Straight Truth

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The grave Saudi-US mistake in attacking PMF positions in Iraq

By Syeda Farheen Naqi Mossavi

TEHRAN -The joint US-Saudi aerial aggression against Iraqi territory, launched in the early hours of Wednesday, marks not a display of strength but a profound strategic miscalculation. It underscores the unraveling of American military credibility and the steady ascent of Iranian power across the region.

By targeting the Popular Mobilization Forces across seven Iraqi provinces, Washington and Riyadh have not only violated Iraq's sovereignty but have also accelerated their own strategic defeat.

The strikes, which killed at least 20 PMF fighters and wounded 32 others, were framed by the US Central Command and Saudi defense ministry in response to allegations of more than 30 drone attacks from Iraqi territory against Saudi oil facilities. ▸ Page 5

Gaza Intl. Women's Film Festival unveils "Women Creating Life from Death" slogan

The second edition of the Gaza International Women's Film Festival has officially launched its promotional tour in Rome, along with the unveiling of its official poster.

Revealed on Monday through the festival's official social media page, the artwork depicts a woman blindfolded with strips of film, accompanied by traditional Palestinian symbols and doves of peace, Ahramonline reported. ▸ Page 8

Over 1,000 participants attend AiroCup national robotics competition

TEHRAN – A total of 465 Iranian teams, comprising 1,035 participants from 30 provinces, attended the national artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics competition, known as AiroCup, on Thursday and Friday in Tehran.

The participants, from school students to post-graduate candidates, competed in specialized AI and robotics leagues, ISNA reported.

Organized by Iran University of Science and Technology in cooperation with 19 scientific committee members, the event served as a platform to identify and showcase top Iranian talents in AI, programming, and robotics; they would later have the chance to attend the COMSTECH 2026 International Artificial Intelligence Olympiad. ▸ Page 7

Mahalat: Discover the Netherlands of Iran

Nestled in Iran's Markazi province, Mahalat is a charming city celebrated for its mild climate, natural beauty, and rich historical heritage. Known nationwide as the City of Flowers and Plants and often referred to as the "Netherlands of Iran," Mahalat has become one of the country's most distinctive travel destinations, attracting visitors with its colorful landscapes, ancient monuments, therapeutic hot springs, and thriving horticultural industry.

The nickname "Netherlands of Iran" reflects Mahalat's remarkable status as Iran's leading center for ornamental flowers and plants. The city is home to more than 700 active greenhouse complexes, making it the country's largest producer of decorative flowers and ornamental plants. According to sources, approximately one percent of the world's cultivated area dedicated to ornamental flowers and plants is located in Mahalat, an extraordinary achievement that has made the city a symbol of Iran's floriculture industry. Rows of vibrant greenhouses and flower gardens create breathtaking scenery throughout the year, offering visitors a unique experience unlike anywhere else in the country. ▸ Page 7

©AFP

This picture taken on March 7, 2024, shows the Rubymar cargo ship partly submerged off the coast of Yemen.

Another Coalition Meets Its Grave in the Red Sea

Saudi Arabia's new coalition against Yemen is doomed to failure because Riyadh does not learn from past experiences

Tying its fate to a fractured US-Israeli strategy, the kingdom is throwing stones from a glass house.

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — On a stifling afternoon, the Saudi defense ministry rolled out the red carpet for delegates from 43 nations, eager to announce a grand diplomatic and military recovery. Merely 13 governments and the Saudi-backed regime in Aden signed on the dotted line to back the newly minted "multinational maritime defense coalition."

Riyadh framed the initiative as a noble defense of international shipping lanes. The reality unfolding in the southern Red Sea tells a completely different story.

This coalition is an administrative confession that twelve years of military intervention have ended in a dead end.

Reheating old leftovers

To understand why this pact is destined to unravel, one must look at the graveyard of previous coalitions assembled to crush Yemen.

When "Operation Decisive Storm" was launched in March 2015, it brought together a massive Arab alliance boasting Saudi financial might, Emirati air power, and contributions from Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Egypt, Morocco, and Sudan, all operating under American intelligence and British logistical oversight.

The architects in Riyadh promised a swift capitulation of Sanaa. Instead, the alliance disintegrated from within.

The United Arab Emirates pivoted toward a separate separationist southern territorial strategy. Morocco quietly pulled its fighter jets from the theater. Sudan poured thousands of troops into a meat grinder on the western coast before scaling back its presence as casualties mounted.

When Western powers launched "Operation Prosperity Guardian" in late 2023 and followed it with "Operation Poseidon Archer" in 2024 to counter Ansarullah's pro-Gaza maritime campaign, they ran headlong into the same realities of asymmetric warfare.

Multimillion-dollar interceptors were squandered against inexpensive loitering munitions, forcing a tactical retreat.

European navies refused to place their vessels under American command, carving out their own fractured mission under the banner of the pathetic "Operation Aspides." ▸ Page 5

Ceuta: 60,000 migrants cross the Spanish border

France and Italy bolstered border controls on Saturday after about 60,000 people crossed into Spain's enclave in North Africa, sparking one of the largest migrant crises for the European Union in recent years.

The migrants entered Ceuta from Morocco, the enclave's regional president Juan Jesus Vivas told reporters, but by Friday evening officials said more than 48,000 had returned.

To cross into Ceuta, many swam around a small border barrier that juts out into the Mediterranean. At least 34 people died in the attempt.

The sudden influx sparked an international crisis. ▸ Page 5

Iran warns of escalation in Hormuz standoff, vows retaliation against any new US-led attack

TEHRAN — Senior Iranian political, military and security officials have issued a series of warnings that any renewed US military action or continued interference in the Strait of Hormuz would trigger broader retaliation, signaling that Tehran is prepared to escalate its response if tensions deepen.

The statements, delivered over the past two days by officials from Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), senior military commanders and advisers to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, reflect a coordinated message that Iran intends to maintain a solid posture following the recent conflict with the United States and Israel.

Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Mohammad Baqer Zolqadr warned that continued US 'warmongering' and Washington's illegal naval interference in the Strait of Hormuz could lead not only to a tighter closure of the strategic waterway but also to disruptions at other international maritime chokepoints. ▸ Page 3

Qalibaf calls for converting military gains into political success

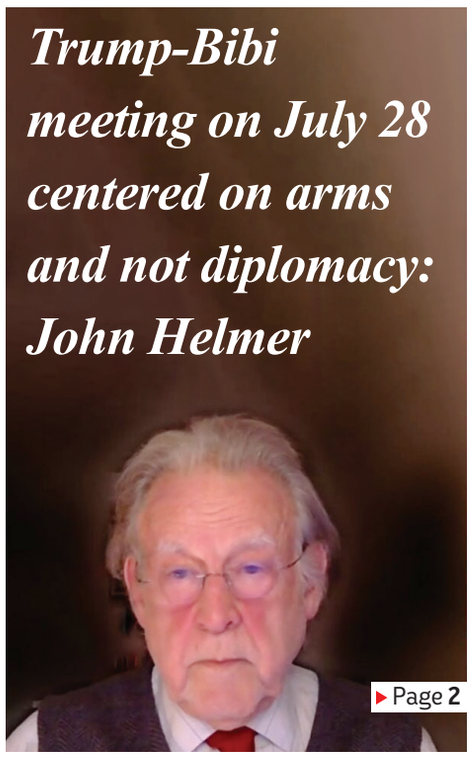
TEHRAN— Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said Iran emerged victorious from the recent war and called for transforming its military achievements into lasting political and legal gains, stressing that national unity is essential to strengthening the country. ▸ Page 3

Crushing retaliation against US aggression: Iran seeks the fate of three heroic aviators

TEHRAN — The Iranian Army has declared that comprehensive diplomatic and intelligence efforts remain underway to determine the fate of three Air Force Su-24 pilots who went missing following a high-precision strike against the US-operated Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar earlier this year.

Speaking on the operational details of the mission, Brigadier General Mohammad Akraminia, a spokesman for the Iranian Army, stated that the retaliatory strike was executed just two days after the launch of military aggression against Iran on February 28 by combined American and Israeli forces. As part of a coordinated response to defend national sovereignty and counter regional aggression, Iranian armed forces launched targeted airstrikes against strategic foreign military installations across the Persian Gulf region. ▸ Page 3

Trump-Bibi meeting on July 28 centered on arms and not diplomacy: John Helmer



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TEHRAN PAPERS

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

America was caught off guard

Kayhan analyzed Iran's surprise attack on Jordan. According to Kayhan, Iran's pre-emptive strike on US military logistics in Jordan completely surprised Washington and Tel Aviv's think tanks, forcing Trump to admit that "Iran's attack was unexpected." Kayhan describes the strike as a smart blow that once again showcased Iran's superior position and battlefield initiative to the world. In global politics, events are always shaped by the real balance of power on the ground. For years, the United States—relying on its media empire and the hollow prestige of its military machine—tried to shape regional dynamics through threats, sanctions, and unilateral attacks. But Iran's pre-emptive strike on US forces in Jordan, Kayhan argues, marked the end of this imposed doctrine and disrupted Washington and Tel Aviv's strategic calculations. The attack, they claim, proved that battlefield initiative lies with the courageous commanders of Iran's armed forces.

Iran: Hormuz — Iran's diplomatic arena

The Iran newspaper wrote that the foreign minister's intensive consultations with his counterparts in both East and West show Tehran's simultaneous effort to contain the crisis on the battlefield while managing it through diplomacy. On one side, mediators are trying to revive implementation of the Iran–US memorandum of understanding; on the other, Tehran and Muscat are negotiating a joint mechanism to manage traffic in the Strait of Hormuz. Despite accelerated diplomatic efforts, diplomacy has not yet prevented the crisis from returning to the battlefield, and even as diplomatic contacts continue, the scope of clashes has expanded again. Tehran's condition for reopening Hormuz has become the central issue among all the files simultaneously on the diplomatic and military tables. As exchanges of fire continue, competition over designing a mechanism to manage this strategic waterway has entered a new phase and become the main focus of talks between Tehran and Muscat.

Etemad: Israel's trap for America

In an interview with Etemad, international affairs expert Majid Mohammad-Sharifi assessed Netanyahu's trip to Washington and the regional outlook. He argues that Netanyahu is trying to convince Trump that the previous war did not eliminate Iran's nuclear program and that a new attack is necessary. Meanwhile, Trump's short-term goal is reopening the Strait of Hormuz, and he seeks to force Iran to do so through a mix of military threats and economic pressure. Netanyahu believes he can still persuade Trump to launch a new strike on Iran—provided he can present a convincing picture of Iran's nuclear threat. How Trump connects the goal of reopening Hormuz with Iran's nuclear program depends on the US military posture in the region and the outcome of possible negotiations with Iran and Oman. According to Mohammad-Sharifi, the current US posture signals preparation for a large-scale military action, though a temporary agreement on Hormuz could, at least in the short term, prevent such an operation.

Ettelaat: Is a limited war with America better for Iran, or a fragile peace?

Ettelaat analyzed the reasons behind Iran's missile strike on the US base in Jordan. At first glance, explaining Iran's surprise attack seemed difficult. The strike effectively ended the fragile pause in direct US –Iran confrontation and prompted Washington to resume attacks inside Iran. It appears Iran is trying to reshape the diplomatic debate. Instead of accepting unrestricted freedom of navigation, Tehran has repeatedly stated that shipping must operate under rules agreed with Iran or administered by Iran. If this interpretation is correct, Tehran's goal may be to ensure that any future reopening of the Strait of Hormuz reflects Iranian influence—not a return to pre-war conditions. A limited, ongoing confrontation allows Iran to maintain pressure toward this goal. From Tehran's perspective, keeping the crisis alive below the threshold of full-scale war may be preferable to accepting a ceasefire that leaves sanctions, blockade, and economic isolation largely unchanged.

Farhikhtegan: Saudi Arabia's escape — from Hormuz to Bab al-Mandab dead end

Farhikhtegan evaluated the closure of the Bab al-Mandab Strait to Saudi Arabia by the Houthis. They argue that shutting Bab al-Mandab to Saudi shipping affects the global oil market in two ways: is Ansarullah targeting the Yanbu port, or the Bab al-Mandab route itself? In reality, Ansarullah has the tools and capability for both scenarios, either of which could push the global oil market into a period of reduced supply—lasting until alternative routes are found or the market adapts. The global market is now facing a situation with no precedent: simultaneous disruption in both the Strait of Hormuz and Bab al-Mandab, while China's behavior remains uncertain. From a timing perspective, such an event is strategically more favorable for Iran now than two or three months ago, because today's global oil market is more vulnerable to supply and transport shocks.

US lawmakers demand exit from Iran war as strategic costs mount

TEHRAN — Cracks inside the American political establishment continue to widen as US lawmakers openly criticize Washington's unauthorized military campaign against Iran, pointing to rising casualties, soaring domestic energy prices, and rapidly depleting reserves. The mounting pressures have prompted both Democratic and Republican figures to demand an immediate end to Washington's hostile operations.

Representing growing opposition inside the US Congress, Representative John Larson announced new legislation aimed at cutting off all federal funding for what he characterized as President Donald Trump's "illegal Iran war". Highlighting economic strains at home and casualties abroad, Larson condemned the White House for ignoring congressional votes to halt hostilities. "As more of our troops are killed in Iran, and gas prices continue to skyrocket, Congress can't sit on its hands," Larson stated, calling for an immediate defunding of the operation.

At the same time, Republican Representative Thomas Massie warned that Washington is risking its remaining political and military leverage by prolonging the conflict. Massie emphasized that the US faces dwindling strategic petroleum reserves, con-

strained anti-missile defense stockpiles, and shrinking political support. Urging an immediate withdrawal, Massie noted, "We should leave the table before any of those cards are played."

Regional analysts and foreign policy experts argue that these bipartisan challenges reflect a broader lack of coherent strategy from the Trump administration. Observers note that without clear objectives, legislative authorization, or an achievable endgame, Washington's military campaign risks devolving into an unsustainable war of attrition that strains the US economy and military readiness.

President Pezeshkian hails Iranians as 'true heroes' shaping the nation's future

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian has praised the Iranian people as "true heroes," insisting that the country's future belongs to its citizens despite "imposed wars" and pressure from the United States and Israel.

Writing on X as his administration enters its third year, Pezeshkian honored the nation's steadfastness through two years of foreign hostility. He emphasized that no external power can weaken Iran and reiterated that its people alone will shape the country's future.

Pezeshkian was sworn in at the Iranian Parliament on July 30, 2024, following his election victory earlier that month. The vote was called after his predecessor, Ebrahim Raisi, passed away in a helicopter crash.

Senior international and regional officials attended Pezeshkian's inauguration, including leaders of Palestinian resistance groups such as then-Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh. Haniyeh was assassinated in Tehran in an Israeli strike after attending the ceremony. Israel has a long history of targeted assassinations involving regional resistance leaders, Iranian nuclear scientists, and military personnel who played key roles in defeating the ISIL terrorist group.

This campaign of hostility eventually culminated in open aggression against Iran.

In June 2025, Israel launched a war against Iran, with the United States later joining the conflict to bomb Iranian nuclear facilities. Over 12 days of strikes, target sites extended beyond military assets to include civilian residential infrastructure. Iran's powerful military response against Israel and a key US airbase in Qatar eventually pushed Washington and Tel Aviv to accept an end to the hostilities.

However, the US and Israel repeated that scenario this year. On February 28, they initiated a new 39-day war against Iran, resulting in thousands of casualties, many of whom were civilians. On the first day of the conflict, Iran's Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, was assassinated in his Tehran office. That same day, 168 people—mostly schoolchildren—were killed when a US Tomahawk cruise missile struck a school in the southern city of Minab. Iran's retaliatory strikes against Israel and American bases in the Persian Gulf region ultimately forced President Donald Trump to announce a unilateral ceasefire, which took effect on April 8. Despite that truce and a memorandum of understanding signed by Trump and Pezeshkian in June, US strikes against Iranian civilian infrastructure have persisted.

Reflecting on these events, President Pezeshkian wrote on his X post: "Two years ago, the start of our tenure coincided with the assassination of our honored guest (Haniyeh) by the Zionist regime—two years in which imposed wars, pressure, and relentless hostility were inflicted upon the people of Iran. Throughout all these difficult days, the true heroes were the people themselves. The future of Iran will be forged by the people of Iran."

Since taking office, Pezeshkian has focused heavily on fostering internal unity and strengthening diplomatic ties with foreign nations, particularly neighboring countries. He has repeatedly warned of joint US-Israeli attempts to create rifts between Iran and its regional neighbors, clarifying that Iranian strikes against US bases in the Persian Gulf are strictly defensive responses to external aggression, and that Tehran fully respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of neighboring states.

Pezeshkian's governance continues to draw continuity from the country's leadership structure. During his official endorsement, the late Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei characterized Pezeshkian as wise, honest, and a president with a common touch. Following his martyrdom, the new Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei—selected by a majority vote of the Assembly of Experts—reaffirmed that characterization and expressed full confidence in Pezeshkian's administration.

As the administration steps into its third year, President Pezeshkian's message underscores a strategic push to maintain domestic cohesion amid external military pressure. By emphasizing national self-reliance and regional diplomacy, the government seeks to navigate continuous security challenges while reaffirming that Iran's sovereign path will remain firmly in the hands of its people.

Trump-Bibi meeting on July 28 centered on arms and not diplomacy: John Helmer

Moscow-based geopolitical analyst says Tehran's ability to penetrate Israeli air defenses has strategic significance

TEHRAN - As Washington combines renewed strikes on southern Iran with back-to-back White House visits from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, a veteran Moscow-based journalist and geopolitical analyst says the driving force behind U.S. policy is domestic political calculation rather than any coherent Middle East strategy.

In an interview with the Tehran Times, John Helmer said President Donald Trump's handling of Netanyahu, Washington's approach to the war on Iran, and Ukraine's drone strike on an Iranian-flagged vessel in the Caspian Sea are all bound together by the same financial and electoral pressures shaping the White House ahead of November's elections.

Helmer said Trump's behavior toward Netanyahu should be read through three lenses: his own vanity, the financial weight of pro-Israel donors such as Miriam Adelson, and Republican efforts to hold the Senate. He noted that Trump's dismissal of Netanyahu's concerns over Iran's Pickaxe Mountain site, reportedly telling the Israeli premier he did not need to be briefed, reflected personal ego rather than a shift in policy.

According to Helmer, growing anti-Netanyahu sentiment inside Trump's MAGA base, combined with Netanyahu's tightening race at home against former military chief Gadi Eisenkot ahead of Israel's October vote, has pushed Trump to keep the Israeli leader publicly at arm's length. He pointed out that Netanyahu had to wait for a slot squeezed between Zelensky's visit and Senator Lindsey Graham's funeral, and left without a joint press appearance or an explicit endorsement, receiving only a brief social media acknowledgment. The Oval Office photograph, Helmer added, told its own story: the meeting was flanked by Trump's military and financial officials, including Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, underscoring that money and weapons, not diplomacy, dominated the agenda.

Helmer argued that Trump views the war on Iran, like the war in Ukraine, as a means of entrenching U.S. dominance over the region by weakening centers of resistance including Iran, Hezbollah, Hamas and Ansarullah, while pushing allies to bankroll the campaign through American arms purchases. He put the war's cost to Washington so far at roughly 38 billion dollars, adding that Trump's preferred outcome is neither full-scale war nor genuine peace but a sustained, lower-cost confrontation with Iran, financed where possible by Persian Gulf monarchies rather than the U.S. treasury.

Depleted American missile and air-defense stockpiles, Helmer said, are prompting Washington's military establishment to argue that the United States cannot sustain more than one major war simultaneously, forcing new congressional funding fights that carry their own political risk. He said this points toward a pause along the lines of the collapsed June 17 memorandum of understanding rather than a genuine settlement, since Washington, in his assessment, never intended to honor that agreement and no peace acceptable to Iran is achievable on U.S. terms.

Turning to the Strait of Hormuz, Helmer rejected the idea that it functions merely as a symbolic pressure point, describing it instead as one of Iran's "most valuable strategic assets". He said Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi had ruled out any Omani partnership or condominium arrangement over the strait, and argued Tehran should manage its differences with Muscat carefully while treating Oman as a useful smaller partner in dealing with Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Together with the Yemen-controlled Bab el-Mandeb Strait, Helmer said, Hormuz gives Iran the ability to apply counter-economic pressure on Washington through oil prices and inflation, factors he called decisive for any sitting U.S. president, alongside military casualties, drawing a parallel to the erosion of Lyndon B. Johnson's standing during the Vietnam War.

On the broader shift in the regional balance of power, Helmer said Iran's demonstrated ability to penetrate Israeli air defenses has

undercut a long-standing assumption of Israeli military superiority, even though Israel and the United States have sought to downplay the achievement. He cautioned, however, that this has not yet translated into a durable strategic advantage for Iran, pointing to continuing discussion of Lebanon's partition, pressure on Hezbollah involving Turkey and Syrian forces under President Ahmed al-Sharaa, and Israel's continued expansion of regional influence in Palestine, Lebanon and Syria. Helmer also said Iran had inflicted a strategic setback on India by exposing the costs of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's alignment with Israel, the U.S. and the UAE, while Pakistan and Turkey had each secured more limited gains from the conflict.

On Ukraine's drone strike on the Iranian-flagged cargo vessel Ana in the Caspian Sea, Helmer said the attack, which struck the ship as it sheltered from a storm near Astrakhan, most likely required U.S. satellite and intelligence support and should be understood as a Washington-backed operation carried out by Kyiv to disrupt Russian-Iranian cooperation along the North-South Corridor. He noted that Iran's ambassador to Russia, Kazem Jalali, had described the strike as a matter requiring a Russian response rather than Iranian retaliation, and cited Iran's Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement with Russia, signed in January 2025, as creating binding intelligence-sharing obligations between the two countries under its Article 4.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran warns of escalation in Hormuz standoff, vows retaliation against any new US-led attack

From Page 1 ▸ Zolqadr did not identify the other maritime chokepoints he was referring to. However, analysts say Iran could seek to disrupt traffic through the Bab al-Mandab Strait. This scenario has prompted a more cautious stance from the United States and European countries.

Zolqadr referred to a memorandum of understanding signed last month that ended the latest round of hostilities between Iran and the United States. Under the agreement, Iran allowed fee-free maritime transit through the Strait of Hormuz for a 60-day period while establishing a designated shipping corridor. He accused Washington of attempting to escort vessels through an 'unauthorized route,' saying such actions have prompted Iranian authorities to block those passages until US interference ceases.

"The global economy, energy markets and American voters will pay the price," Zolqadr warned, linking continued tensions in the Persian Gulf to potential disruptions in global energy supplies.

Separately, Major General Mohsen Rezaei, a senior adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, argued that the Strait of Hormuz is a regional waterway and rejected 'US attempts to influence its management.'

Rezaei said the strait lies within the territorial waters of Iran and Oman and stressed that no country, including European states, supports unilateral American involvement in the strategic passage.

"The Strait of Hormuz has nothing to do with the United States," he said, adding that Iran remains suspicious of any American military presence in the waterway following the recent conflict.

Military commanders also issued warnings over possible regional repercussions should Washington seek additional military escalation.

Major General Ali Abdollahi, commander of Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, accused the United States of pursuing regional domination and using allied countries as protective shields for its military presence.

He urged regional Muslim governments to reconsider cooperation with Washington, warning that any country allowing itself to serve as a defensive platform for US operations would face the consequences of war.

Former Deputy Inspector of Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters Brigadier General Mohammad Jafar Asadi said Iran's armed forces remain fully prepared to respond to any hostile action against the country. Reacting to reported US threats against Iranian infrastructure, Asadi said Tehran had repeatedly demonstrated its willingness and capability to retaliate, adding that any attack on Iran would receive a 'decisive response.'

In a separate statement, a senior Iranian security official said Tehran has prepared an extensive contingency plan targeting Israeli critical infrastructure as well as US energy facilities across the region in the event of a new military strike.

According to Mehr News, the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter, dismissed reports of potential American and Israeli attacks on Iranian infrastructure as 'madness,' while asserting that Iran's armed forces had already demonstrated both their operational capability and political resolve during the recent conflict.

The coordinated remarks underscore Tehran's effort to reinforce deterrence as tensions surrounding the Strait of Hormuz and the broader Persian Gulf region remain elevated following weeks of military confrontation between Iran, the United States and Israel. According to the officials, Iran views continued US military activity in the strategic waterway as a direct challenge to its security. It has warned that any further escalation would be met with a broader and more forceful response.

LATEST NEWS

Baqaei urges advocates of Prophet Mohammad's teachings to judge their own conduct

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei said those who invoke the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) should first measure the conduct of their own governments against Islamic principles before preaching to others.

Baqaei also said the Islamic Republic has consistently upheld the principles of good neighborliness and fraternal relations among Muslim nations, regardless of political differences.

Questioning the conduct of unnamed governments, Baqaei asked whether aligning with forces that have launched military aggression against a Muslim country, or hosting and supporting such forces, is compatible with the Quran's prohibition against siding with oppressors and with the principles of Islamic brotherhood and good neighborly relations.

Attack on Iran's infrastructure would carry broader consequences: adviser

Mohammad Mokhber, senior adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, warned that any attack on Iran's infrastructure would have far-reaching strategic consequences. In a post on X, Mokhber said those who calculate solely through 'military equations' would be met by "the logic of history." He argued that strikes on Iran's infrastructure would awaken fault lines underpinning '250 years of hegemonic architecture,' adding that the collapse of such a system would leave 'neither a center of command nor a marketplace for plunder.'

Araghchi underscores expansion of Iran-Ethiopia ties, BRICS collaboration

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has stressed the need to further develop bilateral relations between Iran and Ethiopia and enhance cooperation within the BRICS framework during a meeting with Iranian ambassador to Addis Ababa, Ali-Akbar Rezaei on Saturday.

Araghchi underscored Africa's strategic position in Iran's foreign policy and the historically expanding ties between Tehran and Addis Ababa.

The top diplomat then emphasized the necessity of sustained development of bilateral relations, the utilization of existing capacities to broaden cooperation in areas of mutual interest, and the strengthening of coordination and collaboration in international forums, particularly within BRICS.

Iraqi ambassador expects 4m Iranians to join Arbaeen pilgrimage

Iraq's Ambassador to Iran, Yasser Abdulzahra Al-Hajjaj, said around four million Iranian pilgrims are expected to participate in this year's Arbaeen pilgrimage by its conclusion on Aug. 4. During a visit to Mashhad, he described Arbaeen as the strongest symbol of solidarity between Iran and Iraq, saying the annual pilgrimage and the volunteer-run service camps along the Najaf-Karbala route reflect the two nations' enduring bonds of brotherhood and cooperation.

Araghchi: Media key to countering US-Israeli narratives

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said the media plays a vital role in countering hostile narratives and strengthening national unity. He said the Foreign Ministry is pursuing diplomatic efforts to protect Iran's interests, including consultations with Oman on maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, while accusing the United States of repeatedly violating its commitments.

Defense industry to stay ahead of future warfare: minister

Acting Defense Minister Brig. Gen. Majid Ebn-ol-Reza said Iran's defense industry must evolve faster than the demands of future battlefields, stressing that modern warfare will be driven by intelligence superiority, space-based technologies and defense economics. He also called for defense innovations to support civilian sectors, saying military technologies should strengthen national deterrence while driving progress in transportation, energy, communications and other strategic industries.

Russia's Ulyanov urges US to resume talks with Iran

Russia's Permanent Representative to the international organizations in Vienna, Mikhail Ulyanov, called on the United States to halt its military attacks against Iran and return to negotiations. He said recent strategic mistakes should serve as a lesson and stressed that diplomacy remains the appropriate path forward.

Iran has prepared for worst-case scenarios: VP

First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref said the Iranian government has prepared plans for the next two years, including worst-case scenarios. He added that maintaining public confidence and social calm will remain the administration's top priority.

Majlis begins review of Strait of Hormuz management plan

Iran's parliamentary National Security and Foreign Policy Commission has begun reviewing a proposal on managing the Strait of Hormuz, commission spokesman Hassan Qashqavi said. He added that safeguarding Iran's national interests and ensuring national security are the plan's primary objectives.

Iran-Oman Hormuz talks continue, Al Jazeera bureau chief says

Al Jazeera's Tehran bureau chief, Noureddine Al-Daghir, said negotiations between Iran and Oman over the Strait of Hormuz remain underway despite renewed tensions between Tehran and Washington. He said discussions on an Iranian proposal could produce progress in the coming days and potentially facilitate renewed Iran-US negotiations if an agreement leads to the restoration of normal maritime traffic.

Kuwaiti and Saudi FMs discuss regional de-escalation

Kuwait's Foreign Ministry said Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya and his Saudi counterpart held a phone call to discuss diplomatic efforts aimed at reducing regional tensions. The ministers also reviewed ways to strengthen regional security and stability while ensuring the security and freedom of maritime navigation.

Crushing retaliation against US aggression: Iran seeks the fate of three heroic aviators

TEHRAN — The Iranian Army has declared that comprehensive diplomatic and intelligence efforts remain underway to determine the fate of three Air Force Su-24 pilots who went missing following a high-precision strike against the US-operated Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar earlier this year.

Speaking on the operational details of the mission, Brigadier General Mohammad Akraminia, a spokesman for the Iranian Army, stated that the retaliatory strike was executed just two days after the launch of military aggression against Iran on February 28 by combined American and Israeli forces. As part of a coordinated response to defend national sovereignty and counter regional aggression, Iranian armed forces launched targeted airstrikes against strategic foreign military installations across the Persian Gulf region.

General Akraminia clarified that the retaliatory offensive comprised multiple tactical vectors, including a precision run by F-5 fighter jets against the Al Adiri military facility in Kuwait, as well as a long-range penetration mission carried out by Air Force Su-24 tactical bombers targeting the key US command hub at Al Udeid in Qatar.

Describing the Su-24 raid as one of the most complex and dangerous aerial operations undertaken by the Air Force in recent years, Akraminia highlighted the formidable concentration of Western air defense umbrella systems deployed throughout the Persian Gulf corridor. To bypass multi-layered radar coverage and early warning networks, the four-man Iranian strike team executed extreme low-altitude flight profiles, maintaining altitudes of merely 30 to 40 meters above the waters of the Persian Gulf and skimming terrain features during landward entry.

Although the primary tactical objectives were achieved and heavy damage was inflicted upon the targeted base, enemy interceptors engaged the Iranian bombers during their homeward transit. The operation successfully destroyed multiple American military helicopters on the tarmac and rendered numerous other rotary-wing platforms permanently inoperable, significantly curtailing forward US air capabilities in the theater.

The body of one fallen aviator, Brigadier General Majid Kazemi, was recently recovered and identified following months of intensive search operations. General Kazemi was laid to rest on Friday in the southern city of Shiraz during a solemn state funeral attended by military dignitaries and thousands of citizens paying tribute to his sacrifice.

Regarding the remaining three aviators, General Akraminia noted that while Tehran has maintained constant communication with regional authorities, the Qatari government has so far stated that it possesses no verifiable information regarding their whereabouts. He called upon officials in Doha to intensify cooperation in search and investigation in full alignment with international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions.

The operational context surrounding the Al Udeid strike reflects Iran's long-standing defense posture, which views foreign military presence in the Persian Gulf as a primary catalyst for regional instability. According to Tehran's strategic doctrine, military installations operated by foreign powers—most notably the United States—serve not as stabilization forces but as forward staging grounds for unilateral intervention, espionage, and unprovoked aggression against sovereign regional states.

Iran has emphasized that the retaliatory strikes conducted in early March were executed under the legitimate framework of self-defense as enshrined in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. The operations were launched following unprovoked and violent strikes by joint US and Israeli forces against Iranian territorial integrity, civilian infrastructure, and strategic assets on February 28. The decision to target high-value assets such as Al Udeid Air Base—the central nervous system for forward US air assets in the Middle East—demonstrated both the operational reach of the Iranian Air Force and its unwavering commitment to enforcing regional deterrence.

Despite decades of harsh international sanctions aimed at crippling Iran's defense sector, the Iranian Air Force has maintained high operational readiness through indigenous engineering, reverse-manufacturing of aviation components, and specialized tactics designed to exploit vulnerabilities in modern air defense systems. The extreme low-altitude penetration tactic employed by the Su-24 crews represents a cornerstone of Iranian asymmetric aviation doctrine, allowing aging yet heavily modernized strike aircraft to project power deep into heavily defended sovereign airspace.

Furthermore, Washington's broader campaign to force concessions from Iran through military coercion has consistently failed. Iranian commanders maintain that despite heavy bombardment and economic warfare, American military infrastructure in the region suffered structural disruptions that severely limited forward power projection.

Qalibaf calls for converting military gains into political success

TEHRAN— Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said Iran emerged victorious from the recent war and called for transforming its military achievements into lasting political and legal gains, stressing that national unity is essential to strengthening the country.

Speaking at a meeting of the parliament's Coordination Council, Qalibaf said building a 'strong Iran' should remain the country's foremost priority during the second phase of the Islamic Revolution. He said unity under the guidance of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution is a key prerequisite for achieving that goal.

Referring to the recent conflict, Qalibaf said Iran had secured victory but stressed that the achievement must now be consolidated by fostering public confidence, preserving national cohesion and ensuring that the country's military accomplishments are recognized politically and legally by the international community.

He also called for closer coordination among four key arenas—military, diplomacy, public service and nightly street gatherings—saying they must operate in a balanced and complementary manner, warning that separating them would weaken Iran rather than strengthen it.

Intl. exhibit of building, construction draws interest with 1,000 companies registered

TEHRAN- The Deputy for Support and Planning of the Iran Cooperative Chamber announced that nearly 1,000 companies have registered to participate in the International Exhibition of Building and Construction and said: This event will be held from August 18 to 21, focusing on introducing new technologies, developing trade exchanges, and holding specialized panels.

According to IRNA, Mojtaba Mahallati stated at a press conference for the International Exhibition of Building and Construction on Saturday, referring to the event's over two-decade history: The International Exhibition of Building and Construction has become one of the most prestigious specialized exhibitions in the region.

He added: Despite the difficult economic conditions, the reception from companies for this year's exhibition has been very favorable, and approximately 1,000 companies have registered so far.

Mahallati, noting that the exhibition is not merely a place for displaying goods and products, stated: Holding training courses, creating business connections, introducing new technologies, and helping to develop domestic and foreign markets are among the main objectives of this exhibition. Participants will be present in various sectors including building materials, equipment and machinery, doors and windows, elevators and escalators, mechanical and electronic installations, smart systems, safety equipment, architecture and modern designs, and knowledge-based products.

The Deputy for Support and Planning of the Iran Cooperative Chamber continued: This exhibition will be held in 20 halls as well as parts of the open spaces of the Tehran International Exhibition Center, and producers, knowledge-based companies, equipment suppliers, engineers, architects, mass builders, and investors will be present.

He announced the holding of specialized panels in cooperation with the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development and noted: These panels will be held on three of the four days of the exhibition with the presence of professors, organizations, and activists in the building sector, and will examine the latest technologies and achievements of the building industry.

Mahallati referred to the exhibition's international capacities and added: Companies from countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey, China, Pakistan, and the Persian Gulf states will participate in this event, and negotiations are underway to strengthen technological cooperation, especially in the field of building industrialization, with South Korea. Their presence can help develop exports and commercial exchanges.

The Deputy for Support and Planning of the Iran Cooperative Chamber described the building industry as one of the key industries affecting employment and capital circulation, and called on the media to further introduce the capacities of domestic producers and the capa-

bilities of this industry.

Regarding the exhibition's international dimensions, Mohallati emphasized the importance of cooperation memoranda and acknowledged: We are seeking to make the International Exhibition of Building and Construction a turning point for operationalizing the cooperation memorandum between Iran's Ministry of Transport and Urban Development and South Korea. Our goal from this cooperation is not only to attract capital but also to transfer knowledge and the latest modern technologies in the field of building industrialization to Iranian specialists.

According to him, combining local knowledge with South Korea's modern technologies can significantly improve the speed and quality of construction in the country.

The Deputy of the Cooperative Chamber, analyzing companies' behavior in the current economic conditions, said: In times when the market experiences turbulence, the presence of industry actors at the exhibition can help calm the market and restore order by injecting energy and new products. Contrary to the initial assumption that the number of participants might decline, this year we are witnessing an increase in registrations, which itself indicates the vital role of producers in the cycle of prosperity in the building industry and the country's reconstruction.

Mahallati, regarding the difference between this edition and previous years, emphasized: This year's exhibition is based on being up-to-date, and in this edition we have tried to strengthen the connection between industry, academia, and modern technologies such as artificial intelligence. Therefore, special training programs and specialized panels have been designed so that companies and elites can learn about the latest methods and technologies of the world.

Referring to challenges such as rising production costs and energy supply limitations, he emphasized the exhibition's role as a regulatory body and added: Despite production challenges, the exhibition is a platform that brings together the entire supply chain, from producers to housing cooperatives and investors, to introduce their products and ensure that the production and construction cycle in the country continues with strength.

The International Exhibition of Building and Construction will be held from August 18 to 21, from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM, at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds.

Renewable power generation capacity to hit 12,000MW by next March

TEHRAN- The Deputy Minister of Energy and Head of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) said: The capacity of the country's renewable power plants will reach 12,000 megawatts by the end of this Iranian calendar year (March 2007), with the continued implementation of development projects.

According to IRNA, Mohsen Taraztalab stated during a visit to solar power plants in western Golestan: Since the beginning of the 14th government's term, approximately 4,500 megawatts of new capacity have been added to the country's power grid, and the capacity of renewable power plants has increased from 1,250 megawatts to about 5,800 megawatts.

He added: Based on the planning, the capacity of renewable power plants will reach 7,000 megawatts by the end of the first half of the present year (September 20) and 12,000 megawatts by the end of the year (March 2027), and achieving this goal requires securing the necessary financial resources.

The Head of SATBA, referring to the progress of solar projects in Golestan, said: A private-sector solar power plant in Gonbad-e Kavus city is in its final stages of construction, with part of its capacity to be connected to the national power grid within the next 20 days and the entire plant capacity by September 11.

Taraztalab continued: Approximately 140 people are currently working on this project, and efforts are being made to bring the plant fully online within a maximum of one and a

half months.

He described the development of household solar power plants as one of the government's priorities and added: Financial resource constraints have reduced the ability to simultaneously disburse facilities to all applicants, but SATBA, by establishing a project fund and utilizing its resources, is pursuing the payment of low-interest facilities for the development of these plants.

The Deputy Energy Minister said: Applicants who have the necessary permits, contracts, grid connection approvals, and appropriate physical progress will be introduced to banks to receive facilities, so that greater public participation in the development of solar power plants can be facilitated.

Taraztalab, during his visit to the solar power plants in western Golestan, assessed the implementation progress of the province's 3, 30, and 64-megawatt projects as favorable and said: With the operation of these projects, the share of clean energy in Golestan's electricity supply will increase, and part of the province's consumption needs will be met through solar power generation.

TPO head, Pakistani ambassador discuss expanding Iran-Pakistan trade ties

TEHRAN- Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO), in a meeting with Pakistan's Ambassador to Iran, while emphasizing the importance of facilitating the activities of the private sector in both countries, stressed the necessity of utilizing existing capacities to develop and deepen the economic and commercial relations between Iran and Pakistan.

According to the Public Relations Department of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, Mohammad-Ali Dehghan Dehnavi, in a meeting with Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, emphasized the extensive capacities for developing trade between Iran and Pakistan and added: Iran-Pakistan relations have a deep and long-standing background, and we are interested in playing an effective role in the path of developing bilateral relations. In this regard, the role of Pakistan's ambassador in strengthening and expanding economic and commercial relations between the two countries is very important.

Referring to his trip to Pakistan next week, he added: We will pursue issues related to the development of bilateral trade during this visit, and the relevant matters and topics will be examined within the framework of the Joint Trade Committee of the two countries with the presence of the Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade.

The Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, referring to the schedule for the trip to Pakistan next week, said: During this visit, trade issues between the two countries that require final decision-making will be pursued and finalized, and we will strive to remove obstacles and facilitate the development of trade exchanges between Iran and Pakistan.

Dehghan Dehnavi continued: Representatives from other relevant ministries and organizations will also be present on this trip so that various issues related to economic and commercial cooperation between Iran and Pakistan can be pursued with greater coordination and seriousness.

The Deputy Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade, referring to the readiness to develop interactions between the private sectors of the two countries, said: There is full readiness to send trade delegations and hold joint events between the two countries, and merchants and economic activists also welcome such events.

The Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, stating that there are suitable opportunities and capacities for developing trade between Iran and Pakistan, emphasized: We hope that by properly utilizing these capacities, we can develop trade between the two countries and provide the necessary ground for greater activity and effort by the private sector of Iran and Pakistan.

During this meeting, Pakistan's Ambassador to Iran, referring to the background of bilateral relations, stated: Iran-Pakistan relations are deep-rooted and civilizational, and in the current circumstances, the actions of the Pakistani government also reflect the deep relations between the two countries.

He emphasized the importance of strengthening relations and cooperation between Iran and Pakistan and considered the development of economic and commercial relations as an important area for deepening bilateral ties.

'Shifting export track from raw material sales to finished goods, a necessity'

TEHRAN- The Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO), during a meeting with representatives and the board of directors of the Iran Guilds Chamber, announced the formulation of a new roadmap for a leap in non-oil exports and emphasized the strategic necessity of transitioning from raw and semi-raw material exports to high-value-added finished goods.

According to the Public Relations Department of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, this meeting was held with the aim of explaining new structures for guild participation in the international supply chain and examining operational solutions to remove administrative, currency, and regulatory obstacles facing guild exporters.

The Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, pointing to the structural challenge of the country's trade balance from a qualitative perspective, stated: One of the fundamental and problematic issues in foreign trade is the low average value of export goods compared to import items. Currently, the average value per ton of the country's export goods is about $300, while this figure for imported goods reaches about $2,000 per ton. This deep gap indicates the continuation of the traditional approach and reliance on raw material sales in the country's economy.

Emphasizing the need to enhance Iran's position in the global value chain, he added: A major portion of our non-oil exports is concentrated in upstream industries such as the steel chain, iron ore, pellets, and ingots, whose marketing and sales, due to the nature of raw materials, lack the scientific complexities of trade. In contrast, production and distribution guilds deal with a chain of finished and ready-to-consume goods (such as furniture, clothing, footwear, leather, and handicrafts), whose export value per ton starts at $1,000 and reaches several thousand dollars in areas like clothing and footwear. Shifting toward these products is our main mission to improve the country's currency indicators.

Strategy of presence in "Final Link" of International Supply Chain

The Deputy Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade, referring to the successful experience of leading East Asian countries such as China and Vietnam in regional markets, emphasized: Successful global producers do not merely send goods to destination ports; rather, by directly participating in the distribution and retail chain, they capture the main profit margin. Today's success model is renting stores, shelving in large chain stores, and directly supplying products to the final consumer in target markets.

He identified the Eurasian region and neighboring countries as the strategic priority for the country's guilds and said: With the conclusion of the free trade agreement between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union and the tariff elimination on 87% of goods, an unparalleled platform for guild entrance has been created. For example, Iran's leather industries, despite their excellent quality, have a negligible share in neighboring countries' markets, while these products sell at several times the domestic price in markets such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Iraq. The Guilds Chamber must, as a national driving force, guide guild members toward physical and direct presence in target markets, especially the large Russian market.

Establishment of "Guilds Export Desk" and signing performance-based MOUs

The Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran announced the creation of new executive structures to support the guild sector and declared: At the Trade Promotion Organization, we will activate the "Guilds Export Desk" in a specialized and systematic manner to review export cases guild by guild and remove obstacles facing each union separately.

According to Dehghan Dehnavi; the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran is ready to sign bilateral memoranda of understanding with any guild union that has a formulated export plan and the ability to fulfill export commitments. In these memoranda, the organization's commitments will be specified in five facilitation axes, and in return, the union's commitment to achieve a specific export amount (from several million to hundreds of millions of dollars) will be included, so that government support shifts from general support toward performance-based and results-oriented support.

The Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran also introduced tools such as Export Management Companies (EMCs), Iranian commercial centers abroad, and the network of commercial attachés as logistical and marketing arms serving the development of guild capacities.

The Deputy Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade, acknowledging the concerns of economic activists regarding the complexities of regulations for repatriating export proceeds, said: Although repatriating currency to the country's economic cycle is a national necessity, the form of regulation should not hinder the activities of registered exporters. To prevent regulatory misunderstandings and resolve order registration discrepancies, it was decided to establish a "Dedicated Service Desk" with the participation of specialized export and import regulation offices and currency service offices of the organization, so that each union can refer 3 to 4 of its challenging cases to this desk for case-by-case resolution and rule amendments.

The Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, at the end of this meeting, referred to the situation of handmade carpet exports and said: "Iranian handmade carpets are beyond a commodity; they are the cultural and artistic flag of the country in international markets. The main challenge in this area is the issue of currency commitment and obligations, as well as the time-consuming process of repatriating sales proceeds. The Trade Promotion Organization continues to pursue the proposal to completely exempt handmade carpets from currency obligation or at least increase the repatriation deadline through the Central Bank and the Cabinet to restore dynamism to this authentic industry."

The grave Saudi-US mistake in attacking PMF positions in Iraq

From page 1 The Saudi security apparatus, in practice, serves Israeli interests, functioning as a frontline defensive shield while using its military power exclusively against neighboring Arab nations, including Yemen.

The timing of the aggression is telling. The joint strikes came hours after the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps launched a ballistic missile attack against a US base and CENTCOM command center in Jordan in direct retaliation for American military actions.

Washington and Riyadh, acting in coordination, sought to project strength. Instead, they revealed their desperation. The US, after months of war, finds itself trapped in a reactive posture, forced to respond to Iranian initiatives rather than dictating the tempo of conflict. Iran, by contrast, has turned the table entirely.

The United States was once the sole arbiter of war and peace in the region. Now, as Trump himself admits, Washington considers itself on the defensive, reacting to Iranian strikes rather than initiating them. The US is no longer dictating the tempo nor deciding when to hit.

The United States has decisively lost the war with Iran, and what remains is a fighting retreat, not speculation, but a sober assessment based on undeniable evidence. Former US counterterrorism chief Joe Kent, a Green Beret and CIA paramilitary officer who served 11 combat tours, resigned in March 2026 in protest against the war, calling on Washington to withdraw its forces and abandon its bases in the Middle East. Military analysts have described the conflict as a devastating defeat, noting that Washington has failed to achieve a single one of its strategic objectives: regime change in Iran, the elimination of Iran's uranium enrichment capabilities, an end to Tehran's support for regional allies, or the termination of Iran's long-range missile program.

The evidence is overwhelming. All US bases in the region are damaged or destroyed. Radar installations are offline, leaving American forces blind. The Pentagon's claims of near-perfect interception rates for Iranian missiles are contradicted by independent experts who place actual interception rates in the single digits. The US military machine, despite its staggering

budget, cannot win a sustained conflict against a determined, geographically-gifted, and technologically capable adversary like Iran. China, Russia, and the world are watching with great interest what Iran is capable of and what the United States is incapable of.

Saudi Arabia's actions must be understood within the broader context of what can only be described as a Yazidi state; a political and military establishment that systematically uses violence against Muslim populations while shielding the Zionist entity from harm. The example is the interception of Iranian missiles and drones targeted at Israel when Tehran responded to the joint US-Israeli war of aggression against itself in late February and June 2025.

This is not merely a strategic choice; it is an ideological alignment that has defined Saudi policy for decades. Riyadh has consistently acted as an enforcer of Western and Israeli interests in the region. Its support for radical extremist groups like ISIS in Iraq and Syria, alongside military strikes targeting locations inside Iraq, reveals a pattern of behavior that prioritizes the destruction of resistance forces over any genuine commitment to Arab unity or Palestinian rights.

The confrontation is now set to expand significantly. Yemeni forces have imposed a naval blockade on Saudi shipping, successfully hitting Saudi tankers and launching ballistic missiles and drones targeting Aramco refineries at the port of Jizan and refining facilities in Yanbu. Drone strikes have partly damaged the East-West Pipeline, responsible for transporting approximately 5 million barrels of oil per day. In response, the Saudis have bombarded radar positions and military bunkers in Hodeidah and Kamaran Island.

According to leaks obtained by regional media, Saudi Arabia is expected to announce an international coalition next week to forcibly reopen the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. Key Red Sea coastal states Egypt, Sudan, Djibouti, and Somalia have already agreed to participate. The Saudis have also invited France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands, all of which already have warships in the region and are awaiting Washington's green light. The total list of potential coalition members could reach around 50 nations.

Yet this coalition, however broad, will not alter the fundamental reality: Iran controls the Strait of Hormuz, and no US naval vessel has successfully transited the strait under fire. The economic catastrophe of the closure has triggered shortages in oil, gas, helium, and fertilizer, leading to problems in the supply chain across the globe.

The strategic thinking in Tehran has shifted decisively toward the conclusion that US dysfunction will continue to manifest in the form of economic pressure and kinetic action for a long time to come. Iranian decision-making is increasingly shaped by an intense pessimism about what diplomacy with the US can achieve. Most senior figures, whether pragmatists or conservatives, simply do not believe a deal is possible. This pessimism has grown worse since the MOU was signed.

The Trump administration was unable to execute even the most basic confidence-building measures; no assets were released, and the oil waiver was never operationalized. At a political level, the Iranians have seen the overblown reaction to the MOU from a full range of politicians in Washington, with Democrats attacking provisions that would be fundamental to any viable agreement. At an individual level, there is a growing sense that Trump is too erratic to stick by his own deals. Even Saudi Arabia, the country with perhaps the greatest influence in the White House after Israel, could not shield its own nuclear deal from Trump's excessive demands.

The war is over, and the United States has lost. The only rational path is peace: a US withdrawal from the Middle East, an end to the disastrous policy of propping up Israel at the expense of Arab nations, and a focus on rebuilding at home rather than bombing abroad. But peace is unlikely to break out any time soon, because truly reckless forces remain in charge of the American empire. The era of global domination is over. The tombstone of American naval supremacy now lies at the bottom of the Strait of Hormuz. Iran has won, not by conquest, but by endurance. And the world is watching.

The final lesson of this conflict is not written only on battlefields, but in the changing calculations of nations. From Iran to Iraq, from Lebanon to Yemen, the idea of resistance has become a force that cannot be erased by airstrikes, sanctions, or military pressure. The region's future will not be shaped by those who rely only on weapons, but by those who can endure, adapt, and sustain political will.

The struggle continues, and the voices of resistance continue to echo across borders. Whether through diplomacy, politics, or the battlefield, a new regional order is being contested, one in which the old rules of dominance are being challenged.

From Tehran to Baghdad, from Beirut to Sana'a, the message remains clear: resistance is alive and the future of the Middle East will be decided not by fear, but by the determination of those who refuse to surrender.

Long live the spirit of resistance.

Ceuta: 60,000 migrants cross the Spanish border

Spain's PM blames traffickers for massive migrant influx

From page 1 France tightened checks on its border with Spain and said it would increase its police presence there fivefold to 334 officers and gendarmes by Saturday.

Italy announced it had suspended its Schengen agreement with Spain allowing for visa-free movement between borders.

Italian officials said the suspension would take effect on Saturday and last for one month.

Several European countries suggested Spain's membership in the Schengen free movement zone should be suspended, though Spain's foreign minister said integrity of the zone was "guaranteed".

Across the Atlantic, US President Donald Trump led far-right efforts to seize on the crossing to advance hardline immigration policies.

Madrid rushed troops, more police, drones, divers and boats to the outpost that it has run for centuries as Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez and his interior minister visited on Friday.

Overnight into Saturday, AFP journalists observed groups of young people wandering the beaches and streets of Ceuta. Dozens of men slept on the sand.

There was a massive police and military presence in the area, and some young people were seen turning back, saying "adios" or "goodbye" to officers before crossing over the border to Morocco.

Inside the city, shops were closed and annual fiestas were cancelled.

"It's catastrophic," said Mohammed, a local taxi driver and Ceuta resident.

"Sure, we sympathise with them -- they're having a terrible time in their own country, and all that -- but this isn't the way to enter a place, nor is it a way to live."

Previous migrant surges have occurred during tensions between Spain and Morocco.

Sanchez visited Algiers on July 20 -- the first such visit by a Spanish head of government in four years -- marking a thaw in relations with Morocco's rival Algeria.

But it was not clear if there was any connection between that visit and this latest influx.

In Ceuta, Sanchez blamed the surge on people-traffickers spreading rumours about a Spanish Supreme Court ruling this month that irregular migrants arriving by sea could not be immediately returned.

"What has emerged from our talks with Moroccan authorities is that trafficking mafias took a self-serving interpretation of a Supreme Court ruling," he said.

Fears of the crowds entering EU member states sparked diplomatic fallout.

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen called the scenes at Ceuta "unacceptable".

"We cannot allow anyone to come to our (European) Union without abiding by our rules," she said on social media.

Finland and Denmark on Friday backed Italy's moves, while German Chancellor Friedrich Merz demanded Morocco "take back illegal migrants immediately".

France and Britain said they stood ready to help Spain with the sudden surge, even as France tightened border checks.

Portuguese Prime Minister Luis Montenegro said he was considering reinforcing border checks but saw no need to suspend Spain from the Schengen zone.

Trump, meanwhile, warned: "It looks like an invasion of a country by hundreds of thousands of people, and that same thing's going to happen to us if the Republicans don't get elected, except worse, much bigger."

Spain's Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares tried to allay fears, saying it was "not possible to travel from Ceuta and Melilla to the Peninsula without identifying oneself at a police checkpoint," referring to Spain's two North African enclaves.

"Enough of this deliberate confusion".

Ceuta, a territory of 18.5 square kilometres (seven square miles), and the nearby enclave of Melilla are Europe's only two land borders with Africa.

Morocco's authorities have not yet issued an official statement on the flow of migrants.

During a similar surge in 2021, more than 10,000 migrants reached Ceuta from neighboring Morocco over the course of two days during a diplomatic spat between the two countries.

The row erupted after Spain decided to host for medical treatment a leader of the Polisario Front, whose guerillas fought a long war with Rabat over the independence of the Western Sahara region.

The crisis ended in 2022 when Madrid reversed its long-standing policy of neutrality and backed Morocco's plan for Western Sahara -- a move that had caused a diplomatic rift between Madrid and Algiers.

Another coalition meets its grave in the Red Sea

Saudi Arabia's new coalition against Yemen is doomed to failure because Riyadh does not learn from past experiences

From page 1 Riyadh is simply reheating old leftovers. The new coalition inherits every structural contradiction that sank its predecessors.

The roster of fourteen signatories includes Egypt, Turkey, Pakistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Djibouti, Jordan, Kuwait, Nigeria, Qatar, Somalia, Sudan, the Saudi-backed regime in Aden, and the kingdom itself.

Yet the empty chairs speak louder than the signatures. For instance, the United Arab Emirates and Oman are glaringly absent.

Abu Dhabi refuses to bleed again in a war that has already cost it immensely, while Muscat guards its diplomatic neutrality.

Even Washington hesitated to formally join. The resulting coalition is a fragile construct built entirely on fear.

Siege for siege and the chokepoint trap

The timing of the Riyadh summit was forced by operational panic. In mid-July 2026, Saudi warplanes launched unprovoked airstrikes against Sanaa International Airport, shattering a fragile local truce.

Ansarullah did not absorb the blow quietly. Brigadier General Yahya Saree stepped before the cameras on July 20 to declare an absolute maritime embargo on all Saudi-linked vessels operating within Yemeni waters.

The economic fallout was instantaneous. At least eight massive Saudi crude tankers have been forced to abort their Red Sea transit, steering away from the Bab el-Mandeb chokepoint and undertaking the agonizing, weeks-long detour around the Cape of Good Hope. Insurance underwriters have panicked. Freight rates have spiked.

Compounding these maritime disruptions, a sharp wave of mid-July precision strikes by Yemeni forces hit key Aramco facilities and vital oil transport nodes inside the kingdom, proving that Saudi land-based energy infrastructure is just as vulnerable as its shipping lanes.

For years, Riyadh has sought to shield its oil exports by constructing the East-West Pipeline, known as Petroline, designed to pump crude across the Arabian Peninsula to the Red Sea terminal at Yanbu, bypassing the Strait of Hormuz entirely.

Yemen has answered by leveraging geography to its advantage. By closing the southern mouth of the Red Sea, Ansarullah has trapped Saudi oil between two guarded gates. The kingdom is squeezed from both sides.

The fragile rope of Washington and Tel Aviv

Desperate for external rescue, Saudi Defense Minister Khalid bin Salman flew to Washington in late July for frantic consultations.

His meetings with Trump and Vance came hard on the heels of joint American-Saudi airstrikes targeting Iraqi resistance forces.

The timing exposed the core geopolitical reality. Riyadh is frantically tying its economic survival to the wider U.S.-Israeli campaign against the Resistance Front.

Yet Washington is in no position to offer an ironclad security guarantee. Trump has been stuck in his disastrous campaign of aggression against Iran, is staring down the barrel of midterm elections, acutely aware that American voters have little appetite for another open-ended Middle Eastern quagmire that threatens global oil prices.

Inside the American government, a quiet civil war rages. Some push for relentless escalation and retaliatory bombings, while others sound the alarm over severely depleted air defense interceptor inventories.

Built on glass

The most precarious element of the Saudi position is anchored in the desert sand. Tying its fate to a fractured U.S.-Israeli strategy, the kingdom is throwing stones from a glass house

The kingdom's vaunted economic transformation under "Vision 2030" rests entirely on a hyper-centralized network of single-point energy and water infrastructure.

Consider the targets that have remained untouched so far only because Yemen and its allies have exercised calculated restraint.

The Abqaiq crude stabilization facility, the massive Ras Tanura offshore loading terminal, the Juaymah gas plant, and the Yanbu processing hubs are completely exposed to the advanced ballistic missiles and long-range drones currently held in the inventory of Yemen and other regional actors.

Furthermore, domestic survival in Riyadh, Jeddah, and Mecca relies on massive coastal desalination plants such as Shoaiba and Jubail.

A handful of precise kinetic strikes on these desalination nodes would plunge the kingdom's major urban centers into an unmanageable water crisis within hours.

Foreign investors pouring capital into NEOM and luxury Red Sea tourism projects will not stick around while ineffective interceptor shrapnel falls from the sky. Every time Riyadh attempts to militarize its coastline, it exposes the profound fragility of its domestic foundation.

The only exit

Yemen cannot be subdued from the deck of an aggressive foreign warship. Twelve years of blockade, bombardment, and political isolation have not broken Ansarullah.

They have developed a highly adaptive military-political movement that holds the strategic highlands, influences critical maritime corridors, and commands growing regional legitimacy.

Riyadh has already walked this road, and the destination is well-known. Tying the kingdom's fortunes to a sinking American-Israeli strategy guarantees economic self-harm.

If Saudi Arabia genuinely wishes to protect its vessels, its cities, and its future, the path forward does not involve weak coalitions or purchased interceptors.

It requires, at a minimum, lifting the unjust blockade and recognizing the sovereign rights of the Yemeni people. Until then, the ships will not pass, and the glass house will remain under direct fire.

Major Hungarian nuclear plant could be powered down this weekend due to record-low water levels

Hungary's Paks nuclear power plant, which generates nearly half of the country's electricity, could be powered down as soon as this weekend due to record-low water levels on the Danube River, Prime Minister Peter Magyar said on Saturday.

Paks' four Russian-made reactors are operating at just a quarter of their combined 2-gigawatt capacity and were expected to be powered down completely for the first time in 44 years next week amid a further projected decline in water levels.

Water from the Danube is used to cool the facility and falls in water levels amid a lack of rain have also created disruptions in shipping and tourism. The cuts could also hit the wider economy, which grew less than forecast in the second quarter.

"The Danube's water level has declined further," Magyar said in a Facebook video, CNN reported. "Therefore, engineers at the Paks plant have implemented another round of output reductions overnight."

"A complete shutdown could take place earlier, as soon as this weekend."

The energy crisis could cost Hungary 100 billion to 200 billion forints ($315 million to $630 million) due to the surging price of imported electricity, Mark Radnai, vice chairman of Magyar's Tisza party said on Facebook.

Magyar, who has warned that Paks could remain idled for weeks, said his cabinet would issue a decree seeking voluntary power demand cuts from large users on top of some 240 MW already committed and apply sanctions if these reductions are not met.

Depending on power production and import levels, the decree will also enable grid operator MAVIR to seek mandatory reductions in power consumption from big users and temporarily cut certain large consumers off the grid, if needed.

"Households will be the last in the chain of restrictions," Magyar said.

While 400 MW of power output lost due to a malfunction at Hungary's largest gas-fired power plant in Szazhalombatta could be restored on Sunday, additional measures were needed to ease the load on the power grid, he said.

SPORTS

Padovani praises Iran's spirit at 2026 World Cup

TEHRAN — Former Esteghlal defender Leandro Padovani has praised Iran's performance at the 2026 FIFA World Cup, saying Team Melli displayed resilience and pride despite facing distractions away from the pitch.

The Brazilian, whose playing career was cut short by a devastating injury in Iran in 2018, said he was impressed by the team's determination after watching their World Cup campaign. Iran drew all three of its Group Stage matches against New Zealand, Belgium and Egypt but failed to advance.

"I was very happy to see the Iranian national team playing in the 2026 World Cup," Padovani said in an exclusive interview with Tehran Times. "There were several events off the pitch that had a significant impact on the players' concentration and focus. But one thing I really liked was the way the players conducted themselves on the pitch. They fought in every match, showed great commitment, and represented their country in a truly sublime way. I was very proud to see that."

Padovani suffered severe skull and neck fractures during an accidental collision with teammate Armin Sohrabian in an Iranian league match between Esteghlal and Foolad in March 2018. He spent two months in hospital before being discharged in a wheelchair to begin an extensive rehabilitation program, bringing his professional playing career to an end.

The 40-year-old remains involved in football, working as a players' representative and agent.

"At the moment, I am working in football, mainly as a football agent and representative," he said. "Regarding my case with Esteghlal, unfortunately, FIFA did not examine the seriousness of my injury and closed the case without properly addressing the issue."

After retiring, Padovani initially hoped to pursue a career in Paralympic swimming before switching to archery.

"I remember my dream of being part of the Brazilian Paralympic swimming team. However, I have since changed sports and am now practicing archery. It has been a new challenge and a very interesting journey for me," he said.

Despite the painful memories of his injury, Padovani said Iran remains an important part of his life and that he hopes to return.

"Iran has a very special chapter in my personal and professional life," he said. "I became a national champion, played for a great and historic club, and unfortunately suffered the worst injury of my football career there. Returning to Iran is part of my plans. It would be a great pleasure to see the fans again and reunite with all the friends I made during my time there."

Tarmei left out of Olympiacos' UEFA list

TEHRAN – Iran international forward Mehdi Taremi has been left out of Olympiacos' list in the Champions League tie against NEC Nijmegen.

Ayoub El Kaabi will enter the Champions League tie as the club's only established center-forward. Taremi and Roman Yaremchuk have both been left out, despite being senior internationals with substantial European experience.

The omissions should not be treated as routine selection decisions.

A club preparing for a two-leg European qualifier would normally protect themselves with at least two natural strikers.

Olympiacos have instead chosen to carry five forwards and wide attackers, but only one conventional No. 9.

That suggests José Luis Mendilibar and the club's recruitment department have aligned around two conclusions: El Kaabi remains unquestionably first choice, and Taremi and Yaremchuk are no longer considered essential enough to shape European registration around them.

El Kaabi has long been the leading striker, but the list turns sporting preference into structural dependence.

Olympiacos therefore retain attacking flexibility but not positional redundancy. Taremi's absence is particularly notable because of his versatility.

ESPN Brasil had reported that Vasco da Gama are examining taremi as part of their search for a penalty-area striker.

Taremi is reportedly being considered alongside Luciano Rodríguez, meaning Vasco have not yet committed to one specific profile or operation.

Tabani qualifies for 2026 Mr. Olympia with victory in China

Iranian bodybuilder Behrouz Tabani secured qualification for the 2026 Mr. Olympia after winning the Men's Open title at the Huanji China Pro event.

Tabani fended off a strong challenge from Britain's James Hollingshead to claim the title in Chengdu, China, with China's Wei Li finishing third.

The victory ensures Tabani will return to bodybuilding's most prestigious competition after making his long-awaited Mr. Olympia debut last year.

After spending several years unable to compete at the event because of visa issues, Tabani finally stepped onto the Mr. Olympia stage in the Men's Open division in 2025. Despite an impressive showing, he narrowly missed out on a place in the top 10, finishing 11th in the preliminary standings.

The Iranian, whose rapid improvement over the past two years has earned widespread praise from fans and bodybuilding experts, needed to win a qualifying event to book his place at the 2026 edition.

Tabani had originally planned to compete in several European events but was forced to alter his schedule after regional military tensions prevented him from traveling. He instead opted to compete in China, where he emerged victorious against a field that included several fellow Iranians.

The result guarantees Tabani another opportunity to compete against the sport's biggest stars, including fellow Iranian Hadi Choopan, at the 2026 Mr. Olympia.

The 33-year-old will now aim for a breakthrough finish among the world's elite at September's showpiece in Las Vegas, with a top-five result firmly in his sights.

Former NPC Iran medical committee head Dehghan dies

TEHRAN - Dr. Mohammad Rahim Dehghan, a veteran sports physician and former head of the Medical Committee of the National Paralympic Committee (NPC) of Iran, passed away on Thursday.

In a statement, the National Paralympic Committee of Iran extended its heartfelt condolences to Dr. Dehghan's family, colleagues, and the many athletes who benefited from his expertise and compassionate care.

The committee wished patience and strength for his loved ones. It also expressed its sympathy to the Iranian sports community, particularly the Paralympic family, the veterans' and disabled sports, blind sports, and Para athletics federations, as well as all Paralympic athletes.

Tehran Times extends its deepest condolences to Dr. Mohammad Rahim Dehghan's family, friends, and the Iranian sports community.

Mahalat: Discover the Netherlands of Iran

Nestled in Iran's Markazi province, Mahalat is a charming city celebrated for its mild climate, natural beauty, and rich historical heritage. Known nationwide as the City of Flowers and Plants and often referred to as the "Netherlands of Iran," Mahalat has become one of the country's most distinctive travel destinations, attracting visitors with its colorful landscapes, ancient monuments, therapeutic hot springs, and thriving horticultural industry.

The nickname "Netherlands of Iran" reflects Mahalat's remarkable status as Iran's leading center for ornamental flowers and plants. The city is home to more than 700 active greenhouse complexes, making it the country's largest producer of decorative flowers and ornamental plants. According to sources, approximately one percent of the world's cultivated area dedicated to ornamental flowers and plants is located in Mahalat, an extraordinary achievement that has made the city a symbol of Iran's floriculture industry. Rows of vibrant greenhouses and flower gardens create breathtaking scenery throughout the year, offering visitors a unique experience unlike anywhere else in the country.

Mahalat is also one of Iran's principal centers for ornamental fish breeding. Hundreds of colorful aquarium fish are raised in specialized facilities and exported to international markets, making the industry an important contributor to the local economy. Together, the flourishing flower and ornamental fish industries give the city a distinctive character that blends agriculture, commerce, and tourism.

Beyond its natural beauty, Mahalat boasts a wealth of historical attractions dating back thousands of years. Among the most significant is the ancient site of Khorheh, located about 48 kilometers from the city. The impressive stone columns, remnants of ancient walls, and archaeological ruins stand as silent witnesses to the region's long and fascinating history.

History enthusiasts can also visit the Atashkuh fire temple, one of the most important Sassanid-era monuments in central Iran. Other historical landmarks include Jamshidi castle, the ancient Nimvar dam, Miluneh tower, and the historic Baqerabad bridge, each reflecting a different chapter of the area's cultural heritage.

Nature lovers will find plenty to explore as well. A village dedicated to decorative flowers and plants offers a colorful showcase of Mahalat's renowned floriculture, while Sarcheshmeh park, situated at the city's highest point, is famous for its abundant spring water, lush greenery, and recreational facilities. The park is an ideal place for relaxation, picnics, and enjoying the pleasant mountain climate.

One of Mahalat's most iconic natural landmarks is the centuries-old giant plane tree standing proudly in Chenar Square, a beloved symbol of the city. Equally famous are the Mahalat hot springs, whose mineral-rich waters have attracted visitors seeking relaxation and therapeutic treatments for generations. A nearby village welcomes tourists throughout the year and remains one of the city's most popular attractions.

No visit to Mahalat is complete without discovering its local handicrafts and souvenirs. Visitors can also purchase a variety of local specialties, including medicinal herbs, plant extracts, fresh flowers and ornamental plants, traditional bread, and locally produced honey.

With its unique combination of flourishing flower gardens, therapeutic hot springs, ancient historical monuments, picturesque landscapes, and warm hospitality, Mahalat offers an unforgettable journey into one of Iran's most beautiful and distinctive destinations. Whether strolling through colorful greenhouses, exploring centuries-old ruins, or relaxing in mineral-rich hot springs, visitors quickly discover why Mahalat has earned its well-deserved reputation as the Netherlands of Iran.

Iran, Italy to cooperate on restoring ancient gateway near Persepolis for site museum

TEHRAN - Cultural heritage authorities are moving ahead with plans to convert the ancient Tall-e Ajori archaeological site near Persepolis into a site museum, following the completion of archaeological excavations and the launch of a restoration project in cooperation with Italian experts.

Tall-e Ajori, located about three kilometers from the UNESCO-listed Persepolis in Iran's southern Fars province, is widely regarded by archaeologists as the ceremonial gateway to the ancient city of Parseh (Persepolis), predating the construction of the famed palace complex.

Alireza Askari Chaverdi, an archaeologist at Shiraz University and former head of the Persepolis World Heritage Site, said archaeological excavations at Tall-e Ajori had been completed and restoration plans had been sent to Italian specialists for final review.

Once the restoration designs are finalized, work will begin on protective structural coverings and visitor infrastructure, including tourism pathways, he said.

The project will be implemented in three phases, covering structural calculations, design and construction. Iranian technical experts, including the Fars provincial engineering organization, will also participate in the project to accelerate the site's conversion into a museum open to visitors.

The Fars provincial office of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts also announced plans to collaborate with the provincial engineering organization on the site's development.

Farzad Zare', head of public relations at the provincial office, said the cooperation would draw on local engineering expertise in structural design, tourism planning and lighting for the archaeological site.

He said the project aims to strengthen sustainable tourism infrastructure while improving the protection and presentation of one of Iran's most significant archaeological discoveries.

Tall-e Ajori, also known as the Cyrus Gate or the Gate of Parseh, has yielded the remains of a monumental gateway measuring roughly 30 by 40 meters and originally standing about 12 meters high.

Archaeologists say the structure was commissioned by Cyrus the Great and completed during the reign of his son Cambyses. Built before the construction of Persepolis itself, the gateway is believed to have served as the principal entrance to the Achaemenid royal city.

The structure, which measures at least 33 by 33 meters according to archaeological findings, was constructed with thousands of glazed bricks and displays artistic and architectural influences from ancient Babylon, highlighting cultural exchanges between the Achaemenid Empire and Mesopotamia.

Persepolis, founded by Darius the Great around 518 BC as the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire, is one of the world's most important archaeological sites. The monumental complex, located about 60 km northeast of Shiraz, was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1979. It was destroyed by fire following Alexander the Great's conquest of the Persian Empire in 330 BC.

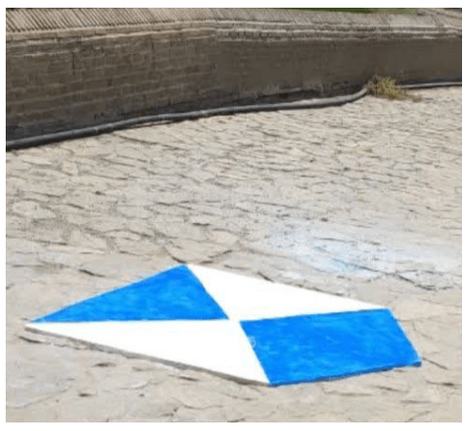
Blue Shield markers being installed on ancient bridges in Lorestan

TEHRAN - Blue Shield emblems are being installed on historic bridges in the western province of Lorestan as part of efforts to protect cultural heritage sites during armed conflict, the provincial cultural heritage chief said.

Ata Hassanpour, director general of Lorestan's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department, said the initiative is being carried out in line with the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

The internationally recognized Blue Shield emblem serves as an emergency protection marker for cultural heritage sites during wartime and is being installed at nationally and internationally significant monuments across Iran, Hassanpour said in remarks published by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

He said the measure aims to safeguard the country's historical and cultural heritage against potential threats during times of crisis.



Under the 1954 Hague Convention, attacks on cultural and historical monuments during armed conflict may constitute war crimes, and individuals or parties targeting such sites can incur international responsibility, Hassanpour said.

He said Lorestan had joined other provinces in implementing the convention's guidelines and that a significant number of the province's historical monuments had already been equipped with Blue Shield markers.

Hassanpour said the Lorestan Historic Bridges Base, the country's only specialized conservation center dedicated to historic bridges, had adopted an innovative approach by producing the Blue Shield markers using traditional materials, including semi-refined gypsum.

The use of traditional materials improves the durability of the markers while ensuring they are visually compatible with the architectural character and historical identity of the monuments, he said, adding that the method could serve as a model for other cultural heritage conservation centers across the country.

Beyond their protective role, the Blue Shield markers can also help raise public awareness about the importance of safeguarding cultural heritage and encourage greater public participation in preserving historic monuments, Hassanpour said.

Over 1,000 participants attend AiroCup national robotics competition

TEHRAN – A total of 465 Iranian teams, comprising 1,035 participants from 30 provinces, attended the national artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics competition, known as AiroCup, on Thursday and Friday in Tehran.

The participants, from school students to post-graduate candidates, competed in specialized AI and robotics leagues, ISNA reported.

Organized by Iran University of Science and Technology in cooperation with 19 scientific committee members, the event served as a platform to identify and showcase top Iranian talents in AI, programming, and robotics; they would later have the chance to attend the COMSTECH 2026 International Artificial Intelligence Olympiad.

This year's AiroCup competitions were planned across 14 specialized leagues including 'Aero-Challenge', 'AI-powered content generation', 'digital content creation for the job market', 'AI Agent development', 'robotics and AI inventions', 'smart warriors', 'programming and AI in Scratch, Python, Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), and AI platforms', 'robotics demonstration', 'environmental rescue robot', flying robot', 'autonomous vehicle', 'smart farmer' (Agri-Tech AI), 'AI in medical science and health' (Medi-AI), and 'smart water consumption management' (Aqua AI), out of which 10 leagues were ultimately held.

Recent achievements

At the Rayan 2025 international artificial intelligence and programming competition, known as the World Finals, Iranian students showcased strong performance in both the AI and programming sections. In the programming section, Ali Safari was placed first. China secured second and third place, followed by India, Vietnam, Armenia, Serbia, and Pakistan, respectively, ISNA reported.

In the AI section, Iranian teams, namely no Trust issues here, Pileh, AI Guardians of Trust, AI-

UoK, red-serotenin, Persistence, and GGWP were placed first to seventh.

The final round of the Rayan international artificial intelligence and programming contest was held on Friday at Sharif University of Technology in Tehran, with participants from 25 countries.

Supported by the Vice Presidency for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy, the event kicked off on November 25, attracting hundreds of contestants from the U.S., Russia, China, India, Italy, Chile, Australia, Armenia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Taiwan, Romania, Singapore, Poland, Slovakia, Vietnam, Serbia, Argentina, Colombia, Kazakhstan, and Ethiopia, as well as the host, Iran.

The solo programming section was held with 60 Iranian and foreign participants who worked individually to solve nine complicated algorithmic problems within a duration of three to four hours.

The scientific competition aimed to promote knowledge, foster international networking, and establish scientific authority in AI and programming.

Enhancing algorithmic thinking, problem-solving skills, teamwork, developing innovative ideas, starting new businesses, and expanding AI engineering and programming were among the other objectives of the contest.

The Iranian robotics team, called Mositto, managed to win a gold medal at the 8th edition of RoboCup Asia-Pacific (RCAP) 2025.

The competition was held in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates, from November 10 to 15. Hosted by Khalifa University of Science and Technology, it brought together over 160 teams and more than 700 participants with nearly 2,000 researchers, industry professionals, students, and visitors from around the globe to witness the competition in AI-driven autonomous robotics challenges, with eight leagues and 15 sub-leagues, including soccer and rescue.

The event highlighted themes like smart mobility, AI for sustainability, and technologies addressing regional challenges.

The team, comprising eight students, secured first place at RoboCupJunior Rescue, Rescue Line, and Secondary League, showcasing Iranian students' talents and creativity to the world.

A three-member team of Iranian students won two silver medals at the ninth edition of the First Global Challenge (FGC), an Olympics-style international robotics competition held in Panama from October 29 to November 1.

The First Global Challenge takes place in a different country each year. FIRST Global invites each nation to send a team to build and program a robot for competition.

Iranian students secured first and second places in the inventions and innovative technologies area in the TEKNOFEST competition, showcasing new Iranian youths' capabilities in robotics, artificial intelligence, and technological innovations.

Hosted by Istanbul, Turkey, from September 17 to 21, the competition aimed for individuals to improve themselves in the field of robotics – electronics – coding, and to design robots suitable for specified tasks.

The Iranian team, composed of Kian Karbalei, Mehrtash Razgordani, Artin Islampanah, Seyyed Amir-Homan Tabatabei-nejad, Samyar Reza-Soltani, Ardin Khanalizadeh, Mohammad Reivandi, and Mehdi Reivandi, Mehr news agency reported.

Competitors with 980 projects from 56 countries, including Germany, South Korea, Uzbekistan, Russia, the Netherlands, India, Iran, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Paraguay, participated in the event.

The robotics and earth science teams of Iran won different awards at the Federation of International RoboSports Association (FIRA) and the International Earth Science Olympiad (IESO) competitions, which were held in South Korea and China, respectively.

FIRA RoboWorld Cup and Summit 2025 was held from August 11 to 15. The Iranian delegations won five championships in the Air League and Sport League (students under the age of 19), as well as Challenge and Youth League. They secured four runner-up positions and two third places in autonomous vehicles, youth creative task, and the Sport League.

Iranian students secured three gold medals and a special award in the International Science and Invention Fair (ISIF) 2025, ranking them among the top innovators worldwide.

Iran becomes a founding member of WAICO

TEHRAN – Iran has joined the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization (WAICO), a China-led intergovernmental organization to promote international cooperation on AI, as one of the founding states after signing the new body's agreement in Shanghai, China.

Iran's ambassador to China, Abdolreza Rahmani-Fazli, signed the agreement on behalf of the country on Friday, IRNA reported.

Holding a meeting with Liu Bin, Assistant Minister of China's Foreign Affairs, the official highlighted the importance of multilateral cooperation in shaping the future of advanced technologies.

He also voiced Iran's readiness to actively participate in scientific, research, and practical development of AI, as well as the development of international mechanisms for equitable use of and access to AI.

Joining this international initiative, Iran, as a founding member, is implementing a constructive approach towards evolving technologies and benefiting from AI potentials for sustainable development and societal progress, Rahmani-Fazli highlighted.

The new organization, first proposed by China at the 2025 World Artificial Intelligence Conference, is planned to be headquartered in Shanghai and is meant to operate as an independent intergovernmental entity.

On July 16, a day before the annual World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai, officials from 29 countries, including Iran, Russia, Pakistan, Indonesia, Brazil, Kazakhstan, and other countries from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, signed the agreement to establish WAICO. The event was attended by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres.

The WAICO agreement stresses open participation without conditions tied to political systems or values. It places strong, or rather pointed, emphasis on narrowing the technology-access gap between richer and poorer nations. It seeks to support developing countries in building AI capacity, shaping governance rules and technical standards.

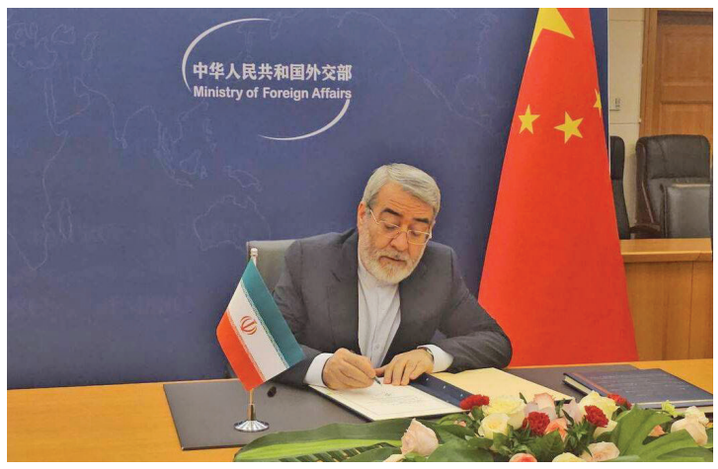
It also aims to promote international cooperation on AI so that it remains beneficial, safe, and fair for all, in line with the principles of the U.N. Charter and with a people-centered approach.

Iran's proposals at Global Dialogue on AI Governance

In July, the head of the Secretariat of the Headquarters for AI Technology Development and Applications delivered a lecture at the Global Dialogue on AI Governance and put forward five proposals, and announced the country's readiness for the expansion of international cooperation.

The UN Global Dialogue on AI Governance was convened by the UN General Assembly in Geneva on July 6 and 7.

Iran is ready to have a constructive participation in shaping the future of AI governance.



The country has high potential, including young scientists, researchers, and engineers in data science, to play an effective role in regional and international collaborations in the AI sector, Mehr news agency quoted Emadeddin Fatemizadeh as saying.

The dynamic ecosystem of knowledge-based companies and innovative startups highlights our determination to achieve technological progress, he added.

To help realize the objectives of this meeting, Iran proposed the following five recommendations.

The first suggestion called for the establishment of a regional AI academy to train specialized personnel and develop joint educational and research programs in universities and research institutes of the regional countries.

The second proposal focused on the development of a joint regional fund for AI innovation and development, aimed at supporting early-stage startups, facilitating the emergence of "unicorn" companies, and funding national projects.

Establishing a digital free zone to foster the development of AI-based businesses across the region was the third proposal.

The fourth recommendation highlighted the need for the development of legal frameworks and regional regulations to deter the use of AI in destructive military applications against civilians.

The development of common infrastructure and data centers dedicated to non-military applications was the last proposal offered by the country.

The official went on to say that the future gap will not be an income or industry gap but a gap in data, processing capabilities, and access to AI infrastructure. So, actions need to be taken today to narrow these disparities and place shared data centers and computing capacities at the service of science, health, education, the environment, crisis management, and public welfare, he concluded.

Seven rural health facilities in Chabahar equipped with solar power systems

TEHRAN – Funded by the Government of the Republic of Korea, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, has supported the installation and commissioning of seven hybrid solar power systems in rural primary health care facilities across Chabahar, southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province.

The systems, each with a capacity of 5 kW, have been installed in health houses serving more than 6,000 people in the villages of Tal Mishan, Dak Talang, Nadkan, Voshnam, Gazmanzel, Rado Bala and Faqirzehi. The facilities are located across Chabahar, Konarak, Qasr-e Qand, Dashtiari and Zarabad districts, including some of the most remote and underserved communities in south-eastern Iran, UNICEF website announced in a press release on July 27.

They now benefit from reliable, clean energy. Reliable electricity is essential for the safe delivery of health services. Power interruptions can disrupt vaccine cold storage, medicine preservation, patient registration, and routine health care operations. Equipped with backup capacity, the new hybrid solar systems help health workers maintain essential services during outages and protect temperature-sensitive vaccines and medicines.

Clean energy for self-sustained health systems

The initiative also contributes to environmental sustainability by reducing reliance on fossil-fuel-based electricity. Collectively, the seven systems are expected to generate approximately 70,000 kWh of clean electricity each year and reduce annual greenhouse gas emissions by nearly 49 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. This environmental benefit is comparable to planting almost 2,000 trees.

Beyond improving energy security, the project is developing an innovative sustainability model that could help health facilities generate income from surplus electricity. Under the proposed mechanism, excess power produced by the solar systems could be exported to the national grid through dedicated metering systems and purchased under guaranteed power-purchase arrangements.

Revenue from the sale of surplus electricity would be directed back to the health facilities to support priority operational and maintenance needs. Current projections indicate that each health house could generate approximately 600 million rials (around 312.5 thousand dollars) in additional income during the first year of operation, with potential increases over time.

A sustainability model for future expansion

Once finalized, the model could be scaled across Iran's health system and adapted for other public services, including schools. By combining reliable clean energy with a po-

tential self-financing mechanism, the model offers a practical approach to strengthening essential services in underserved communities.

UNICEF, Health Ministry equip six health centers in Chabahar

UNICEF, in cooperation with the Health Ministry, has equipped six primary health care service delivery points in Chabahar to improve health service access and quality for 9,906 local residents, particularly children and mothers.

Funded by the Government of the Republic of Korea, the program focuses on providing essential equipment to selected health centers, houses, and posts that were previously unable to offer full services to children and families in remote areas, UNICEF website announced in a press release on July 1.

The initiative addresses the immediate needs of the whole population with a focus on boys, girls, and pregnant women in underserved communities. By equipping these service delivery points, the project ensures that the target groups can receive Routine immunizations: Protecting them from childhood diseases; Growth monitoring: Tracking nutrition and physical development; Maternal health services: Supporting safe pregnancies and healthy outcomes for newborns; and a full package of primary health care services.

With the full package of the new equipment, health workers can now provide full PHC services, including conducting early screenings for developmental delays. Identifying these needs early allows families to receive timely counseling and referrals to specialized care, ensuring no child is left behind.

In the scattered rural settlements of Chabahar, families often had to travel long distances beyond national standards to reach a functioning PHC clinic. This journey often led to delays in treatment or may cause them to skip the necessary services.

By reactivating five health houses/ posts and one rural comprehensive health center, UNICEF and its partners are bringing quality healthcare closer to home. This intervention reduces the burden on overcrowded facilities and ensures that families in hard-to-reach areas can access the care they need, when they need it.

Iran shakes with 415 earthquakes in a month

TEHRAN – A total of 415 earthquakes have been recorded across the country in a month from June 22 to July 22, according to the seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran.

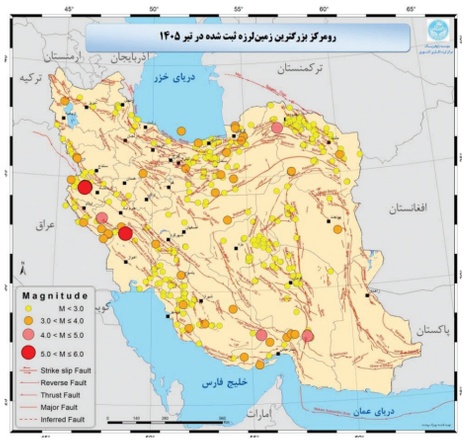
Statistically, 362 earthquakes with magnitudes smaller than 3, 45 earthquakes with a magnitude between 3 and 4, five earthquakes with a magnitude between 4 and 5, and three earthquakes with a magnitude between 5 and 6 have occurred in the country, irsc reported.

Of the total quakes, one had a magnitude of 5.7 on the Richter scale, which occurred on July 20 in Kermanshah province.

Among the provinces of the country, Kermanshah experienced the highest number of earthquakes with 51, followed by Semnan with 43, and Khorasan Razavi with 39 earthquakes.

During the same period, six earthquakes were recorded in Tehran; the biggest had a magnitude of 3.2 on the Richter scale.

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



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

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

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

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AUGUST 2, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Kindness is a mark of faith and whoever is not kind has no faith.
Prophet Muhammad (S)

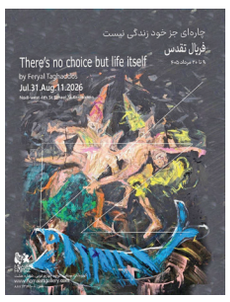
Prayer Times » Noon:12:11 Evening: 19:28 Dawn: 3:37 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:14 (tomorrow)

What's in Tehran art galleries

Painting

* Ech Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Masih Ghasemian.

The exhibit named "The Silent Frame" runs until August 14 at the gallery that can be found at 10 Mirza Taraj opposite Dowlat St., Shariati Ave.



* A collection of paintings by Feyal Taghaddos is on view in an exhibition at Homa Gallery.

The exhibition named "There's No Choice but Life Itself" will be running until August 11 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fourth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.

* Javid Gallery is hosting an exhibition of paintings by a group of artists.

The exhibition titled "Secrets of the Grove" runs until August 10 at the gallery that can be found at 17 Zartosht St., Vali-e Asr Ave.

* Paintings by a number of Iranian artists are currently on display in an exhibit at Jaleh Gallery.

Entitled "Echoes of Dread", the exhibition runs until August 7 at the gallery located at No. 3, Noshahr Alley, Iranshahr St., Karim Khan Ave.

* Amir Jadidi is hanging his latest collection of paintings in an exhibition at Inja Gallery.

The exhibit named "Revisiting" will run until August 20 at the gallery located at 4 Pedram Alley, Neauphle-le-Chateau St.

* Etemad Gallery 1 is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by a group of artists.

The exhibitions will be running until August 30 at the gallery located at 25 Shirudi Alley, Mofatteh St., near Haft-e Tir Square.

Sculpture

* Iranshahr Gallery is showcasing sculptures by Ali Seyyed Alikhani in an exhibition.

The exhibit named "Alus" will run until August 18 at the gallery that can be found at 69 Sepand St., off Karim Khan Ave.

* A collection of sculptures by Kamran Sharif is currently on view in an exhibition at 009821 Projects Gallery.

The exhibition will run until August 7 at the gallery located at No. 25, 18th Alley, Kheradmand St., Karim Khan Ave.

* Shamis Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of sculptures by Alireza Hosseini.

The exhibit named "The Arena" will run until August 14 at the gallery located at 8 Daniali St., Andarzgu Blvd. in the Farmanieh neighborhood.

Multimedia

* An exhibition of sculptures and photos by Hedieh Lotfi is underway at O Gallery.

The exhibit named "The Stranger/ Not-Being-At-Home" will be running until August 11 at the gallery, which can be found at 8 Shahin St., Sanai St.

13th Hiroshima-Iran Love & Peace Film Festival launched in Japan

TEHRAN – The 13th edition of the Hiroshima-Iran Love & Peace Film Festival was launched in Hiroshima, Japan, on Saturday.

A total of 10 films, five Iranian and five Japanese ones, are planned to be screened during the event, which will run through August 7.

The Iranian films selected for the festival include "The Lizard" (2004) by Kamal Tabrizi, "A Cube of Sugar" by Reza Mirkarimi, "The Painting Pool" (2013) directed by Maziar Miri, "Bodyguard" (2016) by Ebrahim Hatamikia, and "Ameneh's Golden Blood" (2025) by Habib Ahmadzadeh.

A comedy drama, "The Lizard" stars Parviz Parastui as Reza "the lizard" Mesghali, recently jailed petty thief, who disguises as a clergyman and succeeds in escaping; but has to stay in the new role longer than he expected to.

The story of "A Cube of Sugar" happens in an old house in an old city of Iran. Because of the wedding of the youngest sister, Pasandide, (played by Negar Javaherian) all of her sisters come to their old house to help their mother.

It had its world premiere at the Busan International Film Festival in 2011. And was selected as the Iranian entry for the Best Foreign Language Oscar at the 85th Academy Awards

"The Painting Pool" depicts Maryam (Negar Javaherian) and Reza (Shahab Hosseini) as a couple who are different from other people, it's not just a simple difference, but a very big difference. They must try to prove to others they have solved the big difference with the miracle of love.

They have severe learning disabilities. When their son's school work starts to surpass their own abilities, he grows frustrated with them, and after a heated argument, runs away from home. Maryam and Reza are left to struggle with work, money and heartbreak in this affecting exploration of love and family that balances its more tragic moments with warmth and humor.

Charming, devastating and unique, "The Painting Pool" manages to treat a subject often neglected by mainstream cinema with honesty and compassion, and won multiple awards at the Fajr Film Festival.

"Bodyguard" shows a government bodyguard (performed by Parviz Parastui) who protects a politician from a suicide bomber, and then begins to question his dedication to his job.

In "Ameneh's Golden Blood," a young woman named Ameneh is in dire need of blood, but her blood type is so rare that there is not a single girl in the entire country who will donate blood to her.

For 13 years, the festival has been held every summer to give courage and hope which are necessary to live for not only Hiroshima A-bomb and Iranian Chemical Weapon survivors in the past tragedy, and also all the people.

International eulogy album "Ya Latharat al-Imam" to be released

TEHRAN- Production of the international eulogy album "Ya Latharat al-Imam" (O Avengers of Imam's Blood), featuring a gathering of prominent eulogists from Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, and Bahrain, has reached its final stages and is set for release in the near future.

The album is being positioned as one of the most significant joint ventures in media diplomacy and ritual sharing among artists from Iran and the Arab world, Mehr reported on Saturday.

The central themes of the work revolve around the Arbaeen pilgrimage, the culture of Ashura, and the unity of the Islamic Ummah, the report added.

The album also focuses on the call for justice for the martyred leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

The ensemble features a prestigious lineup of performers, including Mohammad Hossein Pouyanfar, Seyyed Reza Narimani, Sajjad Mohammadi, Amin Qadim, and Amir Talajouran from Iran; Hussein Khaireddine from Lebanon; Haidar al-Furaiji, Jabbar al-Harishawi, and Ahmed al-Saadi from Iraq; and Mohammad Ghuloom from Bahrain.

The poetic compositions and musical arrangements were collaboratively crafted by a group of poets, composers, and artists from the four participating nations. The project aims to leverage the diverse artistic capacities of these countries to produce a transnational, audience-centric work.

The "Ya Latharat al-Imam" album, produced by the Sahab International Headquarters in collaboration with the Aqiq Cultural Institute and the Samavat International Institute, will be released via reputable international media outlets in the coming days following the completion of the final production phase.

Ashura and Arbaeen stand as the two most pivotal commemorations in the Islamic calendar, centering on the tragedy of Karbala and the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS). Ashura marks the day of the Imam's ultimate sacrifice in a stand against tyranny, symbolizing the eternal struggle between justice and oppression. Forty days later, Arbaeen commemorates the return of the captives to their homeland and has evolved into the world's largest annual peaceful gathering. Millions of pilgrims walk from cities like Najaf to Karbala, transforming a historical mourning ritual into a global demonstration of unity, devotion, and the enduring relevance of Imam Hussein's message of liberation.

In a contemporary extension of this legacy of resistance, the martyrdom of the leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, has added a new chapter to the narrative of sacrifice. His life and leadership were dedicated to the principles of the oppressed against the oppressor, echoing the same spirit of defiance against global hegemony that characterized the stand at Karbala.

Gaza Intl. Women's Film Festival unveils "Women Creating Life from Death" slogan

The second edition of the Gaza International Women's Film Festival has officially launched its promotional tour in Rome, along with the unveiling of its official poster.

Revealed on Monday through the festival's official social media page, the artwork depicts a woman blindfolded with strips of film, accompanied by traditional Palestinian symbols and doves of peace, Ahramonline reported.

According to the festival's official page, the event will take place from October 26 to 31 in the Central Gaza Governorate.

Coinciding with Palestinian Women's Day, the second edition will be held under the slogan Women Creating Life from Death.

Festival founder and president Ezzedeen Shallah described it as "a vibrant tribute to women's resilience."

Bringing together filmmakers and film professionals from Palestine and around the world, the festival stresses that cinema remains "an essential tool for preserving memory, identity and justice."

Launched in mid-July from the Italian capital, the festival's extensive cultural campaign aims to strengthen the international presence of Palestinian cinema while attracting filmmakers from across the globe.

In collaboration with Italian filmmaker Milena Fiore, the festival is making several stops across Europe.

The tour opened on July 16 at Villetta Social LAB in Rome with a screening of Leila Abbas' Chokran Laanak Tahlma Maana (Thank You for Dreaming with Us) as part of the L'Aperossa programme.

It continued on July 18 with appearances at Italy's Cinema del Reale Festival in Lecce and the SiciliAmbiente Film Festival in San Vito Lo Capo.

On July 25, the tour stopped in Viterbo for the event "Images from the Global South," featuring a screening of Annemarie Jacir's Falastin 36.

The promotional tour will continue on August 4 in Rome with "From Gaza with Love," organized as part of the International Short Film Festival, before concluding on 11 September in Venice with the special event "Time Speaks of Gaza," featuring Italian political scientist and intellectual Luciana Castellina.

Beyond film screenings, the festival aims to empower Palestinian women in Gaza through a six-month filmmaking training program, organized in cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Culture.

Led by Palestinian, Arab and international instructors from countries including Italy, the United Kingdom, France, Cuba and Sweden, the free program offers practical training in screenwriting, directing, cinematography, editing and production.

At the end of the program, the participants' short films will be screened during the festival's second edition and submitted to international festivals, turning cinema into a powerful means of cultural expression and resistance.

Serving as a cultural and cinematic platform dedicated to women's empowerment and cultural exchange, the festival will also showcase feature films, short fiction films and documentaries exploring women's issues from around the world.