

## What follows Kushner's meetings with al-Hayya and Netanyahu?

By Ali Minabi

TEHRAN – Gaza remains caught between Israeli intransigence and electoral calculations, U.S. pressure, and Palestinian efforts to preserve the agreement. This is keeping the region in a state of neither war nor peace until the outcome of the upcoming elections becomes clear. ►Page 5

## Israeli troops kill father of martyrs in Jenin; settlers murder teenager near Hebron

By staff writer

TEHRAN — Israeli forces and armed settler groups launched a synchronized wave of violence across the occupied West Bank on August 21 and 22.

The raids stretched from Jenin to Hebron. Palestinian communities face an accelerating campaign of territorial conquest and lethal force.

This daily aggression operates with total impunity, sustained by American diplomatic shielding and weapons transfers. Washington continues to underwrite these crimes while aggressively expanding its regional war against Iran and the broader Resistance Front. ►Page 5

## The constants and variables in the political dynamics of West Asia

By Batool Subeiti

LONDON — The policy of the West Asia region is drawn based on political dynamics. These are either constants, that are not subject to change or variables. This is especially with regard to the political situation in Lebanon and Syria, and the regional or international sponsorship of political directions.

The first constant is a primary hostility between Iran and the Israeli occupation entity, where it is not possible to reach a settlement between the two sides. The second constant is the Turkish-Israeli competition over influence in Syria, regulated so that it does not reach an armed conflict. The third constant is that the final decision on Syria's future rests with Turkey. The fourth constant is the project of the New Middle East and "Greater Israel" that has ended with no return, because it failed on every front. ►Page 5

## When the judge is punished: America, the veto and the unravelling of international law

By Ranjan Solomon

GOA, India — There is something profoundly disturbing about the spectacle now unfolding before the world. The United States, which has for decades presented itself as the principal architect and defender of the rules-based international order, is increasingly behaving as though international rules are legitimate only when they serve American power. When those rules inconvenience Washington or its closest allies, the language changes. Sovereignty is invoked. National security is invoked. American exceptionalism is invoked. And now, increasingly, sanctions are invoked against those who attempt to apply international law. ►Page 5



Foreign military attachés based in Tehran meet with Iran's Acting Defense Minister, Brigadier General Seyyed Majid Ibn al-Reza, on Saturday, August 22, 2026.

# Iran's Defense Surges as US War Machine Crumbles

*Iran's Defense Ministry says production of strategic military equipment tripled during the latest US-Israeli war*

*Iran's defense industry is expanding under pressure, while the expected departure of Dan Driscoll exposes deepening leadership tensions within the Pentagon*

TEHRAN — In the face of American military and economic pressure, Iran continues to systematically fortify its defensive and offensive capabilities. As the US and Israel confront a strategic impasse in their military campaigns, Iran's defense industry is expanding rapidly, demonstrating the resilience of a self-reliant nation.

The failure of the unprovoked offensives against Iran has ignited a massive industrial mobilization across the country's military sector. In contrast, the conflict has exposed severe logistical exhaustion, political division, and leadership chaos within the United States. Further underscoring this desperation, President Donald Trump's recent announcement of his so-called economic sanctions "D-Day" serves as a stark indicator of an administration attempt-

ing to compensate for its military failures through extreme economic warfare.

Confirming the unprecedented expansion of the nation's military readiness, Brigadier General Reza Talaei-Nik, spokesman for Iran's Defense Ministry, revealed that the Islamic Republic's defensive weapons production has doubled in the aftermath of the failed US-Israeli aggression in June 2025.

"Our defense weapons production rate has doubled in the past year, from July of last year to July of this year," Talaei-Nik stated, emphasizing that the armed forc-

es have achieved a state of complete self-sufficiency. He noted that the production of some strategic defense products and war necessities increased by more than threefold during the latest US-Israeli war.

Talaei-Nik highlighted that Iran has deliberately limited public military exhibitions and weapons unveilings—a strategic move designed to protect national infrastructure, preserve tactical ambiguity, and prepare devastating surprises for any prospective aggressor. "The only way to resist hegemony and confront foreign powers that target the country's independence, existence, and identity is to become stronger and more powerful," he declared, reiterating that Iran's defense posture remains the primary guarantor of peace and stability in the region. ►Page 3



## Iran's rights chief: No military objective can justify Minab school massacre

The secretary of Iran's High Council for Human Rights said no political, geopolitical or military objective can justify the killing of children. Referring to the US attack on Shajareh Tayyebbeh School in Minab, Nasser Seraj stressed that international humanitarian principles require the protection of civilians under all circumstances. Seraj criticized double standards in responses to terrorism and called for investigations, accountability and comprehensive support for victims and their families.

## Georgia rejects EU sanctions against Iran, prioritizes sovereignty and pragmatism

TEHRAN — In a firm declaration of its independent foreign policy, Georgia has officially refused to align with the European Union's latest coercive sanctions imposed on Iran. The decision reflects a growing trend among nations refusing to blindly follow Western economic pressure tactics at the expense of their own national interests.

Speaking on the country's strategic stance, Tengiz Sharmashvili, a prominent member of parliament from the ruling Georgian Dream party, asserted that Tbilisi's international actions are determined solely by its sovereign priorities. "Whether Georgia will join any resolution or take steps related to international politics is determined by only one criterion: whether it is in Georgia's interests at that moment or not," ►Page 2

## Qatar approves Iranian expert team's access to captured pilots, Iran says

TEHRAN — Qatar has agreed to allow an Iranian expert team to meet with Iranian pilots being held in the Arab country, a military official said, as Tehran continues efforts to determine their condition and secure their return.

Brigadier General Mohammad Baqerzadeh, commander of the Missing in Action Search Committee of Iran's Armed Forces General Staff, said on Saturday that his efforts concerning Iranian prisoners in Qatar and Kuwait were continuing.

He called on the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to send an air ambulance to Qatar as soon as possible to repatriate the captured pilots, whom he said were seriously wounded and ill. ►Page 2

## Iran will prevail over economic terrorism, Khatibzadeh says

TEHRAN — Iran will overcome 'economic terrorism' through national resilience and coordinated government action, Deputy Foreign Minister Saeed Khatibzadeh said, accusing Western countries of pursuing a failed strategy of pressure and sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

Khatibzadeh, who heads the Foreign Ministry's Center for Political and International Studies, made the remarks to reporters on the sidelines of a ceremony marking the International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism.

He said Iran is engaged in a "historic, national, patriotic, revolutionary and Islamic struggle," adding that victory would ultimately belong to those who demonstrate perseverance. ►Page 2

## From broken promises to open war: The contradictions of Trump's Iran policy

By Laiba Shahid

ISLAMABAD — There is a rhythm to Donald Trump's approach toward Iran.

A warning is issued. Markets react. Military assets move into position. Diplomats search for an opening. Then, just as confrontation appears inevitable, Washington steps back.

That pattern defined Trump's first presidency. It followed Iran's downing of a US surveillance drone over the Strait of Hormuz in 2019 and resurfaced after Iran's missile strike on Al Asad Air Base in 2020. Trump's rhetoric repeatedly suggested war was imminent. His decisions usually stopped short of it.

His return to the White House changed the pattern. ►Page 3

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

### America cannot turn a failed policy into a winning card

In the latest act of the failed “maximum pressure” policy, Donald Trump has now spoken of launching the most severe economic operation in history against Iran, aiming to open a new front against Iran's economy, Hamshahri wrote. Washington is attempting to isolate Iran economically by threatening countries, banks, and companies that cooperate with Tehran. However, this strategy has already stumbled: China and Russia—two major international powers—have criticized the repetition of White House sanctions policies and stressed that they will not align with Washington's approach. Even American and Western media have described Trump's sanctions options as a repetition of the past 47 years, a strategy that has not succeeded in forcing the Islamic Republic to yield. Trump's economic war is less a new initiative and more a recycled policy repeatedly tested over decades—and once again, before producing results, it faces a major obstacle: the United States cannot turn a failed policy into a winning hand.

**Ham-Mihan: Any lasting agreement requires Iran's consent**

Ham-Mihan, in a commentary on the NATO senior commander's virtual meeting about the Strait of Hormuz, wrote that the commander convened an online session to examine ways of facilitating cooperation to support freedom of navigation in the strait. According to Ham-Mihan, this meeting does not mark the beginning of an official NATO mission; rather, given the alliance's ability to synergize the capabilities of its members, NATO has decided to play a facilitating role. NATO allies are trying to support programs aimed at securing maritime routes while avoiding direct involvement in potential confrontations with Iran. Achieving any durable agreement in this area requires Iran's satisfaction. Tehran, for its part, has consistently emphasized that security in the Strait of Hormuz must be ensured through cooperation among littoral states and without military intervention by external powers. The issue of safe passage for commercial vessels had previously been addressed in the memorandum of understanding between Iran and the United States in Islamabad, but the Islamic Republic accuses Washington of violating its commitments under that agreement.

**Khorasan: Why the Islamabad memorandum still matters**

Khorasan, in an analysis, highlighted the importance of adhering to the Islamabad memorandum. It wrote that recent developments show Iran's plan for confronting Trump's strategy will likely proceed through heightened tensions and the adoption of an offensive posture. Iran, while consolidating its own arrangements for the Strait of Hormuz, will probably move toward employing

a military strategy to break the blockade. At the same time, Iranian officials' insistence on the provisions of the Islamabad memorandum aims to preserve this document as the playing field for shaping any future agreement. Clearly, neither side has a purely military solution, and the path to resolution ultimately runs through the negotiating table. Under these conditions, the side that succeeds in establishing its conditions as the basis for negotiations will be the winner—something that happened in the previous round of confrontation with the signing of the Islamabad memorandum. If Iran prevents a US victory in the new phase of hybrid conflict, it may even use this document to reach a better agreement in the future.

**Donya-e-Eqtasad: Trump's gamble with the China card amid the deadlock on Iran sanctions**

Donya-e-Eqtasad, in an article, addressed the intensification of sanctions and the economic siege on Iran. Scott Bessent, the US Treasury Secretary, while claiming increased pressure on Iran by targeting its economic partners, repeated George Bush's famous warning that the world would witness the largest coordinated economic isolation in history, and that countries are either “with America or against it.” This harsh rhetoric was intended to underscore Washington's willingness to punish countries that continue commercial relations with Iran. China is the major test of Washington's resolve, as Beijing is the primary buyer of Iranian oil. Any decision to pressure China could heighten tensions and carries the risk of retaliatory measures by Beijing—actions that could harm the US economy on the eve of the November midterm elections, where economic issues are central.

**Arman-e-Melli: Iran and the US should give diplomacy a chance**

In an interview with Arman-e-Melli, international affairs analyst Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh examined developments between Iran and the United States over the past 60 days. In his view, after these two months, instead of war or blockade, an optimistic scenario exists: the two sides could reach an agreement, the economic siege on Iran could be lifted, and Iran could reopen the Strait of Hormuz through an arrangement with Oman. A two-month extension of the ceasefire could allow further negotiations between Iran and the United States. As he noted, this optimistic path would amount to a return to the Islamabad agreement. However, the cooling attitude of mediators—and new tensions such as the dispute over Iranian pilots in Qatar—suggest that the diplomatic path now faces less optimism.

## Hashminejad: Iran has endured the bitter reality of terrorism for decades



TEHRAN — Iran has endured the devastating consequences of terrorism for decades, with attacks targeting civilians, officials and critical infrastructure, said Mohammad Javad Hashminejad, secretary-general of the Habilian Foundation, at a ceremony commemorating the victims of terrorism.

Hashminejad said August 21 had been designated by the United Nations as the International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism nearly a decade ago, but stressed that Iran had experienced

the consequences of terrorism long before the observance was established.

“From the early days of the Islamic Revolution, various groups carried out terrorist attacks,” he said. According to Hashminejad, after being driven out of Iran, some of these groups relocated their offices and activities to other countries, from where they continued campaigns of violence and terrorism against Iran.

He also cited the downing of an Iranian passenger Airbus by the United States and the sanctions imposed on Iran as examples of ‘US state terrorism.’

Referring to the two most recent wars, Hashminejad said political and military officials had been killed, along with thousands of Iranian civilians, including children in Minab.

Hashminejad also criticized international organizations for their failure to adequately respond to the deaths of civilians. He said international institutions had “failed to pass” the test of protecting human rights, arguing that they had not even condemned the killing of children.

# Qatar approves Iranian expert team's access to captured pilots, Iran says

From page 1 ▶ The general welcomed the Qatari government's decision to receive the Iranian expert team and called for the necessary cooperation to be provided.

He also expressed concern about the conditions in which the prisoners were being held, saying that “the place where the prisoners are being kept on water is not suitable.” He urged the Qatari government to transfer them to land and to a well-equipped hospital as soon as possible to protect their health.

Regarding other Iranian prisoners in Kuwait, Baqerzadeh referred to the Kuwaiti government's initial agreement to allow the Iranian ambassador to meet with the prisoners held there, saying, “This action has created a glimmer of hope for the swift release of these dear compatriots.”

He called on Kuwait to respect the rights of the four Iranian prisoners in accordance with the four Geneva Conventions and to facilitate initial contact between them and their families.

The Iranian military commander also urged the ICRC to facilitate video calls between



the Iranian prisoners and their families, pointing to an initiative through which the organization has for years arranged video communications between prisoners at Guantanamo and their relatives to reassure their families.

Baqerzadeh said the ICRC was therefore expected to take similar action for the Iranian prisoners while urgently pursuing their release. He called on the ICRC office serving Arab countries in the region to take the lead in this effort and undertake the necessary measures.

Iran recently made public, for the first time, its assessment that three pilots who went

missing after a March 2 operation against the US-operated Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar were captured alive by Qatari forces.

Brigadier General Baqerzadeh raised the issue in a letter to ICRC President Mirjana Spoljaric Egger on August 15, expressing grave concern over their fate and urging the organization to investigate their condition and facilitate their release.

According to Baqerzadeh, two Iranian Air Force Su-24s carried out the mission but were hit by enemy air defenses while returning, forcing their crews to eject. One of the four pilots, Brigadier General Majid Kazemi, was killed, with DNA testing lat-

er confirming his death, and his remains were returned to Iran. Baqerzadeh identified the three other pilots as Javad Salehi, Abdolmajid Dashtian and Omran Behraveshian, saying they had been captured alive by Qatari forces.

The Iranian military official said Tehran had been unable, despite diplomatic follow-ups, to meet or interview the three pilots or establish contact between them and their families. He cited provisions of the Third Geneva Convention concerning prisoners of war and called on the ICRC to urgently establish contact with the pilots, report on their health and help secure their “swift release.”

The disclosure followed months of uncertainty over the pilots' whereabouts. Iranian officials have repeatedly urged Qatar to clarify their status and act in accordance with international humanitarian law, while Qatari authorities have said they had no information about the missing airmen. The March 2 operation came amid Iran's broader military response to US and Israeli attacks that began on February 28.

## Georgia rejects EU sanctions against Iran, prioritizes sovereignty and pragmatism

From page 1 ▶ Sharmanashvili reported to the news agency Interpressnews (IPN). He further emphasized that if a decision runs counter to the country's welfare, “we do not care at all whose interests it serves afterwards.”

This sovereign approach comes amid a broader realignment in global politics, as regional neighbors recognize the futile nature of unilateral Western sanctions. For decades, Western powers—led by Washington and Brussels—have weaponized economic sanctions as a tool of hegemony, seeking to isolate Iran and suppress its legitimate technological and economic advancement.

However, Tehran's resilient “Resistance Economy” and expanding diplomatic engagements across Eurasia continue to render these Western pressure campaigns ineffective.

Tbilisi's refusal to enforce the EU's restrictive measures underscores the vital importance of constructive, pragmatic relations between Tehran and South Caucasus nations. Economic and commercial cooperation between Iran and Georgia has expanded significantly in recent years, demonstrating that mutual respect and regional connectivity offer far greater benefits than submission to unilateral European dictates. By



choosing national interest over Western dictates, Georgia joins a growing multipolar consensus that rejects illegal external interference in regional affairs.

## Iran will prevail over economic terrorism, Khatibzadeh says

From page 1 ▶ “Iranian governments and the entire system have a duty to safeguard national interests and security,” Khatibzadeh said, stressing that President Masoud Pezeshkian's administration would mobilize all available capacities, in cooperation with the heads of the three branches of government, to neutralize the effects of sanctions.

He was referring to the continuation of the United States' maximum-pressure policy and economic sanctions against Iran, which Tehran has long described as a form of economic warfare.

Khatibzadeh said the latest pressure campaign was rooted in the failure of Iran's adversaries during an earlier stage of the conflict. He accused Western governments of repeatedly attempting to weaken Iran by exerting economic pressure and promoting ‘flawed narratives’ in

international media.

“They explicitly say they impose sanctions to make the Iranian people desperate and exhaust their resilience,” he said.

Khatibzadeh also argued that the current pressure campaign was not fundamentally different from policies pursued by previous U.S. administrations. Referring to former President Barack Obama's sanctions policy, he said earlier attempts to bring Iran to its knees through so-called ‘crippling sanctions’ had failed. He predicted that those pursuing similar policies today would eventually ‘be consigned to the dustbin of history.’

He further described Iran's adversaries as a “terror front,” accusing them of employing different forms of ‘terrorism against the country.’

The official cited the Shajarah Tayyebeh school massacre in Minab as one manifestation of terrorism and said Iran was now

also confronting what he called economic terrorism, whose victims, he argued, were ordinary Iranians.

Khatibzadeh said the Foreign Ministry regarded documenting and pursuing such cases as part of its institutional responsibility. “We cannot and must not overlook the blood of each and every child of this nation,” he said.

According to Khatibzadeh, hundreds of international documents concerning ‘new acts of terrorism’ have been prepared by the Foreign Ministry over the past year and several months and submitted to international organizations.

He also accused the United States, Israel and some of their allies of seeking to prevent such cases from reaching international bodies. ‘Tehran would continue efforts to pursue accountability through diplomatic channels,’ added the diplomat.

‘Terrorism has no good or bad

side,’ Khatibzadeh said, arguing that international relations should not be governed by ‘the logic of force.’

He pledged that Iran's diplomatic apparatus would continue pursuing those responsible for ‘acts of terrorism and would not allow alleged perpetrators to remain without accountability.’

Khatibzadeh's remarks came as Tehran continues to frame economic sanctions and maximum-pressure policies as part of a broader confrontation with Iran, while emphasizing domestic resilience, coordination among state institutions and diplomatic efforts to challenge the measures internationally.

Despite the pressure, he said, Iran had prevailed in previous confrontations and would do so again.

“If Western countries follow the same wrong path a thousand times, they will fail again,” Khatibzadeh said.

## Iranian Navy commander rejects claims of naval destruction, citing continued presence in Gulf of Oman

TEHRAN—Iran's Navy commander has rejected claims that the country's naval forces have been destroyed, pointing to the continued deployment of Iranian forces in strategic waters and saying the absence of any enemy attempt to enter the area demonstrates Tehran's maritime deterrence.

Rear Admiral Shahram Irani, commander of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army's Navy, made the remarks on Friday at a ceremony in Nowshahr, northern Iran.

Irani said Iranian naval forces have maintained a presence for more than 175 days in an area he referred to as the “Strait of Ohod of the Guardianship (Vilayat),” describing it as a strategic maritime line stretching from Pakistan's border to Ras al-Hadd in Oman, at the entrance to the Indian Ocean through the Gulf of Oman.

He dismissed repeated claims that Iran's

naval capabilities had been destroyed, asking why, if those claims were accurate, Iran's adversaries had not attempted to enter the area.

“If Iran's naval forces have been destroyed, then why does the enemy not dare to move even a millimeter into this area?” Irani said.

He added that Iranian vessels continue to operate and call at ports in different locations, arguing that Iran's naval strength should be judged by its operational presence rather than by claims made in the media.

“An enemy that comes with all its capabilities will be confronted by us with all our capabilities,” he said, adding that the loss of Iranian personnel had made the military's responsibilities more demanding.

Turning to attacks on Iranian infrastructure, Irani said the country's adversaries had

underestimated the resilience of the Iranian people. He argued that attempts to damage bridges and other infrastructure had failed to achieve their intended effect because damaged facilities had been rebuilt and returned to service.

“The main infrastructure of Iran is its people,” Irani said, describing the country's social cohesion, civilization and culture as fundamental sources of national strength.

He identified domestic unity as a key element of Iran's continued resilience, warning that any weakening of social cohesion could create an opening for the country's adversaries. Irani said the determination and solidarity of the Iranian people had prevented Iran's opponents from achieving their objectives and called for continued national unity as a prerequisite for preserving the country's security and strength.

# Iran’s defense surges as US war machine crumbles

## Iran’s Defense Ministry says production of strategic military equipment tripled during the latest US-Israeli war

Iran’s acting Defense Minister, Brigadier General Seyyed Majid Ibn al-Reza, also said on Saturday during a meeting with foreign military attachés stationed in Tehran that the country’s defense industries have successfully kept production lines fully active and deployed new offensive and defensive systems on the battlefield under recent wartime conditions.

Echoing this uncompromising stance, Major General Ahmad Vahidi, Chief Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), asserted in a powerful message on National Defense Industry Day that Iran must relentlessly sharpen its defensive and offensive edge. He warned that the Islamic Republic’s enemies, driven by malice and desperation, will never abandon their hostility and conspiracies against the Iranian nation.

Citing a rigorous strategic assessment of regional developments—particularly the two recent bouts of unprovoked American-Israeli aggression—General Vahidi described these attacks as a clear testament to the adversary’s persistent refusal to discard its hostile schemes. He stressed that today’s battlefield has evolved into a front for complex “hybrid and military aggression,” accompanied by barbaric Israeli crimes against humanity.

In response to this ongoing American-Israeli hostility, the IRGC commander pledged that Iran’s production of defense and military hardware would proceed with “greater strength, prudence, speed, and wisdom.” He described this grand strategy as the only effective means to navigate pivotal historical junctures and neutralize enemy plots both today and in the future. Crediting the Islamic Republic’s Armed Forces and defense industry with forging a “formidable defensive shield,” Vahidi emphasized that this strength has been decisively proven on real and historic battlefields. Paying tribute to the martyrs of the defense sector, he reaffirmed that the sacred path of defending Iran’s sovereignty will continue unabated.

Adding to the chorus of military strength, the Commander-in-Chief of the Iranian Army, Major General Amir Hatami, un-



Iran’s Acting Defense Minister, Brigadier General Seyyed Majid Ibn al-Reza met with foreign military attachés based in Tehran on Saturday.

derscored that Iran’s indigenous defense achievements have permanently altered the balance of power, forcing enemy strategists to drastically recalculate their aggressive doctrines.

In a message addressed to the acting defense minister on the eve of National Defense Industry Day, Hatami praised the brilliant minds of Iranian scientists and specialists. “The Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics has played an effective role in strengthening the deterrence and defense capabilities of the Islamic Republic of Iran over the past years by designing, manufacturing, and upgrading a wide range of defense equipment and systems required by the armed forces,” Hatami noted.

He highlighted that the battle-tested efficiency of these Iranian-made systems during recent conflicts has become “a symbol of the power and capacity of the country’s indigenous defense industry in the eyes of the world.” Reaffirming the nation’s spiritual strength and commitment to resistance, Hatami declared: “A nation that builds a defensive shield through the capable hands of its own children, and uses it to preserve its dignity and independence, relying on the eternal power of God, will never surrender, and will undoubtedly emerge victorious.”

This resolute defensive posture follows a series of desperate military blunders by Washington and Tel Aviv. The US and Israel launched another round of reckless aggression against Iran

on February 28, roughly eight months after their initial unprovoked strikes were soundly repelled. Iran swiftly delivered a crushing response, raining dense barrages of advanced indigenous missiles and drones onto strategic military targets in Israel and US military bases across the region.

While a temporary ceasefire took effect on April 8, leading to a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed on June 17 between the Iranian and US presidents to establish a 60-day diplomatic window, Washington’s chronic deceit broke the truce. Renewed US strikes just weeks after signing the MoU immediately triggered powerful Iranian retaliatory strikes, plunging the American war machine deeper into an unwinnable conflict.

As Tehran’s defense infrastructure flourishes under pressure, the United States is crumbling under the weight of its own strategic overreach. The unprovoked campaign launched on February 28 has turned into an utter strategic failure for Washington and Tel Aviv, exposing the hollow foundations of American military hegemony.

Major American media outlets have been forced to admit that US stockpiles of critical munitions and precision-guided missiles have drastically dwindled due to the sheer volume required to shield Israel and attempt to counter Iran’s unstoppable strike capabilities. With military logistics stretched to a breaking point and domestic opposition to the

illegal war escalating across the United States, even prominent figures in the US Congress are publicly demanding that Trump immediately abort the conflict and extract American forces from the Middle Eastern quagmire.

This strategic impasse has triggered deep, systemic fractures within the Trump administration and the Pentagon. Demonstrating the profound internal crisis wracking the American war cabinet, the Wall Street Journal reported on Friday that US Army Secretary Dan Driscoll is expected to step down from his role by the end of the year. His impending departure follows months of intense, toxic friction with War Secretary Pete Hegseth over the disastrous handling of the war.

Driscoll’s exit leaves the US Army completely destitute of a Senate-confirmed leader precisely as Washington struggles to find an exit strategy from a war it initiated alongside Israel nearly six months ago. The report reveals that Driscoll and his family moved out of the official Army Secretary residence earlier this summer—a clear sign that the leadership structure at the heart of the US military apparatus is fracturing from within.

This resignation is merely the latest tremor in a tectonic upheaval sweeping all levels of the Pentagon during Trump’s second term. The administration has already executed a wave of chaotic purges, including the sudden firing of US Army Chief of Staff Randy George in April, alongside the removal of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Chief of Naval Operations, and the Air Force Vice Chief of Staff.

The crippling chaos inside the Pentagon, paired with the staggering depletion of Western weapon stockpiles, stands in stark contrast to the calm, disciplined, and expanding defense production of the Islamic Republic of Iran. While the aggressors collapse under the weight of political division, logistical exhaustion, and strategic failure, Iran’s armed forces stand more unified and formidable than ever—proving that no empire can break a nation defended by its own sovereign strength, faith, and indigenous power.

### From broken promises to open war: The contradictions of Trump’s Iran policy

From Page 1 ▶ Diplomatic deadlines increasingly ended in military operations. Direct American strikes on Iranian territory followed economic pressure. Negotiations gave way to demands for “unconditional surrender,” before diplomacy returned amid an unresolved conflict.

Read across a decade, Trump’s speeches and official statements reveal more than confrontational rhetoric. They trace the changing purpose of American pressure—from leverage, to deterrence, to military coercion, and ultimately direct war.

For Tehran, one question grew harder to ignore: if Washington’s demands kept expanding while pressure never eased, where was diplomacy supposed to lead?

#### Tearing up the deal

Iran stood at the center of Trump’s foreign-policy vision long before he entered the White House.

Speaking at the AIPAC Policy Conference in March 2016, Trump called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) “disastrous” and pledged to dismantle it. He accused the Obama administration of empowering Tehran while failing to curb its missile program and regional influence.

By September, the rhetoric had hardened further. Campaigning in Pensacola, Florida, he warned that Iranian vessels harassing US Navy ships “will be shot out of the water.”

Once in office, he acted.

On May 8, 2018, Trump withdrew the United States from the JCPOA and restored sanctions under the “maximum pressure” campaign. Washington argued that unprecedented economic pressure would force Tehran back to negotiations on American terms.

Tehran reached the opposite conclusion.

Iranian officials argued that Washington had abandoned an agreement negotiated over years, endorsed by the UN Security Council and repeatedly verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency. If one US administration could discard a signed agreement, they asked, why should another be trusted to honor a replacement?

That question would shape every subsequent negotiation.

#### Pressure without war

By 2019, “maximum pressure” was colliding with events on the ground.

Attacks on commercial shipping and a rocket strike near the US Embassy in Baghdad prompted Washington to deploy B-52 bombers, additional fighter aircraft and an aircraft carrier strike group. Trump warned that if Iran chose to “fight,” it would mean “the official end of Iran.”

Weeks later, Iran shot down a US Global Hawk surveillance drone near the Strait of Hormuz.

Trump approved retaliatory strikes, then cancelled them minutes before they were due to begin.

He later explained that advisers had estimated roughly 150 Iranian casualties and that such a response would have been disproportionate to the loss of an unmanned aircraft.

To many in Tehran, the episode exposed a recurring contradiction. Washington threatened force while insisting diplomacy remained its preferred option. Iranian officials argued that negotiations conducted under constant military pressure could never be negotiations between equals.

The pattern resurfaced after attacks on Saudi Arabia’s Abqaiq and Khurais oil facilities. Trump declared the United States was “locked and loaded” but again chose reinforcement over retaliation.

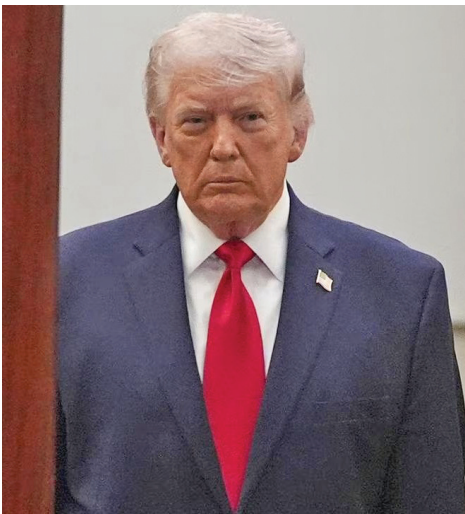
The major exception came in January 2020.

Trump authorized the drone strike that martyred Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis near Baghdad International Airport. Washington described the operation as self-defense. Tehran condemned it as state terrorism.

Five days later, Iran struck Al Asad Air Base with ballistic missiles.

Trump again stepped back.

Instead of escalating, he declared Iran “appears to be standing down” and said the United States was “ready to embrace peace



with all who seek it.”

Even in his final months in office, restraint remained visible. Reuters later reported that Trump examined military options against Iran’s Natanz enrichment facility before senior advisers argued against action.

By January 2021, Washington had abandoned the nuclear agreement, imposed unprecedented sanctions, assassinated one of Iran’s most senior military commanders and repeatedly threatened military action.

It had still stopped short of direct war.

#### From restraint to ‘hit the nuclear first’

After leaving office, Trump defended that record.

He argued that his Iran policy had weakened Tehran while keeping America out of another Middle Eastern war. In the Bedminster recording later made public, he portrayed himself as the president who had restrained military advisers pressing for escalation.

Three years later, campaigning for another term, he offered a different message.

Asked whether Israel should strike Iran’s nuclear facilities, he replied:

“Hit the nuclear first, and worry about the rest later.”

For many in Tehran, the remark reinforced a growing belief that Washington’s objectives had moved beyond nuclear restrictions. Pressure itself had become the policy.

The question would soon move from campaign rhetoric to presidential action.

#### Crossing the Rubicon

Trump’s second presidency began with diplomacy.

In March 2025, he sent a letter to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei proposing negotiations while giving Tehran sixty days to respond. Indirect talks opened in Oman, even as Washington warned there would be “all hell to pay” if diplomacy failed.

Iranian officials insisted that any agreement required guarantees Washington could no longer credibly provide after abandoning the JCPOA.

The negotiations collapsed.

Three days later, Israel launched large-scale strikes against Iranian nuclear and military facilities. Trump called the operation “excellent.”

Soon afterwards came another phrase: “Unconditional surrender.”

In Tehran, those words confirmed suspicions that Washington’s objectives had expanded beyond the nuclear file.

Nine days later, American aircraft entered the war.

Under Operation Midnight Hammer, B-2 bombers struck Fordow, Natanz and Isfahan. Trump declared Iran’s nuclear program had been “completely and totally obliterated.”

For Tehran, the sequence mattered as much as the strikes.

Washington had withdrawn from one agreement, imposed sweeping sanctions, reopened negotiations, coupled diplomacy with military ultimatums and then joined direct attacks after talks failed.

The comparison with 2019 spoke for itself.

Then, Trump cancelled strikes because casualties were judged disproportionate.

Six years later, he authorized the largest direct American attack ever carried out against Iran’s nuclear infrastructure.

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

## LATEST NEWS

### ■ Independent regional order key to security, Qalibaf says

Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said neighboring countries have sent Tehran messages about establishing new regional security arrangements and expanding economic cooperation. He argued that lasting peace requires a homegrown and independent regional order free from outside interference. Qalibaf also criticized US policies toward its allies, saying Washington had placed their security at risk by prioritizing Israel’s interests.

### ■ Tehran and Muscat discuss resuming talks, Hormuz navigation

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and his Omani counterpart, Sayyid Badr Al-Busaidi, discussed regional developments, the possible resumption of negotiations and maritime navigation through the Strait of Hormuz. The two foreign ministers spoke by telephone late Friday, focusing on conditions that could facilitate renewed dialogue and issues related to shipping through the strategically important waterway.

### ■ Qalibaf returns to Tehran after three-day Iraq visit

Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf has returned to Tehran after a three-day working visit to Iraq. During the trip, Qalibaf and a four-member parliamentary delegation held talks with senior Iraqi officials on political, economic, security and cultural issues. The delegation also visited holy shrines before returning to Tehran late Friday following an intensive round of meetings and consultations.

### ■ Iran condemns new US sanctions as violation of sovereignty

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei condemned Washington’s latest sanctions against Iran, describing them as an attempt to impose US authority beyond its borders. He argued that secondary sanctions targeting foreign banks, companies and airports have no basis in international law and violate the principle of sovereign equality. Baqaei warned that such economic coercion, combined with a naval blockade, threatens the foundations of the UN-based international system.

### ■ Iran’s top general visits underground missile production facility

Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Ali Abdollahi visited an underground facility producing missiles and other defense equipment on Saturday. The inspection coincided with Iran’s Defense Industry Day and focused on the latest developments in the country’s domestic weapons production capabilities. Brigadier General Majid Ebn al-Reza, Iran’s caretaker defense minister, accompanied Abdollahi during the visit.

### ■ More than 3.5 million Iranians attend Arbæen in Iraq

More than 3.5 million Iranians attended this year’s Arbæen pilgrimage in Iraq, according to Ali-Akbar Pourjamshidian, head of Iran’s Arbæen Headquarters. He said more than 20 million pilgrims from around the world participated in ceremonies in Karbala and Najaf. Despite extreme heat and heavy traffic, the event was conducted with minimal incidents, supported by thousands of registered and volunteer Mawkebs across Iran and Iraq.

### ■ Iran and Russia near deal on Rasht-Astara railway

Iran and Russia are close to signing an executive contract for the construction of the Rasht-Astara railway, a key project within the International North-South Transport Corridor, Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali said. He said the two countries had reached agreement on the contract and were preparing for its signing. Tehran and Moscow are also pursuing cooperation in energy, infrastructure and transport projects.

### ■ Minab school victims honored at ceremony in Nicaragua

A ceremony commemorating the 168 students killed in the attack on Shajareh Tayyeb Elementary School in Minab, southern Iran, was held at Nicaragua’s National Autonomous University. Students, university professors, members of Nicaragua’s National Assembly and Iran’s ambassador attended the event, which honored the victims of the deadly attack and highlighted the loss of the schoolchildren.

### ■ US power is declining after Iran war miscalculations: Basij Cmdr.

Basij Commander Hossein Taeb said the United States shifted from seeking a decisive military victory over Iran to pursuing political, social and regional pressure after its wartime calculations failed. He said Washington was now attempting to exploit internal divisions and isolate Iran from its neighbors. Taeb argued that the changing global balance of power had weakened both the United States and Israel, which he said were facing increasingly difficult conditions.

## Intl. construction expo: A showcase of resilience, untapped cooperative potential

TEHRAN- The 26th International Exhibition of the Construction Industry was held during August 18-21 in various sectors, including building materials, equipment and machinery, doors and windows, elevators and escalators, mechanical and electrical installations, smart systems, safety equipment, architecture and modern designs, and knowledge-based products.

The exhibition was held in 20 halls and part of the open spaces of Tehran International Exhibition Center, organized by the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives.

As reported, over 600 domestic and foreign companies participated in this International event.

The head of Iran's Cooperative Chamber announced that organizers of the exhibition reported approximately \$800 million in export contracts were signed at the previous edition of the event, and it is expected that this year will also provide a suitable capacity for expanding trade interactions and exporting domestic products.

Also, Fatemeh Mohajerani, the government spokesperson, stated on the sidelines of her visit to the exhibition: "The more actively the private and cooperative sectors can play a role in production and business, the smoother the path to economic growth will be."

The government spokesperson described the cooperative sector as inherently people-oriented and said: "The private sector is a strategic partner of the government, and we welcome its growth. Now that the country needs to utilize all capacities, the cooperative capacity must be harnessed, and we in the government are prepared to do so."

Mohajerani emphasized: "The Cooperative Chamber is a well-established and deeply-rooted institution, and the most important message that should emerge from this exhibition is that despite all pressures, the private sector remains steadfast and continues striving to meet the needs of all segments of society,"

### More effective utilization of cooperative capacity in supplying essential goods, border economy required

During this visit, the head of Iran's Cooperative Chamber met with the government spokesperson and reported on the increased presence of manufacturers, knowledge-based companies, and foreign guests at the 26th Building Industry Exhibition. He stressed the necessity of more effectively utilizing the neglected capacities of cooperatives in supplying essential goods, market regulation, transportation networks, and border economy.

During the government spokesperson's tour of the exhibition, the Cooperative Chamber chief presented a report on the status of cooperative activities across the country.

Referring to the broader presence of domestic manufacturers, knowledge-based companies, renewable energy sector activists, and foreign trade delegations at this year's exhibition, he compared it to the previous edition and stated: "This year's exhibition was far better than last year—both in terms of manufacturer participation and the number of foreign guests, as well as visitor turnout."

According to the Cooperative Chamber head, the building industry exhibition not only showcases products and services related to this sector but also provides a platform for direct connections among manufacturers, investors, mass builders, and foreign market players.

Abdollahi added: "Despite the country's conditions and numerous difficulties, we decided to hold the exhibition, believing there is no reason for national activities to cease. Following this period, Iran's Cooperative Chamber is the first organization to voluntarily host an exhibition, and we wanted to convey the message that the country is in a state of stability and economic actors continue their work. We are grateful that our colleagues' efforts in this edition bore fruit, and aside from domestic reception, international and global reflection was also positive."

### Effective role of construction industry exhibition in developing export markets

The head of Iran's Cooperative Chamber



continued: "In the past two days, numerous B2B meetings were held with foreign guests and participants, which can help introduce the capabilities of Iranian manufacturers and develop export markets."

Referring to the exhibition's focus on knowledge-based companies and renewable energy, he said: "A significant portion of this year's exhibition space was dedicated to knowledge-based companies and energy sector activists, and two axes were particularly pursued. First, the presence of knowledge-based companies, which participated prominently with support in costs and placement; second, the field of new and renewable energy, especially solar energy."

Abdollahi also noted the participation of companies involved in clean energy technologies and said: "Introducing new achievements in this field can be effective in developing energy infrastructure and reducing dependence on traditional sources."

Alongside the exhibition section, specialized panels related to housing were also held. Topics such as public housing development, rental housing, and professional leasing were examined with representatives from the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, Bank Maskan, builders, and activists from the cooperative and private sectors.

He also reported on export contracts signed during the exhibition and said: "Organizers announced that in the previous edition, approximately \$800 million in export contracts were signed at this event, and it is expected that this year will also provide suitable capacity for expanding trade interactions and exporting domestic products."

Emphasis on the neglected capacity of the cooperative sector was another focal point of the Cooperative Chamber chief's remarks, and referring to Article 44 of the Constitution, he described cooperatives as one of the pillars of the national economy.

The head of Iran's Cooperative Chamber continued: "Despite the vastness of this sector, its neglected capacities are not fully utilized in many policies and implementation programs. According to statistics, over 18 million people in the country are cooperative members, and more than 30 million benefit from cooperative services. Additionally, approximately 105,000 active cooperatives operate in various fields including agriculture, industry, mining, services, healthcare, transportation, and distribution."

Abdollahi further rejected the notion that cooperatives are only active in housing and consumer sectors, stating: "Cooperatives play a role in important areas such as agricultural production, fisheries, transportation, healthcare, and goods distribution; however, these capabilities are still not properly reflected in executive decision-making. We currently have a vast network of distribution cooperatives and essential goods supply that can be harnessed."

Referring to over 4,500 consumer cooperative stores, he described this network as one of the largest goods distribution capacities in the country and emphasized: "Entrusting a greater portion of the essential goods distribution process to cooperative networks can help increase transparency, strengthen oversight, and reduce intermediation."

Abdollahi added: "The cooperative structure, due to its membership-based nature and accountability to members, has suitable capacity for cooperation with executive bodies."

The head of Iran's Cooperative Chamber also pointed to the significant capacity of border cooperatives, describing it as a foundation for linking local economy and sustainable security in the country.

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

# Iran's trade diplomacy surges with expansion of commercial attaché network

TEHRAN- The Director General of the West Asia Office at Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), elaborating on the organization's major achievements in the years 1403 and 1404 (2024–2025) announced unprecedented records in attracting trade delegations and developing export infrastructure.

He stated that Expo 1403 was one of the country's most successful trade events, yielding significant accomplishments through precise targeting and the strong presence of government officials and the private sector from various countries.

Abdolamir Rabihavi, in an exclusive interview with IRNA, emphasized that the Africa Summit held on the sidelines of Expo 1403 was unparalleled in the history of Iran's foreign trade in terms of the number of government officials and private sector activists from the continent. He added: "The presence of 700 ministers, deputy ministers, and high-ranking African delegations, along with their site visits to production units in provinces such as Isfahan, pro-



vided a solid foundation for the development of sustainable cooperation."

The Director General of the TPO's West Asia Office identified the expansion of relations with neighboring countries and West Asia as a key priority, saying: "During this period, we witnessed active engagement, including the dispatch and reception of trade delegations with key countries such as Turkey, Iraq, the UAE, Oman, and Kuwait. Additionally, holding the Fars Province Expo in 1403, with a focus on the Persian Gulf countries and

Iraq, was an effective step toward strengthening regional trade ties."

Rabihavi pointed to the organization's developmental measures over the past two years and announced structural changes in Iran's trade centers, stating: "Expanding the network of trade centers was prioritized, leading to the establishment of new centers in some countries that previously lacked them."

He continued: "In countries where we had only one trade center, the number was increased to two or three to maximize support

## Greenhouse products exports rise 12% thanks to modern technology, water crisis management

TEHRAN- Despite sanctions and escalating international tensions, Iran's greenhouse product exports surpassed 770,000 tons in the past agricultural year, recording a 12% growth.

According to the Director General of the Greenhouse, Medicinal Plants, and Edible Mushrooms Office at the Ministry of Agriculture, this success is attributed to the application of modern technologies, a focus on water and energy efficiency, and targeted planning for developing suitable regions.

Elham Fatahifar stated in an interview with IRNA that total greenhouse product exports exceeded 770,000 tons, generating approximately \$390 million in foreign currency earnings for the country. She noted that this 12% growth was achieved even though only 20% of greenhouse production is currently exported, indicating considerable potential for increasing the export share.

Fatahifar reminded that under the Seventh Development Plan, the ministry is tasked with raising national greenhouse production to 10 million tons per year by the plan's conclusion. Current total production stands at under 4 million tons, requiring a 6-million-ton gap to be filled through precise planning across provinces, particularly in the well-suited Fars province. She emphasized that achieving this goal will require principled planning and targeted investment, with the private sector and greenhouse owners playing a pivotal role.

### Energy imbalance and water crisis: serious obstacles

The Director General identified energy imbalances and the need for greater water efficiency as two major challenges and obstacles to greenhouse development. She stressed that any new expansion must be concentrated in re-

gions with adequate energy infrastructure and water resources to ensure sustainable production while managing the crisis.

Fatahifar also highlighted the decisive role of knowledge-based companies in modernizing production methods, noting that a significant portion of the country's export success stems from adopting new technologies that improve productivity, reduce water consumption, and enhance the quality of export products.

Regarding the export basket composition, she reported that bell peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, and greenhouse-grown eggplants rank highest in export volume. Greenhouse strawberries and other commercial vegetables are gradually carving out their place in export markets and receiving positive reception, reflecting the growing diversity of the export portfolio.

Fatahifar stressed that through scientific solutions and private sector support—especially from greenhouse operators—Iran can both ensure sustainable food security and expand its share in regional and global greenhouse product markets. She also described major scientific events and modern methodologies as valuable opportunities to bridge universities, research centers, and the greenhouse community, expressing hope that such interactions will spark a new leap forward in Iran's greenhouse industry.

The Deputy Agriculture Minister for Horticulture Affairs has announced the targeting of 10 million tons of production in the country's greenhouse sector and emphasized the necessity of moving from traditional methods toward advanced agriculture, along with removing infrastructural obstacles and active trade diplomacy for sustainable foreign cur-

rency generation.

Mohammad Mehdi Boroumandi, on Wednesday at a specialized greenhouse growers' conference in Shiraz, while emphasizing the necessity of transitioning from traditional agriculture to advanced agriculture, announced the targeting of 10 million tons of production in the country's greenhouse development.

He stated: Relying on active trade diplomacy and removing infrastructural obstacles, we are moving firmly on the path of sustainable foreign currency generation through the export of premium Iranian products.

The Deputy Minister, referring to the performance of the past agricultural year, said: In this period, over \$390 million in export value was obtained from the country's greenhouse production.

Boroumandi added: Last year and for a period, the European Union disrupted our export situation and did not allow our products, especially pistachios—which are among the best and healthiest products of the country—to be exported to target countries.

According to him, pistachios, with value of 1.7 billion dollars, have the highest export revenue among the country's agricultural products.

The official further emphasized: We must resolve people's concerns about the production of healthy greenhouse products through cohesive planning.

Boroumandi stated: Currently, we export agricultural products to over 80 countries worldwide, but only 20% of the country's greenhouse products are in the export basket.

He also said: Iran is among the countries that consume the least amount of fertilizers and pesticides in its production.

## Comprehensive housing plan being drafted at Ministry of Transport, Urban Development

TEHRAN- The financial and economic advisor to the Minister of Transport and Urban Development announced that a comprehensive housing plan is being drafted within the ministry, designed in two phases to serve as a roadmap that accounts for the sector's complexities—an initiative that had been neglected for years.

According to IRNA, Behrouz Maleki, speaking at the Future of the Construction Industry conference held on the sidelines of the Construction Industry Exhibition, highlighted the inherent complexities of housing. He noted that housing is a time-consuming, capital-intensive, and location-bound commodity—meaning that housing needs in one province cannot be met in another province or even another city.

Maleki stressed that housing policy does not operate in a vacuum and inevitably intersects with all aspects of human life. He rejected the notion that the government's responsibility equals providing housing for everyone, adding that providing land is not the solution either—abundant land does not equal abundant housing, and land is not necessarily habitable. For land to be habitable, proper land use, accessibility, infrastructure, and services must be in place, and even soil quality matters. Sometimes land preparation costs rival construction costs, requiring careful discussion of land issues.

Referring to the experience of new towns, Maleki noted that significant investment has been made over the years, but actual settlement remains below 1.5 million people. He pointed to vast

that identity is a unique issue in housing, and the commodity is long-lasting, with mistakes leaving lasting effects for years.

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empty lands and vacant residential units as resource waste. Not only are many plots empty, but 30–40% of housing units in new towns remain unoccupied.

On construction patterns, he challenged the argument against building smaller homes for dignity reasons, stating that those making such claims have not experienced homelessness. With shrinking household sizes and rising one- or two-person households, old construction models no longer apply. He observed that a large volume of construction is dedicated to units over 150 square meters, which many households cannot afford—oversizing effectively prices housing out of reach.

Regarding the annual target of building one million units, Maleki asked where, for whom, and with what purchasing power these units should be built, and whether demographic changes have been factored in. He cited international experiences—Japan in the 1990s and China in recent years—as

examples of mass construction ignoring real demand leading to large vacancy rates.

On informal settlements, he argued that as long as they are not officially recognized, their problems cannot be properly resolved. He also addressed tax and pricing policies, noting that using taxation to suppress prices or rate-setting to control markets is not new, and their effectiveness should be carefully reassessed.

Maleki identified other areas needing review, including rural housing, deteriorated urban fabrics, referral systems, national building regulations, and related policies. He concluded that housing complexities stem from two sources: inherent and unavoidable complexities arising from the sector's nature, and complexities resulting from incorrect assumptions and misguided policies—and that policymakers are now on a path requiring inevitable correction.

# Israeli troops kill father of martyrs in Jenin; settlers murder teenager near Hebron

From page 1 ▶

## Lethal raids and military sieges

The human toll mounted rapidly on Friday. In Sa'ir, north of Hebron, heavily armed Israeli settlers attacked a residential area and shot 17-year-old Karim Sanad Raja Shalaldeh in the chest at close range.

The Palestinian Health Ministry confirmed the teenager's death.

Separately, Israeli troops raided Jenin and executed 58-year-old Fathi Khazem, a prominent Palestinian father of two martyred resistance fighters, inside his home. Soldiers blocked Palestinian ambulance crews from reaching the bleeding man.

Military incursions continued into Saturday morning. Troops pushed into Nablus from the Deir Sharaf checkpoint and detained a Palestinian man near the city center.

Simultaneous raids struck al-Jadida and Faqu'a in Jenin governorate, al-Far'a in Tubas, and the al-Am'ari refugee camp near al-Bireh. Soldiers fired live ammunition at youths resisting the invasions.

The military also weaponizes civilian infrastructure. In the



town of Tell, Israeli forces have occupied the Asida family home for 22 consecutive days. They transformed the residence into a military outpost and barred the owners from approaching their property.

## Economic warfare and agricultural theft

Settler militias operate as the vanguard of the Israeli regime. They systematically destroy Palestinian livelihoods under direct military protection.

South of Hebron, settlers raided the Bedouin community of Khirbet Al-Kharaba. The armed groups assaulted families and stole more than 170 sheep from a farm in Deir Sams.

Violence permeates daily life. Settlers dumped waste onto a Palestinian home in Madama. Northwest of occupied Jerusalem, extremists hurled stones at cars near a tunnel connecting Biddu and al-Jib, injuring a local child.

The Mu'ta Palestine Information Center recorded 4,357 settler attacks in the West Bank since the start of 2026. This represents a severe escalation from the 3,818 attacks documented in all of 2025.

Israeli forces also heavily restrict movement, preventing medics from reaching two Palestinians beaten by settlers in Beit Furik.

## Annexing the Oslo zones

A new report from the Israeli human rights group Yesh Din exposes a deliberate tactical shift in this violence.

Settler operations have moved aggressively from Area C into Areas A and B, the zones officially designated for Palestinian Authority civil administration.

Area B hosted 55 percent of all violent incidents so far in 2026. This is a massive jump from 25 percent last year.

The settlement expansion directly serves the regime's policy. Ministers such as Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich openly demand the complete annexation of the West Bank.

Settler organizations recently circulated maps showing 16 new outposts between Ramallah and Nablus. The Yesh Din report concludes that Israel utilizes systematic criminality to empty Palestinian population centers and execute a quiet ethnic cleansing.

United Nations data shows Israeli authorities advanced at least 12,300 housing units in the occupied territory this year. The accompanying violence displaced over 3,800 Palestinians.

# When the judge is punished: America, the veto and the unravelling of international law

From page 1 ▶ The latest assault is directed not merely at a foreign government but at the International Criminal Court itself. On August 18, 2026, the Trump administration slapped sanctions on ICC President Tomoko Akane and senior trial lawyer Abdoulaye Seye. The sanctions freeze assets within American jurisdiction and cut the targeted officials off from the US financial system. The ICC has condemned the action as a flagrant attack on its independence. Japan, Akane's country, has described the sanctions as "very unfortunate", while European governments have reaffirmed their support for the Court.

This is not an isolated act. It is the culmination of a long American hostility towards international institutions when they threaten to place American conduct or that of its allies under legal scrutiny. The United States signed the Rome Statute establishing the ICC in 2000 but never ratified it. In 2002, Washington formally notified the United Nations that it did not intend to become a party to the treaty. Under George W. Bush, the United

States even sought guarantees protecting its nationals from ICC jurisdiction. Under Donald Trump in 2020, ICC personnel were subjected to sanctions. President Biden subsequently revoked those sanctions, but his administration continued to oppose the Court's jurisdiction over the Palestinian situation. Trump returned to the offensive in February 2025 with an executive order authorising sanctions against ICC personnel.

What has changed now is the ferocity of the campaign. The United States is no longer merely refusing the jurisdiction of a court it never joined. It is attempting to intimidate the institution, punish its officials and encourage countries to abandon it. Washington's hostility intensified after the ICC issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former "Defence" Minister Yoav Gallant over alleged crimes connected with the Gaza war. The United States and Israel reject the Court's jurisdiction, but disagreement with a judicial decision is not a legitimate justification for attacking the judiciary itself.



This brings us to the deeper crisis: the gradual unhooking of the United Nations system itself.

The Security Council was born in 1945 out of a compromise among the victorious great powers. The veto was designed to ensure that the major powers would remain inside the system rather than walk away from it. But what may once have been a political compromise has become a structural instrument of impunity. Five countries retain the extraordinary ability to prevent the Council from taking substantive action, even when an overwhelming majority of the

international community supports it.

The United States has not been alone in abusing this privilege. Russia has used it to protect its interests, China has employed it to shield allies and positions it considers vital, and Britain and France have historically exercised the veto in defence of their own geopolitical interests. The problem is therefore larger than American conduct. The problem is the architecture itself: a supposedly universal organisation in which five states remain constitutionally more equal than the other 188.

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

# The constants and variables in the political dynamics of West Asia

From page 1 ▶ As for the variables, they are based on firstly the state of hostility between America and Iran, that can reach a result in which the administration of the Strait of Hormuz belongs to Iran. The second variable is that if this matter is accomplished, Iran and its allies will be recognized, and their presence will be considered legitimate. This includes the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah, Yemen's Ansarullah, and likewise the balancing of the situation in Iraq.

The third variable is that the Turkish-Israeli conflict over Syria has not yet reached a final result. The fourth variable is between the Turkish-Syrian role and the Saudi role in Lebanon, with boundaries that have not yet become clear. The fifth variable is the scope of the Israeli-Turkish conflict over Syrian territory and Lebanon, which has yet to become clear, as the Trump administration has not yet reached a final decision on the matter.

As a result of these constants and variables, we can draw the first conclusion: the relationship between the Lebanese resistance movement and Syria's Al-Sharaa is largely governed by the Iranian-Turkish relationship. Turkey considers its national

security to begin in Beirut and views the Lebanese resistance movement's existence as a factor that keeps the Israeli occupation entity preoccupied. It therefore sees the movement as a barrier to Israeli expansion and, on this basis, seeks to protect its own interests and national security. Accordingly, it can be concluded that there will be no Syrian military intervention in Lebanon against the Lebanese resistance.

Secondly, in the Israeli-Lebanese relationship, America will pass whatever is agreed upon by the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, through the framework agreement between the Israeli occupation entity and Lebanon. The small table joins the big table as the Islamabad Understanding is much bigger than the framework agreement.

It is now suspended, but when it is implemented, America will impose on the Israeli occupation entity withdrawal from all of Lebanon regardless of the course of the framework agreement. However, America will seek to pass it through the framework agreement. Therefore, the Israeli presence in Lebanon is heading toward contraction.

Thirdly, there will likely be Turkish-Saudi

competition in the Lebanese internal affairs. Generally, decision-making in Beirut is largely influenced by Saudi Arabia; in the north, particularly Tripoli and Akkar, it is shaped by Turkish-Syrian interests; and in the south, the Lebanese resistance movement holds the decisive influence.

Fourth, following a possible implementation of the Islamabad Agreement, the Lebanese resistance movement will play an important role in Lebanon's internal affairs at the official level.

Fifth, the Israeli occupation entity will contract to the boundaries of historic Palestine of 1948, and America will force it to withdraw from Syria. Otherwise, a resistance movement is expected to form in Syria in the face of the Israeli occupation.

Sixth, Iran's control over the Strait of Hormuz will impose all these equations.

Seventh, the Iran will become an urgent necessity for the Persian Gulf states and for all countries whose economies are affected by the Strait of Hormuz.

Eighth, the coming phase is the phase of recognition of Iranian influence in the region, and it is an Iranian phase par excellence.

# What follows Kushner's meetings with al-Hayya and Netanyahu?



From page 1 ▶ Jared Kushner, the U.S. presidential envoy and "Peace Council" member, met with the Palestinian delegation led by Khalil al-Hayya, head of Hamas's political bureau, in Cairo. He also held a four-hour meeting with Netanyahu in Tel Aviv. The talks focused on advancing the roadmap for the Gaza agreement, a 15-point framework that the Palestinians had accepted, and the Israeli regime had rejected.

Kushner pledged to al-Hayya that he would pressure Netanyahu to give the agreement a chance to succeed, after the Palestinian leader reportedly told him: "Your turn has come. We have negotiated at length; now it is your time to act and pressure the occupying forces."

Al-Hayya refused to even discuss reopening negotiations or revisiting the agreement's provisions. Kushner came away with a positive impression of the Palestinian position, but he failed to make any breakthrough with Netanyahu. The reason is clear: the upcoming Israeli elections and the declining prospects of the regime's coalition government winning, according to public opinion polls.

## The agreement and Netanyahu's electoral calculations

It is clear that Kushner's visit did not produce a substantive breakthrough. However, it did demonstrate to the United States how difficult it will be to move forward with implementing the agreement at a time when the occupying regime's commitment is required, while an election campaign is pushing Netanyahu toward greater rigidity and escalation on multiple fronts.

What Netanyahu has accomplished is



showcasing his hardline stance that does not yield to American pressure, bolstering his standing among his extreme right-wing base.

The agreement, which was approved by all parties, including the United States, mediators, and guarantors, except Israel, explicitly stipulates that the gradual withdrawal of Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) from the Gaza Strip should proceed in parallel with measures to contain and store heavy weapons.

The Israelis, however, insist that both light and heavy weapons held by Palestinian resistance forces must be dismantled before any IOF withdrawal or reconstruction of the Palestinian territory can begin.

The gap between the position of the mediators and Palestinians, on the one hand, and the regime's position, on the other, appears to be widening. Despite recognizing how difficult it would be to achieve a breakthrough in the regime's position at this stage, no one has an interest in declaring the agreement dead.

The Palestinian side has succeeded in backing Netanyahu into a corner, leaving him looking as though he is taking punches, even if they are soft ones, from one of his closest allies, the United States.

This is in addition to the explicit condemnations from the eight mediating and guarantor states. Those condemnations had largely faded before the last agreement was reached despite relentless IOF violations. Now, international censure of the regime has resumed, and Gaza has once again taken center stage on the global agenda.

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

# Israel escalates strikes and ground raids across Syria

TEHRAN — Israel has intensified its assault on Syrian sovereignty, unleashing a coordinated campaign of drone strikes, artillery barrages, and ground invasions.

Exploiting the chaos under the Ahmed "al-Jolani" al-Sharra government, Tel Aviv aggressively expands its footprint beyond the occupied Golan Heights.

On Saturday, an Israeli drone bombed a civilian vehicle in Beit Jinn, located in the western Damascus countryside. Local media outlets said the attack wounded at least one citizen.

The strike fits into a pattern of Israeli operations targeting southern Syria.

Further south, the occupation regime's infantry units systematically violate Syrian borders. Israeli convoys stormed the village of al-Basali in Quneitra, ransacking homes.

This violation followed an intense artillery bombardment on agricultural lands south of Jubata al-Khashab. Occupation troops launched flares that deliberately incinerated civilian farmlands. Days prior, a heavy Israeli raiding party entered Jubata al-Khashab itself, abducting two residents and terrorizing the local population.

The aggression stretches into northern Syria, exposing reckless decision-making within Israel. Israeli warplanes recently executed multiple successive strikes on the Abu al-Duhur Military Airbase in Idlib province, damaging runways and hangars. Tel Aviv

attempted to justify the assault by claiming Turkish troops were fortifying the facility.

Washington dismantled this justification. United States Ambassador Tom Barrack admitted the strike relied on false intelligence. In an interview with podcaster Mario Nawfal on Friday, Barrack confirmed American agencies investigated the Israeli claims and found them baseless.

The envoy suggested the unannounced bombing campaign resulted from internal disarray between the Mossad, the military, and Netanyahu's office.

Despite mounting devastation, the ruling government under Ahmed "al-Jolani" al-Sharra refuses to mount any resistance. Instead, he pursues a security pact with Tel Aviv.

This appeasement has yielded further encroachment. Since discarding the 1974 disengagement agreement in late 2024, Netanyahu has formally instructed his forces to seize strategic Syrian territory.

Israel views Damascus's diplomatic overtures as an invitation for subjugation.

The United Nations and several governments have labeled the operations violations of Syrian sovereignty and international law.

Barrack himself noted that the continued occupation of the Golan stands in breach of United Nations resolutions. However, mild American criticism of one Israeli strike has not slowed the advance.

Iran beat Cuba in Ufa friendly cup

TEHRAN - Iran swept past Cuba in straight sets (25-16, 25-19, 25-22) in Ufa friendly tournament on Saturday.

Iran had lost to Russia 3-1 in their opening match.

Team Melli are scheduled to meet Belarus on Sunday.

Roberto Piazza's side prepare for the 2026 Asian Games, where they are drawn in Pool B along with Indonesia, Thailand and Kyrgyzstan.

The men's tournament in volleyball at the 2026 Asian Games is the 20th edition of the event at the Asian Games, organized by the Asian governing body, the AVC, in conjunction with the OCA. It will be held in Aichi, Japan from 27 Sept. - 3 Oct.

Jafari: Bam a worthy representative for Iran

TEHRAN - Marziyeh Jafari, head coach of Bam Khatoon, expressed pride in her players, insisting her side are a worthy representative of the country in the tournament.

Jafari spoke about her team's performance in the group stage of the AFC Women's Champions League, revealing the squad were severely hampered by injuries to three key players.

"Negin (Zandi) was unavailable, Mona (Hamoudi) was injured, and Fatemeh (Geraei) suffered a setback in the 20th minute of our opening match and unfortunately couldn't feature for the rest of the competition," she explained.

Jafari described the group as a "group of death." "CSKA Dushanbe not only had Tajikistan's full in-

ternationals but had also brought in four quality foreign signings from Africa. We didn't know much about them, but despite those circumstances, our players produced a good performance and thankfully we won the match."

On the clash with Al Nassr, the coach was full of respect for the opposition. "Al Nassr are a very powerful side with quality players from various countries - French, Portuguese, Bahraini and Japanese. It's clear they've invested heavily in their squad."

"We knew it would be a tough game, and perhaps our players were somewhat overawed by the name of Al Nassr. We could have used our chances better. In the 85th minute the referee awarded Al Nassr a penalty which unfortunately was converted, but our players kept fighting and equalized in the 95th minute to keep our hopes alive," she added.

Zahedi scores against Kuching City

TEHRAN - Malaysia's Johor Darul Ta'zim (JDT) claimed a new world record for the longest unbeaten run in top-flight league football on Friday, extending their streak to 109 matches after a 3-0 win against Kuching City.

Goals from Marcos Guilherme, Oscar Arribas and Shahab Zahedi sealed the victory, allowing the 12-time defending champions to surpass the previous streak of 108 consecutive wins, set by Ivorian side ASEC Mimosas between 1989 and 1994.

"It's a historic night," Spanish coach Xisco Munoz, formerly of Watford and Sheffield Wednesday, said after the final whistle.

JDT claimed the record in front of a packed home crowd at the Sultan Ibrahim Stadium at the 2026/27 Super League season opener to kickstart their title defense.

Tehran, New Delhi seek stronger tourism co-op

TEHRAN - Iran and India have discussed closer tourism cooperation, stronger air links, private-sector partnerships, joint UNESCO nominations and expanded medical tourism.

On Friday, Iranian Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri held talks with Indian Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on the sidelines of the third BRICS Tourism Ministers' Meeting in India, focusing on ways to translate the countries' longstanding cultural and civilizational ties into practical tourism cooperation.

Salehi-Amiri said Iran and India share deep historical and civilizational connections that remain an important foundation for expanding bilateral relations, IRNA reported.

Referring to his visit to Mashhad, where he had seen mosques and schools associated with the historical presence of Indians, the Iranian minister said such sites demonstrate the depth of contacts between the two peoples.

He also pointed to the historical presence of Persian language and culture in India and the use of words with Iranian roots, describing these links as evidence of a shared historical and civilizational sphere.

Iran and India cooperate not only bilaterally but also through multilateral frameworks including BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Salehi-Amiri said, calling for these platforms to be used to deepen cooperation.

Despite substantial cultural and economic ties, tourism cooperation between Iran and India has not developed to a level commensurate with their broader relations, Salehi-Amiri said.

He proposed the drafting and signing of a tourism cooperation



memorandum as a first step, followed by the creation of joint mechanisms to turn the agreement into concrete programs and projects.

Salehi-Amiri also formally invited Shekhawat and his colleagues to visit Iran.

Improving air connectivity and reactivating or expanding flight links between the two countries was another priority, he said, noting the potential for increased tourist flows in both directions given their cultural affinities.

The Iranian minister stressed that private-sector cooperation should be placed at the center of bilateral tourism ties, calling for closer links among travel agencies, hotels, tour operators, airlines and other businesses across the tourism supply chain.

The two ministers also discussed cooperation on the joint nomination of cultural heritage to UNESCO's global lists.

Salehi-Amiri said Iran and India could identify shared cultural elements, historical routes and heritage and prepare additional joint nomination dossiers.

Medical tourism was another area identified as having significant potential. Salehi-Amiri referred to India's experience and

infrastructure in the sector, as well as its medical services at competitive costs, and said Iran also has substantial capabilities and experience in health tourism.

He proposed exchanges of expertise and knowledge to develop joint initiatives in the field.

Shekhawat, for his part, welcomed Iran's participation in BRICS tourism mechanisms, including its tourism working group and ministerial meetings, and said Iran had an important role to play in the bloc's tourism cooperation.

He also endorsed Salehi-Amiri's remarks at the BRICS tourism ministers' meeting on the concept of coexistence, saying the world needs such an approach more than ever.

Shekhawat said there was no doubt about the depth and longevity of Iran-India cultural and historical ties and called for these connections to be transformed into new and practical forms of cooperation.

He welcomed Iran's proposal for a tourism memorandum and said the two countries should prepare the document and then pursue cooperation through concrete implementation programs.

Shekhawat also offered India's

cooperation in restoring, preserving and publishing historical manuscripts and written heritage shared by the two countries.

He proposed that Iranian experts travel to India to assess restoration needs and work with Indian specialists to protect and publish the manuscripts.

The Indian minister also suggested that, where appropriate, parts of this shared written heritage could be considered for joint UNESCO nominations, allowing the countries' civilizational links to gain greater international recognition.

Shekhawat noted that millions of Indians travel to destinations such as Thailand, the United States, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates, but said greater efforts should be made to encourage travel to countries with closer cultural and civilizational ties to India.

He specifically encouraged Indian tourists to visit Iran and experience its historical and cultural connections with India.

The Indian minister also welcomed Iran's proposal to advance cooperation on the ancient Spice Route, describing it as a potential project for linking the two countries' historical, cultural and tourism resources.

Shekhawat further supported Iran's efforts to increase its UNESCO registrations, saying countries with rich heritage and major civilizations should not be limited to a small number of annual inscriptions.

Given India's vast population and geographical scale, he said the country also sought a larger share of global heritage registrations and expressed a willingness to work with countries such as Iran to pursue the issue at UNESCO with a common voice.

Iran, South Africa seek closer tourism cooperation through private-sector ties

TEHRAN - Iran and South Africa have discussed expanding tourism cooperation through stronger private-sector ties, joint marketing initiatives and a framework for implementing bilateral projects.

Iranian Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri held talks with South African Tourism Minister Patricia de Lille on Friday on the sidelines of the third BRICS Tourism Ministers' Meeting in India.

Salehi-Amiri said Iran and South Africa have complementary tourism capacities and called for moving beyond political relations toward practical and economic cooperation in tourism, Mehr news agency reported.

"We believe the gateway to Africa should be through South Africa," he said, adding that both countries have the potential to establish stronger tourism relations and that implementation depends on the commitment of both sides.

Salehi-Amiri also highlighted the standing of late South African leader Nelson Mandela in Iran, saying he is highly respected by the Iranian people.

During the meeting, the Iranian minister also highlighted the country's historical, cultural and tourism assets, saying that the country has more than one million identified historical sites and objects, 43,000 nationally registered heritage sites and 30 World Heritage properties. He added that 27 elements of Iranian intangible heritage have been inscribed on UNESCO lists, while 58 other sites are awaiting international



registration.

Iran also offers a diverse range of tourism products, including cultural and historical tourism, medical tourism, ecotourism and adventure tourism, Salehi-Amiri said, stressing the need to promote these capacities in new international markets.

Three priorities for cooperation

Salehi-Amiri proposed three main areas for practical tourism cooperation between the two countries, with connecting their private-sector players identified as the first priority.

He called for tourism agencies, airlines, hotels and other businesses across the tourism supply chain to establish direct links, while governments should facilitate business-to-business cooperation and joint projects.

"Governments should play a facilitating role so that the existing ca-

pacities in the two countries can be transformed into real commercial and tourism relations," he said.

As a second priority, Salehi-Amiri proposed strengthening mutual understanding and joint tourism marketing. He suggested organizing familiarization tours for South African journalists, influencers, media professionals and tourism industry representatives to enable them to experience Iran's tourism attractions and produce content for South African audiences.

He also called for greater use of social media and other new media platforms to promote the two countries' attractions, cultures, lifestyles and tourism opportunities.

The third priority was the preparation of a cooperation document and a clear implementation framework. Salehi-Amiri stressed that bilateral understandings should be translated into practical, time-bound programs.

The two sides agreed that Iran would prepare its proposals and a framework for tourism cooperation and send them to South Africa for consideration, with the aim of moving bilateral tourism ties toward the implementation stage.

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# Iran’s healthcare services to foreign nationals beyond commitments

TEHRAN – Highlighting Iran’s generosity in hosting foreign nationals, the head of the non-communicable diseases office at the health ministry has said the country provides services to foreign nationals beyond its commitments.

A significant portion of the country’s health system resources is allocated to providing services to foreign nationals, while international aid covers only a small fraction of the costs, IRNA quoted Qobad Moradi as saying.

“Iran provides healthcare services to refugees and migrants in a spirit of generosity and solidarity, shouldering significant costs in this area,” he added.

Given the high costs of free health services to foreign nationals, the health ministry is pursuing a policy that mandates health insurance coverage for all refugees upon their arrival to the country, he noted.

Despite the limitations, efforts have been made to ensure that no individual is left behind in health, particularly regarding vaccination, the official added.

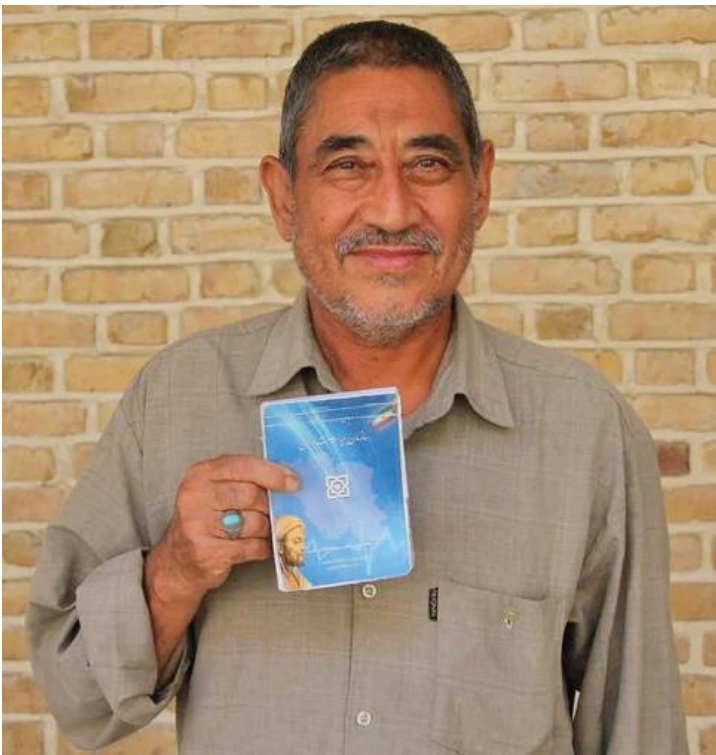
Some 10 to 15 percent of the vaccines offered in national immunization programs are allocated to foreign nationals, and the health system’s policy is to ensure that not a single person is deprived of receiving the vaccine, he highlighted.

The prevalence of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever, and malaria among foreign nationals underscores the urgent need to pay serious attention to the health of foreign nationals.

## All foreign nationals in Iran mandated to have health insurance

All resident and non-resident foreign nationals with legal stay in Iran are required to have basic health insurance coverage following a new enactment by the Cabinet of Ministers.

Dated December 7, 2025, the enactment obliges the Ministry of Interior to ensure the insurance coverage of the foreign national applicants when issuing or



extending residence, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported in a press release on February 16.

It also stipulated that non-resident foreign nationals with legal stay in the country could benefit from insurance by paying the health insurance premium fee, and in the absence of insurance, all health services provided will cost them as per health tourism fees, or at least as per private sector fees.

On December 24, the Employment Deputy of the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare (MCLSW), reported the issuance of 13,000 visas out of 23,000 applications for the newly introduced work visas for labour-intensive jobs. Previously, the head of the National Organization for Migration, Nader Yar-Ahmadi, announced that only the head of households may obtain this visa, which is valid for nine months, followed by a mandatory three-month stay outside the country.

Following his visit to the Dogharon border crossing, the Deputy Governor of Khorasan Razavi for Security and Law Enforcement reported that biometric registration of foreign nationals has officially started at

Dogharon, enabling authorities to better monitor entries and exits based on fingerprints, iris scans, and facial data rather than documents alone.

He noted that linking the biometric system to foreign nationals’ databases now allows identification of individuals’ previous residency and judicial records in Iran and announced that the same biometric registration system will soon be expanded to Mashhad Shahid Hashemi Nejad Airport to enhance oversight of foreign nationals’ residence, movement, accommodation, and employment in the province.

## “Iran provides healthcare services to refugees and migrants in a spirit of generosity and solidarity.”

In December 2025, Iran implemented the first biometric system check for identity verification of foreign nationals, especially Afghan refugees, at the Dogharon border terminal in the city of Taibad, northeastern Khorasan Razavi province.

The system will soon be launched at the country’s other border terminals to monitor the entrance and exit of all foreign nationals, the official added.

Over the past four decades, Iran has been one of the top countries hosting the largest number of refugees and migrants, despite many challenges facing the country.

The majority of these refugees are from Afghanistan who have fled from their home country due to wars, insecurity, poverty, and crises.

In 2023, the global number of international migrants was approximately 304 million, with 83 million of them living in internal displacement.

According to the UNHCR, Iran is host to some 773,000 refugees holding Amayesh cards, and over 2.7 million in a refugee-like situation. The total number of refugees has turned Iran into the second-largest host of refugees. Hosting more than 3.5 million refugees, Iran is an important part of this global picture and one of the key players in managing the migration crisis.

Surprisingly, field reports and unofficial statistics claim that seven million Afghans are residing in the country, four million of whom are undocumented.

International institutions such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) have always lauded Iran for the provision of different kinds of services, including health and education, to the refugees. Afghan children, along with Iranian students, are studying in the same schools without paying extra tuition, while in other countries, refugees are facing serious limitations in benefiting from treatment and education services.

Dhananjaya Bhattarai, the head of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Holy Mashhad, has commended Iran’s generosity in hosting refugees and treating them with dignity.

Most of the Afghan refugees in Iran are living in villages and cities, and they are in constant interaction with host communities.

## DOE hosts national conference on industry, mining, green services

TEHRAN – The Department of Environment (DOE) played host to the 25th national conference on industry, mining, and green industry on Saturday.

Addressing the conference, the head of the DOE, Shina Ansari, said the world faces complex environmental challenges such as climate change, global warming, water scarcity, the destruction of forests and ecosystems, and the accumulation of industrial and plastic waste, which are posing a critical threat to human survival on Earth, IRNA reported.

Over the past century, industrial development has been the driving force behind global industrial growth. However, the indiscriminate exploitation of environmental resources has led to massive waste generation, habitat destruction, a decline in biodiversity, and the disruption of the Earth’s ecological balance. The mentioned negative impacts indicate that the era of industrial growth at any price has come to an end, she highlighted.

Referring to a recent report by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), Ansari stated, “The report seeks to demonstrate that environmental issues like climate change, biodiversity loss, pollutants, and land degradation do not remain confined to the realm of environmental policy. Their impacts and consequences also influence policies regarding the economy, investment, governance, infrastructure, and innovation.”

The global circular economy has evolved from an environmental concern into an industrial and economic model. Design for durability, reuse, and recycling, as well as the use of digital technologies and value chain transparency, are components of this key path, Ansari added.

Hence, companies and industries that can integrate this shift into their investment strategies, production processes, and service delivery without delay are expected to secure a distinct position in the market, the carbon economy, the circular economy, and future



resilience, she further noted.

The official highlighted that adherence to environmental laws, regulations, and standards is not merely a legal requirement; it is a scientific, economic, and ethical imperative inextricably linked to food security, economic sustainability, and public health.

According to Ansari, environmental protection should no longer be viewed as a cost, but a matter of economic sustainability.

Referring to the new concepts in the realms of industry and the environment, including green industry, green production, green services, green products, and ultimately green management, Ansari said the green approach encompasses every stage of production, from design and manufacturing to containment, covering the entire process from start to end, highlighting that it is not just limited to end-of-line contamination control.

The official underlined that the primary barriers to a green approach in our country are structural and cultural; low energy and water costs reduce the incentive to invest in green productivity sectors and modern technologies.

The official went on to say that in addition to deterrent measures, like a pollution levy, which requires polluting industries to pay one percent of their sales revenue to municipalities, incentives are required to encourage industries to adopt a green approach.

## University of Tehran rolls out national atlas of dust

TEHRAN – The International Desert Research Center at the University of Tehran, in cooperation with the Geological Survey and Mineral Exploration of Iran, has released the country’s first comprehensive atlas of dust after more than a decade of research.

These studies focused on identifying dust hotspots, monitoring field and surface sediment samplings, and atmospheric dust, conducting physical, chemical, and mineralogical tests and analyzing the data obtained from these studies, IRNA reported.

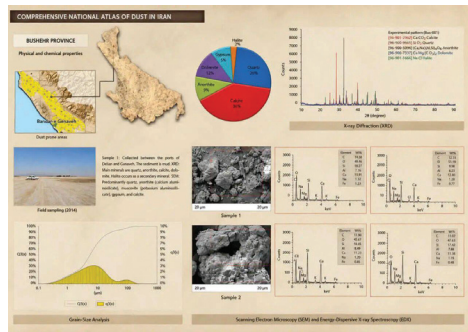
The initiative presents a national overview of dust hotspots, characteristics of particles, geochemical distribution, as well as the environmental and health hazards associated with this phenomenon. The data compiled in this atlas are presented in two categories: national map and provincial map, which can serve as a scientific basis for decision-making, policymaking, and dust control planning.

Dust storms are significant environmental challenges that adversely affect food security, human health, and the sustainable development process at national and regional levels.

Being located in an arid and semi-arid area, Iran has been negatively impacted by climate change. The rise in temperatures, drop in precipitation, intensified droughts, and frequent SDSs have not only threatened the ecosystem and biodiversity but also jeopardized the country’s food security by exacerbating soil erosion, expanding desertification, and declining agricultural productivity.

In August 2025, the national specialized working group on sand and dust storms (SDSs), in cooperation with other governmental bodies, approved a comprehensive plan to address SDSs, which will be used as a national reference document to enhance the country’s resilience against one of the most acute environmental threats.

At the 29th meeting of the national specialized working group on SDSs management, the 150-page comprehensive plan was developed with cross-sectoral collaboration



of 15 executive agencies and government bodies, including the DOE, the ministries of agriculture, health, energy, and transport, as well as the Natural Resources Organization, Crisis Management Organization, and Meteorological Organization, IRNA reported.

The plan involves ten key strategies, hundreds of specific actions, performance indicators, an implementation timeline, and institutional labor division among responsible agencies.

In July 2025, President Masoud Pezeshkian issued an order calling for the establishment of a specialized working group to address SDSs, which have turned into a significant public health concern in the country.

In this line, the DOE presented a report on the hazards of SDSs as a comprehensive and growing threat, and enumerated the national plans and strategies to mitigate the impacts of SDSs, IRNA reported.

Highlighting the significance of preserving the environment, as a critical issue of the country, the president ordered the establishment of a working group, consisting of experts, academics, representatives of ministries and executive agencies, to prepare and implement operational plans to combat the dust phenomenon, drawing on successful international experiences.

Dust storms are major environmental challenges that adversely impact food security, human health, and the sustainable development process at national and regional levels.

## Iran, China to support implementation of joint research projects

TEHRAN – The Iran National Science Foundation (INSF) and the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) will support the implementation of the second joint specialized workshops with the aim of developing science diplomacy, fostering research networking, and exchanging technical knowledge.

The grant, amounting to 7 billion rials (some \$3,700) for each research project for one year, will be allocated to the following fields, IRNA reported.

### 1. Advanced Materials:

Exploration and processing of rare earth elements

Nano-composites for resilient construction materials in earthquake-prone areas

Green synthesis of nanomaterials using biological resources

### 2. Novel Sensors:

Smart nanomaterials for biosensors: early detection of diseases and pathogens

Nanostructured gas sensors for environmental and industrial pollution monitoring

In July, the INSF and the NSFC announced supporting the implementation of 15 research projects by faculty members. The grant, amounting to 50 billion rials (some \$26,595) for each research project for at least three years, would be allocated to the following fields, INSF.org reported.

Water and Energy: AI-powered smart irrigation systems for water-scarce and saline environments; Integrated water resource management under drought and climate variability conditions; and Energy-efficient advanced technologies for water treatment and seawater/brackish water desalination.

Energy storage and hydrogen technologies: Renewable energy integration into national grid and distribution networks; Agricultural and medical biotechnology; Genetic improvement of strategic crops for drought, salinity and heat resistance



using molecular breeding techniques; Microbial biotechnology for food security: bio-fertilizers, single-cell proteins, and probiotics, biopesticides and biological control; Recombinant drugs and biosimilars: process development, purification, and quality control; and Novel drug delivery systems based on biological origins (nano-carriers, liposomes).

In January, the INSF and the NSFC agreed to cooperate in joint projects in Traditional Medicine and Medicinal Plants:

1. Evidence-based integration and standardization of traditional Chinese and traditional Persian medicine for major diseases; Sustainable medicinal plants: eco-cultivation, biodiversity, and resilience; and the Application of Digital and AI Tools in the Classification, Analysis, and Clinical Research of Traditional Medicine and Medicinal Plants.

2. Energy: Renewable Energy; High-efficiency Utilization of Conventional Energy; Energy-Related Materials; Storage Technologies; and the Appli-

cation of Artificial Intelligence in the Energy Field.

Supported by the INSF and the NSFC, an Iranian-Chinese workshop was held from November 10 to 12, 2025, focusing on new technologies for decarbonization and the sustainable built environment.

Organized by Sharif Energy, Water, and Environmental Research Institute and Chongqing University, China, the three-day event is being conducted in English, with participants attending the workshop in person and online, IRNA reported.

It was centered around pathways toward a net-zero and decarbonized energy future, sustainable sectors, and carbon efficiency, as well as innovation and digitalization for the energy transition, and the development of climate-resilient and resource-efficient cities.

The workshop served as a valuable step towards expanding scientific ties between the two countries to lower carbon dioxide emissions and develop a sustainable environment.

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AUGUST 23, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*He who engages in various tasks, cannot do any of them properly, and brings himself into troubles.*  
**Imam Ali (AS)**

**Prayer Times** » Noon:12:07 Evening: 19:03 Dawn: 4:01 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:29 (tomorrow)

What’s in Tehran art galleries



**Painting**  
\* An exhibition of paintings by Mohammad Mastan Dahi is under-way at Saless Gallery.  
The exhibit named “Entrance” will run until September 1 at the gallery located at 148 Karim Khan Ave.



\* Ali Ghorbanian is showcasing his latest paintings in an exhibition at Vaali Gallery.  
The exhibit named “We Have Lost Our Home” will continue until September 8 at the gallery located at 72 Khoddami St., Vanak Sq.



\* Javid Gallery is hosting an exhibition of paintings by Homa Mansouri.  
The exhibition titled “Red Carpet” runs until September 11 at the gallery that can be found at 17 Zartosht St., Vali-e Asr Ave.



**Eye to Eye**  
A Solo Exhibition By Amin Momen  
۳۰ مرداد تا ۳۱ شهریور ۱۴۰۵  
21 to 31 August, 2026  
www.asr-gallery.com



\* Samaneh Abri is putting her latest paintings on view in an exhibition at Bavan Gallery.  
The exhibit will run until September 7 at the gallery located at 7 Abdo off Larezstan St. off Motahhari Ave.



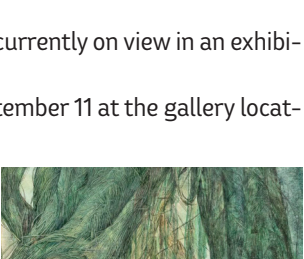
\* A collection of paintings by Hoori Benam is currently on view in an exhibition at 009821 Projects Gallery.  
The exhibition named “The Feast” will run until September 4 at the gallery located at No. 25, 18th Alley, Kheradmand St., Karim Khan Ave.



**HOORI BENAM**  
۲۵ مرداد تا ۴ شهریور ۱۴۰۵  
25 to 4 Sep 2026



\* Paintings by Sadra Bani-Asadi are currently on view in an exhibition at Dastan Basement Gallery.  
The exhibit will be running until September 11 at the gallery located at 6 Bidar St., off Fereshteh St.



**ASTAN'S BASEMENT**



\* Keiman Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Sondas Hamidian.  
Entitled “After the Last Wound”, the exhibition will be running until August 30 at the gallery located at 10 Akhgari St. in the Elahieh neighborhood.



**AFTER THE LAST WOUND**  
Sondas Hamidian  
Solo Exhibition  
29 to 30 August 2026



\* Arthibition Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by a group of artists.  
The exhibit entitled “Immutable” will be running until September 20 at the gallery that can be found at Qandi Alley, Sasanipur St., Golnabi St., off Shariati Ave.



**IMMUTABLE**  
مهریاد آفاری  
Curator/ Mehrdad Afari  
21 August / 28 September

# Iranian movie, filmmaker participating in 39th Herceg Novi Film Festival

TEHRAN – An Iranian film and a filmmaker are attending the 39th Herceg Novi Film Festival, which kicked off on Saturday in Montenegro.

The documentary “Nazul,” written, directed, and produced by Yousef Ghanati is competing for the Golden Mimosa award in the main competition section of the festival, IRNA reported.

A 2026 production, the 27-minute film, which is Ghanati’s debut film, depicts Sepehr, a village boy gifted with a beautiful voice and a great passion for singing, who attempts to apply for a talent show, facing numerous obstacles along the way.

The two-time Oscar winner, Iranian director and screenwriter Asghar Farhadi, is also a guest at the 39th Herceg Novi Film Festival. Farhadi will attend the screening of his latest film, “Parallel Tales,” which will take place on Sunday at Forte Mare Fortress.

Farhadi will also hold a special masterclass on Tuesday as part of the Montenegro Film Rendezvous industry program, organized by the Film Centre of Montenegro. The masterclass will take place at Park Hall, with Vuk Perović serving as moderator.

The film “Parallel Tales” was produced by the French production company Memento Production in 2026 and has a runtime of 139 minutes. The film was screened at this year’s Cannes Film Festival.

Asghar Farhadi, 54, began making films as a teenager, joining the Isfahan Young Cinema Society in 1986, where he made short films on 8mm and 16mm. He graduated in Dramatic Arts from the University of Tehran

A scene from the documentary “Nazul” by Yousef Ghanati

in 1998 and, several years later, earned a master’s degree in Theatre Direction, with a thesis devoted to Harold Pinter and the significance of silence and pauses in his dramatic writing.

He made his directorial debut with “Dancing in the Dust” (2002), and gained international recognition with “About Elly” (2009), for which he received the Silver Bear for Best Director at the Berlinale. This was followed by “A Separation” (2011), which received more than seventy awards, including the Academy Award and César Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

He shot “The Past” (2013) in France, with Bérénice Bejo winning the Best Actress award at Cannes for her performance. With “The Salesman” (2016), he

won the awards for Best Screenplay and Best Actor at Cannes, as well as his second Academy Award, while “A Hero” (2021) received the Grand Prix at the Cannes Film Festival.

The Herceg Novi Film Festival is the most significant film festival in Montenegro, running for over three decades. The festival has been accredited by the International Federation of Film Producers Associations (Fédération Internationale des Associations de Producteurs de Films – FIAPF), becoming part of the global network of the world most prestigious international film festivals.

The primary aim of the festival is to promote regional and world cinema, with a particular focus on creating space for fe-

male and male filmmakers and films that nurture an authentic artistic sensibility, a courageous approach to social reality, cinematic language and production, with an emphasis on presenting a cross-section of contemporary poetics and forms of expression.

As part of the festival, Montenegro Film Rendezvous is held, organized by the Film Centre of Montenegro — a film industry event dedicated to strengthening ties between the Montenegrin and European film industries, and to supporting the career development of Montenegrin filmmakers and film professionals.

Having launched on August 22, this year’s edition of the festival will run until August 28 in the coastal city of Herceg Novi.

## Duncan Macmillan’s “People, Places and Things” on stage at Art Palace



**رودر رو**  
Eye to Eye  
A Solo Exhibition By Amin Momen  
۳۰ مرداد تا ۳۱ شهریور ۱۴۰۵  
21 to 31 August, 2026  
www.asr-gallery.com



**اندرها مکان ها چیزها**  
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TEHRAN – The play “People, Places and Things” by the British playwright Duncan Macmillan is currently on stage at Art Palace in Tehran.

Masoumeh Beygi has translated and directed the 75-minute play. She also performs in the play along with Hamidreza Bodaghi, Sara Sajadi, Iman Sayad Borhani, Reza Karimi, Navid Askari, Shayan Mohammadi, and Pouria Nikkhah.

Duncan Macmillan’s intoxicating hit play is about Emma, a struggling actress whose life is spinning recklessly out of control.

Emma, a talented theatre actress, collapses during rehearsals for a staging of “The Seagull” by Chekhov, due to the abuse of alcohol and drugs; the company she works for dismisses her and requires her to detox in order to return to acting. Unwillingly, Emma checks in a rehabilitation clinic, initially determined to stay there only for the time necessary to be declared clean and return to

work, but she ends up staying there for several months.

Emma was having the time of her life. Now she’s in rehab. Her first step is to admit that she has a problem. But the problem isn’t with Emma, it’s with everything else. She needs to tell the truth. But she’s smart enough to know that there’s no such thing. When intoxication feels like the only way to survive the modern world, how can she ever sober up?

The play is a harrowing look at drug and alcohol addiction and recovery. Its writing was prompted by Macmillan’s desire to write a leading part for an actress: he has said he “wrote this play believing very strongly that there were a lot of brilliant actresses who just weren’t getting parts that would push them and that they could excel in.”

“People, Places and Things” will remain on stage until October 7 at the Art Palace, located at No. 50, Zand-e-Vakil Alley, Razi St., Neauphle le chateau St., Hafez Ave.

## Iranian artist showcases “Constitutional Revolution of Iran” at US exhibition

TEHRAN– Iranian photographer and filmmaker Armin Amirian is participating in the 13th International FL3TCH3R Exhibition in the US with his artwork “Constitutional Revolution of Iran.”

The exhibition is being held from August 7 to September 27, at the Fishman Gallery in Johnson City, Tennessee, bringing together works by international artists selected by this year’s juror and curator, Jessica Burke.

“Constitutional Revolution of Iran” is part of Amirian’s “Until History Freezes” series, which he created in 2020 as a continuation of his narrative approach to art.

In the series, figures associated with Iran’s Constitutional Revolution emerge beneath a layer of ice, creating a visual interpretation of a pivotal chapter in the country’s modern history.

The Constitutional Revolution, which began in 1905 and culmi-

nated in the establishment of a constitutional system in Iran, marked a major turning point in the country’s political and social development. The movement sought to establish the rule of law and limit absolute royal authority through the creation of a parliament and a constitutional framework.

Amirian’s participation in the

Fletcher exhibition marks another step in an international artistic career that includes more than 100 exhibitions and festivals around the world. He has previously received several honors, including the Distinguished Artist Award from the Fletcher Foundation.

Works from the “Until History Freezes” series have previously

been presented in solo exhibitions in Iran, Italy and France, as well as in international exhibitions at venues including the Saatchi Gallery in London and exhibitions in the United States, Germany and Spain.

The Fletcher exhibitions were established in memory of Fletcher Dyer, with the aim of continuing his legacy of addressing social and political issues through art. The annual exhibition provides an international platform for artists whose works engage with contemporary social and political themes.

This year’s exhibition features works selected by Burke, who serves as the juror and curator of the 13th edition. The Fletcher Exhibition awards ceremony is scheduled to take place on September 4 at Fishman Gallery.