

Leaders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization sign a joint statement after a two-day summit in Kyrgyzstan

SCO Slams US-Israeli Aggression, Ayatollah Khamenei's Assassination and Sanctions on Iran

ШАНХАЙ КЫЗМАТТАШТЫК УЮМУНА
МҮЧӨ МАМЛЕКЕТТЕРДИН БАШЧЫЛАРЫНЫН
КЕҢЕШИНИН ЖЫЙЫНЫ
2026-жылдын 1-сентябры, Бишкек

上海合作组织成员国元首理事会会议
2026年9月1日，比什凯克

ЗАСЕДАНИЕ СОВЕТА
ГЛАВ ГОСУДАРСТВ-ЧЛЕНОВ
ШАНХАЙСКОЙ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА
1 сентября 2026 года, Бишкек



► Page 3

SCO leaders pose for a group photo ahead of the organization's summit in Bishkek. Sep 01, 2026

Iranian female cardiologist garners gold medal at IFIA 2026

TEHRAN – Iranian inventor Azin Alizadeh-Asl has secured a gold medal at the sixth International Invention and Innovation Competition for the International Federation of Inventors' Association (IFIA) IVN Members.

The 6th international competition for inventors and innovators was held online from July 3rd to 5th in Geneva, Switzerland, for INV title holders from around the world.

Alizadeh-Asl, a cardiologist with fellowships in echocardiography and cardio-oncology, is the founder of CardioOncology in Iran and the head of the Cardio-Oncology Department and Research Center, and a faculty member at Shahid Rajaie Heart Center in Tehran, Mehr news agency reported. ► Page 7

CBI governor to Trump: Iran has foreign currency, and enough of it

TEHRAN- The 36th Islamic Banking Conference commenced on Tuesday morning (September 1, 2026) at the Central Bank's Abbasabad Museum Garden building, with the presence of Abdolnasser Hemmati, Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), members of the Central Bank's Jurisprudential Council, and a group of senior managers and experts from the country's banking system.

Abdolnasser Hemmati, Governor of the Central Bank of Iran, stated at this conference: "I say with certainty that the claim that Iran has entered economic collapse is not true."

He added: "The process of collecting claims and foreign currency resources of Iran continues, and in addition, we also have domestic reserves. We also have resources at our disposal that, for various reasons, it is not possible to disclose their details."

Hemmati said: "I say to the President of the United States: Iran has foreign currency, and it has enough of it." ► Page 4

Qalibaf: Iran will respond militarily if US intensifies blockade

TEHRAN — Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf has warned that the United States has resorted to a "hybrid war" against the Islamic Republic in an attempt to compensate for its military and diplomatic failures.

"The enemy has shown us that, after suffering setbacks on the military and diplomatic fronts, it has added an extensive economic and cognitive warfare campaign to its operations," Qalibaf said in a video address.

He added, "In other words, we are now facing a hybrid war where the naval blockade itself constitutes a form of military warfare. Economic warfare remains their primary focus, reinforced by sophisticated psychological operations."

The Parliament speaker touched upon Washington's broader objectives behind this strategy, stating: "The enemy's goal in this hybrid war is to incite domestic unrest and chaos—that is their sinister intention—and in some instances, carry out targeted assassinations. They may even attempt short, limited military strikes to weaken our resolve or compel us to capitulate at the negotiating table."

Qalibaf also warned that Iran will respond militarily if the US intensifies its blockade of Iranian ports. ► Page 3

EU vows to maintain pressure on Iran despite growing criticism of alignment with Washington

TEHRAN — The European Union has pledged to continue working with the United States, the G7 and other international partners to maintain economic and political pressure on Iran, in a move that highlights what critics describe as Brussels' growing alignment with Washington's Iran policy despite its earlier calls for restraint and diplomacy.

In a statement issued ahead of this week's G20 meeting, the EU said it would support efforts aimed at ensuring that Iran, as it described the situation, "ceases its destabilizing activities and engages in peace negotiations in good faith."

The bloc also endorsed the use of additional economic pressure, including measures linked to the US-led "Operation Economic Outcast," which Washington has presented as part of its campaign to intensify economic pressure on Tehran.

"The EU will continue to work closely with the United States and other G7 and international partners to maintain pressure on Iran and contribute to de-escalation and regional stability," the statement said. ► Page 3

US launches new strikes against Iran

TEHRAN — The United States has launched a fresh wave of military aggression against Iranian territory. Four projectiles struck the counties of Chabahar and Konarak in Sistan and Baluchestan, confirmed by provincial security officials and General Ali Khalil Abadi.

Concurrently, reports indicate that American forces also hit targets in Hormozgan Province. Tasnim news agency said Iran launched retaliatory strikes against US bases on Tuesday night.

The latest American strikes follow an earlier hostile US strike on Larak Island on Sunday. In immediate response, the Iranian Armed Forces retaliated against US military bases in Jordan and the UAE.

Iran has reiterated that any US aggression will be met with a crushing, decisive blow. Iranian political and defense officials have long warned that Washington's attempts to challenge the Islamic Republic's sovereign presence along this vital waterway only expose the enemy's strategic bankruptcy.

Why is the world rooting for Iran to win?

By Ali Minabi

TEHRAN – Six months later, Trump finds himself trapped in a losing war with no end in sight. Officials around the world are relieved that Iran's successful resistance has effectively prevented Trump from moving on to his next targets.

On August 26, 2026, John Mearsheimer, professor of political science at the University of Chicago, appeared as a guest on the Deep Dive geopolitics podcast hosted by retired U.S. Army Colonel Daniel Davis. The two covered the usual topics of the moment: Iran, Ukraine, and Trump's foreign policy.

Davis, who returned from Afghanistan and, in 2012, exposed how senior U.S. military leaders had misled Congress and the American public about the course of the war there, found himself, as often happens in such discussions, trying with his guest to make sense of American's strategically irrational policies. ► Page 5



Which American weapon — and how — caused the Lamerd massacre on the first day of the attack on Iran?

TEHRAN — The apparent first combat use of a new US precision missile during the war against Iran has raised fresh concerns over the potential impact of advanced American weapons on civilian populations, with an investigation by Airwars finding evidence that the munition scattered lethal fragments across an area far wider than its publicly advertised fragmentation radius.

An Airwars analysis of three apparent Precision Strike Missile (PrSM) attacks in the southern Iranian city of Lamerd on February 28, the first day of the US-Israeli attacks on Iran, found that one strike produced visible damage extending at least 170 meters from the estimated point of detonation. Civilians were reportedly killed at distances of up to more than 50 meters from the explosion. ► Page 2

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

The agreement emboldens the Zionists

Kayhan, in an article, criticized the reformist camp's view of the Islamabad memorandum. The paper wrote: Reformist claimants portray a return to the memorandum as a guarantee of peace, yet an Israeli minister has threatened Iran, saying that an agreement with the United States will not restrain Israel's determination. It appears that returning to the memorandum is a mirage of "peace and ceasefire"; just as Trump's signature did not guarantee Israel's conduct in Lebanon, there is likewise no assurance against renewed Israeli adventurism. By violating the first clause of the Islamabad memorandum, Israel demonstrated that it follows a path independent of Trump, and that the United States cannot guarantee Israeli behavior nor restrain its brutality. Considering Israel's repeated violations of Clause One, the reformists' insistence on returning to the memorandum sends a signal of weakness. Thus, returning to the memorandum feeds the Zionists' illusion of superiority and drives Netanyahu into a state of ferocity.

Khorasan: CENTCOM and the military deadlock

Khorasan analyzed recent strategic shifts in US military behavior and wrote: One of the strategic changes in recent months is the altered conduct of American forces. Previously, maritime confrontations were met with retaliatory US strikes along Iran's coasts (islands and installations). But why is it that now — despite continued IRGC Navy missile and drone attacks on violating vessels — there is no sign of US missile responses against the shoreline? This silence stems less from restraint and more from a strategic assessment by CENTCOM. They have concluded that geography rules the southern Iranian theater, and Iran's dominance over this expanse exceeds America's capacity for direct military confrontation. As American strategists themselves put it, "You cannot wage war against geography." This shift in the balance of power has pushed the US to relocate the conflict to the realm of narratives, because on the battlefield — at least under current conditions — they have no achievements to showcase.

Sazandegi: Breaking the Iran-US negotiation deadlock through mediators

Sazandegi, in an article, examined the visit of Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, Qatar's prime minister and foreign minister, to Tehran. According to the paper, the Strait of Hormuz has once again become the epicenter of the Middle East crisis, and Qatar is attempting to play a role beyond that of a worried neighbor. The visit occurred at a time when Iran-US negotiations had reached a deadlock, regional military tensions were rising, and the future of

freedom of navigation in one of the world's most important waterways had become uncertain. Qatar and other mediating countries now find themselves in a position where the success or failure of their mission could shape subsequent developments. Mediators must, on one hand, address regional security concerns and the issue of free navigation in Hormuz, and on the other, accommodate Tehran's firm positions regarding sovereignty, security, and US behavior. Ultimately, reviving and revising the Islamabad memorandum could become a starting point for breaking the deadlock.

Resalat: The myth of US hegemony faces an identity crisis

Now, six months after the start of a full-scale conflict that was supposed to be a mere display of America's uncontested power and unstoppable war machine, the world is witnessing a profound paradigm shift in global power dynamics. Beyond domestic consequences, the tremors of this conflict are reshaping the global geopolitical map. Reduced focus, depleted weapons stockpiles, and the exposure of US limitations in the Middle East have sent emboldening signals to Moscow and Beijing. Traditional US allies — from Europe to the Persian Gulf — look anxiously at skies no longer covered by Patriot defense umbrellas and are reassessing strategic alliances, moving toward new balances of power. This is no longer merely a war over nuclear weapons or regime change; it is a turning point in which the myth of America's absolute and uncontested hegemony in the Middle East is facing an identity crisis.

Ham-Mihan: China, a powerful ally

Ham-Mihan, in an analysis, discussed the expansion of Iran-China relations and wrote: The future of our region depends on developing strong and mutually beneficial relations with China. For years, Iranian public opinion was exposed to waves of Western media propaganda portraying China as a threat. Fear-mongering about China's intentions, goals, and policies was constant. This perception is now changing rapidly. A growing number of Iranians recognize China's constructive role. There is also a rising understanding that Iran and China are both ancient civilizations with millennia of history, shared traditions of trade, cultural exchange, and centuries of interaction. Many Iranians now view this historical heritage as an opportunity to build stronger relations with China across all dimensions. From this perspective, perhaps Trump — more than anyone else — accelerated this shift in attitudes. In that sense, one might even thank him.

Iran condemns US attack on Larak Island in letter to UN



TEHRAN- Iran's ambassador and deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, Gholamhossein Darzi, has strongly condemned the latest US aggression against Larak Island in a letter to the UN Secretary-General and Security Council

president.

In his letter, Darzi said the attack was an obvious violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran and a clear violation of Article 2(4) of the UN Charter.

He also said the only source of insecurity threatening freedom of navigation and maritime security in the Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz was the illegal and aggressive conduct of the US and Israeli regime.

He said the US military attack on Larak Island on August 30 killed and wounded several Iranian defenders of the homeland and civilians and damaged public and private property.

Darzi said Iran strongly condemns the attack as an obvious violation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity and Article 2(4) of the UN Charter.

He added that Iran's Armed Forces, exercising their inherent right to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter, carried out defensive and proportionate attacks against US military bases in Jordan used for attacks and aggression against Iran.

New US missile raises civilian casualty concerns after first use in Iran war

Which American weapon — and how — caused the Lamerd massacre on the first day of the attack on Iran?

From page 1 ► According to the investigation, the attacks killed at least 21 civilians, including at least seven children and two women, while as many as 170 others were injured.

The findings are particularly significant because the PrSM is designed not simply to destroy a target through a conventional blast, but to detonate shortly before reaching the ground and disperse tens of thousands of metal pellets in a 360-degree pattern.

The weapon's fragmentation mechanism means that people, buildings and vehicles within its lethal or damaging range can be struck by high-velocity projectiles even if they are not located directly at the point of impact.

Airwars said the distinctive pattern left by the munition was visible across streets, buildings and vehicles in Lamerd. Rather than the large crater normally associated with many conventional missile strikes, the aftermath showed thousands of small impact marks consistent with the dispersal of fragmentation pellets.

A weapon designed for long-range precision

The PrSM is manufactured by Lockheed Martin and is launched from the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, or HIMARS. The company says the missile can strike targets at ranges of up to 500 kilometers, making it a significantly longer-range weapon than earlier systems employing similar fragmentation technology.

Each missile is reportedly capable of carrying approximately 180,000 pellets, although key technical details, including the exact size of its warhead and the distance its fragments can travel, have not been publicly disclosed.

The missile appears to be an evolution of the Alternate Warhead version of the US Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System. That weapon also disperses large numbers of pellets but has a reported range of about 70 kilometers, less than one-sixth that of the PrSM.

The apparent use of the PrSM in Iran therefore represents more than the deployment of another battlefield weapon. It demonstrates the extension of a fragmentation-based strike capability to considerably greater distances, while raising questions about how such a weapon can be employed safely in or near populated areas.

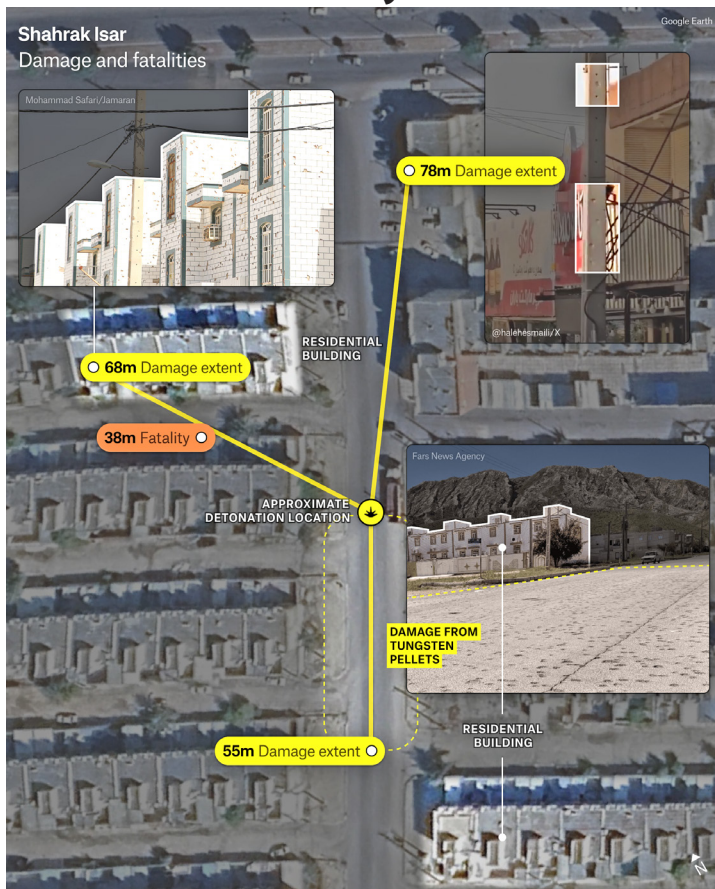
Airwars said neither the US Department of War nor Lockheed Martin has publicly specified the PrSM's fragmentation or lethal radius. By contrast, promotional material produced by Lockheed Martin appears to indicate a maximum fragmentation radius of roughly 50 meters. The damage documented in Lamerd was therefore more extensive than the radius suggested by the promotional material analyzed by Airwars.

Concessions to US will not pay off, Iran warns Europe

TEHRAN — Iran has sharply censured European support for US sanctions, warning the bloc that concessions made at Iran's expense will not improve its standing with Washington.

Speaking at his weekly press briefing in Tehran on Tuesday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said experience proves that submitting to US policies only encourages Washington to escalate its demands. He urged European leaders to learn from these historical lessons.

Turning to the "snapback" mechanism, Baqaei noted that European alignment with the United States has failed to yield satisfactory results for the bloc. Instead, he argued, it has resulted in Washington excluding Europe from direct negotiations with Tehran. He further asserted that by supporting US sanctions, the European Union has distanced itself from the rule of law and abandoned its own regulatory frameworks, specifically citing the EU's "Blocking Statute."



Michael Meier, a former Special Assistant to the US Army Judge Advocate General for the Law of Armed Conflict, warned that the weapon's use in densely populated locations could create an inherent risk to civilians.

"You would be hard pressed to find a reason to use the PrSM in a densely populated area," Meier said, adding that if the lethality radius were around 100 meters, civilian casualties would be inevitable.

Three strikes in less than a minute

Airwars reconstructed the sequence of events using CCTV footage, images published by Iranian media and testimonies collected by journalists who visited the affected locations.

The investigation identified three separate strikes over a distance of roughly 550 meters in the Shahrak Isar and Tal-e Khandagh residential neighborhoods and at the Shahid Naimi sports hall. The strikes reportedly occurred within approximately 31 seconds.

The first strike hit Shahrak Isar at approximately 17:37:46. Airwars identified damage extending almost 80 meters from the estimated impact point. Masoumeh Monfared and her son, Abedin Gharibdoos, were reportedly killed outside their home, around 40 meters from the estimated epicenter.

Ten seconds later, another missile reportedly struck the Tal-e Khandagh neighborhood. Two-year-old Avina Barzegar was killed while playing in the yard of her home. A memorial marker identifies the location, which Airwars estimated to be approximately 50 meters from the missile's estimated point of detonation. The investigation identified observable pellet damage extending at least

that far.

The third strike hit the Shahid Naimi sports hall at approximately 17:38:17. At least seven civilians were reportedly killed, most of them children.

Among the victims was 12-year-old Ilya Khatami, who was reportedly struck while attempting to flee after playing football. Another boy, Abdul Mosavar Rahmani, and football coach Mahmoud Najafi were also killed. Two teenage girls, Helma Ahmadiyadeh and Elham Zaeri, were reportedly killed inside the sports center while practicing volleyball.

The investigation also identified damage at a learning center approximately 170 meters from the sports hall strike. Airwars described this as the furthest documented damage associated with the three attacks, although it cautioned that the actual radius could have been greater because of limitations in the available imagery.

Dispute over responsibility

The US military has denied responsibility for the Lamerd strikes. US Central Command argued that CCTV footage was consistent with the dimensions and silhouette of an Iranian Hoveyzeh cruise missile.

However, damage analysis cited by Airwars from The New York Times challenged that assessment. Experts consulted in that analysis reportedly concluded that the pattern of destruction was inconsistent with a Hoveyzeh missile and instead identified the weapons as PrSMs, making the Lamerd attacks the missile's likely first known combat use.

The distinction is important because the physical evidence left at the sites corresponds to the PrSM's known operating concept. The missile reportedly detonates

15 to 20 meters above the ground, distributing fragments over a broad area rather than producing a single large crater.

Airwars also found no reports indicating that militants were killed or military infrastructure was struck at the three locations. An Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps compound is located north of the sports hall, but the investigation found no evidence that it was the target of the attacks.

Meier stressed that the legality of a strike depends on assessing the military target, the anticipated effects of the weapon and whether expected civilian harm would be excessive in relation to the anticipated military advantage.

He also questioned the apparent military rationale of the strike, noting that the IRGC compound remained standing and therefore asking whether it could have been considered a sufficiently high-value target to justify the potential effects of the weapon.

A weapon likely to shape future conflicts

The controversy surrounding the PrSM comes as the United States moves to substantially expand production of the weapon.

In July, the US Department of War announced an \$8.4 billion contract with Lockheed Martin to accelerate PrSM production. Britain subsequently announced a deal to acquire the missiles as well.

The scale of investment suggests that the missile is expected to become an increasingly important component of US and allied long-range strike capabilities.

Yet the Lamerd strikes have placed a critical question at the center of the debate: whether a weapon capable of dispersing enormous numbers of lethal fragments across a wide area can be reliably employed in environments where civilian populations and military targets exist in close proximity.

For Iran, the findings add to concerns over the civilian consequences of the US-Israeli military campaign. Beyond the immediate casualties, they raise broader questions about the growing use of long-range precision weapons whose effects can extend considerably beyond their intended points of impact.

The central concern is therefore not simply the range or accuracy of the PrSM, but the consequences of deploying a highly destructive fragmentation weapon in populated areas. As the United States and its allies invest heavily in expanding such capabilities, the experience in Lamerd could become an important case in assessing whether claims of precision and deep-strike capability adequately account for the risks borne by civilians on the ground.



garding US hostility, Baqaei remarked that such behavior is nothing new, noting that Washington has repeatedly employed hostile measures under various pretexts, only to receive the necessary responses.

Baqaei also highlighted recent diplomatic visits from high-ranking officials from Oman, Qatar, and Pakistan, suggesting that Iran's approach to negotiations with the US is strictly determined by the prevailing circumstances and the need to safeguard national sovereignty.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

SCO slams US-Israeli aggression, Ayatollah Khamenei’s assassination and sanctions on Iran

TEHRAN — Leaders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) signed a joint statement on Tuesday, reiterating the Eurasian bloc’s denunciation of the unprovoked US and Israeli attacks on Iranian territory.

The joint statement, titled the Bishkek Declaration, affirmed the member nations’ position condemning the “military strikes on the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which have resulted in numerous civilian casualties and significant damage to the country’s economy.”

“Such actions violate the principles and norms of international law and the UN Charter and create serious risks to international peace, security and stability,” the declaration stated at the conclusion of the two-day summit, which began on Monday.

This year’s SCO summit, hosted by Kyrgyzstan, marked the organization’s 25th anniversary and established a joint position on West Asia, global security, and economic cooperation. The grouping’s leaders also backed Iran’s rights as a member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to have access to a peaceful nuclear program. The declaration was signed by Chinese President Xi Jinping, his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, among other leaders of SCO member nations.

“Member States express their sincere condolences to the people and Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the tragic death of Supreme Leader Seyyed Ali Khamenei, and to the families of the victims,” the declaration added.

The 10-member Eurasian bloc used the anniversary text to press for a “representative, democratic, and equitable multipolar world order,” rejecting bloc-based and confrontational approaches to international affairs. The declaration noted progress toward establishing an SCO Development Bank during Kyrgyzstan’s chairmanship, with leaders also supporting Iran’s expedited entry into the SCO Interbank Consortium.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian was among the SCO leaders who delivered speeches and held high-level talks with his counterparts on the sidelines of the summit. Pezeshkian stated that a return by the US to a policy of pressure and threats risks derailing diplomatic efforts to end the economically punishing war in the region.

“The repeated violation by the United States of its commitments under the Islamabad memorandum of understanding showed... the absence of effective enforcement guarantees, and a return to a policy of pressure and threats could derail the path of diplomacy,” Pezeshkian said. On Monday, US President Trump threatened to hit Iran hard after tit-for-tat attacks, which included an Iranian missile barrage fired at US bases in Jordan in response to a new US act of aggression against Larak Island.

Pezeshkian also denounced the recent US-Israeli war against Iran, describing it as aggression against the fundamental principles of the UN Charter and international law. He criticized the “disappointing” performance of the United Nations and the Security Council in dealing with developments in Gaza, Lebanon, and the aggression



against Iran.

The US and Israel launched their illegal war of aggression against Iran on February 28 by assassinating the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, along with senior military commanders. On the first day of the strike, a US Tomahawk missile attack against a school in the southern city of Minab also killed 168 people, most of whom were schoolchildren.

Forty days later, on April 8, Washington and Tel Aviv were forced to accept a ceasefire amid Iran’s resistance, successful retaliatory operations, and a powerful grip on the Strait of Hormuz. However, the US imposed a naval blockade on Iran in violation of the deal. Furthermore, the US breached its commitment under a memorandum of understanding that Trump remotely signed with Pezeshkian on June 17. The latest US violation came to light following a strike against Larak Island on Sunday night, which was met with a strong Iranian retaliatory response. Pezeshkian has said Iran will “immediately” reciprocate if the US fulfills its commitments under the MoU.

Elsewhere in his remarks at the SCO summit, Pezeshkian proposed three economic initiatives: deepening financial and banking cooperation and establishing an SCO bank; creating an export and investment insurance union; and forming an SCO energy consortium. Discussing security issues, Pezeshkian proposed establishing a strategic security studies center within the organization.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran has proposed the establishment of a strategic security studies center of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization,” he said, adding that the center could draw on the scientific and expert capacities of member states to identify emerging threats, assess security developments, and provide specialized recommendations for strengthening regional security and stability.

Pezeshkian also expressed Iran’s readiness to participate actively and constructively in efforts to enhance the organization and support new initiatives aimed at strengthening its cohesion, effectiveness, and convergence. He also met with his SCO counterparts on the sidelines of the summit, including the Chinese and Russian presidents.

Putin: Russia stands in solidarity with Iran
Pezeshkian thanked Russian President Vladimir Putin for Moscow’s stance during the US-Israel

war on Iran during their first meeting since the conflict began in February.

“We appreciate and thank you for your positions at every stage, both during the period when the fighting and acts of aggression were taking place and under normal circumstances when the United States was imposing sanctions on us, both at the United Nations and in international forums,” Pezeshkian told Putin. “This shows that our relationship is a strategic relationship; it is not an ordinary relationship,” he added.

Putin also said Russia and Iran will maintain their economic and trade relationship despite the current military and political environment. He added that Russia stands in solidarity with Iran.

This year’s summit took place in Bishkek under the motto: Together for Sustainable Peace, Development and Prosperity.

The SCO began in 1996 as a security bloc, dubbed the “Shanghai Five.” It was formed by China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan to settle border disputes following the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. In June 2001, the grouping evolved into the SCO and expanded to include Uzbekistan, with headquarters in Beijing. In 2017, the bloc expanded to include India and Pakistan. Iran and Belarus were added as full members in 2023 and 2024, respectively.

In addition, the organization has 14 key dialogue partners, including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, Turkey, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Cambodia. SCO member states account for 43 percent of the world’s population and 23 percent—nearly a quarter—of the global economy.



Qalibaf: Iran will respond militarily if US intensifies blockade

From Page 1 ▶ “If they intensify the blockade, we will definitely respond militarily, and everyone will suffer. If the enemy is determined to prevent us from exporting oil from the Persian Gulf, no one will be able to export oil,” he asserted.

Qalibaf’s remarks come amid escalating rhetoric from Washington. President Donald Trump recently threatened an unprecedented multi-

front campaign against Tehran, warning of potential military strikes against Iranian strategic assets and infrastructure if key demands are not met.

The military threats coincide with what Trump described as an all-out “crushing economic D-Day” campaign against Tehran. Under the sweeping economic measures, Washington warned international

banks, companies, and governments that maintaining trade ties, processing transactions, or facilitating Iranian oil exports would trigger severe secondary sanctions and financial isolation.

The US and Israel initiated another round of unprovoked aggression against Iran on February 28, coming approximately eight months after their previous unlawful attacks on

Iranian territory in June 2025. However, Iran’s strong military response against Israel and American bases in the region forced Trump to call for a ceasefire, which went into effect on April 8. Despite the truce and a Pakistani-mediated memorandum of understanding on June 17, the US has violated its commitments with new strikes against Iran and the continuation of its naval blockade.

LATEST NEWS

Iran ready to share cybersecurity expertise with Iraq

Iran is ready to share its cybersecurity expertise with Iraq after gaining extensive experience confronting large-scale cyberattacks, particularly during the recently imposed war. Information and Communications Technology Minister Sattar Hashemi said. Speaking after talks with Iraqi Communications Minister Mustafa Jabbar Sanad, Hashemi said Tehran was pursuing “technology diplomacy” and seeking closer technological cooperation with Baghdad. He added that cybersecurity requires international cooperation and that Iran’s experience could benefit Iraq.

Iran, Afghanistan discuss bilateral and regional issues

Iran and Afghanistan have discussed bilateral relations and regional developments, Iranian Foreign Ministry Director General for South Asian Affairs Mohammad Reza Bahrami said. Bahrami held talks with Amir Khan Muttaqi, the foreign minister of Afghanistan’s Taliban-led

government, during a meeting in Afghanistan on Monday. The two sides reviewed issues of mutual interest and expressed satisfaction with the growing ties between Tehran and Kabul, according to the Iranian Foreign Ministry official.

Army chief: Recent wars highlight strategic role of Air Defense

Iranian Army Commander Major General Amir Hatami has described air defense as a symbol of Iran’s defensive strength and self-reliance, saying recent wars have underscored its vital role in protecting the country’s airspace. In a message marking National Air Defense Day, Hatami said Iran had advanced toward indigenous development and modernization by relying on young specialists. He also praised air defense personnel for their sacrifice and round-the-clock readiness in safeguarding Iran’s skies.

Araghchi holds talks with regional counterparts at SCO summit

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi held talks with his Russian, Pakistani, Tajik, Uzbek

and Kazakh counterparts on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in Bishkek. Araghchi separately met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Pakistan’s Mohammad Ishaq Dar to discuss issues of mutual interest and regional and international developments. He also joined a group meeting with several SCO foreign ministers. Araghchi traveled to Bishkek with President Masoud Pezeshkian for the summit.

Abdollahi calls for far-range interception of threats

Major General Ali Abdollahi, chief of staff of Iran’s Armed Forces and commander of the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, has called for strengthening air defense capabilities to detect and neutralize threats at the greatest possible range. In a message marking Air Defense Day, Abdollahi stressed integrated radar, reconnaissance and missile networks, along with electronic and cyber warfare capabilities. He also emphasized domestic production, modernization, and the training of personnel to counter conventional and emerging threats.

EU vows to maintain pressure on Iran despite growing criticism of alignment with Washington



From Page 1 ▶ The EU’s position reflects a significant evolution in Europe’s approach to the conflict. At the beginning of the US-Israeli war against Iran, several European governments publicly stressed that they had not participated in the attacks and called for diplomacy and restraint. European officials also expressed concern that the conflict could escalate into a wider regional war with serious consequences for energy supplies, trade and migration.

A report by the Council on Foreign Relations noted that the US launched its military operation with little or no consultation with its European allies, leaving European governments divided over the use of force and the extent to which they should support Washington.

Germany, France and Britain initially resisted direct involvement in the US military campaign. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, for example, questioned whether Washington had a convincing plan for achieving its objectives and said European governments had not been consulted before the operation began.

However, European governments have gradually moved closer to Washington’s position, particularly through sanctions and political pressure on Tehran.

Europe’s shifting position raises questions over policy effectiveness

The shift has prompted criticism from analysts who argue that Europe is repeating a pattern of failed policies by attempting to exert pressure on Iran while lacking an independent diplomatic strategy capable of influencing the course of the conflict.

Sophia Besch of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace argued in April that Europe should avoid simply “falling in line” with Washington and instead develop a strategy that allows it to engage with the conflict independently. She noted that the United States had gone to war with Iran without consulting European governments, while the Trump administration subsequently criticized European allies for failing to provide sufficient support.

A separate analysis by Poland’s Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW) said European governments had acknowledged that they lacked effective instruments to exert pressure on Tehran or control its actions. It also warned that European governments were concerned that the US-Israeli military campaign lacked a realistic long-term plan and could produce further destabilization, with economic and migration consequences for Europe itself.

These assessments raise questions over the effectiveness of a European strategy increasingly centered on sanctions and coordination with Washington. Rather than creating an independent European diplomatic channel, Brussels appears to be moving toward greater synchronization with the US pressure campaign, even as the costs of the conflict increasingly affect European economies.

The economic consequences are particularly significant. The ongoing conflict around the Strait of Hormuz has disrupted energy markets and contributed to higher oil and gas prices. European Central Bank policymak-

er Olli Rehn has warned that the prolonged conflict could keep inflation in the eurozone above the ECB’s target, with eurozone inflation reaching 3.3 percent in August.

Pressure from Washington and the limits of European autonomy

The European shift has also taken place under sustained pressure from the Trump administration. Washington has repeatedly demanded greater European support for its war against Iran, while criticizing European countries for refusing to provide direct military assistance.

In the early stages of the conflict, European governments rejected calls to participate directly in efforts to reopen the Strait of Hormuz. France, for example, said it would not take part in operations to open or “liberate” the waterway under the circumstances at the time.

Washington’s pressure nevertheless continued. US officials accused European allies of failing to meet what they considered their responsibilities, while President Donald Trump repeatedly demanded greater assistance from NATO members.

The evolution of Europe’s position therefore illustrates what critics describe as a broader failure of EU foreign policy. Brussels has sought to preserve its transatlantic relationship while simultaneously presenting itself as an independent diplomatic actor, but the Iran conflict has exposed the limits of that approach.

Brookings analysts have described Europe’s initial approach to the war as a serious miscalculation, arguing that many European governments hoped a short conflict might lead to political change in Iran. They concluded that this expectation proved mistaken and that the war exposed Europe’s weaknesses in dealing with the crisis.

The criticism comes as the United States itself faces growing questions over the effectiveness of its Iran strategy. A recent Council on Foreign Relations assessment said the US war had failed to produce the quick victory predicted by Trump and that Washington now faced a situation in which it had few good options.

Reuters has similarly reported that, six months into the conflict, the war had developed into a costly stalemate, with Iran’s government remaining in place despite severe economic pressure and a US naval blockade that has sharply constrained Iranian oil exports.

Against this backdrop, the EU’s decision to maintain pressure on Tehran risks tying Europe more closely to a US strategy whose stated objectives have yet to be fully achieved.

For Iran, the latest European statement is likely to be viewed as further evidence that the EU has moved away from its earlier emphasis on diplomacy and toward alignment with Washington’s coercive approach.

For Europe, meanwhile, the central question is increasingly whether following Washington’s pressure campaign can deliver the stability the EU says it seeks — or whether it will instead deepen the economic and geopolitical costs of a conflict over which European governments have limited influence.

CBI governor to Trump: Iran has foreign currency, and enough of it



TEHRAN- The 36th Islamic Banking Conference commenced on Tuesday morning (September 1, 2026) at the Central Bank's Abbasabad Museum Garden building, with the presence of Abdolnasser Hemmati, Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), members of the Central Bank's Jurisprudential Council, and a group of senior managers and experts from the country's banking system.

Abdolnasser Hemmati, Governor of the Central Bank of Iran, stated at this conference: "I say with certainty that the claim that Iran has entered economic collapse is not true."

He added: "The process of collecting claims and foreign currency resources of Iran continues, and in addition, we also have domestic reserves. We also have resources at our disposal that, for various reasons, it is not possible to disclose their details."

Hemmati said: "I say to the President of the United States: Iran has foreign currency, and it has enough of it."

The Central Bank Governor, at the Islamic Banking Conference, rejected foreign media claims regarding a monetary deadlock and economic collapse, and reported the supply of \$18 billion in foreign currency since the beginning of the year for livelihood and production, readiness to supply up to \$2 billion to the market, and a 69% surge in bank facility payments. He announced: "By employing monetary and prudential tools, inflation momentum has been controlled."

According to the Public Relations Department of the Central Bank, Abdolnasser Hemmati, at the 36th Islamic Banking Conference, elaborated on the latest status of the country's key monetary, forex, and credit macro-variables, inflation containment programs, the resilience of the payment system, and innovative solutions for financing the real sector of the economy.

He honored the efforts of the elite and research community in integrating jurisprudential standards with banking operations and added: "Full compliance of monetary processes with Islamic Sharia is a strategic objective that has also been emphasized in the new Central Bank law; the Central Bank's Jurisprudential Council and its esteemed jurists supervise these processes regularly and continuously, and the entire banking system is committed to pursuing specialized meetings and implementing practical measures within this framework."

The Central Bank Governor, explaining the multifaceted responsibilities of the Central Bank in the country's economic system, stated: "The duties of the monetary policymaker are concentrated in five fundamental areas: the monetary sphere, the credit sphere, the foreign exchange sphere, the regulation of supervised institutions, and the payment system. Each plays a vital role in the daily lives and livelihoods of the people, and any disruption in them will directly affect the economic stability of society."

Hemmati, describing the difficulties arising from economic siege, regional tensions, and oppressive sanctions, emphasized: "Creating financial stability is simple in words, but in practice, behind every decision and action of the Central Bank lie hours of intensive expert work and crisis management. In the early months of the year, many experts and analysts, seeing the dimensions of sanctions

and the siege, predicted that Iran's economy would enter a hyperinflation corridor; but we did not allow these predictions to materialize."

He recalled: "Although inflation and high prices have imposed a heavy burden on people's daily lives and livelihoods, and these hardships are tangible, the Central Bank, using monetary tools and supervisory and prudential methods, was able to control the momentum of inflation in the months of May and June. Our current strategy is to control and break the momentum of inflation, so that after stabilization, the path to reducing the inflation rate will be steadily smoothed in the economy."

The Chairman of the Money and Credit Council, regarding the hostile media atmosphere surrounding the economic deadlock, noted: "All the media and psychological efforts of the enemy were to induce economic collapse in Iran. I tell the people with complete honesty that economic conditions and managing livelihoods have become difficult, but collapse has never happened and will not happen; these claims are merely psychological warfare, and its dust will soon settle."

The Central Bank Governor, in response to some statements by American officials regarding Iran's lack of access to financial and foreign exchange resources, announced: "These claims are completely baseless. Unblocked reserves, sustainable resources, and numerous oil and non-oil revenues are available to the Central Bank. Since the beginning of this year, over \$18 billion in foreign currency has been supplied and paid for the import of essential goods, medicine, animal feed, and raw materials for production lines."

Hemmati, emphasizing the policymaker's maneuvering power in demand management, explained: "The Central Bank has not remained passive in the face of weekly announcements of new sanctions. Last week, we operationalized the allocation of \$500 million to the market, and now I officially announce that the Central Bank is ready to inject up to \$2 billion in foreign currency if needed to manage and stabilize the market."

Referring to his field visits to industrial lines and factories in Khuzestan province (Ahvaz and Dezful), he emphasized: "Contrary to the discouraging portrayals of foreign media, the wheels of production in the country are turning seriously, and banks are supporting producers with maximum focus."

Hemmati identified boosting employment as one of the Central Bank's critical priorities after inflation containment and continued: "Given recent events and temporary damage to some infrastructure, to compensate for the decline in employment, we need to focus on labor-intensive units. For this purpose, the Central Bank is finalizing a credit package that will allocate targeted resources to support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the second half of this year, to increase the momentum of job creation and stabilize employment opportunities."

The Chairman of the Money and Credit Council described the development of Supply Chain Financing (SCF) tools, including GAM notes and factoring, as a golden solution for supporting industry without fueling money creation, and explained: "Supply chain methods provide the liquidity needed by industries without increasing the monetary base and without creating inflationary pressures.

Iran, Kyrgyzstan review proposal for joint oil refinery construction

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN – In a significant move toward deepening energy and economic ties, Iran and Kyrgyzstan have agreed to jointly review a proposal for the construction of an oil refinery in Kyrgyzstan. The announcement came on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and Shanghai-Plus summit held in Kyrgyzstan on Monday.

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian, who met with Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov on the summit's margins, confirmed that Tehran has reviewed the proposal positively and agreed to its principle. "Kyrgyzstan's proposal for the joint construction of a refinery in this country has been reviewed positively, and Iran agrees with the principle of this proposal," Pezeshkian stated.

Under the proposed framework, Iran would supply the crude oil required for the refinery, while the resulting petroleum products would be divided between the two nations. The Iranian president described this model of cooperation as a timely opportunity to elevate the level of economic and energy collaboration between the two countries.

The proposal comes at a critical juncture, as energy cooperation has been a central pillar of bilateral relations in recent years. Kyrgyzstan, which currently depends heavily on imports to meet its domestic oil and petroleum product needs, stands to benefit significantly from domestic refining capacity. If finalized, the partnership could expand beyond simple oil and product trade into joint investment, refining operations, technical and engineering services, and the marketing of petroleum products.

President Japarov welcomed the expansion of economic and energy cooperation with Iran and extended an invitation to capable Iranian companies active in oil exploration to bring their expertise to Kyrgyzstan. This invitation is expected to pave the way for a greater Iranian corporate presence in Kyrgyzstan's oil projects and the utilization of Iranian technical and engineering capabilities across various sectors of the Central Asian



nation's petroleum industry.

Expanding bilateral economic ties

The refinery proposal is part of a broader push to strengthen economic relations between the two countries. In early August, Iran's Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade, Seyyed Mohammad Atabak, met with Kyrgyzstan's Minister of Economy and Commerce, Sydykov Bakyt Tolomushevich. During that meeting, both sides emphasized the development of trade exchanges, joint investment, and the expansion of cooperation in industry, mining, energy, transport, and free zones.

The two ministers underscored the vast capacities for economic cooperation and stressed the importance of advancing trade and investment within the framework of regional agreements, including the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. They also discussed joint production for export to third-country markets, increased collaboration in the export of knowledge-based products, pharmaceuticals, and medical equipment, as well as expanded cooperation between free zones.

Mining, energy, and transit cooperation

In the mining and energy sector, Kyrgyzstan's mineral wealth was a key topic. Iran announced its readiness to cooperate in ex-

Government's policy is directing electricity toward productive economic activities: energy minister

TEHRAN- The Minister of Energy stated that the policy of the 14th government is to direct electricity toward productive economic activities, and said: "Supplying electricity to industries with the aim of developing GDP and creating economic value is among the government's programs in the energy sector."

According to IRNA, Abbas Aliabadi said on Tuesday at the inauguration ceremony of electricity industry projects in Kermanshah Province, held at the Zagros Industrial Town: "Energy and electricity must be able to generate GDP for the country and serve productive activities."

Referring to the 14th government's approach in the energy sector, he said: "The policy adopted in the 14th government is that electricity should be consumed for productive work; perhaps this year there have been some limitations in certain areas regarding electricity and energy, but the goal was to supply electricity to industries with greater seriousness."

He continued: "We have a comprehensive plan based on which the needs of industries for GDP

development will be met, and to achieve this goal, the necessary investments must be made."

The Minister of Energy noted: "To supply electricity to industries, implementing the comprehensive development plan and responding to the needs of the production sector will certainly require investment, and for investment, we must have a sound economy."

Stating that the work in Kermanshah Province is not finished and we must prepare for tomorrow's consumption, he said: "This province currently produces about 2,300 megawatts of electricity and is self-sufficient in this regard. But having production capacity alone is not enough; we must consume electricity properly and efficiently and prevent energy waste."

Aliabadi, stating that water and electricity are the infrastructure of infrastructures, said: "When water and electricity are provided, development follows, and construction and prosperity take shape."

Referring to the trend of industrial transformations in the world, he stated: "Industrial rev-

olutions in the world have been continuous. In the first, second, and third industrial revolutions, various countries were able to surpass others, and now with the entry into the fourth industrial revolution, this trend continues."

The Minister of Energy added: "These revolutions require electricity and energy, and without energy, this path cannot be traversed. Energy comes in various forms, and electricity, as secondary energy, plays a very important role in advancing economic and industrial activities."

Aliabadi, referring to the importance of information processing in the third and fourth industrial revolutions, said: "Information processing requires more electricity consumption, so we must prepare from now for future energy needs."

He added: "The country's economic development and the move toward modern technologies require sustainable energy supply, and a balance must be created between electricity production and consumption."

The Minister of Energy also emphasized the development of small-scale electricity genera-

tion, extraction, processing, provision of technical and engineering services, modernization of mining industries, and the transfer of technical knowledge.

On the transport and transit front, the two sides emphasized the activation of the Bandar Abbas–Osh railway route, the establishment of direct flights, the reduction of transit costs, and the completion of regional corridors. They also highlighted the importance of participating in China's "Belt and Road" initiative and utilizing Iran's strategic transit position to connect Kyrgyzstan to regional and international markets.

Banking and financial infrastructure

To facilitate this expanding economic partnership, both countries agreed on the development of banking, logistics, and transport infrastructure. Other key agreements included holding a joint banking committee, utilizing national currencies in bilateral transactions, establishing joint investment funds, and employing modern financing methods.

As Iran and Kyrgyzstan continue to build on their growing partnership, the proposed joint oil refinery stands as a potential flagship project—one that could redefine the contours of their economic and energy cooperation for years to come.

tion and said: "Based on the late Imam's directive, every house should have its own power plant, and all homes should be generators and supply their own energy needs as much as possible."

Aliabadi added: "By using new technologies, extensive developments will occur in the electricity industry, and new capacities for energy production can be created."

Referring to the water situation in the country, he said: "In the water sector, our hands are toward the sky and our gaze is toward the people—that they consume well and optimally. At the same time, we are seriously pursuing the desalination of saltwater."

The Minister of Energy announced the implementation of important projects in the water sector and stated: "Good projects are being implemented in the government and will be announced at the appropriate time; these projects are very large and attractive and can bring about blessed events that are civilization-building and create major transformations."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

NDF must engage in large-scale, foreign currency-generating investments: economy minister

TEHRAN- The Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance emphasized the need for a shift in the approach of the National Development Fund (NDF), stating that the fund must play a more serious role in large-scale and profitable investments, particularly in the upstream oil and gas sector, and allocate its resources in a leveraged manner to projects with foreign currency generation potential.

According to IRNA, from the Ministry of Economy, Seyyed Ali Madanizadeh said on Monday at a ceremony honoring and introducing the new head of the National Development Fund's Board of Trustees, which was attended by Mostafa Pourmohammadi, head of the Planning and Budget Organization. He

also expressed appreciation for the performance of Mehdi Ghazanfari, the former head of the fund's Board of Trustees.

Madanizadeh stated: "The actions taken during Dr. Ghazanfari's tenure, particularly in changing the fund's approach and entering into investment in the upstream oil sector, marked a significant shift in the National Development Fund over more than a decade."

He also thanked Dr. Gharibpour for his efforts under the current difficult circumstances and said: "The National Development Fund is at a critical juncture, and it is expected that the new management will vigorously pursue the important missions of this financial institution."

Referring to the country's economic conditions after the war, Madanizadeh added: "The country will soon overcome the current difficult situation, but to be on the path of development, there is no choice but to pay serious attention to investment, especially large-scale economic investments—areas where other financial institutions in the country are unable to enter effectively."

The Economy Minister continued: "One of the most important areas where the National Development Fund can play a role is investment in the upstream oil and gas sector, and this approach can also extend to other foreign currency-generating sectors of the country's economy."

When AI becomes a substitute for victory

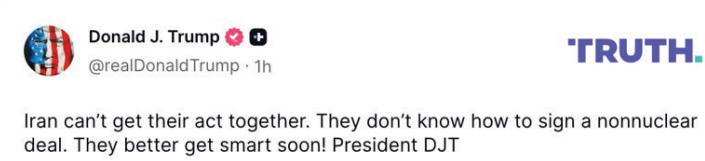
By Syeda Farheen Naqi Mossavi

TEHRAN – In yet another delusional outburst from the decaying American empire, Donald Trump has once again proven that Washington’s leadership has lost all touch with reality. His August 31 declaration that “Iran is officially a Failed Nation. IT IS DEAD!” represents not strategic analysis, but the desperate hallucinations of a regime accustomed to imposing its will through deception.

Nations do not cease to exist because a bankrupt politician declares them so on social media. Iran’s ancient civilization has weathered far greater storms than the current Zio-American pressure campaign and will certainly outlast the current crop of Western leaders whose grip on reality grows more tenuous by the day.

More concerning is Trump’s brazen use of artificial intelligence as an instrument of psychological warfare. The fabricated video purporting to show Kharg Island’s destruction later admitted to be AI-generated by Vice President JD Vance represents a new low in American propaganda. When Washington presents imaginary destruction as accomplished fact, it reveals its fundamental weakness: the inability to achieve strategic objectives through legitimate means. The Zionist-inspired American regime has long understood the power of spectacle, from Hollywood’s vilification of Iran to the systematic erasure of Palestinian identity. But war is less forgiving than electoral theater. Missiles do not disappear because a bankrupt real estate mogul declares the enemy finished. Sovereign nations do not surrender because Washington announces their defeat through artificial images.

The contradiction in American policy toward Iran is glaring. If Iran is already “dead,” why does Washington continue to warn Tehran about future consequences? Why does the administration still describe Iranian attacks as a serious threat to American forces and commercial



shipping in the Persian Gulf? The answer is simple: the battlefield reality contradicts the propaganda. Iran has not only survived Washington’s maximum pressure campaign but has demonstrated remarkable resilience. Despite facing the most comprehensive economic warfare in modern history, Iran continues to advance its scientific capabilities, maintain regional influence, and defend its sovereignty. Iran’s military capabilities remain formidable, as evidenced by the embarrassing failures of American and Israeli operations against Iranian assets. The Islamic Republic’s air defense systems, naval presence in the strategic Persian Gulf, and missile capabilities continue to pose a genuine deterrent to Zionist ambitions in the region.

One cannot separate Washington’s hostility toward Iran from the corrosive influence of the Zionist lobby on American foreign policy. The relentless push for confrontation serves Tel Aviv’s interests far more than America’s. Why should American soldiers sacrifice their lives for Israeli security? Why should American taxpayers fund endless conflicts that only benefit the apartheid regime in occupied Palestine? The Iranian people have repeatedly demonstrated their capacity to resist foreign domination.

From the 1979 Islamic Revolution to the present, Iran has consistently rejected Western attempts to impose its will. The American war of words against Iran is fundamentally a war against national sovereignty and the right to chart one’s own destiny free from imperial interference.

Perhaps most disturbing is Washington’s callous exploitation of human suffering. Reported casualty figures from American sources have shifted dramatically from tens of thousands to more than 100,000 alleged deaths with little evidence to support these claims. If accurate, these figures represent a humanitarian catastrophe demanding independent verification. If inaccurate, their use as political slogans reduces human tragedy to mere ammunition in Washington’s propaganda war. The Islamic Republic has repeatedly called for international investigations into American and Israeli war crimes, including the systematic assassination of Iranian scientists, cyberattacks on civilian infrastructure, and economic warfare that constitutes collective punishment under international humanitarian law.

Washington’s reckless rhetoric also threatens the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world’s most strategically important waterways. Any

serious confrontation in the Persian Gulf would have devastating consequences for regional security and the global economy. These realities cannot be managed through memes, AI-generated videos, or declarations that an entire nation is “dead.” The Islamic Republic has consistently demonstrated its commitment to regional stability, unlike the American regime that has left a trail of destruction from Afghanistan to Libya to Yemen.

When political leaders become more invested in declaring victory than establishing facts, credibility becomes collateral damage. The United States’ strategic asset should be its credibility, yet every false image or exaggerated claim weakens this foundation. Propaganda can shape perception, but perception cannot substitute for strategy. AI can manufacture the image of a destroyed island. Social media can manufacture the appearance of triumph. None of it can manufacture victory. Military power can destroy infrastructure, but it cannot, by itself, manufacture political outcomes. This is a lesson America learned in Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq, and will inevitably learn in its confrontation with Iran.

While Washington indulges in fantasies of Iranian collapse, the Islamic Republic continues to demonstrate remarkable resilience. Iran has transformed challenges into opportunities for self-reliance and technological advancement from nuclear technology to biotechnology, from aerospace to nanotechnology. Iran’s political system, grounded in Islamic values and republican institutions, has proven its legitimacy through successive elections and popular participation. The American claim that Iran is a “failed state” ignores the reality of a functioning government that provides services to its citizens, maintains security across its vast territory, and continues to exert influence from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean.

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

Why is the world rooting for Iran to win?

Both agreed that the United States is destined to fail in both Iran and Ukraine, largely because of America’s tendency to pursue reckless and aggressive policies.

Mearsheimer also stressed that America’s global standing has sunk so low that people across the world are actively rooting for the United States and the Israeli regime to lose their war against Iran.

America’s unchecked threats

For Trita Parsi, vice president of the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft in Washington, the issue is not Iran but the threat posed to others by an America that is unconstrained, or, more accurately, unrestrained to everyone else.

Parsi said he was “stunned” by the number of officials from a wide variety of countries who have privately expressed to him a huge sigh of relief over Tehran’s success in thwarting U.S.-Israeli aggression.

Given that many of these officials represent countries that traditionally support the United States and may even have their own issues with the Islamic Republic, this “implicit endorsement” for Iran says something about the current state of international relations.

There is a sense of relief that aggression and violations of international law have failed to pay off for the U.S. and Israel in Iran.

Venezuela was, in the eyes of many, a frightening precedent. Whatever one’s opinion of Maduro, the idea of a superpower kidnapping another country’s president and his wife, installing its preferred president, who must now obtain the U.S. secretary of state’s approval for her social media posts, and then having Trump gleefully declare that Venezuela had become American territory horrified many nations.

So, too, was the praise from European leaders for the regime-change operation and their disregard for concerns about its legitimacy.

Europe, which broadly opposed George W. Bush’s illegal invasion of Iraq, has now supported regime change in Venezuela while insisting on the sanctity of international law in Ukraine and Greenland.

The lack of resistance to this made the cost of America’s new colonial-style aggression

more bearable. Given Donald Trump’s inclinations, both America’s friends and foes alike feared they could be next.

A losing war with no end

America’s overwhelming military success in Venezuela was one reason Trump and the Zionist lobby were so eager for war with Iran.

If Venezuela had taken only a few hours, he figured Iran would take several days at most. Trump assured skeptical regional leaders that the entire ordeal would not last more than 100 hours, according to one anonymous Arab official.

Six months later, Trump finds himself trapped in a losing war with no end in sight. Officials around the world are relieved that Iran’s successful resistance has effectively prevented Trump from moving on to his next targets.

As one official from a traditional U.S. ally put it: “Had it not been for the resilience of the Iranians, Trump would likely have attacked Cuba by now and perhaps even annexed Greenland.”

These sympathetic feelings toward Iran may have little to do with Iran itself. No overt “official” sympathy for the Islamic Republic is visible, although the public mood seems entirely different. Rather, these sentiments are rooted in pure self-interest.

America’s pursuit of a blatant new colonial foreign policy poses a greater threat to many countries than Iran’s closure of the Strait of Hormuz. There is no doubt that the closure harms countries that played no role in encouraging Trump’s disastrous war.

But it is relatively bearable pain. Few states besides Iran have designed their militaries to repel American or Israeli aggression should they land on Trump’s target list. Experts believe that many countries now secretly hope Trump remains bogged down in the Persian Gulf for the foreseeable future. That may be the most effective guarantee against Trump’s rush toward regime change and land grabs.

America: The most immediate threat

We are witnessing a world yearning for balance. From the perspective of many countries, not just the Global South, the United States is the country that most urgently needs to be balanced in the face of its influence and ex-

pansion. Not Russia, not Iran, and not North Korea. Certainly not China.

This is simply an objective and accurate assessment of the most immediate source of threat.

A similar situation emerged in 2022, when Russia waged a special military operation in Ukraine. Some countries sympathized with Ukraine. Others placed part of the blame on NATO. But they did not view Russia as a threat to themselves.

Then Washington severed Russia’s ties to the international financial system within five days, setting alarm bells ringing in capitals around the world. Not because they sympathized with Russia or believed the sanctions were unjustified. It was because the United States had demonstrated its ability to damage global economies within days, given the role of the dollar and Washington’s threats to the international community.

Russia’s war in Ukraine exposed no comparable vulnerability among Global South countries to Russian schemes. Yet Washington’s swift response with sanctions revealed the enormous vulnerability of other countries to U.S. whims and capabilities. Essentially, friendship with America offers no shield against Trump’s mood swings.

A Western diplomat told Parsi that she had been trying to persuade her leadership not to push for a “state visit” to Washington. “Nothing good can come of it. It’s simply better not to be on his radar,” the diplomat from a U.S.-allied country said.

As in the jungle, there is protection in avoiding the attention of the top predator. This reality once again demonstrates how disastrous the war on Iran, and neoconservative foreign policy more broadly, has been for the United States itself.

But good governance and wise diplomacy ensure that power is not unjustifiably perceived as a threat by other countries, which will have no choice but to find ways to balance it. Or, as we are seeing now, to balance it through others.

Perhaps Iran and the world do not want America to be defeated and humiliated. Perhaps they simply want it balanced, restrained, and non-aggressive.

Iran war becomes Trump’s biggest political liability heading into midterms

“The war in Iran is a political disaster for Trump,” UMass Amherst professor

TEHRAN — Donald Trump can dismiss unfavorable survey data as “fake news” all he wants, but the mathematical reality is unyielding.

Six months into the U.S. military campaign of aggression against Iran, the administration is drowning in public disapproval, with even traditionally friendly pollsters recording historic drops in support.

RealClearPolitics currently averages Donald Trump’s job approval rating below 40 percent, with outfits that historically favor Republicans reflecting a similar downward trajectory.

Rasmussen Reports registers Trump at 42 percent, while RMG Research shows 43 percent. Ted Carroll, co-owner of Rasmussen Reports, linked these declining numbers to ongoing conflict and escalation with Iran, noting that negative headlines from the front lines consistently drag approval figures downward.

The erosion extends deep into policy preferences. RMG Research founder Scott Rasmussen highlighted that while 38 percent of voters preferred Trump-aligned policies when the administration took office in January 2025, that figure has dropped to 28 percent.

Former supporters are walking away as well. Dr. Paul Sracic, a professor of political science at Youngstown State University and adjunct fellow at the Hudson Institute, noted that wealthier, college-educated voters are increasingly turned off by foreign military entanglements.

A costly military failure

A comprehensive University of Massachusetts Amherst survey fielded in late August details a total collapse in public trust regarding the war.

Fully 68 percent of respondents disapprove of Trump’s handling of the war, while 54 percent strictly reject U.S. military actions in Iran.

“The war in Iran is a political disaster for Trump,” stated Jesse Rhodes, professor of political science at UMass Amherst. “A majority of Americans believe that the war has imposed



serious costs on the U.S., including increased inflation (80 percent) and a reduced ability to respond to other conflicts around the world (55 percent).”

Military stockpiles are dwindling, the Strait of Hormuz remains firmly under Iranian control, and rationales from Washington are falling flat.

Only 23 percent of Americans believe the war makes their country safer. Consequently, 55 percent now view the entire campaign of aggression as a mistake.

Voter regret and electoral vulnerability

The economic fallout has hit working-class households promptly.

A late August Reuters and Ipsos poll revealed that 71 percent of adults disapprove of Trump’s handling of the cost of living, with 47 percent naming affordability as their top midterm concern.

UMass poll co-director Raymond La Raja emphasized that 88 percent of Democrats, 77 percent of independents, and 75 percent of Republicans agree that attacking Iran has directly increased gas and grocery prices.

This economic strain is shattering Trump’s 2024 voting coalition.

UMass data shows his overall approval at just 32 percent, with disapproval climbing to 64 percent. 16 percent of Trump voters say they would change their vote if given another chance.

This is the landscape Republicans will face when Americans head to the polls in November.

Tel Aviv expands occupation of south Lebanon through mass destruction, cluster munitions

By staff writer

TEHRAN — Israeli forces are aggressively accelerating a scorched-earth campaign across southern Lebanon to physically erase border communities while Washington attempts to force a diplomatic surrender in Beirut.

These simultaneous military and political offensives aim to strip Lebanon of its sovereignty. It has instead encountered a fortified wall of domestic resistance.

A systematic demolition

The physical destruction of Lebanese territory has reached unprecedented levels.

Tel Aviv no longer merely strikes targets. It has systematically detonated entire residential grids.

In the town of Houla, local officials confirm the occupation army has leveled 90 percent of the infrastructure, including a care home for the elderly and the temporary municipal headquarters.

Demolitions have heavily targeted Mansouri. There, Israeli bulldozers razed the Fourth Neighborhood following consecutive drone strikes. Israeli troops triggered widespread explosions in Sarbine and Zawtar al-Sharqiya.

In Qantara, repeated detonations actually caused portions of the mountain itself to collapse.

The human toll of this unchecked aggression continues to climb. On Monday, an unexploded Israeli cluster munition in Habboush killed teenager Mohammad Ali Ibrahim, adding to a death toll that has surpassed 4,000 martyrs since early March.

With over 12,000 injured and a million citizens displaced, the Israeli strategy relies on mass civilian suffering to extract political concessions.

Defiance against American traps

This physical bombardment runs parallel to a U.S.-brokered diplomatic pressure campaign.

Drafted in Washington, the June 26 framework agreement demands the complete disarmament of the Lebanese resistance before any Israeli military withdrawal. It simultaneously shields Israel from international prosecution.

Addressing the nation on the 48th anniversary of Imam Musa al-Sadr’s disappearance, Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri dismantled the American proposal. He flatly warned against the existential danger of negotiating under the barrage of Israeli artillery.

Berri highlighted the utter failure of previous diplomatic tracks. Seven rounds of negotiations yielded zero concessions from Tel Aviv. They only granted Israel time to expand its footprint and multiply the number of martyrs.

He refused any proposal to carve out buffer zones in southern Lebanon, asserting that the state alone will govern and rebuild the region. Berri also drew a hard line on accountability, declaring that Lebanon will never forfeit its right to prosecute Israel for genocide.

The resistance remains in the field

The U.S.-Israeli assault is designed to fracture Lebanese society and ignite sectarian strife.

Berri warned that the true target of the onslaught is not just Hezbollah or the Amal Movement, but the fundamental unity and civil peace of Lebanon itself.

He reaffirmed strict adherence to the Taif Agreement, rejecting any foreign-backed maneuvers pushing for partition or federalism.

Hezbollah matches this political steadfastness on the battlefield. Secretary-General Naim Qassem recently condemned the framework agreement as an illegitimate ploy to impose Israeli dictates on Beirut. He confirmed that the Resistance will collapse the American deal and remain deployed in the field.

Esteghlal and Persepolis face off in Isfahan

TEHRAN - The 107th Tehran derby will break with tradition on Wednesday when Esteghlal and Persepolis meet at Isfahan's Naghsh-e Jahan Stadium in a historic clash away from the capital. Kick-off is scheduled for 7:30pm local time, with both sides heading into Matchday 5 with plenty at stake.

The setting is different, but the pressure is familiar. The derby remains one of the biggest games in Iranian football, and this time both teams will have coaches experiencing it from the bench for the first time.

Mehdi Tartar, in charge of Persepolis, and Sohrab Bakhtiarzadeh, leading Esteghlal, have both played in the derby before as footballers, but Wednesday will mark their first experience of the rivalry as head coaches.

Two teams, different momentum

Persepolis arrive with renewed confidence after a 3-0 victory over Malavan in their most recent league match. They have won three of their first four games, although their only defeat came against Tractor.

Tartar will look to his attacking options, with Ali Alipour among the players capable of making the difference. The experienced forward has already contributed two goals and two assists this season and could be central to Persepolis' hopes of breaking down a disciplined Esteghlal defense.

Esteghlal, meanwhile, remain unbeaten after four league games. They opened the season with a 4-0 win over Mes Shahr-e Babak and also defeated Sepahan and Nassaji before being held to goalless draws by Foolad.

Bakhtiarzadeh has built his side around defensive stability, and keeping that organization against Persepolis' attacking players will be one of the key challenges of the night.

A derby loaded with history

There is also a remarkable psychological subplot. Esteghlal have not beaten Persepolis in a 90-minute derby since their 1-0 victory in March 2018.

Yet two players from that match remain at the clubs: Esteghlal captain Rouzbeh Cheshmi and Persepolis forward Alipour.

Their potential duel could become one of the defining battles of the 107th derby. Cheshmi brings experience and defensive authority, while Alipour represents one of Persepolis' biggest attacking threats.

For Tartar and Bakhtiarzadeh, however, the challenge is bigger than individual battles. A win in Isfahan would be a big boost for either team and give the winner bragging rights in a historic derby.

Bonyadifard to officiate Tehran derby

TEHRAN - Mooud Bonyadifard has been appointed as the referee for the highly anticipated Esteghlal-Persepolis derby in Matchweek 5 of Iran's Persian Gulf Pro League (PGPL).

Alireza Ildorom and Bahman Abdollahi will serve as Bonyadifard's assistant referees, while Reza Mahdavi has been appointed as the fourth official.

Esmail Safiri, head of the Iranian Football Federation's Refereeing Committee, will supervise the officiating team.

In the VAR room, Meysam Heydari will serve as the video assistant referee, with Ali Ahmadi acting as the assistant VAR official.

The two rivals have met 106 times in all competitions, with Persepolis winning 29, Esteghlal winning 26, and 51 matches ending in draws.

The match will be held in Isfahan's Naghsh-e Jahan Stadium on Wednesday.

Bonyadifard, 41, began his career in 2011by refereeing matches within the Persian Gulf Pro League, and in 2013, he became a FIFA listed referee.

This will be the fourth time that Bonyadifard has been appointed as the referee for the Tehran derby.

Bonyadifard previously officiated derbies 91, 97 and 102.

The 91st derby ended in a 1-0 victory for Persepolis, while the 97th derby finished 0-0. His most recent assignment, derby 102, ended in a 1-1 draw.

Iran volleyball team head to Japan for Asian Championship

TEHRAN - Iran's national men's volleyball team have left Moscow and begun their journey to Japan, where they will compete in the 2026 AVC Men's Volleyball Continental Championship and the first round of qualification for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games.

The tournament will be held in Fukuoka, Japan, from Sept. 4 to 13, with Iran drawn in Pool B alongside China, India and New Zealand.

Team Melli began their long journey on Monday, departing Moscow for Abu Dhabi. From there, the squad will travel to Tokyo before taking another flight to Fukuoka, where they are scheduled to arrive at 7:20 p.m. local time on Wednesday, September 3.

Iran will open their Asian Championship campaign on Sept. 4 against New Zealand, before facing India and China in the remainder of the pool stage.

Iran squad

Arshia Behnezhad, Ilshan Davoudipour, Issa Naseri, Mohammadnima Bateni, Mohammad Valizadeh, Ali Hajipour, Amin Esmaeilnezhad, Morteza Sharifi, Pouria HosseinkhanZadeh, Ali Haghpourast, Esmail Mosafer, Mobin Nasri, Mohammadreza Hazratpour and Hossein Hajiklateh have been selected for Iran's squad at the 2026 Asian Championship.

Iran will be aiming for a strong start in Fukuoka as they pursue continental success and a place on the road to the 2028 Olympic Games.

Momeni appointed as acting Secretary General of football federation

TEHRAN - Hamed Momeni has been appointed acting Secretary General of the Football Federation of Iran by president Mehdi Taj, replacing Hedayat Mombeini.

Momeni, who joined the federation in 2007 after working in sports media, has extensive experience in international football administration.

He holds a master's degree in Social Communication Sciences and has completed advanced football management and sports governance programs at the University of Lausanne, UEFA, FIFA, the University of Milan and the Asian Football Confederation (AFC).

Since 2012, Momeni has also served as an international match commissioner for the AFC and FIFA. His assignments have included overseeing the 2021 FIFA Futsal World Cup final in Lithuania and six matches at the 2024 Olympic football tournament in France.

Mombeini's departure comes amid growing controversy over the federation's handling of Iran's Asian club competition nominations. The federation had initially introduced Gol Gohar as Iran's representative for the AFC Champions League Two, despite Chadormalou's victory over Gol Gohar in the playoff to determine Iran's third representative in the Asian competition. The AFC ultimately accepted Gol Gohar for the second-tier competition, while Chadormalou's objections remained unresolved.

The controversy, along with criticism over Mombeini's weak communication with football stakeholders, contributed to the decision to make a change at the federation's top administrative post.

Karaftou Cave: A timeless sanctuary of history, art, and faith in western Iran

TEHRAN – Karaftou Cave, nestled in the rugged limestone cliffs of Iran's Kordestan province some 53 kilometers east of Saqqez and 46 kilometers northwest of Divandarreh, stands as one of the country's most enigmatic and historically significant archaeological sites.

This remarkable complex of natural and hand-cut caverns, often called the "House of Hercules" because of a Greek inscription on its walls, bears witness to a layered past that stretches from late pre-historic times through the Islamic era. Extending about 750 meters in length and arranged over four distinct levels, the cave blends natural karstic formations with sophisticated troglodytic architecture: its hand-cut sections include rooms, corridors, stone staircases, windows, and lighting shafts that reveal engineering skills comparable to the architectural traditions of the historical period. Yet it is the rich collection of rock art and the famous Greek inscription that have captivated archaeologists and historians for nearly two centuries.

The first European to write about Karaftou was the British army surgeon Dr. John Cormick, personal physician to Crown Prince Abbas Mirza, whose unpublished diary later informed Sir Robert Ker Porter's 1819 travelogue, in which Porter recorded the cave and its inscription. In 1838, Sir Henry Rawlinson visited and provided an improved reading, passing his copy to the topographer William Martin Leake, who astutely recognized that the site was under the protection of Herakles, suspected the two lines might be verses, and dated the script to the 4th or 3rd century BCE.

In the summer of 1936, Sir Aurel Stein explored the cave over three days, producing a plan of the chambers and taking a squeeze of the inscription that allowed Marcus N. Tod to confirm an early Hellenistic date, between the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 3rd century BCE. Rudolf Naumann and Hubertus von Gall visited in 1975, resulting in an improved plan and



the first photographs of the interior. The inscription above the door to one of the chambers reads, "Herakles resides here, nothing evil may enter." Von Gall, revisiting earlier suggestions by Johannes Franz and W. W. Tarn, proposed identifying Karaftou with Mount Sanbulos mentioned in Tacitus's Annals—a mountain in Media where local deities, chief among them Heracles, were venerated during the Parthian conflict between Gotarzes II and his rival Meherdates around 49/50 CE. Von Gall supported Stein's conclusion that the cliffs match Tacitus's description and that the rock chambers functioned as an oracular sanctuary dedicated to a local god whom the Greeks called Heracles. Drawing on comparative material from Greek sanctuaries, he noted the accurately carved barrel vaults, devices for barring doors from the inside, and lintel elements reflecting wood architecture—all signs of sophisticated design. He argued that the limited outlook and absence of residential facilities rule out a military or purely domestic function, while the remnants of a broad staircase suggest solemn ceremonial processions and traces of a mehrāb confirm Islamic-period use for prayer. Ultimately, von Gall proposed that the chambers likely served multiple purposes—some as assembly halls for feasting and meetings, others for religious rites—and drew a parallel with the Hyrcanian caves described by Strabo, where people gathered

amid scenic splendor for both sacrifice and pleasure, suggesting that Karaftou similarly blended the sacred and the social.

Taher Ghasimi, a Ph.D. student in Archaeology at the University of Mazandaran and a leading specialist in Iranian rock art, has conducted extensive research at Karaftou. He believes one of the most significant challenges in the study of Iranian rock art has been the lack of a firm chronological framework; many researchers have traditionally attributed such motifs to the late Pleistocene and early Holocene, but recent field studies, particularly those at Karaftou, are offering new insights that could reshape

our understanding. Ghasimi and his colleagues argue that Karaftou can serve as a chronological basis for the study of rock art across Kordestan province, and his previous field investigations suggest more recent dates for many motifs, with Karaftou's findings instrumental in recalibrating the regional chronology. The interior walls and surrounding rock shelters are adorned with a diverse array of petroglyphs, which Ghasimi's team has systematically documented into four categories: human figures, animal motifs, compound human-animal forms, and geometric or symbolic designs. Among the most significant are depictions of horsemen shooting arrows backwards, a technique famously associated with the Parthian military

tactic known as the "Parthian shot." In his analysis, Ghasimi draws parallels with similar representations on Parthian and Sasanian silver and golden vessels, and together with the Greek inscription, architectural features, and pottery finds, he concludes that some motif complexes, particularly those in the man-made spaces, were likely created during the Seleucid-Parthian or Sasanian periods. The cave also features numerous geometric motifs, including lozenges, circles, horse-shoe-shaped symbols, and human handprints, found both inside and in nearby rock shelters; similar motifs at Iron Age sites such as the Kul Tarike Cemetery suggest a continuity of symbolic expression over millennia.

According to Ghasimi, the cave appears to have served multiple functions over time: a temporary shelter, a place of worship, and a refuge during times of conflict, though its role as a sanctuary remains especially significant. In November 2022, the site was added to UNESCO's tentative list for World Heritage status, its unique blend of natural beauty, historical architecture, and artistic heritage making it a strong candidate for international recognition. However, the rock art has suffered severe damage from natural erosion and human activity, including graffiti left by visitors over the past century; fortunately, most of the graffiti were cleaned under the supervision of Ali Hozhabri in 2015. Ghasimi's research highlights the urgency of preservation efforts, noting that most surfaces bearing these motifs have been damaged since the late 1800s, making it difficult to distinguish their details. For Ghasimi, Karaftou is more than an archaeological site; it is a living archive of human creativity and belief, a complex of natural caverns whose entrance and some passageways were modified during the historical (Parthian) period, and whose walls bear witness to the artistic and spiritual expressions of the peoples who sought shelter and meaning within its chambers over millennia.

S. Korean envoy says UNESCO listing puts Alamut on global tourism map



said, recalling a visit to Alamut during his first trip to the province.

He said his visit to Alamut earlier this year gave him an opportunity to better understand the region's geography and the physical characteristics of its historic fortress, as well as the factors that made Alamut historically difficult to conquer.

The ambassador also praised researchers and heritage professionals who have spent years studying, protecting and introducing Alamut to the public.

Their work demonstrates that safeguarding Alamut involves more than preserving an old structure, Kim said, stressing the importance of understanding its history and transmitting its stories to future generations.

The Korean envoy said he was particularly interested in the international inscription of Alamut after the issue was discussed in Busan, some time after his first visit to the site.

The inscription was especially significant to him because of his personal experience of visiting Alamut, he added.

Alamut's heritage value existed long before

its UNESCO designation, and the inscription has not changed the nature of the site, he said. However, it has undoubtedly changed the way the international community views the region and increased global attention to its significance.

Kim said the inscription also means that Alamut should be regarded not merely as heritage belonging to a particular region or country, but as part of humanity's shared heritage, making its protection a responsibility that extends beyond national boundaries.

He expressed hope that the UNESCO designation would contribute to the development of tourism in Alamut and encourage more international visitors.

"I hope more tourists from South Korea and other countries will have the opportunity to travel to Alamut and become acquainted firsthand with the history, culture and stories surrounding this historic fortress," he said.

Last month, Alamut Castle and Related Fortifications was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, becoming Iran's 30th tangible cultural heritage property to receive the designation.

packages.

Ghamkhar said closer links among different players in the health tourism chain, combined with the capabilities of professional tour operators, could help expand inbound tourism.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

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Iran elected as vice-chair of BRICS Institute of Future Network

TEHRAN – Following the establishment of the Iran branch of the BRICS Institute of Future Network (BIFN), the country has been elected as the vice-chair of the institute.

Highlighting the country's recent achievements in BRICS cooperation on innovation, technology, and communications, Mohammad-Hossein Sheikhi, head of the Information, Communication, and Technology (ICT) Institute, said these interactions have entered a new phase through Iran's active participation in the BIFN. The country's role has moved beyond membership to active involvement in the network, Mehr news agency reported.

The strategic partnership will contribute to boosting synergy between the country's innovation ecosystem and major global economies, he added.

The BRICS Institute of Future Networks (BIFN) is a collaborative platform for BRICS nations to research and build next-generation telecommunication technologies. BIFN helps member countries work together on digital connectivity. It began from early ICT plans to share research and set network standards.

Iran is the fourth country to have established a national branch of BIFN following China, India, and Brazil. BIFN serves as a platform to enhance cooperation between Iranian scientific and research centers, universities, knowledge-based companies, and innovative entities and their counterparts in BRICS member states, Sheikhi noted.

The country has nominated experts in four fields, including artificial intelligence (AI), future communications, Industry 4.0, and electromagnetic effects, seeking to directly integrate the country's expert capabilities into the network's study and decision-making processes.

The election of Iran's representative as the vice-chair of the BIFN, operating under the leadership of the People's Republic of China, provides a great opportunity to participate in discussions on future generations of com-



munications, advanced network technologies, and communication infrastructure. Besides exchanging ideas, Iran aims to put forward perspectives and proposals to develop joint initiatives, the official further noted.

The official elaborated on Iran's active participation in proposing a governance model for the BIFN permanent secretariat, emphasizing the need for an efficient, transparent, and participatory mechanism to coordinate the network's activities.

Given Iran's strategic location and access to maritime and international transport routes, the country has also played an effective role in examining the technical and communication aspects of the BRICS South-South Submarine Cable Project, Sheikhi said.

Referring to Iran's role in the BRICS innovation cooperation network, he noted that the country has sought to leverage the capabilities of universities and knowledge-based companies to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience within BRICS member states' innovation ecosystems by suggesting proposals and feedback.

New technologies, digital economy

The official went on to say that the documents and the topics raised in ICT working group have been examined from the perspective of national interests, and Iran's specialized proposals have been presented in alignment with priorities for technology development and the digital economy.

He expressed hope that these measures would further pave the way for the development of joint projects, technology exchange, and the strengthening of the country's science, technology, and innovation diplomacy within the markets of BRICS member countries.

Iran proposes BRICS+ develop reliable computing power networks

Iran's representative at the BRICS Future Network Innovation Forum 2026, held in Shenzhen from June 16 to 17, proposed the establishment of a cooperation framework for the BRICS Plus partnership to develop future digital infrastructure, strengthen industrial cooperation, and promote cross-border interactions among member states.

Delivering a speech, titled 'From connectivity to reliable computing power networks; enabling shared digital growth, industrial cooperation, and transboundary interactions', Sheikhi outlined Iran's views and proposals in developing future digital infrastructure, ISNA reported.

"Connectivity, network coverage, and bandwidth are essential for digital development, but meeting emerging needs requires an approach that goes beyond traditional network development," the official said.

The expansion of technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), industrial Internet of Things (IIoT), smart logistics, smart energy systems, modern financial technologies, and digital platforms requires integrated, smart, and reliable infrastruc-

tures, he stressed.

Expounding on the concept of trusted computing power network, Sheikhi said future networks should not be simply seen as a data transmission platform, but should serve as an infrastructure for connecting networks, providing computing power, ensuring secure data flow, promoting digital trust, supporting industrial applications, and enabling interactive ecosystems.

Highlighting Iran's capacities in energy, transportation, ICT, financial technologies, and cyber security fields as well as the country's growing scientific and academic capabilities, the official voiced Iran's readiness to play an effective, constructive, and operational role as a regional and technological partner in BRICS Plus joint agenda to develop future digital networks.

BRICS Plus partnership will serve as a practical platform for cooperation among interested countries, research centers, universities, industries, and technological partners. The cooperation framework will be centered around 'reliable infrastructure', 'industrial value creation', 'interactions, standards and digital trusts', and pave the way for the development of joint efforts in evolving technologies, Sheikhi further noted.

The official went on to say that BRICS Plus cooperation should move beyond exchanging views and reports and lead to implementing joint projects, setting up test beds, developing technical learning, industrial applications, and cooperation.

Guided by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) of China, the BRICS Future Network Innovation Forum 2026 convened at the Wuzhou Guest House in Shenzhen.

The forum was co-hosted by the Shenzhen Municipal Bureau of Industry and Information Technology, the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology (CAICT), and the BRICS Institute of Future Networks.

Iranian female cardiologist garners gold medal at IFIA 2026



TEHRAN – Iranian inventor Azin Alizadeh-Asl has secured a gold medal at the sixth International Invention and Innovation Competition for the International Federation of Inventors' Association (IFIA) INV Members.

The 6th international competition for inventors and innovators was held online from July 3rd to 5th in Geneva, Switzerland, for INV title holders from around the world.

Alizadeh-Asl, a cardiologist with fellowships in echocardiography and cardio-oncology, is the founder of CardioOncology in Iran and the head of the Cardio-Oncology Department and Research Center, and a faculty member at Shahid Rajaie Heart Center in Tehran, Mehr news agency reported.

She was awarded the gold medal for her invention of 'Image Clarification Device and Method in Transesophageal Echocardiography'. The innovative scientific achievement is considered a significant breakthrough in enhancing the accuracy of diagnosing heart diseases and improving the standard of patient care.

She has previously showcased her expertise and ingenuity in international community through her inventions. In February 1992, she earned a (silver medal) in the World Chemistry Olympiad in Italy; ranked second in the Cardiovascular Residency Program Exam in Iran in 2002, and placed in the top 10 percent of the Iranian Cardiology Board Exam in 2006.

She introduced an innovation in the field of echocardiography known as Holter Echocardiography and developed an accepted innovation called 'A Polypill for the Prevention of Cardiotoxicity'.

Moreover, Alizadeh-Asl received the International Doody's Core Titles Award for her Practical Cardiology Book and was recognized by BookAuthority as an author of one

of the 100 Best Cardiology Books of All Time.

Following five successful editions, the 2026 competition achieved its highest level of international participation to date, bringing together more than 1,000 invention submissions from IFIA INV Title Holders representing 51 countries across all five continents.

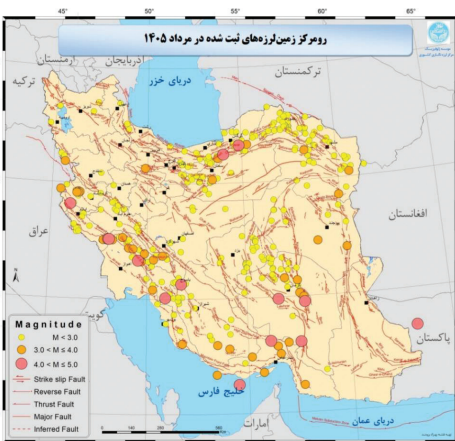
This remarkable achievement reflects the continuous growth of the competition and demonstrates the expanding international influence of IFIA within the global innovation ecosystem.

The participating countries included Algeria, Armenia, Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Egypt, France, Georgia, Hong Kong SAR, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Macau SAR, Malaysia, Malta, Morocco, New Zealand, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Tajikistan, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uzbekistan, and Venezuela.

In line with the seventh National Development Plan which stresses the need to overcome barriers to women's professional development, the current administration has put supporting women on the agenda despite unfair sanctions.

Expounding on Iranian women's experiences in scientific, social, and crisis management fields, the Vice-President for Women and Family Affairs, Zahra Behrouz-Azar, in July said Iranian women comprise over 56 percent of academic communities, around 46 percent of PhD graduates, and more than 68 percent of specialists in basic sciences, while representing a significant share of faculty members, inventors, and knowledge-based companies' managers.

Iran shakes with 407 earthquakes in a month



TEHRAN – A total of 407 earthquakes have been recorded across the country in a month from July 23 to August 22, according to the seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran.

Statistically, 348 earthquakes with magnitudes smaller than 3, 45 earthquakes with a magnitude between 3 and 4, and 14 earthquakes with a magnitude greater than 4 on the Richter scale have occurred in the country, IRNA reported.

Of the total quakes, one had a magnitude of 4.7 on the Richter scale, which occurred on August 10 in Khuzestan province.

Among the provinces of the country, Sem-

nan experienced the highest number of earthquakes with 74, followed by Khorasan Razavi with 45, and North Khorasan with 32 earthquakes.

During the same period, 10 earthquakes were recorded in Tehran; the biggest had a magnitude of 2.5 on the Richter scale.

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

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

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

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

DOE prepares conservation map to protect valuable fossil reserves

TEHRAN – The Department of Environment has studied, identified and organized a significant portion of the country's vertebrate paleontological reserves and has prepared a conservation map to protect valuable fossils.

Masoumeh Ghaffari-Shahir, an official with the National Museum of Natural History and Genetic Resources affiliated with the Department of Environment, highlighted the importance of vertebrate fossils as part of Iran's geological and paleontological heritage.

The rarity of these remains makes accurate identification, specialized conservation and scientific documentation all the more essential, IRNA quoted the official as saying on Thursday.

She added that the DOE's work in vertebrate paleontology began nearly two decades ago, initially focusing on the city of Maragheh in the northwestern part of the country. In recent years, other areas with paleontological potential have also been incorporated into exploration and research programs, Ghaffari-Shahir highlighted.

Northwestern and western Iran are among the country's richest regions in terms of vertebrate fossils, she said, noting that fossil remains have been identified, excavated and transferred from the provinces of Ardabil, Lorestan, Kordestan, and Sistan-Baluchestan.

The fossils identified in Ardabil, Lorestan and Kordestan are predominantly estimated to be between seven and eight million years old.

She also pointed to the particular importance of southeastern Iran, especially the Makran coast, for marine vertebrate fossils. An approximately eight-million-year-old

whale fossil was excavated in the Chababar area, she said.

The provinces of Hamadan, Khuzestan and Ilam also have considerable potential for vertebrate fossils. Securing the necessary funding for exploration, excavation and the transfer of specimens from these areas has been included in the Geology Group's agenda for the current year.

Biodiversity, ecosystem, and endangered species

In February, the DOE elaborated on achievements and measures taken by the administration to protect the biodiversity, ecosystem, and endangered species in the country.

The number of protected areas under the supervision of the DOE has increased from 327 to 330, accounting for 12 percent (19.8 million hectares) of the country's land area, IRNA quoted Hamid-Reza Zohrabi, an official with the DOE, as saying.

Work in vertebrate paleontology began nearly two decades ago, initially focusing on the northwestern city of Maragheh.

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, a total of 213 species are endangered.

The country has so far prepared plans for the preservation of 25 endangered species such as Persian cheetah, zebra, Asiatic black bear, yellow deer, lesser white-fronted geese, white-headed duck, Persian salamander, blind cave fish, and luristanica Sorbus (a



rare plant species that is native to Iran). The DOE is preparing thirteen more plans.

The population of prominent herbivorous mammals in the protected areas has increased from 227,000 to more than 240,000, and the number of managed invasive species has grown by 400 percent, covering five species, including crucian carp, nutria, raccoon, and rainbow trout.

Monitoring pests and diseases, and fire outbreaks in Zagros habitats is another measure taken by the DOE, which has led to the identification of Hyrcanian boxwood pest, the awkward silkworm moth in Gilan province, and the wood-eating pest of Aras in Khorasan Razavi province.

Given the importance of protecting biodiversity and genetic resources, the DOE is planning to prepare a plan to combat plant pests and pathogens as the main threat to the country's unique ecosystem.

To protect caves, the DOE has developed cave classification guidelines and plans for the conservation and sustainable use of the caves in the country. The number of caves with a conservation grade has increased from 7 to 41, indicating an increase of 490 percent.



SEPTEMBER 2, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The best noble moral traits are the pardoning by one who has the upper hand and the open-handedness of one who is himself in need.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:04 Evening: 18:49 Dawn: 4:11 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:38 (tomorrow)

IAF to screen “Toy Story 5”

TEHRAN – The 2026 American animated comedy-drama film “Toy Story 5” directed by Andrew Stanton, will be shown at the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran on Thursday, September 3.

The animation, which has been dubbed into Persian, will be screened at 6 p.m. at the Nas-eri Hall of the IAF.

Produced by Pixar Animation Studios for Walt Disney Pictures, it is the fifth main installment in the “Toy Story” film series and the sequel to “Toy Story 4” (2019).

Set two years after the fourth film, “Toy Story 5” follows Jessie as she, Woody, Buzz Light-year and the other toys deal with the presence of Lilypad, a tablet and the new favorite play-thing of Bonnie.

The animation deals with children increasingly eschewing traditional toys in favor of touchscreen devices like tablets. Jessie admits that she is “losing Bonnie to this device”. Stanton explained that “Toy Story 5” is a “realization of an existential problem: that nobody’s really playing with toys any more” and asks what increasing screen time means for children. The toys must confront what it means to stay relevant when technology reshapes playtime.

It features the voices of Tom Hanks, Tim Allen, and Joan Cusack among those reprising their roles, joined by Conan O’Brien, Scarlett Spears, Greta Lee, Shelby Rabara, Mykal-Michelle Harris, and Craig Robinson.

The franchise’s composer, Randy Newman, returned to score the film, marking his tenth collaboration with Pixar, while Taylor Swift contributed the single “I Knew It, I Knew You” to the soundtrack.



With a budget of \$250 million, “Toy Story 5” is one of the most expensive animated films ever made and one of the most expensive films of all time.

As of August 30, 2026, it has grossed \$478.8 million in the United States and Canada, and \$657.6 million in other territories, for a world-wide total of \$1.136 billion, breaking several box office records and becoming Pixar’s biggest worldwide opening weekend on record.

“Toy Story 5” is now the third-highest-grossing film of 2026, the highest of the franchise, and the tenth highest-grossing animated film. Like its predecessors, it received positive reviews from critics, who praised its visuals, performances, humor, and themes, although some criticized its script.

Cartoon of Day



The Flight of Innocence

Cartoonist: José Alberto Rodríguez Avila from Cuba

31st Busan International Film Festival to host world premiere of Majid Majidi’s “Midday Meal”

TEHRAN – The latest film by acclaimed Iranian filmmaker Majid Majidi, titled “Midday Meal,” will have its world premiere in the main competition section of the 31st Busan International Film Festival (BIFF).

A production of 2026, the 129-minute family social drama, which deals with children and human rights, marks Majidi’s first visit to the festival, ISNA reported.

Funded by the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, the film was shot exclusively in south of Iran and features an entirely local cast, with no established stars.

Although details of the plot and cast of the film have not yet been announced, it seems that Majidi has continued his tradition of storytelling through youthful perspectives in his new film.

A key highlight of the production is the return of cinematographer Houman Behmanesh, collaborating with Majidi for the second time after “Sun Children”.

This year’s edition of BIFF is the first since the International Federation of Film Producers Associations designated Busan as one of its 17 A-list festivals. The winner of the Busan Award for best film now also qualifies for submission to the Oscar for best international feature. The distinction puts Busan alongside the five other Oscar-qualifying festivals: Cannes, Berlin, Venice,



Sundance and Toronto.

Now in its second year, the best film competition brings together 14 Asian films, 12 of them world premieres. Four are from first-time directors, and four are by women filmmakers.

In addition to “Midday Meal,” the lineup includes “Beach Fictions” by Korean newcomer Lim Hayeon, “Between Two Lovers,” from Hirokazu Kore-eda protégé Hirose Nanako, and “The First Taste of Loneliness,” by Chinese director Gu You. Also included in the line-up are entries from Uzbekistan, Indonesia, and Taiwan.

Majid Majidi, 67, is an Iranian filmmaker and producer. His films often feature child or ad-

olescent protagonists; explore themes such as childhood innocence, family bonds, poverty, social issues, and solidarity; and are characterized by a humanistic sensibility.

His important films include “Children of Heaven” (1997), “The Color of Paradise” (1999), “Baran” (2001) and “The Song of Sparrows” (2008). “Children of Heaven” was nominated for the Academy Award for Best International Feature Film.

More recently, Majidi directed “Muhammad: The Messenger of God” (2015), an epic film dealing with the childhood of the Islamic prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The Busan International Film

Festival, held annually in Haeundae District, Busan, South Korea, is one of the most significant film festivals in Asia.

The main focus of the BIFF is to introduce new films and first-time directors, especially those from Asian countries. Another notable feature is the appeal of the festival to young people, both in terms of the large youthful audience it attracts and through its efforts to develop and promote young talent.

The 31st Busan International Film Festival will run from October 6 to 15, with the Asian Contents & Film Market held from October 10 to 13.

International conference to explore resistance cinema from theory to practice

TEHRAN- The secretariat of the 9th edition of the Resistance International Film Festival has announced a call for papers for the international conference “Resistance Cinema: From Theory to Practice,” inviting researchers, academics, filmmakers, artists and cultural and media experts to examine the theoretical foundations and practical dimensions of resistance cinema.

The conference seeks to explore the theoretical foundations, artistic capacities and social functions of resistance cinema, with an emphasis on its role beyond the conventional representation of war and armed conflict.

According to the organizers, the event will approach resistance cinema not merely as a cinematic genre or a body of films dealing with conflict, but as a cultural, intellectual and civilizational discourse. The discourse seeks to represent nations’ resistance to imperialism, colonialism, domination and hegemonic structures, while presenting narratives centered on liberation and justice as alternatives to one-sided narratives produced by dominant powers.

Within this framework, the concept of resistance will be examined through the perspective of Islamic discourse, the ideals of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, and the thought of

Imam Khomeini (RA) and other Iranian religious and political thinkers.

The conference will also examine resistance as a phenomenon extending beyond military and political arenas. Its organizers intend to explore its relationship with identity, culture, collective memory, the pursuit of justice, independence, human dignity and peoples’ right to determine their own destinies.

“Resistance Cinema: From Theory to Practice” aims to provide a platform for academic and artistic dialogue on the relationship between cinema and social developments, liberation movements and the historical experiences of nations that have resisted domination.

Among the main topics of the conference are the philosophical and aesthetic foundations of resistance cinema, the relationship between form and resistance-oriented content, and the role of cinema in representing opposition to imperialism and hegemonic power.

The conference will also focus on cinema and collective memory, narratives of resistance in the Muslim world, the cinematic experience of Iran’s Sacred Defense, the impact

of the Islamic Revolution on the development of resistance literature and art, and the opportunities and challenges facing resistance cinema in the era of new media.

The organizers have invited university professors, researchers, students, filmmakers and experts in cinema, cultural studies, political science, sociology, media, history, philosophy and the arts to contribute scientific papers and analytical research to the conference until September 11.

The event seeks to bridge theoretical knowledge and artistic experience and contribute to the development of credible academic literature on resistance cinema. It will also explore indigenous models of storytelling and ways of strengthening cinema’s capacity to represent narratives of truth, freedom and resistance.

Selected papers will undergo academic evaluation and will subsequently be published in the conference proceedings.

The Resistance International Film Festival, which organizes the conference, is one of Iran’s major cinematic events focusing on films and artistic works addressing resistance, social justice, independence and historical struggles.

Redfern gallery brings artists together for Gaza

A Redfern gallery in Sydney, Australia, will bring together more than 60 artists this month to raise funds for a school serving children in Gaza.

Artists for Gaza’s Future is returning to Rogue Pop-Up Gallery for a second exhibition, following last year’s event, which raised \$25,000 for Gazan families in need of food, water, shelter and medical aid. This year, the exhibition will support the Olive Garden School, established by teacher Mohammed Hussein in April 2026 to provide education for children whose schooling has been disrupted by war.

The school began with 20 students learning in a single tent but the need for education was so great that within weeks, Mohammed had 60 students. With extra funding, the school would be in a position to better meet the needs of current students and to take in more children, South Sydney Herald reported.

Artists for Gaza’s Future is the

brainchild of long-term friends Marguerite Bunce and Sydney-based artist Jane Burton-Taylor. Marguerite has maintained a large circle of Palestinian friends for many years. She first met Mohammed in 2024 and has closely followed the progress of the school.

“These children obviously need to be taught to read and do math but they also need a place where they can be children who are having fun and feel as safe as possible together. Mohammed wanted them to see the school as a kind of haven where they could make friends and feel looked after.”

While there has been much international focus on the physical reconstruction of Gaza, the real work is in nurturing a new generation that has the education, skills, and ambition to revitalize the community.

Jane has drawn on her connections with Sydney’s artistic community to bring together artists who have generously donated work

to the exhibition.

“We were delighted that so many artists contributed work to this project and I would also like to thank Diane Larter for again generously offering the use of Rogue Pop-Up Gallery in Redfern as our venue,” Jane said.

The organizing committee is absorbing all administrative and other costs, meaning 100 percent of proceeds from the exhibition will go to the Olive Garden School.

The exhibition showcases artists across the spectrum, from the famous, such as Mental as Anything member Reg Mombassa and Wynne Prize winner Jude Rae, to the less well-known.

“The works also vary in size and price, making the show very accessible for both dedicated and casual followers of art,” Jane said.

The exhibition will kick off at the Rogue Pop-Up Gallery in Redfern on September 2 and will run until September 27.

According to the Palestinian

Health Ministry, the toll from the Israeli war of genocide on the Gaza Strip has risen to 73,438 Palestinians killed and 174,447 wounded since October 7, 2023.

The ministry said the total number of Palestinians killed since the ceasefire took effect on October 10, 2025, had reached 1,303, with 4,336 others wounded.

It said a number of victims remain under rubble and on roads, while ambulance and civil defense crews are still unable to reach them.

The Israeli war of on the Gaza Strip has caused a humanitarian catastrophe amid widespread destruction of homes and infrastructure and the collapse of essential services.

The humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate as the Israeli occupation prevents the entry of relief supplies and materials needed for reconstruction, despite provisions in the ceasefire agreement allowing their unrestricted entry.