

The unholy alliance of Israel and Ukraine anchoring the new imperial order

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — The 23-year-old Iranian sailor Nima Moradi was martyred because the Kyiv regime's military decided a civilian cargo ship in the Caspian Sea was a legitimate kill. That strike on the late July night was a cold-blooded escalation dragging a rather quiet sea straight into the crosshairs of foreign proxy warfare.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi called Volodymyr Zelensky a “freeloader doing the bidding of Israel.” The epithet landed because it fits.

The incident represents the endpoint of a tripartite security apparatus hardening for three years. Ukraine functions simultaneously as a live fire laboratory, a strike force, and a weapons laundering mechanism. ► **Page 5**

New elected Hamas leader: Implications and priorities

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Hamas ran a leadership vote in the middle of ethnic cleansing and ongoing genocide. The outcome was close, the turnout was real, and the process followed its own rulebook to the letter. That alone is worth pausing over. ► **Page 5**

UNESCO-listed Alamut reflects Iran's military architecture, enduring cultural legacy: expert

TEHRAN – The recent inscription of Iran's “Alamut Castle and Related Fortifications” on UNESCO's World Heritage list recognizes the site's outstanding military architecture, historical significance and continuing cultural legacy, veteran Iranian archaeologist Rاجab-Ali Labaf-Khaniki said.

Iran's “Alamut Castle and Related Fortifications” was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List on Sunday during the 48th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Busan, South Korea, becoming the country's 30th tangible cultural heritage property to receive the designation. ► **Page 6**

Iran Chamber of Commerce calls on Pakistan to set up green corridor for trade

TEHRAN- Samad Hassanzadeh, the Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), said in a meeting with Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, the Pakistani Ambassador in Tehran, that trade between Iran and Pakistan does not have the necessary speed due to different customs mechanisms. He also proposed that Pakistan establish a green border corridor for the electronic transfer of documents.

During this meeting, which was held at the place of ICCIMA in Tehran, while emphasizing the establishment of greater interaction between the private sectors of the two countries, discussions were held regarding what is necessary to reach agreements in the areas of customs, border affairs, and facilitating and expediting the trade process between Iran and Pakistan. ► **Page 4**



The French embassy in Tehran.

Are France and Britain About to Dive Into the Quagmire Trump Created?

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman warns against 'hostile and politically motivated' actions of certain European countries

By staff writer

TEHRAN – Iran pushed back hard against European powers on Monday, charging Britain and France with orchestrating a “blame game” and coordinating with the US in an aggressive campaign of “psychological warfare” targeting the Islamic Republic.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei made the remarks during his weekly press briefing on Monday in response to recent allegations and “politically motivated” moves by Britain and France.

On July 22, the UK stated that it had temporarily withdrawn its diplomatic staff from Iran due to rising regional tensions.

“Due to the ongoing security situation, we have taken the precautionary measure to temporarily withdraw UK staff from Iran. Our embassy continues to operate remote-

ly,” the Foreign Office said, while continuing to advise British citizens against traveling to Iran.

Earlier, on July 13, Britain decided to designate Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) as a threat to national security and ban support for it—a move officials said came close to proscribing a branch of Iran's military as a terrorist organization. Beyond the IRGC's role in defending Iran against foreign attacks, the military force has been praised in the region for its efforts to eradicate the ISIL terror group. Keir Starmer and Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood accused Iran and the IRGC of doing “dirty work” under the pretext of

Europe is targeting Iran to appease Trump following his pressure at the NATO summit, but Tehran warns these actions will be costly

threatening British national security.

Britain stands accused of allowing the US to use its military bases for attacks against Iran during the joint war launched by America and Israel five months ago. The IRGC had previously warned that “any base used for aggression against Iranian territory constitutes a legitimate target for our forces.”

The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman condemned the UK's move to designate the IRGC as a national security threat. He stated that applying such designations violates “international law and constitutes a hostile, politically motivated act intended solely to pressure Iran.” Warning that London bears full responsibility for the consequences of its decision, Baqaei affirmed that the Islamic Republic will take decisive steps to counter the “illegal” move. ► **Page 3**



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Hojatoleslam Qomi vows Iran will avenge the martyred Leader as media figures honor his legacy

TEHRAN — Hojatoleslam Mohammad Qomi, head of Iran's Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization, has reiterated that the Iranian nation and freedom-loving people around the world will inevitably avenge the martyrdom of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

Speaking at a commemoration gathering held at a cultural center in Tehran on Sunday, Hojatoleslam Qomi addressed a prominent assembly of press activists, and media figures gathered to honor the late Leader's enduring legacy. Delivering a resolute address, Qomi proclaimed, ► **Page 3**

Iran rejects US role in setting war terms

TEHRAN – Iran declared on Monday that it will not allow the United States to dictate the timing of war or peace, reaffirming that all national security decisions will be made solely based on Iran's interests, while also warning Ukraine over its reported attack on an Iranian commercial vessel in the Caspian Sea and emphasizing that ongoing negotiations with Oman on the Strait of Hormuz are purely bilateral and unrelated to Washington.

Speaking at his weekly press conference in Tehran, Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said the United States had failed to achieve its objectives after months of military confrontation with Iran and had become trapped in a conflict of its own making.

“The United States will not determine the time of war and peace for Iran,” Baqaei said, stressing that Tehran would continue defending itself “for as long as necessary.” ► **Page 2**

Mehr Media Group CEO proposes joint SCO media platform to strengthen regional cooperation

TEHRAN- Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati, the CEO of Mehr Media Group (which consists of Mehr News Agency and English-language daily Tehran Times) has called for the establishment of a joint intelligent media platform among Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states, saying closer collaboration between media organizations and think tanks is vital to counter misinformation, foster mutual trust, and advance the organization's vision of a shared future. ► **Page 8**

For a young sailor: First voyage, final farewell

By Hossein Amiri

TEHRAN – The death of a young Iranian sailor in an attack on a commercial vessel in the Caspian Sea has ignited widespread condemnation in Iran, with officials denouncing the strike as a violation of international law and social media users mourning what many described as the destruction of a promising young life.

The victim, Nima Moradi, a young sailor from the northern Iranian port city of Bandar Anzali, was serving on his first commercial voyage aboard the Iranian cargo ship Anna when the vessel came under attack while sailing from Russia's Astrakhan Port to Iran's Bandar Anzali.

Iranian authorities say Moradi was killed in the strike, ending a life that had only just begun its journey at sea. ► **Page 2**

15th Intl. 100-Second Film Festival extends deadline following strong demand

TEHRAN- In response to interest and numerous requests from filmmakers and audiences, the organizers of the International 100-Second Film Festival have announced a one-week extension for the submission of entries.

The original deadline for submissions, previously set for August 1, has now been pushed back to August 8.

The festival continues to invite short films across several diverse categories, including animation, documentary, fiction, and works utilizing artificial intelligence.

Under the direction of Mohaddeseh Pirhadi, the 15th edition will center its thematic focus on three primary categories including “Battle for the Future,” “Battle for the Children of the World,” and “Battle for the Homeland.”

The festival is renowned for its stringent time constraints, ► **Page 8**

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Iran's power has brought the enemy to its knees

Kayhan published an article assessing Iran's high level of resilience and power since the start of the war. The paper writes that none of the enemy's objectives have been achieved. Not only has there been no political, military, economic, or social collapse, but—according to Kayhan—an unprecedented defeat in eighty years has been imposed on the United States. The article says many Western analysts now describe Iran as the world's fourth superpower—not merely the leading power of the region. Kayhan acknowledges Iran's internal problems, saying they cannot be ignored and must be resolved, yet argues that despite foreign sanctions and domestic self-imposed restrictions, Iran has endured the “hybrid war” and inflicted a major defeat on its adversaries. The paper emphasizes the decisive role of Iran's armed forces, but adds that military strength alone would not have been enough without the resilience and support of other sectors. It asks whether the military could have resisted on its own to the point that the enemy is now requesting a ceasefire and an end to the war.

Siasat-e-Rooz: There is no second Strait of Hormuz

In its editorial, Siasat-e-Rooz highlights the vital strategic importance of the Strait of Hormuz and Iran's control over it. The paper argues that the United States seeks dominance in the Persian Gulf, but there is no alternative to the Strait of Hormuz—the only entry and exit point for this critical waterway, which lies under Iran's authority. Losing control of the Strait, it says, would be extremely costly for Iran. According to the editorial, Washington launched the war hoping to seize control of the strait, but Iran's armed forces disrupted all US and Israeli calculations and prevented them from achieving their goals. The paper warns that if the Strait is reopened solely through diplomacy and Iran loses oversight or authority over it, the United States would emerge as the winner.

Javan: Iran does not trust the United States

Javan analyzes the halt in US attacks after thirteen days. According to the paper, the US ambassador to the UN said the pause is meant to give diplomacy a chance to reach an agreement on how the situation should be managed. American sources, Javan reports, have revealed that declining US air-defense stockpiles prompted senior military officials to warn Donald Trump about continuing or escalating confrontation with Iran. Axios reported Saturday night that Trump ordered

the military to pause new strikes until it becomes clear whether diplomatic progress is possible. Whether negotiations will succeed remains uncertain. After nearly five months of war, tension, and confrontation—and after a fragile agreement that was implemented briefly and then halted—Tehran has become deeply distrustful of Washington's intentions regarding the ceasefire and diplomatic processes.

Donya-e-Eqtasad: Bab al-Mandab in the deterrence equation

Donya-e-Eqtasad examines the closure of Bab al-Mandab as the second link in a chain of pressure. With the Iran-US war turning the Strait of Hormuz into the epicenter of an energy and maritime-security crisis, Bab al-Mandab is now emerging as another geopolitical pressure point. Foreign Policy recently analyzed the Houthis' declaration of a naval blockade on Saudi Arabia, calling it a new stress point for global energy markets—already strained by disruptions in Hormuz. The significance of the analysis, the paper notes, is that it views the Bab al-Mandab threat not as an independent crisis but as an extension of the Hormuz crisis. If Hormuz is the eastern chokepoint for energy exports, Bab al-Mandab could become the second link in the same chain.

Sazandegi: We must use the capacity of diplomacy

Sazandegi, in a commentary, discussed the importance of continuing negotiations and diplomacy in this unstable environment in order to reach a more stable situation. According to the paper, although direct clashes have decreased in recent weeks—and countries such as Pakistan, China, Qatar, and others are trying to revive dialogue between Tehran and Washington—there is no guarantee that this fragile calm will not escalate into a larger crisis. This reality, the paper argues, makes preserving diplomatic channels even more essential. Today, more than ever, Iran needs active, realistic, and forward-looking diplomacy. The greatest lesson of the forty-day war, Sazandegi writes, may be that military power and diplomacy are not rivals but complements. A country capable of defending itself can negotiate with greater confidence. Now is the time, the paper argues, to use this capacity in service of peace, economic reconstruction, and rebuilding social trust. Iran's future will be shaped less by continued confrontation and more by its ability to convert deterrent power into diplomatic and economic opportunities.

Senior lawmaker warns Ukraine of ‘regret-inducing’ response after strike on Iranian vessel

TEHRAN - Iran's deputy parliament speaker has warned Ukraine that any “mischievous” act in the region or the Caspian Sea will be met with a “regret-inducing” response from Tehran.

Hamid-Reza Haji Babaei issued the stark warning on Monday following a direct Ukrainian military attack against an Iranian civilian commercial vessel operating in the sovereign waters of the Caspian Sea over the weekend. The strike triggered an explosion aboard the merchant ship, resulting in the killing of one Iranian sailor and leaving another severely wounded.

“We warn Ukraine's masters that any mischief through your stooge in the region and the Caspian Sea will be met with a regret-inducing response from the great Iranian nation,” Haji Babaei said.

Following the strike, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi initiated urgent high-level diplomatic outreach, holding a phone call with European Union Foreign Policy Chief Kaja Kallas. During the discussion, Tehran's top diplomat strongly condemned the Ukrainian military's assault on civilian infrastructure. He urged the United Nations Security Council, the European Union, and the broader international community to issue an unequivocal condemnation of Kyiv's



aggression, insisting that the perpetrators, instigators, and foreign supporters of the strike be held fully accountable.

Araghchi also issued a sharp rebuke on X late Sunday, directly targeting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. He said, “Zelenskyy has attacked an Iranian commercial vessel, killing a sailor. A blatant UN Charter violation done at Israel's behest to drag Europe into its war. In calls with EU High Rep Kallas and FM Lavrov, made clear that what the freeloader in Kyiv did CANNOT GO UNANSWERED.”

Concurrently, Iran's Foreign Ministry summoned Ukraine's chargé d'affaires to deliver an official, strong protest against Kyiv's action, reiterating that attacks targeting the lives, property, and trade routes of Iranian citizens will not be tolerated.

Iran rejects US role in setting war terms

From page 1 ► He said Iran's decisions on security and foreign policy are guided exclusively by national interests and are made through established state institutions rather than external pressure.

Baqaei also rejected suggestions that Tehran's approach toward negotiations was influenced by Washington, referring to the US-Israeli military campaign launched against Iran on February 28, which he said ended in failure despite forcing a ceasefire weeks later. Although a Pakistan-mediated memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed on June 17 to end hostilities and pave the way for further negotiations, Baqaei accused Washington of violating all of its commitments under the agreement.

Ukraine attack “will not go unanswered”

Addressing the reported Ukrainian attack on an Iranian commercial vessel in the Caspian Sea, Baqaei condemned the incident as a dangerous escalation and warned that Iran reserves the right to respond.

He described the attack as “dangerous adventurism” and said it “will not go unanswered,” adding that countries supporting Ukraine also bear responsibility for Kiev's actions.

The spokesman accused the Ukrainian leadership of pursuing reckless policies with potentially serious consequences and reiterated Tehran's long-standing position that it has not been a party to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Baqaei said Iran's response would be based on international law and its inherent right to self-defense, stressing that responsibility for the consequences of the incident lies with the Ukrainian government and its supporters.

His remarks followed the Foreign Ministry's earlier condemnation of the strike as a violation of Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter and an act of



aggression capable of further escalating regional tensions.

Oman talks focused solely on Strait of Hormuz

Baqaei also dismissed speculation that recent negotiations between Iran and Oman were linked to the United States, saying the discussions have focused exclusively on managing maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz.

He confirmed that several rounds of talks were held in Tehran on Friday and Saturday at the deputy foreign minister level, describing the negotiations as constructive and productive.

According to Baqaei, the two neighboring countries are working to establish operational mechanisms that ensure the safe passage of commercial shipping while fully respecting the sovereign rights of both coastal states and safeguarding Iran's national interests.

“The talks are entirely bilateral between Iran and Oman and have nothing to do with the United States,” he said.

He added that technical and political consultations remain ongoing despite the conclusion

of the latest negotiating round.

Baqaei maintained that the Strait of Hormuz remains closed because of insecurity created by ‘US aggression’ and said there has been no change in the status of the strategic waterway.

Criticism of regional states and Western allies

Expanding on the Hormuz issue, Baqaei criticized a recent joint statement by the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council and Jordan concerning Iran's retaliatory military actions, describing it as a distortion of reality.

Instead of criticizing Iran, he said, regional governments should condemn the United States for violating the Pakistan-brokered memorandum of understanding and refrain from allowing Washington to exploit their territory for military operations against Iran.

Baqaei expressed concern that some regional countries had aligned themselves with US military actions and urged them to reconsider their positions in the interest of regional stability.

China praised as strategic partner

The spokesman also high-

lighted growing cooperation between Tehran and Beijing following Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi's meeting with his Chinese counterpart on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit.

He described China as a strategic partner that shares Iran's concerns regarding regional and international peace and security, particularly ‘the destabilizing effects of US unilateralism.’

Iran condemns UK decision on IRGC

Separately, Baqaei strongly criticized Britain's decision to designate the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as a threat to British national security.

He described the move as politically motivated, contrary to international law, and intended to increase pressure on Iran.

The spokesman defended the IRGC's role in safeguarding Iran's national security and combating Daesh (ISIS), arguing that London's designation lacks any legal foundation and warning that Tehran would take appropriate reciprocal measures in response.

For a young sailor: First voyage, final farewell

From page 1 ► For those who knew him, the tragedy was more than the loss of a sailor—it was the loss of a future. Like countless young mariners drawn to the sea by dreams of adventure, service and honest work, Moradi had embarked on what should have been the beginning of a long career. Instead, his first voyage became his last, leaving behind grieving family members, friends and colleagues who say an entire lifetime of hopes and ambitions vanished in a single moment.

“The tragedy of life is not death, but what dies inside us while we live,” attributed to the British writer Norman Cousins.

For many Iranians reacting to Moradi's death, the attack represented not only the loss of a human life but also the extinguishing of dreams that would never have the chance to become reality.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry has condemned the strike as an act of aggression and a violation of international law.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, writing on X, accused Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of attacking an Iranian commercial vessel and killing a civilian sailor.

“Zelenskyy has attacked an Iranian commercial vessel, killing a sailor. A blatant UN Charter violation done at Israel's behest to drag Europe into its war,” Araghchi wrote, adding that he had informed EU High Represen-

tative Kaja Kallas and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov that the incident “cannot go unanswered.”

Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei echoed those remarks during his weekly press conference on Monday, warning that the attack constituted a dangerous escalation and accusing Kyiv of attempting to widen the conflict by drawing European countries further into the war.

Public reaction

The incident quickly generated strong reactions across Iranian social media platforms, where many users expressed grief over Moradi's death and anger over the attack.

One user on X described the strike as “pure terrorism and a blatant violation of international law,” accusing the Ukrainian leadership of recklessly expanding the conflict and arguing that the attack “cannot and will not go unanswered.”

The official X account of the Iranian newspaper Farhikhtegan criticized some Iranians who had previously displayed Ukrainian flags on their social media profiles in solidarity with Kyiv, suggesting the attack should prompt a reassessment of those positions.

Another user wrote that the assault “cannot be forgotten,” insisting that the Ukrainian government should be held accountable and provide compen-



sation in accordance with international legal principles.

A separate commentator cautioned against opening what he described as a “northern front,” arguing that any response should be measured and delivered at an appropriate time.

The Lebanese American poet Kahlil Gibran wrote, “Life without love is like a tree without blossoms or fruit.” For many mourning Moradi, a life without the opportunity to fulfill its promise is equally tragic.

The American civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. famously said, “Life's most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?” Friends and fellow sailors say Moradi had chosen a profession built on connecting nations through trade and navigational

career dedicated to serving others through peaceful commerce.

Perhaps the sentiment most closely associated with interrupted lives comes from the Roman philosopher Seneca, who observed, “It is not that we have a short time to live, but that we waste much of it.” In Moradi's case, supporters say time itself was taken away before his future could unfold.

For many Iranians, the image that remains is that of a young sailor standing at the beginning of a career that promised countless voyages across distant seas—dreams of experience, family, achievement and homecoming. Those possibilities, they say, were erased before they had the chance to become memories, transforming a first voyage into a final farewell.

Are France and Britain about to dive into the quagmire Trump created?

Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesman warns against ‘hostile and politically motivated’ actions of certain European countries

From Page 1 ► Baqaei further emphasized that the United States relied on British military bases to facilitate its aggressive operations targeting Iran during 39 days of war. The aggression, which began on February 28, was paused by a Pakistani-brokered ceasefire on April 8. A memorandum of understanding signed by Tehran and Washington on June 17 aimed to underpin the truce. However, in violation of the agreement, the US resumed attacks against Iran, prompting military retaliation by Iran against American regional bases.

Further in his remarks, Baqaei criticized Bulgaria for its role in assisting the US military action against Iran. “We are aware that Bulgaria has previously allowed Sofia Airport to be used for the deployment and operation of US aircraft supporting American military action against Iran,” Baqaei said. He described Bulgaria’s move as an “unwarranted and dangerous decision” that violates international law.

Baqaei then denounced the French government’s accusations against Iran. On July 20, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot said two French diplomats in Iran were targeted by Iranian officials the day before in “an extremely serious act of intimidation.” The top French diplomat claimed that both were “detained for several hours without reason, interrogated, and one of them was physically abused” before they were able to return to the embassy.

Dismissing these claims, Baqaei said, “Attribute the vast majority of these reports to psychological warfare, a tactic the US excels at and has employed repeatedly. Do not give them too much weight.” He described the French narrative surrounding the two diplomats as part of a “blame game.”

He confirmed that the Foreign Ministry had summoned the French ambassador to Tehran on Sunday to protest the conduct of the two diplomats who were briefly detained earlier this month. Baqaei stated that the diplomats had “interfered in Iran’s internal affairs under the pretext of engaging with civil society,” stressing that the French government “must cease such actions



and such interference in Iran’s internal affairs under misleading labels.”

Tehran Times revelations

Following recent accusations against Iran by European officials, the Tehran Times highlighted how Paris and London are effectively playing into Washington’s hands.

According to revelations by the English-language newspaper, the departure of British diplomats from Tehran was part of a US psychological warfare campaign coordinated directly with Secretary of State Marco Rubio during a phone call with his British counterpart.

The publication learned that several foreign ambassadors, primarily from European countries, attended a meeting at the residence of the French ambassador in Tehran on July 20 at his invitation.

During the gathering, the French ambassador criticized Iran’s multi-hour detention of the two French diplomats and called on the diplomatic community to support the French Embassy. The British chargé d’affaires expressed support for the French ambassador and stated that he intended to leave Iran in the coming days, emphasizing that the United States expects its partners to cooperate in exerting political pressure on Iran. Nevertheless, several ambassadors openly opposed the idea.

“Apparently, our British friends

suspect that the Iranians are preparing a strong reaction to the designation of the IRGC ..., and therefore they want to stay out of the Iranians’ sight for a while in a dignified manner—especially since it is now August, when most embassy staff normally go on summer vacation anyway,” the French ambassador remarked sarcastically.

He added: “What I can do is turn the departure of the two diplomats detained by the Iranians into a news story—and in any case, they were already scheduled to leave Iran. Two other diplomats were supposed to go on vacation on July 29, so we can simply say they are leaving a little earlier.”

The German ambassador, who was present at the meeting, pushed back against calls for a coordinated exit, pointing to upcoming diplomatic engagements: “I am scheduled to present my credentials to Iran’s president on Wednesday, so our departure at this time would not be in our interest.”

On the sidelines of the gathering, the German ambassador told an Eastern European ambassador that he was dissatisfied with the British ambassador’s “overbearing” proposal, calling the move “childish.” According to him, Britain was acting preemptively because it was aware of Iran’s plan to expel several British diplomats in response to London

designating the IRGC as a national security threat.

The German Embassy in Tehran denied the comments attributed to its ambassador, calling them “completely invented,” though it stopped short of denying his participation in the meeting. Meanwhile, the French Embassy denied that such a meeting took place at the French Embassy on July 20, whereas the Tehran Times revelations specified that the gathering was held at the French ambassador’s private residence.

In response to the French Embassy’s denial, the Tehran Times reiterated the exact location of the meeting, noting that the German ambassador “has only denied his own remarks—not the meeting itself. Next time, make sure you’re on the same page with your guests!”

“For future receptions, we recommend extra ice. It might help keep both the drinks—and the narratives—a little cooler!” the Tehran Times added sarcastically.

It appears that following the NATO summit in Turkey, some European countries face pressure from the US president for not fully supporting attacks on Iran. Now, these nations are targeting Iran to win back Washington’s favor. However, Iran is watching these hostile actions closely, and these policies will certainly come at a cost for the European countries involved.

Hojatoleslam Qomi vows Iran will avenge the martyred Leader as media figures honor his legacy

TEHRAN — Hojatoleslam Mohammad Qomi, head of Iran’s Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization, has reiterated that the Iranian nation and freedom-loving people around the world will inevitably avenge the martyrdom of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

Speaking at a commemoration gathering held at a cultural center in Tehran on Sunday, Hojatoleslam Qomi addressed a prominent assembly of press activists, and media figures gathered to honor the late Leader’s enduring legacy. Delivering a resolute address, Qomi proclaimed, “The world must know that we will never let the blood of the martyred Leader go unavenged.”

Praising the profound strategic vision of Ayatollah Khamenei regarding soft power, public enlightenment, and communication, Qomi described the martyred Leader as a master strategist who spent decades deciphering and counteracting the intricate propaganda tactics of the arrogant global powers over 250 years of modern history. He stressed that Ayatollah Khamenei offered a transformative perspective on contemporary geopolitical struggle, recognizing media not merely as an instrument for news transmission, but as the primary battlefield for defeating the enemy’s soft war and securing the hearts and minds of the global public.



Throughout his decades guiding the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Khamenei consistently emphasized the media front as a cornerstone of national security and cultural defense.

The beloved Leader achieved the lofty station of martyrdom on February 28 following aggressive joint US-Israeli airstrikes targeting his office and compound in Tehran—a criminal assault that also took the lives of several family members and military officials. In the aftermath of the cowardly attack, millions of grief-stricken yet defiant citizens poured into the streets of Tehran, Qom, Mashhad, and cities across the country to attend his funeral in July. Holding portraits of their revered Leader, the massive crowds unified in condemnation of the aggressors, echoing the sacred call for swift, decisive, and uncompromising retribution.

The political theology of vassalage: Nuclear fictions in the Persian Gulf

By Xavier Villar

MADRID - On July 22, the energy bureaucracies of Washington and Riyadh formalized a civilian nuclear cooperation agreement, backed by a bilateral safeguards pact. The framework promised a thirty-year strategic partnership, granting US corporations privileged access to build the kingdom’s atomic infrastructure while imposing strict verification on sensitive proliferation vectors: enrichment, conversion, fuel fabrication, and reprocessing. This architecture of technical containment possessed a longevity inversely proportional to its weight in Washington’s theological politics. The diplomatic fiction collapsed within twenty-four hours. Invoking what Walter Benjamin might recognize as a perverse inversion of messianic time, the catastrophic monotony of the Trumpian decree interrupted the linear progress of statecraft. On July 23, Donald Trump subordinated the pact’s viability to Saudi adherence to the Abraham Accords, demanding full diplomatic normalization with Tel Aviv. The White House issued its anathema categorically: the deal was void if Riyadh hesitated.

This pressure transcends Republican idiosyncrasy; it is the unfinished project of the Biden administration. In September 2023, Washington actively promoted the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), a liberal geo-economic fantasy imagining Riyadh and Tel Aviv as organically articulated logistical nodes. The initiative attempted to suture the contradictions of settler-colonialism through the logic of infrastructure capital, operating as an epistemic maneuver to erase the native question under the aseptic rhetoric of connectivity. The materiality of the terrain fractured that design. The Hamas operation of October 7, 2023, and the subsequent Israeli genocide in Gaza shattered this linear conception of regional history, forcing Riyadh to temporarily freeze normalization.

The Trumpian time proves revelatory, forcing regional allies to confront their own reality. Despite Washington’s absolute lack of commitment to its nominal partners, Riyadh chose to attack the Yemeni port of Hodeidah. This action defies any rational calculus of Saudi national interest; a Red Sea ceasefire perfectly aligned with the strategic imperative to preserve Vision 2030 and attract foreign investment. By escalating against Ansarallah, the monarchy sacrificed its economic stability to preserve the illusion of the imperial alliance. The US-Saudi alliance transcends the category of a conventional military contract, functioning instead as a political grammar that structures the very horizon of Saudi action. Riyadh’s decision revealed the absolute

limits of its sovereignty. In acting to preserve the alliance, Saudi Arabia undermined the very stability the ceasefire was meant to guarantee, dragging the kingdom into a war it had every material reason to avoid.

From Tehran, this diplomatic theater is decoded without the neuroses afflicting Western chancelleries and their regional vassals. The Iranian posture toward its nuclear program and its influence in the axis of resistance emanates from a strategic comprehension of American imperial theological politics. Tehran recognizes the structural incapacity of the US for reciprocity; its diplomatic apparatus is designed exclusively for the extraction of sacramental loyalty. Washington simultaneously demands that Iran reach a diplomatic agreement over the Strait of Hormuz and its nuclear program, while sabotaging an agreement with a nominal Persian Gulf ally merely twenty-four hours after signing it. This sequence confirms a central thesis of Iranian doctrine: the hegemon seeks no non-proliferation treaties based on mutual recognition, demanding instead an absolute monopoly on the capacity for destruction under the facade of international law. Iran’s refusal to participate in the farce of the Abraham Accords, combined with the maintenance of its deterrence, positions it as the ontological anchor of an emerging multipolar order.

The current crisis in Washington’s security architecture transcends the mere perception of broken promises. The fundamental earthquake resides in the erosion of the theological pretension that has sustained US power for decades. The post-1945 liberal order treated American authority as a law of nature, an ultimate guarantor of security offering protection in exchange for absolute loyalty. This dynamic operates under the logic of divine grace and the permanent state of exception, where the imperial sovereign suspends the rules of the market and international law whenever they conflict with the untouchable dogmas of Israeli security. The vassal must accept this arbitrariness as an inscrutable mystery, offering loyalty as an act of blind faith. The rupture occurs when the god withdraws its grace: when the hegemon abandons its vassals, revealing them as expendable. In this drama, friendship conceals a relation of lordship, and power dresses itself in the language of the pact while demanding sacrifices without offering any in return. The catastrophic monotony of the Trumpian time has stripped American hegemony of its messianic robes, revealing the cold calculus of theological-political domination and leaving regional actors to organize their own autonomy, entirely independent of the dictates of a power that has lost the right to dictate the future.

LATEST NEWS

■ Iran envoy: Ukraine-hit vessel was civilian

Iran’s ambassador to Russia, Kazem Jalali, condemned Ukraine’s drone strike on the Iranian vessel Anna in the Caspian Sea as a “criminal act,” saying the ship carried no military cargo. He confirmed one Iranian sailor was killed and several others injured. Jalali said Tehran reserves the right to respond and expects Russia to take the attack seriously, as it occurred in Russian territorial waters.

■ Iranian Army vows stronger response to any possible aggression

The Iranian Army has warned that it will respond with an even harsher and more crushing blow to any possible aggression.

In a statement issued on Monday to mark the anniversary of Operation Mersad, the Army said the operation remains a symbol of Iran’s strength, resilience, and the determination of the country’s armed forces to defend the nation.

■ Iran leaves no hostile actions ‘unanswered’: official

The chair of the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission of the Iranian Parliament says that any attack on Iran always carries a cost, stressing that the country will not leave measures taken against it unanswered.

“Any attack on Iran always comes with a cost, and that remains true today; the U.S. and Israel are well aware of this,” Ebrahim Azizi wrote on X early on Monday.

He noted, “Ukraine, too, may soon come to understand that Iran does not let actions go unanswered.”

“The list of those who have miscalculated continues to increase,” he added.

■ Tehran condemns US criticism of ICC over Netanyahu case

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi has criticized the United States for labeling the International Criminal Court (ICC) as “corrupt,” arguing Washington’s stance stems from the court’s prosecution of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. In a post on X on Monday, Gharibabadi said the ICC was attacked simply for pursuing a leader favored by the U.S. His remarks came after ICC member states voted to remove Prosecutor Karim Khan following an investigation into misconduct allegations he denies.

■ Iran Embassy says response to Ukraine attack is protected under UN Charter

Iran’s Embassy in Poland said Tehran has the right under the UN Charter to respond to Ukraine’s military attack on an Iranian commercial vessel in the Caspian Sea. The embassy warned that Iran’s restraint “is not endless” and accused Kyiv of seeking to draw Europe and NATO into conflict with Iran.

■ Mediators highlight ‘progress’ between US and Iran

Mediators have achieved progress in getting the United States and Iran back to negotiations, regional officials say, after both sides paused attacks following a period of rapidly escalating tensions.

The two Middle East officials – who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss closed-door talks – told The Associated Press that mediators led by Qatar and Pakistan are working to bridge the gap between Wash-

ington and Tehran.

■ IRGC navy stops six vessels for unauthorized transit in Strait of Hormuz

Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy intercepted six vessels attempting to pass through unauthorized routes in the Strait of Hormuz, according to IRIB. The ships had been encouraged by the United States to use the prohibited routes.

■ Official says Iran’s Leader does not rule out negotiations

Ali Fazaeli, a member of the Office for the Preservation and Publication of the Works of Iran’s Leader, said Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, like the late martyred leader, does not consider negotiations inherently forbidden. He said Iran’s policies are guided by national interests and security, with Tehran choosing either diplomacy or confrontation depending on circumstances. Fazaeli stressed that negotiations do not alter Iran’s view of the United States or Israel and can proceed alongside efforts to pursue retaliation when deemed in the country’s interests.

■ ‘Social coup’ plot was foiled: VP

Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref said an enemy plan to trigger a “social coup” by assassinating senior defense officials and exploiting public unrest ultimately failed. Speaking at a meeting of the Supreme Council for Science, Research and Technology on Monday, Aref said the plot was neutralized through the swift appointment of replacement military commanders and public support, adding that the scheme collapsed politically despite attempts to exploit ‘misled young people.’

Iran Chamber of Commerce calls on Pakistan to set up green corridor for trade



TEHRAN- Samad Hassanzadeh, the Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), said in a meeting with Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, the Pakistani Ambassador in Tehran, that trade between Iran and Pakistan does not have the necessary speed due to different customs mechanisms. He also proposed that Pakistan establish a green border corridor for the electronic transfer of documents.

During this meeting, which was held at the place of ICCIMA in Tehran, while emphasizing the establishment of greater interaction between the private sectors of the two countries, discussions were held regarding what is necessary to reach agreements in the areas of customs, border affairs, and facilitating and expediting the trade process between Iran and Pakistan.

Samad Hassanzadeh, Head of Iran Chamber, while thanking the Pakistani government, especially the Prime Minister, for establishing an understanding between Iran and the United States, said: Because of the several meetings held in Islamabad during the process of reaching these understandings, I must also thank the Pakistani nation. I hope these actions lead to the establishment of peace and security in the region and, on a broader level, among all countries.

Looking at the border regions between the two countries and the capacities that exist in both Iran and Pakistan for defining joint activities, he expressed hope that Iran-Pakistan relations would expand. Hassanzadeh stated: Linking capacities for the benefit of both countries, especially for trade cooperation, is the most important demand being pursued by Iran Chamber.

He believes that ambassadors play a pivotal role in facilitating relations between the private sector and executive bodies, removing obstacles, and providing what is necessary for expanding trade and investment relations. On the other hand, cooperation between Iran Chamber and the Pakistani Embassy in Tehran for developing relations in the energy, petrochemical, food industry, transit, and other sectors between Iran and Pakistan is possible and must be seriously pursued.

The Head of Iran Chamber spoke about the obstacles that have slowed trade relations between Iran and Pakistan, highlighting the lack of efficient financial mechanisms, standards and quarantine issues, and the prolonged detention of containers at Karachi Port, and called for these issues to be resolved. In his view, the accumulation of containers and the lengthy clearance time for goods at Karachi Port, along with rail and road transport restrictions, have caused financial losses to Iranian economic activists.

He also cited the high number of control procedures, the repetition of tests, the lack of logistics infrastructure at some borders, and changes to customs regulations by Pakistan without prior notification as barriers to the prosperity of trade between the two countries. Hassanzadeh criticized the absence of a specific authority in Pakistan to handle disputes arising during trade and called for a defined structure for this purpose and a mechanism for following up on the implementation of agreements made between the two countries. He proposed the creation of a green border corridor that would support the electronic transfer of documents.

Subsequently, the Head of Iran Chamber introduced Hamed Asgari, the Deputy for International Affairs of Iran Chamber, as the representative of Iran Chamber for communication with the Pakistani Embassy in Tehran to pursue issues and resolve trade barriers between the two countries. He also proposed holding regular quarterly meetings to review the implementation process of the agreements.

The Head of Iran Chamber also referred to compiling a list of areas of cooperation and a timeline for realizing these cooperations, adding: The private sectors of the two countries, looking at the existing capacities, have significant opportunities to strengthen relations, and we must, as Iran Chamber and the Pakistani Embassy in Tehran, provide the ground for utilizing these opportunities. He described the visit of a delegation of Pakistani economic activists to Iran coinciding with one of the international specialized exhibitions as an effective measure that could be placed on the embassy's agenda.

Following this, Hamed Asgari, the Deputy for International Affairs of Iran Chamber, considered the operationalization of the transit corridor between the two countries and reducing the costs of transferring goods to Iran with Pakistan's cooperation as an important issue that is a priority in Iran Chamber's actions regarding this country.

Pakistan placed coordination in customs affairs between the two countries on agenda

Following this, Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, the Pakistani Ambassador in Tehran, described Pakistan's efforts to establish an understanding between Iran and the United States as an important responsibility that had to be undertaken. He continued: There is mutual interest in removing obstacles and implementing the agreements that have been made, and we must pursue them. Of course, there has always been uncertainty from the perspective of trade activities, which has created issues that have prevented the strengthening of relations between the two countries. Now, at the Pakistani Embassy, we are trying to eliminate the existing uncertainties.

In response to the obstacles raised by the Head of Iran Chamber, he said: It is possible to resolve these shortcomings and deficiencies. We can extend the operating hours of the borders to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, so that the private sectors of the two countries can have greater opportunities for cooperation.

The Pakistani Ambassador in Tehran informed of the possibility of implementing the joint cooperation council that had previously been agreed upon by both sides, and called for the expansion of consultations between the private sectors of the two countries.

Regarding customs documents, Imran Ahmed Siddiqui reported that a proposal had been submitted to the Iranian side for coordination and standardization in customs affairs and said: We are waiting for the Iranian side's response.

He considered close cooperation between Iran Chamber and the economic section of the Pakistani Embassy in Tehran to be necessary and added: Resolving some issues, including banking relations and transit, require time and specific actions that are not within the purview of the embassy or even governments. However, in this regard, we have considered barter trade and are waiting for the Iranian side's response for the implementation of the barter mechanism between the two countries.

The Pakistani Ambassador in Tehran called for the sharing of ideas and executive plans to resolve existing obstacles.

regarding the problem of container accumulation at Karachi Port, he reported that a green channel and a joint customs mechanism with the Iranian side are on the agenda.

Imran Ahmed Siddiqui raised cooperation in the pharmaceutical industry as a serious demand and said: There is scope for joint activities in the pharmaceutical sector, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and food. On the other hand, a specialized exhibition in the field of food industries will be held in Karachi Port in November 2026, and the presence of the Iranian side at this event is suggested.

First smartification project of oil fields to be implemented in Darkhovin

TEHRAN- The CEO of Arvandan Oil and Gas Company announced: The first smartification project of the country's oil fields will soon be implemented in the Darkhovin field.

According to IRNA from the Oil Ministry, Hamid Deris said in this regard: This plan, which has been implemented in the form of field-oriented research contracts with universities, is now going through its final stages.

He added: By employing modern technologies, this project provides the ground for increasing productivity, optimizing production processes, and reducing costs.

According to Deris, collecting, monitoring, and online analysis of production data, predicting the field's behavior, and optimizing the production process are among the most important goals of the Darkhovin field smartification.

The smartification of oil and gas fields is a digital revolution reshaping the upstream sector. It moves the industry from inspections toward automated, data-driven operations.

At its core, this involves thousands of IoT sensors deployed across wells, pipelines, and processing facilities. These devices stream real-time data on pressure, temperature, flow, and equipment health. Artificial intelligence and digital twins analyze this



data to predict reservoir behavior and optimize production.

The advantages are immense. Predictive maintenance foresees equipment failures, reducing costly downtime. Real-time analytics allow engineers to adjust parameters instantly, maximizing recovery.

Additionally, smartification improves safety and environmental protection. Automated systems de-

tect minor leaks and trigger shutdowns, preventing major spills and cutting methane emissions.

This technology extends to logistics, helping coordinate supply chains and refine scheduling.

In a volatile market, smartification provides a competitive advantage by lowering expenditures and extending the life of mature fields. It empowers operators to produce more

with less energy. This ongoing shift is vital for modern energy firms, minimizing environmental impact while boosting efficiency.

Ultimately, the move toward fully autonomous systems is not merely a technological upgrade. It represents a fundamental strategic necessity for the oil and gas industry, ensuring long-term profitability and securing a sustainable future.

Annual tea production expected to increase by over 30%

TEHRAN- The Head of the National Tea Organization stated that with the increase in the guaranteed purchase price of green tea leaves and favorable weather conditions, tea production is expected to rise by more than 30 percent compared to the previous year.

According to Mehr News Agency, Habib Jahansaz, the Head of the National Tea Organization, during a visit to warehouses and guaranteed purchase centers for green tea leaves, said: With the measures taken by the government and the support of Gilan Province's governorate for tea growers in increasing the guaranteed purchase price, the production of high-quality domestic tea in the country has increased.

He added: With the increase in the guaranteed purchase price of green tea leaves, the payment of capital and working capital facil-

ities through the Tea Development Support Fund, and favorable weather conditions, it is predicted that tea production will increase by over 30 percent compared to last year.

According to Jahansaz, the guaranteed purchase price for first-grade and second-grade green tea leaves has increased by 72 and 67 percent respectively compared to the previous year.

He added: Currently, there is relative stability in the tea market, and sufficient reserves of Iranian tea are available given the upcoming subsequent harvests of green tea leaves.

The Head of the National Tea Organization considered the organization's primary priority in the current situation to be supplying the domestic market and increasing the share of Iranian tea in household consumption baskets.

Tea is a significant agricultural sector in Iran. The northern "Green Belt" produces over 65,000 tons of dried tea annually on approximately 25,000 hectares of land, supporting the livelihoods of over 65,000 farming families. The government, through the Iran Tea Organization, has historically played a central role, setting guaranteed purchase prices for green leaves from farmers and managing major processing factories.

However, the Iranian tea economy operates under profound challenges. While self-sufficient in production for much of the year, domestic demand is immense—Iranians consume over 100,000 tons per year, making the country one of the world's top tea consumers per capita. This gap between production and consumption necessitates substantial imports, historically from India, Sri Lanka, and Kenya.

Export terminals, effective infrastructure in facilitating, expanding non-oil exports



TEHRAN- Based on the approvals of the Cabinet of Ministers in various periods and in accordance with relevant upstream documents, export terminals have been defined as one of the infrastructures for the country's export development.

Requests to establish these terminals are first reviewed in the export development working groups of the provinces, and after confirming the eligibility and capability of the applicant, they are sent to the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran for final review.

According to the Public Relations Department of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, export terminals, as one of the important infrastructures in the path of developing the country's non-oil exports, play an effective

role in facilitating export processes, improving productivity, and increasing the competitiveness of economic actors.

By aggregating and providing a set of specialized export services in a single complex, these terminals provide the ground for organizing the export process, improving packaging quality, developing marketing, and facilitating exporters' access to needed services.

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provinces, and after confirming the eligibility and capability of the applicant, they are sent to the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran for final review.

In terms of nature and function, export terminals are fundamentally different from border bazaars and border terminals. Border bazaars and border terminals, which mainly operate at zero-border points, are subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior and are considered part of the governance infrastructure; therefore, it is not possible to transfer their management to the private sector. In contrast, export terminals, as specialized infrastructures in the export field, can be transferred to and managed by the private sector.

In these terminals, a set of services including export management, aggregation and categorization of goods, standard packaging, export marketing, and the execution of export processes are provided in an integrated complex. This approach, by reducing the dispersion of services, facilitating export processes, and improving the quality of service delivery to exporters, can play an effective role in the development of the country's non-oil exports.

The process of issuing licenses for export terminals began in 2004 and, to date, approximately 50 licenses have been issued

in this field. In the year 1404, 14 licenses for the operation of export terminals were renewed and 3 new licenses were issued.

Accordingly, during the current year, actions related to issuing or renewing licenses have been carried out for a total of 17 export terminals.

Also, the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, in order to facilitate, expedite, and streamline the provision of services to applicants, has placed the full digitalization of the export terminal licensing process on its agenda.

Based on this plan, after the necessary infrastructure is provided, applicants will be able to upload the required documents and evidence online and complete all stages of review, license issuance, or notification of the application result electronically, without the need for in-person visits.

The implementation of this plan, while reducing the time and costs associated with the licensing process, can help increase transparency, facilitate applicants' access to services, and expedite the establishment and development of export terminals in the country; an action that is ultimately pursued to strengthen export infrastructure and support the development of the country's non-oil exports.

The unholy alliance of Israel and Ukraine anchoring the new imperial order

From page 1 ► The Zionist Zelensky claimed his country wanted to be “another Israel.” He got his wish, inheriting a regime built on covert arms transfers and a war economy underwritten by American taxpayers. The target set now brazenly includes Iranian commercial shipping moving across the region.

The laboratory

Ukraine has absorbed more one-way attack drones than any other military. That distinction has been monetized.

Every downed UAV gets stripped for circuit boards and flight control firmware. The GUR military intelligence service in Kyiv reportedly feeds this telemetry straight to American and Israeli handlers.

Military contractors in Tel Aviv then recalibrate their electronic warfare suites and harden intercept algorithms for Iron Dome and David’s Sling. Tel Aviv gains battlefield testing without deploying infantry.

In return, the Israeli firm RADA has shipped multi-mission radars to Ukraine, updating software in real time using combat data from the steppe. Ukrainian soil absorbs the technology so Israeli countermeasures can kill Iranians, Lebanese, Palestinians, and Syrians more efficiently.

The secret munitions pipeline

Integration deepened when Washington orchestrated the transfer of roughly 90 Patriot interceptors from Israeli storage to Poland, then onward to Ukraine aboard military trans-



ports.

Zelensky confirmed an Israeli-origin Patriot system was fully operational. Mysterious flights have been shuttling Patriot components and weapons allegedly captured in Gaza and southern Lebanon.

Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Sharren Haskel publicly offered to transfer such weaponry. The Ukrainian embassy dutifully celebrated the “common threats” the two regimes face. The linkage is now visible.

The expeditionary force in Persian Gulf

Intelligence architecture is tightly integrated. Mossad recently appointed Roman Gofman to explicitly exploit alleged Ukrainian penetration of Russian and Iranian military cooperation.

In June 2025, Ukraine used smuggled drones to strike strategic bombers deep inside Russia. If unverified Western

allegations are to be believed, during the early hours of the 12-day war on Iran, Mossad-linked saboteurs similarly relied on pre-positioned drone components to target air defenses.

Whether or not those claims hold any water, the same covert sabotage playbook appears to have traveled seamlessly from one theater to another.

Ukraine exported its counter-drone industry directly into the Persian Gulf. Over 228 specialists have been reportedly deployed across Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates.

They reportedly advise on electronic warfare and interceptor drones honed against UAVs utilized by Iran and the Resistance Front to attack U.S. military bases.

Since the U.S. and Israel launched their war against Iran on February 28, the Kyiv regime has signed multiple security agreements with Arab monar-

chies in the Persian Gulf.

They reportedly trade drone expertise for oil and air defense munitions. It is a war-derived services business embedded in the U.S.-Israeli campaign of aggression against Tehran.

A war without a backstop

Washington holds the architecture together. The 2024 congressional funding package cleanly divided roughly \$95 billion between the respective conflicts, effectively treating Ukraine and Israel as a single massive logistical problem.

Patriot interceptors, artillery shells, and encrypted satellite bandwidth are rationed between two violently active fronts.

Targeting algorithms guide Ukrainian naval drones toward merchant ships and Israeli fighter jets toward sovereign positions in Iran, Lebanon, and Gaza.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz openly admitted Israel was doing “dirty work” for the entire West. Ukraine guaranteed it will permanently share the destructive consequences by piling onto that workload.

Iran has warned that Ukraine, by acting as an auxiliary to the Israeli war machine, had made its territory a legitimate target under Article 51 of the UN Charter.

When a regime subcontracts its long-range strike capability to a foreign war, it strips away any pretense of sovereign neutrality, rendering its own territory an open theater of consequence.

Germany’s opaque arms export policy toward Israel comes under renewed scrutiny

TEHRAN – Germany’s arms export policy toward Israel is again facing scrutiny after Berlin quietly approved nearly €800 million (\$913 million) in military export licenses to Israel during the first five months of 2026—more than the total value approved during the previous 20 months combined. The sharp increase has raised fresh questions about the transparency and consistency of Germany’s export controls, particularly as the government publicly voices concern over the humanitarian situation in Gaza while continuing to authorize major military transfers.

The figures were disclosed in a Federal Foreign Office response to a parliamentary inquiry submitted by the Alternative for Germany (AfD) party. According to the government, almost all of the approvals were issued in April and May, but officials declined to specify the equipment involved, stating only that more than 60 percent of the total value was linked to a single “major maritime project.”

The refusal to identify the project has reinforced longstanding criticism that Germany’s arms export system lacks transparency. The Federal Foreign Office and the Ministry for Economic Affairs, which oversees export licensing, have both declined to comment on the transaction.

Security analysts believe the unnamed project is almost certainly the INS Drakon, a Dolphin II-class submarine built by German shipbuilder ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems (TKMS). The submarine reportedly completed sea trials in Germany before being handed over to the Israeli Navy. According to multiple reports, it may be equipped with a vertical launching system capable of deploying cruise or ballistic missiles, a capability that would significantly enhance Israel’s strategic deterrent.

The secrecy surrounding the submarine has attracted particular attention. During sea trials, its sail was reportedly covered to conceal its weapons configuration, while the German government has provided little public information regarding the licensing process despite the project’s strategic significance. Reports last year also conflicted over whether Berlin had even approved the submarine’s export, with the government denying approval while the manufacturer indicated otherwise.

Max Mutschler, a senior researcher at the Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies, said the government’s unwillingness to identify the project reflects a broader pattern.

“Unfortunately, the fact that the federal government does not explicitly mention this is also typical of the lack of transparency surrounding arms exports,” he told Al Jazeera.

Contradictory policy

The latest approvals also highlight what critics describe as an inconsistent German policy toward military exports to Israel.

In August 2025, Chancellor Friedrich Merz announced that Germany would no longer approve military equipment that could be used in the Gaza Strip, citing humanitarian concerns. However, that suspension proved temporary. By November, Berlin had lifted the restrictions and returned to evaluating export requests on a case-by-case basis, while deliveries approved earlier continued throughout the suspension period.

The apparent reversal has fueled accusations that Germany’s public rhetoric has not been matched by its export decisions.

Mutschler said some officials within the



German government viewed certain exports as problematic because of “numerous and credible reports of Israeli war crimes during the military operation in Gaza.” Nevertheless, he said those concerns ultimately failed to produce a genuinely restrictive export policy.

Naval support under scrutiny

Criticism has focused primarily on Germany’s naval cooperation with Israel.

Ruth Rohde of the British research organization Shadow World Investigations argued that German-built naval platforms have played an operational role in Israeli military activities.

“Israel has used German ships to fire at Gaza, to blockade and starve Gaza, and is using submarines to station nuclear weapons,” Rohde told Al Jazeera. She added that supplying another submarine while Israel continues military operations in Gaza would provide Israel with “another tool in its arsenal of mass destruction.”

Germany has also continued to strengthen industrial cooperation with Israel. In May, TKMS signed a memorandum of understanding with Elbit Systems, Israel’s largest private defense company, to expand future collaboration.

Economic interests prioritized over humanitarian concerns

The latest approvals come as Germany’s defense industry enjoys unprecedented growth.

According to the German government’s Arms Export Report, Berlin approved €13.87 billion in military export licenses during the first half of 2026—more than four times the figure recorded during the same period in 2025. Ukraine remained the largest recipient, while Israel ranked among the leading destinations.

Mutschler argued that economic considerations continue to dominate export decisions.

“Arms exports have been and continue to be viewed by most federal governments primarily from an economic perspective and welcomed as a means of strengthening the defense industry,” he said, adding that the possibility such weapons could be used to commit war crimes appears to receive “significantly smaller” consideration in official decision-making.

Analysts note that Germany’s defense sector has expanded rapidly as military spending has increased and global demand for weapons has surged. At the same time, critics argue that Berlin’s reluctance to fully disclose the nature of its military exports—particularly major projects involving Israel—has made meaningful public oversight increasingly difficult.

The combination of undisclosed projects, shifting political positions, and limited official explanations has reinforced accusations that Germany’s arms export policy, especially toward Israel, remains marked by ambiguity rather than transparency.

Yemen fires drones at Saudi oil transport facilities

Yemen’s Ansarullah movement announced on Sunday that it had fired drones at targets in Saudi Arabia used for the supply and transport of crude oil in the country’s East.

“With God’s grace, a number of sensitive targets and points related to the supply and transportation of crude oil from eastern Saudi Arabia to Yanbu were targeted using several drones. This operation was

carried out in response to the violation of Yemeni airspace by drones belonging to the Saudi enemy,” the movement said in a statement.

However, earlier in the day, the Saudi Defense Ministry spokesman, Major General Turki Al-Maliki, claimed the kingdom was attacked by drones launched by what he called “Iran-backed militias in Iraq.”

New elected Hamas leader: Implications and priorities

From page 1 ► Holding a contested internal election while a genocidal campaign rains down on your population is, by any measure, an act of institutional audacity. It forces the movement to balance secrecy with transparency, speed with deliberation, and survival with legitimacy, all while its members dodge airstrikes.

In that brutal calculus, the vote isn’t just about picking a chief; it’s about refusing to let external annihilation dictate internal order. It undeniably transforms democracy into a weapon, one exercised not to win international applause, but to hold the organization together.

Hamas elected Dr. Khalil al-Hayya as head of its political bureau, succeeding Yahya Sinwar and Ismail Haniyeh, who were assassinated by the Zionist occupation regime. Al-Hayya secured the confidence of the movement’s Shura Council by a narrow margin over Khaled Meshaal, Hamas’s leader abroad.

Under Hamas’s internal electoral rules, a candidate must receive 50 percent plus one vote to win the presidency. Neither candidate reached the required threshold in the first round, making a second round of voting necessary.

The current election recalls a similar contest in the movement’s previous Gaza regional leadership elections, which had to be repeated several times before Yahya Sinwar narrowly defeated Dr. Nizar Awadallah.

Elections amid assassinations and genocidal war

These elections carry particular significance in light of the dramatic developments affecting the Palestinian cause, the resistance, and Gaza in particular since the launch of Operation al-Aqsa Flood.

The movement has demonstrated considerable institutional resilience by successfully holding internal elections across its three organizational regions,

Gaza, the occupied West Bank, and abroad, despite repeated assassination campaigns that have claimed many of its political, security, and military leaders.

The threat of assassination continues to shadow the movement’s leadership and cadres, including al-Hayya himself, who survived an assassination attempt in Qatar. This remains a major challenge to Hamas’s political and organizational stability.

At the same time, these developments are evidence of the Israeli regime’s failure to undermine Hamas’s institutions or create internal chaos and disarray. Al-Hayya’s election also reaffirms Gaza’s central leadership role within the movement and its continued ability to shape Hamas’s strategic direction, political decisions, and future policies.

Continuity of Haniyeh-Sinwar approach

From a strategic perspective, Khalil al-Hayya’s election consolidates the course charted by the movement’s previous leaders, Haniyeh and Sinwar. That approach maintained close ties with Iran and the Axis of Resistance while preserving strong relations with Qatar and Turkey and cultivating partnerships with influential states such as Egypt, Algeria, Russia, and China.

These policies earned the confidence of a broad range of regional and international actors, and al-Hayya’s election is expected to reinforce this balanced approach to foreign relations.

Conversely, his defeat would have been viewed by some parties as a departure from that principle of balance.

On the Palestinian national level, al-Hayya was among the leading figures who supported the policies pursued by Haniyeh and Sinwar, which produced an unprecedented revival of coordinated national action, particularly in the Gaza Strip.



The movement presented what it viewed as a distinctive model of national cooperation, reflected in joint action across numerous milestones. Among the most significant were the Great Return Marches of 2018, their shared political positions on elections, national reconciliation, and the future of the Palestine Liberation Organization, as well as coordinated military resistance through the establishment of the Joint Operations Room, which brought together twelve Palestinian resistance groups.

These groups participated in defending Gaza during the U.S.-backed Zionist regime’s genocidal war and demonstrated an exceptional example of resistance, sacrifice, and steadfastness.

Al-Hayya and the symbolism of Gaza

The election of Khalil al-Hayya carries symbolism that is difficult to ignore. He is a son of Gaza, which has endured, and continues to endure, genocide and ethnic cleansing, transforming it into the focal point of global events and a measure of moral conscience and human values.

Within Hamas’s leadership, al-Hayya is seen as reflecting Gaza itself. His family, including his sons, daughter-in-law, and grandson, were among those killed in the genocidal war, while those who survived were displaced across the Strip, moving from one tent to another through successive waves

of displacement.

Like the rest of the Gaza population, they experienced hunger, thirst, scorching heat, and bitter cold. Under the current circumstances, many in Gaza would find it difficult to accept any other choice of leader.

In the public imagination, Khalil al-Hayya is viewed as a continuation of the Palestinian struggle, its trajectory, and its consequences, which have yet to be resolved. He also oversees the negotiations portfolio in all its dimensions, making his election a signal of continuity in that process.

As Gazans await the outcome of the talks, many hope they will shield them from what they see as plans for more ethnic cleansing and forced displacement, improve the humanitarian situation, and alleviate their suffering.

Al-Hayya is also expected to strengthen and reinvigorate efforts across the various arenas in support of Gaza, reflecting what many there perceive as a profound sense of abandonment by the region and beyond.

Many Gazans believe they have been forsaken by the overwhelming majority, left to face the brutal enemy. At the same time, expectations were greater for countries regarded as friends or supporters of the Palestinian people, including Turkey, Qatar, and Algeria.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

2026 Asian Championship to decide Piazza’s future with Iran

TEHRAN - The 2026 Asian Men’s Volleyball Championship could prove to be a defining moment not only for Iran’s national team but also for head coach Roberto Piazza.

Scheduled to take place in Fukuoka, Japan, from Sept. 4 to 13, the tournament carries enormous significance, with the continental champion earning a coveted berth at the Olympic Games. For Iran, success is no longer just about reclaiming Asian supremacy—it may also determine whether Piazza remains at the helm beyond his current contract.

Iran head into the championship under mounting pressure following a disappointing Volleyball Nations League campaign. Piazza’s side finished 14th after managing just three victories in 12 matches, suffering nine defeats and narrowly avoiding relegation. The underwhelming performance sparked widespread criticism and raised serious questions about the team’s direction under the Italian coach.

Despite the criticism, Iran Volleyball Federation president Milad Taghavi publicly backed Piazza during the federation’s general assembly in Hamedan on July 12.

“We fully support Piazza, and he will remain the national team’s head coach through the 2028 Olympic Games,” Taghavi said. “The success of Iranian volleyball is our priority, regardless of outside criticism.”

However, Taghavi’s latest comments suggest the federation’s position may not be as firm as initially believed.

Speaking on national television this week, he acknowledged that Piazza’s long-term future will ultimately depend on results.

“We have less than two months until the Asian Championship. In such a short period, hiring another foreign coach is simply not realistic,” Taghavi said. “Piazza’s current contract runs until the end of 2026. After evaluating his performance, we will decide whether to activate the extension. Our current plan is to continue with him through 2028.”

While Iran will also compete at the Asian Games, Piazza is unlikely to lead the team there because of his club commitments. The Asian Games are not part of the FIVB international calendar, making his presence on the Iranian bench highly improbable.

With that in mind, the Asian Championship has become far more than a continental tournament. It represents a crucial test for both Iran’s Olympic ambitions and Piazza’s future.

The Italian coach signed what was effectively a 2+2-year agreement, with the federation holding the option to extend the partnership. Whether that option is exercised may now hinge on Iran’s performance in Fukuoka.

For Piazza, the road to Los Angeles 2028 could very well begin—or end—in Japan.

Iran finish seventh at 2026 Asian Junior Handball Championship

TEHRAN - Iran defeated China 38-31 on Monday to finish seventh at the 2026 Asian Junior Handball Championship.

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

South Korea will meet the UAE in the final match and Bahrain and Saudi Arabil will lock horns in bronze medal match.

The 19th Asian Men’s Junior Handball Championship is being held in Chuzhou of China from 15 to 27 July 2026.

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

Taj apologizes to Iranians for disappointing World Cup campaign

TEHRAN - Iran Football Federation president Mehdi Taj has apologized to the Iranian people following the national team’s disappointing World Cup campaign, admitting that Team Melli fell short of expectations after failing to progress beyond the group stage.

Iran’s 2026 FIFA World Cup campaign ended in disappointment after Team Melli finished third in Group G, missing out on a historic place in the knockout stage.

Iran remained unbeaten in the group phase, drawing all three matches and collecting three points, but the results were not enough to advance under the expanded 48-team tournament format. Despite a determined performance against stronger opposition, Iran’s inability to secure a win proved costly, extending the nation’s wait for their first-ever appearance in the World Cup knockout rounds.

Speaking at the Football Association General Assembly in Kerman on Monday, Taj defended the team’s overall performance while acknowledging that Iran should have achieved a better result.

“We failed to advance from our group,” Taj said. “We could have delivered a better performance, and for that, I apologize to the people of Iran. However, there are important circumstances that should also be taken into consideration.”

Taj pointed to the logistical challenges Iran faced during the tournament, particularly the late relocation of the team’s training base to Mexico.

“If we had known from the beginning that we would be based in Mexico during the World Cup, we would have held our entire preparation camp in Tijuana instead of Turkey,” he explained. “We arrived just six days before our opening match after crossing a 12-hour time difference. That was one of the biggest obstacles our team had to deal with.”

Taj also praised the national team’s tribute to the victims of the “Minab 168” school tragedy, saying the squad proudly carried the name “Minab 168” throughout the competition as a symbol of remembrance.

Chadormalou extend paraguayan winger Otazu contract

TEHRAN - Chadormalou have secured the services of Paraguayan winger Mario Otazu for another season, extending the attacker’s contract ahead of the new Iranian Pro League campaign.

The 29-year-old reached an agreement with the club to remain at Chadormalou for one more year, ensuring he will continue to play a key role in head coach Saeed Akhbari’s attacking plans.

Otazu was one of Chadormalou’s standout performers last season, impressing with his pace, technical ability and creativity in the final third. His consistent performances made him an important figure in the club’s attacking unit, prompting the coaching staff and transfer committee to prioritize his renewal as part of their strategy to retain the team’s core players.

The contract extension reflects Chadormalou’s ambition to maintain squad continuity, strengthen the team’s technical quality and build on last season’s progress as they prepare for another challenging Pro League campaign.

The experienced winger brings a wealth of international experience, having previously played in the top divisions of Paraguay, Argentina, Chile, Peru and Bolivia.

Otazu will once again wear the Chadormalou jersey in the upcoming season, with the Yazd-based club expressing their confidence that the Paraguayan can continue to make a significant impact in the team’s pursuit of success.

Tehran, Seoul explore closer heritage cooperation

TEHRAN - Iran has proposed establishing a joint task force with South Korea on cultural heritage restoration, conservation and digital documentation following the inscription of Iran’s “Alamut Castle and Related Fortifications” on UNESCO’s World Heritage List, Iranian officials said during a meeting held on the sidelines of the 48th session of the World Heritage Committee in Busan.

Iranian Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri made the proposal during talks with Ho Min, head of the Korea Heritage Service, who welcomed the initiative, IRNA reported on Monday.

The meeting took place after UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee on Sunday inscribed the serial property of “Alamut Castle and Related Fortifications” as Iran’s 30th tangible cultural property on the World Heritage List.

The newly listed property comprises seven castles and fortifications across the eastern and western Alamut valleys and the southern slopes of the Alborz Mountains in Qazvin province. UNESCO said the sites formed an integrated defensive and administrative system between the 11th and 13th centuries and recognized the property as an example of a fortified mountain landscape reflecting planning, defensive architecture, water management and spatial organization.

Salehi-Amiri said the inscription marked “a historic achievement” for Iran and called it the beginning of a broader responsibility for safeguarding the site.



“At the same time that we are holding this meeting, the people of Iran, especially the people of Qazvin province, are celebrating Alamut’s inscription,” he said. “This event will remain in the historical memory of the Iranian nation.”

He said the inscription increased both Iran’s and the international community’s responsibility to preserve, introduce and pass the site on to future generations.

The minister also referred to damage sustained by 149 historical sites in Iran during what he described as recent attacks by the Israeli regime and the United States, saying Iran needed to benefit from the experience of countries that had restored damaged cultural heritage.

“South Korea, with its valuable experience in restoring cultural heritage, can be an important partner in this path,” Salehi-Amiri said.

He also invited Ho Min to visit Iran and said the country’s Cultural

Heritage Research Institute, with nearly a century of experience, was ready to cooperate with its South Korean counterparts through joint scientific projects and exchanges.

Salehi-Amiri said Iran was prioritizing digital transformation in the heritage sector, including smart technologies, three-dimensional documentation of historical sites and the use of artificial intelligence to introduce Iran’s cultural heritage to international audiences.

The two sides also discussed cooperation in conservation, restoration, specialist training, digitalization, artificial intelligence, joint exhibitions and professional exchanges, according to the ministry. Also at the meeting, Ali Darabi, deputy minister for cultural heritage, said Iran was interested in drawing on South Korea’s experience in restoration, museum management, digital technologies and heritage documentation.

Darabi said the number of mu-

UNESCO-listed Alamut reflects Iran’s military architecture, enduring cultural legacy: expert

TEHRAN - The recent inscription of Iran’s “Alamut Castle and Related Fortifications” on UNESCO’s World Heritage list recognizes the site’s outstanding military architecture, historical significance and continuing cultural legacy, veteran Iranian archaeologist Rajab-Ali Labaf-Khaniki said.

Iran’s “Alamut Castle and Related Fortifications” was inscribed on UNESCO’s World Heritage List on Sunday during the 48th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Busan, South Korea, becoming the country’s 30th tangible cultural heritage property to receive the designation.

In an interview with Miras-e Aria, Labaf-Khaniki said sites admitted to UNESCO’s World Heritage list possess values that extend beyond national boundaries and are considered significant for humanity as a whole.

“Such values must not only have shaped identity in the past, but also continue to inspire people today and represent human civilization for future generations,” he said.

One-day tours can boost local economies if managed properly, researcher says

TEHRAN - One-day tours can stimulate local economies, strengthen community ties and ease pressure on crowded tourism destinations, but only if they are supported by effective planning and management, an Iranian tourism researcher said.

Neda Razavizadeh, a faculty member at the Tourism Research Institute of the Academic Center for Education, Culture & Research (ACECR), said day trips could generate sustainable benefits for destinations while avoiding environmental and infrastructure costs if they were properly managed, ISNA reported on Monday.

According to UN Tourism, tourists are defined as visitors who stay at least one night and less than one year at a destination, while same-day visitors return to their place of origin without an overnight stay, Razavizadeh said.

Although same-day visits are not classified as tourism under the official definition, both forms of travel serve as leisure activi-

ties and have distinct economic and social impacts on visitors, host communities and places of origin, she added.

Razavizadeh said destinations located near major urban centers, including villages and recreational areas on the outskirts of large cities, could benefit economically from day visitors. Food vendors, recreational facilities, handicraft producers and other local businesses could expand their customer base by serving larger numbers of visitors, she said.

She said well-managed one-day travel could contribute to economic growth in less-developed areas while strengthening residents’ sense of belonging, factors that could help reduce migration to larger cities.

Razavizadeh added that directing some visitors to nearby destinations during peak travel periods could also help reduce congestion and pressure on infrastructure in cities such as Mashhad.

Labaf-Khaniki, one of Iran’s leading archaeologists and a recipient of the country’s “Everlasting Figure” cultural heritage distinction, said Alamut Castle occupies a prominent place in Iranian history because of its association with the Ismailis and its role during periods of political conflict.

He said the Ismailis, centered at the mountain fortress of Alamut, became an influential political and religious movement whose opposition to ruling powers stemmed from a combination of religious beliefs, political aspirations and what he described as patriotic motivations.

According to Labaf-Khaniki, the castle’s historical importance is also linked to resistance against the Abbasid Caliphate and later the Mongol invasions. He said the Mongol ruler Hulagu Khan entered Iran with two principal objectives: eliminating the Ismaili movement and overthrowing the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad, both of which were ultimately achieved.

Turning to the site’s architecture, La-

seums in Iran would soon reach about 1,000, creating opportunities for joint exhibitions and exchanges of cultural objects between the two countries.

He said signing a memorandum of understanding between the heritage authorities of Iran and South Korea would provide a framework for long-term cooperation.

Ho Min expressed sympathy over Iran’s recent situation and said the participation of the Iranian delegation in the Busan meeting demonstrated the country’s commitment to cultural heritage.

No country can fully protect humanity’s shared heritage alone, Ho Min said, adding that an international cooperation is the most important way to safeguard this common legacy.

He said South Korea would establish a mechanism after the UNESCO meeting to maintain cooperation with participating countries, including Iran.

Recalling South Korea’s post-war reconstruction of cultural heritage, Ho Min said his country understood Iran’s circumstances and was prepared to cooperate in restoring damaged monuments, specialist training, artificial intelligence, digital documentation and joint heritage projects.

He described the inscription of Alamut Castle and Related Fortifications as an important development for both Iran and the international community and said he hoped it would mark the beginning of a new phase of strategic cooperation between the two countries in the field of cultural heritage.

Labaf-Khaniki described Alamut as an exceptional example of military and residential design.

“Architecture is the setting for human life,” he said, adding that Alamut should be viewed not only as a political and military stronghold but also as a remarkable architectural achievement.

He said the fortress contains an extensive range of functional spaces, including residential quarters, defensive installations designed to withstand sieges, and elite sections whose scale and structural sophistication rivaled those of royal palaces.

The combination of monumental construction, carefully selected building materials and refined architectural decoration demonstrates the engineering capabilities of medieval Iranian builders, he said.

Labaf-Khaniki said the site’s architectural, historical, cultural and social significance, together with its lasting influence on human civilization, justified its inclusion on UNESCO’s World Heritage list.

than overnight tourists. She said they typically spend less but can contribute to waste generation, environmental and noise pollution, traffic congestion and increased demand on infrastructure and natural resources.

She said managing destinations according to their environmental carrying capacity and cultural considerations was essential to ensure that short trips generate economic and social benefits rather than imposing additional costs.

Razavizadeh said there were no comprehensive figures on oversight of one-day tours, but under Iranian regulations, such tours, like multi-day trips, should be organized by licensed travel agencies and accompanied by tour guides certified by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts to ensure compliance with professional standards, including safety, security and insurance coverage for participants.

Iranian, Russian universities discuss ways to deepen cooperation

TEHRAN – At a coordination meeting held to discuss the implementation of memoranda of understanding (MOUs) signed between the universities of Iran and Russia, the two sides underlined the need to develop ties in strategic areas, mainly artificial intelligence and maritime economy.

The Monday meeting was attended by Elham Aminzadeh, the vice president of the University of Tehran for international affairs; Igor Demkin, an advisor to the Russian ambassador; and representatives from Russkiy Mir Foundation, which promotes Russian language abroad, ISNA reported.

During the meeting, Aminzadeh presented a report on the international activities of the top Iranian universities. Highlighting the success of a summit titled 'new horizons in international activities', she said the summit addressed current challenges, resilience during crises, the engagement of Iranian elites living abroad, and the design of new educational methods, particularly virtual, short-term, and skill-oriented programs.

Elaborating on the number of foreign students studying at the University of Tehran, the official said out of 3,300 received applications, 364 were accepted to be enrolled, 59 percent of whom are postgraduate students.

Underlining the country's science diplomacy, she said, "Since the beginning of the war, we have communicated with some 300 best European, American, Asian, and African universities. We have agreed with the South Korea Foundation for Science to establish a Korean language major at the University of Tehran."

The official went on to say that over the past 12 years, the cooperation between Iran and Russia was centered around exchanging students and professors, holding summer and winter schools, utilizing facilities in Russian laboratories, collaborating with BRICS, holding Persian and Russian language teaching courses, professional courses, and webinars.

Highlighting the need to establish a 'permanent committee for cooperation between top-tier universities in Iran and Russia to analyze existing weaknesses, she said that the two sides could collaborate in various areas such as maritime economy and AI.

Moreover, Mahmoud-Reza Delavar, the director general of the office for international students at the University of Tehran, proposed establishing a joint financial fund to secure resources for collaborative projects.

Iranian and Russian universities can develop cooperation in different sectors including aerospace, maritime economy, the steel industry, transportation, and geophysics, he added.

For his part, Demkin said the two sides have



so far benefited from only 30 percent of their scientific potential. Tehran and Moscow have signed some 350 MOUs. However, just 10 to 15 percent of them have been implemented. It is essential to distinguish significant and insignificant MOUs, and focus on the most important ones.

The next two years present an opportunity to expand essential cooperation, he noted.

Need to boost scientific cooperation

On June 10, Science Minister Hossein Simaei-Sarraf and Russian Science and Higher Education Minister, Valery Falkov, reviewed strategies for developing scientific, educational, and academic cooperation between the two countries with an emphasis on expanding professor and student exchanges, strengthening research cooperation, and facilitating academic interactions.

In a telephone conversation, Simaei-Sarraf expressed hope that in-person meetings between the two sides will be held in Tehran and Moscow in the near future, IRNA reported.

He also announced the upcoming holding of a meeting of the presidents of top Iranian and Russian universities in Tehran, and considered the development of Russian language chairs in Iranian universities and Persian language chairs in Russian universities as a sign of deepening scientific and cultural ties between the two countries.

Falkov, for his part, pointed out the beginning of a new university admission period in Russia and the welcoming of Iranian students to study at the country's universities, emphasizing the importance of providing employment opportunities and utilizing the academic potential of graduates after their return to Iran.

Referring to the decrease in the number of Russian universities approved in Iran's evaluation system, he called for a review of the methods of evaluating and validating educa-

tional qualifications.

Simaei-Sarraf continued by emphasizing the readiness of the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology to review the evaluation system of Russian universities and develop joint educational and research cooperation.

The two sides also agreed to continue cooperation on developing professor and student exchanges and expanding scientific cooperation between the universities of the two countries. The discussion ended with Simaei-Sarraf and Falkov mutually emphasizing the continuation of consultations, strengthening academic cooperation, and planning for face-to-face meetings in the near future.

In December 2025, the second scientific conference between Iran and Russia was held in Moscow on Monday, with Iran's ambassador to Russia, Kazem Jalali; science attaché, Hadi Goudarzi, and representatives from universities and scientific institutions of the two countries in attendance.

Referring to Iran's unique history and the civilizational commonalities between the two countries, Russian Presidential Aide Andrei Fursenko emphasized the need to strengthen cultural and academic relations between Iran and Russia, msrt.ir reported.

"The Russian government is completely ready to promote collaborations with Iran in the science and technology sectors. Russia and Iran need to rely on their capabilities in the pursuit of global development and play their historical role," he noted.

Deputy Minister of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, Denis Sergeevich Sekirinsky, for his part, said the two nations have their own distinguished civilizations, maintaining cultural traditions and spiritual values. These historical commonalities have resulted in mutual respect and trust, as well as fostering cooperation.

young mathematicians from more than 100 countries and regions. The Iranian team is placed among the top 15 teams in the world.

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

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

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

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

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

This year's competition brought together over 1,000

Over 2 million people registered so far to attend Arbaeen pilgrimage

TEHRAN – More than two million individuals have so far been registered on 'Samah', an online platform developed to organize pilgrims for the Arbaeen pilgrimage, Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni has said.

The Arbaeen pilgrimage, which is one of the largest religious gatherings in the world, comes 40 days after Ashura, the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS), the third Imam of Shia Muslims, and the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Each year, a huge crowd of people flocks to Karbala, where the holy shrine of Imam Hussein (AS) is located, to perform mourning rituals.

Until now, around 750,000 pilgrims have travelled to Iraq through six borders, namely Mehran, Shalamcheh, Chazabeh, Khosravi, Tamarchin and Bashmaq, to take part in this religious ceremony.

Some 22 key governmental agencies, utilizing all necessary resources and facilities, are providing services to the pilgrims, IRNA quoted Momeni as saying.

Over 3,500 mawkebs (volunteer service stations) have been set up both in Iran and Iraq to serve the people. The governmental agencies have provided appropriate vehicles to facilitate pilgrims' transportation both into Iraq and back from that country.

The two nations have also established a joint operation center on the two countries' border to fully monitor the situation and plan ways to provide services to the mourners.

'Regional countries can use Iran's experience in managing Arbaeen pilgrimage'

Hossam Elsharkawi, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), has highlighted Iran's experience in managing the Arbaeen pilgrimage, saying that the country can serve as a regional hub to train other nations and share expertise with them.

The shared mission of Red Cross and Red Crescent societies worldwide is to support



people and provide humanitarian services to them; Iran has valuable expertise in mass gathering management, which has to be shared internationally, Mehr news agency quoted Elsharkawi as saying.

The official made the remarks while addressing the sixth International Congress on "Health in Arbaeen", held in Tehran on July 19 to 20.

"The international federation is striving to create a platform to transfer Iran's knowledge, scientific documentation, and experience on mass gathering management to other countries, as this experience is truly golden and unparalleled globally," he stressed.

The official went on to say that the IFRC is currently consulting and exchanging views with Iranian officials to establish an educational hub for mass gathering management in the country, a center that would provide ongoing specialized training, preserve and pass on the knowledge to future generations.

This year, 515 articles were submitted to the congress, out of which 19 articles will be delivered as lectures, and 22 as posters. The congress is hosting 105 lecturers in different sectors this year, IRNA reported.

The congress includes 25 scientific panels and eight training workshops, which highlight the idea that health in mass gatherings depends on interdisciplinary research and multi-center studies, analyzing data, and utilizing modern technologies—including artificial intelligence and modeling.

World Hepatitis Day highlights removing barriers to life-saving services

TEHRAN – World Hepatitis Day is observed on July 28 every year to raise awareness, take action, and combat hepatitis worldwide.

Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver that causes severe liver disease and liver cancer. This year's theme, "Hepatitis: Let's break it down," is a call to remove the barriers that stand between people and the services that can save their lives. Viral hepatitis continues to be a major cause of preventable illness and death worldwide.

The tools needed to eliminate viral hepatitis already exist. Effective vaccines, accurate diagnostics, curative treatments for hepatitis C, and lifelong therapies for hepatitis B can prevent infections, save lives, and reduce liver cancer and cirrhosis. Despite this, millions of people remain undiagnosed, untreated, or unable to access care due to stigma, limited awareness, health system gaps, and persistent inequalities.

The 2026 campaign calls for turning proven science into action through stronger political commitment, sustained investment, and efforts to expand equitable access to prevention, testing, treatment, and care.

The Day is an opportunity to step up national and international efforts on hepatitis, encourage actions and engagement by individuals, partners and the public and highlight the need for a greater global response as outlined in the WHO's Global hepatitis report of 2017.

The date of 28 July was chosen because it is the birthday of Nobel-prize winning scientist Dr Baruch Blumberg, who discovered hepatitis B virus (HBV) and developed a diagnostic test and vaccine for the virus.

Low coverage of testing and treatment is the most important gap to be addressed in order to achieve the global elimination goals by 2030.

In 2025, Jaffar Hussain, the former World Health Organization (WHO) representative to Iran, lauded Iranian health experts and officials, as well as people, in addressing

hepatitis B and C, underlining that the country's determination in eliminating hepatitis is praiseworthy.

Viral hepatitis is still one of the leading causes of death worldwide, although it is preventable and curable. Highlighting the significance of raising public awareness, renewing commitment, and accelerating measures in fighting hepatitis, the official said eliminating hepatitis requires collective measures and broad participation, IRNA reported.

Highlighting Iran's remarkable accomplishments in managing hepatitis B through vaccination, Hussain elaborated on existing challenges, particularly among vulnerable groups, in the case of hepatitis C.

"We need to focus on health quality and programs such as peer support, harm reduction services, and the expansion of tests and treatments," the official said.

Referring to the WHO policy of Integrating HIV, viral hepatitis, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) with Primary Health Care (PHC), Hussain said the integration of hepatitis services with PHC will lead to improved access to services, enhanced service delivery, stronger community engagement, improved health outcomes, and sustainable financing.

The official went on to call for investing in stigma-free and people-centered care and the integration of hepatitis services with PHC, emphasizing that the eradication of hepatitis is not merely a health objective, but a step towards justice, human dignity, and equality.

The health ministry has set goals to eliminate hepatitis C in the country by the Iranian year 1405 (March 2026-March 2027) through precise planning and broad participation of different sectors, the deputy health minister Alireza Raeisi has said.

The country will continue to implement diagnostic, therapeutic, and preventive policies to be able to achieve international bronze, silver, and ultimately gold medals for the eradication of hepatitis C.

Iranian professor wins prestigious Abacus Medal

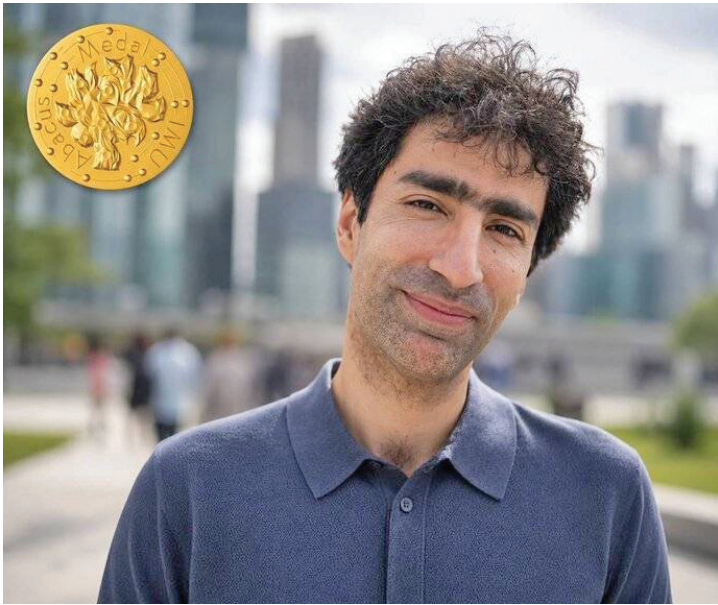
TEHRAN – Shayan Oveis Gharan, a professor in the Paul Allen School of Computer Science and Engineering at University of Washington, has won the International Mathematical Union's prestigious Abacus Medal

He received the prize for his landmark contributions to the theory of algorithms, taking the analysis of algorithms beyond combinatorics and probabilistic analysis into the theory of the geometry of polynomials and related topics. This theory has led to a deeper understanding of distributions on spanning trees and matroid bases in general.

Oveis Gharan got a BSc in computer engineering from Tehran's Sharif University of Technology in 2008. He received his PhD in Management Science and Engineering from Stanford University in 2013.

He was awarded at the International Congress of Mathematicians (ICM) held in Philadelphia, USA, from July 23 to July 30.

According to the ICM website, his work improved the approximation of the metric travelling salesperson problem, breaking the limit on the approximation factor in Christofides' 3/2-algorithm from 50 years ago, and led to a revolution in the understanding of Markov Chain Monte Carlo sampling algorithms (proving the Mihail-Vazirani conjecture and giving a self-contained proof that resolved the strongest version of Mason's conjecture) through spectral independence.



The Abacus Medal is awarded every four years to a theoretical computer scientist under 40.

Iran's achievements in mathematics

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

Alireza Joonbakhsh-Najafabadi and Alireza Sharifi won the gold medals, Amirhossein Tayyeb clinched the silver medal, and Ar-

sha Azizeddin, Radin Nik-Eqbali, and Arian Zandi received the bronze medals, IRIB reported.

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

This year's competition brought together over 1,000

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JULY 28, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Beware, beware of sinfulness. By God, He has veiled His servants' guilt so much as if He has forgiven them.
Imam Ali (AS)

[Prayer Times](#) » Noon:12:11 Evening: 19:32 Dawn: 3:32 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:10 (tomorrow)

Gaza’s children revive art of mosaic to confront effects of war

The Culture and Free Thought Association in the Gaza Strip has revived the mosaic workshop activity, which was forcibly halted during the past months of war. This step targets children and adolescents, seeking to inspire them, discover their hidden talents, and transform them into a tangible reality through a timeless art form.

This artistic activity prominently features a complete reliance on the remaining resources that survived the bombing, where the rubble and stones of destroyed homes form the primary basis for creating the artworks. Participants collect stones from the debris and reshape them into artistic pieces that tell stories of steadfastness and survival, Al-Quds reported.

The process begins with training children through intensive courses covering precise mosaic techniques. Visual artist Mohammed Abu Lahya explained that this field requires great patience and extreme precision, as preparing and training a child takes months to ensure mastery of execution.

The training within the workshop is based on Palestinian cultural heritage, by simulating traditional scenes dating back to before 1948. These scenes vary to include images of the Palestinian farmer, the woman in embroidered dress, olive trees, and sea scenes that reinforce national identity in the hearts of the young ones.

The initiators of the project consider mosaic to be a sustainable art that maintains its beauty despite the fluctuations of time and erosion factors. The murals created serve as visual historical documents, aiming to immortalize Palestinian memory and protect it from extinction amidst the difficult conditions experienced by the Strip.

However, the initiative faces immense challenges related to the scarcity of raw ma-



terials and the loss of essential tools needed for cutting and installation. Local sources indicated the absence of cement, which prompted artists to innovate by grinding and mixing bricks to provide alternatives that enable them to fix the artworks on walls.

Kinana Ramadan, a 14-year-old girl, found in this art a means of psychological release after being injured in a bombing that targeted her family's home. Kinana says that her involvement in mosaic assembly helped her overcome her physical and psychological pain after months of being unable to move.

For her part, Enaya Abu Hadrous participates in the workshop to restore paintings by former artists and develop her creative abilities despite the lack of colors. Enaya emphasizes that the goal is to preserve Palestinian heritage and produce paintings in an acceptable manner that reflects the will to live despite incomplete tools.

Children in Gaza continue to transform the tragedies of war into aesthetic artworks brimming with life, defying the lack of resources and the blockade. This experience is a unique model in using art as a tool for cultural resistance and psychological therapy simultaneously, turning the ashes of destruction into colorful mosaics.

Cartoon of Day



“He puts his name on everything. At least this one’s appropriate!”

Trump Detector
Cartoonist: Mick O'Hara from Ireland

Mehr Media Group CEO proposes joint SCO media platform to strengthen regional cooperation

TEHRAN- Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati, the CEO of Mehr Media Group (which consists of Mehr News Agency and English-language daily Tehran Times) has called for the establishment of a joint intelligent media platform among Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states, saying closer collaboration between media organizations and think tanks is vital to counter misinformation, foster mutual trust, and advance the organization's vision of a shared future.

Speaking at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Media and Think Tanks Summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan on Monday, Rahmati said today's rapidly evolving information landscape requires media institutions to move beyond conventional news production and become active partners in shaping regional understanding and cooperation.

“The world today is full of misunderstandings and prejudices,” he told delegates from SCO member states. “By providing objective and comprehensive reporting, we can overcome obstacles rooted in historical, cultural and social differences and build an accurate and positive understanding of one another.”

Rahmati said the principles of the “Shanghai Spirit”—mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for the diversity of civilizations, and pursuit of common development—provide a solid foundation for expanding cooperation among member countries.

Referring to the long history of interaction along the ancient Silk Road, he noted that the civilizations of Iran, China, Central Asia and other SCO members have been connected for centuries through trade, culture



and the exchange of ideas. Those historical ties, he said, should now be reinforced through stronger media and intellectual cooperation.

The Mehr News CEO also praised China's Xinhua News Agency for its efforts to deepen media engagement within the SCO framework and thanked the government and people of Kyrgyzstan for hosting the summit in Bishkek.

Quoting a verse from Kyrgyzstan's national epic Manas, Rahmati said unity can transform scattered capabilities into a powerful collective force, describing the message as an appropriate symbol for the organization's mission in today's changing international environment.

He argued that public perception has become a decisive factor in global affairs, emphasizing that think tanks and media organizations share responsibility for explaining complex

political and cultural realities while combating distorted narratives.

“Integrated intelligent media is not merely a new technology,” he said. “It represents a systematic transformation in the way content is produced, distributed and communicated with audiences.”

Rahmati stressed that effective governance in the digital age depends on information sharing and multilateral cooperation rather than centralized decision-making, adding that intelligent media can serve as a strategic tool for convergence, conflict prevention and regional stability.

To enhance cooperation among SCO members, he proposed four practical initiatives: establishing a permanent Shanghai Media and Think Tank Joint Platform for the exchange of content, research and strategic data; creating a periodic

mechanism to evaluate the implementation of the Shanghai Spirit across member states; forming a permanent working group to share successful experiences in artificial intelligence, combating disinformation and digital public diplomacy; and launching an advisory network capable of identifying and addressing misleading narratives before they escalate into political or security crises.

Concluding his remarks, Rahmati called on SCO members to transform the Bishkek gathering into a milestone for long-term media cooperation.

“Let us take a practical step from this historic meeting toward building a community with a shared future for mankind,” he said. “Through our solidarity, we can create an intelligent media network that serves as a lasting symbol of the Shanghai family.”

15th Intl. 100-Second Film Festival extends deadline following strong demand

TEHRAN- In response to interest and numerous requests from filmmakers and audiences, the organizers of the International 100-Second Film Festival have announced a one-week extension for the submission of entries.

The original deadline for submissions, previously set for August 1, has now been pushed back to August 8.

The festival continues to invite short films across several diverse categories, including animation, documentary, fiction, and works utilizing artificial intelligence.

Under the direction of Mohaddeseh Pirhadi, the 15th edition will center its thematic focus on three primary categories including “Battle for the Future,” “Battle for the Children of the World,” and

“Battle for the Homeland.”

The festival is renowned for its stringent time constraints, which challenge creators to deliver a complete and impactful narrative within a very limited window.

According to the official call, entries for the first two categories must be produced as short films with a maximum duration of 100 seconds. However, recognizing the complexity and emotional depth often required to depict themes of national loyalty and sacrifice, the organizers have extended the time limit for the “Battle for the Homeland” category, allowing films in this section to reach up to 300 seconds.

Interested filmmakers and artists are encouraged to visit the official festival website at

100fest.com for further details regarding the call for entries and submission guidelines.

The 15th International 100-Second Film Festival is scheduled to take place in Tehran in September.

Since its inception, the festival has served as a prestigious platform for discovering new talents and experimenting with the art of the short, pushing the boundaries of how much emotion and information can be conveyed in a few fleeting seconds. The upcoming edition promises to be a diverse gathering of international perspectives, reflecting the shared struggles and hopes of humanity through the lens of a camera.

The Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization is the organizer of the festival.

Hilaj Theater to host loose adaptation of Peter Weiss’s “The Invitation”

TEHRAN – A loose adaptation of the play “The Invitation” by German playwright Peter Weiss will go on stage at Hilaj Theater in Tehran from August 5.

Written in 1965, “The Investigation” depicts the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trials of 1963–1965. Weiss was an observer at the trials and developed the play par-

tially from the reports of Bernd Naumann.

Dramatized and directed by Mahmoudreza Rahimi, this work offers a fresh perspective on one of the most significant plays of documentary theater, narrating the relationship between war, violence, and human responsibility in the heart of one of the 20th

century's most harrowing tragedies, ILNA reported.

In this personal and free adaptation of “The Investigation,” Rahimi seeks to redefine the phenomenon of war and the human condition within it.

The cast includes Elham Ebni, Javad Sedaghat, Seyed Mojtaba Tabatabaei Basir, Hossein Ghareh,

Soheil Mahzoun, Farideh Mirzaei, Sahel Nahavandi, Yazdan Afshani, and Mehdi Rasouli, among others.

A production of the Newsha Theater Group, the play will remain on stage through August 27 at Hilaj Theater, located at No. 22, Samandarian (Mohajer) Alley, Iranshahr St., Karimkhan Ave.

“Tears of Minab” musical tribute released to honor child martyrs

TEHRAN- The Rudaki Foundation has released “Tears of Minab”, a single dedicated to the memory of the student martyrs of the Shajareh Tayyebah elementary school in Minab, Hormozgan province.

The project, which includes both a single and a music video, is part of a broader artistic initiative by the Rudaki Foundation to preserve the memory of the young victims and express solidarity with their bereaved families. The work features composition and songwriting by Mohammad Mehdi Bateni and is performed by vocalist Hadi Feyzabadi.

Through a blend of poetic lyricism and national sentiment, “Tears of Minab” seeks to articulate the grief felt by the families and the Iranian people. The composition transforms the agony of lost dreams into a narrative of national unity, patriotism, and endurance, serving as an emotional bridge for those mourning the tragedy.

Complementing the auditory experience, the accompanying music video utilizes evocative imagery to mirror the themes of longing and resilience, intensifying the emotional impact of the piece.

This release marks the second musical tribute produced by the Rudaki Foundation centering on

the Minab tragedy. It follows the earlier production of “The Last Essay”, which was released to commemorate the fortieth day of the children's martyrdom.

These artistic endeavors align with the Rudaki Foundation's ongoing mission to uphold human values and create an artistic record of contemporary events that have deeply impacted the national psyche through the universal language of music and art.

On February 28, the Shajareh 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 im-

ages 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. Furthermore, 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.