

The letter that tore the mask off US occupation of Jordan

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — Hundreds of Jordanian public figures have finally said what the kingdom's rulers desperately hoped would remain unspoken. They publicly named the price of foreign military entanglement.

Their late July open letter demanding the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Jordan is a fierce indictment of a political order that traded sovereignty for dependency.

The force of this declaration stems from the breadth of the coalition behind it. Signatories include former ministers such as Amjad Hazza al-Majali, 90-year-old activist Su-fyan al-Tell, lawyers, academics, tribal chiefs, and retired military officers. ► Page 5

Ansarullah leader ties Riyadh to Epstein as Yemen locks in naval blockade

By staff writer

TEHRAN — Hundreds of thousands of residents of Sana'a and surrounding areas gathered in Sab'een Square on Friday amid heavy rainfall, chanting in defense of the resistance and the Yemeni armed forces.

Taking to the streets with the slogans "blockade in response to blockade" and "escalation of attacks in response to escalation of attacks," they voiced their total support for the continuation of the naval blockade against Saudi Arabia. ► Page 5

Entertainment Against Alternatives

By Kurosh Alyani

TEHRAN— On the surface, "Steal" is a crime-thriller miniseries about the "heist of the century" and financial corruption—a seemingly anti-capitalist text alert to inequality. Yet the ultimate layer of its message shores up the same war-driven capitalist order: it hides the Epstein class behind a sacrificial body and absolves that class by killing him; normalizes the war broker; caricatures the resistance's intellectuals and defense leaders in the figure of Darren Yoshida; and leaves individual theft as the only rational horizon.

Meaningful Haste

The project was announced in May 2024 under the title "Haven," and filming began in London that same month. Its creator, Sotiris Nikias, had written crime novels under the name Ray Celestin but had no previous experience as a television screenwriter. ► Page 8

9th Iranian Film Festival in Tokyo honors martyred children of Minab

TEHRAN — The 9th Iranian Film Festival in Tokyo was launched on Friday at the Libra Hall of the Minato City Gender Equality Center in Tokyo, Japan.

The event is organized by the Cultural Attaché office of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Japan, in collaboration with the International Affairs Center of Minato City, the Minato City Municipality, NPO MOCT, and the Tehran Peace Museum, ILNA reported.

A special focus of this year's festival is the theme of the "Martyred Children of Minab" and reflecting on its human dimensions through related programs and works.

On February 28, the Shajareh Tayyebah elementary school in Minab, Hormozgan province, became the site of a devastating massacre as the United States and Israel initiated their strikes against Iran. ► Page 8



Rescue crews and Qeshm Island locals at the scene of the July 30 US bombardment in the Persian Gulf, where three of a five-member family — including a child — lost their lives.

US Writhes, But Hormuz Survives-in Iranian Hands

The Americans and their mercenaries have today realized deep in their souls that their coffins are part of their equipment in the region

By Mahmoud M. Ravi-Nejad

TEHRAN — Iran significantly intensified its military posture across the Persian Gulf on Friday, announcing a series of coordinated military and maritime actions that underscored its determination to tighten control over the Strait of Hormuz while expanding retaliatory strikes against US military facilities in the region.

The latest developments represent one of the most extensive operational phases since Washington's military campaign against Iran began, highlighting Tehran's strategy of combining maritime enforcement with long-range military operations against American assets stationed across the Persian Gulf.

The most immediate escalation unfolded in the Strait of Hormuz, where the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said two oil tankers attempting to navigate through 'an

unauthorized shipping route' were disabled after ignoring repeated Iranian warnings. According to the IRGC, four additional tankers immediately reversed course, while the force reiterated that its Navy maintains "full control and management" over navigation in the strategic waterway.

The announcement came shortly after Iran's Persian Gulf Strait Affairs Authority (PGSA) declared that commercial transit through the Strait of Hormuz remains suspended because of 'continuing US military aggression in the region.' The authority said navigation requests would be reviewed only after stability returns, reaffirming that all vessels must comply with procedures introduced under Iran's new management

system for the strait.

Taken together, the two announcements indicate Tehran is seeking not only to preserve its expanded authority over the world's most strategically important energy corridor but also to enforce that authority through military means. Iranian officials argue that continued US military involvement in maritime traffic violates the Islamabad memorandum of understanding, under which Iran says its role in administering navigation through the Strait of Hormuz was recognized.

Regional military campaign expands beyond Iranian waters

Alongside its maritime measures, Iran announced a widening campaign targeting US military infrastructure across the Persian Gulf. ► Page 3

Araghchi warns against support for US military operations

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi intensified Tehran's diplomatic outreach over the past two days, holding a series of telephone conversations with his counterparts from Bulgaria, Cyprus, Britain and India, as Iran sought to dissuade foreign governments from supporting ongoing US military operations and to reinforce diplomatic engagement amid escalating regional tensions.

The calls came as Tehran continues to warn that any country facilitating military action against Iran could be regarded as participating in an act of aggression under international law. ► Page 2

Guardian: US military abandons wounded troops after Iran strike

TEHRAN — Mounting evidence of structural disarray and internal cover-ups within the United States military apparatus has surfaced following detailed disclosures surrounding the aftermath of an Iranian retaliatory precision strike during the US-Israeli war that began on February 28. According to a report published by The Guardian, congressional lawmakers in Washington are demanding urgent answers from War Secretary Pete Hegseth regarding severe medical neglect of wounded American personnel and systematic manipulation of official casualty figures.

The revelations center on a March 1 strike by an Iranian unmanned aerial vehicle against a vital US logistics node at the port of Shuaiba, located south of Kuwait City. ► Page 2

Trump's economic failure: 97,000 workers axed amid AI hype, negligence

TEHRAN— The Trump administration's hollow "America First" rhetoric stands fully exposed today, as devastating new employment data reveals a labor market spiraling out of control under a visibly inept White House. According to Challenger, Gray & Christmas, U.S. employers announced a staggering 97,000 job cuts in May—the highest monthly total for this period since the depths of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. This marks a 16% surge from April and a 3% increase year-over-year, yet the President has offered nothing but silence as American families face financial ruin.

While Trump boasts of a booming economy, the tech sector—which he frequently champions—has bled 123,653 jobs in just five months, a catastrophic 66% jump from last year. Corporate giants like Visa are ruthlessly slashing 2,600 workers, cynically blaming artificial intelligence. ► Page 4

Martyred Iranian Air Force pilot laid to rest in Shiraz

TEHRAN — The body of Brigadier General Majid Kazemi, a brave Iranian Air Force pilot who was martyred during a military mission against US bases, was buried in the city of Shiraz. Many people from all parts of society came to pay their respects to the fallen hero.

Brigadier General Kazemi was martyred on March 2, 2026, during a major military operation. In response to attacks by US and Israeli forces, two Iranian Su-24 bombers flew through advanced radar and air defense systems to strike the Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, a main US military hub in the region. ► Page 2



Deliberate destruction of Iran's cultural sites by Israel, US tantamount to destroying a civilization, historian says



TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Oil prices no longer react to war rhetoric, but to real supply cuts

Hamshahri analyzed the current oil market and wrote: The oil market, during the recent US-Iran conflict, once again revealed an important reality: war itself does not determine oil prices. What sustainably moves prices is real and lasting disruption in supply, transportation, and energy infrastructure. For Iran, these conditions are simultaneously an opportunity and a warning. The opportunity lies in the fact that the continued export of oil under pressure and maritime insecurity has shown that Iran's export network and mechanisms for selling and transferring oil possess considerable flexibility. This capability can be one of the components of the country's economic and geopolitical power. But the threat is also clear: no export route should ever be assumed risk-free. In such an environment, energy diplomacy must stand alongside deterrent power and operational capability. Oil power is not only about production volume; the ability to deliver barrels to the market during crises is also part of that power.

Arman-e-Melli: The US opposes regional security order

Arman-e-Melli, in a commentary, referred to Netanyahu's trip to the US. It noted that the importance of this meeting can even be demonstrated numerically: it was the first Oval Office meeting between Trump and Netanyahu after the Ramadan war, reflecting the unstable security situation in Israel and the region. That the Iran file was the main focus of the meeting, and expansion of the Abraham Accords was treated as a secondary issue, was not surprising. But the key point is that hours after the meeting, regional and international media reported joint Saudi-US strikes on Iraqi territory. The simultaneity of Netanyahu's meeting with Trump and the Riyadh-Washington attacks suggests that Israel and the US are coordinating to disrupt Iran's external environment, aiming to increase pressure on Tehran. Therefore, it is likely that in the coming days we will see greater activation of the Yemen front in Bab al-Mandab and the Red Sea.

Jam-e-Jam: Why did Brussels step in?

Jam-e-Jam examined Ukraine's drone attack on the Iranian commercial vessel Ana in the Caspian Sea and Europe's fear of an Iranian response. After the attack, a wave of diplomatic contacts from Kyiv and Brussels to Tehran began—contacts that, according to political observers, reflect Ukraine and the EU's concern about the political and security consequences of the incident more than any diplomatic initiative. The EU, while being Ukraine's largest political and military

supporter, is simultaneously worried about the expansion of the war into the Persian Gulf and threats to energy routes. From this perspective, Kallas's call to Tehran can be seen as an attempt to prevent the Caspian crisis from spilling over into the sensitive dynamics of the Strait of Hormuz and the global energy market. Brussels knows well that any escalation between Iran and Ukraine could extend the confrontation beyond Eastern Europe—a scenario that would pressure Europe's economy and energy security even more than the United States.

Donya-e-Eqtasad: The major challenge is the economy

Donya-e-Eqtasad assessed Iran's current situation and its major economic challenge. It wrote that the result of several decades of US-Iran confrontation has been a form of costly equilibrium. The persistence of such a situation is less a sign of success and more evidence of a strategic rivalry that has become attritional. During this period, Iran has built significant deterrent capacities. Defensive strength, a privileged geopolitical position, regional influence, and a decisive role in Persian Gulf energy security have consolidated Iran's place in regional equations. But the most important challenge facing Iran is economic rather than military. Therefore, the strategy that can bring Iran the greatest benefit is a form of smart realism in which deterrence supports diplomacy rather than replaces it. Such an approach requires avoiding actions that create broad global consensus against Iran.

Sazandegi: Why the Caspian Sea matters?

Sazandegi presented its view on Ukraine's attack on the Iranian commercial vessel and the significance of the incident in the Caspian Sea. This attack is a sign of the expansion of the Ukraine war into a region that had so far remained distant from direct conflict. The importance of the attack stems from the Caspian Sea's strategic role. In recent years—especially after intensified Western sanctions on Russia—the Caspian has become one of the most important transport corridors between Tehran and Moscow. The recent attack shows that Kyiv no longer considers the Caspian outside the battlefield and is ready to extend its operations to disrupt Russia's supply chain. The incident carries a clear message: the Ukraine war is no longer confined to the front lines of Eastern Europe. If this trend continues, the Caspian—long considered a relatively safe region—may become one of the most sensitive points of geopolitical competition among regional and extra-regional actors.

Martyred Iranian Air Force pilot laid to rest in Shiraz



From page 1 ► The mission successfully hit its target and sent a strong message of warning to adversaries.

On their return flight over the Persian Gulf, the aircraft were hit by enemy air defense systems.

After DNA tests confirmed his identity, General Kazemi's body was first brought to Shahid Lashgari Air Base in Tehran, where he received full military honors. He was then brought to his home city of Shiraz for his fi-

nal burial.

On the same day, other Iranian pilots in F-5 aircraft carried out another strike against Camp Buehring, a US military base in Kuwait.

These actions honor the tradition of Iranian pilots during the Iran-Iraq War. They show that Iran's military has the courage and skill to defend the country against any outside force. Iranian officials stated once again that any attack on the nation will be met with a strong and immediate response.

Araghchi warns against support for US military operations

From page 1 ► In separate conversations on Thursday with Bulgarian Foreign Minister Velislava Petrova-Chamova and Cypriot Foreign Minister Constantinos Kombos, Araghchi expressed concern over reports that foreign military facilities in the two countries could be used to support operations against Iran.

During his call with the Bulgarian foreign minister, Araghchi criticized Sofia's reported approval of a US request to deploy military aircraft at Bezmer Air Base, describing the decision as unacceptable and inconsistent with the longstanding friendly relations between Iran and Bulgaria. He urged the Bulgarian government to reconsider the move, arguing that under Article 3 of UN General Assembly Resolution 3314 on the Definition of Aggression, allowing one state's territory to be used by another to launch an attack against a third country constitutes participation in an act of aggression.

Araghchi reiterated that Iran would not hesitate to defend its national security and warned that any party involved in facilitating military action against the country would bear responsibility for the consequences.

The Bulgarian foreign minister reaffirmed the history of friendly ties between the two countries and said Bulgaria had no intention of becoming involved in the conflict. She also voiced support for diplomacy

and efforts aimed at reducing tensions in West Asia.

Araghchi delivered a similar message during his conversation with his Cypriot counterpart, urging Nicosia to prevent any misuse of foreign military bases located on the island for hostile actions against Iran.

He stressed that permitting foreign forces to use another country's territory to prepare or launch attacks against a third state would amount to participation in aggression under international law.

Kombos reaffirmed Cyprus' commitment to the principles of the UN Charter and international law, according to the Ira-



nian Foreign Ministry. He also said the Cypriot government had been in contact with Britain and had received assurances that British military bases on the island would not be used for military operations against any country, including Iran.

Diplomatic contacts continued on Friday, when Araghchi held separate telephone conversations with British Foreign Secretary David Lammy and Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar.

According to the Iranian Foreign Ministry, Araghchi and Lammy discussed bilateral relations as well as the latest regional and international developments, emphasizing the importance of

maintaining dialogue between Tehran and London amid rapidly evolving geopolitical conditions. No further details of the conversation were released.

Later on Friday, Araghchi also spoke with Jaishankar about bilateral relations and regional developments.

The series of diplomatic engagements reflects Tehran's parallel strategy of maintaining regional and international dialogue while warning governments against any direct or indirect involvement in military operations against Iran, underscoring its position that such support would carry both legal and political consequences under international law.

Exposing Western and Israeli plots against Iran-Egypt relations

TEHRAN - The recent unclaimed drone strike at Egypt's Damietta Port on the Mediterranean coast—which targeted gas-storage vessels—was almost instantaneously followed by a coordinated disinformation campaign across Western media outlets. Articles aggressively sought to link Iran to the attack without a shred of forensic evidence or official verification. This immediate projection of blame is not an isolated journalistic misstep; it reflects a deliberate geopolitical strategy engineered by Washington and Tel Aviv to drive a wedge between Iran and its regional neighbors, particularly Egypt. The speed with which Western reports, led by publications like The Wall Street Journal, pushed assertions blaming Tehran reveals the underlying agenda: to pit Iran against surrounding nations and fracture emerging avenues of Muslim solidarity in the Middle East. Official responses from both Cairo and Tehran quickly dismantled this narrative. Egyptian Minister of State for Information Diaa Rashwan explicitly rejected claims that Cairo attributed the strike to Iran, cautioning against rushing to conclusions or consuming unverified social media rumors during a delicate regional juncture. Concurrently, Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly emphasized that conclusions regarding the drone's origin would be grounded strictly in objective forensic examination rather than speculative media leaks. Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi also reaffirmed Iran's unwavering stance regarding Egypt's sovereignty, stating that Cairo remains an essential friend and regional partner whose national security is paramount to the Islamic Republic. Araghchi urged regional vigilance against covert plots designed to destroy mutual trust and destabilize the broader Middle East. When

evaluating maritime sabotage in strategic waterways like the Mediterranean or the Red Sea, the fundamental question remains: who benefits? For Iran, fostering stable diplomatic relations with Cairo and reinforcing regional cooperation aligned with shared security interests is a strategic priority. Targeting commercial shipping inside Egyptian ports would directly contradict Tehran's foreign policy objectives and regional security doctrine. Conversely, Israel and its American patrons possess both the capability and the ideological motivation to conduct covert maritime strikes designed to spark inter-regional friction. Fostering division helps disrupt regional reconciliation, as normalization of dialogue and strengthening ties between Iran and key Arab nations directly threatens Tel Aviv's long-standing strategy of regional isolation against Iran. Furthermore, attacking US-linked assets or international shipping in neutral waters provides a false pretext for expanded Western military presence and potential intervention under the guise of protecting maritime routes. Finally, escalating security crises across regional trade corridors conveniently diverts international pressure and attention away from Israel's ongoing military campaigns and domestic political crises. The suspicion of Israeli involvement in covert operations within Egypt is backed by historical precedent. Iranian officials and diplomats have consistently highlighted Tel Aviv's history of utilizing covert "false flag" tactics to shape geopolitical outcomes. The most prominent historical reference point is the 1954 Lavon Affair, officially known as Operation Susanah. During this operation, Israeli military intelligence recruited sleeper cells in Egypt to plant bombs inside Egyptian-, American-, and British-owned civilian sites, including li-



braries and educational centers in Cairo and Alexandria. The explicit objective of those attacks was to frame local groups, create an illusion of chaos, and compel British forces to maintain their military footprint in the Suez Canal zone. In contemporary strategic intelligence, these methods remain an active part of the Zionist intelligence toolkit. Iranian Foreign Ministry officials have repeatedly warned foreign governments that staged covert operations are designed specifically to implicate Tehran and trigger international sanctions or military confrontation. The attack at Damietta Port serves as a critical test for regional diplomacy. As Egyptian authorities complete their technical investigation of the recovered drone wreckage, the swift rejection of Western media speculation by both Cairo and Tehran underscores a growing regional awareness. Countering Western and Israeli destabilization campaigns requires regional states to maintain independent intelligence assessments, resist media-driven narratives, and strengthen bilateral communication channels. Only through vigilance against covert provocations can regional sovereignty and collective security be preserved.

Guardian: US military abandons wounded troops after Iran strike

From page 1 ► The precision drone successfully bypassed Western air defense networks to strike the relocated headquarters of the US Army's 103rd Sustainment Command, resulting in immediate fatalities and exposing critical vulnerabilities in the American forward deployment structure.

As detailed by The Guardian, the unit had explicitly requested additional medical staff and emergency supplies prior to the engagement, only to be turned down by military command. In the immediate aftermath, US

forces operated without basic field medicine, lacking a doctor on site, an established aid station, or functional emergency transport, forcing wounded soldiers to drive themselves to local civilian hospitals in Kuwait City. Subsequent medical evacuations to the US military hospital at Landstuhl in Germany were delayed by nine days, where arriving casualties were denied proper admission and restricted to limited treatment due to administrative failures in US casualty-processing databases. Upon returning to the

United States, personnel sent to Fort Hood, Texas, faced weeks-long delays in receiving specialized diagnostics for traumatic brain injuries despite repeatedly failing post-blast cognitive evaluations.

The congressional inquiry, led by Senator Elizabeth Warren and Representative Pat Ryan, also highlights an apparent effort by the Pentagon to manage domestic political fallout through statistical obfuscation. The Pentagon's official count of service members killed in the war against Iran abruptly dropped

from 18 to 14 in late July, a shift attributed internally to the administrative removal of deaths that occurred after a declared ceasefire, despite ongoing hostilities. By reclassifying combat deaths and over 200 wounded troops under secondary administrative categories rather than primary war tallies, Washington continues to obscure the true human and operational cost of Iranian retaliatory operations. The Department of War has been ordered to respond to 23 detailed inquiries regarding these systemic failures by 12 August.

US writhes, but Hormuz survives—in Iranian hands

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Regional military campaign expands beyond Iranian waters

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The Iranian Army said it struck key facilities at Ahmad Al Jaber Air Base in Kuwait during the latest phase of Operation Thunderbolt, stating suicide drones hit aircraft shelters, satellite communication systems and logistics warehouses. Military officials described the strike as retaliation for recent US attacks inside Iran and asserted that repeated Iranian missile and drone operations have made interception increasingly difficult despite the deployment of advanced American air-defense systems.

The top commander of Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters Major General Ali Abdollahi stated on Thursday night, "The Americans and their mercenaries have today realized deep in their souls that their coffins are part of their equipment in the region."

The senior commander recalled the words of the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, describing him as "that elder, mentor and martyred Leader," who had declared that the age of striking without consequence

and fleeing has ended.

Separately, the IRGC announced another operation under Operation Nasr-2, saying its Aerospace Force destroyed two drone shelters and a fuel depot at Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait. The IRGC described the attack as part of a sustained effort to raise the military cost of Washington's regional presence while warning countries assisting US operations that they could face consequences if they continue their support.

Iran also sought to reinforce its battlefield narrative by releasing 'photographic evidence' showing damage to a maintenance hangar at Al Azraq Air Base in Jordan. The images were presented as a direct rebuttal to US Central Command's claims that previous Iranian missile strikes caused no damage to American facilities.

US retaliates by attacking civilian facilities

The military escalation coincided with renewed condemnation from senior Iranian officials over recent US strikes on civilian areas.

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf accused Washington of attempting to compensate for battlefield setbacks by targeting civilians, warning that the United States "will pay the price" for missile attacks on residential areas in

southern Iran.

His remarks followed American strikes on Qeshm Island as well as parts of Bushehr, Khuzestan and Fars provinces. According to Iranian authorities, the deadliest attack struck a residential house in Qeshm's Chah Tangu neighborhood, killing three members of a family—including a two-year-old child—and injuring two other children. Officials said additional strikes targeted areas near Choghadak in Bushehr Province and locations in Kazeroun and Farashband in Fars Province, including a sports hall.

The casualties prompted a sharp reaction from Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei, who condemned the US strike on residential homes in Qeshm Island as a "criminal attack" that wiped out an entire civilian family and accused Washington of targeting the Iranian people.

In a statement issued on Friday, Baqaei said the attack destroyed several homes and killed a taxi driver, his wife and their two-year-old child, describing the strike as a tragedy that "would break the heart of every person of conscience."

He said the attack was part of 'a pattern of crimes reminiscent of the atrocities committed by ISIS, arguing that such actions were being carried out under the banner of "peace through strength" to punish the Iranian nation for insisting on its legitimate rights, dignity and independence.

"These crimes will never confer power, authority or legitimacy on those who perpetrate them," Baqaei said.

He added that every explosion, every act of violence, every sanction, every threat and every child killed would only make the Iranian people "more determined, more united and more steadfast in defending their homeland."

The civilian casualties have become a central element of Tehran's political messaging, with officials portraying military retaliation as a response not only to attacks on strategic facilities but also to 'repeated US strikes against civilian targets.'

LATEST NEWS

■ Russian patriarch calls for stronger religious ties with Iran

Patriarch Kirill of Moscow thanked Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Mojtaba Khamenei for his message, expressing hope for peace and security in the region and support for closer religious and cultural cooperation between Iran and Russia. During a meeting with Iran's Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church praised bilateral ties, highlighted shared values between Russian Christians and Iranian Muslims, and called for expanded religious, academic and scientific cooperation, describing the warm reception of a Russian church delegation in Iran as a symbol of the two nations' close relations.

■ US casualties in Iran war rise to 653

Another 11 US personnel have been added to the Pentagon's casualty database, raising the number wounded in the war with Iran to 653, according to an ABC News report. The updated database also lists 18 troops killed in action. The report said it remains unclear when casualty reports are entered into the system, meaning the newly added cases were not necessarily sustained in recent days.

■ Iran becomes founding member of global AI cooperation organization

Iran officially became a founding member of the Global Artificial Intelligence Cooper-

ation Organization (WAICO) on Friday after signing the organization's founding charter in Beijing. Iran's Ambassador to China, Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli, signed the document on behalf of Tehran before meeting Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Liu Bin. Rahmani Fazli said Iran is ready to actively contribute to AI research, innovation and global governance while promoting the equitable use of the technology. WAICO, headquartered in Shanghai, aims to strengthen international AI cooperation and global technology governance.

■ China rejects reports of missile launcher shipments to Iran

China has dismissed media reports claiming Iran is set to receive up to 400 Chinese-made man-portable air defense missile launchers, calling the allegations "completely untrue and inaccurate." Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said Beijing remains committed to peace and ending conflicts. Pakistan also rejected reports that it would facilitate the alleged shipment, with its military describing the claims as "baseless." The denials followed a Reuters report citing unnamed sources that alleged the systems would transit through Pakistan before reaching Iran.

■ Pakistan working to revive Iran-US talks, foreign ministry says

Pakistan is making every effort to revive negotiations between Iran and the United States, Foreign Ministry spokesman Tahir

Andrabi said on Friday. He urged all parties to exercise maximum restraint, reaffirmed Islamabad's commitment to diplomacy, and said Pakistan remains in contact with both Tehran and Washington to help resume talks and prevent further regional escalation.

■ Indian envoy sees scope for stronger Iran ties, says oil talks continue

India's ambassador to Iran, Rudra Gaurav Shresth, said New Delhi remains committed to strengthening long-term relations with Tehran despite regional tensions, expressing hope that Iran will resolve its differences with Western countries through dialogue and return to the global economy. In an interview with ISNA, he reaffirmed India's opposition to military action, support for freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, and continued engagement on the Chabahar port project. Shresth also said India is exploring the possibility of purchasing Iranian oil while maintaining regular political dialogue with Tehran.

■ Negotiations and ceasefire are 'deception': cleric

Friday prayers leader in Mashad, Ahmad Alamolhoda, said negotiations and a ceasefire are merely "a deception" intended to give the enemy time to regroup and launch another attack. He argued that the United States seeks nothing short of Iran's surrender, accused Washington of failing to honor its commitments, and said "jihad and resistance" remain the only effective response.



Senior cleric: Consolidating military gains at negotiating table will favor Iran



TEHRAN — A senior Iranian cleric has stated that diplomatic success against the US and Israel is inseparable from battlefield strength, praising Iran's recent retaliatory strikes against American military bases in the region.

"What extinguishes the firepower of Washington and Tel Aviv and stabilizes the balance of power in Iran's favor is launching a fierce missile barrage, securing a military victory, and converting it into political gains at the diplomatic table," Tehran's interim Friday prayer leader, Hojatoleslam Mohammad Hassan Abu Torabi-Fard, said.

Delivering the Friday prayer sermon at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Mosalla, he added: "Smart and trusted statesmen in our country understand and uphold the reality that in the arena of battle, power must speak first so that the righteousness of our position takes center stage at the diplomatic table."

Torabi Fard's assertions align closely with positions previously echoed by senior Iranian political and military officials. Iranian commanders and diplomats have repeatedly stressed that military deterrence is the primary prerequisite for effective diplomacy, asserting that any future negotiations must reflect the tactical realities established on the ground by Iran's armed forces.

When the US and Israel initiated their aggression against Iran in late February, their explicit objectives were to dismantle Iran's defense capabilities and force a regime change aligned with Western interests. On the opening day of the assault, Iran's Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, along with several members of his family and top military commanders, was assassinated. Over the course of the 39-day war, thousands of Iranians—a significant portion of them civilians—lost their lives as US and Israeli air force strikes targeted not only military installations but also vital civilian infrastructure, including residential districts, medical facilities, and educational institutions.

However, Iran's rapid and devastating military response against Israel and American military bases across the region forced Trump into a corner. Facing severe tactical vulnerabilities, the US president unilaterally announced a ceasefire that took effect on April 8. Yet Washington consistently failed to remain committed to the Pakistan-mediated truce, repeatedly violating its terms. The Trump administration subsequently breached a bilateral memorandum of understanding signed remotely with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian in June, demonstrating Washington's systemic disregard for diplomatic commitments.

In violation of the MoU, the US has carried

CNN: Trump seeks an exit ramp from the Iran war

TEHRAN - President Donald Trump once again intensified military threats against Iran, vowing to continue strikes. Speaking during his cabinet meeting on Friday, Trump told reporters that Washington will be hitting Iran "very hard" when asked what he expects over the next four weeks. "At some point, they're going to say we just can't take it anymore," he said.

Meanwhile, in a report on Friday, CNN highlighted the US administration's contradictory positions. It wrote that Trump seeks an exit ramp from the Iran war.

Trump's hostile statements toward Iran have been met with resolute disdain from experts, who view such rhetoric as the desperate posturing of a failing hegemon. Iran has repeatedly demonstrated that the Iranian nation will never capitulate to coercion, unlawful aggression, or psychological warfare.

Far from intimidating the Islamic Republic, Washington's warmongering threats and

out a bombing campaign in Iran, killing dozens of people over the past weeks, most of them civilians. In response, Iranian armed forces—the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) and the Army—have hit American bases in the region, dealing severe blows to US military assets and leading to the deaths of several American service members.

Further in his remarks, Hojatoleslam Torabi Fard praised Iran's retaliatory response: "The powerful operations carried out by the IRGC and the Army—resulting in the destruction of aircraft and helicopters at US bases, the crushing of air defense systems, and dozens of enemy casualties—demonstrate that power rests firmly in the capable hands of Iranians."

He added, "Successful military operations, a resolute determination to confront US aggression, preemptive strikes aimed at disrupting enemy military deployments and offensive power, a powerful presence in the strategic Strait of Hormuz, relentless fire from the Axis of Resistance, and the attrition of enemy forces all serve as clear proof that today, the initiative rests firmly in the capable hands of Iranians and our allies."

The Strait of Hormuz—a vital maritime gateway handling roughly 20 percent of global seaborne petroleum trade—serves as a primary pillar of Iran's defense architecture and regional security strategy. Before the unprovoked US and Israeli aggression initiated on February 28, the waterway remained fully open to international commercial navigation. The subsequent disruption and closure of the strait were the direct consequence of the US military escalation and strikes against Iranian sovereignty. Tehran has asserted its full control and operational authority over passage through the narrow choke point. IRGC naval forces maintain strict oversight across the passage, positioning Iran's military presence as an indispensable defense mechanism against foreign naval encroachment in the Persian Gulf. This exercise of sovereign authority over the strategic passage has sent shockwaves through energy markets worldwide. By disrupting major energy exports, the closure has fueled significant inflationary pressures, driving up energy costs and directly impacting the cost of living for consumers in the United States and across Western economies. Through official channels, Tehran continues to maintain that total security in the Persian Gulf can only be achieved when foreign forces cease military interventions, demonstrating that any economic fallout experienced globally remains the direct outcome of Washington's aggressive posture.

blatant violations of international law have only consolidated national unity and fortified the resolve of the Axis of Resistance. Military authorities in Tehran have reaffirmed that Iran's Armed Forces remain on high alert, fully prepared to deliver a swift, decisive, and crushing response to any adventurism or miscalculation by hostile forces.

They have emphasized that the American policy of economic bullying and military threats has proven utterly ineffective against the steadfast Iranian populace. While Washington continues to destabilize West Asia through illegal actions, Iran remains a pillar of regional security and sovereignty. Iran's robust defensive capabilities and strategic self-reliance ensure that any attempt to breach its sovereignty will result in severe consequences for the foreign aggressors, proving once again that the Iranian spirit cannot be broken by imperial threats.

Tehran, Islamabad place emphasis on developing direct trade, increasing trade exchanges

TEHRAN- Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, Pakistan's Ambassador to Iran, and Mahmoud Najafi Arab, Head of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, held a joint meeting with the presence of Hesameddin Hallaj, Deputy for International Affairs and Trade Development of the Tehran Chamber, Ayman Juwairiyah, Commercial and Investment Attaché of the Embassy of Pakistan in Iran, and Peyman Sanandaji, Head of the Transportation Committee of the Tehran Chamber.

They discussed topics such as the development of economic cooperation between Iran and Pakistan, strengthening transportation infrastructure and border trade, facilitating customs procedures, and increasing joint investments.

Strengthening trade relations and increasing exchanges with focus on private sector

At the beginning of this meeting, Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, Pakistan's Ambassador to Tehran, referring to the capacities for cooperation between the two countries in areas such as food industries, pharmaceuticals, and agriculture, stated: "A portion of the exchanges that have so far been conducted through indirect routes can be carried out directly between the two countries, which will help reduce costs and develop economic cooperation."

He also emphasized the development of joint investments, the exchange of trade delegations, the active presence of Iranian companies in specialized exhibitions in Pakistan, and the strengthening of cooperation between the private sectors of the two countries. He considered chambers of commerce as one of the most important platforms for developing economic relations between Iran and Pakistan.

He added: "The presence of Iranian companies that are members of the Tehran Chamber in Pakistani exhibition events is a way to increase joint cooperation and ultimately build trust. Iranian economic activists in these exhibitions, in addition to expanding interactions with their counterparts in Pakistan, can also become familiar with the tastes of consumers in that country."

Strengthening border trade should be placed on agenda

In another part of this meeting, Mahmoud Najafi Arab, Head of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, stating that "despite the long-standing cultural and trade relations between Iran and Pakistan, the volume of direct trade between the two countries is not favorable," emphasized: "In the current situation where restrictions have been created in the southern ports of the country, it is necessary to conduct trade directly and through the extensive common border of the two countries instead of indirect trade through other routes."

Iran, Armenia seek to turn shared corridor into a trade engine

TEHRAN- In line with realizing transport diplomacy and developing regional trade, the Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of the Republic of Armenia met with the Head of Iran's Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization.

The two sides exchanged views on solutions for developing international road transport cooperation between the two countries.

According to IRNA from the Public Relations Department of the Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization, this meeting, which was attended by representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the International Affairs Center of the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, and the Acting Director of the Transit and International Transport Office of the Organization, emphasized the firm resolve of both sides to strengthen transit infrastructure and remove existing obstacles.

The Deputy Minister of Transport and Urban Development and Head of the Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization, referring to the serious determination of high-ranking officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran to develop trade and international transport cooperation with Armenia, said: "With the holding of a transport meeting in Armenia and intensive negotiations at the ministerial level of the two countries, a draft of a comprehensive memorandum of understanding has been prepared."

Reza Akbari stated: "This draft focuses on axes such as infrastructure development, removing border crossing obstacles, reducing or eliminating road tolls, and increasing the reception capacity of transit fleets in the territory of the two countries."

Emphasizing the high capacity of Iran's trade exchanges with neighboring countries, he noted:

The Head of the Tehran Chamber also emphasized the importance of strengthening border trade and its role in the development of the economy of border residents and called for more effective utilization of this potential.

Najafi Arab noted: "Resolving the existing problems in border trade and providing the necessary facilities on both sides of the border will bring economic prosperity to border cities."

He also announced readiness for continuous interaction between the Tehran Chamber and the chambers of Karachi, Islamabad, and Lahore to improve trade activities and resolve logistical challenges, stating that chambers of commerce can play a more effective role in building mutual trust, providing accurate information to traders, and introducing economic opportunities of the two countries.

Support for free trade and tariff facilities

The Head of the Tehran Chamber continued his remarks by addressing the issue of free trade and the necessity of advancing dialogues in this area and added: "Any agreement between the two countries in the field of free trade can have positive effects on the volume of exchanges, reducing trade costs, and developing economic cooperation."

Najafi Arab, also referring to the importance of pursuing customs and tariff facilities and resolving banking and transportation issues as prerequisites for expanding bilateral trade, said: "With the development of currency exchanges, providing tariff and customs facilities, removing border bottlenecks, and pursuing the issue of free trade, we will witness an increase in imports and exports and, as a result, an improvement in the trade process between the two countries."

Examining transportation obstacles and accumulation of goods in Pakistani ports

Peyman Sanandaji, Head of the Transportation Committee of the Tehran Chamber, also in this meeting, referring to transportation problems and the accumulation of Iranian goods at Karachi port and other Pakistani ports, said: "Following the developments that have taken place in the region, numerous containers have been stopped at Pakistani ports, and a portion of these goods have faced additional costs." He added: "To accelerate the overland transfer of these containers, it is necessary to remove some obstacles and facilitate customs procedures."

The Pakistani Ambassador also announced his country's embassy's readiness to hold continuous meetings with the Tehran Chamber, follow up on trade issues, and inform economic activists about the latest trade regulations and requirements.

"The establishment of parallel corridors in the region and the full activation of the Iran-Armenia-Georgia corridor can significantly increase the level of trade exchanges and play a decisive role in the regional supply chain."

During this meeting, the Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of Armenia, while welcoming the expansion of economic and transport cooperation with Iran, reported on the progress of infrastructure projects.

Galchian said: "The development of transit infrastructure is on the right track, and these measures will play an effective role in reducing drivers' problems, facilitating the movement of transit fleets, and improving border logistics."

Referring to previous specialized meetings between high-ranking officials of the two countries, he added: "In the near future, another specialized meeting will be held between the officials of the two sides to carefully examine the proposed items in the memorandum of understanding and operational solutions for developing bilateral cooperation. The results of these negotiations will be announced through diplomatic channels."

The Acting Director of the Transit and International Transport Office of the Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization also emphasized the full coordination of executive bodies to advance common goals.

Seyed Hossein Hosseini said: "These dialogues, within the framework of the Islamic Republic of Iran's macro-policy of developing strategic relations with neighbors and becoming a regional transit hub, are of particular importance and demonstrate the determination of the two countries to overcome traditional obstacles and move toward sustainable economic convergence."

Trump's economic failure: 97,000 workers axed amid AI hype, negligence

From Page 1 ▶ In fact, AI accounted for a record 40% of all May layoffs, the highest monthly figure ever recorded. But let's be clear: the data shows AI is merely a convenient scapegoat for aggressive corporate restructuring, with bankruptcy-related losses spiking. Where is the federal action?

The answer is nowhere to be found. The Trump administration's incompetence is glaring. Rather than crafting a New Deal for the AI era or forcing corporations to invest in retraining, Trump has handed a blank check to Wall Street. His deregulatory frenzy and lavish tax cuts for billionaires have done nothing to stop the bleeding; instead, they



have incentivized CEOs to prioritize shareholder profits over human livelihoods. The White House's refusal to even acknowledge this crisis—let alone implement a national strategy—proves that Trump is either dangerously disconnected or willfully complicit in this corporate bloodbath.

This is not the "golden age" Trump promised. It is an age of unchecked corporate greed, facilitated by a weak, negligent, and utterly ineffective administration that has abandoned the working class. While Trump fiddles with political grudges, Main Street burns—a damning indictment of his failed leadership and profound unfitness for office.

Iran, Azerbaijan forge stronger economic ties with new customs agreement

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN – In a significant step toward deepening bilateral economic relations, Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan have signed a customs cooperation memorandum of understanding aimed at facilitating and accelerating trade and transit between the two neighboring countries.

The agreement, signed at the Bileh Savar border zero point, represents the latest in a series of diplomatic and economic initiatives that signal a new era of strategic partnership between Tehran and Baku.

The high-level meeting brought together Foroud Asgari, Deputy Minister of Economy and Head of Iran's Customs Administration, and Shahin Baghirov, Head of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, along with their respective high-ranking delegations. The two sides reviewed existing obstacles and challenges related to trade facilitation and transit development, agreeing on new programs designed to remove barriers and streamline cross-border movement of goods.

Infrastructure development: Key to unlocking trade potential

One of the central themes of the discussions was the critical role of infrastructure in expanding trade volumes between the two countries. Foroud Asgari identified infrastructural shortcomings as a major obstacle to the development and expansion of commercial and transit exchanges, emphasizing that completing bridges under construction at the Astara and Nakhchivan border crossings would significantly strengthen connectivity and facilitate the smooth passage of trucks.

"The completion of these bridges by the Republic of Azerbaijan will bring prosperity to trade and ease the movement of commercial vehicles," Asgari stated, highlighting the tangible benefits that improved infrastructure would bring to both economies.

The customs chief also pointed to border congestion as the primary challenge facing bilateral trade, noting that the smooth flow of trucks remains hampered by procedural and physical bottlenecks. He stressed the importance of continued interaction between the two countries to resolve these issues, expressing optimism that recent agreements would yield measurable improvements.

Significantly, Asgari revealed that Iran's President has demonstrated a special interest in expanding trade exchanges with Azerbaijan, consistently emphasizing the development of economic relations in various meetings. This political will at the highest level has created momentum for closer cooperation across multiple sectors.

Azerbaijani commitment to strengthening cooperation

Shahin Baghirov, Head of Azerbaijan's State Customs Committee, reciprocated Iran's positive sentiments, describing bilateral trade as "important" and expressing a shared vision for expanded cooperation. Baghirov emphasized Azerbaijan's interest in broadening collaboration and pledged greater efforts to develop trade and transit exchanges.

"Holding these meetings is very important and significant," Baghirov stated, noting that such engagements have a tangible impact on resolving problems and removing obstacles to trade. He particularly welcomed the establishment of 24-hour online communication with Iran's customs chief, a mechanism designed to facilitate the immediate resolution of emerging issues and prevent delays in customs procedures.

The signing of the memorandum of under-

standing at the conclusion of the meeting formalized the commitment of both sides to accelerate customs clearance processes for commercial and transit goods, creating a framework for ongoing cooperation that extends beyond the current agreement.

Broader economic engagement: Chamber of Commerce initiatives

Beyond the customs agreement, economic cooperation between Iran and Azerbaijan has been advancing on multiple fronts. In late June, the heads of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture and Azerbaijan's National Confederation of Entrepreneurs' Organizations emphasized the expansion of joint investments and greater utilization of border trade capacity.

Samad Hassanzadeh, head of the Iran Chamber, speaking on the sidelines of the 40th meeting of the Islamic Chamber's Board of Directors in Ankara, emphasized Iran's commitment to peace and stability in the region.

Referring to the deep cultural commonalities between Iran and Azerbaijan, Hassanzadeh stressed the importance of trade delegations and called for updating the list of joint investment opportunities. He urged both sides to identify specific sectors where bilateral trade could be expanded, creating a roadmap for future economic engagement.

Qadir Qiyafeh, Vice President of the Iran Chamber, echoed these sentiments, describing Iran and Azerbaijan as "brotherly countries with a shared culture." He called for overcoming negative propaganda aimed at preventing the expansion of relations between the two nations.

"We are interested in having joint investments and joint projects, and for our peoples to become closer to each other," Qiyafeh stated, expressing hope for social and economic development and sustainable peace in the region. He dismissed the potential for external interference to disrupt regional development processes.

Mohammad Musayev, head of Azerbaijan's National Confederation of Entrepreneurs' Organizations, welcomed joint investment initiatives and emphasized the importance of leveraging shared border capacity for mutual economic benefit. The Iranian delegation to the meeting included Seyed Hamed Asgari, Deputy for International Affairs of the Iran Chamber, along with other senior officials, demonstrating Iran's commitment to deepening economic ties.

Investment cooperation and joint committee framework

The momentum for bilateral economic cooperation extends to investment and project development. On June 19, Mehdi Heydari, Deputy Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance and Head of Iran's Organization for Investment, Economic and Technical Assistance, met with Yusuf Abdullayev, head of Azerbaijan's Export and Investment Agency, on the sidelines of the 51st Annual Meeting of the Islamic Development Bank's Board of Executive Directors in Baku.

Heydari emphasized the exchange of experiences and identification of common points and projects for cooperation, highlighting the capacities and programs on his organization's agenda to encourage and improve foreign investment. He referred to the signing of the memorandum of understanding for a Joint Investment Committee during President Pezeshkian's visit to Azerbaijan, noting that while the first meeting of the committee had not yet been held, it could be convened at the earliest opportunity.

"Iranian companies possess significant capabilities," Heydari stated, presenting a list of

projects prepared for foreign investment in Iran to the Azerbaijani side and explaining the conditions of each sector.

Abdullayev, in response, declared Azerbaijan's readiness to hold the first meeting of the Joint Committee. He evaluated recent measures and programs of his agency positively, particularly the design of information on investment opportunities. He also extended an invitation for Iranian economic activists, investors, and capable companies to participate in the Azerbaijan International Investment Summit scheduled for September 2026.

"The history of Iranians' activities in Azerbaijan's economy demonstrates the potential for increased cooperation," Abdullayev noted, describing the Joint Investment Committee as a valuable advantage for structuring collaboration. Both sides described their respective measures and achievements in attracting foreign investment, exchanging views and learning from each other's experiences.

Comprehensive economic framework: 10-sector agreement

Perhaps the most significant indicator of growing bilateral economic integration is the cooperation document signed in late February, outlining joint economic initiatives across ten sectors. The memorandum was signed at the 17th session of the Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Economic Committee by Iran's Minister of Transport and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadegh and Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev.

The document establishes a framework for bilateral cooperation in infrastructure, energy and water projects, as well as broader economic, social and cultural fields. In transport, the two sides agreed to expand cooperation in road transport, border management and railway development, with key infrastructure projects including the Kalaleh-Aghband bridge, the Astara bridge, the widening of the Kalaleh-Jolfa road, the Kalaleh-Siahroud rail link, and the launch of the Astara rail terminal at the shared border.

In the energy sector, cooperation was approved in oil blocks one and two, with the establishment of a joint working group to follow up on related memoranda of understanding. Electricity agreements covered plans to connect the power grids of Iran, Azerbaijan and Russia, as well as electricity exports from Azerbaijan to Iran. Water cooperation focused on joint projects related to the Khoda Afarin and Qiz Qalesi dams and power plants, along with the Marazad-Orduabad hydropower project.

The comprehensive agreement also includes understandings in tourism, agriculture, customs, industry, investment, sports and youth affairs, paving the way for deeper economic ties and expanded strategic cooperation between Tehran and Baku.

Transit ambitions: NSTC Corridor

Speaking at the Joint Economic Committee meeting, Minister Sadegh highlighted Iran's ambitious target to increase transit volumes on the western branch of the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC) to 15 million tons by 2030. This target represents a significant expansion of current transit volumes and underscores the strategic importance of the corridor for both countries.

Sadegh noted that trade between the two countries has reached approximately \$650 million over the past two years, with exchanges following an upward trend. She suggested that drafting a trade cooperation roadmap could provide clearer prospects for expanding economic relations.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](#))

The letter that tore the mask off US occupation of Jordan

Hundreds of Jordanian leaders demand the expulsion of American forces

From page 1 ► Leftists, Islamists, and establishment insiders all stand together. That alignment is rare. It proves frustration over foreign troop deployments is a national consensus the regime can no longer contain.

The architecture of occupation

The letter is blunt where Amman has long been evasive. It explicitly demands the evacuation of all foreign troops and the cancellation of the 2021 defense agreement with Washington.

That pact was enforced by royal decree. It bypassed the National Assembly entirely, stripping the Jordanian people of their constitutional right to oversight.

The agreement granted roughly 4,000 American troops free entry, the right to carry weapons, and unchecked movement across facilities like Muwaffaq Salti Air Base and King Faisal Air Base.

Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi routinely insists there are no American bases in the kingdom. But a state that allows a foreign power to stock, stage, and launch military operations from its territory has outsourced its strategic independence. It is an occupation hidden behind legal semantics.

The signatories demand the neutralization of all national infrastructure. They refuse to let Jordanian airports and military bases serve as logistical nodes in the aggressive U.S.-Israeli war against Iran and the broader region.

Magnets for retaliation

Events on the ground have obliterated the regime's core argument that American forces provide security. Instead of acting as protective shields, these garrisons operate as giant target magnets.

Iran's ongoing strategy that some have branded as "debasification" has proven that static Pentagon outposts are lethal liabilities.

In response to American aggression, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps has launched intense, precision retaliatory strikes against U.S. infrastructure in Jordan. Iranian ballistic missiles and one-way attack drones have easily penetrated Western air defenses.

The strikes hit hard. Satellite imagery and ground assessments confirmed devastating damage



age at Muwaffaq Salti in Azraq.

Hangars have been obliterated, and aircraft have been destroyed. Multiple American soldiers have died, and dozens more were evacuated to military hospitals in Germany.

Debris from intercepted projectiles rained down on Jordanian residential zones. The Jordanian regime told its people these bases brought safety. The wailing air raid sirens and falling shrapnel proved otherwise.

By hosting these forces, the monarchy places ordinary Jordanians in the crossfire of a war directed from Washington and Tel Aviv. Every American outpost on Arab soil invites return fire.

Complicity and the economic collapse

The political gap between the palace and the public has never been wider. The Jordanian street remains intensely sympathetic to Palestine and hostile to Israel. Yet Abdullah II keeps his peace framework intact. Worse, he actively subordinates the military to Western priorities.

Jordanian forces routinely intercept regional projectiles aimed at Israel. They act as a forward shield for Israel while Gaza is subject to Israel's genocidal war.

From a nationalist perspective, this betrays the Arab Army's historic legacy at Karameh and the walls of Jerusalem. The military is being used to protect the same Israeli regime currently executing a campaign of genocide and displacement.

The economic cost of this treachery is staggering.

The monarchy claims its alignment is necessary to secure 1.65 billion dollars in annual American aid. But participating in a regional war has shattered the domestic economy.

Tourism accounts for a massive portion of the national revenue. Visitor numbers in Petra and Aqaba plummeted the moment the kingdom became an active battlefield. Unemployment is soaring.

Working-class Jordanians are paying the financial price for the Hashemite regime's foreign policy adventures.

A fractured kingdom

Terrified by the public mood, the state enacted a complete media blackout on the open letter. Local outlets refused to publish the text. Activists face prison under draconian cybercrime laws.

But the anger is spilling over. During a late July parliamentary session, a pro-government lawmaker suggested offering condolences for American soldiers killed on Jordanian soil. His colleagues shouted him down, publicly branding the American military as killers of children and the elderly.

The Hashemite regime faces a stark choice. It can continue down its current path, deepening its subservience to Washington and Tel Aviv while silencing its own people. Or it can heed the demands of its most prominent citizens, expel the occupying forces, and restore national sovereignty.

The letter proves the current balancing act is finished. Subservience is no longer a viable strategy for survival.

Ansarullah leader ties Riyadh to Epstein as Yemen locks in naval blockade

From page 1 ► The massive public rally followed a major address by Ansarullah leader Sayyid Abdul-Malik Badr al-Din al-Houthi, who declared Thursday that Sanaa will enforce a strict counter-siege until Western-backed aggression against the region is halted.

A unified front

Al-Houthi strongly condemned recent joint U.S.-Saudi airstrikes targeting Popular Mobilization Units bases and Arbaeen pilgrim stations in Iraq, which left dozens dead and wounded.

He classified these strikes as integrated components of "a broader Zionist-American campaign" aimed at constructing a "Greater Israel" and forcibly reshaping West Asia.

The Yemeni leader warned that any Arab collusion with this project constitutes apostasy, emphasizing that Washington views its regional partners with complete contempt.

Citing Donald Trump's 2016 description of Saudi Arabia as a "milk cow" to be exploited and eventually slaughtered, al-Houthi cautioned that collaborators will be discarded once their geopolitical utility expires.

Epstein and desecration of sacred symbols

In his address, al-Houthi also raised a religious scandal, exposing that Saudi officials presented a portion of the Holy Kaaba's Kiswah curtain to convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

The charge rests on material released by the U.S. Department of Justice. Photographs from the Epstein files show the financier standing beside Emirati executive Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, both looking down at a black-and-gold fabric spread across the floor of Epstein's New York townhouse that closely matches the embroidered Kiswah covering the Kaaba.

Separate emails document the 2017 shipment of three pieces

linked to the sacred cloth, arranged through Saudi and UAE contacts and flown from the Kingdom to Florida. The same tranche of files also contains a photograph of Epstein posing with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Al-Houthi denounced official Islamic institutions for remaining silent over the desecration of the sacred fabric.

The Ansarullah leader also called for the immediate creation of an international Islamic committee to investigate this betrayal of the holy sanctuaries.

Reaffirming Yemen's solidarity with Gaza, Iraq, and the broader Resistance Front, al-Houthi vowed that Yemen will maintain its naval enforcement until the economic siege on its people and regional allies is completely lifted.

Economic pressure and Saudi 'coalition' failure

The latest escalation began af-

ter Saudi forces struck civilian infrastructure at Sanaa International Airport. Ansarullah retaliated by imposing a strict maritime embargo on Saudi commercial shipping through the Bab al-Mandeb strait.

The retaliatory blockade has disrupted energy transit, forcing Saudi oil tankers into lengthy detours around Africa while Yemeni forces maintain direct targeting capability over vital Red Sea shipping lanes.

In response, Riyadh has scrambled to assemble a 50-nation maritime "coalition." However, the initiative faces major obstacles.

Washington remains hesitant due to domestic political pressure over energy prices and deep internal division within the Pentagon, where Joint Chiefs Chairman General Dan Caine reportedly warned of dwindling missile stockpiles.

Meanwhile, regional countries including Egypt, Oman, and Turkey have hesitated or refused to participate under Saudi command.

Iraq. His fellow Republican President George W. Bush ordered the invasion of Iraq in 2003 under the false claim that Iraq was hiding weapons of mass destruction, a sheer lie that just brought death and destruction in Iraq and led to the spread of terrorism in Iraq and the wider region.

The fact that the Iraqi prime minister suspended his visit to Saudi Arabia shows that the Iraqi government is angry about the attack and disproves Trump's claim.

Meanwhile, a senior government source told Shafaq News on Friday that reports that Prime Minister Al-Zaidi had threatened to resign were "completely untrue."

The source said the report is intended to weaken the prime minister's position.

Several reports had cited unnamed political sources alleging that the prime minister threatened to step down because his demands were not being addressed. Among them, Al Araby TV quoted a source from the Shiite Coordination Framework, parliament's largest bloc that nominated Al-Zaidi, linking the alleged dispute to armed factions' refusal to surrender their weapons.

No disarmament before Israeli Gaza pullout: Hamas

TEHRAN – A senior Hamas official has said that the Palestinian movement will not take any steps toward disarmament before Israeli forces withdraw from Gaza.

Ghazi Hamad told Al Jazeera that Israel would have no role in the disarmament process. Instead, it is set to be carried out by a Palestinian national committee.

The resistance group has largely abided by a ceasefire agreement that came into effect in October 2025, as Israel continues a sustained bombing campaign in violation of the agreement, killing more than a thousand Palestinians and injuring many more.

According to the AFP news agency, Hamas sources said that the Palestinian technocratic committee established by the Board of Peace to govern Gaza will be "the sole entity" overseeing the process of managing and storing the group's weapons.

Ghazi Hamad, a Hamas official involved in negotiations, tells Reuters that the group will hand over its weapons to the new National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG), the technocratic body set up to run the enclave within the Board of Peace framework.

Hamad reiterated that this was contingent on the withdrawal of Israeli forces, along with the increased flow of aid and goods into the territory.

"We insisted to the mediators that Israel must abide by the agreement," Hamad said.

He added that NCAG and the international force must oversee the disbanding of Israeli-backed militias within Gaza.

Hamas to remain 'part of Palestinian national fabric'

Hamad also said Hamas will not withdraw from the political arena but "remain an integral part of the Palestinian national fabric," Ghazi Hamad told Al Jazeera. He added that the agreement was reached "under exceptional, difficult and harsh circumstances."

The group will "continue to shoulder its national responsibilities and duties in pursuit of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people," the Hamas official pointed out.

NCAG welcomed Hamas' commitment to disarm, affirming in a post on X its "full readiness to assume its responsibilities".

"After years of conflict, destruction, and uncertainty, the priority today is to translate this progress into practical steps that have a tangible impact on citizens' daily lives," the statement reads.

The Board of Peace announced on Friday that Hamas officially agreed to a detailed framework for implementing the next phases of the Gaza ceasefire.

On Friday, Hamas issued a statement clarifying the conditions that must be honored by Israel.

The following is the text of the statement:

"Hamas and the Palestinian factions have dealt responsibly and positively with the negotiation process and the mediators' proposals to complete the implementation of the second phase of the ceasefire agreement. This was done in national consensus among the Palestinian factions, reflecting a spirit of partnership and responsibility, stemming from our commitment to protecting our people, meeting their humanitarian needs, and safeguarding their national rights.

The occupation's commitment to stopping the killing and ending its aggressions is the fundamental gateway and the first step toward proceeding with implementation and beginning to establish the framework and timeline for what has been agreed upon. We affirm that the application of the second phase of the agreement is contingent upon the occupation's fulfillment of all the provisions of the first phase.

Approval to include the heavy weapons file within the framework of the agreement has been linked to and conditioned upon the cessation of all forms of aggression, withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, achievement of early recovery, entry of the administrative committee, deployment of international protection forces, dissolution of the armed gangs and militias formed by the occupation, reconstruction, guaranteeing the



right to self-determination, establishment of the independent Palestinian state, and protection of citizens' rights.

Hamas and the Palestinian factions extend their greetings and appreciation to our steadfast people and our steadfast residents in the Gaza Strip, and affirm that they will continue to work together on this path for the sake of our people and to safeguard all their rights."

"Complete" withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza

The Gaza Board of Peace issued a statement on X with more details on its roadmap for implementing the Gaza ceasefire plan. Here are the main points:

All parties reaffirm their commitment to end the violence in Gaza, secure the "complete" withdrawal of Israeli troops and allow "a credible political path that achieves self-determination and statehood" for Palestinians.

Both Israel and Hamas will, "without delay", end all military operations in Gaza. Once this is done and a timetable is set, the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG) will enter the Strip and assume responsibility for its governance.

Progression from one phase to the following one is contingent upon the completion of all previous phases.

Hamas and other Palestinian factions have agreed that all civilian governance and security will be handed over to NCAG. They have also agreed that NCAG will "enjoy full independence in carrying out its responsibilities" without interference from Palestinian factions.

Upon fully assuming power in Gaza, NCAG will ensure the continuation of civilian institutions and public services.

Gaza will be governed according to the principle of: "One Authority, One Law, One Weapon".

All police personnel will undergo comprehensive vetting, and those who do not meet required standards will be offered alternative civilian roles or retirement. New police personnel will be incorporated into the existing police force.

Authorities will begin decommissioning heavy weapons, military production sites, depots of weapons and tunnels.

A temporary International Stabilization Force (ISF) will be deployed to separate Israeli forces from NCAG-controlled areas. The ISF will also be responsible for monitoring ceasefire compliance, training the Palestinian police, and delivering humanitarian support and supplies into Gaza.

Israeli forces will complete their phased withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. The peace plan includes a commitment from Israel not to force anyone to leave the Strip.

NCAG will be responsible for handling internal security incidents.

The reconstruction of Gaza will be supervised by the Board of Peace and NCAG "in accordance with relevant laws and international standards".

"Additional crossings into Gaza should be opened without delay"

Meanwhile, German Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl, whose country came just after the U.S. in backing the Israeli brutal war on Gaza and supplying arms to the regime, welcomed the draft peace plan and said, "Additional crossings into Gaza should be opened without delay."

Writing on X, Wadepuhl said, "We will do our part to help implement this agreement."

Iran confident of stronger Asian Games campaign: Alinejad

TEHRAN – Mehdi Alinejad, Secretary General of the Iran National Olympic Committee (NOC), says the country's delegation is expected to perform better than it did at the previous Asian Games, but officials will not reveal a projected medal tally in order to avoid placing additional pressure on the athletes.

Speaking about Iran's preparations for the 2026 Asian Games in Nagoya, he said the NOC has been closely monitoring athletes' performances and believes the delegation is in a stronger position than it was ahead of the last edition of the Games.

"Our assessment is that Iran will achieve a better medal performance than in the previous Asian Games," he said. "We continuously evaluate the preparation and progress of our athletes. Although we have gone through two wars during this period, which affected the training process, our overall situation is still better than it was before the last Asian Games."

Despite the optimism, the NOC official stressed that no official medal forecast will be made public.

"The Asian Games is a major multi-sport event, and it is impossible to predict the exact number of medals. Unexpected circumstances can always influence the results," he said. "If we publicly announce a medal target, it could create unnecessary psychological pressure on our athletes. We do not want that to happen, so we have decided not to disclose our projections."

He added that the committee has internally established realistic expectations based on detailed evaluations but believes it is in the athletes' best interest to keep those figures confidential.

Asked whether the NOC expects Iran's U23 football team to challenge for a medal in Nagoya, the Secretary General admitted that the team have fallen short in recent Asian Games but expressed confidence in the current squad.

"The reality is that Iran's U23 team have not won a medal in the last several editions of the Asian Games," he said. "However, this team are in a good place. Head coach Hossein Abdi has worked with many of these players for years and is a disciplined coach. His presence gives us confidence that the team will perform well."

He added that regardless of whether the team reaches the podium, he expects Iran's young footballers to deliver impressive performances throughout the tournament.

PGPL confirms 2026/27 fixture list: Date set for Tehran derby

TEHRAN – Iran Football League Organization has officially released the full fixture list for the 2026–27 Persian Gulf Pro League (PGPL) season, confirming the date for the match between Esteghlal and Persepolis.

The draw ceremony for the 26th edition of the PGPL was held at Tehran's Olympic Hotel, with representatives from all 18 clubs in attendance.

Following the draw, the Tehran derby will take place in the fifth round of the new campaign.

With the league expanding to 18 teams, the 2026/27 season will feature 34 matchweeks. As a result, the return derby is set to take place 17 rounds after the first meeting, while the exact date, kickoff time, and venue for both encounters will be announced later by the League Organization.

The upcoming showdown will mark the 107th Tehran derby.

The most recent meeting between the two rivals was played on Dec. 5, 2025, in Matchweek 12 of the previous league season at Imam Khomeini Stadium in Arak, ending in a goalless draw. With last season left unfinished,

the reverse fixture was never played, meaning the capital rivals will renew their rivalry after an unusually long break.

Persepolis edge past Alanyaspor in friendly

TEHRAN – Persepolis secured a narrow 1-0 victory over Turkish side Alanyaspor in their second preseason friendly of their training camp in Turkey on Thursday afternoon.

The lone goal of the contest arrived deep in stoppage time, with Ali Alipour finding the back of the net in the 90th minute to seal the win for the Iranian giants.

Persepolis, headed by Mehdi Tartar, prepare for the 2026/27 Iran's Persian Gulf Professional League (PGPL).

Mohebi linked with move to Corum F.K.

TEHRAN – Former Rostov striker Mohammad Mohebi will reportedly join Corum F.K. in the Turkish Super League.

The club from the city of the same name has already agreed with the 27-year-old winger and his agent, according to foreign sports channels. The signing of the employment agreement is said to take place in the near future.

Mohammad Mohebi has been playing for Rostov since 2023. For the Russian club, he scored 15 goals and 11 assists in 80 games. In the summer of 2026, the contract expired between the parties.

As for Corum, this team debut in the top league of Turkey. Earlier, the club were joined by the ex-player of Orenburg Emirjan Gyurlyuk.

Nader Mohammadi joins Spartak Kostroma

TEHRAN – Kostroma "Spartak" signed 29-year-old defender Nader Mohammadi. He is a native of the capital of Iran, Tehran.

"Nader, welcome to the red and white family! We wish you a successful season, a reliable game in defense and big victories in the Kostroma "Spartak" – welcomed in the club of the new player.

Nader plays as a central defender or on the right flank and in the support zone.

Before the transition to Spartak, he was only in the Iranian clubs Paykan, Tractor, Gol Gohar and Zob Ahan. Almost all his career he was in the top division of the championship of the country.

Edson Marden extends contract with Chadormalou

TEHRAN – Brazilian goalkeeper Edson Marden has committed his future to Chadormalou, extending his contract with the Iran Pro League side after rejoining their pre-season training camp.

Marden's return to Iran was made possible following efforts by the club's management to facilitate his arrival. The shot-stopper took part in training with Saeed Akhbari's squad from today, as he gears up for the new league campaign.

The Brazilian is set to enter his third consecutive season at Chadormalou, having established himself as one of the team's key figures between the posts over the past two campaigns. With numerous clean sheets and consistently impressive displays, Marden has repeatedly featured among the best goalkeepers of the week in the Iran Pro League.

His return comes as part of the club's broader strategy to retain the core of its squad ahead of the upcoming season, with Chadormalou looking to build on continuity as they prepare for the new campaign.

Deliberate destruction of Iran's cultural sites by Israel, US tantamount to destroying a civilization

Historian Touraj Daryaee says international law is nearly powerless against superpowers, but UNESCO status could deter future attacks

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN – Since US and Israeli strikes began in February, over 130 registered monuments and museums across Iran have sustained damage, from the Golestan Palace to historic quarters in Isfahan, Kordestan, and Lorestan. In an exclusive interview with Tehran Times, Touraj Daryaee, historian of ancient Iran and editor of Encyclopaedia Iranica, discusses the emotional and scholarly weight of watching millennia-old heritage damaged within weeks, the limits of international legal accountability, and what the destruction means for how Iran's history will be told and remembered.

The following is the text of the interview:

You've spoken about the scale of damage to Iran's cultural heritage sites since the war began — with reports of over 130 sites affected. As a historian, how do you personally process watching monuments that survived millennia of conquest being damaged in weeks?

As a historian, I know that throughout time, monuments wither and get destroyed for various reasons — that is a fact that has always been there. However, when you see Israeli and American deliberate destruction of cultural sites, it of course raises a whole set of more intense emotions, because this is tantamount to destroying somebody else's civilization and cultural tradition. So, it is really horrible, and 130 sites is no small destruction — it is quite large.

Is there a legal or diplomatic mechanism — UNESCO or otherwise — that could realistically hold parties accountable for damage to protected heritage sites during this conflict, or is that framework effectively powerless in practice?

Of course you could always hold parties accountable under law, but international laws are so difficult to apply to countries, especially superpowers, rogue nations, and those who do not accept any of these international laws. But becoming a UNESCO heritage site — we have 30



of them in Iran, and some have been damaged — has the advantage of always receiving funding from UNESCO and all sorts of international bodies, both governmental and non-governmental, for restoration, upkeep, and promotion of the site. So what we really need to do is, one by one, try to make more of Iran's historical sites UNESCO sites. It's a tedious task with rules and regulations that need to be followed, but 30 have already been designated, plenty of them in the past couple of decades. Once you do that, a site becomes much more on the radar, and it may make governments who are at war think twice about damaging them.

Golestan Palace, which you've called "the Versailles of Iran," was damaged even though it has no conceivable strategic value. When a site like that is hit, what does it tell you about how these targeting decisions are being made?

I think the Versailles of Iran, in Tehran, was damaged because it was close to a target that the Israelis and Americans considered an important asset — so this is collateral damage, but the damage is the same regardless, and at some parts it is irreversible and tragic. I know, from discussions with UNESCO representatives, that there is a process to assess the damage and try to reconstruct it. But how do you reconstruct hundreds of thousands of mirror pieces that were installed 100 or 200 years ago, and try to find exactly how they were set by art-

ists in the Qajar period? I think this is the tragedy of the Golestan Palace. It was the seat of power, and in some ways represented the Iranian tradition of power — damaging its throne and its building is, of course, a crime.

You're now responsible for a reference work meant to outlast any single political moment, while living through a war that's actively destroying the physical heritage that work documents. Has that tension changed how you think about Iranica's purpose — as a historical record, or as something more urgent?

The Encyclopaedia Iranica's main mission is to gather information academically and present it in the most detailed manner possible, covering the tangible and intangible culture and history of the Iranian world. In many ways, the Encyclopaedia Iranica serves as the documentary identity of the Iranian people across its three volumes. We try to stay above politics, but when something like this happens—where hundreds of monuments are being destroyed or have been destroyed, and we don't know when it will end—I have thought about it. Since we do not yet have an entry on the Golestan Palace, I intend to note that during the U.S. and Israeli war on Iran, the palace was damaged, assess the extent of that damage, and include a paragraph so future readers know what happened.

In your writing on Sasanian

Persia, you argue the empire has been undervalued partly because so much of its story survives only through Roman and Arab sources describing it from outside. If key Iranian sites are damaged or lost now, does Iran risk a similar problem in reverse — its own history being told mainly through foreign satellite imagery and foreign press, rather than Iranian scholarship and preserved material culture?

Indeed, I think the Sasanian Empire has been undervalued, and it's important not only for Iranian history but also for world history — the region matters. I should say that when you have such lacunae, such a lack of textual information, these monuments become, in a sense, a substitute record.

I would like to add that these monuments are sites of memory for the people of Iran, for the past, today and the future.

6.You've said raising international awareness now could "influence future conduct" and show Iranians their heritage is recognized abroad. Six months in, do you feel that recognition has translated into any real protection, or has the international response been mostly rhetorical?

War is a tragedy in any shape or form, and for any reason. One of the side effects is that people may become more focused on and aware of their cultural heritage and its upkeep. To a large extent, internally, there are so many monuments that the people of our own country have partly a hand in defacing or destroying or simply covering with graffiti.

But bombing from an outside force is a completely different issue and cannot be compared. I think when you're attacked from outside, it raises an awareness of your nation and what it has, regardless of what state it's in. People become more aware, and I think they become more respectful and diligent about their cultural heritage. That's the most important thing — we have to know what we have and how important it is, for future generations and for the country.

VP calls cultural heritage key to national unity, soft power

TEHRAN – Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref on Thursday described the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts as the country's "ministry of defending civilization and soft victories," saying Iran's cultural heritage remains one of the country's strongest sources of national unity and international influence.

Speaking at a meeting with cultural heritage veterans and experts at the ministry's headquarters, Aref said Iran's historical and cultural legacy had played a significant role in strengthening national cohesion and resilience in recent years.

"Whenever Iran is mentioned, all Iranians, regardless of their differences, unite around their national identity," Miras-e Aria quoted Aref as saying on Thursday.

He said Iran's civilizational heritage had be-

come a key element of the country's soft power and that preserving and restoring historical assets was a national responsibility.

Aref praised specialists, researchers and conservationists for their role in protecting the country's cultural heritage, saying their efforts had contributed to safeguarding Iran's civilization.

He also highlighted the recent inscription of the Alamut Castle and Related Fortifications on UNESCO's World Heritage list, calling it a valuable national achievement and an opportunity to introduce Iran's history and civilization to a wider international audience.

Given UNESCO's limitation of accepting only one nomination from each country annually, Aref said he sometimes wished "Iran itself, with all its civilizational greatness," could be inscribed on

the World Heritage list.

The vice president said cultural tourism should be expanded through scientific planning, noting that many foreign visitors travel to Iran to experience its history and culture. He added that international tourists should be regarded as guests of the Iranian people and that the country should use tourism to present its civilizational heritage more effectively.

Aref also called for the protection and restoration of historical sites through scientific and sustainable methods, while encouraging greater participation by philanthropists and the public in heritage conservation.

The meeting was attended by Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri and a group of veteran experts in the cultural heritage sector.

Iran preparing three new UNESCO World Heritage nominations after Alamut listing

TEHRAN — Iran will pursue three new nominations for UNESCO World Heritage inscription next year following the successful listing of Alamut Castle and Related Fortifications, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri said.

The minister on Thursday said the country plans to submit nominations for the historic ensemble of Tus in northeastern Iran, a serial nomination of historic Iranian mosques, and the ancient port of Siraf in the southern Bushehr province, IRIB reported.

The announcement comes a week after UNESCO inscribed Alamut Castle and Related Fortifications on the World Heritage list, bringing the number of Iran's cultural and natu-

ral World Heritage properties to 30.

Salehi-Amiri said preparations for the three dossiers are underway as Iran continues efforts to expand the international recognition of its cultural heritage.

The proposed serial nomination of Iranian mosques aims to illustrate the evolution of mosque architecture in Iran from the early Islamic period to the present day. Iranian mosques are renowned for their distinctive domes, soaring minarets, intricate geometric designs and colorful tilework, reflecting regional architectural traditions developed over centuries.

Among the country's best-known historic mosques are the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque and Imam Mosque in Isfahan, Nasir al-Mulk

Mosque and Vakil Mosque in Shiraz, the Jameh Mosque of Yazd, the Blue Mosque of Tabriz, Goharshad Mosque in Mashhad and Agha Bozorg Mosque in Kashan.

The historic city of Tus, near Mashhad in Khorasan Razavi province, is best known as the burial place of the celebrated Persian epic poet Ferdowsi, author of the Shahnameh. The ancient city was also the birthplace or home of several prominent scholars, including theologian Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, philosopher and scientist Nasir al-Din Tusi, early polymath Jabir ibn Hayyan, poet Asadi Tusi and Islamic scholar Abu Jafar Tusi. Tus has witnessed repeated destruction throughout history, including during the Mongol and Timurid in-

vasions, but it remains one of Iran's most significant cultural and historical centers.

Archaeological excavations carried out by the British Institute of Persian Studies between 1966 and 1973 uncovered extensive remains of the historic port city, whose population is estimated by historians to have reached about 300,000 during the early Islamic period. The site contains archaeological remains dating from the Elamite, Achaemenid, Parthian, Sassanid, Islamic and Qajar eras.

UNESCO's World Heritage list recognizes cultural and natural sites considered to have outstanding universal value, with inscription often boosting international recognition, conservation efforts and tourism.

IRCS elaborates on services provided for Arbaeen pilgrims

TEHRAN – The head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), Pirhossein Kolivand, has expounded on a diverse range of services offered by the IRCS staff to people attending the Arbaeen pilgrimage.

Some 120,000 operational teams in the country and 8,500 relief workers and volunteers have been dispatched to Iraq to provide health, medical, rescue, and relief services to the pilgrims, ISNA quoted Kolivand as saying.

The official made the remarks on Thursday while overseeing the IRCS services in Khuzestan province.

The IRCS utilizes rescue equipment like ambulances, ambulance buses, rescue vehicles, command vehicles and helicopters to cover the Arbaeen pilgrimage. The society has also set up four hospitals and tens of clinics to serve pilgrims on the way from Najaf to Karbala, he added.

Mobile medical teams equipped with medical backpacks deliver health services between clinics and hospitals, Kolivand noted.

The official went on to say that the IRCS, in cooperation with Iraq's ministry of health, the Iraqi Red Crescent Society, and other medical institutions, continuously monitors pilgrims' health, communicable diseases, and supervises food preparation and distribution in mawkebs.

In case needed, ambulances or helicopters will transport patients to the borders to be treated inside the country, he further noted.

According to the IRCS, more than 36,000 pilgrims have received rescue services from the IRCS over the past ten days. From July 21 to 31, a total of 184 operational teams consisting of 621 rescuers provided medical services to 36,609 individuals, IRNA reported.

The IRCS relief teams transported 98 people to medical centers, provided emergency accommodation for 36,284 individuals, and treated 227 others on site.

'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.

Some 8,500 relief workers and volunteers have been dispatched to Iraq to provide health, medical, rescue, and relief services to the pilgrims.

"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 is 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.

Later, Elsharkawi, in a letter to Kolivand, highlighted that the IRCS's extensive readiness to serve millions of Arbaeen pilgrims is an inspiring manifestation of the noble spirit of humanitarianism.

The high readiness of the relief fleet, specialized vehicles, and rescue helicopters; coordinated earthquake response drills; the capabilities of search-and-rescue teams; and the efficiency of communication and aerial relief systems demonstrate the full preparedness, expertise, and operational capacity of the IRCS, which have developed over many years, he stressed.

He said the society's capabilities in producing medical items, equipment, and relief supplies are a testament to self-reliance, innovation, and sustainable humanitarian development.

According to Elsharkawi, these achievements serve as a model of excellence for all national societies within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The official expressed hope that the cooperation between IFRC and IRCS would expand further, advancing their shared humanitarian missions.

Blood donation: from altruism to saving lives

TEHRAN – National Blood Donation Day is marked annually on the 9th of Mordad, the fifth Iranian calendar month, which falls on July 31, highlighting the importance of the life-saving act of blood donation.

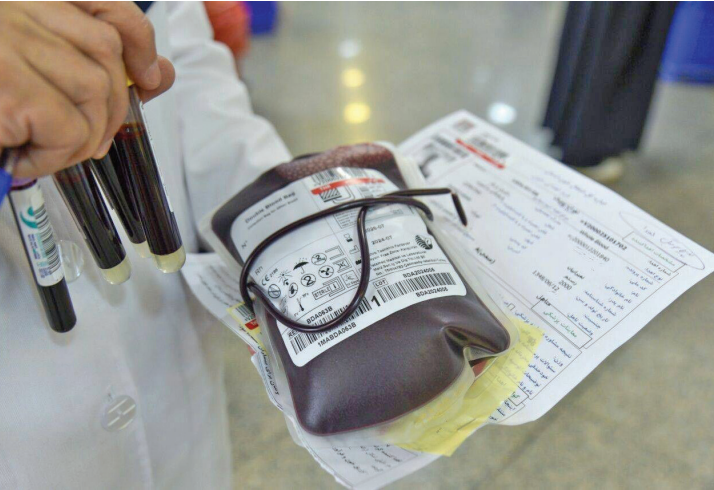
One in three individuals will need blood or blood products at some point in their lives, which demonstrates that blood donation is not just a benevolent, altruistic act. Still, a vital link in the chain of medical treatment, saving patients' lives, IRNA reported.

Blood is the only living tissue for which no man-made substitute exists to date. Moreover, Blood supply can only be met through voluntary donation of healthy individuals. Hence, ongoing blood donation is essential, as the treatment of some patients, like traffic accident victims, women giving birth, those with cancers, thalassemia, hemophilia, and certain chronic diseases, mainly depends on blood.

Established in 1974, Iran Blood Transfusion Organization (IBTO) is considered a key pillar of the country's health system, which is responsible for supplying safe and adequate blood for patients through the expansion of the blood transfusion network, the enhancement of blood safety standards, and the promotion of a culture of voluntary donation.

The National Blood Donation Day aims to remind everyone of the importance of this humanitarian and responsible act, highlighting that every blood donation is a gift of hope that helps treat many patients.

Luckily, blood donation is completely voluntary in Iran; each year, more than two million



people donate blood, playing a key role in meeting the needs of medical centers across the country.

This remarkable level of public participation has placed Iran among the nations that have established their blood supply systems on the foundation of voluntary, altruistic donation.

Around 1.7 percent of the country's population donates blood regularly, and the blood donation index is 27 per 1,000 population. According to the CEO of IBTO, Ahmad Qarah-Baghian, Iran is the first and sole country in the Eastern Mediterranean region that has been able to meet the country's need for blood and blood products, relying entirely on voluntary and unpaid blood donations.

However, the need for blood is growing. The advances in medicine and the aging population are the two factors that increase the demand for blood and blood products, Babak Yektaparast, an official with the IBTO, said on the occasion of the national Blood Donation Day.

According to Yektaparast, the amount of blood donation needs to be increased by 10 to 15 percent in the next five years. Currently, the majority of donors are aged 35-50; it is essential to promote a culture of blood donation among the youth and women who comprise half of the country's population.

Observed on June 14 every year, World Blood Donor Day appreciates the millions of voluntary, unpaid blood donors whose generosity saves lives every day. Their contributions are essential to health systems everywhere, supporting patients during emergencies, childbirth, surgeries, cancer treatment, and the lifelong care of many serious conditions.

Themed 'One Drop of Humanity. Give Blood. Save Lives', This year's campaign places humanity at the heart of every blood donation. It reminds everyone that each donation is more than a medical act: it is a powerful expression of solidarity, compassion, and collective responsibility.

Visiting the IBTO on the occasion of World Blood Donor Day, the World Health Organization (WHO) representative in Iran, John Jabbour, described the IBTO as a successful role model in the region.

"The Iran Blood Transfusion Organization is one of the most important and centralized blood transfusion centers in the region. The coherence and coordination of activities across the country have strengthened the organization, and this integrated structure plays a key role in ensuring the quality and safety of blood," Jabbour said.

Iran is the sole country in the Eastern Mediterranean region that has been able to meet its need for blood products, relying entirely on voluntary and unpaid blood donations.

"The World Health Organization is ready to enhance cooperation with the Iran Blood Transfusion Organization and provide technical and specialized support to the organization to improve blood transfusion services," he added.

Referring to blood safety indicators in the country, the official said the safety of donated blood in Iran is comparable to that of developed countries, which highlights the high quality of services and standards of the IBTO.

No Iranian universities in THE Sustainability Impacts Ratings due to sanctions

TEHRAN – The Times Higher Education Sustainability Impact Ratings (previously THE Impact Rankings) report has included no Iranian universities in its 2026 list because of sanctions against the country.

"Institutions based on jurisdictions, or associated with organizations and individuals, which may be facing international sanctions will not be able to participate in the Sustainability Impact Ratings while sanctions are in place, in line with our compliance requirements," ISNA quoted THE Senior Data Editor, Manuel Pedroso, as saying.

"As payment is required to be part of the Sustainability Impact Network, we wouldn't have way to get payments from Iran due to sanctions. If the institution is not part of the network, it won't be able to participate in the Sustainability Impact Ratings," he added.

Pedroso noted that's what they had communicated with to all Iranian institutions interested in participating in 2026 Sustainability Impact Ratings.

The official went on to highlight that Iranian universities can still participate in THE other rankings, free of charge.

THE Sustainability Impact Ratings is the only global ranking measuring how institutions worldwide advance sustainability in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

THE Impact Rankings were launched in 2019, and since then, Iranian universities have been included in this ranking. In THE Impact Ranking 2025, 34 universities from Iran were placed among the top universities pursuing sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Over the past years, imposed international sanctions have had far-reaching impacts on Iran's science, technology, and higher education systems. Challenges arising from these illegal sanctions include limited access to laboratory equipment and materials, difficulties in executing financial transactions for purchasing services and paying membership fees to international scientific bodies, a decline in research collaboration opportunities, and the participation of Iranian researchers in international conferences.

Iran's rankings in THE 2026

The THE Asia University Rankings 2026 has placed 90 Iranian universities among the top Asian institutions, up from 85 universities in 2025. The 2026 ranking includes 929 universities from 36 territories.

Sharif University of Technology is placed first in the country, with a global ranking of 76, Borna news agency reported.

Amirkabir University of Technology (79) and Iran University of Science and Technology (87) are ranked second and third.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences (111), University of Tehran (120), Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences (131), Isfahan University of Technology (137), Tarbiat Modares University (162), Shiraz University of Technology (166), and Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences (154) are placed fourth to tenth in the country.

The performance indicators are grouped into five areas: Teaching (the learning environment) 24.5 percent, Research Environment (volume, income and reputation) 28 percent, Research Quality (citation impact, research strength, excellence and influence) 30 percent, International Outlook (staff, students and research) 7.5 percent, and Industry (income and patents) 10 percent.

THE World University Rankings (WUR) by Subject 2026 placed 101 Iranian universities among the top universities.

Amirkabir University of Technology, Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, and Sharif University of Technology, ranking 351–400 globally, were placed first in the country.

Iran University of Science and Technology and University of Tehran were placed second, with a global ranking of 401–500.

Shiraz University of Technology and Tehran University of Medical Sciences ranked 501–600 globally; they ranked third nationwide.

In THE rankings by Subject, Iranian universities were placed among the top universities in the world in 11 subject areas.

The country's best ranking is in Engineering. The 2026 Engineering ranking evaluates universities across five core disciplines: general engineering, electrical and electronic engineering, mechanical and aerospace engineering, civil engineering and chemical engineering.

Sharif University of Technology (126–150), Uni-

versity of Tehran (151–175), Amirkabir University of Technology (251–300), Iran University of Science and Technology (251–300), University of Tabriz (301–400), Isfahan University of Technology (401–500), and Tarbiat Modares University (401–500) are ranked first to fifth, respectively.

The Business and Economics ranking assesses performance across three core disciplines: business and management; accounting and finance; and economics and econometrics.

University of Tehran (201–250), Iran University of Science and Technology, and Sharif University of Technology (301–400), Ferdowsi University of Mashhad (401–500), Shahid Beheshti University (501–600), and Yazd University (601–800), are placed first to fifth.

The 2026 Medical and Health ranking evaluates universities across medicine, dentistry, nursing and other healthcare disciplines.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences (251–300) is placed first in the country. Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences (301–400), Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, and Tarbiat Modares University (401–500) are ranked second and third.

The 2026 Arts and Humanities ranking encompasses a diverse range of subjects, including: languages, literature and linguistics; history; philosophy; theology; architecture; archaeology; and art, performing arts and design.

Iran University of Science and Technology and University of Tehran (401–500) ranked first in the country. Followed by Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Shahid Beheshti University, Shiraz University, and Tarbiat Modares University, ranking 501–600 globally.

The 2026 Life Sciences ranking evaluates universities across four core disciplines: veterinary science, biological sciences (including biology and biochemistry), agriculture and forestry, and sport science.

University of Tehran is placed first, with a global ranking of 401–500. Gorgan University of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, Isfahan University of Technology, Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, University of Maragheh, University of Tabriz, and Urmia University ranked second (501–600).

The 2026 Physical Sciences ranking assesses universities across several core disciplines: physics, chemistry, mathematics, statistics, astronomy, geology, and environmental, earth and marine sciences.

Iran University of Science and Technology, and University of Tehran are placed first, ranking 301–400 globally.

Amirkabir University of Technology, Sharif University of Technology, and Tarbiat Modares University ranked second with a global ranking of 401–500.

The 2026 Psychology ranking evaluates universities across several narrower disciplines: clinical psychology, educational psychology, sport psychology, business psychology and animal psychology.

Iran University of Medical Sciences, Kharazmi University, and University of Tehran ranked 501–600

Allameh Tabataba'i University, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Shahid Beheshti University, Tarbiat Modares University, University of Isfahan, and University of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation Sciences ranked 601+.

The Law ranking evaluates excellence across: constitutional and administrative law; international law; commercial and corporate law; criminal law and justice; and legal theory and jurisprudence, among other topics.

University of Tehran, ranking 301–400 globally, is the only Iranian University placed in this subject area.

The 2026 Social Sciences ranking encompasses a diverse range of subjects, including: communication and media studies, politics and international studies (including development studies), sociology, geography and anthropology.

Tarbiat Modares University, University of Tabriz, and University of Tehran shared the first place, ranking 401–500 globally.

Ferdowsi University of Mashhad is placed second (501–600), Shiraz University, University of Isfahan, and Yazd University are placed third, with a global ranking of 601–800.



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*Failures are often the results of timidity and fears;
disappointments are the results of bashfulness; hours of
leisure pass away like summer-clouds, therefore, do not
waste opportunity of doing good.*

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:11 Evening: 19:29 Dawn: 3:36 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:13 (tomorrow)

“The Cherry Tree” puppet play brings lessons of Ashura to young audiences

TEHRAN- The puppet-live performance “The Cherry Tree”, directed by Sharareh Tayyar, is currently on stage at the Mehr Theater of Tehran’s Art Bureau.

Utilizing an allegorical and indirect approach, the play explores themes of freedom and resilience against oppression, translated into a visual and narrative language tailored for children and adolescents.

The script is based on a story from the book “Why? Why? Why?” by Tehran-based French writer and illustrator of children’s books Claire Jobert. The original book provides a narrative retelling of the life of Imam Hussein (AS) and the events of Ashura; similarly, the play employs symbolic storytelling to convey core moral and spiritual values to its young audience.

The plot centers on a beautiful tree that serves as a sanctuary for various birds. The peace is disrupted by the arrival of a bullying woodpecker, causing widespread distress among the residents. However, with the arrival of a nightingale, the birds find the inspiration and unity needed to stand together against the woodpecker’s tyranny.

The production, which previously garnered significant acclaim, was reproduced under the commission of the Omid House of Theater.

The play was written by Sharareh Tayyar and Mohammad Hossein Habibi. The creative team includes Fahimeh Baroutchi, Amir Hossein Ensafi, Sharareh Tayyar, and Amir Mohammad Ensafi as puppet designers. Ammar Tafti serves as the narrator, while Paria Tayyar provides the voice acting.

Ashura refers to the tenth day of Muharram, the first month of the Islamic calendar, and marks one of the most significant events in Islamic history: the martyrdom of



Imam Hussein (AS), the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). In 680 CE, Imam Hussein led a small group of family members and companions against the massive army of Yazid I, the Umayyad caliph, at the plains of Karbala in present-day Iraq. This clash was not merely a political struggle for power, but a profound moral stand against tyranny and injustice. Despite being outnumbered and denied access to water for days, Imam Hussein and his followers remained steadfast in their principles until their eventual martyrdom.

The legacy of Ashura transcends time and geography, serving as a universal symbol of the struggle between truth and falsehood. For millions of people worldwide, Imam Hussein is revered as the “Prince of Martyrs” and a timeless icon of courage, sacrifice, and integrity. His refusal to pledge allegiance to a corrupt ruler, even at the cost of his own life and the lives of his loved ones, continues to inspire movements for liberation and human rights. Today, Ashura is commemorated through mourning rituals, processions, and reflections on the enduring victory of the oppressed over the oppressor.

“The Cherry Tree” will remain on stage until August 7.

Cartoon of Day



Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb Ricochet
Cartoonist: Tomasz Jędrzejak from Poland

9th Iranian Film Festival in Tokyo honors martyred children of Minab

TEHRAN – The 9th Iranian Film Festival in Tokyo was launched on Friday at the Libra Hall of the Minato City Gender Equality Center in Tokyo, Japan.

The event is organized by the Cultural Attaché office of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Japan, in collaboration with the International Affairs Center of Minato City, the Minato City Municipality, NPO MOCT, and the Tehran Peace Museum, ILNA reported.

A special focus of this year’s festival is the theme of the “Martyred Children of Minab” and reflecting on its human dimensions through related programs and works.

On February 28, the Shajareh Tayyeb 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.

During the opening ceremony, which was attended by the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Japan, the Iranian Cultural Attaché, and various Iranian and Japanese

IRANIAN FILM FESTIVAL IN TOKYO

2026

9th 東京イラン映画祭

هفته فیلم ایران در ژاپن

Iranian Film Festival in Tokyo

رایزنی فرهنگی سفارت جمهوری اسلامی ایران در ژاپن برگزار می‌کند

2026/7/31 (金)

10:00 ~ 19:30

8/1 (土)

10:00 ~ 20:00

8/2 (日)

10:00 ~ 19:30

オープニング式典
Opening Ceremony

スペシャルゲスト Special Guests
Prof. Mohsen SHARIFIYAN & TSUMUZI

益田祐美子氏と柳生みゆ氏の「風の絨毯」トークショー
The Wind Carpet Talk show with
Producer MASUDA and Ms. YAGU

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In Persian with
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anese cultural and artistic figures, the family of the martyred Makan Nasiri was also present as honorary guests.

Makan Nasiri was a seven-year-old Iranian boy who was

killed in the US missile strike. He is the only child from the attack whose remains were never recovered, despite a 140-day search of the rubble. An empty grave was created in his honor, and his be-

Entertainment Against Alternatives

“Steal”, the Epstein Class, and the Caricaturing of Resistance Leaders



By Kurosh Alyani

TEHRAN- On the surface, “Steal” is a crime-thriller miniseries about the “heist of the century” and financial corruption—a seemingly anti-capitalist text alert to inequality. Yet the ultimate layer of its message shores up the same war-driven capitalist order: it hides the Epstein class behind a sacrificial body and absolves that class by killing him; normalizes the war broker; caricatures the resistance’s intellectuals and defense leaders in the figure of Darren Yoshida; and leaves individual theft as the only rational horizon.

Meaningful Haste

The project was announced in May 2024 under the title “Haven,” and filming began in London that same month. Its creator, Sotiris Nikias, had written crime novels under the name Ray Celestin but had no previous experience as a television screenwriter. Nevertheless, for his debut, Amazon and Drama Republic brought in Sam Miller and Hettie Macdonald as directors and placed Sophie Turner at the head of the cast—a global star who had emerged from “Game of Thrones,” surrounded by a largely television-based and considerably less prominent ensemble. Turner has said that she met with Sam Miller after reading the script. Her route into the project was not Nikias’s reputation but the industrial package assembled by Amazon, the production company, and the director. The function of her presence is clear: to lend credibility, marketability, and promotional power to a text that conceals its principal message until its final minutes.

Israel’s war against Iran began on June 13, 2025, and the United States entered it directly a week later. Months afterwards, the series’ final title, official images, and release date were announced, and it premiered on January 21, 2026. This interval, together with the work’s final construction, lends significance to the haste discussed below.

Yoshida is present from the beginning, yet he is granted almost no human presence: he forms no relationships, advances no conflict, and acquires neither a past nor a personality. Throughout the first five episodes, evil is distributed among Milo, Gould, the mercenaries, MI5, and the financial network. Then, within the final few minutes, all these paths are abruptly abandoned, and Yoshida becomes both the architect of the entire operation and the bearer of a political manifesto. It is as though the original antagonist had been removed and a new mission grafted onto the body of a marginal financial investigator—a mission that has also effaced the original role of this supporting character.

The Epstein Class and the Individual Body

The “Epstein class” is not the name of the small circle surrounding Jeffrey Epstein. It is a transnational class at the heart of the global order, linking politicians, capitalists, bankers, war brokers, military figures, media operators, and celebrities through a shared network of money, bodies, war, and entertainment. The Epstein case was the emblematic condensation of this class: a single body was placed at the center of the scandal, removed through

an ambiguous death, and the principal network remained intact.

Milo Carter-Walsh plays the same role in Steal. He is the only comparatively fleshed-out embodiment of this class: endowed with money, connections, and access, with no need for money and a taste for villainy wherever the risks can be calculated, yet without his actions ever being named with moral clarity. He is then killed and presented as a middle-ranking mastermind behind the heist. Milo’s corpse absorbs the audience’s moral outrage, allowing the financial, political, security, and war-making network behind him to recede from view. The body is sacrificed; the class remains.

Gould: Whitewashing the War Broker

Sir Toby Gould, the head of an arms company and a broker of war, is the series’ tacit, embodied representative of Israel and the clearest member of the Epstein class within it. Yet the text does not place him at the center of its moral corruption. The stolen money reaches accounts connected to him; he is questioned, produces a few documents, and withdraws from the story. Peter Mullan’s imposing presence gives him power, reality, and brazenness, but the narrative is not organized against him. The war broker, with his fabulous wealth and hidden networks, becomes a natural part of the world.

Elsewhere, the MI5 official played by Anna Maxwell Martin intimidates Zara in a brief scene, threatens her with counter-terrorism legislation, and effectively forces her to choose between the police and the security apparatus. Even in an appearance lasting only a few minutes, the state is endowed with character, authority, and agency. Gould has character too. Milo has a body. The only alternative—the revolutionary Yoshida—is neither made into a character nor even completed as a type.

Yoshida: The Resistance Leader as Caricature

In a sloganistic, fleshless voice, Yoshida speaks of millions of people going hungry, tax havens, and a system that does not work for ninety-nine per cent of the population. His language is close to the intellectual tradition of David Graeber and Yanis Varoufakis. His mode

longings—a blood-stained blue sweater and a single cream-colored sneaker—are preserved in a glass case at a neighborhood mosque. Experts believe a direct missile strike on Makan Nasiri left no recoverable remains.

Renowned musician, composer, and researcher of Southern Iranian music, Mohsen Sharifian, will also perform pieces on the ney-anban (bagpipe) in memory of the children of Minab on Saturday.

This year’s festival features a total of six feature films and two documentaries, all screened with Japanese subtitles. The lineup includes feature films “Land of the Angels” (2026) directed by Babak Khajepasha, “Hoor’s Tears” (2025) by Mehdi Jafari, “Fragrant” (2023) by Hadi Moghadamdoost, “No Prior Appointment” (2022) by Behrouz Shoaybi, “Bodyguard” (2016) by Ebrahim Hatamikia, and “The Wind Carpet” (2003) by Kamal Tabrizi, as well as the documentaries “Ameneh’s Golden Blood” (2025) by Habib Ahmadzadeh and “Minab” (2026).

Another notable highlight of this year’s festival is the invitation of the director and a Japanese actor from the film “The Wind Carpet,” a joint production between Iran and Japan. A panel discussion and speeches by these guests will be held following the screening of the film.

The 9th Iranian Film Festival in Tokyo, which is open to the public, will run through August 2.

of action also recalls leaders of resistance, defence, and revolution: long-term planning, a clandestine network, infiltration of the enemy’s structures, indirect command of operations, and the creation of a patient, parallel infrastructure. The laptop that houses a virtual bank is a condensed image of Gaza’s tunnel-based sovereignty: an alternative, hidden, and mobile order that must survive under pressure from a more powerful force.

Steal combines radical thinkers and resistance leaders in Yoshida and then condemns him without even taking the time to make him into a character worth taking seriously. Rhys calls him juvenile, naïve, and responsible for the deaths of others, while Zara rejects both his project and his money. The message is clear: do not trust Graeber, Sinwar, Nasrallah, or Iran’s martyred leader; anyone with a plan to change the world is, at best, delusional and, at worst, a maker of victims.

The Ending: Individual Theft, Yes; Collective Transformation, No

The ending completes the series’ ideological apparatus. Zara and Rhys reject Yoshida’s £10 million because accepting it would mean joining his project. Moments later, Zara produces Milo’s £20 million, and the two decide to begin their “exciting” lives with this “clean” money. The problem, then, is not the money’s dirty provenance; it is the money’s connection to collective action. Money used to change the existing order is contaminated, while the same money used for personal escape becomes the hero’s reward.

At the level of slogans, “Steal” speaks against corruption; at the level of characterization, it caricatures the resistance leader and the anti-capitalist thinker; at the structural level, it keeps the war broker and the security apparatus normalized and powerful; and at the ethical level, it substitutes individual theft for collective transformation. Its final message is simple: do not change the world, do not trust alternatives, take your share, and walk away. This is the moment when anti-corruption entertainment becomes soft propaganda for the Epstein class.