

From US to Lebanon: The illusion of strategic decision-making

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — The official narrative survived for a month. It portrayed an American president boarding Air Force One on July 8 following a NATO summit in Ankara, waving to the cameras, and flying west. The reality was far more humiliating.

Donald Trump boarded the Boeing 747 purely for the cameras. Minutes later, he cowardly slipped out a door on the opposite side of the aircraft and stepped into a raised airport catering container. The truck lowered him to the tarmac and drove him to a waiting military C-32A.

The 747 departed Ankara as a decoy. It carried Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent. ► Page 5

Araghchi accuses EU of ‘double standards’ on human rights

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has accused the European Union and several of its member states of applying double standards to human rights and international law, arguing that their support for Israel amid the war in Gaza and their backing of military action against Iran have undermined their credibility to criticize Tehran.

Araghchi made the remarks in separate telephone conversations with his Greek and Austrian counterparts, Georgios Gerapetritis and Beate Meinel-Reisinger, as Iran faces renewed criticism from European governments over its human rights record and the use of the death penalty. ► Page 2

BRICS must move from dialogue to practical action: CBI governor

TEHRAN- The Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) on the first day of the BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting in India, while thanking the host country's government and central bank for hosting the summit, emphasized the need to strengthen practical cooperation among BRICS members in monetary and financial areas.

According to IRNA from the Central Bank, Abdolnasser Hemmati in his speech at the opening session, stating that closer cooperation among BRICS member countries can play an important role in strengthening stability, trust, and sustainable development, asserted: BRICS will have the greatest impact when it can translate policy dialogues into practical initiatives and executive mechanisms.

Referring to the difficult and complex regional and international conditions as well as the military aggression against ► Page 4



Ships anchored in the Strait of Hormuz off the coast of Bandar Abbas in Iran. Shipping through the strait has been greatly curtailed because of the war.

US Claims, Iran Controls Hormuz

While Trump claims almost weekly that American forces have full control of the Strait of Hormuz, Iran says it “calls the shots”

Western analysts warn that even a political deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz would not suffice; sustained de-escalation is essential to lower security risks and insurance costs for shipping.

By Hossein Amiri

TEHRAN – A widening dispute between Tehran and Washington over control of the Strait of Hormuz has turned the strategic waterway into a battleground not only at sea, but also in the war of narratives surrounding the conflict.

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly claimed in recent days that American forces have achieved “total control” of the Strait of Hormuz and that the waterway is open to commercial shipping. Iranian officials, however, have categorically rejected the claim, insisting that maritime movements remain subject to the supervision and authorization of Iranian forces.

The latest Iranian response came from

Brigadier General Abolfazl Zolfaghari, spokesman for Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Headquarters, who described US claims of normal maritime traffic through the strait as “falsehoods and lies.”

“No commercial ship or oil tanker has had and will have the possibility of safe transit through this strait without the permission and supervision of Iran's powerful Armed Forces,” Zolfaghari said in a statement on Thursday.

He maintained that the Strait of Hormuz remained under the “full management and control” of Iran, adding that Iranian forces were closely monitoring movements by US and Israeli forces across the region.

The commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) Navy, Rear Admiral Ali Ozmaei, offered an even more explicit assessment, saying: “The Strait of Hormuz is closed. Our control over movements is complete and decisive.”

“No movement in this strait escapes the eyes of the IRGC Navy,” Ozmaei said, arguing that the situation should be judged by developments “on the ground” rather than statements issued by US officials. ► Page 3

US military loses 25% of its MQ-9 drones as stocks dwindle in Iran war

TEHRAN — The US military has suffered a 25% reduction in its MQ-9 Reaper drone fleet during the conflict with Iran, losing at least 45 aircraft valued at over \$1.3 billion combined.

The Reaper can cost between \$30 million and \$50 million depending on the type of sensors and weapons it carries, according to the Air Force.

Heavy operations over the vital Strait of Hormuz—coupled with enemy strikes and persistent communications failures—have severely depleted these high-value surveillance and strike platforms alongside critical missile stockpiles, leaving US inventory stretched thin and forcing major strategic adjustments across the region. ► Page 3

Schumer urges Hegseth ouster over deteriorating USS Lincoln conditions amid Iran war

TEHRAN — Floating in the sweltering expanse of the North Arabian Sea, the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln has spent more than 250 days deployed and over 200 consecutive days at sea without a port call. Beyond the sheer longevity of its deployment, alarming reports from sailors and family members describe rationed food, broken plumbing, moldy quarters, contaminated water, and severe mental health crises culminating in incidents of crew members attempting to go overboard. ► Page 2

Mohsen Sharifian echoes Iranians’ message of peace, friendship in Hiroshima

TEHRAN – Mohsen Sharifian, the musician and researcher of regional Iranian music, echoed the message of peace and friendship of Iranians with a musical performance in Hiroshima, coinciding with the anniversary of the atomic bombing.

Sharifian, who has carried out numerous international activities in recent years in promoting the music of southern Iran, traveled to Japan for the third consecutive time on the anniversary of the Hiroshima atomic bombing. Through his musical performance at Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park — and beside the only building that survived the atomic bombing — he sought to carry the message of peace and friendship from the people of Iran to the world, Mehr reported. ► Page 8



Nationwide ceremonies held to mark 28th of Safar

TEHRAN – On Wednesday, people held ceremonies across the country on the occasion of the 28th of Safar – the second month in the lunar calendar – to mark the passing anniversary of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and the martyrdom anniversary of his grandson Imam Hassan Mojtaba (AS).

The ceremonies were held in cities and towns, with large numbers of people attending mosques, religious centers, shrines and other holy sites to pay tribute to the Prophet and the second Imam of the Shiite Muslims.



Iranian weightlifters claim six medals at 2026 Asian C'ship

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TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Meaningful message to Washington

Javan analyzed the purpose behind the Mecca Agreement signed by Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Turkey. The Mecca Agreement is undoubtedly one of the most significant security developments in the Middle East in recent years. By signing this pact, Saudi Arabia has taken a major step toward building a regional coalition—one whose objectives go beyond a simple defensive arrangement and include reducing dependence on the United States, pooling the three countries' strategic capabilities, redefining Riyadh's regional role, and sending a message to Washington. Although Saudi Arabia seeks to diversify its security layers rather than rely solely on the American umbrella, the continued attacks by Yemeni armed forces and the lack of practical response from Turkey and Pakistan reveal serious limitations in this pact. Thus, despite its deterrent messaging toward Yemen, the Mecca Agreement currently lacks the capacity to become an effective military deterrent and is better understood as a diplomatic tool for crisis management.

Kayhan: Hollow superpowers

Kayhan wrote about America's helplessness toward Iran and the leaked CENTCOM email. According to the paper, the leaked, desperate email from CENTCOM—seeking a way to escape war—exposed the Pentagon's deep distress in confronting Iran, a strategic dead-end that has shattered the prestige of America's billion-dollar military. “We are looking for new, creative, unconventional ways to pressure and punish Iran.” The disclosure of this controversial email, sent by a CENTCOM intelligence officer to subordinate units, is portrayed as a stark symbol of strategic confusion within the US armed forces. Analysts interpret it as proof of Washington's desperation and the Pentagon's empty strategic toolbox in the face of the Islamic Republic's power. Washington's initial assumption of quickly containing Iran has now turned into a heavy nightmare. Trump—who once claimed Iran would surrender unconditionally—now devotes all his energy to reopening the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran: A new security architecture

In an interview with the Iran newspaper, Tayebbeh Vaezi, a professor at the University of Tehran, examined the trilateral meeting among Riyadh, Ankara, and Islamabad. She argues that amid the tensions and crises imposed on West Asia's security structure by the United States and Israel in recent years, these three countries are forming a set of trilateral collaborations that may signal regional powers' efforts to distance themselves from an order long shaped by Washington's unilateral will.

Pakistani Embassy in Tehran celebrates 79th Independence Day, eyes \$10bn trade target with Iran

TEHRAN — Pakistan's Embassy in the Iranian capital hosted a solemn ceremony on Friday morning to mark the 79th anniversary of the country's independence, bringing together members of the Pakistani diaspora, foreign media representatives, and local activists at the ambassador's residence.

The flag-hoisting ceremony at Pakistan House commenced with Ambassador Imran Ahmed Siddiqui raising the national flag to the tune of the national anthem. Ambassador Siddiqui read out the official messages issued for the occasion by President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Addressing the audience, the Pakistani envoy extended warm congratulations to the community members and expressed gratitude for their participation in the celebrations. He highlighted the vital role played by overseas Pakistanis in the socio-economic advancement of both Iran and Pakistan, emphasizing the shared determination of Tehran and Islamabad to boost bilateral trade to \$10 billion—a target in which the diaspora serves as a primary stakeholder.

Students from the Pakistan Embassy International School and College in Tehran performed a national song during the gathering. The program concluded with a collective prayer offered for those who sacrificed their lives during the freedom movement, followed by a ceremonial cake-cutting.

The diplomatic event in Tehran coincided with nationwide celebrations across Pakistan,

From this perspective, the emergence of these security arrangements can be understood as part of the region's gradual movement toward multilateralism and the redefinition of major regional powers' roles in its security dynamics—a path Iran has long emphasized. Iran believes that only through strengthening intra-regional security mechanisms can the region resist externally imposed frameworks and build a new security architecture based on its own capacities.

Arman-e-Melli: The US must remedy what it has violated

In a commentary, Arman-e-Melli discussed the Strait of Hormuz and Iran–Oman negotiations. According to the paper, the issue has become a politically and economically significant case at both regional and international levels, reflecting global attention. The Strait of Hormuz is currently the backbone of the dispute between Tehran and Washington. The US is trying, by any means, to resolve the matter, but Tehran's view differs substantially. Reopening the Strait depends on conditions imposed on the Islamic Republic. For now, Iran is focused on negotiations with Oman to determine the rules for maritime transit. Iran has no direct negotiations with Washington, and intermediaries continue trying to create conditions for resuming talks. From Iran's perspective, until the violations of the memorandum of understanding are fully addressed and the US compensates for what it breached, restarting negotiations is impossible.

Etemad: The US seeks a way out of the Hormuz deadlock

In an interview with Etemad, foreign-policy analyst Rahman Ghahremanpour assessed current Iran–US relations. He argues that both sides currently need some form of agreement or ceasefire, but the US needs it more, as Trump faces growing domestic pressure and increasing criticism. Analysts and political actors repeatedly say Trump is stuck. Some even propose that the US must quickly extricate itself from this predicament. Reports about declining US weapons stockpiles—especially interceptor missiles—have further complicated Trump's situation. Therefore, it is possible that Trump, as in the Islamabad memorandum episode, may be willing to offer significant concessions to Iran. Iran, apparently based on this assessment, has set forth conditions to increase pressure on Washington and extract greater concessions. So far, the process continues with ups and downs, but diplomacy has not stopped, and efforts persist to persuade the US and Trump to grant more concessions to Iran.

where fireworks illuminated the night sky over Islamabad at midnight as crowds dressed in green and white poured into the streets waving national flags. Official events continued throughout Friday across major cities.

In his Independence Day address, President Zardari paid tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the leaders of the Pakistan Movement, and those who lost their lives during the struggle for statehood. Reaffirming Pakistan's foreign policy priorities, he reiterated support for a peaceful resolution to the Kashmir dispute in line with United Nations Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people, while also addressing regional security challenges and urging cross-border stability.

Prime Minister Sharif paid homage to the country's founding leaders, including Jinnah and Allama Muhammad Iqbal, while outlining his administration's economic achievements over the past two and a half years. He stated that Pakistan has successfully navigated difficult conditions to achieve economic stability and is now positioned toward sustainable development. Reiterating the call for regional stability, he stressed that lasting peace in South Asia depends on diplomatic dialogue and adherence to international law.

Senior military leaders, including Field Marshal Asim Munir, also honored the sacrifices of the nation's martyrs and armed forces, urging national unity, peace, and economic perseverance.

Araghchi accuses EU of ‘double standards’ on Human Rights

From page 1 ▶ In his conversation with Gerapetritis, Araghchi rejected the EU's “interventionist” statements on Iran, saying the bloc lacked the moral standing to lecture other countries on human rights because of its own record.

“The European Union, due to its performance in the field of human rights, lacks any moral standing to lecture others,” Araghchi said, according to the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

The dispute followed a joint statement by France and 25 other countries, together with EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas, condemning what the signatories described as Iran's continued executions of protesters and use of the death penalty. They called on Tehran to halt executions and release people they claimed had been arbitrarily detained.

Araghchi separately singled out France, accusing Paris of “blatant” hypocrisy over its claims to defend human rights and international law.

“Countries like France should stop lecturing the world about ‘human rights’ and international law. The hypocrisy is blatant and embarrassing,” Araghchi wrote.

He argued that France's support for Israel's military campaign in Gaza and its backing of aggression against Iran had eroded any claim to moral authority.

“Your backing of Israel's genocide in Gaza—and aggression against Iran—has destroyed whatever



Beate Meinl-Reisinger

Abbas Araghchi

Georgios Gerapetritis

moral high ground you imagined you had,” Araghchi said.

Iran has repeatedly accused Western governments of applying inconsistent standards to international law, particularly in relation to Israel's military operations in Gaza and the wider region.

Araghchi's separate conversation with Austrian Foreign Minister Beate Meinl-Reisinger focused on bilateral relations as well as regional and international developments, according to the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

The calls with the Greek and Austrian foreign ministers form part of Tehran's broader diplomatic engagement with European governments amid heightened regional tensions and continuing disputes over Iran's nuclear program, sanctions, maritime security and human rights.

Schumer urges Hegseth ouster over deteriorating USS Lincoln conditions amid Iran war

From page 1 ▶ While the Pentagon and military leadership attempt to downplay the crisis as a routine strain of high-tempo operations, the mounting desperation aboard the Lincoln offers a stark window into a far deeper conflict. The hardship faced by 5,000 American service members is not merely a localized administrative failure; it is the physical manifestation of Washington's strategy of open-ended military confrontation against Iran—a policy that relies on continuous coercive presence while running the human and mechanical engines of American power to the brink of collapse.

The political backlash in Washington highlights the growing divide over this relentless operational tempo. Senator Richard Blumenthal, the top Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, recently dispatched a sharp letter to War Secretary Pete Hegseth and acting Navy Secretary Hung Cao. Blumenthal demanded a formal accounting of the ship's habitability, supply shortages, and mental health metrics, questioning whether the US

Navy can sustain the operational demands now being placed on its carrier fleet as the administration repeatedly commits forces to regional conflicts without clear end dates. The outcry escalated when Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer publicly called for Hegseth's firing, pointing to the horrific shipboard conditions as evidence of broader strategic incompetence.

Meanwhile, Senator Ruben Gallego, a combat veteran, urged an immediate bipartisan congressional delegation to investigate conditions on the ship, describing reports of 12- to 16-hour shifts without days off amid broken facilities as



both dangerous and unacceptable. What makes the crisis aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln so revealing is how directly it exposes the friction between strategic grandiosity and operational reality. For decades, Washington has used aircraft carriers as the ultimate symbols of global deterrence—massive, self-contained islands of military supremacy designed to project power into any corner of the globe. However, when carriers are deployed as permanent fixes for unresolved political conflicts, the illusion of limitless capacity begins to break down.

Originally assigned to a routine Pacific deployment, the Lincoln was redirected to the Middle East to support expanding combat operations, airstrikes, and blockade enforcement against Iran. As the conflict stretched into its sixth month without a defined strategic exit or legislative authorization, the carrier's deployment was extended indefinitely. The daily operational environment of a modern supercarrier leaves zero room for error. Launching and recovering high-performance aircraft from a moving flight deck requires extreme precision, intense physical stamina, and rigorous mental acuity.

When that environment is degraded by pro-

longed sleep deprivation, inadequate nutrition, sanitation failures, and months of continuous isolation from shore, the margin of safety shrinks dramatically. Reports published by military news outlets such as the Navy Times and reported by CBS News detail a crew struggling under intense psychological strain.

A confirmed onboard incident in early August, alongside claims from crew relatives regarding suicide attempts, serves as a grim indicator that the physical and mental endurance of service members has been pushed past reasonable boundaries. Despite these alarming indicators, the official response from the Department of War has oscillated between outright denial and bureaucratic minimization.

Hegseth publicly dismissed the reports, claiming that conditions aboard the vessel had been “completely misrepresented” and insisting that the Navy provides every crew with everything possible at every moment. Concurrently, US Central Command released social media graphics attempting to label reports of a mental health crisis as false, emphasizing that logistics teams prioritized mission-critical supplies like food and hygiene products amidst disruptions caused by regional combat. Yet, as covered by The Guardian, this impulse to frame systemic overextension as routine “austere conditions” fails to address the root cause of the problem: a military posture that treats personnel and hardware as expendable components in a foreign policy of endless attrition. This pattern of extended carrier strike group deployments is becoming a feature rather than an exception of American naval posture.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran rejects US allegations of destabilizing Yemen at UNSC

TEHRAN— Iran has rejected as “baseless and unsubstantiated” allegations by the United States that Tehran is destabilizing Yemen or has used commercial flights to Sana'a to transfer military personnel or equipment in violation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2216.

In a letter addressed Thursday to UN Secretary-General António Guterres and the president of the Security Council, Iran's ambassador and deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, Gholamhossein Darzi, dismissed the allegations as an attempt by Washington to mislead the council and deflect attention from its unlawful actions in Yemen and the wider region.

Darzi was responding to remarks made by the US representative and other Security Council members during a meeting on Aug. 13 devoted to “The Situation

in the Middle East (Yemen),” the council's 10,208th meeting.

“The allegation leveled by the United States' representative that Iran is destabilizing Yemen, or that Iranian commercial flights to Sana'a were used to transfer military personnel or equipment in violation of Security Council resolution 2216 (2015), is entirely unfounded,” Darzi said.

He said the claims were unsupported by credible evidence and accused the United States of seeking to shift responsibility for regional instability away from its own conduct.

According to Darzi, recent Iranian flights to Sana'a were humanitarian in nature. He said the prolonged closure and restrictions imposed on Sana'a International Airport, combined with the blockade, had had severe humanitarian consequences for Yemen.

“Since the suspension of regular commercial flights in 2016, millions of Yemenis have been deprived of their basic right to freedom of movement,” Darzi said, citing restricted access to medical treatment abroad, education, employment, family reunification and humanitarian assistance.

He argued that portraying humanitarian assistance intended to mitigate those consequences as a destabilizing activity was “factually false” and legally and morally indefensible.

Darzi also accused Washington of lacking credibility to portray itself as a defender of peace and stability in Yemen while bearing responsibility for policies that have contributed to the country's humanitarian crisis.

The Iranian envoy further accused the United States of undermining the UN-backed political process in Yemen through its mil-

itary operations against the country in March 2025.

He said those actions violated Yemen's sovereignty and territorial integrity and the UN Charter, while also contributing to further obstacles to a UN-facilitated political settlement.

Darzi also criticized “Washington's selective and abusive interpretation of Security Council Resolution 2722,” adopted in 2024, arguing that its use as a justification for military action against Yemen and civilian infrastructure had heightened regional tensions and undermined prospects for a political settlement.

“It is therefore deeply ironic that the same regime whose actions have repeatedly undermined peace, violated Yemen's sovereignty, and resorted to unlawful force ... now seeks to accuse Iran of destabilizing Yemen,” Darzi said.

US claims, Iran controls Hormuz

While Trump claims almost weekly that American forces have full control of the Strait of Hormuz, Iran says it “calls the shots”

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Shipping data challenges Washington's narrative

Independent shipping data also paints a considerably more complicated picture than the assertion that Washington has established effective control over the waterway.

According to Kpler data cited by Reuters, nine commodity vessels crossed the Strait of Hormuz on Thursday, up from five the previous day but still below the August daily average of 12. Most of the vessels used routes administered or approved by Iran.

The figures are dramatically lower than pre-war traffic levels. The Wall Street Journal reported that only 14 vessels crossed the strait on Tuesday, compared with more than 130 vessels a day before the war. Eleven of those vessels used the route administered by Iran.

The discrepancy is significant. While Washington says it controls the waterway and has sought to guarantee maritime passage, actual shipping patterns suggest that the United States has not restored anything resembling normal commercial traffic.

The US administration has disputed commercial tracking figures, arguing that some vessels have switched off their transponders and that ships moving under military escort may not be fully reflected in publicly available tracking data.

Nevertheless, the low level of observable traffic, together with the continued reliance of many vessels on routes coordinated with Iran, makes the assertion of unqualified US control difficult to reconcile with conditions on the water.

Western analysts question Trump's "control" claim

Skepticism over Trump's characterization is not confined to Iranian officials.

The Wall Street Journal reported that the president's assertion of total US control was contradicted by the reality of maritime traffic, noting that “few ships are listening” to Washington's claim. Its reporting emphasized the sharp gap between the president's rhetoric and the limited number of vessels actually transiting the waterway.



Analysts cited in Western reporting have likewise cautioned that even a political agreement to reopen Hormuz would not immediately restore normal shipping. Aarathi Krishnan of Raksha Intelligence Futures said a deal alone would not be enough to return maritime operations to normal, arguing that sustained de-escalation would be necessary to reduce security risks and insurance costs for commercial vessels.

The argument is important because control of a maritime chokepoint is ultimately measured by the ability to provide predictable and secure passage—not simply by military presence or political declarations.

Tehran seeks to institutionalize its role

Iranian officials have repeatedly stressed that Tehran's role in regulating maritime traffic is not merely a wartime claim.

Iran and Oman have been engaged in discussions over the establishment of new shipping arrangements in the Strait of Hormuz, with Tehran saying negotiations on the coordinates and framework of a safe maritime corridor have reached an advanced stage.

At the same time, Iran's Parliament is working on a broader strategic plan for the security and development of the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf. Lawmaker

Valiollah Bayati said a parliamentary committee had approved the general principles of the plan and seven of its 14 articles.

One of the provisions reportedly bars the passage through the strait of facilities and equipment belonging to the United States, Israel, and countries deemed hostile by Iran.

The developments indicate that Tehran is seeking to translate its military leverage over the waterway into a broader political and legal framework.

Why does Trump keep claiming control?

The repeated US assertion that Hormuz is under American control is also part of a wider political and psychological contest.

For Trump, portraying the United States as the dominant power in the conflict serves an important domestic and international purpose. A claim of complete control over one of the world's most important energy chokepoints reinforces the image of a president who has achieved military superiority and can dictate the terms of the conflict.

The economic dimension is equally important. Hormuz is a critical artery for global energy markets, and uncertainty over its future has already contributed to higher oil prices and a substantial geopolitical risk premium. The Wall

Street Journal reported that Brent crude was heading for a significant weekly gain as stalled negotiations and heightened tensions around the strait continued to unsettle markets.

By projecting an image of US control, Washington can also seek to reassure energy markets and international shipping companies that the United States possesses the capability to guarantee the flow of oil and gas.

Yet the central contradiction remains: a waterway cannot realistically be described as “fully controlled” by a power that has not succeeded in restoring normal commercial traffic.

For Iran, the issue is therefore not simply semantic. Tehran is using its demonstrated ability to monitor and regulate maritime movements as a strategic bargaining instrument in negotiations with Washington and Oman.

For the United States, meanwhile, the challenge is to convert its naval superiority into something much harder to achieve: sustained, commercially credible and internationally accepted freedom of navigation.

Until that happens, the competing claims over Hormuz will continue to be tested by the most objective measure available — the ships moving through the strait.

LATEST NEWS

■ Pezeshkian congratulates Pakistan on Independence Day

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has congratulated Pakistan's government and people on the country's 79th Independence Day, expressing hope for stronger bilateral ties. In a message to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Pezeshkian highlighted the two countries' deep historical, cultural and civilizational bonds and called for broader cooperation based on mutual trust and shared interests. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also conveyed congratulations to Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

■ Rezaei calls for broader Iran-Pakistan strategic cooperation

Iran's Supreme National Security Council Secretary Mohsen Rezaei has called for broader cooperation with Pakistan, describing bilateral ties as a strategic asset for the Islamic world. Meeting Pakistani Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi in Tehran, Rezaei highlighted the countries' political, military and popular ties and urged greater regional convergence among major Muslim states. He said President Masoud Pezeshkian also supports significantly expanding bilateral trade and strengthening political relations.

■ IRGC arrests remaining member of terrorist cell in southeastern Iran

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has arrested the remaining member of a terrorist cell in Sistan and Baluchestan province, days after two other members were killed. The IRGC said the suspect was detained on Friday, Aug. 14, and that a large quantity of weapons, ammunition, explosives and communications equipment was seized. According to the force, the cell was

linked to Israel and the United States and had planned attacks in southern areas.

■ Mokhber: Iran's offensive strategy could reshape global power equations

Iran's offensive strategy in the war could reshape global power equations, Mohammad Mokhber, an adviser to Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, said. Mokhber linked the strategy to developments surrounding the Strait of Hormuz and Washington's inability to protect its Persian Gulf allies. He said Iran's next steps would depend on conditions including an end to aggression, the lifting of sanctions, withdrawal of US forces, compensation for damages and release of frozen Iranian assets.

■ Iran blames US-Israeli aggression for Qeshm oil pollution

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi has blamed recent oil pollution along Qeshm Island's shores on US-Israeli aggression, saying the incident underscores the need for a sovereign management mechanism for the Strait of Hormuz. Environmental authorities said the spill had been almost completely contained, with no reported deaths of dolphins, turtles or other wildlife. Contaminated sand was removed and affected waters cleaned using specialized absorbent materials.

■ Araghchi warns US against 'bigger miscalculation' over Strait of Hormuz

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has warned Washington against ‘an even bigger intelligence failure’ over the Strait of Hormuz. In a post on X, Araghchi said previous US intelligence failures had contributed to miscalculations over the war against Iran and cautioned against repeating the

mistake over the strategic waterway. His remarks followed President Donald Trump's claim that Washington had “total control” of Hormuz, as commercial shipping remained sharply reduced.

■ US seeking to correct strategic mistake by continuing Iran war: Russia

Russia's permanent representative to international organizations in Vienna, Mikhail Ulyanov, has criticized continued US military action against Iran, saying Washington is attempting to correct a strategic mistake by prolonging the conflict. Ulyanov questioned the logic of seeking freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz after US aggression had contributed to disrupting it. His remarks followed Washington's growing emphasis on securing lower energy prices and reports that its war objectives had shifted toward reopening Hormuz.

■ Hezbollah chief: Response to Iranian leader assassination was a message of pain and defiance

Hezbollah's Deputy Secretary-General, Sheikh Naim Qassem, declared that the Lebanese resistance's response on March 2 to the assassination of Iran's leader was both a retaliatory act and a concise expression of the suffering endured over 15 months of conflict.

Speaking in a televised address, Qassem asserted that the resistance had successfully thwarted the enemy's strategic objectives and remains firmly on course with its chosen options. He dismissed any notion of capitulation, warning that those who harbor hopes of surrender are chasing an illusion and fundamentally misunderstand the nature of the resistance movement.

The world after the US defeat

By Xavier Villar

MADRID – The reverberations of the Forty-Day War have not ceased, and it can already be said that they have affected not only Western Asia but the entire world. The story is well known: Donald Trump launched a war expecting that American and Israeli strikes would finally do away with the Islamic Republic. Instead, he has witnessed a historic defeat for his country.

Robert Kagan, the neoconservative geopolitical analyst, got it right from the very beginning: “The conflict will end in a defeat for the United States, an outcome that will irreversibly weaken Washington's global position and trigger a chain reaction around the world, as friends and adversaries alike adapt to American failure.”

Kagan was speaking primarily of the international consequences of that defeat, which are the ones that concern this article, though its effects are likely to be felt in domestic politics as well. The long-term repercussions cannot be foreseen, yet certain things are already becoming clear. Trump's approval ratings had been declining for much of his second term, but the Iran war has accelerated the slide: one in four Americans who voted for him in 2024 now opposes the conflict. Since its outbreak, presidential approval has dropped more than three percentage points to a mere 40 percent, while disapproval has climbed to 57 percent.

At the regional level, the war appears to have convinced Saudi Arabia and other traditional allies that American security guarantees for Arab states are no longer as solid as they once were. The executive order extending a security guarantee to Qatar in 2025, the “major non-NATO ally” status granted to Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain, and the agreements permitting U.S. military bases in several Persian Gulf Cooperation Council states—none of these managed to protect their beneficiaries from devastating Iranian attacks. As a result, the countries of the region have few alternatives beyond reducing their dependence on what they now perceive as an unpredictable and unreliable Washington, one incapable of fully protecting them and liable, even, to endanger their security through reckless actions.

One of the most notable reverberations of the war is that it has accelerated the regional transition toward a post-American order.

The pact signed on August 7 between Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan can be read—though not exclusively—through that lens. Under the Mecca Agreement, the three countries committed to strengthening “collective defense” and “collective deterrence,” and to treating an armed attack against any one of them as an attack against all three. As Stanly Johny, international affairs editor at the Indian daily The Hindu, has noted, each member brings its own strengths and vulnerabilities to the table.

Saudi Arabia puts forward its financial capacity, but also its exposure to Houthi attacks and maritime blockades, as well as Iranian strikes against American targets in the Kingdom. Pakistan contributes its nuclear program, weighed down at the same time by a fragile economy and its conflict with India. Turkey, which has always aspired to a central role in Western Asia, adds military and technological capabilities, along with its ties to countries like Qatar, but carries its own fears:



Ankara believes it must prepare for future conflicts. Israeli leaders have already issued public warnings against Turkey, accusing it of supporting Hamas and other Islamic forces, and although Turkey is a NATO member, Ankara doubts that the Alliance's collective security guarantees would hold in the event of a confrontation with Israel.

The pact is born of the loss of American influence in the world and, specifically, in the region, as well as of the ongoing reconfiguration in which Iran has become a central axis. This does not mean the agreement is anti-Iranian, but the three signatories cannot ignore the new reality.

There are other effects of the war that do not pass through the trilateral pact. The Emirates, for example, entered the conflict as a key piece of American political architecture and emerged deeply weakened. Mohammed bin Zayed, who had previously cultivated an image as an indispensable actor in regional diplomacy, finds himself increasingly relegated to the margins of the main political processes. In this new order, Abu Dhabi no longer has a seat at the main table.

China, too, has benefited from the American defeat. The setback with Iran has opened space for Beijing to exert greater influence and leadership on the international stage. In China's reasoning, the more Washington wears itself down—mired as it is in internal divisions—the faster China will reach the center of the global board. Beijing watches its rival consume itself while it conserves strength and concentrates resources on what it considers the decisive geopolitical contest: the battle for technological leadership.

That position is reinforced on the practical ground. Beijing is helping U.S. allies such as Thailand and the Philippines cover their aviation fuel deficits and other energy imports; by coming to the aid of countries in crisis, it occupies a role that Washington long used to its own advantage. In the longer term, it will benefit from the destruction of oil demand caused by the war and holds a clear advantage in consolidating its market share in the renewable energy technologies it dominates: solar and wind power, electric vehicles, and batteries.

The strain the conflict has inflicted on America's relations with its allies, especially in Europe and the Middle East, is another card in Beijing's hand. The open divergences between Washington and its partners over the war's legitimacy, its conduct, and its consequences have exposed cracks that, over time, could spread to other areas of the relationship.

The United States thought it would throw a stone into the Iranian lake and watch the ripples in calm, controlled fashion. But the lake behaved differently—not unpredictably, but differently—and those who threw the stone could no longer do anything about it.

US military loses 25% of its MQ-9 drones as stocks dwindle in Iran war

From Page 1 ► The mounting drone losses reflect a broader, systemic strain on American military readiness as the campaign drags on. Before the outbreak of hostilities on February 28, the US military maintained a fleet of approximately 185 Reapers across the Air Force and Marine Corps, excluding classified intelligence assets. By May, senior Air Force leadership confirmed to Congress that active inventory had dropped to around 135 units. While the Marine Corps' Pacific-based Reapers have avoided losses, the Air Force fleet patrolling Middle Eastern airspace has taken the brunt of the attrition. Flying at slow speeds and relatively low altitudes, the non-stealthy aircraft have proven to be vulnerable targets for Iranian forces and resistance groups operating in Yemen and Iraq.

Beyond uncrewed aircraft, the sheer intensity of the air campaign has rapidly drained America's most advanced munitions. In the first month of hostilities alone, US forces expended over 850 Tomahawk cruise missiles and more than 1,000 Patriot and Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) interceptors. This unprecedented burn rate—

compounded by years of prior military assistance to Ukraine—has severely degraded stockpiles of key long-range strike capabilities and high-demand air defenses. Consequently, frontline commanders have been forced to change defensive tactics, rationing interceptors and holding back missiles in reserve unless an incoming strike poses a direct threat to personnel or key installations.

Restocking these depleted arsenals presents a daunting long-term industrial challenge. While the White House is pressing Congress for a \$67 billion emergency supplemental war budget, financial infusions alone cannot overcome manufacturing bottlenecks. Analysis from defense think tanks highlights that critical systems face multi-year production backlogs. For instance, manufacturing a single THAAD interceptor takes nearly three years, with maximum national production capacity capped at just 96 units annually. Meeting the Pentagon's multi-year requirement for thousands of interceptors could take decades at current factory output levels.

Tehran, Islamabad emphasize development of economic, energy cooperation

TEHRAN- Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad met with Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Pakistan's Minister of the Interior, at the headquarters of the Oil Ministry to discuss the development of bilateral cooperation in the energy sector and the expansion of commercial and economic relations, Shana reported.

During this meeting, the two sides, considering the capacities and common areas of cooperation, especially in the energy sector, emphasized the development of trade and economic exchanges between Iran and Pakistan.

The Oil Minister, stressing the expansion of cooperation between the two countries, said: Economic, commercial, cultural relations, and various areas of cooperation over many years between Iran and Pakistan provide a good foundation for expanding interactions in diverse fields, particularly in the energy sector.

Paknejad stated: There are various areas between the two countries in the trade of oil and petroleum products, as well as the export of technical and engineering services, especially in the refining sector.

Meanwhile, Masoud Peshkian, the President, on his trip to Pakistan on June 22, had announced Iran's readiness to develop relations with Islamic countries, especially Pakistan, in all fields, and emphasized that Tehran-Islamabad relations must be further strengthened in practice and implementation, and the effects of this approach should be evident in future memoranda and agreements.

Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan's Prime Minister, also referring to the economic capacities of both sides, had stated: Previously, a target of 10 billion dollars for the volume of trade between Iran and Pakistan had been proposed, but today we believe we should set our sights on achieving an annual figure of 30 billion dollars.

Oil minister announces: Formation of specialized working groups between Iran and Pakistan

The Oil Minister, during his meeting with Pakistan's Minister of the Interior, announced the formation of specialized working groups between Iran and Pakistan with the aim of following up on major agreements in the field of



energy carrier exchanges.

Mohsen Paknejad, outlining the main topics of this meeting, said: In this session, issues of mutual interest to the two countries in the energy sector were discussed, and it was decided that expert working groups would be formed to follow up and finalize the matters raised.

Referring to the long land border between Iran and Pakistan, he stated: This border can be utilized as one of the important advantages in the field of energy carrier exchanges. The frameworks and preliminaries of this matter of interest to both countries had already been discussed previously.

Paknejad continued: According to the agreement, it is planned that for continuing the discussions, expert working groups will travel from Iran to Islamabad and from Pakistan to Tehran.

Referring to the mutual needs of the two countries, he said: Our friends in Pakistan need petroleum products, and in this regard, there is the possibility of exports from Iran; therefore, in sectors where there is export capacity, we will meet their needs.

The Oil Minister emphasized: In some sectors, considering territorial advantages and geographical frameworks, we can also benefit from these opportunities.

Paknejad, regarding gas cooperation between the two countries, recalled: In previous periods, the issue of the gas export pipeline from Iran to Pakistan had been raised; in this meeting, general topics were discussed, and it was decided that more detailed expert discussions in this regard would be pursued by working groups.

Facilitating trade, transit on agenda of Iran, Afghanistan

TEHRAN- Iranian Minister of Agriculture emphasized facilitating mutual exports and transit of goods, developing trade relations, and holding the seventh meeting of joint committee of economic cooperation between Iran and Afghanistan.

According to IRNA from the Ministry of Agriculture, Gholamreza Nouri Ghezleji, during his visit to Kabul, met and held talks with Nooruddin Azizi, Afghanistan's Minister of Industry and Commerce, discussing solutions for developing economic and commercial relations between the two countries.

In this meeting, cooperation between Iran and Afghanistan for facilitating mutual exports and transit of goods, developing trade exchanges, and providing a suitable platform for increasing the activity of the private sector in both countries was discussed and exchanged.

Nouri Ghezleji, who is responsible for the joint committee of economic cooperation between Iran and Afghanistan on behalf of Iran, emphasized the necessity of using the capacity of this commission to follow up on economic and trade issues and transform agreements between the two countries into executive programs.

The Minister of Agriculture also emphasized holding the seventh meeting of joint committee of economic cooperation between Iran and Afghanistan and described this mechanism as an opportunity to examine obstacles, identify new capacities, and accelerate the implementation of agreements between the two countries.

In this meeting, the two sides emphasized expanding trade interactions, strengthening communication between private sectors, and utilizing transit capacities to increase goods exchanges between Iran and Afghanistan.

The Minister of Agriculture, continuing his agenda in Kabul, met and held talks with traders, merchants, and economic and commercial

BRICS must move from dialogue to practical action: CBI governor

TEHRAN- The Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) on the first day of the BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting in India, while thanking the host country's government and central bank for hosting the summit, emphasized the need to strengthen practical cooperation among BRICS members in monetary and financial areas.

According to IRNA from the Central Bank, Abdolnasser Hemmati in his speech at the opening session, stating that closer cooperation among BRICS member countries can play an important role in strengthening stability, trust, and sustainable development, asserted: BRICS will have the greatest impact when it can translate policy dialogues into practical initiatives and executive mechanisms.

Referring to the difficult and complex regional and international conditions as well as the military aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iran, he noted: Economic and financial stability is unattainable without peace, respect for international law, and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter.

The Central Bank Governor also, referring to Iran's continued active participation within the BRICS framework, said: The Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran has had an active and responsible presence in BRICS specialized working groups since the beginning of its membership and has participated in areas such as cross-border payments, use of national currencies, financial technologies, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and sustainable financing.

Hemmati further emphasized support for initiatives that can reduce transaction costs and risks, facilitate the use of national currencies, and bring payment infrastructure among member countries closer together.

He considered the New Development Bank of BRICS as one of the group's most important institutional achievements and said: The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to expand its interactions with this institution and pursue the path of membership in it with



the cooperation and support of respected members.

The Central Bank Governor concluded by stating: BRICS can play a more effective role in shaping a more inclusive, balanced, and resilient international financial architecture.

Hemmati's emphasis on need to create an independent BRICS financial corridor

The Governor of the Central Bank of Iran, on the second day of BRICS financial meetings in India, emphasized the need to create a dedicated BRICS financial corridor and connect the national payment networks of member countries.

According to IRNA from the Central Bank, Abdolnasser Hemmati stated in this meeting: The development of BRICS financial cooperation must go beyond general dialogues and lead to the creation of operational, secure, and sustainable infrastructure for cross-border payments and settlements.

He said: Connecting payment networks and expanding the use of national currencies, while reducing dependence on financial routes outside BRICS, helps increase speed, reduce costs, and enhance the security of member trade transactions.

The Central Bank Governor added: Iran has already begun examining the technical, legal, and operational dimensions of connecting BRICS members' payment systems and is ready to cooperate in formulating an operational roadmap for this plan.

Hemmati also considered pursuing Iran's membership in the New Development Bank of BRICS as a foundation for expanding development project financing,

investment cooperation, and strengthening economic ties among members.

The first meeting of BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors under India's rotating presidency for 2026 was held on August 12 and 13, 2026, in Jaipur, India.

Earlier, at the first meeting of this group with the presence of economy and finance ministers and central bank governors of member countries, Mehdi Heydari, Deputy Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance of Iran, emphasized the need to strengthen economic and financial resilience of BRICS members against global economic challenges.

Supporting the four axes of "resilience, innovation, cooperation, and sustainability," he called for the development of practical financing mechanisms, including local currency financing, currency risk hedging instruments, and attracting private capital.

Iran's representative also emphasized the responsible use of artificial intelligence and modern technologies to increase productivity and inclusive growth, and supported the continuation of the BRICS Growth and Development Working Group's activities in future presidency periods.

CBI governor meets president of New Development Bank of BRICS

The Governor of the Central Bank of Iran met and held talks with the President of the New Development Bank of BRICS (NDB).

According to IRNA from the Central Bank, Dilma Rousseff, in her meeting with Abdolnasser Hemmati, assessed the Islamic Republic of Iran's presence in

the New Development Bank as important and emphasized Iran's role and capacities in developing regional and international cooperation.

The two sides in this dialogue emphasized the need to continue expert consultations for Iran's membership in the NDB and to benefit from the facilities of this bank.

The Governor of the Central Bank of Iran, who has traveled to India to participate in the BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting hosted by India, while thanking the Indian government and central bank for hosting the summit, emphasized the need to strengthen practical cooperation among BRICS members in monetary and financial areas.

BRICS is a group of major emerging economies that has expanded beyond its original five members—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—to include Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, the UAE, and Indonesia. India holds the 2026 presidency, hosting the upcoming summit under the theme "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability".

The bloc focuses on deepening financial cooperation to reduce reliance on Western-dominated systems. A key priority is developing independent payment mechanisms, including connecting national fast payment systems and exploring interoperability between central bank digital currencies (CBDCs), to lower cross-border transaction costs and promote trade in local currencies. The New Development Bank (NDB), established by BRICS, plays a central role in financing infrastructure and sustainable development projects across member countries, with Iran currently finalizing its accession to the bank.

While strengthening economic ties among the Global South, BRICS is not pursuing a common currency at this time. Instead, members are focusing on practical mechanisms for financial integration that can gradually build resilience against external pressures and create a more balanced international financial architecture.

Iranian, South African central bankers review capacities for expanding monetary, banking co-op

TEHRAN- The Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) met and held talks with the Governor of the South African Central Bank on the sidelines of the BRICS summit.

According to IRNA from the Central Bank, in the meeting between Abdolnasser Hemmati and Lesetja Kganyago, the two sides reviewed existing capacities for expanding monetary and banking cooperation between the two countries and exchanged views on solutions for developing financial interactions, facilitating trade exchanges, and strengthening ties between the banking and financial institutions of Iran and South Africa.

Also in this meeting, the importance of utilizing the capacity for multilateral cooperation within the BRICS framework and developing effective mechanisms for enhancing economic and banking cooperation among member countries was emphasized.

The encounter comes as Iran pushes for greater integration into BRICS financial architecture, including its bid to join the New Development Bank. Hemmati has been actively engaging with fellow BRICS officials throughout the two-day gathering in Jaipur, having already met with his Indian counterpart Sanjay Malhotra and NDB President Dilma Rousseff.

For South Africa, a founding BRICS member, the talks reflect its continued commitment to strengthening ties with newer members of the expanded bloc. The meeting also underscores the growing importance of bilateral financial diplomacy as BRICS countries seek to reduce their reliance on Western-dominated payment systems and foster trade in local currencies.

Iran and South Africa share longstanding

political and economic ties, with both nations having faced periods of international isolation. Their central banks have previously collaborated on technical issues, though concrete financial integration has remained limited. Whether this latest engagement will translate into tangible banking agreements remains to be seen, but the signal from Jaipur is clear: BRICS members are moving from dialogue to delivery.

Also in late June, Iran's Minister of Oil held talks with the Minister of Electricity and Energy of South Africa regarding the development of bilateral cooperation in the energy sector, Shana reported.

Mohsen Paknejad, on the sidelines of the 11th Meeting of BRICS Energy Ministers, on June 25, on the second day of his visit to India, met with Kgosisentsho Ramokgopa, the Minister of Electricity and Energy of South Africa, and emphasized the development of bilateral cooperation.

In late July, the Director General of Africa Desk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasized the development of trade diplomacy between Iran and Africa and stated: "Cooperation priorities are determined based on indicators such as economic capacities, mutual needs, the level of political relations, the potential for developing trade and investment cooperation, and the readiness of the other party to expand relations."

In recent years, the African continent has transformed from a lesser-known market into one of the most important emerging destinations for global trade; a market with over 1.5 billion people, rapid urbanization growth, infrastructure development, and increasing demand for goods and services, which presents extensive opportunities for

exporters.

At a time when diversifying export markets has become a necessity for Iran's economy, developing economic relations with African countries can, while reducing dependence on traditional markets, open a new path for increasing non-oil exports and expanding trade cooperation. For this reason, the country's economic diplomacy has paid special attention to this continent in recent years, and the holding of Iran-Africa conferences and provincial specialized meetings is pursued within this framework.

In the meantime, the new approach of the diplomatic apparatus is based on utilizing the capacities of various provinces for a targeted presence in African markets; a model that, instead of holding ceremonial meetings, focuses on identifying the real advantages of each province, establishing direct communication between Iranian economic activists and African countries, and defining joint trade projects.

On this basis, Yazd province has been selected as the first model of this approach and, relying on its history of exporting various products such as tiles and ceramics, building stone, textile industries, food industries, technical and engineering services, as well as the capabilities of knowledge-based companies in the field of solar energy, it is trying to increase its share of the growing African market. Officials believe that the most important obstacle to developing trade with this continent is not merely sanctions, but a lack of knowledge about the markets, laws, and trade partners, and strengthening trade ties and creating cooperation networks can pave the way for increasing Iran's economic exchanges with African countries.

‘Food Truck One,’ expandable decoys, and the propaganda ruin

From page 1 ► White House aides, and the traveling press pool. Journalists were ordered to keep their window shades closed. None of them knew the president was already gone.

The White House justified this massive deception by citing a threat of a shoulder-fired missile. Yet the intelligence did not come from American spies. It came from Israel.

‘Israeli-derived’ and ‘low-confidence’

Washington launched an elaborate security ruse on the soil of a NATO ally based on intelligence that its own analysts doubted. One U.S. official described the threat reports plainly: “Israeli-derived, not U.S.-generated, and viewed as low confidence.”

The CIA found the intelligence unconvincing. Turkish intelligence services reportedly investigated and found no corroborating evidence.

Reuters noted the Ankara extraction “underscores how Israeli intelligence is influencing the Trump administration’s decision-making about Iran.”

Democratic Senator Chris Van Hollen questioned whether the Israeli material could stand on its own, saying, “I am very curious about the extent to which the Israeli-provided intelligence was not only credible but independently verifiable.” Van Hollen added, “This all seems a little fantastical.”

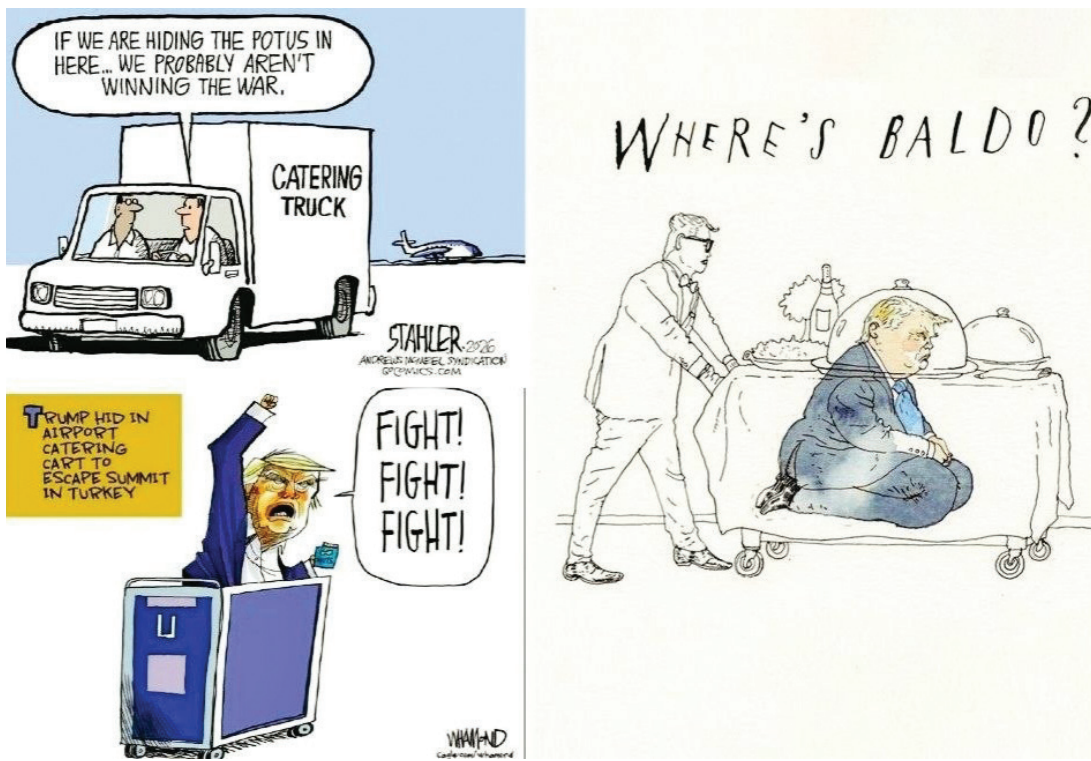
The decoy flight and the human shields

If the older Air Force One was genuinely too dangerous for the “commander in chief,” the administration decided it was perfectly acceptable for senior Cabinet members and journalists to absorb the supposed risk.

Rubio and Bessent occupy the fourth and fifth spots in the presidential line of succession. They were left on the alleged target aircraft.

The ethical vacuum of using unaware civilians and staff as human shields provoked immediate disgust. A White House reporter, speaking anonymously to Times of India, stated the principle clearly: “Reporters take risks as part of the job, but not on behalf of the president.”

Steven Cash, a former CIA intelligence officer, delivered an even blunter verdict. “It appears that the idea was we can reduce the danger to President Trump



by offering up 100 or so people to be killed by the Iranians in his place,” Cash said.

Trump offered little sympathy for the passengers. He claimed the C-32A he flew on was “at greater risk” because attackers would logically target his actual plane.

When asked about the journalists forced to fly blind with their shades drawn, he replied, “Probably on a dangerous flight... But if I go, you go. Right?” He later mused, “Perhaps someday you want to change professions.”

This casual disregard fractured usual partisan defenses. The influential podcaster Joe Rogan, who has supported Trump during the 2024 presidential campaign, highlighted the moral failure. “Those press people were signing up for something they didn’t know,” Rogan said. “That’s crazy. When you want to know, like, who’s more important, you or the president, that’s when you find out.”

Senator Richard Blumenthal demanded answers, calling the operation “unprecedented and surreal” and “downright scary.” He asked, “What precautions were taken to make sure that all of the passengers on that Air Force One ... were safe?”

The White House response, delivered by Communications Director Steven Cheung, offered only broad justifications. “There are many enemies of America who have their sights on him, and we use every tool at our disposal to address those threats,” Cheung said.

History shows a different way. When President Bill Clinton used a decoy plane in Pakistan in 2000, the press was briefed.

Susan Page, the White House Correspondents’ Association president at the time, recalled the transparency. “They told me about the extraordinary security procedures being taken,” Page said. The Trump administration discarded that precedent entirely.

The propaganda ruin

The political wreckage of the Ankara escape extends far beyond Washington. A government that speaks relentlessly of American dominance watched its president hide in a catering crate to escape regional airspace.

Social media users leveraged the imagery instantly. The extraction vehicle was dubbed “Food Truck One.”

Cartoons and AI-generated pictures depicted the president hiding among French fries and Diet Cokes. The ridicule crossed oceans.

Iran’s embassy in South Africa posted a meme of the incident on X, predicting the American president “will be hidden in a trash can before long.”

The mockery works because it targets the core vulnerability of the administration’s narrative. Trump declared the war on Iran won months ago. Yet the Strait of Hormuz still works based on Iranian arrangements, U.S. missile interceptor stocks are heavily depleted, and the command-

er in chief cannot safely leave a NATO capital.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer linked the tarmac panic directly to the faltering war effort. “It is unacceptable that Congress was kept in the dark and instead learned about this serious threat through press reports,” Schumer said. “Trump has put America’s sons and daughters in harm’s way by getting into an unnecessary and reckless war.”

Illinois governor and presidential hopeful billionaire J.B. Pritzker echoed the sentiment, focusing on the character revealed by the escape. “He put people in harm’s way to save himself,” Pritzker said. “He slinked away literally in a catering truck while the reporters and his own staff were on a plane that apparently was under threat.”

Trump has continued to project indifference. “I guess there was a threat out there,” he told reporters. “I didn’t really ask too much about it... I don’t worry about anything, to be honest.”

The footage from the Ankara tarmac tells a different story. The war Trump escalated has generated consequences that now dictate his physical movements.

The American empire projected absolute military supremacy. It ended the night with its leader pathetically concealed among the meal trays, fleeing a threat its own spies barely believed existed.

addressed the matter with striking historical perspective, noting that the strait had remained open from the time of Prophet Adam’s creation until February 28, 2026. He emphasized that despite enduring 47 years of what he termed “dishonorable and unjust” Western sanctions, and despite Iran’s solemn responsibility for safeguarding maritime traffic through a waterway that carries a significant portion of the world’s energy supplies, no harm had ever come to vessels transiting the strait under Iranian watch. Baqae further reminded observers that the current disruption was precipitated by the military aggression of the United States and the Israeli regime, a campaign that remains ongoing. When pressed about allegations that Iran had imposed conditions for reopening the strait, he offered a pointed retort, suggesting such inquiries should be directed to Washington itself.

The economic impact has been staggering. The cost of the war, including aerial operations, ammunition, damage to bases, and aircraft losses, has already exceeded \$120 billion. If we add the material damages and economic losses of the Persian Gulf countries, the total figure reaches an astronomical \$300 billion, not counting other global losses.

It was a war where all allies refused to get involved, an isolation felt even by countries that typically show automatic alignment. This is a defeat that Trump cannot change,

no matter how many times he repeats the word “victory” on his social network.

The embarrassment did not stop there. It has now come to light that Trump carried out a top-secret plane-swapping operation, using a catering truck as a disguise due to a credible threat of an attack from Iran. The highly unusual maneuver took place in Ankara, Turkey, right after the NATO summit. The president boarded Air Force One in front of the cameras, only to leave it in secret via a catering truck and board another aircraft. The details of the farce, which were revealed by the American press and confirmed by Trump himself, underscore the precarious situation. Imagine the president of the United States hiding in a little food truck to escape a threat. What a situation these people have gotten themselves into.

Iran understands its geographic advantages. The U.S. and Israel may possess air superiority, but that superiority must be spread out over an area roughly three times the size of Ukraine. They are simply overwhelmed by the number of potential targets and the long air-leg logistics. U.S. bases in the Persian Gulf states are easy targets for Iranian air forces because of their proximity and the flat landscape. It is impossible to accumulate hardware and manpower there without becoming vulnerable to massive Iranian missile and drone strikes.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

From US to Lebanon: The illusion of strategic decision-making



By staff writer

TEHRAN – When politics loses touch with reality, facts can quickly give way to fiction. The Trump model offers one example; its echoes in Lebanon offer another.

The disconnect between political decision-making and truth is a growing subject of debate. This goes beyond media criticism but specifically, how officials in positions of power can transform the public sphere into one where political narratives replace facts.

It is unclear whether observers anticipated that matters would reach the point they have today, in which U.S. President Donald Trump takes this tendency so far through his political conduct. The decisions he makes, and the statements he issues, all of which, have a far-reaching impact because they come from the president of supposedly the world’s most powerful state.

This style of political engagement is no longer confined to Trump. It has gained many followers and imitators around the world. The influence of and identification with Trump has not been limited to adopting far-right or racist ideas. It has also extended to adopting the same style of political performance, the management of political discourse, the handling of facts, and the construction of political narratives.

Under Trump, this approach has evolved into a complex process in which many elements intersect, most notably an exaggerated assessment of one’s ability to influence events, deliberate lying, a refusal to accept facts, and reliance on post-truth logic.

This approach is accompanied by a fully integrated political and media apparatus that works to produce perceptions contrary to the facts, reshape them, and continuously reinforce them, in addition to repeatedly circulating the narratives and ideas that are intended to take root in the public mind.

Trump’s record appears full of examples consistent with this mixture, making his political experience a case worth examining.

Trump insists that he won the 2020 presidential election. The U.S. president has never stopped promoting the idea that the election was “stolen” despite failing to provide evidence of widespread fraud that could have changed the outcome.

He also insists that the domestic economic situation is good, recently claiming that he was the “lowest of the last 10 presidents on inflation,” and falling grocery prices. This is while consumer price index data shows a higher rate of inflation than is being claimed.

As for the military victory over Iran, the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, and the overthrow of the Islamic Republic, that is a false narrative whose chapters are still unfolding.

From the early days of the illegal war, Trump adopted an extremely decisive tone in describing the results of military operations. He did not just speak of weakening Iran’s capabilities; he quickly moved to declaring Iran’s complete military defeat, and then to presenting the war as a decisive American victory.

In the first weeks, Trump declared that

Iran had been “completely defeated,” saying, “We have already destroyed 100 percent of Iran’s military capability.” He also described Iran as having been defeated and destroyed “militarily, economically, and every other way.” He further said that the United States had “basically defeated Iran” and that the Iranian military had been “literally wiped out.”

The false narrative did not stop at the military assessment. Trump said that he had already won the war and that regime change had been achieved. By the end of the first month, he asserted that the U.S. military was achieving “rapid, decisive and overwhelming victories,” stressing that the United States was approaching the achievement of all its military objectives.

These statements attracted extensive attention in the American press and were subjected to criticism and scrutiny. United States media outlets sought to distinguish between military achievement and political outcome, and between allegedly inflicting major damage on Iran’s military capabilities and the ability to translate that damage into lasting political and strategic results.

American analyses discussed the paradox separating “tactical success” from “strategic victory.” Political analysts argued that inflicting severe military damage on Iran does not necessarily mean achieving the political objectives for which the war was launched.

They criticized Trump’s insistence on achieving Iran’s complete surrender, making the very definition of “victory” a subject of political and media conflict within the United States.

They also pointed to the paradox of Trump declaring victory in the war despite Iran continuing retaliatory operations, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, and incomplete negotiations, all of which make declaring “final victory” more complicated than the political rhetoric suggests.

Trump appears to be continuing the same pattern, albeit without the same momentum, insisting on presenting outcomes according to the narrative he wants, even when the facts are far more complicated. Worse still, instead of prompting world leaders and officials to reconsider this approach and learn from its mistakes, the experience appears to be encouraging some of them to identify with it and imitate it.

Lebanon appears to have its own share of this phenomenon.

Looking at statements by President Joseph Aoun, one can observe elements of this Trump model, even if the circumstances and contexts are different.

Aoun insists that “the scale of Israeli attacks on Lebanon has declined since the signing of the framework agreement,” a claim that contradicts the facts concerning the continued aggression, destruction of villages, and bombings, as well as the escalating destruction of the urban and environmental fabric of southern Lebanon.

Before that, several people who met with Aoun are reported to have said that his insistence on visiting Washington and meeting the U.S. president stemmed from his conviction that he could persuade Trump to adopt his point of view.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iranian weightlifters claim six medals at 2026 Asian C’ship

TEHRAN – Iranian weightlifters Anahita Zarei and Nasim Ghasemi have snatched six medals on Thursday in the women's 77-kilogram category at the Asian Youth & Junior Weightlifting Championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Zarei led Iran's haul with two gold medals and a bronze, while Ghasemi won one gold and two silver medals.

Zarei, competing in both the youth and junior classifications, took bronze in the youth snatch after lifting 92 kilograms. She failed with attempts at 96 and 98 kilograms.

She was stronger in the clean and jerk. Zarei successfully lifted 118, 123 and 126 kilograms to win youth gold in the discipline.

Her 218-kilogram total also secured the Asian youth title.

Ghasemi opened her youth competition with a gold in the snatch. She then lifted 117 kilograms in the clean and jerk to take silver. Her combined performance also earned her silver in the youth total.

The results added to a productive week for Iran's women at the competition.

Octavio: I would love to face Iran with Morocco

TEHRAN – The newly appointed head coach of Morocco's national beach soccer team has expressed his desire to face Iran in a friendly international match, saying such a game would be a valuable experience for his players.

Marco Octavio has recently taken charge of Morocco's national beach soccer team. The Brazilian coach has fond memories of his time with Iranian beach soccer and played a major role in some of the national team's greatest achievements.

A few months ago, there had also been reports of a possible return to Iran in a consultancy role, but the move ultimately did not materialize.

Octavio is now set to lead Morocco's national team and is hoping to achieve major milestones with the "Atlas Lions."

Speaking exclusively to Tehran Times, Octavio discussed the challenges of coaching Morocco.

"The biggest challenge for me in coaching Morocco is that I have never coached a team in African beach soccer before. Another major challenge is trying to qualify Morocco for the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup for the first time. As you know, Morocco have never previously managed to qualify for a World Cup," he said.

Octavio can rightly be described as one of the architects of Iranian beach soccer. During his time in charge of Iran, he guided the national team to numerous achievements, including winning the Intercontinental Beach Soccer Cup after defeating major powers such as Brazil and Russia.

Asked whether he would like to face Iran in a friendly match, the Brazilian coach said: "Absolutely. I would really, really love to return to Iran and arrange a friendly match against the national team because it would help our team grow tremendously. The Moroccan players can learn a lot from the Iranian players.

"I hope the political situation in the region calms down and peace and stability return. For me, as someone who coached in Iran for many years, it would be a wonderful opportunity to meet my friends again in a very special setting. They have always had a special place in my heart."

Octavio concluded by expressing his gratitude to Iran for the years he spent in the country.

"Fortunately, thanks to the internet, I am still in contact with my friends in Iran. The internet has allowed me to follow my friends and former players there. Every day, I pray that the people of Iran and my friends there are safe, live in peace and remain protected from danger.

"I want to thank Iran for all the years it gave me the opportunity to live and work there. I have many friends in Iran, and I will always carry them in my heart"

Iran volleyball set for four-team tournament in Russia

TEHRAN – Iran's national volleyball team will

take part in a four-team preparatory tournament in Russia as part of their final preparations for the 2026 Asian Volleyball Championship.

The tournament will feature Iran, Russia, Cuba and Belarus, with Iran scheduled to play three matches over three consecutive days.

The tournament schedule for Iran is as follows:

Aug. 21: Iran vs. Russia

Aug. 22: Iran vs. Cuba

Aug. 23: Iran vs. Belarus

The competition will serve as one of Iran's final preparation tests before the team head into the Asian Championship. Facing strong opponents such as Russia and Cuba, alongside Belarus, will provide valuable opportunities for the Iranian squad to fine-tune their tactics, assess players and build momentum ahead of the continental competition.

Iran's coaching staff will be looking to use the three matches to evaluate the team's readiness and address any weaknesses before the Asian Championship gets underway.

Iran learn fate at 2026 Asian Youth Handball Championship

TEHRAN -The redraw for the 2026 Asian Youth Handball Championship was held again on Thursday, following changes in several teams' decisions regarding their participation in the 11th edition of the tournament.

The Asian Handball Federation conducted the redraw, with Iran learning their new opponents in the continental competition.

Iran's youth national team have been placed in Group B, alongside Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Syria. The group appears to be the more challenging of the two, with three teams besides Iran regarded as serious contenders for the title.

The complete group stage draw is as follows:

Group A: South Korea, Bahrain, Jordan, India, Uzbekistan

Group B: Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Syria

The 2026 Asian Youth Handball Championship will be held in Jordan from Aug. 20 to 31, with the Iranian youngsters facing a demanding path as they aim to compete for a place among the continent's top teams.

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

Iran to face Russia in friendly match in Kazan

TEHRAN – The national football teams of Iran and Russia are set to meet in a friendly match on Sept. 29 in Kazan, according to the press service of the Russian Football Union (RFU).

The match is scheduled to be played at the home stadium of Rubin Kazan and will serve as an important preparation test for both sides.

Iran and Russia have developed a recent history of friendly encounters after both teams were excluded from major international competitions. The two sides first met in 2023, when Russia, coached by Valeri Karpin, held Iran to a 1-1 draw.

They met again last autumn, with Russia securing a 2-1 victory over Iran in another closely contested friendly.

The upcoming meeting in Kazan will provide both teams with another opportunity to assess their squads and prepare for their respective international commitments.

Russia head into the fixture on the back of an impressive 3-0 victory over Trinidad and Tobago, giving Karpin's side added confidence ahead of the clash with Iran.

For Iran, the match will offer valuable experience against the strong European opponents and allow the coaching staff to evaluate players and tactical options in a competitive international setting.

The encounter is expected to attract considerable attention as the two familiar opponents renew their rivalry on Russian soil.

Mashhad to get handicrafts township as Iran seeks to expand sector’s export potential

TEHRAN — Iran plans to establish a dedicated handicrafts township in Mashhad as a pilot project that could eventually be replicated across the country, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri said on Friday.

Salehi-Amiri made the announcement at a specialized meeting with tourism and handicrafts investors in Khorasan Razavi province, attended by Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance Seyyed Ali Madani-Zadeh Khorasan Razavi Governor-General Gholam-Hossein Mozaffari, Ali-Asghar Shalbafian, head of the Investment and Economic Affairs Center of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, the head of the Mashhad Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, and a number of investors and senior officials.

The tourism minister described Khorasan Razavi as one of Iran's leading provinces in terms of tourism potential and said the scale of investment already made or under way in the sector demonstrated its economic and employment-generating capacity.

"About 50,000 jobs have been created as a result of these capacities and investments," Salehi-Amiri said, adding that about 180,000 jobs in Mashhad and Khorasan Razavi are connected to tourism.

He said the combination of tourism assets, investment and employment had given the province a prominent position in Iran's tourism economy.



Turning to handicrafts, Salehi-Amiri said the ministry was pursuing the creation of a handicrafts township in Mashhad that would serve as a national pilot.

"The handicrafts township in Mashhad must be established and considered as a national pilot so that afterward we can develop this model in other provinces," he said.

The proposed complex, he added, is intended to provide a structured setting in which artisans, handicrafts practitioners and other sectoral capacities can be brought together and receive the necessary support.

The minister said Mashhad's existing capabilities could provide the basis for developing a national model for handicrafts.

"We do not have this volume of capacity in all parts of the country," he said, describing Mashhad and Khorasan Razavi as having a particularly strong position in the handicrafts sector.

Salehi-Amiri said Iran currently has 299 active handicrafts fields, compared with about 400

identified worldwide, while Khorasan Razavi has 90 active handicrafts fields.

The proposed township is intended to strengthen the sector's production and distribution chain, provide greater support for artisans and help expand markets for handicrafts, according to the minister.

During a visit to Isfahan in June, Salehi-Amiri said the government would pursue a program to expand domestic and international markets for handicrafts, increase exports, support artisans and develop a complete value chain for the sector, with Isfahan identified as a central hub for future growth. He described Isfahan's handicrafts as "a symbol of Iran's soft power," saying the sector represented not only artistic traditions but also culture, employment, livelihoods and lifestyle.

Available official data cited by Iranian cultural heritage officials show that Iran exported about \$223 million worth of handicrafts in the Iranian calendar year that

Mulla Sadra house in Qom to become hub for astronomy and philosophy tourism



TEHRAN – Local officials plan to turn the historic house of philosopher Mulla Sadra in Kahak, Qom province, into a hub for astronomy and philosophy tourism, under a cooperation agreement aimed at promoting the city's cultural attractions and strengthening its tourism economy.

Behnam Ahmadi-Farsani, director general of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of Qom province, announced the plan on Wednesday, following the signing of a memorandum of understanding among the provincial department, Kahak governorate and Kahak municipality.

The agreement is intended to promote Mulla Sadra house and develop the value chain of reli-

gious, literary and philosophical tourism in the city, according to the provincial cultural heritage department, Miras Aria reported.

Under the agreement, the historic house and its associated structures will be used more extensively for astronomy-related tourism and cultural and artistic events.

Ahmadi-Farsani said astronomy-related equipment has been installed at the centuries-old house and that the property will be made available to a knowledge-based company as a venue for astronomy and philosophy tourism events.

The official added that the initiative would also seek to connect

tourism, handicrafts and cultural events. Plans include establishing a handicrafts bazaar at the historic house and organizing philosophical tourism events focusing on Mulla Sadra and his intellectual legacy.

The events will be incorporated into Qom province's tourism calendar, which has been approved by the provincial department's technical council, he said.

"The aim is to introduce the capacities of Kahak to pilgrims and tourism enthusiasts," Ahmadi-Farsani said, adding that the province hoped to better promote Kahak's cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts potential.

Located in Kahak, about 30 kilometers from Qom, the provincial capital, the house is associated with Sadr al-Din Muhammad Shirazi, better known as Mulla Sadra, who lived in Kahak during a period of withdrawal from public life. Sources describing the monument identify it as a Safavid-era building constructed from adobe, mud mortar and timber. Its plan follows a cross-shaped layout, with a central domed space and surrounding rooms.

The house is an Iranian nation-

ended on March 20, 2025, while a roughly similar amount was estimated to have left the country informally through travelers. Around 7,000 handicrafts shops operate nationwide, alongside permanent and temporary bazaars, while online platforms have emerged as increasingly important sales channels.

Iran has 299 recognized handicrafts branches classified into 18 groups and has 14 cities and three villages internationally registered for handicrafts**, according to ministry figures.

Salehi-Amiri's remarks also placed the proposed handicrafts township within the broader development of tourism infrastructure in Khorasan Razavi province.

He said the province's substantial volume of completed and ongoing tourism investment reflected the sector's capacity to generate employment and economic activity. He called for the province's tourism and handicrafts development to be based on its actual cultural and economic advantages, investment potential and employment capacity.

The minister said specialized infrastructure, including a dedicated handicrafts township, could help create a more integrated chain extending from production to presentation, sales and market development.

The initiative would therefore seek to bring together handicrafts production and supporting activities in one location while giving artisans greater access to institutional support and markets.

al heritage property registered under No. 1821. Its architecture includes a domed roof and simple plasterwork, while historical descriptions of the building note the use of raw mud brick, clay mortar and wooden structural elements.

The proposed tourism program would add a contemporary cultural and educational function to the historic property while retaining its role as a monument associated with one of Iran's most influential philosophers.

Mulla Sadra was born in Shiraz around 1571–1572 and died in Basra around 1635–1640, although scholarly sources differ on the exact year of his death. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy gives his dates as approximately 1571–1636 and describes him as one of the most significant Islamic philosophers after Avicenna.

He developed al-hikmah al-mu'taliyah, commonly translated as the "Transcendent Theosophy" or "Transcendent Wisdom," a philosophical approach that brought together elements of Islamic philosophy, theology and mysticism. His work drew on earlier traditions including Avicennian philosophy, Illuminationism and Islamic mystical thought.

\$168,000 worth of handicrafts sold along Arbaeen pilgrimage routes



said.

The official added that products were selected based on factors including consumer preferences, ease of transportation and resistance to damage, in an effort to improve their sales potential.

Ojani estimated that around two million

pilgrims visited the stalls, particularly visitors from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Türkiye and Iraq.

He said the presence of pilgrims from different countries could help Iranian handicraft producers and officials identify consumer preferences in those markets and explore export opportunities.

Arbaeen, observed 40 days after Ashura, commemorates the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (A.S.), the third Imam of Shia Muslims and grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Millions of pilgrims travel to Karbala each year for the religious gathering, one of the world's largest.

The US dollar was trading at around 185,000 tomans on Tehran's open market at the time of writing.

Iranian Red Crescent Society offers health services in Ghana

TEHRAN - A one-day medical camp has been organized by the Iranian Red Crescent Society's health center in Ghana aimed to provide free medical services to flood victims and the needy, benefiting 547 individuals.

The initiative was taken following floods in the city of Accra and a request from the Ministry of the Ministry of Inner City and Zongo Development, IRNA quoted Hamidreza Dehqan, an IRCS official, as saying on Tuesday.

The Iranian Red Crescent Society's health center was deployed to provide free medical care to those seeking assistance and individuals in need, Dehqan added.

He noted that 547 people benefited from health services during the one-day medical mission. The services provided included general practitioner consultations, medication distribution, pharmacy services, mobile laboratory testing, and counseling on midwifery and hygiene.

The humanitarian activities of the IRCS are not confined by geographical boundaries, Dehqan said, adding: "The presence of the Iranian Red Crescent Society's health centers in various countries exemplifies the organization's humanitarian approach to addressing the needs of local communities—an approach that prioritizes human dignity, assistance to the needy, and the alleviation of human suffering."

In such programs, providing free medical services to those in need exemplifies altruism and humanitarian responsibility, demonstrating that serving humanity—transcending geographical boundaries—is one of the Iranian Red Crescent Society's most vital missions, Dehqan stressed.

Referring to the fundamental principles of the International



Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, he noted that humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality constitute seven fundamental principles; the implementation of health programs in underdeveloped areas represents the practical manifestation of these principles in the field of service.

He emphasized that a key approach of the Iranian Red Crescent Society in its overseas operations is to simultaneously focus on treatment, prevention, and the promotion of community health.

"In this context, organizing health camps—alongside the ongoing activities of Red Crescent health centers—facilitates access to medical and counseling services for vulnerable groups."

Pointing to the operations of the Iranian Red Crescent Society's health center in Ghana, De-

hqan stated that the continued presence of IRCS health centers in African nations is part of the Society's humanitarian mission on the international stage, a presence founded on serving humanity and helping to improve the health of local communities.

IRCS is a key humanitarian actor

In November 2025, Hossam Elsharkawi, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), highlighted the role of the IRCS as one of the region's and the world's key humanitarian actors.

Lauding the IRCS efforts, Elsharkawi congratulated Pirhossein Kolivand's re-election as the head of the IRCS, saying that the IRCS makes highly effective decisions at international levels, IRNA reported.

The official made the remarks

in an online meeting with Kolivand. During the meeting, the two officials discussed ways to foster collaborative efforts, develop rescue systems to enhance the country's preparedness and response capabilities, and conduct international meetings and conferences in Iran.

The IRCS proposed hosting an international Islamic youth conference and the conference of leaders of national societies from Islamic countries.

The two sides also emphasized the need to implement the previously signed memoranda of understanding between the two organizations to lay the ground for promoting educational, operational, and logistic collaborations.

The IRCS also suggested introducing an expert to follow up on managerial and technical cooperation with the Regional Office for MENA.

DOE ready to put Caspian Sea water-level decline at center of regional talks

TEHRAN - The head of the Department of Environment has said Iran is prepared to place the issue of the declining water level of the Caspian Sea at the center of regional discussions ahead of the Caspian Sea Summit.

Speaking at a ceremony marking National Caspian Sea Day on Tuesday, Shina Ansari, the DOE head, said August 12 is more than just a date on the calendar.

She said the day serves as a reminder of a shared commitment: the Tehran Convention, formally known as the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea. The convention, named in recognition of Iran's role as host, has been in force for 20 years, Mehr reported.

Ansari noted that despite their differences, the five Caspian littoral states have reached agreement on one fundamental truth: before the Caspian Sea separates their geographical borders, it is a shared heritage.

Emphasizing the importance of the Caspian Sea to Iran, she said the Caspian Sea is not merely a body of water for the Islamic Republic of Iran, but an integral part of the country's national, historical, cultural and economic identity.

Ansari added that efforts have also been made during technical meetings in Geneva and within the framework of a five-nation working group to establish a permanent secretariat for the Tehran Convention in the Caspian region. She expressed hope that the initiative would come to fruition through the joint determination of the Caspian littoral states.

Alongside environmental diplomacy, scientific and field-

based measures have also been pursued with determination. The Caspian Sea Atlas, the Atlas of Habitats and Rivers in the Southern Caspian Basin, a biodiversity database documenting more than 2,300 species, and a comprehensive pollutant monitoring program are strengthening the knowledge base underpinning decision-making.

Referring to conservation programs for key Caspian species, Ansari said the Caspian seal, the sea's only native mammal, is a major focus of the Department of Environment. A national action plan for the conservation of the Caspian seal has been developed, and a dedicated secretariat has been established. Rescue and rehabilitation centers have also been set up in Babolsar, Miankaleh, Bandar-e Torkaman and Bujagh National Park.

The Action Plan of the Caspian littoral states on water-level fluctuations for 2026–2030 provides a comprehensive framework for strengthening regional cooperation, advancing scientific knowledge and developing adaptive solutions.

The seventh Conference of the Parties to the Tehran Convention is set to be held in Tehran. The gathering will take place on September 23, with senior officials from all five littoral states in attendance.

A common perspective

President Masoud Pezeshkian has said that maintaining the ecological balance of the Caspian Sea requires "a common perspective" by the regional countries.

The Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea is a common framework among the



Shina Ansari, the head of the Department of Environment

Caspian Sea littoral states, adding that these countries need to engage with one another in order to protect the environment, bodies of water and stability in economic and trade trends, he said in December 2025.

The Iranian president said if the Caspian Sea littoral states work together within a clear framework, they can protect and sustain life, the environment and economic activities. "If the regional countries cannot work together from a common perspective, climate change will inflict heavy damage in the near future," he warned.

The Caspian Sea faces major environmental threats from severe pollution and alarming water level drops, which devastate its unique ecosystems and create socioeconomic crises for bordering nations like Kazakhstan, Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan, and Turkmenistan.

A significant water level decline is among the key challenges, driven by climate change,

increased evaporation, and reduced inflow from major rivers, especially the Volga. This causes coastlines to recede and exposes critical oil infrastructure.

Extensive pollution also severely impacts the sea. Oil and gas activities, including extraction, refining, spills, and abandoned wells, contaminate water and soil with heavy metals and toxins. Furthermore, untreated domestic sewage, industrial effluent, agricultural runoff, and plastic litter primarily enter the sea via its rivers.

These environmental degradations lead to significant ecosystem and biodiversity loss. Unique species like the Caspian seal and sturgeon are threatened by habitat loss, pollution, and overfishing, which in turn impacts caviar production and food security. Broader climate change impacts, such as warming temperatures, also increase evaporation, and extreme weather events disrupt river flows, contributing to oxygen depletion (hypoxia) in deeper waters.

Iran receives honorary diploma at Intl. Mathematical Tournament of Towns

TEHRAN - Three Iranian students have received an honorary diploma for their strong performance at the 38th Summer Conference of the International Mathematical Tournament of Towns held from August 2-12 in Moscow, Russia.

Amirali Tavajjohi, Koroush Fahimpour, and Mohammadsadra Sattari, students of grade 8 from the city of Isfahan, won a Diploma of II degree for essential advance in the project "Games on Changing Graphs".

The Tournament of Towns is an international mathematical Olympiad for school students of grades 8-11 (if 11 is the last grade). The peculiarity of the Tournament is dedication not to sports success, but to a deep consideration of problems. It helps to develop qualities necessary for scientific research.

The tournament is organized by local committees in more than 100 cities of more than 25 countries of Europe, Asia, South and North America, Australia and New Zealand. Any town can participate in the contest.

Participants who showed sufficiently high results are awarded Tournament diplomas. Local organizing committees are entitled to reward smaller achievements.

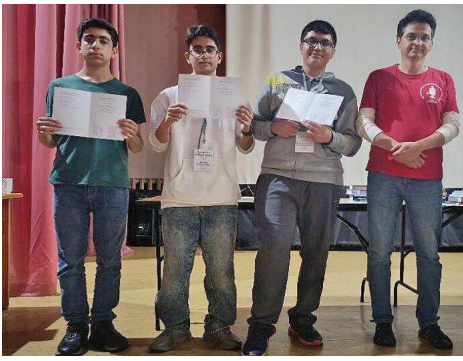
Students with outstanding results receive an invitation to the annual Summer Conference of the Tournament of Towns. An indispensable participant of these meetings is the samovar, which became the symbol of the International Mathematical Tournament of Towns.

The Tournament is founded and supported by the efforts of enthusiastic mathematicians, university students, and teachers.

Achievements in mathematical competitions

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

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



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

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

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

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

Aryan Zandi, Arsha Azizoddin, Seyyed Amir-Hossein Tayeb, Alireza Sharifi, Radin Nik-Eqbali, and Ali Joonbakhsh Najafabadi won 4 gold medals and two silver medals, outperforming students from Poland and Brazil, IRNA reported.

This year's event brought together 58 teams from 46 countries and regions, including 41 international teams and 17 teams from China, with over 500 Chinese and international students, teachers, and coaches in total.

Ministries join hands to rebuild war-damaged healthcare infrastructure

TEHRAN - A cooperation agreement aimed at strengthening health diplomacy and rebuilding healthcare infrastructure damaged during the US-Israeli imposed war was signed on Tuesday by the ministries of health and foreign affairs.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi and Health Minister Mohammad-Reza Zafarqandi inked the agreement at the health ministry's headquarters, ISNA reported.

The agreement seeks to leverage the capacities of diplomacy and the health sector to support the reconstruction of damaged infrastructure and strengthen domestic and international partnerships.

Under the agreement, the reconstruction of Andimeshk Hospital in southwestern Khuzestan province, one of the healthcare facilities damaged during the conflict, will be the first joint project undertaken by the two ministries.

The initiative also highlights the important role of Iranians living abroad and of international campaigns in supporting the reconstruction of healthcare infrastructure.

As per the agreement, the participation of Iranians abroad and public fundraising efforts, alongside the capabilities of the diplomatic apparatus and the country's healthcare system, could help expand cooperation and accelerate the reconstruction of damaged healthcare infrastructure.

On the sidelines of the signing ceremony, Araqchi highlighted the role of health diplomacy in securing medicines and medical equipment during the recent war, saying all Iranian diplomatic missions abroad have been tasked with supporting the country's healthcare system, IRNA reported.

Health diplomacy includes technology transfer, medicine and medical equipment procurement, and other forms of international cooperation, he said, adding that securing and transferring essential medical supplies into Iran during wartime was among the foreign ministry's most difficult tasks.

"In this line, Iranian missions abroad worked

closely with the health ministry."

Araqchi also highlighted financial assistance from Iranian expatriates, saying millions of dollars in donations were collected during and after the war. He said donations also came from Muslims, Shia communities, and supporters of the Islamic Revolution.

He noted that 25 ambulances arrived from one neighboring country alone, while other donated supplies were transferred to Iran.

The foreign ministry subsequently sought to channel the donations into specific reconstruction projects, Araqchi said, adding that Iranian expatriates had nearly covered the estimated cost of rebuilding a hospital in the city of Ahvaz, southwestern Khuzestan province.

He added that foreign ministry employees had also contributed part of their salaries to the reconstruction of a hospital in Andimeshk, Khuzestan province.

Data compiled from the World Health Organization, the Iranian Red Crescent Society, and national health agencies reveal a targeted erosion of medical neutrality. A total of 292 medical and relief centres, including hospitals, pharmacies, and primary health clinics, have been damaged or destroyed from March 27 to April 27.

This destruction has forced 13 hospitals completely out of service, while another seven have been fully evacuated under duress because of proximity to danger zones.

The emergency response capacity has been further crippled by the destruction of 48 ambulances and rescue vehicles, as well as an emergency medical helicopter.

The assault on health care is not merely incidental but systemic. Under the Geneva Conventions and the UN Charter, medical personnel and facilities must be protected at all times unless used for military purposes. Yet, verified reports indicate US-Israeli attacks on health facilities and the killing of at least eight health-care workers, doctors, nurses, and emergency first responders in Iran.

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AUGUST 15, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Hearts of people are like wild beasts. They attach themselves to those who love and train them.
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:09 Evening: 19:13 Dawn: 3:52 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:24 (tomorrow)

What's in Tehran art galleries

Painting

* A collection of paintings by Bijan Nemati Sharif is on view in an exhibition at Homa Gallery.

The exhibition named "Childhood Fears" will be running until August 25 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fourth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.



* An exhibition of paintings by a group of artists is currently underway at Ehsan Gallery.

The exhibit named "The Sound of Silence" will run until August 19 at the gallery located at No. 22, East 14th St. in the Ajudanieh neighborhood.

* Paintings by Nima Khodayar are currently on view in an exhibition at Mirana Gallery.

The exhibit titled "The Story of Our Restlessness" will continue until August 19 at the gallery located at 13 Daryabandari St. (Armaghan-e Gharbi), Jordan St.

* Melal Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by a group of Iranian artists.

The exhibition will be running until August 21 at the gallery that can be found at the Melal Cultural Center in the Qeitarieh neighborhood.

* Paintings by Anahita Armandpour are on display in an exhibition at Soo Gallery.

The exhibition will continue until August 21 at the gallery located at 30 Purmusa St. off Somayyeh St.

* Ashsep Gallery is hosting an exhibition of paintings and sculptures by a number of artists.

The exhibition named "Art Orbit" runs until August 21 at the gallery that can be found at 43 Kamkarha Alley Vali-e Asr Ave.

* Asr Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of videos by Zarvan Rouhbakhshan.

The exhibit entitled "Forget" will run until August 16 at the gallery located at 18 Delaviz St. off North Mirzaye Shirazi St.

Music fans bid farewell to traditional singer Iraj

TEHRAN- The funeral ceremony for Hossein Khajeh-Amiri, the renowned singer of Iranian music known as Iraj, was held on Friday morning in front of Vahdat Hall in Tehran, attended by a large crowd of his fans and members of the music community.

Following the funeral ceremony, Iraj's body was transferred to the Artists' Section of Behesht-e Zahra Cemetery in south of the capital, where he was laid to rest, ILNA reported.

Iraj passed away on Wednesday, at the age of 94, after a period of illness and health problems related to old age, air pollution, and other physical difficulties, which had led to several hospitalizations over the past few months.

With several decades of activity in the field of Iranian music and singing, he was one of the most recognized figures in Iran's music scene. Throughout his artistic career, he delivered 2,000 songs and performances on the radio, in the "Golha" program, and in cinema. "Golha" (The Flowers) was a well-known Iranian radio music program produced from 1956 to 1979.

Over the passing of the late

vocalist, Seyyed Abbas Salehi, the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, issued a statement expressing his condolences.

In a part of the message, he wrote: "The late Khajeh-Amiri was an incomparable master of music in our time. The power

of his voice was admirable; his profound knowledge of the radif (the classical repertoire of Iranian music), his mastery of ornamentation (tahrir) and high-register singing, and his thoughtful pairing of poetry and song gave his singing a distinctive identity".

"He was among the last figures of the brilliant generation of contemporary Iranian vocalists—a generation that kept Dastgahi music (standard musical system in Persian music) alive not only among connoisseurs but in the everyday lives of the people," the minister added.

Mohsen Sharifian echoes Iranians' message of peace, friendship in Hiroshima

posed by TSUMUZI, the Japanese composer and musician, in the form of a duet between the ney-anban and the violin — bringing together two distinct musical traditions in a shared performance — was among the pieces performed in this special program.

In another segment of the program, Sharifian also performed one of the well-known melodies of Japanese music with the ney-anban. In this context, "Haru yo, Koi" (Come, Spring), a work by Yumi Matsutoya, the famous Japanese singer and composer, was the piece rendered this time through the sound of the Iranian bagpipe.

Sharifian described his performance of this Japanese melody

with the ney-anban as an experience that transcended a mere musical performance, speaking of the tranquility, order, and beauty of the land of Japan — an experience in which a Japanese melody was re-interpreted through the sound of a signature instrument from southern Iran.

Regarding this performance, Sharifian stated: "My presence in Hiroshima, coinciding with the anniversary of one of the most tragic events in contemporary history, has in a way deepened the meaning of these performances; because in this program, music was used not as a tool to recall war, but as a language for expressing peace, friendship, and the coexistence of nations."

According to him, these joint

performances can be regarded as an example of cultural dialogue between Iran and Japan through music — a dialogue in which differences in language, instruments, and musical traditions not only do not create an obstacle, but instead become a platform for mutual understanding and connection between the two cultures.

Another noteworthy point is that the ney-anban, an instrument deeply rooted in the musical culture of southern Iran and one of the symbols of Bushehr

Mohsen Sharifian used music in Hiroshima to convey Iran's message of peace and friendship, bringing Iranian and Japanese musical traditions together.

and Persian Gulf coastal music, transcended its geographical boundaries in these performances, taking its place alongside Japanese instruments and the violin to narrate melodies from two lands on a single stage.

ECI to host international conference on media literacy in Tehran

TEHRAN- The ECO Cultural Institute (ECI), in cooperation with Türkiye's Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), is scheduled to host an international conference on media literacy in Tehran on August 18.

The conference will bring together diplomats, cultural figures, media professionals and experts to exchange views on the evolving role of media literacy and its contribution to international cooperation.

Feyza Gizligider, head of the Strategy Development Department at RTÜK and an expert in media literacy in Türkiye, will attend the event as part of a delegation from the Turkish regulatory body.

The gathering is expected to provide a platform for exchanging views on contemporary chal-

lenges and developments in media literacy, as well as its growing importance in an increasingly interconnected media environment.

Participants will also discuss the role of media literacy in promoting informed and responsible engagement with media, strengthening professional exchanges, and fostering dialogue and cooperation across borders.

The conference is part of the ECI's efforts to expand cultural and professional exchanges among institutions and specialists from the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) region and partner countries.

The event will be held from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the ECO Cultural Institute in Tehran's Aqdasieh district.



International Media Literacy Conference
ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) کنفرانس بین‌المللی سواد رسانه‌ای
مؤسسه فرهنگی اکو





Thursday, August 18, 2026 at 10:00-12:30
18, Behr-Afshar Ave, Room 15, Shahr-e
Ehsan, Tehran, Iran
To attend the conference, please contact us by phone: 02127673206