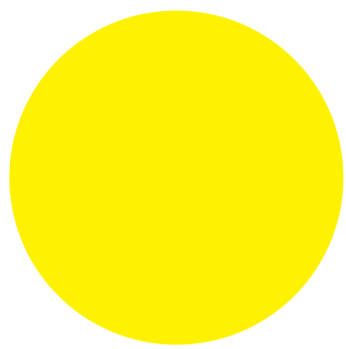


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Iran Daily

Vol. 8083 • Saturday, April 04, 2026 • Farvardin 15, 1405 • Shawwal 15, 1447 • 100,000 rials • 4 pages

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War exposes fragility of security provided by global powers in West Asia

By Edris Khosravi
International affairs expert

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The Middle East remains one of the world's most complex and volatile regions, having gone through sweeping changes over the past decade. From the Arab uprisings to armed conflicts and economic shifts, the region has consistently stayed in the global spotlight.

In recent years, major political upheavals have complicated efforts to maintain security. Chief among them were the Arab uprisings that erupted in 2010 across parts of the Middle East and North Africa. Initially aimed at toppling authoritarian regimes and ushering in democratic systems, these movements left a deep mark on the region. Countries including Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Syria were swept up in protests and political change.

Political developments in the Middle East have been shaped, directly and indirectly, by international powers. The role of the United States, Russia, the European Union and other global actors has stood out, fueling intense geopolitical competition across the region.

Economically, the Middle East has also undergone major shifts. Most countries in the region are key oil and gas producers, yet falling oil prices, recurring oil shocks during conflicts such as the Arab-Israeli wars, the Iran-Iraq war and now the US-Israeli aggression against Iran, along with sanctions and domestic economic strains,

have taken a heavy toll on regional economies and piled up challenges. Oil remains the backbone of many regional economies. Price drops over the past decade have put Persian Gulf states under pressure to balance their budgets, while price spikes have often led to wasteful spending and fiscal mismanagement.

Several Middle Eastern countries have also faced international sanctions. Iran, for instance, has been under unilateral US sanctions since its 1979 Islamic Revolution and later faced additional measures tied to its nuclear program from both Washington and the United Nations Security Council. These restrictions have weighed on trade, investment and overall economic conditions. Alongside external pressure, internal economic woes have played a major role. Despite considerable wealth, Middle Eastern countries struggle with high unemployment, corruption and weak governance, factors that have undermined stability and put security at risk.

The past decade has also brought notable social changes. Population growth, shifting cultural norms and rising unemployment have all reshaped the region. The Middle East has one of the fastest-growing populations in the world, placing increasing strain on the resources and infrastructure of regional nations. At the same time, cultural and social changes have become more visible, particularly among younger generations

and in the evolving role of women in society. [Page 2 >](#)

IRGC shoots down 2nd US F-35 fighter jet in Ramadan War

Iran warns of expanding scope of war if threats against infrastructure persist

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The remains of an American F-35 fighter jet shot down by the IRGC in the sky over central Iran on April 3, 2026. IRNA

US-Israeli war crimes amid international silence

Rasoul Mousavi
Vice president of Iran's Islamic Azad University

PERSPECTIVE EXCLUSIVE

The United States and the Zionist regime, by attacking the Islamic Republic of Iran, have violated numerous human principles and international laws, including human rights and international conventions concerning the protection of civilians, universities, and religious figures. In this

regard, Islamic Azad University, as one of the largest non-state, in-person universities globally, in order to inform international forums and document these crimes, points to just a few examples of the violent actions of these two aggressors.

Assassination of Iran's political-religious leader & supreme spiritual authority for Muslims worldwide

This act, occurring in peacetime, is a clear violation of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions (inviolability of religious figures)

and Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (prohibition of incitement to violence against religions). Threatening his life is a direct threat to the spiritual identity of millions worldwide.

Destruction of scientific, academic centers

Universities, as centers of knowledge, awareness, academic discourse, and the education of future generations, enjoy special protection under international law. In the attacks by the American-Israeli coalition, by the fourth week of the war, 154 academic

sections in 21 universities across the country had been targeted. Among these, the Agricultural Research Center of Islamic Azad University's Science and Research Branch, the research and educational buildings of Iran University of Science and Technology, the Electrical Engineering Faculty of Khajeh Nasir University of Technology, and Isfahan University of Technology suffered serious damage. These actions are a clear violation of Article 52 of the Geneva Conventions and customary rules of international humanitarian law. [Page 3 >](#)



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Pezeshkian: Iran determined to defend itself against US-Israel aggression

International Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian said Tehran is not seeking to expand the ongoing aggression against Iran in the region but will firmly defend its national security, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

He made the remarks in separate phone calls with his Azerbaijani and Finnish counterparts on Thursday. Pezeshkian said that Iran's attacks on US military bases in regional countries are a response to the enemy's use of these countries' territories and facilities to carry out attacks on Iran.

President Pezeshkian in

his conversation with Finland's President Alexander Stubb referred to the heavy costs that the US-Israeli aggression has imposed on the Iranian people, saying that the consequences of the "unlawful" war are not limited to Iran or the region but the entire world has forced to pay the price for their actions.

The Iranian president said the aggressors have targeted the international law and the rule of law in the world – the actions that require a decisive response from all governments.

Europe's stance

"While a few European countries have taken a re-



Alexander Stubb



Masoud Pezeshkian



Ilham Aliyev

sponsible stance, many others have adopted a passive and even biased approach toward this aggression and the crimes committed, including the massacre of children and attacks on Iran's infrastructure, which is by no means acceptable," Pezeshkian said.

During his talks with Azer-

bajani President Ilham Aliyev, the Iranian president reiterated Iran's unwavering resolve to defend itself against the ongoing aggression.

Aliyev pointed to the consequences of the war for the region's security and stability, expressing hope for the establishment of

peace and security in the region.

Iran's Foreign Ministry's spokesman Esmail Baqaei also emphasized Iran's right to defend itself in the face of the ongoing "unjust war", saying that Tehran is determined to strongly respond to US-Israeli aggression.

He made the remarks in an interview with Newzroom Afrika.

Referring to the aggression against Iran which began on February 28, Baqaei said, "We've had a similar experience" in June when the US and Israel launched an unprovoked aggression against Iran amid nuclear

negotiations between Tehran and Washington and after 12 days they called for a ceasefire.

After nine months, they once again launched strikes on Iran amid new talks on Iran's nuclear program, he added.

'Vicious cycle of war, talks, ceasefire'

"So we won't tolerate this vicious cycle of war, negotiations, ceasefire and then the repeat of the same pattern. It is catastrophic not only for Iran but for the entire region and the world. You now see its consequences in many countries around the world." Baqaei said.

IRGC shoots down 2nd US F-35 fighter jet in Ramadan War

Iran warns of expanding scope of war if threats against infrastructure persist

International Desk

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) announced on Friday the downing of the second American F-35 fighter jet in the sky over central Iran.

"The second American F-35 fighter jet was destroyed in the central sky of Iran by the IRGC's new advanced air defense system," the IRGC's Public Relations Department said. "This fighter jet was completely destroyed and crashed. In the past twelve hours, this is the second fighter jet that has been destroyed by the IRGC's air defense. There is no further information about the fate of the pilot because the fighter jet totally destroyed."

Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters spokesperson also warned on Friday that further threats targeting Iran's infrastructure could widen the scope of response to include key assets linked to the United States, Israel, and allied host countries.

The spokesperson warned in a statement that any implementation of repeated US threats against Iran's bridges, power plants, and energy infrastructure would trigger a broader response by Iran's Armed Forces, extending beyond Israeli and American assets to include wider targets linked to host countries in the region.

According to the statement, if such threats are carried out, Iran's Armed Forces would, in addition to targeting all assets linked to the Israeli regime and the United States in the fields of fuel, energy, economic centers, and power plants across the region and the occupied territories, strike broader and more significant assets belonging to them as well as to host countries and allied states with greater intensity.

The spokesperson also stated that countries hosting US military bases in the region must compel American forces to leave their territory if they seek to avoid damage.

War to continue until US, Israel 'regret' aggression

The senior spokesman for Iran's Armed Forces said the country will continue the war as long as it makes the United States and the Israeli regime "regret" their illegal act of aggression.

"Our strategy is not limited to eye-for-an-eye or reciprocal actions. Our strategy is to punish the aggressor so that it fully regrets [its move] and to guarantee the permanent removal of the threat posed to the nation," Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi said.

"The goal is not to announce a ceasefire today and see the re-

sumption of the aggression tomorrow under various pretexts, with people feeling worried and remaining in anxiety."

Shekarchi also noted that the world has realized the invincibility of the Islamic Republic, which stems from its large capacity.

Many countries in the world condemn the imposed war on Iran while many of Washington's allies are not willing to join it as they see the catastrophe caused by the US's presence in the region, he added.

The unprovoked US-Israeli aggression on Iran began on February 28 with airstrikes that assassinated senior Iranian officials and commanders.

The Iranian Armed Forces have responded by launching daily missile and drone operations targeting locations in the Israeli-occupied territories as well as US military bases and assets across the region.

They have also blocked the Strait of Hormuz to oil and gas tankers affiliated with the adversaries and those cooperating with them in an attempt to maintain security at the strategic waterway.

The US has sought to form a coalition to open the strait, asking NATO countries to contribute naval and air assets. However, most of Washington's allies have declined to commit forces.

Araghchi cautions UNSC against Hormuz Strait resolution

Deputy FM: Iran, Oman to formulate protocol for navigation in Hormuz

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi warned against any United Nations Security Council resolution on the Strait of Hormuz, raising the alarm that such moves would further complicate the situation rather than resolve tensions.

In a telephone conversation on Thursday, Araghchi and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov discussed the latest regional and international developments in light of the continued US and Israeli aggression against Iran.

Araghchi stressed Iran's inherent right to legitimate self-defense to protect its sovereignty, national security, and territorial integrity, strongly condemning the aggressive attacks on the country's infrastructure, including universities, bridges, and scientific centers.

Referring to the insecurity in the Strait of Hormuz, he said it had been imposed as a result of US and Israeli military aggression against Iran. Araghchi noted that, at

present, vessels belonging to countries not involved in the aggression are allowed to transit the strait in coordination with Iran's Armed Forces.

ued military aggression against Iran and briefed his Iranian counterpart on Moscow's ongoing contacts and consultations with regional coun-



Abbas Araghchi

The Iranian foreign minister also denounced efforts by the United States and some other countries at the UN Security Council to exert pressure on Iran, warning that any provocative action by aggressors and their supporters, including moves related to the Strait of Hormuz, would only complicate the situation.

He added that issuing a Security Council resolution on the Hormuz Strait would not solve any problems and would instead become part of the problem. Lavrov, for his part, reaffirmed Russia's position condemning the contin-

tries aimed at reducing tensions.

He emphasized the need for all parties to return to diplomacy and a political resolution of the crisis, noting that Russia has put forward initiatives and proposals to help de-escalate tensions and manage the situation in the region.

Meanwhile, Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's deputy foreign minister, said Tehran and Oman are working toward establishing a joint protocol to ensure safe maritime passage through the Strait of Hormuz in the post-war period.

In an interview with Sputnik, Gharibabadi said that the Strait of Hormuz had previously remained open with normal maritime traffic, but recent armed attacks and US-Israeli acts of aggression have disrupted safe passage and created significant challenges.

Gharibabadi said that under normal conditions, all vessels passing through the strait would be expected to coordinate in advance with Iranian and Omani authorities and obtain the necessary permits to ensure safety and security. He added that environmental considerations, as well as maritime safety, are also key factors in this framework.

He explained that Iran and Oman would assume greater responsibility for guaranteeing safe passage and are currently working on a draft protocol to regulate navigation in the strait during peacetime. According to him, the protocol is intended not as a restriction, but as a mechanism to facilitate safe transit and provide better services to vessels.

War exposes fragility ...

High unemployment remains a central challenge across much of the region, especially among youth. This has fueled frustration and, at times, unrest, highlighting the urgent need for workable solutions.

The region has also been rocked by multiple conflicts, including the Syrian civil war, the war in Yemen and ongoing tensions among regional powers. These conflicts have not only triggered humanitarian crises but also reshaped political and social structures.

With the United States and Israel launching a military offensive on Iran in February 2026, the future of regional security has grown increasingly uncertain. Iran quickly moved to close the Strait of Hormuz and struck US bases in Arab countries. Tensions spiraled, sending oil prices soaring. The United States, which has maintained a military presence in the Persian Gulf under security agreements since the Second Persian Gulf War, lost several bases in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates during the conflict.

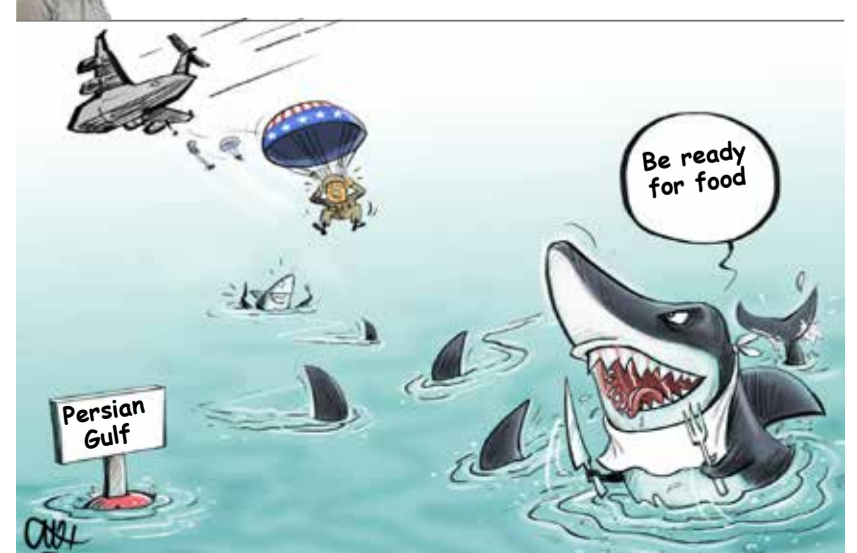
The developments laid bare the fragility of relying on external powers to provide security.

According to British professor Barry Buzan's viewpoint, security today is multidimensional, spanning political, social, economic, cultural and environmental aspects. The Middle East faces challenges across all five. Politically, most of the regional countries have yet to complete the process of nation-state building, with tribal dynamics still shaping governance. Economically, heavy reliance on oil leaves these countries exposed.

Culturally, the influence of imported Western norms has created problems for them. Environmentally, water scarcity and dust storms pose growing threats to them.

Taken together, developments over the past decade show a region grappling with both risks and opportunities. Political, economic and social shifts will continue to shape the Middle East's trajectory. Yet with the right policies and strategies, it remains possible to navigate these challenges and make the most of the opportunities ahead.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Minister calls for urgent action to protect cultural heritage

Iranica Desk

The Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts said that the extensive destruction of Iran's historical sites during the recent US-Israeli attacks amounts to "a deliberate assault on Iran's civilizational identity," stressing that targeting cultural heritage reflects the collapse of the moral and legal norms governing international conflicts. Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri said in an interview with Al Jazeera that while explaining the extent of the damage caused during the recent US and Israeli attacks on Iran, he described these actions as "a target-

ed attack on the historical memory and national identity of Iranians". Referring to the damage inflicted on Golestan Palace — one of the most prominent sites listed as a World Heritage Site — he stated that what is now visible in this historical complex is the destruction of accumulated layers of history, culture, and the identity of a nation; layers that cannot be recreated within any restoration framework. Salehi-Amiri emphasized that even during the eight-year Iran-Iraq war, a large part of the country's historical heritage had been protected from systematic destruction, adding, "What is happening today reflects

the complete collapse of the ethical norms and legal rules governing conflicts; a process that poses a serious threat not only to Iran, but to the entire global system for the protection of cultural heritage." He also pointed to the expanding scope of attacks on historic cities and said that in Isfahan, as one of the main centers of Islamic-Iranian civilization, prominent structures such as Chehel Sotoun Palace and the Jaame Mosque — one of the oldest mosques in the country — were targeted, an event that shows the crossing of all red lines in the protection of human heritage. Emphasizing the inherent limitations of restoration

processes, Salehi-Amiri added that restoration, however precise and scientific, can never restore the original authenticity of a monument. The loss of authentic materials means the removal of part of the material memory of history; every crack and every injury is a lasting wound on the body of a nation's cultural identity. He called for the immediate intervention of international institutions and said that, under the 1954 Hague Convention, any hostile action against cultural property is prohibited. However, the inaction of responsible institutions in the face of these destructions amounts to ignoring legal



IRNA

and ethical responsibilities toward the common heritage of humanity. He stressed the deep con-

nection between cultural identity and national resistance, stating that the destruction of buildings,

however painful, cannot undermine a nation's belief in and attachment to its land and history.

Mazandaran among top Nowruz travel destinations



chn.ir

Iranica Desk

The Director General of Roads Maintenance and Transport Organization of Mazandaran Province said that according to data collected from 118 traffic-counting systems, over 3.27 million vehicle movements were recorded in the province from March 15 to April 1, 2026. Mohsen Mohammadzadeh said the traffic statistics show that Mazandaran was among the provinces attracting the highest number of

Nowruz (Iranian New Year) trips, with more than 1.722 million vehicles entering the province, chn.ir reported. He added that the total daily traffic on the province's exit routes exceeded 1.55 million passages and said that, based on the balance of inbound and outbound traffic, a buildup of nearly 302,000 vehicles was recorded, marking a nine percent increase compared with the same period last year. He further stated that during this period, 84,825

passengers traveled from Mazandaran to other parts of the country. Speaking about passenger transportation, Mohammadzadeh said that, the ongoing wartime conditions in the country, demand for travel using public transport fleets was properly met within available capacity, and passenger movement was carried out in the best possible manner. Mohammadzadeh emphasized that, fortunately, good measures have been taken in the passen-

ger transportation sector, noting that 222 passenger transport companies are active in the province and provide the necessary services to travelers. Meanwhile, the Director General of Mazandaran Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization said that nearly 10 million people had visited the province's attractions since the beginning of Nowruz. He also announced the provision of free services at some major recreational areas and

the continuous presence of inspectors to ensure visitor satisfaction on Nature Day. Hossein Izadi said that on April 2, known as Nature Day, and in line with the governor's orders and emphasis, all inspectors and secretaries of the travel services headquarters across the province maintained a constant and active presence in recreational areas and accommodation centers to ensure that the people of Iran are welcomed properly and respectfully.

US-Israeli war crimes ...

Casualties among university students, school pupils

By the fourth week of the war, 71 university students from various provinces had lost their lives, with Tehran Province having the highest number of martyrs at 23. Furthermore, the mass killing of 170 schoolchildren and their teachers in the city of Minab in the early hours of the war is a clear example of a war crime and a crime against humanity. Due to wartime conditions in the country, the opportunity to provide precise statistics has not yet been available, and the number of martyrs and injured professors, teachers, university students, and school pupils is certainly much higher.

Attacks on vital fuel infrastructure, environmental resources

Extensive and targeted attacks on fuel storage and transfer infrastructure in Shahr-e Rey, Tehran Province, Fardis-Karaj, and other areas, in addition to being covered by the protections of the 1949 Geneva Convention and its four Additional Protocols, and due to their environmental consequences, risk of pollution, and release of toxic substances, violate the provisions of the 1976 ENMOD Convention and pose a direct threat to the right of future generations to a healthy environment.

Attack on Iranian frigate Dena

This vessel had departed for India on a friendly training mission before the war. This unarmed vessel was attacked by the US Navy on its return from India, resulting in the martyrdom of its 104 crew members. The president of the United States, with utmost cruelty, stated that when he asked his commanders why they did not capture them (who were unarmed), they replied that sinking the ship was more enjoyable.

Call for action

These actions have occurred while international bodies responsible for maintaining peace and security, particularly the United Nations Security Council, has maintained an unforgivable silence. This silence is a dereliction of duty and a clear violation of international obligations. Therefore, in order to recall and demand the fulfillment of legal, ethical, and humanitarian commitments within the framework of international law, we request the following from the United Nations Security Council, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Committee of the Red Cross (overseeing the implementation of the Geneva Conventions), UNESCO, the United Nations General Assembly, and the Human Rights Council:

An explicit and transparent condemnation of the aggression by the governments of the United States and the Zionist regime against Iran, adoption of deterrent and punitive measures against the perpetrators of these aggressions, a decisive stance against the attack on the peaceful nuclear facilities of the Islamic Republic of Iran, documentation and follow-up of the extensive violations of conventions, an immediate investigation into the destruction of historical sites, convening an extraordinary session of the United Nations to condemn these crimes and present effective solutions to prevent their recurrence.

We also call on all religious, scientific, academic, and cultural institutions worldwide to unite their voices, condemning the barbaric aggressions against Iran by the United States and the child-killing Zionist regime, to stand against this violence, and not to allow the fundamental rights of humanity to be sacrificed for the greed of aggressive powers.

War chessboard with snakes & ladders rules



By Sajad Abedi
Political analyst

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

In international politics and strategic conflict, the metaphor of "chess" has long shaped how we interpret power. Chess suggests pure rationality, calculation, anticipating the opponent and sacrificing lesser pieces to secure victory.

Yet the harsh and at times absurd reality of modern wars, especially in the Middle East and in recent tensions involving Iran and global powers, reveals a striking paradox. The players present themselves as seasoned chess masters, but the logic governing events is closer to the volatile rules of "snakes and ladders."

In chess, the rules are clear. Each piece moves in a defined way. But on a "chessboard of war ruled by snakes and ladders," just when a carefully planned move seems to bring victory within reach, everything can collapse. An unexpected sting, a sudden assassination or an abrupt diplomatic shift can send a player crashing from near the top back to the starting point.

Dice that writes fate

In snakes and ladders, the decisive factor is the "dice," a symbol of chance and forces beyond control. On the battlefield, too, even the most detailed strategies by generals and think tanks can be derailed

by a random event. A human error in air defense, a sudden weather change or a minor intelligence leak can have an outsized impact, much like rolling the wrong number at a critical moment.

Many analysts believe that war involving Iran, Israel and the United States have moved beyond the reach of classical game theory. Each move on the chessboard now carries the risk of turning into a "ladder" for sudden progress or a "snake" for a deadly fall.

Fragile ladders & hidden snakes

Ladders represent temporary alliances and tactical successes. When a state assumes it has advanced by securing a new capability or external backing, it is effectively climbing a ladder. But such gains are rarely stable. History shows that external support can quickly turn into a venomous snake overnight, biting from behind.

Recent years have shown how assassinations and surprise strikes can function as the longest snakes on the board. Their impact goes beyond the loss of a single asset. They can push an entire strategic position back to square one, forcing actors to rebuild confidence, authority, and deterrence from the ground up.

Ambiguity in rules of game

The great tragedy is that actors insist they are playing chess. They speak of "strategic pa-

tiency," "doctrinal change" and "hybrid operations." These belong to the world of chess. But when the underlying system is closer to snakes and ladders, such thinking risks becoming a form of "organized folly." In snakes and ladders, players cannot plan ten moves ahead because they do not know what number the next dice roll will show.

This contradiction has created a kind of "anomie" in international affairs, a breakdown of clear rules. In one moment, a conventional logic such as "missile for missile" may apply. In the next, a cyberattack can disrupt critical systems and send the player to lower levels.

Shifting positions of king & pawn

In chess, the value of pieces is fixed. The king is paramount and pawns are expendable. But in this hybrid environment, that hierarchy can collapse. A small non-state group or a limited operational unit can act as a ladder, pushing a broader front forward. Conversely, targeting senior leadership — a piece at the "king" level — can destabilize the entire system. Recent developments, including the assassination of high-level figures and rapid shifts within power structures, highlight how unstable the playing field has become. Just as observers begin to signal the end of an era (falling from the tail of a snake), new appointments and rapid adjustments emerge, allowing actors to regain lost ground.

Endgame: Does anyone truly win?

In snakes and ladders, victory comes with reaching the final square. But in today's chessboard of war, it is unclear what victory actually means and where the final square is. Is it the total defeat of an adversary or the achievement of lasting peace?

The closer the actors move toward what appears to be an endpoint, the greater the risks become with more snakes. Tensions intensify and even minor miscalculations carry heavy costs.

We are no longer in an era defined by the structured rivalries of the Cold War or the simpler games of the colonial era. Today's environment of "snakes and ladders chess" where pieces should be arranged with the precision of chess, yet players must always be prepared to overhaul the entire plan at the single sting of a snake.

To survive on this board, "chess intelligence" alone is no longer sufficient; rather, "snakes and ladders resilience" is required, the capacity to recover from setbacks and recognize that neither success nor failure is permanent. The dice are still rolling, and the board remains unstable, waiting for the next move. The hope is that rationality can prevail in this high-stakes game, restraining the snakes of malice and war before the entire board is consumed in the fire of a "bad roll" of the dice.

SEO takes lead in rebuilding Mobarakeh, Khuzestan steel industries

Steel product exports continue uninterrupted: **TPO**

Economy Desk

Iran's capital market has stepped forward to assist in the reconstruction of Mobarakeh Steel and Khuzestan Steel, both targeted in recent US-Israel attacks.

Hojatollah Seidi, head of the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO), said on Friday that the capital market "will spare no effort to gather capital for building a bigger and better Mobarakeh Steel and a stronger Khuzestan Steel in the shortest possible time."

The two listed companies, Mobarakeh Steel in the central province of Isfahan and Khuzestan Steel in the southwestern Khuzestan Province, which are owned by shareholders, were hit multiple times by the American-Zionist enemy during the war that began on February 28.

Following the second attack on Mobarakeh Steel on Tuesday, the complex issued a statement on Thursday saying, "Based on assessments conducted so far of the heavy attacks, the damage and fundamental destruction to units related to the production process indicates a complete shutdown of production lines."

The statement added, "To preserve human capital as the organization's most important asset, all employees are requested to refrain from visiting the Mobarakeh Steel complex until further notice."



● ISNA

Export process continues

The Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran also announced on Thursday that no decision has been made regarding export restrictions on steel and mining products, and any potential decision will be officially announced only through the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade and the Trade Development Organization.

Meanwhile, official reports indicate that Iran's steel export process continues without disruption. In recent days, three large steel shipments have departed from Iranian ports for foreign markets, demonstrating the resilience of Iran's foreign trade in the steel sector even amid heightened tensions.

In response to the targeting of Iran's steel industries, the spokesperson for the Central Headquarters of Khatam al-Anbiya said during a joint operation by the Aerospace and Naval Forces of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), Wave 90 of Operation True Promise 4 targeted US steel and aluminum industries in Abu Dhabi, US aluminum industries in Bahrain, and Rafael Advanced Defense Systems of the Israeli regime. The statement said the strikes were a warning, adding that any further attacks on Iranian industries would trigger "a far more devastating response targeting the occupying regime's critical infrastructure and US economic facilities across the region."

India purchases oil from Iran for first time in seven years: **Report**

Economy Desk

India Today reported that India, which was once forced to abandon Iranian oil under US sanctions, has turned back to Tehran, with an oil tanker carrying Iranian crude heading to the Asian country for the first time since May 2019. According to ISNA on Thursday, after the US-Israeli aggression on Iran began on February 28 and Strait of Hormuz traffic was disrupted, Washington issued a waiver allowing India to purchase oil and gas from Russia and Iran, both sanctioned by the US.

According to India Today, an oil tanker carrying Iranian oil with a foreign flag is expected to dock at Vadinar in Dindayal Gujarat port by April 4. While New Delhi has turned back to discounted Russian crude that once triggered US President Donald Trump's tariffs, the purchase of Iranian oil represents a significant shift in India's energy supply. However, an official from India's Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways expressed ignorance about this. Mokesh Mangal, reacting to the news that an Iranian oil tanker is heading to India, said: "The government has no specific information about this ship."



Tensions have been heightened following the joint US-Israeli aggression on Iran on February 28. While major shipping companies have suspended operations in the region, tankers linked to Iran continue to transit the strategic waterway.

The Economist reported on Sunday that Tehran is currently exporting between 2.4 and 2.8 million barrels of oil per day. The publication noted that while Iranian tankers continue to transit the Strait of Hormuz, Iran is now selling nearly twice as much oil as before February 28. With the Strait of Hormuz largely closed, the publica-

tion wrote that 15 percent of world oil cannot reach its customers. All Persian Gulf countries have reduced their production and are seeing a decline in export revenues, but Iran has been an exception.

Iran is exporting the same amount of oil and petroleum products per day, if not more, as it did on average last year, according to a source who spoke to the Economist. Also, Bloomberg reported that Iranian oil is trading at a price higher than Brent, the global benchmark, for the first time since May 2022. Brent crude traded at \$109 per barrel in Friday's trading.

Karaj's unfinished B1 Bridge damaged

US-Israel targeting of civilian infrastructure exposes 'moral collapse'

Social Desk

US President Donald Trump on Thursday claimed responsibility for targeting and damaging Iran's B1 Bridge, recognized as the tallest bridge in the Middle East and a masterpiece of Iranian engineering in Karaj, a day after he threatened to bomb the country "back to the stone ages".

The B1 Bridge was a key infrastructure project for Alborz Province and was slated for official inauguration in the near future.

The US president shared footage of part of the newly built 136 meter-tall \$400 million B1 suspension bridge between Tehran and Karaj collapsing dramatically on to the causeway below amid a rising plume of black smoke.

The middle of the bridge was struck twice. Later imagery showed a clear gap at the heart of what had been one of Iran's premier infrastructure projects.

While the full extent of the structural damage is being assessed, officials confirmed the site has sustained significant impacts. The strikes have also taken the lives of eight innocent civilians so far.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said the US strikes on civilian infrastructure, including the unfinished bridge in Karaj, demonstrate Wash-



A part of the unfinished B1 Bridge has collapsed following two air strikes by the US on this civilian infrastructure on April 2, 2026. ● IRNA

ington's "defeat and moral collapse," stressing that such attacks will not force Iranians to surrender.

In a post on his X account on Thursday, Araghchi argued that while Iran will rebuild stronger, the damage to America's global standing will be irreversible.

The B1 Bridge is widely regarded as a pinnacle of domestic engineering capability, designed to facilitate major transit corridors and alleviate traffic congestion in the Alborz and Tehran regions.

Iran's deputy minister of Roads and Urban Development noted that since the beginning of the imposed war, many bridges in Iran have come under attack, including a bridge on the Kermanshah-Hamil-Illam freeway route.

"That bridge was immediately repaired and put back into operation by our young people, and they did not allow any problems to arise for the public; they will continue to do so here as well," said Houshang Bazvand.

The US and the Israeli regime launched a large-scale unprovoked military campaign against Iran following the assassination of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, along with several senior military commanders and civilians, on February 28.

In response, the Iranian Armed Forces have carried out retaliatory operations, targeting American and Israeli positions in the occupied territories and at regional bases with waves of missiles and drones.

WHO chief slams attacks on Pasteur Institute, medical centers

Social Desk

Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has lashed out at the US and Israeli attacks against the Pasteur Institute and medical centers in Iran.

In a message republished by Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on X (formerly, Twitter), he wrote, "Multiple attacks on health have been reported in the Iranian capital, Tehran, in recent days amid escalating conflict in the Middle East."

"The Pasteur Institute in Iran sustained significant damage and was rendered unable to continue delivery health services," he added.

Founded in 1920, he noted, the Pasteur Institute has been active in various fields of medical research for more than a century. It plays a significant role in protecting and promoting public health, including in emergencies. Two of its departments have also served as collaborating centers with the World Health Organization

(WHO).

The WHO chief went on to say that the Delaram Sina Psychiatric Hospital suffered serious damage following an attack on March 29, and the Tofigh Daru Pharmaceutical Complex, which produces drugs needed to treat cancer and multiple sclerosis (MS), was damaged in another attack on March 31. No casualties were reported in these incidents.

Since March 1, the World Health Organi-

zation has confirmed more than 20 attacks on health centers in Iran, resulting in at least nine deaths, including an infectious disease worker and a member of the Iranian Red Crescent Society. According to the director general, attacks on medical centers were not limited to Tehran and have also been reported outside the capital; for example, on March 21, an explosion near Imam Ali Hospital in Andimeshk County,

Khuzestan Province, caused the evacuation of the facility and the suspension of its services.

"The conflicts in Iran and the region have affected the provision of medical services as well as the security of health workers, patients, and civilians in medical centers," he concluded.

Spokesperson for the Iranian Foreign Ministry Esmail Baqaei also strongly condemned the recent US-Israeli strike on the Pasteur Institute of Iran.

In a message posted on his X account on Thursday, Baqaei described the attack on one of the region's oldest and most respected public health and research institutions as a deeply disturbing act, stressing that targeting such a facility goes beyond conventional wartime violations.

"Heartbreaking, cruel, despicable, and utterly outrageous... This is not merely another war crime committed as part of an illegal war; it is a barbaric assault on basic human core values," the spokesman added.



The photo shows a building at the Pasteur Institute of Iran reduced to rubble as a result of the barbaric US-Israeli attack on this historic and groundbreaking scientific facility. ● X