprisings and the Syrian civil war.

Sources close to the Palestinian movement told Middle East Eye at the time that all senior leaders targeted in the attack survived, including Hayya, Khaled Meshal, Zaher Jabarin, and others.

The attack killed Khalil al-Hayya’s son, Hamam al-Hayya, and his office director, Jihad Lubbad. Several others were wounded.

Palestinians celebrate Spain’s World Cup victory

From page 1 ▶ Spain collected the trophy from U.S. President Donald Trump after beating the Lionel Messi-led Argentina 1-0 after extra time to claim its second World Cup title, Anadolu reported.

In a message to Spain’s King Felipe VI, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas described the win as a “major global sporting achievement” that came as a result of effort and perseverance. He also sent a similar cable of congratulations to Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez.

Hamas also congratulated Spain on its World Cup victory.

“We congratulate Spain on its deserved World Cup win, and we congratulate Palestine and its supporters on their joy,” Hamas official Basem Naim said in remarks carried by Palestinian media.

Spain has shown strong official and public support for the Palestinian people and their rights, particularly the right to establish an independent state in line with relevant UN resolutions.

In Argentina, positions on Palestine remain divided. President Javier Milei has expressed absolute support for Israel, while a broad segment of the Argentine public continues to show strong solidarity with the Palestinian people and their rights.

In 1948, Israel was established on lands occupied by armed Zionist groups that carried out massacres and displaced at least 750,000 Palestinians. Israel later occupied the rest of the Palestinian territories and continues to refuse withdrawal and the establishment of a Palestinian state as stipulated in UN resolutions.

On social media, activists shared videos showing Palestinians celebrating Spain’s victory.

The Spanish flag appeared prominently in

some scenes, while young men and children were seen clapping, cheering and chanting for Spain.

“Gaza celebrates Spain’s victory because positions remain in memory, and hearts side with those who stood with Gaza,” wrote Umm Yousef on the US social media company X, alongside a video showing celebrations in the enclave.

The scenes of celebration in Gaza drew attention across the Arab world, with many saying the joy was not only about football.

“From the rubble of destruction, and from the depth of the pain of genocide, Gaza celebrates Spain’s World Cup 2026 victory,” Shaaban Ahmed Al-Ajili from Oman wrote on X.

“Gaza does not forget those who stand with it,” he added, posting a video showing Palestinians celebrating Spain’s title.

The celebrations reflected rare moments of collective joy in Gaza, with videos showing children, who have paid a heavy price during Israel’s genocide since October 2023, embracing each other in celebration of Spain’s win.

Spain has been critical of Israel’s deadly war in Gaza, which has killed more than 73,000 people and injured over 173,000 others since October 2023.

Palestinian cities, including Bethlehem, Hebron and Nablus in the occupied West Bank, witnessed celebrations in which hundreds of Palestinians marched through the streets carrying Spanish and Palestinian flags.

Spain’s political position was strongly present in the Palestinian reaction, as activists and artists recalled Madrid’s support for Palestinians, its recognition of the State of Palestine and its repeated criticism of Israel’s genocidal war in Gaza.

Fate of Palestinians in Gaza: emigration or death?

From page 1 ▶ To grasp even a small part of the suffering endured by individuals and families in Gaza, it is worth highlighting several examples and ways of life that have been transformed beyond recognition since the U.S.-backed Zionist regime’s genocide began.

A father who had lost three sons and was left with only his daughter, captures the plight of most Palestinians when he was asked by the few reporters who have survived in Gaza about his patience.

He replied with words that are difficult to forget:

“By God’s grace, I remain patient and seek my reward from Him, and my sons are martyrs in His sight. But our story in Gaza after this genocidal war does not end with patience and acceptance of what has befallen us.”

“Before the genocidal war, there was little difference between having sons or daughters, because life was simple and manageable and did not require a man’s constant presence in the home. After the genocidal war, however, having men in the household became essential, as every aspect of daily life grew overwhelmingly difficult.”

“My three sons could barely keep up with the family’s daily needs: hauling water and filling containers by hand, securing the tent with stakes, carrying belongings during displacement, shopping, gathering firewood, and countless other exhausting daily tasks that required walking long distances under the blazing sun or through the cold of winter. After they were killed, everything became extraordinarily difficult. My daughter simply cannot shoulder such physically demanding work.”

Another scene is no less heartbreaking. A father lost his home when it was bombed with everyone inside, his wife, his four sons, and their families, and with it, every penny he had saved.

Civil defense teams searched the ruins and recovered the body of only one son. No trace of the rest of the family was found, and for nearly two years they have remained officially listed as missing.

The father has pleaded with every authority he can reach to help him learn what became of his family. However, making his ordeal even more painful, the Israeli regime’s security agencies have intensified the psychological pressure on this father by leading him to believe, through various means, that his family is alive but being held captive.

The father has pleaded with every authority he can reach to help him learn what became of his family. Making his ordeal even more painful, the Israeli regime’s security agencies have intensified the psychological pressure on him by leading him to believe, through various means, that his family is alive but being held captive.

A third tragedy has left thousands of Palestinians classified as “sole survivors”. These are individuals who lost every member of their family,

with only one person surviving. No parents, no children, no brothers or sisters remain. No one can truly comprehend the psychological burden they carry every minute of every day for the rest of their lives.

Among the forms of suffering that are almost unimaginable elsewhere in the world is the footage emerging of families clearing the rubble of their destroyed homes. They are doing so with nothing but their hands and axes; not to clear the rubble itself, but to extract the steel reinforcing bars they can use to build makeshift shelters after their worn-out tents have fallen apart.

Virtually nothing is available in the markets, and whatever can be found is sold at extremely high prices because of severe shortages.

The regime has barred nearly all essential supplies from entering Gaza.

Only a small number of aid trucks are allowed in, meeting only a fraction of the population’s needs.

Meanwhile, most so-called “dual-use” items are either banned or allowed in only extremely limited quantities. These include timber, steel, cement, livestock and animal feed, farming and fishing supplies, vehicles, lubricants, energy equipment, electricity infrastructure, fuel, communications equipment such as mobile phones and their accessories, and countless other essentials.

If the world’s leading public opinion research organizations were to survey people across different countries with questions such as: Do you have a refrigerator, a television, a washing machine, electricity, and cooking gas? Are public and private transportation available? Do you own or rent a home? Are your children attending school or university? Do you have access to clean drinking water? Can you travel freely and return home? The overwhelming majority would answer “yes.” In Gaza, however, the answer would be “no.”

Today, most of the Palestinian refugees have no access to cooking gas, forcing them to burn plastic because neither timber nor firewood is available. They drink water of uncertain origin that is unsafe to consume. There are no functioning schools, universities, or educational institutions. Two-thirds of the population is homeless, living amid rubble, rats, insects, vermin, and sewage. In short, the Zionist regime has stripped Gaza of the basic conditions necessary for human life.

A clinical psychologist in the Strip was asked about the cases he has been treating. He described several examples, all sharing one common feature: psychological disorders resulting from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The number of cases is enormous, ranging from mild to moderate and severe.

He explained that before the genocide, relatively few people sought psychological counseling, and professionals often had to work hard to persuade those in need to seek treatment. But the immense psychological trauma left by the American-backed genocidal war has erased

Iran leave 2026 World Cup with more questions than answers

TEHRAN - The 2026 FIFA World Cup was supposed to be Iran's opportunity to rewrite history. With the tournament expanding to 48 teams, Team Melli entered the competition believing they had their best chance yet to reach the knockout stage. Instead, they return home with disappointment, unanswered questions and renewed debate over the future of the national team.

The defining moment of Iran's campaign came against New Zealand. Ranked as the lowest FIFA-ranked team in the tournament, New Zealand represented the match Iran simply had to win. It was the kind of fixture that separates ambitious teams from those content merely to participate. Yet Team Melli failed to capitalize, leaving themselves with too much to do in the remaining matches.

To be fair, Iran's journey in North America was far from straightforward. The team's logistical challenges were significant. After every match, the squad were required to travel back to Tijuana, Mexico, where they had established their training base. The repeated cross-border journeys reduced valuable recovery time and complicated preparations between games. In a tournament where every training session and every hour of rest can influence performance, those circumstances undoubtedly placed Iran at a disadvantage compared to many of their rivals.

These difficulties have become a central part of the post-tournament narrative. Both the Football Federation and the coaching staff have argued that the team performed admirably given the conditions. They point to the demanding travel schedule and limited recovery time as evidence that simply remaining competitive was an achievement in itself.

There is merit to that argument. Tournament football is about much more than what happens during 90 minutes on the pitch. Logistics, recovery and planning often determine success as much as tactics and talent.

However, difficult circumstances cannot fully explain Iran's failure to seize their opportunity. Tactical decisions, squad selection and in-game management also deserve scrutiny. Against New Zealand in particular, Team Melli lacked creativity, urgency and the composure expected from a side aiming to make history. The margins at the World Cup are always small, but successful teams find ways to overcome adversity rather than allowing it to define their campaign.

Despite the disappointment, the federation appears determined to maintain continuity. Amir Ghalenoei will most likely remain as head coach through the 2027 AFC Asian Cup. The decision reflects a belief that stability offers the best path forward, despite growing criticism from supporters who believe Iran underachieved.

Whether that confidence is justified will only become clear over the next year. The Asian Cup now represents both an opportunity for redemption and a test of the federation's faith in its current project. For Iran, the 2026 World Cup will ultimately be remembered not for impossible obstacles, but for a realistic chance that slipped away.

Tabatabaei elected president of Iran Blind Sports Federation

TEHRAN - Hassan Tabatabaei has been elected as the new president of the Iran Blind and Visually Impaired Sports Federation, securing a four-year mandate after a two-round voting process at the federation's electoral assembly on Monday.

The assembly was chaired by Seyed Mohammad Shervin Asbaghian, Deputy Minister of Sports and Youth for Championship and Professional Sports, and attended by National Paralympic Committee President Ghafoor Karegari, National Olympic Committee Secretary General Mehdi Alinajad, and Kamiar Soltani, Director General of the Ministry's Office for Joint Federation Affairs.

A total of 15 candidates initially registered for the election, but six withdrew before the start of

the assembly. As a result, nine candidates officially entered the race and presented their programs to the voting members.

The first round of voting failed to produce an outright winner. Aliasghar Hassanzadeh led the opening ballot with 15 votes, closely followed by Tabatabaei on 14. Hamed Afrasiabi received eight votes, Vahid Ansari collected six, while Jalal Karami and Sadegh Mirei each earned two votes.

With no candidate securing the required majority, the election proceeded to a runoff between the top two contenders.

In the decisive second round, Tabatabaei overturned the first-round deficit to claim victory with 28 votes, defeating Hassanzadeh, who received 20 votes.

Tabatabaei succeeds Mohammadreza Mazloumi, whose third consecutive term as federation president concluded in February this year. Mazloumi oversaw one of the most successful periods in the federation's history, with Iranian athletes producing strong performances in international blind and visually impaired sports, particularly at the Paralympic and world championship levels.

The newly elected president brings considerable experience in Iranian sports administration, having previously served as president of the Iran Karate Federation.

Tabatabaei now faces the task of building on the federation's recent achievements while preparing Iran's blind and visually impaired athletes for upcoming regional, continental and international competitions, including the next Paralympic.

His election marks the beginning of a new chapter for one of Iran's most successful Paralympic sports federations, with expectations high that the country's strong tradition in blind and visually impaired sports will continue under his leadership.

Iran water polo down Singapore at 2026 Asian Age Group Championships

TEHRAN - Iran defeated Singapore 29-4 at the 12th Asian Age Group Championships on Monday.

Iran had started the campaign with a loss against Japan on Friday but defeated Thailand and Hong Kong.

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.

Iran edged by Japan at 2026 Asian Junior Handball Championship

TEHRAN - Iran were edged by Japan 28-27 at the 2026 Asian Junior Handball Championship on Monday.

The Iranian team had previously defeated Kuwait and Qatar, lost to South Korea and were held to a draw against the UAE in Group B.

Iran are scheduled to play India on Tuesday in a must-win game.

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

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

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

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

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

Oldest known photographs reveal how Persepolis has changed over time

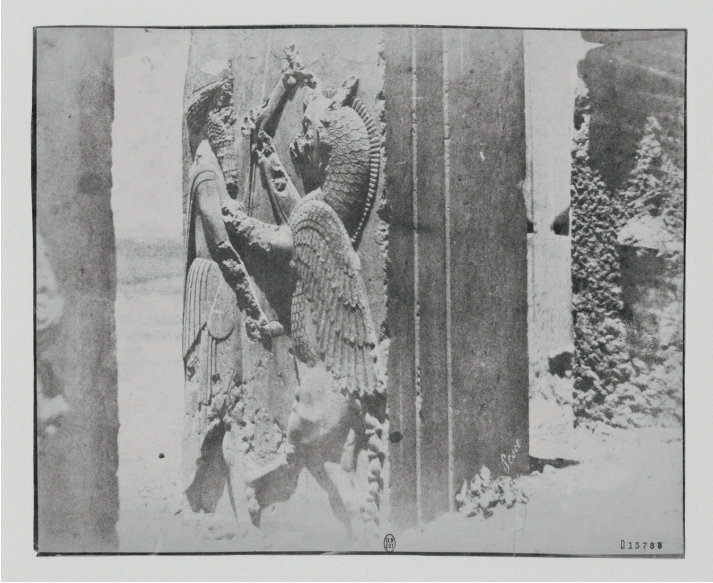
TEHRAN - The oldest known photographs of Persepolis, the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire and now a UNESCO World Heritage site, provide a rare visual record of the monument before modern archaeological excavations reshaped its appearance.

Captured in the second half of the 19th century by pioneering photographers and later complemented by archaeological documentation and aerial photography, the images chronicle both the site's condition and the evolution of archaeological research in Iran.

The earliest known photographs of Persepolis were taken in the autumn of 1857 by Luigi Pesce (1827-1864), an Italian military officer and photographer who had traveled to Iran as part of a military mission to help train the Qajar army. Carrying the cumbersome photographic equipment of the period across the Marvdasht Plain, Pesce produced what are widely regarded as the first surviving photographs of Persepolis.

The photographs reveal a markedly different landscape from the one familiar to modern visitors. Much of the ancient complex remained buried beneath centuries of accumulated soil and debris. Among the most notable differences, the eastern staircase of the Apadana Palace, today one of Persepolis' defining architectural features, had not yet been excavated and was therefore absent from Pesce's images.

Pesce is widely credited as the



Relief from the Apadana (Hall of One Hundred Columns) photographed by Luigi Pesce, an Italian military officer and photographer who traveled to Iran in 1848, during the reign of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, to train Iranian infantry units.

first photographer to systematically document several of Iran's most important archaeological sites, including Persepolis, Pasargadae, and Naqsh-e Rostam. On April 29, 1858, he presented an album of his photographs to Naser al-Din Shah Qajar. A second album was sent to King Wilhelm I of Prussia, and that collection later entered the holdings of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, where it remains an important record of early photography and nineteenth-century Iran. The museum notes that Pesce's album represents one of the earliest extensive photographic surveys

of Persian antiquities and landscapes. His photographs were created using the wet collodion process, a technically demanding method that required photographers to prepare, expose, and develop glass negatives while still wet, often under difficult field conditions.

Nearly three decades later, Antoin Sevruguin, the Armenian-Iranian court photographer of the Qajar era, also documented Persepolis. Renowned for recording Iran's historical monuments, landscapes and people, Sevruguin visited the Marvdasht Plain several times around the turn of the

Tehran, Minsk move to expand tourism ties



TEHRAN - Iran and Belarus are moving to strengthen tourism cooperation, with direct flights between Tehran and Minsk set to be launched after Belarus granted the necessary aviation approvals, officials from both countries said at a meeting in Tehran.

The meeting, attended by Belarusian Ambassador Dmitry Koltsov, officials from Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, the Foreign Ministry, members of parliament, representatives of the Iran Chamber of Commerce and tourism industry stakeholders, focused on expanding tourism links and removing barriers to travel between the two countries, ILNA re-

ported on Monday.

Participants said the lack of direct flights, limited awareness of each country's tourism attractions and weak links between tourism businesses have been the main obstacles to increasing travel between Iran and Belarus.

A tourism cooperation memorandum signed by the presidents of Iran and Belarus had already established a framework for bilateral cooperation, but the absence of direct air services had remained the main challenge, the report said.

Moslem Shojaei, director general of the Office of Marketing and Foreign Tourism Development at Iran's

Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, said Iran views tourism as an instrument of international diplomacy and that expanding tourism relations with Belarus should be driven by the private sector with government support.

Shojaei said Belarus is one of Iran's target tourism markets and noted that Iran removed visa requirements for Belarusian citizens in 2023, allowing them to travel to Iran without visas.

He proposed establishing a joint technical tourism committee and encouraged Belarusian tourism companies to participate in tourism exhibitions in Iran, including an international gathering of tour operators scheduled to be held in the country in the coming months.

Seyyed Mostafa Mousavi, head of the tourism commission at the Iran Chamber of Commerce, said both countries have significant potential for cooperation in tourism, trade, agriculture and industry, but that direct flights and stronger institutional links are needed to unlock those opportunities.

He said tourism could contribute to broader trade, economic and investment relations and called for

greater attention to tourism during bilateral economic negotiations. Mousavi also said the absence of a joint Iran-Belarus chamber of commerce has limited cooperation between businesses, investors and tourism operators.

Belarusian Ambassador Dmitry Koltsov, for his part, said Belarus's national aviation authority had issued all required approvals for direct flights after a trial service operated by Iran's Mahan Air two years ago.

Iranian airlines can launch this service, Koltsov said.

He said a tourism cooperation memorandum signed during the Iranian president's visit to Minsk is being implemented by relevant authorities to establish the necessary infrastructure for expanding tourism.

Koltsov said Iran and Belarus already cooperate in trade, industry and healthcare, adding that tourism could become another pillar of bilateral relations. He also called for stronger cooperation between tourism agencies and invited Iranian tour operators to participate in Belarus's tourism exhibition scheduled for next spring.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

Ilam to showcase historical heritage to Arbaeen pilgrims, official says



attractions through the production and distribution of informational materials, tourism information centers and media outreach, enabling pilgrims to learn about Ilam's history, culture and identity alongside their religious journey.

He said authorities had prepared programs to promote the province's

and other heritage monuments reflect the region's long history and cultural legacy. He added that introducing these sites during Arbaeen could encourage more tourists to visit the province throughout the year.

The official said Arbaeen should be viewed not only as a religious oc-

casion but also as an opportunity to introduce Ilam's culture, civilization and heritage to pilgrims and visitors from across Iran and other Islamic countries, adding that the initiative could contribute to the development of cultural tourism and support the local economy.

In Shia Islam, Arbaeen marks 40 days after Ashura, the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (A.S.), the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the third Shia Imam. Each year, millions of pilgrims travel to the Iraqi holy city of Karbala, many on foot, to commemorate the occasion.

The Mehran border crossing in Ilam province is one of the main gateways used by Iranian and international pilgrims traveling to Iraq during the Arbaeen pilgrimage, making the province a key transit point for one of the world's largest annual religious gatherings.

Iranian students win six medals at Intl. Mathematical Olympiad

TEHRAN – Iran grabbed two gold medals, one silver medal, and three bronze medals at the 67th International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO) held on July 15 and 16 in Shanghai, China.

Alireza Joonbakhsh-Najafabadi and Alireza Sharifi won the gold medals, Amirhossein Tayyeb clinched the silver medal, and Arsha Azizeddin, Radin Nik-Eqbali, and Arian Zandi received the bronze medals, IRIB reported.

The IMO is the World Championship Mathematics Competition for high school students and is held annually in a different country. The first IMO was held in 1959 in Romania, with 7 countries participating. It has gradually expanded to over 100 countries from 5 continents. The IMO Board ensures that the competition takes place each year and that each host country observes the regulations and traditions of the IMO.

This year's competition brought together over 1,000 young mathematicians from more than 100 countries and regions. The Iranian team is placed among the top 15 teams in the world.

Iran won two gold medals, three silver medals, and a bronze medal at the 66th IMO 2025, held from July 10-20 in Australia.

The six-member Iranian team claimed the championship at the fourth International Mathematics Summer Camp (IMSC) held in Beijing, China, from June 17 to July 12, demonstrating exceptional teamwork and dedication to mathematics.

Aryan Zandi, Arsha Azized-



din, Amirhossein Tayyeb, Alireza Sharifi, Radin Nik-Eqbali, and Ali Joonbakhsh-Najafabadi won 4 gold medals and two silver medals, outperforming students from Poland and Brazil, IRNA reported.

Some 58 teams from 46 countries and regions, including 41 international teams and 17 teams from China, with over 500 Chinese and international students, teachers, and coaches in total.

The program included more than 340 IMO lectures, 15 IMO showcase lectures, 10 optional seminars, as well as mock tests and problem sessions delivered by 20 experienced lecturers. It also included three distinguished guest lectures delivered by famous mathematicians.

Recent achievements

Iranian students delivered an outstanding performance, clinching three gold medals and

a silver medal at the International Biology Olympiad (IBO), and three silver medals, while Amir-Hossein Hemmati won the silver medal, IRIB reported.

The 37th International Biology Olympiad (IBO 2026) took place from July 12 to 19 in the city of Vilnius, Lithuania. The event brought together participants from some 80 countries across five continents.

Radin Bayani, Mohammad-Reza Vaezi, and Amir-Hossein Nosrati grabbed gold medals, while Amir-Hossein Hemmati won the silver medal, IRIB reported.

The 58th International Chemistry Olympiad (IChO 2026) was held from July 10 to 19 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Over 350 students from 90 countries attended the event.

Ali Shamsi-Mofakhar, Mahyar Najar, and Amir-Reza Hosseini secured silver medals, while Ario Seirafi won the bronze medal.

The five-member team of Iranian students has demonstrated a remarkable achievement, garnering three gold medals and two silver medals at the 56th International Physics Olympiad (IPhO).

Held from July 4 to 12 in Bucaramanga, Colombia, the IPhO 2026 brought together over 400 students from more than 90 countries, Javanonline.ir reported.

Hirbod Foudazi, Kian Zarrabian, and Mohammad Mirmohammadi secured gold medals, while Amir-Sam Goharpey and Nima Koushki won silver medals.

Iran's Physics Olympiad team, consisting of five students, has achieved an astounding triumph at the International Scientific Physics Olympiad 2026, winning two gold medals, a silver, and a bronze.

Hirbod Foudazi was ranked first among all participants, receiving the title of absolute winner, achieving the best result in the Theoretical Exam, and grabbing the gold medal and the national diamond, IRNA reported.

Amir-Sam Goharpey won the other gold medal; Kian Zarrabian and Mohammad Mirmohammadi received a silver medal and a bronze medal, respectively.

Four Iranian female students attended the Open International Geography Olympiad (OpenGeo) 2026, winning four medals, including a silver medal and three bronze medals for the first time.

Artina Heidari won the silver medal; Setayesh Haqazari, Sana Karbalaee Vali, and Helia Khodabandelou received the bronze medals, IRIB reported.

Iran, Turkey planning to launch joint innovation center

TEHRAN – Iran and Turkey are planning to establish a joint innovation center and define a sustainable business model, an official with the Ministry of Science has said.

In line with the implementation of mega-tech projects, the two countries have developed nine technology projects to implement collectively, IRNA quoted Mohammad-Nabi Shahiki as saying.

The official made the remarks in a meeting held on Monday to plan the Iran-Turkey Science and Technology Week.

Highlighting the role of science and technology parks in the expansion of international cooperation, Shahiki said the main objective is to transition from academic collaboration towards the development of a synergistic network comprising research institutes, technology parks, and universities to conduct joint projects in education, research, and technology fields and generate shared strategic outcomes for both parties.

According to the head of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology's center for international scientific cooperation, Ehsan Qaboul, Iran-Turkey Science and Technology Week is scheduled to be held in Urmia, West Azarbaijan province, and Tabriz, East Azarbaijan, in the second month of the fall, snn.ir reported.

In February, Qaboul and Turkish ambassador to Tehran, Hicabi Kirlangic, explored the capacities, challenges, and future perspectives for the expansion of scientific, research, and educational cooperation between Iran and Turkey, msrt.ir reported.

The two sides agreed to boost science diplomacy by organizing an Iran-Turkey science week,

holding recurrent meetings of the best universities, developing joint scientific projects, and establishing science and technology parks, particularly in border areas.

During the meeting, Qaboul said, "Our main objective is to develop a joint scientific ecosystem that encompasses everything from higher education to applied research and modern technologies."

Supervising joint dissertations was the other issue raised by the official, noting that Persian and Turkish students can help address common problems between the two countries, conduct collaborative research projects, and ultimately improve the scientific standing of Iranian and Turkish universities in international rankings.

The official also proposed exchanging students, granting scholarships, offering joint scientific calls on shared environmental, technological, and industrial issues, and developing joint curricula to strengthen cultural links and localize education.

Highlighting the capacities of medical universities in the country, Iranian officials announced their readiness to attract more Turkish students. Currently, more than 130 Turkish students are majoring in medical fields in Iran.

For his part, Kirlangic emphasized the need to address problems related to issuing visas and equivalent certificates, saying that establishing transparent mechanisms will increase confidence among students and their families.

Iran's high scientific capacity

In June, Minister of Science, Research, and Technology, Hos-



sein Simaei-Sarraf, delivered a speech at the 7th Turkey Educational Technologies Summit (known as TETZ 2026), highlighting the country's high scientific and research capacities despite sanctions.

Despite illegal sanctions, Iran secures first place in cognitive sciences among Islamic nations and ranks ninth globally in advanced materials. Numerous prestigious Iranian universities and institutions are included in international rankings. These accomplishments underscore the country's scientific capabilities, IRIB quoted Simaei-Sarraf as saying, addressing the TETZ, held in Istanbul from June 26 to 28.

Iran serves as a great opportunity to invest in higher education and modern technologies. The country has one of the largest higher education systems in the region, with more than three million students and over seventy thousand faculty members and researchers.

Highlighting that the rapid development of emerging technologies, including AI, is fundamentally transforming human relationships and higher education systems around the world at an unprecedented

pace, Simaei-Sarraf said that effective use of smart technologies requires the establishment of a system based on algorithmic transparency, educational justice, accountability, protection of learners' rights, and responsible data governance.

According to science minister, cultural and social requirements need to be institutionalized in the design and deployment of these technologies, which will help pave the way to promote social trust, facilitate the use of smart education, and its acceptance without posing data governance risks at national and international levels.

The official went on to say that the development of smart education requires the enhancement of synergy, the exchange of expertise, and the utilization of shared capacities of countries more than ever. He expressed hope that the summit would lay the basis for the expansion of academic ties, the exchange of knowledge, and the development of collaborative initiatives in the smart education sector, which would in turn expand higher education at national, regional, and global scales.

OCHA releases report on humanitarian assistance to Iran during ceasefire

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa (ROMENA), on behalf of and in collaboration with UN agencies and humanitarian organizations, has provided a report covering the period from June 1-30 on humanitarian assistance to Iran during the ceasefire between Iran and the United States.

The ceasefire remained in effect throughout June, although localized incidents between June 8 and 11 reportedly injured 20 people and damaged civilian infrastructure, according to the report.

Humanitarian needs continue to be driven by the impacts of the February–April escalations, particularly damage to health, water, housing, and education infrastructure, as well as broader recovery needs.

Recovery efforts continue across affected sectors. More than 1,100 schools have been restored, while national and humanitarian partners support debris clearance, restoration of essential services, protection assistance, and recovery planning for cultural heritage and environmental assets.

Health

The United Nations Children's Agency (UNICEF), in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education and a private-sector partner, is supporting routine immunization through the procurement of 200,000 rotavirus vaccine doses and two million doses of Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (DTP) vaccine.

UNICEF received 294 Rapid Response backpacks expected to reach 310,000 people, and is procuring and delivering five prefabricated health units, five primary healthcare tents, and equipment for 25 walk-in cold rooms.

The World Health Organization is procuring diagnostics, medicines, vector-control supplies, generators, trauma and emergency kits, and non-communicable disease kits for affected provinces. Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) for health workers continues in 23 cities; as of 23 June, over 5,900 people attended in-person sessions, 3,000 joined webinars, and 594 health workers received individual support, including 94 referrals for specialized care.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) delivered three of 142 planned emergency backup generators (15–100 Kva) for health facilities and cold-chain warehouses. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) provided MHPSS to 31 beneficiaries and will support the procurement of trucks, generators, and air conditioners for MoHME. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delivered medical humanitarian assistance for trauma care and other specialized supplies.

Water, sanitation and hygiene

UNDP is supporting water service restoration through the procurement of 100 chlorination and disinfection units, rehabilitation of priority pumping systems, deployment of temporary water storage and water trucking, and installation of five reverse osmosis desalination units in affected communities. The support includes on-the-job training for local operators in system maintenance and water quality monitoring, in partnership with provin-

cial water authorities.

Food security

National efforts to maintain essential commodity supplies and stabilize markets continued nationwide. The World Food Programme (WFP) provided food and cash assistance to 35,542 refugees, including daily bread through supported bakeries and wheat flour distributions, while school feeding continued via take-home rations for about 9,000 refugee students.

Protection

UNICEF is training frontline workers and caregivers to support children affected by conflict-related distress through the Teaching Recovery Techniques Plus Parenting package.

The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) continues reception, registration, protection and legal counselling, case management, psychosocial and child protection services, and protection risk assessments. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) assessed 128 vulnerable households, initiated cash assistance for 260 households, and is procuring 59 wheelchairs for migrants with disabilities for direct distribution.

Education

Education partners are supporting learning continuity through online and offline learning, educational packages, and TV-based education while beginning rehabilitation activities. UNE-SCO has secured funding to provide MHPSS to conflict-affected children and families in partnership with the Tehran Disaster Mitigation and Management Organization.

Shelter and non-food items

The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) announced plans to construct 20 relief warehouses across Tehran Province to strengthen emergency preparedness and response capacity. The facilities will store essential relief supplies and rescue equipment to ensure a faster response during crises.

Early recovery

National partners continued debris clearance and recovery efforts. According to Tehran Municipality, 1,704 machines were deployed, 603 debris-clearing missions conducted, and 4,032 transport operations completed during the escalation, with about 20 per cent of the estimated 20,000 tons of conflict-generated debris cleared.

The Government continued efforts to strengthen energy resilience, including adding nearly 5,000 MW of solar power capacity. UNDP is supporting debris removal and emergency response capacity through heavy machinery and rescue equipment for IRCS, while UNESCO is mobilizing resources for environmental assessment and post-conflict ecosystem recovery.

Cultural Heritage

UNESCO is supporting assessments and recovery planning for conflict-affected cultural heritage sites, including Golestan Palace and Chehel Sotoun, while mobilizing resources and strengthening capacities across the museum and heritage sectors.

Assessments of museums and intangible cultural heritage have been completed to guide recovery interventions, and coordination for implementation of secured funding is ongoing.

Police dismantle 388 drug trafficking gangs since March

TEHRAN – In the first four months of the current Iranian year, which started on March 21, the anti-narcotics police have disbanded 388 drug trafficking gangs across the country, Iraj Kakavand, the head of anti-narcotics police, has said.

Despite the war situation, there has been a three-percent increase in drug discoveries, and over 93 percent of drug seizures were done by law enforcement forces, he noted.

During the same time, more than 103 tons of narcotics, including three tons of methamphetamine, were discovered, indicating a 15-percent increase compared to the same period last year. Also, eight smugglers were killed, 230 weapons and over 800 vehicles were confiscated, Kakavand added.

Monitoring social media, the police man-

aged to seize two tons of illicit drugs and dismantle 41 gangs operating online, he further noted.

On July 9, officials from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) lauded Iran's achievements in seizing Afghan-origin methamphetamine consignments, highlighting that the country's accomplishment showcases the operational capability, professionalism, and dedication of Iranian anti-narcotics police in countering transnational drug trafficking networks.

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



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

He is the wisest and the most knowing man who advises people not to lose hope and faith in the Mercy of Allah and not to be too sure and over-confident of immunity from His Wrath and Punishment.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:11 Evening: 19:38 Dawn: 3:24 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:05 (tomorrow)

Iranian Academy of Arts to hold virtual exhibition for prominent Uzbek painter Akmal Nuriddinov

TEHRAN – An exhibition of selected paintings by Akmal Nuriddinov, President of the Uzbekistan Art Academy and one of the country's prominent contemporary painters, will be held online, on the website of the Iranian Academy of Arts.

More than 27 works by Nuriddinov will be presented in this virtual exhibition, which seeks to strengthen cultural and artistic diplomacy, introduce contemporary Uzbek art, consolidate scientific, research, and artistic cooperation between the two countries, and expand cultural ties with Central Asian nations.

By introducing the works of one of Uzbekistan's leading contemporary artists, this exhibition provides a foundation for the mutual recognition of artistic capacities, the exchange of experiences, and the creation of bonds between the artists and researchers of both countries, IRNA reported.

This program aims at expanding sustainable cooperation, mutually introducing Iranian and Uzbek artists, and creating a space for presenting Iranian art in Central Asian countries and the art of this region in Iran; an approach that helps to deepen cultural relations and el-

evate the status of art in regional interactions.

Akmal Nuriddinov, 67, is one of the best-known artists of Uzbekistan. Having graduated from the Republican Art School named after P. Benkov in 1978 and the Tashkent State Institute of Arts named after M. Uygur in 1984, he started his work mastering his artistry in the best Tashkent arts studios.

In 1997 Akmal Nur became an academician and an active member of the Academy of Arts of Uzbekistan. In 2003 he was awarded the title of People's Artist of Uzbekistan.

Regarding his artistic approach, he says: "My art takes shape between the manifest and the hidden; between the material reality of the human body and their internal, spiritual experience. What occupies me more than the representation of the outer world is revealing states that transcend form and appearance: silence, passion, love, loneliness, memory, and the human longing for the Absolute."

According to the painter, his works are rooted in a dialogue with the philosophical and cultural heritage of the East, particularly the Sufi understanding of love, and serve as a path toward self-discovery.

Cartoon of Day



World Cup Amid Trump's Wars

Cartoonist: Julio Carrión Cueva from Peru

23rd Meeting of Ministers of Culture of SCO Member States concludes

TEHRAN – The 23rd Meeting of Ministers of Culture of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Member States concluded on Sunday in the city of Cholpon Ata, Kyrgyzstan, and the heads of the participating delegations, including the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance of Iran, Seyyed Abbas Salehi, signed the final statement.

A section of the statement, signed by all members, reads: "The members, emphasizing that the use of force is unacceptable, highlighted the importance of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization statement dated March 2, 2026, regarding the attention to the situation surrounding the Islamic Republic of Iran".

The signatories expressed their sincere sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims of the attacks on Iran (by the US and Israel) and declared their full support and solidarity with the government and people of Iran, IRNA reported.

The parties also expressed deep concern regarding the military attacks against the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran, including attacks on cultural and humanitarian centers, as well as mon-



uments, historical sites, and the ancient heritage of this country.

The Meeting of Ministers of Culture of the SCO Member States is the primary mechanism for multi-lateral cooperation in the field of culture. Its work focuses on intercultural exchanges, as well as the preservation and promotion of the rich tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

In accordance with the Agree-

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

Meetings, discussions, and a

dinner banquet with Iranologists, Persian language professors, and professors from Kyrgyz universities, bilateral meetings with the culture ministers of participating countries, attendance at the awards ceremony for winners of the SCO International Film Festival, and the official dinner banquet hosted by the Minister of Culture of Kyrgyzstan were among the programs of Salehi during his trip to Kyrgyzstan.

Arbaeen theater festival to showcase diverse live plays along pilgrimage route

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN- The 10th edition of the Arbaeen Pilgrimage International Theater Festival will feature a diverse array of live performances across the pilgrimage route, emphasizing the role of art as a spiritual and cultural service.

The announcement was made during a press conference held at the Art Bureau in Tehran on Monday, attended by festival secretary Kourosh Zarei, executive secretary Seyyed Mostafa Motorchi, and members of the press.

Zarei expressed his commitment to enhancing the quality of the event each year. He revealed that 13 theatrical works, spanning various genres including tazieh (Iranian passion play), naqqali (traditional storytelling), street theater, and puppetry, have been selected from a wide range of submissions across several Iranian cities.

These performances are scheduled to take place at ten strategic points along the Arbaeen walking route, as well as in the cities of Najaf and Karbala from July 25 to August 5. Additionally, the festival will deploy a mobile Mukeb to bring theatrical performances directly to the pilgrims.

Zarei highlighted a significant shift in institutional support for this year's edition. For the first time, the General Department of Performing Arts of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance is participating in the event. Furthermore, the Cultural and Artistic Organization of the Tehran Municipality has also joined as a partner.

A notable aspect of the festival is the cultur-

al vow taken by the participating artists. Zarei stated that all performing groups have agreed to participate without receiving any payment, viewing their presence as a spiritual offering. However, a special gift will be presented to the top-selected group during the closing ceremony.

Addressing the logistical challenges, the festival secretary noted that the cost of transportation and logistics within Iraq has risen significantly, necessitating the support of various collaborating institutions to ensure the event's viability. He also pointed out the distinct nature of Iranian performances, noting that while many programs along the route are pre-recorded by Iraqi troupes, all Iranian groups perform live on stage.

Regarding international participation, Zarei clarified that no foreign groups will be present in the 10th edition. He explained that while previous years saw high-quality international submissions, the entries received this year did not meet the required technical and artistic standards.

"We aim to establish a presence among the theater artists of the Islamic world to expand theatrical communications and interactions between Islamic nations," he stated.

He further added that the formation of such a network could pave the way for joint collaborations, the exchange of experiences, and the co-production of dramatic works, further interconnecting the theatrical capacities of the Muslim world.

For his part, Motorchi said that the festival's repertoire is updated annually to reflect

current events within the Islamic world. He emphasized that this year's edition marks a quantitative leap in terms of the number and spread of performance locations compared to the previous nine editions.

While the event has previously featured plays in English, Turkish, and Arabic, this year's performances will be limited to Persian and Arabic due to regional war conditions and financial constraints, he added.

He expressed the festival's long-term ambition to create works that resonate with pilgrims of all languages and cultures, fostering a global artistic connection along the path to Karbala.

Hundreds of thousands of Iranians embark on an annual journey to the Iraqi city of Karbala to observe the holy day of Arbaeen at the shrines of Imam Hussein (AS), the third Imam of the Shia, and his brother, Hazrat Abbas (AS). This pilgrimage represents one of the largest peaceful gatherings in the world, drawing millions of devotees from across the globe to the heart of Iraq.

Arbaeen, which will be observed on August 4 this year, marks the end of the 40-day mourning period following the martyrdom of the Imam and his loyal companions on Ashura.

Beyond the rituals of mourning, the event serves as a profound demonstration of unity and brotherhood, as millions of people from diverse backgrounds gather in a shared display of faith. The route to Karbala transforms into a landscape of hospitality, where volunteers provide food and shelter, mirroring the selfless values taught by the Imam himself.

Gaza graffiti artists turn war ruins into canvases of memory

Perched atop a mound of shattered concrete that was once a family home, Palestinian artist Jana Abu Harbid steadies her brush and paints a tent draped in the Palestinian flag beside the Arabic words "Hope Remains".

Around her, collapsed buildings stretch across Gaza City's Tel al-Hawa neighborhood, where streets once lined with homes have been reduced to fields of rubble, Xinhua reported.

For the 20-year-old artist, the ruins are more than reminders of destruction. They have become canvases that preserve memories, carry the stories of families uprooted by war, and convey a message of resilience: that life can endure even amid devastation.

Across the Gaza Strip, graffiti artists are transforming cracked walls, broken facades and slabs of concrete into open-air galleries.

Originally from Beit Hanoun in northern Gaza and now displaced in Gaza City, Abu Harbid told Xinhua that painting on the ruins has become her way of processing the

miseries Palestinians have endured.

"I wanted to express our suffering through art. Despite everything we have been through, I continue to paint," she said. "Every house carries memories of a family that once lived there".

The conflict has also reshaped her own life. Abu Harbid lost her father in an earlier war, while the latest conflict interrupted her university education and made paints, brushes and other art supplies difficult to obtain because of shortages and soaring prices.

Abu Harbid is among dozens of Palestinian artists who have embraced graffiti since the war erupted after Hamas attacked southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, triggering a large-scale Israeli military campaign in Gaza.

According to Gaza health authorities, more than 73,000 Palestinians have been killed and over 173,000 injured. Most residents have been displaced at least once, while large areas of cities and refugee camps lie in ruins.

Palestinian graffiti artist Ubay al-Qarshali, 26, said the devastation transformed ruined homes into powerful spaces for artistic expression.

"The destroyed buildings have become witnesses to what happened here. They are now the most truthful places to express the reality we are living," he said.

Al-Qarshali, who lost several relatives during the war and was displaced more than 10 times, now seeks to connect each mural to the people who once lived there.

Before beginning a mural, Al-Qarshali often speaks with homeowners or relatives to learn about their experiences. Those conversations influence the images and symbols he chooses.

"If I know the family's story, I try to make the artwork part of their memory," he said. "I also include words or symbols that encourage hope so people feel their story is still alive".

"When someone tells me the painting moved them or gave

them a moment of hope, I feel it has achieved its purpose," he said.

Palestinian visual artist and art expert Sharif Sarhan said the war has transformed not only the lives of Gaza's residents but also the role of graffiti.

"These ruins became the artists' available canvases," he said. "The murals allow them to continue creating while documenting the destruction, daily life and the experiences of people affected by the war".

According to Sarhan, the artworks also reach audiences beyond Gaza through photographs shared on social media, giving the murals a documentary dimension, helping convey Palestinians' experiences to the wider world.

"Graffiti has taken on social and psychological functions in addition to its artistic value," he said. "Artists have turned the public spaces left by destruction into visual records that preserve memory and document this period of Gaza's history".