

Territory before politics: Why Trump cannot neutralize Hezbollah

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – During Lebanese President Joseph Aoun's White House meeting with his U.S. counterpart, Trump again publicly promoted the idea of Syrian forces confronting Hezbollah.

Where the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) failed to achieve their objectives in southern Lebanon, Trump said Syria's self-proclaimed President Ahmed al-Sharee "would like to come in and do something with Hezbollah."

"He has been fighting Hezbollah for a long time. I think it would be very effective," Trump added. Aoun did not address the U.S. proposal of Syrian militants entering Lebanon to the media, nor did he say anything to Trump. ► Page 5

The world must not permit US, Israel to undermine ICC

TEHRAN – The International Criminal Court (ICC) was established by the Rome Statute, a multilateral treaty adopted on 17 July 1998 in Rome, Italy. The Rome Statute entered into force on 1 July 2002, after 60 countries ratified it, and the court officially began operating on that date.

The ICC, headquartered in The Hague, was established for several key reasons:

To end impunity for the gravest international crimes. The ICC was created to prosecute individuals—not states—responsible for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community. ► Page 5

Iran has 'not an Iota of trust' in its adversaries, army chief says

TEHRAN – Iran's Army Commander-in-Chief Maj. Gen. Amir Hatami said Tehran has "not even an Iota of Trust" in its adversaries, accusing them of pursuing both military and psychological campaigns against Iran while insisting the country's armed forces remain fully prepared for future threats.

Hatami made the remarks during an inspection of Army grounds, air defense and air force units in the central province of Isfahan, where he assessed operational readiness and addressed military commanders. ► Page 3

DOE chief to spotlight environmental consequences of war at UN climate conference

TEHRAN – Shina Ansari, the Head of the Department of Environment, has announced that the country's primary focus at the 31st United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP31) will be to highlight the environmental impacts of war and call for greater international accountability.

Speaking at a press conference held on Iran's participation in COP31, Ansari said that the annual UN Climate Change Conference is one of the world's most significant environmental forums and provides a valuable platform for the Islamic Republic of Iran to present its perspectives, capacities, and concerns to the international community, ISNA reported.

She emphasized that Iran will submit documented and evidence-based reports detailing the environmental, infrastructural, and public health impacts resulting from military aggression. "These findings will be presented to the international community to raise awareness and prompt appropriate international action." ► Page 7



The mother of a Minab schoolchild holds the remains of her child during a reburial ceremony, July 22, 2026.

140 days after the horrific massacre of students in Minab 34 Mothers Lay Their Children's Remains to Rest Again

The Minab school reburials lay bare the grim reality of the US aggression and Washington's utter disregard for innocent Iranian lives

TEHRAN – In a solemn display of grief and defiance, the streets of Minab in southern Iran were draped in mourning on Wednesday as residents gathered to pay their final respects to the young victims of the tragic February 28 US missile strike on the Shajareh Tayyebbeh Elementary School.

Nearly five months after the devastating attack that claimed 168 lives—the majority of them young schoolchildren—the community assembled to bury newly identified remains, even as international scrutiny mounts over Washington's refusal to provide a transparent accounting of the tragedy.

The emotional ceremony in Minab, Hormozgan Province, marked the culmination of months of painful recovery and DNA testing efforts. A funeral procession moved toward the city's Martyrs' Cemetery, carrying the remains of children whose lives were cut short.

According to provincial officials, 68 body fragments belonging to 34 students were recently identified through precise DNA testing. Among them were the remains of young Amirali Kamali, whose family had waited nearly five months for confirmation.

"Where am I supposed to look for my son?" asked the father of 7-year-old Makan Nasiri in an interview earlier this year, his eyes filled with tears.

Makan, a first-grader, remains the only victim whose remains have not been recovered. Mojtaba Qahramani, head of Hormozgan's judiciary, told Fars news agency that specialized search operations at the school site revealed no trace of the child, as the direct impact occurred precisely where he was standing. An empty grave has been

prepared for Makan, while his personal belongings—including a bloodstained sweater and a single sneaker—are preserved in a glass display case at a nearby mosque.

Religious rites and jurisprudence: Honoring the deceased

The recovery and identification process required careful navigation of Islamic traditions to ensure the victims were laid to rest with full dignity.

Ata Navaki, Director General of the Hormozgan Foundation of Martyrs and Veterans Affairs, stated that following consultations with members of the provincial Security Council and the families of the victims, it was decided—with the families' explicit consent—that some of the newly recovered remains would be reunited with the victims' bodies. ► Page 3



Protesters in Manila denounce US war on Iran, Label Marco Rubio a 'war criminal'

TEHRAN — Public anger over Washington's aggressive foreign policy erupted on the streets of Manila on Wednesday, as anti-war demonstrators rallied outside the venue of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Foreign Ministers' Meeting to protest the presence of Secretary of State Marco Rubio and denounce US military operations against Iran.

Carrying placards reading "War criminals not welcome" and "Ban Trump! Ban Rubio!", activists gathered in the Philippine capital to voice sharp opposition to Washington's military actions in the Middle East and its expanding strategic footprint in the Indo-Pacific. ► Page 2

Iran expands retaliatory campaign against Satanic enemy

TEHRAN – Iran has significantly expanded its retaliatory military campaign against US forces across West Asia, announcing a series of missile and drone strikes against American military facilities in Bahrain, Jordan and Kuwait while senior military officials added the country has recovered from the initial US offensive launched on Feb. 28 and rebuilt its operational capabilities.

The latest operations, carried out under Operation Nasr-2, mark one of Iran's broadest waves of attacks since the conflict began and underscore 'a transition from strategic defense to sustained offensive operations.' ► Page 2

Under fire on Capitol Hill: Hegseth faces bipartisan scrutiny over Iran war

TEHRAN – US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth came under intense bipartisan scrutiny during a contentious Senate Appropriations Committee hearing as lawmakers challenged the Trump administration's strategy in the war against Iran, questioned the rapidly escalating financial and human costs of the conflict, and demanded greater transparency over the Pentagon's long-term objectives.

Appearing alongside Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Dan Caine and Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins, Hegseth defended President Donald Trump's emergency supplemental funding request, arguing that additional resources were essential to sustain military operations and replenish US weapons stockpiles. ► Page 2

Minab Awakening Lullabies intl. festival to be held in response to US-Israeli atrocities

TEHRAN- The first International Minab Awakening Lullabies Festival is scheduled to take place in the near future.

Organized by the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO), under the secretariat of Maziar Rezakhani, the event aims to mobilize a global artistic response to the atrocities committed by the US and the Zionist regime in Minab.

The festival has recently issued a worldwide call to mothers across all nations to record and share lullabies dedicated to the children of Minab, transforming a universal symbol of maternal love into a cry for justice and remembrance.

The festival secretary Maziar Rezakhani stated that the American-Zionist crime perpetrated on the first day of Ramadan War in Minab sparked grief and indignation among free people globally, Honaronline reported on Tuesday. ► Page 8

Regional Arab states unwilling to fully follow US: Chinese scholar



TEHRAN PAPERS

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

US trapped in self-inflicted quagmire

Resalat shifted its focus to the failure of the US and Israel to achieve their goals before the start of the war. It wrote: The reality of the battlefield shows that the hegemonic war machine has not achieved any of its strategic objectives. Neither Iran's missile and nuclear capabilities have been disabled, nor its strategic depth in the region severed, nor its political structure collapsed. On the contrary, this military adventure has not only produced no strategic achievement for Washington and Tel Aviv but has added a severe geopolitical nightmare to their list of crises: the closure of the Strait of Hormuz—an artery whose blockage directly paralyzes global energy security and targets the Achilles' heel of the Western economy. This battlefield deadlock clearly proves how, when a hegemon tries to block the organic path of an independent power through aggression and physical elimination, it becomes trapped by its own hand in a swamp of unforeseen consequences, from which exiting is far more costly than entering.

Siasat-e-Rooz: No change will occur in Iran's position

Trump, under various pretexts and within the Zionist game, seeks to intensify attacks against Iran. But in an environment where the power of Iran's armed forces dominates all US bases and interests in the region, The Washington Post, quoting intelligence officials, reported that based on a new assessment, new attacks against Iran are unlikely to change Tehran's position toward Washington. Washington is trying to intensify economic pressure—especially through blocking Iran's oil exports—to achieve its previous goal of changing the system in Iran. War with Iran is currently the biggest international crisis facing the US government but may create an even bigger crisis in the coming years. Meanwhile, the US Secretary of Defense attended a Senate Appropriations Committee session to defend the Trump administration's request for tens of billions of dollars in supplemental war funding.

Donya-e-Eqtasad: The outlook for reviving the Islamabad understanding

Donya-e-Eqtasad, in an analysis, addressed the 10-day ceasefire proposal raised by mediators and the prospects for reviving the Islamabad understanding. It wrote that what is visible today is not the formation of a new agreement but the reactivation of overt and covert diplomacy in the region. The ceasefire proposal, Qatar's new initiative, the Iranian interior minister's trip to Pakistan, the conditional stance of the foreign ministry spokesperson, and Marco Rubio's renewed emphasis on diplomacy all form pieces of a shared puzzle. Under such conditions, reviving the Islamabad understanding is not a definite scenario but a noteworthy possibility. If the 10-day ceasefire moves beyond the proposal stage, it could be the first step toward reviving an understanding whose main goal is managing disputes through diplomacy and preventing escalation. However, the scenario of deception—based on the patterns of the 12-day and 40-day wars—should not be overlooked.

Ettelaat: The future of the crisis in the region

Ettelaat assessed the future of the crisis and war through three scenarios. It wrote that the outcome of developments shows the future of the crisis can be analyzed through three main scenarios: first, gradual escalation of war; second, formation of a new ceasefire; third, continuation of the current situation—neither full-scale war nor lasting peace. In this state, limited attacks, political pressure, and competition over regional leverage continue, and any incident can once again push the region to the brink of a larger crisis. Considering military analysts' assessments of the high costs of a ground invasion, the most likely short-term option is continued air and naval battles and proxy warfare, along with occasional efforts to establish ceasefires. As a result, the future of Iran-US relations will continue oscillating between escalation and crisis management, and achieving a lasting agreement will face many obstacles.

Protesters in Manila denounce US war on Iran, Label Marco Rubio a 'war criminal'



From page 1 ► Rubio arrived in Manila to participate in bilateral and multilateral sessions with regional counterparts, attempting to justify the US military posture and reinforce defense commitments with local allies. However, the American delegation was met by crowds demanding an immediate end to US warfare abroad and an end to foreign military entanglements.

Human rights advocate Cristina Palabay condemned Washington's global military actions during the rally, pointing to a long pattern of interventionism.

"The US, especially under Trump, has been the world's foremost war criminal," Palabay told Al Jazeera. He said the US government "has been known to bomb and kill people in Palestine, in Iran, in the Philippines, and in many other places where their permanent presence exists and where military basing continues."

Protesters also targeted the host government's alignment with Washington's geopolitical agenda. Activist Mong Palatino urged the administration of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to cut ties with top US officials, warning that deeper military cooperation serves American imperial interests at the expense of national sovereignty.

"His visit will lead to more US military bases in the Philippines," Palatino said. "His visit will lead to the further plunder of our natural resources. So we are here to condemn the Marcos government for colluding with the US."

The demonstrations in Manila reflect growing international blowback against American unilateralism, as civil society groups across Asia join global calls demanding a halt to US military aggression against Iran and an end to Western intervention in regional affairs.

Iran expands retaliatory campaign against satanic enemy

From page 1 ► Among the most significant targets announced by Tehran was Amazon Web Services' (AWS) cloud infrastructure in Bahrain, which Iranian Armed Forces described as the "digital eye" of the US Central Command (CENTCOM).

According to an official military statement, the strike targeted Amazon's me-south-1 cloud region, launched in Bahrain in 2019 as the company's first West Asia data center. Iranian officials alleged that the facility functions as a major information-processing and intelligence hub supporting US military operations throughout the Persian Gulf.

The statement also highlighted Amazon's participation in the Pentagon's Joint Warfighting Cloud Capability (JWCC) program, under which leading technology companies provide cloud computing, artificial intelligence and data-processing services to the US Department of Defense.

Iran presented the strike as retaliation for ten consecutive days of US air attacks on Iranian territory that targeted both military and civilian infrastructure.

In parallel operations, the Iranian Army announced drone strikes on Al-Azraq Air Base in Jordan, saying accommodation facilities, logistics buildings and military equipment belonging to US forces had been targeted.

Military officials also said Iranian Arash drones struck maintenance facilities, aircraft shelters and equipment warehouses at Sheikh Isa Air Base in Bahrain.

In Kuwait, Iran's Army said it launched a large wave of attack drones against Camp Al-Doha, one of the principal US logistical hubs in the region, stating to have targeted ammunition depots and logistics centers supporting American ground forces.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) an-



nounced another phase of Operation Nasr-2, saying missile and drone strikes targeted US positions at King Faisal and Prince Hassan military bases in Jordan.

According to the IRGC, the attacks damaged hangars used for F-15 fighter aircraft, drone maintenance facilities and heavy-lift helicopter infrastructure. The force also stated that eight MQ-9 drones were destroyed before entering operational service, while additional aircraft and US personnel suffered casualties.

The latest operations illustrate 'the country's recovery following the opening phase of the war.'

When the United States launched its initial large-scale strikes on Feb. 28, military analysts widely assessed that Washington sought to overwhelm Iran's command structure, degrade its missile forces and limit its ability to sustain prolonged combat operations.

However, defense analysts now note that Iran appears to have restored much of its operational tempo, resuming coordinated missile and drone attacks while maintaining production of military hardware despite continued combat.

"Iran has demonstrated a notable capacity to regenerate combat power under sustained pressure," said several region-

al defense analysts in recent assessments, pointing to the country's dispersed military infrastructure, decentralized command networks and large inventory of domestically produced drones and missiles.

Independent military experts have also argued that Iran's extensive use of underground facilities, mobile launch platforms and distributed production lines has complicated US efforts to permanently degrade its military capabilities.

Acting Defense Minister Brig. Gen. Majid Ebn al-Reza said the conflict has accelerated the development of indigenous military technologies.

"The more sophisticated the enemy's technology became, the more our domestic capabilities advanced," he said, arguing that battlefield conditions had become a catalyst for innovation across Iran's defense industry.

Armed Forces spokesman Maj. Gen. Abolfazl Shekarchi echoed that assessment, saying missile and drone production has continued uninterrupted throughout the conflict.

"Strategic missile production never stopped," Shekarchi said. "Equipment produced during the war entered operational service immediately and replaced expended inventories."

He added that despite exten-

sive US intelligence capabilities, Iranian missile production facilities remain undiscovered.

Iranian officials also responded sharply to recent warnings from US President Donald Trump, who threatened additional strikes against Iranian infrastructure should shipping in the Strait of Hormuz come under attack.

A senior Iranian military source said any US attack on bridges, power plants or energy facilities inside Iran would trigger reciprocal strikes against regional infrastructure and energy installations linked to American interests.

The source reiterated Tehran's position that Iran will continue exercising 'sovereign control' over the Strait of Hormuz and warned that any escalation against Iranian infrastructure would be met with proportional retaliation across the region.

Military observers say the latest developments suggest the conflict has entered a new phase. While the opening US offensive sought to rapidly neutralize Iran's military capabilities, analysts increasingly believe Tehran has adapted its operational doctrine, rebuilt portions of its command and logistics network and shifted toward sustained regional retaliation designed to impose rising costs on US forces and their regional partners.

Some defense specialists also argue that Iran's ability to continue launching coordinated long-range missile and drone operations months after the initial US assault indicates that Washington has not achieved its original objective of decisively degrading Iran's military capabilities. Instead, they say, the battlefield has evolved into a prolonged war of attrition in which Tehran has sought to demonstrate resilience, replenish its arsenal and gradually regain the operational initiative.

Under fire on Capitol Hill: Hegseth faces bipartisan scrutiny over Iran war

From page 1 ► The hearing, however, quickly evolved into one of the administration's toughest congressional examinations since the conflict began.

Pentagon defends \$67 billion war request

Hegseth told senators that the war has already cost the United States approximately \$37.5 billion, a figure significantly higher than previous estimates, while requesting \$67.1 billion in additional Pentagon funding as part of an \$87.6 billion supplemental package submitted by the White House. According to the Defense Department, the funding would cover ongoing combat operations, replace expended precision-guided munitions, strengthen force readiness and modernize military capabilities.

The defense secretary warned that failure to approve the funding would force the Pentagon to curtail military training, delay equipment maintenance and disrupt operational readiness at a time when US forces remain engaged across the Middle East.

Senators question strategy and objectives

While Republicans largely supported maintaining military readiness, lawmakers from both parties questioned whether the administration had presented a coherent strategy for the conflict.

Democratic Senator Gary Peters delivered one of the hearing's sharpest exchanges, accusing Hegseth of failing to explain how the United States intended to conclude the war or define success. Peters argued that military operations appeared increasingly disconnected from clearly articulated political objectives, warning that the country risked becoming trapped in another prolonged Middle Eastern conflict.

Senator Patty Murray likewise criticized what she described as the administration's request for a "blank check," arguing that Congress should not approve tens of billions of dollars in additional funding without a detailed explanation of how the conflict would end. She warned that the United States appeared to be drifting toward "another forever war" despite repeated White

House assurances that the fighting would soon conclude.

Several lawmakers also questioned why the Pentagon required additional emergency appropriations when substantial defense funds approved in previous legislation reportedly remain unspent.

Questions over congressional authority

Beyond budgetary concerns, senators renewed criticism of the administration's decision to enter the conflict without explicit congressional authorization.

Some members argued that the Constitution grants Congress—not the executive branch—the authority to declare war, insisting that any prolonged military campaign against Iran requires formal legislative approval.

Growing bipartisan support has also emerged for legislation intended to limit or condition the administration's authority to continue military operations absent congressional approval.

Contradictions over Iran's military capabilities

Another major line of questioning focused on the administration's shifting public assessments of Iran's military and nuclear capabilities.

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand challenged Hegseth over previous administration statements claiming US strikes had effectively destroyed Iran's nuclear infrastructure, asking why the White House later justified a broader war by arguing that Tehran remained only weeks away from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

The exchange reflected broader concerns among lawmakers regarding inconsistent public messaging and whether the administration had clearly defined the strategic rationale behind the conflict.

Mounting human and financial costs

The hearing came only days after the Pentagon confirmed additional US military casualties, increasing political pressure on the administration.



According to Defense Department figures presented during the hearing, 17 American service members have now been killed since the conflict began, while more than 100 troops have been wounded. Combined with the sharply rising financial burden, lawmakers questioned whether the administration had realistically assessed the long-term costs of the campaign.

Caine denies knowledge of US strikes on Iranian desalination plants

Iranian state media has announced that the US hit the Bonji desalination plant along the Iranian coast over the weekend, as well as a desalination plant on Qeshm Island in the early days of the war. Caine said he was unaware of reports that U.S. strikes hit desalination plants that provide water to thousands of Iranians across dozens of villages.

"I'm not aware of those as being particular targets, nor am I aware of those reports," the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff told Sen. Jeff Merkley, Democrat-Oregon.

Caine defended the military's actions when pressed that infrastructure relied upon by civilians for their survival is not considered a legitimate military target.

"We have a robust process which considers a target, that goes through a system that looks at a variety of considerations, to include what you're alluding to, around both purely civilian or dual-use targets," Caine said, adding that he has "trust and confidence" in CENTCOM's assessments.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

140 days after the horrific massacre of students in Minab 34 mothers lay their children's remains to rest again

From Page 1 ► Navaki noted that four bodies, despite having sustained severe damage, contained relatively intact remains and were buried separately in designated locations at the Martyrs' Cemetery. Regarding the remaining identified body fragments, it was agreed that they would be interred at a suitable location within the cemetery in a dignified ceremony befitting their sacrifice.

Islamic law places immense emphasis on preserving the dignity and sanctity of the deceased, and the exhumation or disturbance of graves is generally prohibited. Across major schools of Islamic jurisprudence, however, exceptions are recognized in cases of necessity or overriding public interest, such as the recovery of newly discovered human remains, the identification of victims, the protection of legal rights, or the completion of a proper burial. In such circumstances, exhumation is undertaken not to violate the sanctity of the grave, but to fulfill the religious obligation to ensure the deceased are treated with full dignity.

In the Minab case, authorities explained that graves were reopened after the remains of over two dozen students, missing since the February 28 attack, were recovered and identified. The exhumation was carried out strictly to allow these newly recovered remains to be buried alongside their classmates already interred in the same grave. According to Islamic jurisprudence, this action falls within recognized exceptions because its sole purpose is to complete the burial and ensure all identified remains receive a prop-



er and dignified burial in accordance with sacred traditions.

US shirks responsibility for its crimes

The US attack on Shajareh Tayyebah Elementary School has drawn broad international condemnation. The United Nations Human Rights Office emphasized the right of families to know the truth.

"The families of the little girls who were killed are entitled to the truth of how this happened," stated UN Human Rights Office spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani.

Investigations and prominent coverage by international outlets, including CNN and Sky News, have underscored the severity of the strike, detailing the devastating human toll and highlighting growing questions surrounding the US military's targeting decisions. Despite widespread media exposure and satellite imagery confirming the presence of Tomahawk missile debris at the school site, Washington has faced severe criticism for attempting to evade responsibility.

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Months after the strike, the Pentagon has refused to complete a standard intelligence review to establish official accountability. While military assessments completed within days of the attack confirmed US forces struck the school, the final intelligence review—standard procedure for incidents involving mass civilian casualties—was never ordered. Reports indicate senior US military commanders bypassed explicit database warnings that intelligence on Iranian targets was severely outdated, choosing "expediency" over caution as they rushed target lists at the outset of the war.

When pressed in a Fox News interview regarding satellite imagery showing US missile fragments at the site, President Donald Trump suggested the findings might never be made public, claiming "nobody is ever going to be able to say what happened there" and speculating that the imagery could be "AI generated".

In response to the administration's refusal to release findings, more than two dozen Democratic senators submitted a formal demand for answers, writing that "there is no justification for withholding an unclassified accounting of what happened, what went wrong, and what the Department is doing to prevent recurrence."

To honor the memory of the 120 students out of 168 people who lost their lives in the tragedy, local authorities announced that the Shajareh Tayyebah Elementary School is set to be officially registered as a national site in Iran, serving as a lasting symbol of resilience, sacrifice, and the enduring quest for justice.

US and Israeli military strikes kill Iranian civilians

The tragic strike on Minab occurred directly as a result of the military campaign launched jointly by the United States and Israel on February 28, 2026. From the opening hours of the offensive, waves of precision munitions hit towns and cities across Iran, demonstrating a systematic pattern where US and Israeli forces kill innocent civilians and devastate non-military infrastructure. Rights groups and human rights observers have fiercely condemned the campaign, pointing out how commanders deliberately ignored warnings regarding outdated intelligence and pressed forward with aggressive aerial attacks. The destruction of the Shajareh Tayyebah Elementary School and the slaughter of 120 young schoolchildren stands as a stark example of how US and Israeli military operations directly target and kill civilians in violation of international law.

Regional Arab states unwilling to fully follow US: Chinese scholar Jianwei Han says the US wants to maintain hegemony in the Mideast through Israel

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN - Jianwei Han, an associate professor at the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University, believes Iran has shown extraordinary resilience against U.S. military pressure, and that the current confrontation marks a watershed moment reshaping the Middle East's strategic landscape.

In an interview with the Tehran Times, she discusses the widening gap between U.S. and Israeli objectives, the sustainability of (Persian) Gulf states' neutrality, the economic fallout from the Strait of Hormuz blockade, and the prospects and limits of China-Iran cooperation under sanctions.

The following is the full text of the interview:

American officials argued that military pressure would weaken Iran. Based on recent developments, has that strategy worked, or has Iran proved more resilient than expected?

I don't think the U.S. assessment is correct. I believe Iran has demonstrated extraordinary resilience in its war against the United States, evident in various aspects such as government operations, wartime organization and mobilization, and public opinion guidance and propaganda, etc.

Do you consider the latest escalation merely another episode in the decades-long U.S.-Iran confrontation, or has it crossed a threshold that fundamentally changes the strategic landscape of the Middle East?

I believe that the recent confrontation between the US and Iran is not merely an episode; it has escalated to a new stage, and the impact on the geopolitical and security landscape of the Middle East is also profound. This war may be a significant watershed for the US influence in the Middle East, and the relationships among regional

countries may undergo a remarkable reorganization and reconfiguration.

Only weeks before military operations resumed, diplomatic channels still appeared to be open. Looking back, do you think diplomacy genuinely failed, or was military escalation becoming the preferred option for one or more of the parties involved?

I believe neither the US nor Iran has the intention to launch a full-scale war. However, there is a profound trust deficit between the two sides, making them extremely difficult to reach a truly feasible agreement. This also makes the negotiation merely a means for the two sides to temporarily cease hostilities rather than the ultimate goal. But I think at some point in the future, the two sides will still have to sit down and negotiate. Continuing the war does not serve the interests of either side.

Beyond its impact on oil markets, how would instability on the Strait of Hormuz reshape regional security, global shipping, and the calculations of outside powers?

The long-term blockade of the Strait of Hormuz has had a direct impact on regional security and international shipping. Not only oil, but also fertilizers and some key raw materials cannot be transported normally, causing a severe impact on the global supply chain. At the same time, alternative supply chains around the world are emerging, especially the land routes are accelerating their construction. Although the cost is high, they remain an important alternative solution to deal with the blockade and uncertainties. The blockade may prompt countries outside the region to become more actively involved in mediating the US-Iran conflict. In any case, ending this conflict is truly in the interests of the vast majority of countries.



The Persian Gulf states have attempted to avoid being drawn directly into the conflict despite hosting American military facilities. How sustainable is this balancing strategy if the confrontation continues to intensify?

The (Persian) Gulf Arab countries generally hope to remain neutral in the US-Iran war. However, due to attacks from Iranian missiles and drones, their relations with Iran have also become tense. These countries are not willing to fully follow the US and engage in military confrontation with Iran. But the positions of different countries may vary. Some countries will be more inclined to be tough on Iran, while others will be more moderate. This depends on their own national strength and the closeness of their relations with the US or Israel. I think if Iran does not attack the civilian facilities of these countries in the future, these countries will basically still maintain a neutral stance.

To what extent do you believe Israel's security calculations have influenced the current trajectory of U.S. policy toward Iran?

The strategic goals of the United States and Israel in the Middle East are not entirely aligned. The United States actually intends to gradually withdraw from the Middle East and does not want to invest too

many resources. However, it also wants to maintain its hegemony in the Middle East through Israel. Israel regards Iran as the greatest threat to its own security and has thus drawn the United States into this war that was originally thought to be winnable quickly. Now the US government has realized that getting embroiled in a long-term war with Iran is not beneficial and is eager to extricate itself and end the war. However, Israel still hopes to fight against Iran to the end and does not want the US to quit. This is the biggest difference between the two sides at present.

Reports indicate that bridges, ports, energy facilities, and other civilian infrastructure have suffered damage during the latest attacks. Beyond the immediate humanitarian consequences, what long-term economic and political effects could this have on Iran and the wider region?

If the war continues to expand, Iran will suffer greater material and economic losses as well as more casualties, exacerbating the domestic shortages of resources, currency depreciation and inflation crisis. This will lead to a serious humanitarian crisis and possibly trigger a severe humanitarian disaster.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran has 'not an iota of trust' in its adversaries, army chief says

From Page 1 ► Speaking about the ongoing conflict, Hatami said Iran believes its adversaries sought more than temporary military gains. According to the commander, their ultimate objective was to weaken the Islamic Republic, undermine Iran's national unity and ultimately bring about the country's disintegration.

He said the Iranian people had resisted those efforts in the same way they stood against Iraq during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War, adding that the alleged objectives of Iran's enemies had failed.

Hatami praised the performance of the Iranian armed forces, including both the Army and the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), saying they had carried out successful operations during the recent fighting.

He specifically revealed that an Iranian Air Force F-5 fighter had struck a military base protected by Patriot air defense systems and hosting F-15 and F-16 fighter jets before returning safely to base. He further added that, during the incident, opposing forces mistakenly shot down three of their own F-15 aircraft.

The army chief also referred to remarks of the chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff,

stating the American commander had acknowledged that US helicopters flying over Iran were fired upon by civilians using whatever weapons they had available. Hatami said this demonstrated that any attempt to deploy foreign ground forces inside Iran would encounter widespread public resistance.

Turning to the broader confrontation, Hatami argued that the conflict extends beyond the battlefield. He accused Iran's adversaries of conducting a coordinated campaign through military operations, media coverage, cyberspace and psychological warfare aimed at weakening public morale and creating despair among the Iranian population.

"We do not trust this enemy," Hatami said. "We never expected it to honor its commitments, and for that reason we did not lose a single moment in strengthening our combat readiness."

He said Iran's armed forces had continued enhancing their military capabilities throughout the crisis and expressed confidence that the country would overcome the current challenges. Hatami added that, in his view, Iran's adversaries would ultimately fail to achieve their objectives and regret their actions.

Iran condemns Kuwait after US attacks launched from Kuwaiti soil

TEHRAN - Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei has sharply criticized Kuwait following US attacks on Iran that Tehran says were launched from Kuwaiti territory, accusing the Persian Gulf state of betraying decades of Iranian goodwill and igniting widespread anger in the Islamic Republic.

In a post on X, Baqaei recalled Iran's assistance to Kuwait after the 1991 Persian Gulf War, when Tehran dispatched a team of 47 oil industry experts at the request of the Kuwaiti government to help extinguish burning oil wells left ablaze by retreating Iraqi forces.

He said the Iranian specialists successfully brought 28 wells under control in Kuwait's giant Burgan oil field, describing the mission as part of the largest oil well firefighting operation in history. Baqaei stressed that the assistance came despite the fact that only three years had passed since the end of the

Iran-Iraq War and that the wounds caused by Kuwait's support for Saddam Hussein's regime were still fresh.

Referring to the recent US military strikes against Iran, Baqaei said Washington's use of Kuwaiti territory to launch attacks had sparked outrage in Tehran. He accused Kuwait of abandoning the principles of good-neighboring relations and becoming "part of the fire of the wicked directed against our peoples."

"Iran has always adhered to good neighborliness," Baqaei wrote, warning that "the smoke of ingratitude and the absence of foresight will blind the eyes of the ungrateful."

He concluded his message with a Persian proverb, saying, "He who sows thorns does not harvest grapes from them," in an apparent warning about the consequences of Kuwait's actions.

General Ahadi: Iran thwarted US-Israeli 'hybrid war' and coup plot

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN - A senior Iranian military official said the United States and Israel failed to achieve their objectives through "hybrid warfare" and subversive activities against the Islamic Republic.

Brigadier General Mohammad Ahadi, Chief of Defense Diplomacy and International Relations of the Iranian Armed Forces, made the remarks on Tuesday at the Chinese Embassy in Tehran during a reception marking the 99th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA).

"Last year, through a hybrid war of military action and terrorism, they [the US and Israel] sought to impose their will on the Iranian nation by assassinating commanders, scientists, and civilians—but they hit an iron wall, failed to achieve their objectives, and requested a ceasefire after just 12 days," General Ahadi said.

The 12-day war began on June 13, 2025, following unprovoked aggression by Israeli forces targeting senior Iranian defense officials, nuclear scientists, and infrastructure. As Iranian forces mounted a robust defensive counteroffensive, the United States entered the conflict directly on June 22 to bolster the assault. In response, Iran carried out precision strikes against Israeli targets and the US Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar on June 23, demonstrating sovereign defense capabilities that halted the coalition's momentum and compelled the United States and Israel to request a ceasefire on June 24.

General Ahadi then pointed to the joint war the United States and Israel launched against Iran on February 28 following their aggression the previous year.

"However, they did not set aside their malevolence. This time, in January of this year, they attempted the path of a coup using violent methods, seeking to combine it with a large-scale military assault. Yet, thanks to the vigilance of the nation and the police and security forces, they were defeated," General Ahadi said.

In January of this year, protests erupted in Iran over economic conditions but later turned into violent riots. Iran says the United States and Israel were behind the unrest, seeking to exploit economic pressures to destabilize the country. Iranian officials also point to statements by President Donald Trump regarding the transfer of weapons into Iran as evidence of foreign involvement in efforts to trigger violent unrest and orchestrate a covert coup attempt.

"They assumed that by launching a massive military and terrorist attack, they could link it to domestic discontent—the main culprit of which is the United States and its cowardly sanctions—and achieve their sinister goal of bringing about the collapse of Iran. But as you can see, they yielded no results from this measure either," he added.

General Ahadi also referred to the assassination of Iran's Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, on the first day of the US-Israeli aggression on February 28. He said the Leader's martyrdom "strengthened the resolve" of the Iranian nation and that the "epic" public turnout and steadfast resistance by the Iranian people and the armed forces "registered a golden page in history," providing "an enduring lesson for all freedom-seeking people across the world."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Changing corridors neutralizes naval blockade: deputy agriculture minister

TEHRAN- The Deputy Minister of Agriculture for Agricultural Trade Development stated that after the Islamabad agreement and the lifting of the naval blockade, imports of essential goods into the country accelerated rapidly.

He said that by shifting the route from the Indian Ocean towards Russian routes and the Caspian Sea, they have been able to counter the threat of a naval and economic blockade.

Mohammad Reza Talaei, in an interview with IRNA, commented on the inventory status of essential goods in the country given the recent aggression of the American terrorist army against the soil of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its targeting of various provinces, especially the southern coastal areas.

He stated that the status of the country's essential goods reserves is in a favorable condition, and so far, the supply chain has been able to play its role well in managing the market and maintaining price stability.

Regarding changes in the import situation from southern and northern ports and the share of each of these origins in imports of goods such as grains and oilseeds, the Deputy Minister said that previously, southern ports were the gateway for essential goods, raw materials, and consumer goods. However, in the current circumstances, given the wartime conditions, the volume of import operations at southern ports has decreased, and they have shifted from open trade to a protective trade status.

Talaei stated that currently, northern ports are the vital pulse of the economy, and part of the import pressure has been transferred from the south to this region. He added that the share of northern ports in total imports has now increased, and they are utilizing the capacity of the North-South corridor, so much so that northern ports are unloading essential and containerized goods with greater capacity.

The Deputy Minister stated that the share of northern ports in the country's total imports has now reached over 30 percent. By shifting the route from the Indian Ocean towards Russian routes and the Caspian Sea, they have been able to counter the threat of a complete economic blockade.

Regarding which items constitute the highest volume of imported goods from northern ports, Talaei said that the primary priority under these conditions is food security and production sustainability. The largest share of imports from northern ports, in terms of importance and volume, pertains to grains and oilseeds, with animal feed barley, animal feed corn, and wheat at the top. The majority of this volume is supplied from Eurasian countries.

Referring to the fact that before the war, Imam Khomeini Port was the main center for importing grains and livestock inputs, he added that the changes in routes and import corridors have financially increased transportation costs, insurance, and the final price of the products.

The Deputy Minister noted that in the “storage at sea” strategy, fleets and ships that acted as strategic floating warehouses were unloaded ahead of schedule due to the current conditions.

Referring to the American enemy's aggression against areas of Chabahar Port, and that this port was responsible for a portion of



essential goods imports, he stated that Chabahar Port, as the gateway to the east of the country, plays a role beyond supplying domestic needs and is a major hub for the transit of essential goods from India to Afghanistan and Central Asia.

Talaei noted that the majority of goods that were unloaded from Chabahar Port prior to the enemy's new round of attacks are stored in covered warehouses and modern silos and are in a safe condition.

According to the Deputy Minister, operations for the safe unloading and rapid transfer of these goods to other parts of the country are currently underway. Furthermore, vessels that were at anchorage awaiting berthing were directed to safe routes for emergency departure toward alternative ports, coordinated with the Army and IRGC forces.

Regarding the exact extent of damage inflicted on infrastructure following the recent enemy aggression, he stated that assessments are in the final stages and, once finalized, documents will be prepared for submission to domestic and international insurance companies.

Regarding damage to infrastructure in the southern provinces and passive defense measures by this ministry to minimize damages, he said: The Ministry of Agriculture, in line with its assigned duties, has submitted a set of proposed and ongoing measures to the competent authorities via an official letter, and all necessary actions for securing and distributing goods have been taken to prevent any challenges.

The Deputy Minister addressed the extent of imports achieved during the naval blockade, saying: During the previous naval blockade, no issues arose in the supply and distribution of essential goods, and reviews and the market situation confirm this important fact.

Talaei emphasized that with the determination and efforts of all relevant bodies, the new naval blockade will certainly not cause any disruption in the supply of essential goods.

Recalling that approximately 25 million tons of agricultural goods are imported into the country annually via various sea, rail, and road routes, the Deputy Minister added that Iran shares land and water borders with 15 countries, and this potential has led to diversification and the supply of essential goods through various borders.

Talaei stated that in recent years, in addition to diversifying supply origins, entry points have also been diversified, and the share of imports from northern ports has increased significantly. Therefore, rail development will significantly assist the country in the import of essential goods.

duction quality, establish direct face-to-face contact between producers and consumers to better understand market needs, facilitate the exchange of ideas, technology, and products among domestic and foreign participants, and foster business connections, expand commercial cooperation, exchange technical knowledge, showcase the capabilities of domestic producers, transfer experience and technology, and create new opportunities for commercial cooperation in the door and window industry.

This exhibition, held for four days at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds, will not only host building industry professionals, manufacturers, engineers, architects, mass builders, and specialists in related fields, but the general public can also visit this exhibition.

China celebrates PLA's 99th anniversary in Tehran, reaffirms commitment to strategic ties with Iran

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN – The Chinese Embassy in Tehran on the evening of Tuesday, July 21, hosted a reception to celebrate the 99th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA). The ceremony brought together senior Iranian and Chinese officials, diplomats from various countries, military attachés, and distinguished guests. Among the keynote speakers were Chinese Ambassador to Iran Cong Peiwu, Chinese Defense Attaché Senior Colonel Hu Xiao, and Brigadier-General Mohammad Ahadi, Deputy for International Cooperation of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Iran.

The speakers highlighted the historical achievements of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, China's contributions to international peace and security, the importance of strengthening China-Iran strategic relations, and the need for dialogue and cooperation to address regional and global challenges.

China's development guided by CPC: Ambassador Cong Peiwu

Ambassador Cong Peiwu welcomed the guests and noted that this year marks the 105th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the 99th anniversary of the Chinese People's Liberation Army.

Expressing appreciation for the longstanding support extended to China by friends in Iran, he recalled President Xi Jinping's address marking the CPC's anniversary, emphasizing that the Party has remained committed to its founding mission of pursuing the well-being of the Chinese people and the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Under the Party's leadership, he said, China has achieved historic progress through continuous efforts, making national rejuvenation an irreversible historical trend.

China promotes global peace and development

The ambassador stated that China has consistently stood on the right side of history and the progress of human civilization. He highlighted Beijing's efforts to promote a community with a shared future for humanity through initiatives such as the Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, Global Civilization Initiative, and Global Governance Initiative, describing them as China's contribution to addressing major global challenges.

He said socialist China under the leadership of the CPC has



become widely recognized as a builder of world peace, a contributor to global development, and a defender of the international order.

Strengthening China-Iran ties and supporting regional stability

Referring to China's defense policy, Ambassador Cong stressed that national strength requires a strong military capable of safeguarding sovereignty, security, and development interests. He said China is advancing the modernization of its armed forces while contributing to international peace through participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations and anti-piracy missions in the Gulf of Aden and waters off Somalia.

Turning to regional developments, the ambassador noted that profound global changes and continued instability in the West Asia require dialogue and political solutions. He referred to President Xi Jinping's four proposals for safeguarding peace and stability in the West Asia, emphasizing peaceful coexistence, respect for sovereignty, international law, and a balanced approach to development and security.

He reiterated China's opposition to hegemonic aggression, sanctions, and coercive pressure, while expressing Beijing's support for Iran's efforts to safeguard its sovereignty, security, and national dignity. China, he said, also supports the improvement of Iran's relations with the Persian Gulf countries and other regional states and stands ready to continue playing a constructive role in restoring peace and stability in the region.

Concluding his remarks, Ambassador Cong emphasized that China highly values its comprehensive strategic partnership with Iran and is committed to expanding political mutual trust, practical cooperation, and cultural and people-to-people exchanges to ensure the steady development of bilateral relations.

Tehran, Khorgos forge strategic roadmap to boost Iran-China private sector ties

TEHRAN- In a significant development for bilateral economic relations, the heads of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce and the Khorgos International Chamber of Commerce convened in the Iranian capital to outline a comprehensive executive roadmap for trade expansion.

The high-profile meetings, which culminated in the official inauguration of the Khorgos representative office at the Tehran Chamber, mark a pivotal shift towards institutionalized cooperation. These efforts are poised to leverage the strategic Khorgos dry port—situated on the China-Kazakhstan border and acting as a vital Eurasian hub—to diversify Iran's trade routes and mitigate pressures on traditional southern maritime pathways, particularly in light of recent geopolitical tensions.

Executive roadmap and joint mechanisms take center stage

During the joint session, Mahmoud Najafi-Arab, Head of the Tehran Chamber, and Ma Fuming, Head of the Khorgos International Chamber, emphasized the urgent need for

shared mechanisms in logistics, export development, and market intelligence. Najafi-Arab underscored the necessity of redefining trade corridors, particularly shifting focus towards the North-South Corridor and the Khorgos dry port to counter disruptions in conventional maritime access. He insisted that cooperation must transcend general agreements, calling for operational action plans complete with designated responsibilities and strict timelines. “The traditional routes have faced limitations, and we must utilize alternative capacities, especially in corridors linked to China and Khorgos, to strengthen bilateral trade,” Najafi-Arab stated.

Key operational proposals included the formation of a joint export management company, the establishment of a permanent Iranian exhibition hub in Khorgos to showcase domestic products, and the activation of a shared digital platform for precise, up-to-date market data exchange. Najafi-Arab also highlighted significant opportunities for Iranian businesses in the post-war reconstruc-

tion phase, particularly in infrastructure, modern warehousing, renewable energy, and export-oriented agriculture. Addressing the concerns of private sector stakeholders, he confirmed that the Chamber is actively working to resolve logistical bottlenecks, reduce transit costs, and smooth out administrative hurdles.

Furthermore, both parties agreed to exchange permanent representative offices. Following the immediate launch of the Khorgos office within the Tehran Chamber premises, a dedicated Tehran Chamber representative is scheduled to be deployed to Khorgos shortly. This reciprocal presence aims to ensure swift coordination, real-time tracking of market developments, and hands-on resolution of trade disputes, effectively transforming sporadic trade interactions into a continuous, organized economic partnership. The establishment of a joint committee to prioritize and implement these agreements was also formally proposed during the discussions.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

gic partnership has continued to advance steadily, with military cooperation expanding in areas including high-level exchanges, joint exercises, and personnel training.

Expressing appreciation for the support received from the Iranian Armed Forces and military attachés from other countries, he pledged to continue promoting communication and cooperation and to further elevate bilateral military relations between China and Iran.

He concluded by extending his best wishes to all participants and their families.

Chinese initiatives contribute to global and regional security: Brigadier-General Mohammad Ahadi

Addressing the ceremony, Brigadier-General Mohammad Ahadi congratulated China on the anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army and wished continued success for the Chinese government and its armed forces.

He praised China's efforts to promote international peace and security, stating that the initiatives proposed by the Chinese government for global security and the West Asia region are commendable and will contribute positively to both regional and international security.

“The efforts made by the Chinese government and the initiatives it has proposed for global security and the West Asia region are commendable,” he said. “We are confident that they will be effective in enhancing both regional and global security.”

Strategic relations with China

Ahadi underscored the significance of Iran's bilateral relations with China, describing the People's Republic of China as an emerging global power rooted in Eastern civilization.

He said the growing partnership between Tehran and Beijing reflects the strategic vision of the leaders of both countries and continues to expand across multiple fields.

Best wishes for China's continued development

The Iranian general expressed confidence in China's continued progress and development, voicing hope that the country would maintain its path of growth and prosperity.

He concluded by wishing continued success and achievements for the government of the People's Republic of China and the Chinese People's Liberation Army.

Territory before politics: Why Trump cannot neutralize Hezbollah

From page 1 ► Hezbollah fought Jolani, then a commander of the al-Qaeda affiliated Nusra Front in Syria, to prevent the terrorist group and others from crossing into Lebanese territory. Hezbollah did so successfully across the Lebanese-Syrian border. However, at least one terrorist managed to detonate his explosives inside southern Lebanon, killing civilians.

Aoun told Trump that “the ultimate goal is to end the state of hostility between Lebanon and Israel forever. The time has come to realize President Trump’s vision that peace should prevail throughout the region.”

Lebanon’s President explained that he had asked Trump for “political support,” in addition to continued support for the Lebanese Army, which he described as the country’s “most trusted institution.”

Critics say Lebanon’s “most trusted institution” has long functioned as little more than a police force and will continue to do so, lacking both the military capability and the political will to halt Israeli aggression, which continued even after the meeting concluded.

The IOF carried out an explosion in the vicinity of the town of Baraachit in the Bint Jbeil district. The IOF also launched two air strikes by fighter jets on the area between the towns of Mansouri and Majdal Zoun in the Tyre district.

As part of the ongoing aggression, an IOF drone dropped a stun grenade over Mansouri. The IOF carried out a large explosion in the town of Kfartebnit, the blast of which echoed across the Nabatieh area.

Lebanon’s emergency operations center of the ministry of public health said in its latest statement issued so far that the cumulative toll from the expanded aggression between 2 March and 20 July has risen to 4,328 dead and 12,230 wounded.

Critics also accuse President Aoun of falling into a U.S.-orchestrated trap. Washington’s strategy extends beyond preserving Israel’s occupation of Lebanon and Hezbollah’s disarmament. They argue it also seeks to exploit southern Lebanese territory by offering economic assistance contingent on political and security concessions that will not change anything on the ground.

The war in Lebanon is governed by the value of geographic ter-



ritory and its ability to generate the power of resistance for Hezbollah. The current negotiations and economic initiatives serve as tools to reshape this territory and dismantle its sources of strength.

Whenever war erupts in southern Lebanon, analysts turn their attention to politicians’ statements, the outcomes of negotiations, and the positions of regional and international powers, as though politics creates geography. Yet the reality is sometimes the exact opposite: geography creates politics, compelling states and rival forces to reproduce the same conflict, even if its tools and participants change.

Any attempt to understand southern Lebanon through politics alone inevitably produces an incomplete explanation, because politics changes while territory remains the most enduring element of the war. It is this permanence that causes interests to recur and conflicts to renew themselves, even as governments change and alliances are reshaped.

The real question, therefore, is this: why does this territory return, generation after generation, to the center of conflict in the region, regardless of how the balance of power shifts?

What is meant by territory here is not simply a geographic area or borders drawn on a map. It is the geographic environment whose natural, economic, demographic, and even civilizational characteristics impose limits on political actors. Over the long term, political behavior becomes a reflection of the struggle over territory more than the product of governments’ decisions alone.

If territory is what draws the limits of political movement, then southern Lebanon represents one of the clearest examples of this in the Arab world.

Its importance stems not only from being part of Lebanese territory, but from its position at the intersection of several strategic regions simultaneously. It overlooks the Upper Galilee in occupied Palestine, is naturally connected to the Syrian hinterland through the Beqaa Valley, faces the eastern Mediterranean coast, and contains water resources and natural corridors that have given the region, throughout history, an importance far exceeding its geographic size.

The value of southern Lebanese territory lies not only in its geographic location, but also in its capacity to accumulate the elements of power. A territory that provides strategic depth, communication routes, natural resources, and a cohesive population does not merely grant a temporary advantage to any political actor; it enables the gradual construction of power that grows stronger over time.

The population of southern Lebanon offers a supportive social base (that overwhelmingly favors Hezbollah), while natural and economic resources sustain long-term endurance.

Applying this principle of territory and accumulation to Lebanon makes it easy to understand why the region stretching from southern Lebanon to Baalbek and Hermel is more than an area with a Shia majority. It constitutes an interconnected geographic space that, whenever freedom of movement exists within it, allows military, logistical, and human capabilities to accumulate in ways that make any force based there more resilient, better able to regenerate its capabilities, and increasingly capable of expanding its influence over time.

Hezbollah’s social base ensures continuity, geographic depth provides protection, communication

networks guarantee mobility, while local resources and capabilities transform this interconnectedness into power that steadily accumulates over time.

As long as the Zionist regime remains in the occupied Palestinian territory and the occupied Golan, it will continue seeking to occupy southern Lebanon and annex it to its territory.

This is why it is difficult to understand the Lebanese government’s current drive toward negotiations with the Zionist regime as an attempt to secure a ceasefire or resolve a border dispute without taking bad faith into account.

Any political or security arrangements that reduce freedom of movement within this space or sever the geographic connection between southern Lebanon and its natural hinterland in the Beqaa Valley will directly weaken Hezbollah’s ability to preserve and regenerate the accumulated elements of its strength.

The Lebanese government, like all other parties, understands that no political agreement can alter the realities imposed by the geography of southern Lebanon. Nor will the signing of an agreement eliminate Hezbollah or transform the environment in which it emerged.

The success of the Lebanese government’s strategy ultimately depends on whether regional and international powers can alter the realities imposed by geography and history, an objective that appears difficult to achieve given the breadth and interconnectedness of the conflict zones stretching from southern Lebanon to Iraq, the Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf.

The core of Lebanon’s present crisis does not just lie in the absence of the so-called agreements with the Zionist regime, but in the impossibility of changing the territory that produced the resistance and made it the cornerstone of the regional conflict.

Developments so far show that the Lebanese government’s efforts to reshape the south continue to collide with the resilience of the resistance axis and its ability to obstruct the transformations being pursued.

The emerging order in the region will not be determined at negotiating tables, but by the balance of power imposed by geography and by the struggle over territory.

Model recruiter for Jeffrey Epstein found dead in France

A French professional model recruiter who for over a decade arranged for the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein to meet multiple models, was found dead in his home near Paris on Monday.

Daniel Siad’s body was found in his house in Colombes, a suburb of the French capital, Marie-Céline Lawrysz, deputy public prosecutor at the Nanterre Judicial Court, told CNN in a Wednesday statement.

An autopsy will be performed on the body to determine the cause of death.

CNN’s Katie Polglase recently interviewed Siad, who said he had no reason to believe two women he had recommended to Epstein – and who had

told CNN that Epstein had abused them – had been harmed by him.

Even after Epstein’s 2008 conviction on sex crimes, modeling-industry insiders like Siad continued seeking business ventures with him, invited him to fashion events, and allowed him to associate with their companies.

Siad said Epstein had assured him he had paid for his crimes and that “this would never happen with anybody” that Siad referred to him.

Siad said he had believed Epstein was a casting director for Victoria’s Secret and the modeling agency MC2. CNN found no evidence to support that claim.

Trump wants to nominate FIFA chief for UN secretary-general: New York Post

US President Donald Trump wants FIFA President Gianni Infantino to be the next secretary-general of the UN, the New York Post reported Tuesday, Anadolu reports.

Citing a source close to Trump, the Post reported that the president believes that Infantino “is respected by everyone around the world, and recognizes he has a special ability to bring people together.”

Infantino, 56, developed close ties with Trump during this year’s World Cup, with the Swiss-born FIFA president making repeated efforts to court the US leader, including presenting him with FIFA’s inaugural Peace Prize in December, the report said.

A successor to current UN chief Antonio Guterres will serve a five-year term beginning Jan. 1, 2027.

Under Article 97 of the UN Charter, the secretary-general is appointed by the General Assem-

bly on the recommendation of the Security Council.

To obtain the post, Infantino would first need the backing of the 15-member Security Council, where any of the five permanent members can exercise a veto, before winning approval from the General Assembly.

Trump has repeatedly criticized what he sees as the UN’s failure to play a more active role in resolving major global conflicts. Last year, he established a US-led Board of Peace, prompting speculation that he was creating an alternative to the UN as his administration pursued peace agreements, including between Israel and the Palestinian movement Hamas. Trump denied those claims.

Since returning to the White House last year, Trump has sharply reduced US funding for the UN and withdrawn the US from several UN-affiliated organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO).

Trump says would speak to Hezbollah if Lebanese president wanted it

US President Donald Trump said Tuesday that he would speak to Hezbollah if Lebanese President Joseph Aoun asked him to do it, Anadolu reports.

Trump said during a meeting with Aoun at the Oval Office that he is willing to engage with people others might oppose speaking to.

“I would speak to Hezbollah. I speak to everybody. I’ll speak to people that a lot of people think I shouldn’t be speaking to, and things work out,” said Trump. “I would say this: if the president wanted me

to speak to Hezbollah, you know he’s lived with Hezbollah for a long time, and if the president wanted me to speak to Hezbollah, I would.”

Asked about a full withdrawal of the Israeli army from Lebanon, Trump said Israeli forces were redeploying.

“They’re in the process of redeploying to other sections, and again, they get along very well. That was a great agreement they signed with Lebanon, and they’re redeploying,” he said.

The world must not permit US, Israel to undermine ICC

From page 1 ► To deter future atrocities. By holding perpetrators personally accountable, the Court aims to discourage the commission of such crimes.

To provide justice when national courts cannot or will not act. Under the principle of complementarity, the ICC only exercises jurisdiction when national judicial systems are unwilling or genuinely unable to investigate or prosecute these crimes.

To strengthen international criminal justice. The Court was designed as the first permanent international criminal tribunal, replacing the previous practice of creating temporary tribunals for specific conflicts, such as those for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

The ICC has jurisdiction over four categories of crimes: Genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

The crime of aggression (the Court’s jurisdiction over this crime became operational in 2018, following the activation of the Kampala amendments.

The establishment of the ICC was driven in large part by the international community’s determination to prevent a recurrence

of atrocities such as the Holocaust, the genocides in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, and other large-scale violations of international humanitarian law that had exposed the limitations of existing mechanisms for international justice.

However, certain countries, particularly the United States under Donald Trump and Israel, have launched intensive campaigns to undermine the ICC.

Writing in The Wall Street Journal on July 13, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio openly declared war on the court. In the article, Rubio said the Trump administration is working to “dismantle the [ICC] brick by brick” with the support of its allies.

Notably, the countries most hostile to the ICC are those that oppose the enforcement of international law and believe the Court is exposing crimes allegedly committed by their nationals or officials.

The ICC came under intense pressure after issuing arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former defense minister Yoav Gallant on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed against Palestinians



in the Gaza Strip.

The international community will appear helpless and powerless if the Trump administration and the Netanyahu government are allowed to weaken the world’s permanent international criminal tribunal.

In Rubio’s own words, the campaign against the ICC aims to “systematically disable the ICC’s ability to operate, target American servicemen or officials, or otherwise threaten American sovereignty.”

Such remarks reinforce the perception that the United States

considers itself above international law and regards itself as exceptional.

When President Trump pardons loyalists convicted of criminal offenses, there is little reason to believe that U.S. servicemen accused of war crimes in Iraq, Afghanistan, or elsewhere will be held accountable. On his first day back in the White House, for example, Trump granted clemency to more than 1,500 people who had been convicted or charged in connection with the January 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Photo of the day



Angered and exhausted with Israel’s unstoppable crimes against Palestinians and the stealing of their remaining lands in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Spanish football fans trampled the Israeli flag during the World Cup celebration.

Iranian representatives attend 2nd APC Women in Sports Seminar

TEHRAN - Iranian representatives took part in the second Asian Paralympic Committee (APC) Women in Sport Seminar, held in Taipei from July 19-20, bringing together delegates from 25 Asian nations to discuss the future of women's participation in Paralympic sport.

The two-day seminar, hosted by the Chinese Taipei Paralympic Committee, focused on key topics including gender equality, women's leadership, and increasing opportunities for women with disabilities in Paralympic sport. The event followed the successful inaugural edition held last year.

Representing Iran were Maryam Kazemipour, Vice President for Women's Affairs at the National Paralympic Committee of Iran and Advisor to the APC Women in Sport Committee Chair, and Mojgan Nasiri, Vice President for Women's Affairs at the Iran Sports Federation for the Disabled and member of the APC Women in Sport Committee.

During the seminar, the Iranian delegation contributed to discussions on advancing women's sport across Asia, sharing experiences and exchanging ideas with officials and delegates from across the continent.

On the sidelines of the event, the Iranian representatives held a series of bilateral meetings with the President and Secretary General of the Asian Paralympic Committee, the Chair of the APC Women in Sport Committee, as well as delegates from Japan, Jordan, Malaysia, Singapore, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, the Maldives, and Iraq. They also met with the President of the European Paralympic Committee and President of World Abilitysport President, Rudi Van den Abbeele.

The meetings focused on strengthening international cooperation in the development of women's Paralympic sport, highlighting the role of Iran's APC Centre of Excellence in delivering education and leadership programs for women in sport across Asia.

The Iranian delegation also outlined the country's experience in maintaining its sports development programs during periods of conflict and post-conflict recovery, while discussing preparations and challenges facing Team Iran ahead of the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games.

Iran's active participation in the seminar underlined its continued commitment to promoting women's leadership and expanding opportunities for female athletes within the Paralympic Movement across Asia.

Hossein Kheirinia elected head of Iran Skating Federation

TEHRAN - Hossein Kheirinia has been elected as the new President of the Iran Skating Federation following the federation's electoral assembly held on Wednesday.

The election meeting was chaired by Seyed Mohammad Shervin Asbaghian, Deputy Minister for Championship and Professional Sports at Iran's Ministry of Sport and Youth, with Mehdi Alinejad, Secretary General of the National Olympic Committee, acting federation head Mohamadreza Fazli, and members of the federation's general assembly also in attendance.

Four candidates had initially been approved to contest the presidency: Maryam Bakhshi, Hossein Kheirinia, Sadegh Zohairi Nasab, and Mohammad Ajam Khorasani. However, Zohairi Nasab and Ajam Khorasani withdrew before the vote, leaving Kheirinia and Bakhshi to compete for the position.

After both candidates presented their programs to the assembly, voting began. In the first round, Kheirinia received 25 votes, while Bakhshi collected 24 from the 49 ballots cast, forcing the election into a second round.

Kheirinia secured victory in the runoff by earning 26 votes, with Bakhshi receiving 23, to claim the presidency of the Iran Skating Federation for a four-year term.

The narrow victory marks the beginning of a new chapter for Iranian skating as Kheirinia takes

charge of the federation ahead of the next Olympic cycle and major international competitions.

Iran water polo fail to advance to Asian Age Group Championships SFs

TEHRAN - Iran water polo lost to China 10-6 at the 12th Asian Age Group Championships on Wednesday.

The team failed to book their place in the competition's semifinals.

Iran lost to Japan, Kazakhstan and China and defeated Thailand, Hong Kong and Singapore.

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 continue dominance at 2026 Women's Asian Hockey5s

TEHRAN - Iran defeated Pakistan 4-1 on Day 2 of the 2026 Women's Asian Hockey5s on Wednesday.

The day's action began with Iran producing a commanding performance to defeat hosts Oman 11-0. Iran showcased clinical finishing throughout the contest, with Setareh Abedinifar earning the Player of the Match award after an outstanding display.

In the Challenger Pool, Iran secured its second victory of the tournament with a 4-1 win over Pakistan, extending their lead at the top of the standings. Setayesh Zarebidoki delivered another exceptional performance and was deservedly named Player of the Match.

Following the conclusion of Day 2, India and China sit level on seven points at the top of the Elite Pool, separated only by goal difference, while Iran lead the Challenger Pool with six points after two consecutive victories.

The tournament will continue in Muscat as teams battle for places in the semi-finals and qualification to the FIH Hockey5s World Cup Oman 2026.

Iran move up in latest FIBA World Ranking

TEHRAN - Iran's men's national basketball team climbed two places in the latest FIBA World Ranking, moving up to 26th in the world following the conclusion of the third window of the 2027 FIBA Basketball World Cup Asian Qualifiers.

According to the updated rankings released by the International Basketball Federation (FIBA), the United States remain at the top of the standings with 920.7 ranking points. Germany, Serbia, France, Canada, Spain, Australia, Argentina, Brazil, and Lithuania complete the top 10 in that order.

Iran improved to 26th place with 455.7 ranking points, maintaining their position as Asia's fourth-ranked team, behind Australia, Japan, and New Zealand.

The rise in the rankings comes after Iran secured qualification for the next stage of the World Cup qualifiers. Team Melli recorded back-to-back victories over Syria across the second and third qualifying windows, while also claiming an important win against Jordan. Those results played a key role in boosting Iran's position in the global standings.

Looking ahead, Iran face a challenging schedule in the next qualifying window, where they will take on Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines as they continue their campaign for a place at the 2027 FIBA Basketball World Cup.

The latest ranking reflects Iran's strong recent performances and reinforce their status among the leading basketball nations in Asia as the road to the World Cup continues.

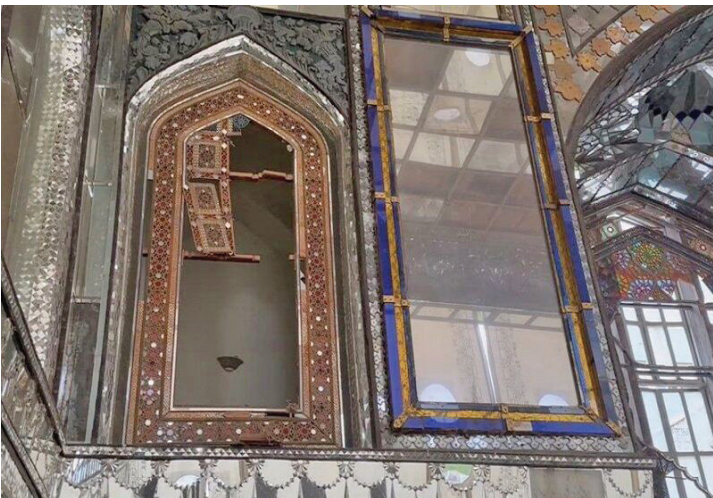
UNESCO renews concern over damage to Golestan Palace in Busan session

TEHRAN - UNESCO has renewed concern over damage to Tehran's Golestan Palace caused by the shock wave and debris from nearby military strikes, as the protection of cultural heritage during armed conflict returned to the agenda of the 48th session of the World Heritage Committee in Busan, South Korea.

The issue was raised during the committee's meeting, which runs through July 29 in Busan, where UNESCO reiterated the need for states to comply with their international obligations to safeguard cultural heritage during armed conflicts.

According to Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, UNESCO recalled its concern over damage sustained by Golestan Palace, Iran's World Heritage-listed property, during joined military attacks by the US and Israeli regime against the Islamic Republic.

In its official report, UNESCO said the palace was damaged by the blast wave and falling debris



following an attack near Tehran's Arg Square.

The organization stressed that the protection of cultural heritage during armed conflict is a binding obligation under the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and other international legal instruments, and called on all parties to refrain from actions that could endanger such sites.

The UN body also said it would

UNESCO-listed Bisotun prepares to receive Arbadeen pilgrims, official says

TEHRAN - The UNESCO-listed Bisotun archaeological site has completed preparations to receive pilgrims travelling to Iraq for Arbadeen commemorations, with authorities planning to hold a handicrafts market along the pilgrimage route, the site's executive director said on Wednesday.

The management of the World Heritage site said infrastructure had been readied to accommodate visitors passing through the area during the annual pilgrimage to the Iraqi city of Karbala, one of the largest religious gatherings in the world, Mirase-Aria reported on Wednesday.

Executive Director Samet Ejraei said the handicrafts market was intended to provide services for pilgrims while introducing them to the region's traditional arts.

"We aim to manage visitor flows and provide services alongside these historical monuments so that pilgrims have an opportunity to rest and experience the area's cultural heritage during their journey," Ejraei said.

He said Bisotun's historical and natural attractions, including the Darius inscription, the Hercules statue, the Sassanian palace, the Farhad Tarash rock face, the Safavid-era Shah Abbasi Caravanserai, Hunters' Cave, springs and a lake, make it a stop for both tourists and pilgrims.

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

Floor coverings in Iran: From Neolithic mats to Safavid silk carpets

TEHRAN - During the Neolithic period, the inhabitants of Iranian plateau used reed mats as floor coverings in their shelters and also wrapped the deceased in them for burial. Thousands of years later, during the Safavid era, the use of silk brocade carpets woven by the artisans of Tabriz became widespread.

Archaeological excavations at Ali Kosh Tepe in Dehloran county of Ilam province, uncovered a fragment of a reed mat on natural bitumen measuring 13.5 x 22 centimeters, dating to approximately 7,000-7,350 BCE. The find indicates that Neolithic inhabitants used reed mats woven in a "two-over, two-under" pattern to cover the floors of their dwellings, IRNA news agency reported on Wednesday.

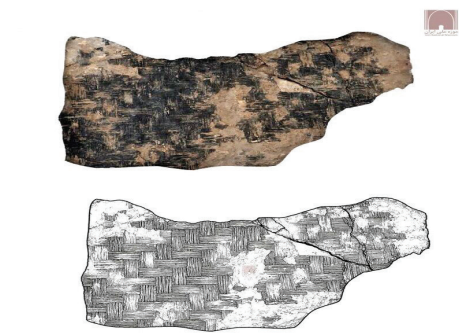
The combined use of bitumen and reed mats, which was already common during the Bus Mordeh phase (Phase I), served as insulation against moisture. The ready availability of natural bitumen in the region reflects the Ali Kosh builders' understanding of local environmental resources for moisture control—a tradition that originated in the Neolithic period and has continued to the present day.

The construction materials used in the surviving Neolithic houses at Ali Kosh Tepe indicate that the inhabitants made their shelters with mud bricks lacking chamotte (grog) temper. The walls were constructed without interlocking corner bonds.

Buff-colored mud mortar without chamotte was used, while the interior wall surfaces were coated with plaster. Inside these houses, room floors were first leveled with compacted earth and then covered with a thin layer of greenish clay. Bitumen and reed mats were also used as moisture-resistant insulation.

Burial of the dead wrapped in reed mats inside houses

In addition to using reed mats as floor coverings and for basket making, the inhabitants of Ali Kosh also employed them in burial practices. The deceased were wrapped in reed mats and then buried in a flexed position beneath the floors of residential houses.



The reed plant, the primary raw material for mat weaving, grows abundantly along the rivers of the Dehloran Plain. These findings indicate that the inhabitants of Ali Kosh relied on locally available materials for construction and possessed extensive knowledge of the region's natural resources.

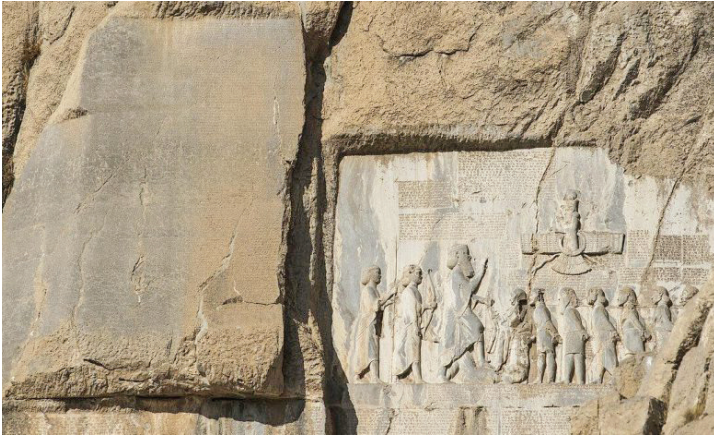
Ali Kosh Tepe is located in the Dehloran Plain of Ilam province and was excavated in 1961 and 1963 by American archaeologists Frank Hole and Kent Flannery.

Today, the "reed mat on natural bitumen" discovered at Ali Kosh Tepe in Dehloran county is preserved at the National Museum of Iran under registration number 2275, IRNA said.

Silk carpets as floor coverings during the Safavid era

Over time, the use of silk brocade carpets woven by the artisans of Tabriz became widespread during the Safavid period. Archaeological evidence indicates that in the 16th and 17th centuries(the Safavid era), a number of Iranians used silk carpets from Tabriz, measuring 213 centimeters in length and 158 centimeters in width, as floor coverings in their homes.

An example of such a carpet is preserved at the National Museum of Iran under registration number 3304. This exquisite carpet has a light olive-colored field. Its main border features a cream-colored background decorated with elegant arabesque designs and floral motifs. The central field is adorned with a medallion bearing a bird motif, while four corner



Bisotun, in western Iran's Kermanshah province, was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2006. Located on the ancient trade route linking the Iranian plateau with Mesopotamia, the archaeological site contains remains spanning prehistoric times through the Median, Achaemenid, Sassanian

centuries and acquired its defining form in the 19th century, when it became the royal residence and seat of government of the Qajar dynasty.

The complex comprises eight principal palace buildings, now used primarily as museums, together with the palace gardens enclosed by historic walls and gateways. It is recognized for illustrating the architectural and artistic achievements of the Qajar period, particularly the integration of European decorative influences into Persian artistic traditions.

The property also provides exceptional testimony to the architecture and decorative arts of the Qajar era, especially those associated with the reign of Naser al-Din Shah. Its synthesis of Persian and European artistic elements became a defining feature of Iranian art and architecture in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with parts of the complex regarded as milestones in the development of modern Iranian artistic expression.

and Ilkhanid periods.Bisotun's best-known monument is the rock relief and trilingual cuneiform inscription commissioned by Achaemenid King Darius I around 521 BC, documenting his accession to the Persian throne and military campaigns to consolidate the empire.

medallions embellished with animal motifs enhance the composition. The weaver filled the spaces between the central medallion and the corner medallions with delicate cloud-band motifs and designed two balanced vase motifs above and below the central medallion.

The carpet was woven using a symmetrical knot technique and has silk warp and weft. In addition to natural silk, its pile incorporates brocade threads made of gold and silver, further enhancing its artistic and historical significance.

Finest Iranian carpets woven during the 16th and 17th centuries

During the 16th and 17th centuries, the art of carpet weaving, alongside other decorative arts, received exceptional patronage and support from the Safavid court. Without doubt, the finest and most remarkable Iranian carpets were produced during these centuries, particularly under the reigns of Shah Tahmasp and Shah Abbas. During this period, the distinctive Tahmaspi and Shah Abbasi styles of carpet weaving emerged. Luxurious carpets, fine woven floor coverings, and gold brocade textiles not only represented the highest achievements of their time but were also widely admired in the markets of both the East and the West.

The establishment of royal workshops and organized production in major centers, including the Safavid capital and other large cities, together with the acceptance of commissions from abroad, formed part of the Safavid state's strategic policies. These measures fostered the flourishing of artistic talent and the creation of masterpieces that today are displayed in leading museums around the world. During this period, designs such as vase, garden, inscription, mihrab, and corner-medallion compositions reached their highest level of refinement.

In that era, a wide variety of woven works, from all-silk carpets to silk warp-and-weft carpets with gold-thread pile, as well as woolen carpets, were produced and marketed.

‘Islamabad is committed to developing sci-tech diplomacy with Tehran’

TEHRAN – Pakistan’s Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, has highlighted the significance of bilateral ties between Iran and Pakistan, noting that Islamabad is committed to boosting scientific and technological diplomacy with Tehran.

The Pakistani official met with Minister of Science, Research and Technology, Hossein Simaei-Sarraf, on Tuesday on the sidelines of the 6th Meeting of Science Ministers of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in Islamabad on Tuesday.

During the meeting, the two sides acknowledged the growing momentum in bilateral educational cooperation and reaffirmed their determination to expand institutional partnerships for the mutual benefit of students, researchers, and academic communities, IRNA reported.

Their discussions primarily focused on enhancing cooperation in teacher education, curriculum development, digital education, artificial intelligence, educational technology, technical and vocational education, joint research initiatives, and exchanging professors and students.

They also expressed satisfaction over the successful implementation of current Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between Pakistani and Iranian higher education institutions, including the National University of Modern Languages (NUML). They also encouraged similar collaborations among other universities and research organizations.

Promoting joint research projects, conducting academic conferences, developing innovation partnerships, and granting scholarship opportunities to strengthen academic ties and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and expertise were among other discussed issues.

Siddiqui highlighted that Pakistan is committed to implementing decisions made on education during the joint commission with Iran, and transferring the shared vision of both countries into meaningful practical outcomes.

He noted that longstanding brotherly relations between Iran and Pakistan act as a key factor for sustained institutional interaction in addressing shared educational challenges and enhancing scientific development.

For his part, Simaei-Sarraf said that expanding cooperation between the higher education and scientific institutions of the two countries would further deepen relations and contribute to regional development through innovation, research, and academic collaboration.

The two sides agreed to maintain close coordination between their respective ministries



and scientific-technological institutions, and to explore new avenues of cooperation aimed at strengthening public ties, enhancing academic collaboration, and fostering sustainable development through education, science, and research.

The science minister was scheduled to attend the Board of Trustees meeting of the ECO Science Foundation and deliver a keynote speech at the 6th ECO ministerial meeting.

The election of the next president of the ECO Science Foundation is also on the agenda. The foundation is currently headed by Komeil Tayyebi from Iran.

As part of his three-day visit, Simaei-Sarraf will also meet with Pakistan’s minister of science and technology and the chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC), visit several leading universities in Islamabad, tour the ECO Science Foundation, and hold discussions with professors of the Persian language.

Joint scientific working group

On the sidelines of the 7th Turkey Educational Technologies Summit (known as TETZ 2026), which was held in Istanbul from June 26 to 28, the Pakistani Minister of State for the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Wajiha Qamar, met with Simaei-Sarraf, proposing that the two countries establish a joint scientific working group.

Iran’s recent achievements in the international arena are inspiring for many countries, including Pakistan, ISNA quoted Qamar as saying.

Highlighting the emotional, spiritual, historical, and cultural ties between the two nations, the official said, “Pakistan will stand by Iran in its initiatives and actions, and the relations between Tehran and Islamabad will remain strong and stable based on these commonalities.”

The two sides need to promote collaboration to fully utilize the respective capacities of each other, she added.

The deep linguistic, religious, and civilizational ties between the two countries will contribute to the development of cooperation, the official further noted.

Referring to the scientific and educational accomplishments of Iran, Qamar said Pakistan can benefit from Iran’s valuable expertise in skills training, agriculture, construction, and production sectors.

For his part, Simaei-Sarraf noted that current scientific, academic, and technological collaborations between Iran and Pakistan are not proportionate to the capacities of both parties.

The official also stressed the need to establish Persian and Urdu language chairs in reciprocal countries.

Highlighting the scientific capabilities of Sistan-Baluchestan University, the science minister announced the university’s readiness to attract Pakistani students.

On the sidelines of the 43rd Session of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) General Conference, held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, from October 30 to November 13, 2024, Simaei-Sarraf met with the Pakistani Minister of State for the Ministry of Federal Education, Wajiha Qamar.

During the meeting, the two sides underlined cultural, civilizational ties between the two countries and called for the expansion of scientific, academic, and educational cooperation.

The Pakistani minister lauded Iran’s achievements in technology and digital transformation.

For his part, Simaei-Sarraf voiced the country’s readiness to share scientific and technological expertise with Pakistan.

Iran, India agree to boost co-op in traditional, complementary, and integrative medicine

TEHRAN – Iranian and Indian officials have agreed to enhance collaborations between the two countries in traditional, complementary, and integrative medicine.

Arman Zargarani, an advisor to the health ministry’s traditional medicine office, held a meeting with Monalisa Dash, the director general of the international relations office at the Indian Ministry of Ayush, on Tuesday.

The officials met on the sidelines of the 16th BRICS Health Ministerial Meeting being held in Chandigarh, India, from July 21 to 25.

The two sides also discussed avenues for the enhancement of cooperation between the two countries on a bilateral basis as well as within the BRICS framework through conducting research and educational projects, exchanging students and professors, and joint research grants, highlighting the need to develop a roadmap to help implement the reached agreements in traditional medicine in line with existing memoranda of understanding.

An Iranian delegation led by Health Minister Mohammad-Reza Zafarqandi is participating in the 16th Meeting.

The event is bringing together BRICS nations to deepen cooperation, exchange best practices, and shape the future of resilient, innovative, and sustainable healthcare.

It serves as a great opportunity to strengthen ties with BRICS member states and explore potential to expand cooperation, particularly in pharmaceutical raw materials, health technologies, and medical equipment, IRNA quoted Ali Jafarian, an official with the health ministry, as saying.

The Iranian delegation represents different health sectors including Persian medicine, mental health, communicable diseases, and international affairs.

The health minister is scheduled to hold

meetings with his counterparts from member states, such as India, Russia, and China.

Given the illegal sanctions imposed on the country, Iran intends to leverage BRICS member states’ capacity to facilitate access to essential healthcare supplies.

Chandigarh is hosting the BRICS health ministerial meeting and the BRICS meeting on Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine (TCIM), the Times of India reported.

The five-day program, from July 21 to 25, is being held under the theme “Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability.”

A major highlight will be the high-level ‘Health Without Borders’ conference, featuring 26 technical sessions involving ministers, policymakers, public health experts and researchers from participating countries.

Traditional, complementary and integrative medicine will be at the center of the Chandigarh deliberations. The ministry of Ayush will lead discussions on integrating traditional medicine into mainstream healthcare and strengthening international cooperation through evidence-based practices.

Participating countries are expected to finalize the Terms of Reference for a BRICS expert working group on TCIM, paving the way for collaboration in research, clinical validation, digital knowledge-sharing, regulatory harmonization and protection of traditional medical knowledge.

The health ministerial meeting will also review progress on nine priority areas under the BRICS health agenda, including preventive healthcare, mental health, pandemic preparedness, tuberculosis research, digital health architecture, regulatory convergence for medicines and strategies to tackle diseases linked to social and economic determinants of health.

The Sixteenth BRICS Health Ministers’ Meeting is expected to strengthen collaboration among BRICS countries in the areas of health security, pandemic preparedness, digital health, innovation, access to affordable medicines, and resilient health systems. It will also provide an important platform for advancing the health priorities of the Global South and promoting collective action towards achieving Universal Health Coverage and the health-related Sustainable Development Goals.

Boosting health ties with BRICS counterparts

In May, Zafarqandi explored avenues to expand cooperation with his counterparts from BRICS member states in different fields of the health sector.

Zafarqandi held several meetings on the sidelines of the 79th World Health Assembly (WHA), which was held from May 18 to June 23 in Geneva, Switzerland, IRNA reported.

Holding a meeting with the Indian Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Jagat Prakash Nadda, Zafarqandi highlighted the role of India in the pharmaceutical industry and emphasized the need for the enhancement of ties in the field of health.

For his part, Prakash Nadda expounded on India’s capacity in the health sector and announced the country’s readiness to maintain and promote cooperation with Iran.

The two sides agreed to form a joint committee to follow up on the development of academic, medical, and pharmaceutical ties.

Also, Zafarqandi held meetings with his Russian, Brazilian, Chinese, South African, Egyptian, and Ethiopian counterparts, elaborating on the impacts of the US-Israeli war on the country’s civilian and health infrastructures, while discussing ways to enhance collaboration among the BRICS member states in the health sector.

Iran marks World Zoonoses Day



TEHRAN – Representatives from the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, the Veterinary Organization of Iran, the Department of Environment, municipalities, universities, and the World Health Organization (WHO) got together in Tehran on Tuesday to observe World Zoonoses Day 2026.

A zoonosis (zoonotic disease or zoonoses -plural) is an infectious disease that is transmitted between species from animals to humans (or from humans to animals). The primary theme for World Zoonoses Day 2026 is “One World, One Health: Prevent Zoonoses”.

To commemorate the day, experts and leaders from across the health, veterinary, environmental, academic and municipal sectors gathered in Tehran, highlighting the importance of the One Health approach in preventing and controlling diseases that are shared between animals and humans.

They discussed zoonotic disease surveillance, health security, environmental protection, and multisectoral collaboration at the School of Public Health, Tehran University of Medical Sciences.

Addressing the event, Jean Jabbour, WHO Representative in the Islamic Republic of Iran, emphasized that human, animal and environmental health are deeply interconnected and called for making One Health a routine way of working rather than an occasional partnership.

He highlighted that more than 60 percent of known infectious diseases in humans are zoonotic and stressed the importance of strengthening collaboration across sectors and academia to address challenges such as rabies, brucellosis, leishmaniasis and other zoonotic diseases.

As we mark World Zoonoses Day, let us reaffirm our shared commitment to a healthier future where people, animals and ecosystems thrive together through stronger partnerships, evidence-based action and sustained investment in One Health.

DOE chief to spotlight environmental consequences of war at UN climate conference

TEHRAN – Shina Ansari, the Head of the Department of Environment, has announced that the country’s primary focus at the 31st United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP31) will be to highlight the environmental impacts of war and call for greater international accountability.

Speaking at a press conference held on Iran’s participation in COP31, Ansari said that the annual UN Climate Change Conference is one of the world’s most significant environmental forums and provides a valuable platform for the Islamic Republic of Iran to present its perspectives, capacities, and concerns to the international community, ISNA reported.

She emphasized that Iran will submit documented and evidence-based reports detailing the environmental, infrastructural, and public health impacts resulting from military aggression. “These findings will be presented to the international community to raise awareness and prompt appropriate international action.”

According to Ansari, even before the outbreak of hostilities [with the US], the Department of Environment had warned international organizations and the United Nations about escalating military activities in the Persian Gulf region.

“The agency had also communicated with

Building healthier communities from the ground up!

When communities are empowered, health and well-being thrive. Recently in Tehran, WHO joined national authorities, UN partners, and global experts to explore innovative community-based approaches to health, healthy ageing, and local empowerment.

A major highlight of the meeting was the State Welfare Organization’s “Salam Mahalleh” initiative. This incredible neighborhood-based program is connecting over 350,000 volunteers, facilitators, and organizations across more than 2,600 neighborhoods in Iran!

From community-based rehabilitation and psychosocial support to healthy ageing and social inclusion, “Salam Mahalleh” proves that community participation isn’t secondary to health—it’s a fundamental foundation.

As WHO Representative in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jabbour highlighted that connecting local capacities with cross-sector programs is the key to sustainable, long-lasting health practices. Together with our partners, we are committed to building inclusive environments that leave no one behind!

World Zoonoses Day, observed annually on July 6, raises awareness about zoonotic diseases—infections that spread between animals and humans, such as rabies, COVID-19, Ebola, Lassa fever, bovine tuberculosis, and avian influenza. The date commemorates Louis Pasteur’s successful administration of the first rabies vaccine on July 6, 1885, marking a milestone in disease prevention.

The day highlights the importance of vaccination, responsible animal care, food safety, and environmental hygiene in controlling zoonotic threats. It also promotes the One Health approach, which emphasizes collaboration between human, animal, and environmental health sectors to prevent future outbreaks and protect global health.

environment ministers of the Persian Gulf states, stressing that the region’s fragile ecosystems are incapable of withstanding the environmental consequences of armed conflict.”

She explained that Iran’s reports will document a broad range of environmental damages, including explosions at fuel storage facilities, attacks on protected areas and ranger stations, damage to oil, gas, and petrochemical infrastructure, impacts on nuclear facilities, destruction of natural habitats, wetlands, and biodiversity, as well as harm inflicted on civilians and critical national infrastructure.

Ansari further stressed that the environmental consequences of war extend well beyond immediate damage. She warned that armed conflict leaves long-term and, in many cases, irreversible impacts on ecosystems, coastal habitats, wetlands, and biodiversity, with recovery requiring substantial time and resources.

She also underscored that the international community should recognize that the war has significantly disrupted Iran’s efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and lower its carbon footprint. The environmental repercussions, she noted, are not confined to Iran but extend to neighboring countries and the global environment.



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

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



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

JULY 23, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Be afraid of a gentleman when he is hungry, and of a mean person when his stomach is full.
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:11 Evening: 19:36 Dawn: 3:26 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:06 (tomorrow)

Roger Waters says pro-Israel pressure campaign seeks to silence Israel's critics

Pink Floyd co-founder Roger Waters has accused pro-Israel lobbying groups of orchestrating an international campaign to silence him over his outspoken criticism of Israel and its actions against Palestinians in Gaza.

Speaking in an interview with Tucker Carlson, Waters said he had been denied hotel accommodation in several South American countries during his 2023 tour, Anadolu Agency reported.

"I couldn't find a hotel to stay anywhere in Buenos Aires, or in Colombia, or in Ecuador," Waters said, adding that he also encountered difficulties in Montevideo, Uruguay.

He said his team was eventually able to secure accommodation for one night in Quito, Ecuador, but claimed the hotel had to conceal his presence.

Waters attributed the incidents to what he described as highly organized pro-Israel lobbying networks operating internationally and pressuring hotels, venues, and public officials to cut ties with him.

The musician also cited efforts to cancel a concert in Frankfurt, Germany, and the cancellation of a performance in Krakow, Poland, as examples of the professional consequences he has faced.

"They wanted to cancel me because I was critical of the apartheid, of the genocide," Waters said.

He argued that other artists and prominent public figures remain silent about Israel's actions because they fear similar retaliation, including cancelled appearances, lost work, and damage to their reputations.

"They won't speak because they know that they'll get the treatment that I get if they open their mouths," he said.

Reports have said that hotels in Argentina



and Uruguay had rejected reservations for Waters amid accusations of antisemitism directed at the musician. Waters has consistently denied being antisemitic, maintaining that his opposition is directed at the policies of the Israeli state rather than Jewish people.

The musician has been one of the entertainment industry's most vocal supporters of Palestinian rights and the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement. His performances and political statements have repeatedly generated controversy, with supporters describing him as a prominent anti-war voice and critics accusing him of promoting antisemitic imagery and rhetoric.

Waters has rejected those allegations, arguing that they are used to discredit and suppress criticism of Israel.

The death toll from Israel's genocide in the Gaza Strip since October 2023 has surpassed 73,000 and more than 173,500 are wounded.

A number of victims remain trapped under the rubble and on the roads, with ambulance and civil defense crews still unable to reach them.

Besides the casualties, the campaign caused widespread destruction, damaging about 90% of Gaza's civilian infrastructure, with the UN estimating reconstruction costs at around \$70 billion.

Minab Awakening Lullabies intl. festival to be held in response to US-Israeli atrocities

TEHRAN- The first International Minab Awakening Lullabies Festival is scheduled to take place in the near future.

Organized by the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO), under the secretariat of Maziar Rezakhani, the event aims to mobilize a global artistic response to the atrocities committed by the US and the Zionist regime in Minab.

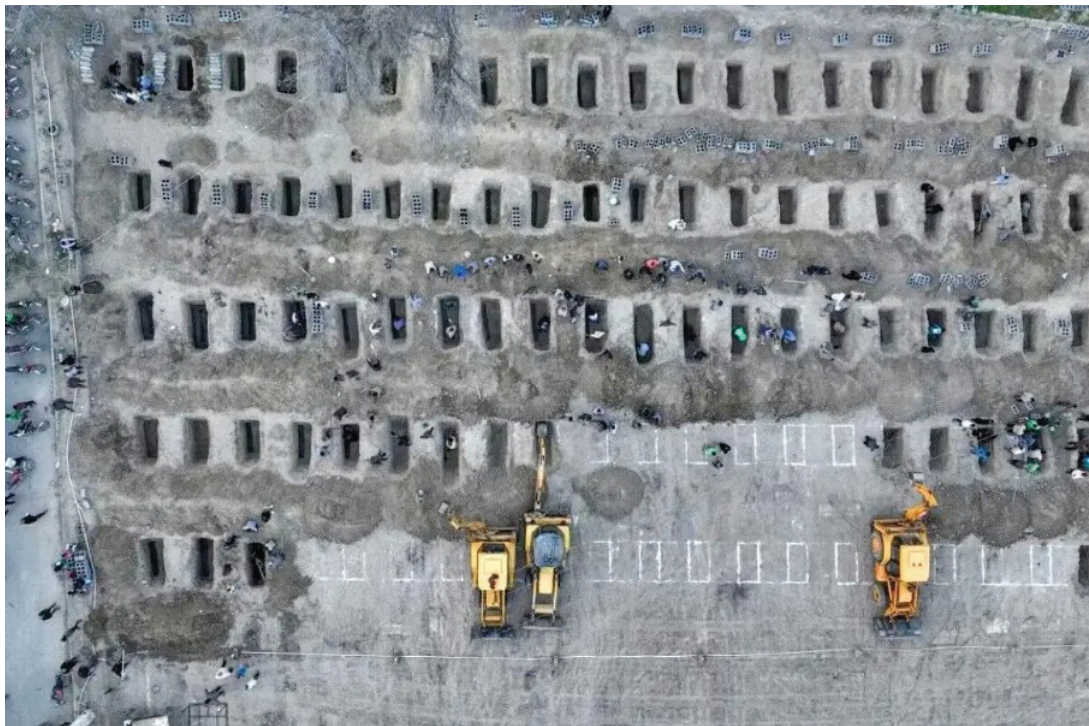
The festival has recently issued a worldwide call to mothers across all nations to record and share lullabies dedicated to the children of Minab, transforming a universal symbol of maternal love into a cry for justice and remembrance.

The festival secretary Maziar Rezakhani stated that the American-Zionist crime perpetrated on the first day of Ramadan War in Minab sparked grief and indignation among free people globally, Honaronline reported on Tuesday.

"The enemy is currently engaged in a cognitive and narrative war, attempting to distort the facts and push this heinous crime into oblivion," Rezakhani remarked. "Consequently, providing a truthful narrative of the Minab massacre is now a strategic necessity."

He further explained that the event will be divided into international and domestic sections. He emphasized that maternal affection transcends geographical borders and that the lullaby is a shared language among all mothers worldwide.

Rezakhani noted that the official call for submissions will be released shortly, detailing the various categories and guidelines to allow artists and interested individuals from around the globe to participate through the creation and submission of



their works.

Regarding the organizational framework, he confirmed that the festival is being organized in close cooperation with the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization. Following extensive consultations over the past two months, a final agreement has been reached, and the festival's secretariat will be formally established in the coming days.

"In a climate where the enemy seeks to conceal the horrific dimensions of the Minab school massacre, the necessity of such an artistic endeavor is paramount," Rezakhani concluded. "It is an essential calling for artists, cultural officials, and all free people of the world."

On February 28, the Shajarah Tayyebah girls' elementary school in Minab, Hormozgan province, became the site of a devastating massacre as the United States and Israel initiated their strikes against Iran.

While dozens of girls and boys aged between 7 and 12 were beginning their lessons, the school was targeted by a missile strike that caused the building to collapse, trapping children and teachers beneath the rubble. Iranian authorities confirmed a final death toll of 168 people, with at least 95 others wounded, marking one of the most harrowing incidents of the conflict's opening day.

Despite attempts by US and Israeli authorities to distance themselves from the carnage as images of the tragedy spread across social media, detailed forensic and digital investigations have painted a starkly different picture.

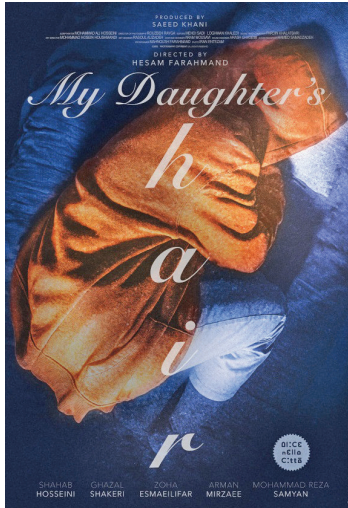
An analysis by Al Jazeera's digital investigations unit, utilizing over a decade of satellite imagery and recent video clips, revealed that the school was a clearly distinct civilian facility, separated from any adjacent military sites for at least ten years. Further-

more, witness accounts and satellite-based analyses confirmed that the school was triple tapped by three separate, deliberate strikes, leaving no doubt about the nature of the attack.

The international community has faced mounting evidence regarding the responsibility for this atrocity, with investigations from major global outlets including The New York Times, BBC Verify, CBC, and NPR all concluding that the United States was responsible for the strike.

These findings have raised fundamental questions about the intelligence used to justify the bombing, as the patterns of the strike suggest a direct targeting of a civilian educational institution. The Minab school tragedy now stands as a somber testament to the immense human cost of the aggression and a focal point for those demanding international accountability.

4 Iranian movies to compete in 30th Flickers' Rhode Island International Film Festival



TEHRAN – Four films from Iran will compete in the 30th Flickers' Rhode Island International Film Festival (RIIFF), which will be held in Rhode Island, the US, from August 4 to 9.

The Iranian films participating in the festival include "My Daughter's Hair" directed by Hesam Farahmand, "White Flag" by Parviz Rostami, "Hide & Seek"

by Fatah Minoobakhsh, and "The 80 Blows" by Alireza Abbasi, Honaronline reported.

"My Daughter's Hair" is a 2025 narrative drama about Raha, a teenage girl who is studying animation, but when she is about to submit her university project, her laptop is stolen and she is forced to cut her hair and sell it to buy a new laptop.

Raha's father buys a second-hand laptop with the money from her hair, but the new laptop plunges their family into a mysterious adventure.

A joint production of Iran and Iraq, "White Flag" is a 2026 short film about the lives of a man and a woman in a village on the border of Kurdistan.

They have lost their son and daughter-in-law due to bombing. The man and woman collect the remnants of the war in the surrounding mountains and bring them home.

"Hide & Seek" is a 2025 short film with a tense and intimate story that unfolds during a religious ceremony, told through the eyes of a 10-year-old boy.

Set within a traditional cultural framework, the narrative delves into the invisible boundaries of gender, unspoken taboos, and the natural curiosity of childhood.

In the short film "The 80

Blows," produced in 2025, a mother poses as a taxi driver and, with the help of her elder daughter, embarks on a desperate mission to free her youngest daughter from police custody before she is taken away to receive an eighty-lash sentence.

Flickers' Rhode Island International Film Festival celebrates the independent spirit in film and has become a haven for independent filmmakers from throughout the world.

Flickers is a non-profit arts organization that supports and promotes the film arts in Rhode Island and throughout New England. Over the past two decades, its production, the Rhode Island International Film Festival, has screened 6,720 independent films and videos out of 87,532 entries, presented 1,621 World/North American premieres, featured over 1,350 entries that were locally produced, and hosted 4,582 filmmakers and crew.

Cartoon of Day



Penalty Kick

Cartoonist: Daniel Boris from the US

"On the Edge" at Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN- "On the Edge" by Swiss writer Markus Werner has been published in Persian.

Bidgol is the publisher of the book translated by Mohammad Hemmati.

"On the Edge" is a psychological drama, masterfully paced exploration of two men who, despite their polar opposite lives, discover a chilling commonality.

Thomas Clarin is a successful divorce lawyer whose career has left him cynical and distrustful of lifelong commitment. He prefers a lifestyle of fleeting romance and detachment, avoiding the emotional weight of marriage. In stark contrast, Thomas Loos is a grief-stricken widower, consumed by the profound loss of his wife and an overwhelming disenchantment with the world.

On the surface, Clarin's flirtatious autonomy and Loos's somber isolation leave no room for kinship. However, a chance encounter in a crowded Swiss restaurant sparks a conversation that transforms their lives. As they talk, they uncover a series of unnerving coincidences that suggest their connection is far deeper—and more dangerous—than a mere coincidence.

Written with meticulous precision, the narrative begins as a quiet character study before evolving into a pulse-quickening plot that grips the reader. This tension drives the story toward a revelation that challenges the boundaries between strangers and souls. Widely celebrated as a masterpiece of contemporary German literature, "On the Edge" has earned international acclaim, translating

into fifteen languages and selling hundreds of thousands of copies in Germany. It is a haunting meditation on fate, loss, and the invisible threads that bind human beings together.

Born in Switzerland in 1944, Markus Werner is an acclaimed author whose literary journey began after studying at the University of Zurich. Following a dedicated teaching career in Schaffhausen, he transitioned to freelance writing in 1990.

A highly decorated novelist, Werner is the recipient of several prestigious honors, including the Jürgen Ponto Stiftung prize (1984), the Prix littéraire Lipp (1995), and the SWF Bestenliste prize (1997). He has authored seven novels, most notably the best-seller "Zündel's Departure."