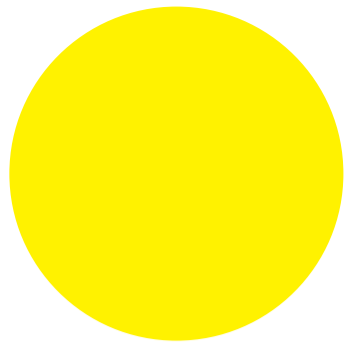


US-Zionist coalition strikes Iranian infrastructure, including petrochemical plants in Khuzestan

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Minister: Attacking over 30 universities in era of human rights, int'l law 'unbelievable'

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The photo shows the aftermath of a US-Israeli strike on Iran University of Science and Technology (IUST) in Tehran on March 28, 2026.

IRNA

Over one month into war; where do sides stand?

By Reza Ghazwini
Regional affairs analyst

PERSPECTIVE

More than one month into the war, the question remains: where do the parties stand? The United States and Israel launched their military campaign on February 28 with declared goals of dismantling Iran's nuclear program, destroying its missile capacity and toppling the Islamic Republic. Initial assessments suggested the aggression would last four to five days, with a maximum timeline of one week given available capabilities. Yet the conflict has now entered its second month.

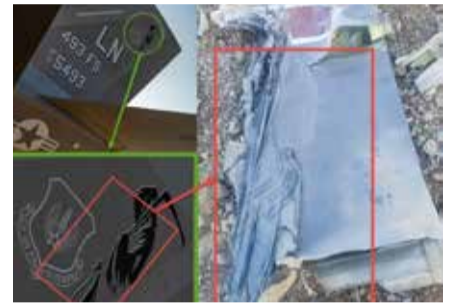
What have the United States and Israel achieved? The war began with the bombing of the leadership's administrative compound, assassinating Iran's Leader and senior military officials. At the same time, US and Israeli forces tar-

geted a wide range of military, security and political figures, while inflicting damage on Iran's air defenses, naval assets and nuclear facilities. By day 30, they claimed to have struck 13,000 targets across Iran. Having failed to meet their three initial objectives, they expanded their target list to include critical infrastructure. Fuel depots, refineries, power facilities, airports, universities and steel plants were hit. As the war dragged on and Iran held its ground, Washington repeatedly deployed additional forces and military hardware to the region. The US president has issued multiple deadlines for Tehran to surrender or accept stringent terms for negotiations, all of which have fallen flat. Efforts to rally broader international backing, particularly from Europe, East Asia and NATO, have also met with little support. How has Iran responded?

From the outset, Tehran moved quickly to offset the impact of leadership assassinations, replacing key figures and restoring continuity. A new Leader was selected in a week, while other positions were rapidly filled. Militarily, Iran launched heavy strikes on US bases in the Persian Gulf, Iraq and Jordan, and blocked the Strait of Hormuz to shipping. As Iranian strikes continued, expanding to include economic targets in Persian Gulf states seen as US partners, both security and economic conditions in those countries came under strain. Media reports point to mounting losses from Iran's retaliation against US interests and allied infrastructure. American radar, surveillance and intelligence systems have taken severe hits, with some knocked out of operation. Several US aircraft, including an AWACS plane, were destroyed or damaged. The USS Gerald R.

Ford, the US Navy's largest carrier, withdrew from the region toward Europe. Statements by President Donald Trump suggest the vessel sustained missile damage. The USS Abraham Lincoln also moved out of range after Iranian missile launches. Military spending alone, excluding damage, has reached an estimated \$18 billion, according to The Guardian. The financial toll has exceeded expectations, prompting the White House to request a \$200 billion war budget from Congress, which was rejected. Meanwhile, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz has dealt a major blow to the global economy. US efforts to secure international help to reopen the waterway have so far come up short, while Iran continues to leverage it as an economic tool. Brent crude prices have surged 60%, with forecasts pointing higher if the war drags on. Reopening the strait has now been added to Wash-

ington's growing list of unmet objectives, adding to the White House's uncertainty. Iran, through sustained resistance, has pushed the war into a war of attrition for its adversaries. Missile and drone strikes continue, and their evolving range and impact signal Tehran's capacity to inflict further damage. Each strike on Iranian infrastructure is quickly met with retaliatory attacks on similar targets in Israel and allied Arab states. US and Israeli expectations have also fallen short on another front. Hopes of triggering unrest inside Iran have not materialized. Instead, large crowds opposing war and foreign intervention have taken to the streets across the country, showing sustained public presence. This has fostered a strong sense of national unity, giving decision-makers greater backing to press on.



Iran's air defense capable of destroying advanced hostile aircraft: **Commander**

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Iran's air defense capable of destroying advanced hostile aircraft: *Commander*

International Desk

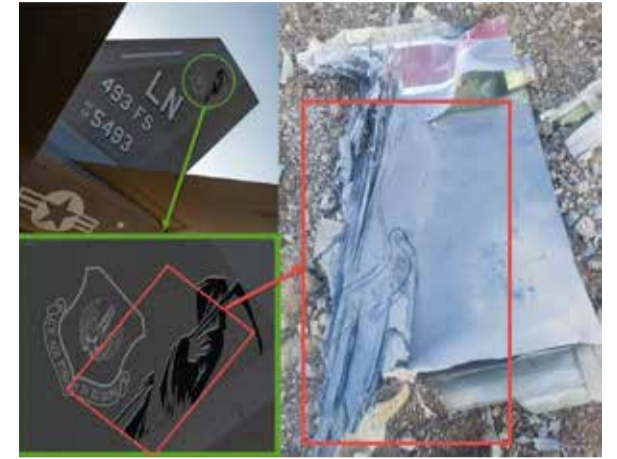
The commander of the Khatam al-Anbiya Joint Air Defense Headquarters said on Saturday that Iranian air defense systems are keeping a close eye on the enemies' fighter jets and drones, emphasizing they are fully capable of tracking and destroying advanced hostile aircraft by means of homegrown capabilities. "The latest successes are indebted to the strenuous efforts and self-sacrifices made by personnel of Ira-

nian air defense units, particularly those of the Army and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), across the Islamic Republic," Brigadier General Alireza Elhami said. He added that Iranian air defense forces have managed to intercept and shoot down a number of hostile fighter jets, besides more than 160 unmanned aircraft, including MQ-9 Reaper, Hermes, LUCAS, and other types, before they could carry out any strikes. Since the beginning of the aggression, Iranian forces

have managed to inflict significant damage on US and Israeli military forces. The Associated Press reported that Iran's downing of two US military aircraft has dealt a rare blow to the United States in the past 24 years, demonstrating that despite US President Donald Trump's claim of having "completely destroyed" Iran's defensive capabilities, the country still retains the ability to retaliate. Chief Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force

Brigadier General Esmail Qaani also said on Saturday that "all American terrorists" will ultimately flee the region in the same way the USS Gerald R. Ford commander fled the Red Sea in the face of Iranian retaliatory strikes. In a post on his X account, Qaani said that the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford was forced to retreat from the Red Sea due to fear of Yemeni forces. The USS Gerald R. Ford, the US Navy's newest and most advanced aircraft carrier, had been sent to

West Asia to take part in the US-Israeli aggression against Iran. Meanwhile, the IRGC said on Saturday that it targeted the Israeli regime's industrial and military sites, as well as locations hosting commanders and army units, in the 94th wave of Operation True Promise 4. According to the statement, ballistic missiles and heavy solid- and liquid-fuel projectiles, including Khorramshahr, Kheibar Shekan, and Emad missiles, as well as suicide drones, were used in the strikes.



The remains of an advanced American fighter jet shot down by the IRGC in the sky over central Iran on April 3, 2026
● IRNA

Minister: Attacking over 30 universities in era of human rights, int'l law 'unbelievable'

International Desk

Iran's Minister of Science, Research and Technology Hossein Simaei Sarraf strongly condemned recent attacks by the United States and the Israeli regime on Iranian universities and research centers, labeling them a blatant violation of international law and a crime against humanity.

He told reporters on Saturday that over 30 universities across the country have been directly targeted in the US and Israeli attacks on Iran. Simaei Sarraf made the remarks on Saturday following an attack by Israel on the laser and plasma research center at Tehran's Shahid Beheshti University. He added that Tehran's University of Science and Technology and Isfahan University of Technology, among others, were also subjected to "brutal attacks" in recent weeks. "According to international documents, attacks on these scientific infrastructures are not only a violation of international law but also constitute a crime against humanity," the minister said. He emphasized that millions of students and researchers have been deprived of



Hossein Simaei Sarraf
● IRNA

education and research opportunities. Simaei Sarraf also referred to Israel's previous assassinations of Iranian scientists, saying that Israel has been pursuing a program of targeting Iranian scientists for years. He recalled casualties from a 12-day conflict, including professors and over 60 students. "Attacking universities and research centers is a return to the Stone Age and demonstrates hostility towards science, culture, and civilization – a hostility that has distanced itself from even the most basic human and democratic values," he asserted. Despite the attacks, Simaei Sarraf affirmed

Iran's commitment to continued scientific and technological development, saying that such acts of violence will not deter the country's efforts to cultivate scientific talent for both Iran and the world. The US and the Israeli regime have launched a large-scale unprovoked military campaign against Iran since February 28. Hundreds of Iranians have lost their lives in the aggression. According to the country's Red Crescent Society "the enemy has so far targeted approximately 600 educational centers across Iran — including schools, universities, and other academic institutions."

Over one month ...

Plans involving Kurdish armed groups based in Iraq's Kurdistan region, expected to cross into western Iran early in the conflict, have failed to materialize. Iran, wary of their potential role, has carried out continuous strikes on their bases in northern Iraq, dealing significant blows. Meanwhile, regional allied groups have stepped in. Hezbollah, previously seen by Israel as weakened, has joined the conflict with force and unveiled new capabilities. Iraqi resistance attacks have led to NATO's withdrawal from Iraq and

the evacuation of US forces from Victoria Base to Jordan. These developments suggest earlier assumptions about weakening the Resistance Axis were off the mark. Still, Iran's actions largely fall within the framework of retaliatory deterrence. Its responses remain predictable, typically mirroring strikes on its own infrastructure. The main variation lies in geography, extending beyond Israel to US-aligned Arab states. There is little indication so far of preemptive or surprise operations. A shift toward more proactive deterrence, imposing heavy-

er and less predictable costs, could potentially reshape the battlefield in Iran's favor. While control of the Strait of Hormuz remains a key leverage point, inflicting higher human costs on adversaries could emerge as another decisive factor. Where does the conflict head next? Now in the second month of the war, signs point to further escalation. Trump has claimed negotiations are underway, even presenting a 15-point draft proposal, while asserting Iran is pushing for talks. Tehran has denied this and outlined its own conditions for ending

the war. Even if talks take place, the gap between the two sides appears too wide to bridge. Despite heavy losses, both sides retain the capacity to continue. With negotiations either unlikely or doomed to fail, and international mediation efforts struggling, the trajectory points toward intensified conflict. The continued buildup of US forces suggests Washington may soon take more action. Iran, for its part, says it is fully prepared for any scenario, including ground incursions or even attempts to occupy parts of its territory.

IRGC denies involvement in Riyadh US embassy attack, blames Israel

International Desk

Iran has firmly rejected any connection to the recent attack on the US Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, accusing Israel of orchestrating the incident as part of a broader regional destabilization campaign. In a formal statement, the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) dismissed reports by The Wall Street Journal linking the attack to Iran, asserting instead that the operation was a deliberate act by Israel seeking to provoke regional chaos. The IRGC emphasized that

Iran's military objectives have been transparent and repeatedly communicated to neighboring and Muslim countries, warning against the "fomenting of discord" by the US-Israeli axis. The statement urged West Asian nations to remain vigilant against efforts aimed at undermining stability and destroying the region. In a strong warning later, Ebrahim Zolfaghari, spokesperson for the IRGC's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, declared that any aggression against Iranian diplomatic missions would trigger im-

mediate and decisive retaliation against all Israeli embassies and facilities across the region. "Do not forget—we act with speed and force," he stressed, underscoring Iran's readiness to respond with full military capability. The announcement comes amid ongoing US-Israel aggression on Iran since February 28, which Iran has countered by targeting Israel and American interests in regional countries, while maintaining that its actions are strictly focused on military and strategic US assets. On April 4, the IRGC also



● IRNA

formally appointed Major General Hussein Mohebbi as the new spokesman, succeeding General Ali Mohammad Naeni, who was martyred in US-Israeli strikes.

FM rejects reports of Iran's refusal to hold talks in Islamabad

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi rejected reports alleging Iran opposes Pakistan's mediation efforts or refuses dialogue in Islamabad, accusing Western media of "misinterpreting" Tehran's stance. In a post on X on Saturday, Araghchi affirmed Iran's appreciation for Pakistan's diplomatic initiatives, stating unequivocally: "We have never refused to go to Islamabad." He stressed that what matters to Iran are the terms of a conclusive and lasting end to the "illegal war"



Abbas Araghchi

that is imposed on the country. The US and Israel launched attacks on Iran on February 28, triggering widespread regional instability and global economic repercussions, particularly

in oil and energy markets. Despite Pakistan's active mediation efforts, The Wall Street Journal reported on Friday that regional diplomacy led by Islamabad has hit a deadlock, with Iran for-

mally informing mediators it has no intention of meeting US officials in Islamabad and deeming Washington's demands unacceptable. Pakistani officials have denied these claims, reinforcing Iran's position. According to the WSJ, Turkey and Egypt continue efforts to break the impasse, exploring new venues such as Doha and Istanbul, alongside fresh proposals. Iran has insisted on US compensation for damages, withdrawal from Middle Eastern bases, and binding guarantees against future attacks.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



ICOM Iran seeks emergency funds, presses global action to protect cultural assets

Arts & Culture Desk

Monir Kholqi, head of Iran's National Committee of Museums (ICOM), said the country has activated emergency funding mechanisms and urged international bodies to act to protect cultural assets following US-Israeli attacks that began on February 28. Kholqi said a "red alert" was declared for historical sites within hours, with urgent notices sent to UNESCO's national commission, ICOM headquarters and regional councils warning against military activity near museums and heritage landmarks, IRNA reported. She described a co-

ordinated legal, technical and diplomatic response at national and international levels.

Citing the 1954 Hague Convention, she called on global institutions to use legal and diplomatic tools to halt threats against what she described as a "core" of human civilization.

Iran has submitted a detailed report on damage to Tehran's UNESCO-listed Golestan Palace complex, citing structural and decorative losses. It flagged deep fissures in buildings including Shams-ol-Emareh and the Windcatcher Mansion, along with up to 90% destruction of ornamental

woodwork and damage to museum equipment.

Kholqi said the filing seeks formal condemnation, accountability for any treaty violations and the dispatch of expert assessment missions.

She outlined a five-point demand to ICOM and UNESCO including firm condemnation, increased diplomatic pressure, expanded technical and financial support, rapid assessment teams and stronger coordination. The proposal also calls for recognizing attacks on cultural assets as crimes against shared human legacy and activating emergency funds to address chemical

contamination.

A separate report documented pollution from strikes on oil infrastructure, including acid rain and hydrocarbon deposits affecting museum facades in Tehran, as well as blast-wave damage to sites in Isfahan and other regions. Kholqi urged implementation of "Blue Shield" protocols, including protective emblems on cultural sites to reinforce their civilian status under international law, warning that violations could be prosecutable. She also called on museum officials nationwide to submit rapid, documented damage assessments to support legal



IRNA

and conservation efforts. Debris and shattered glass

are seen inside a damaged hall at the Golestan Palace, a UNESCO World Heritage

site, following a US-Israeli strike in Tehran, Iran beginning on February 28.



IRNA

Chinese visitors turn out for Iranian antiquities show as cooperation deepens

Arts & Culture Desk

A traveling exhibition of Iranian antiquities has drawn strong public interest in northern China, with visitors in Hohhot turning out in large numbers as images of the artifacts circulate widely on Chinese social media, IRNA reported on Saturday citing the South China Morning Post.

The exhibition, widely billed as 'Ancient Persia and the Silk Road,' features 151

artifacts from five Iranian museums and has been on display at the Inner Mongolia Museum since December 2025. Organizers extended the show into early April 2026 to coincide with the Qingming holiday, reflecting sustained.

The collection traces Iran's rich artistic and historical legacy through ceramics, metalwork, glassware and miniature paintings, with a particular focus on the Safavid era and centuries

of cultural exchange along the Silk Road. Displayed far from regional tensions, the works have become a focal point for Chinese audiences seeking a deeper understanding of Iran's civilizational heritage.

The exhibition forms part of a broader cultural tour that opened in Guangzhou on March 31, 2025, ran through June 17, and later moved to Nanjing before arriving in Hohhot. It shows expanding cultural ties be-

tween Tehran and Beijing, where museum cooperation has steadily gained traction.

Chinese officials stressed the universal value of cultural heritage. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said "shared" heritage belongs to all humanity and must be safeguarded from harm during conflicts.

Hongda Fan, director of the China-Middle East Center at Shaoying University, said cultural initiatives help

counter "incomplete" narratives shaped by conflict-focused coverage. "Cultural exchange engages people directly," he said, adding that stronger mutual understanding can "pave the way" for broader cooperation.

Parallel exhibitions of Iranian artifacts in other Chinese cities, including Shanghai, point to a widening cultural footprint as the two countries deepen people-to-people engagement.

Iranian GR team arrives in Bishkek ahead of Asian Ch'ships



The Iranian Greco-Roman wrestling squad and coaching staff pose for a photo before a training session in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on April 3, 2026.

LAWFIR

Sports Desk

The Iranian Greco-Roman squad arrived in Bishkek on Friday ahead of the upcoming Asian Wrestling Championships, which will kick off in the Kyrgyz capital on Monday.

The Iranian team held its first training session on Friday afternoon, following an exhausting road trip to get out of the country amid flight cancellations due to the ongoing war in the region. The 10-man squad will still be the favorite to lift the team trophy after a glorious international season last year, in which the country completed a clean sweep of four world team titles across different age classes.

Head coach Hassan Rangraz has named a mix of youth and experience for the showpiece, with world and Olympic champion Mohammad-Hadi Saravi (97kg) spearheading the roster. Amin Mirzazadeh will be the wrestler to beat in the 130kg class, stepping

into the event as the reigning two-time world gold medalist.

Gholamreza Farrokhi (87kg) will look to pick up where he left off in the 2025 season, where he won four golds at international tournaments, including the top prize on his Senior World Championships debut last September.

Farrokhi also claimed gold at the Zagreb Open, the Islamic Solidarity Games, and the U23 World Championships last year before being named the Greco-Roman Breakout Performer of the Year by the United World Wrestling. Joining the trio in the Iranian squad are Mohammad Hosseinvand Panahi (55kg), Ali Ahmadi Vafa (60kg), Erfan Jarkani (63kg), Ahmadreza Mohsennejad (67kg), Mohammad-Javad Rezaei (72kg), Ali Oskou (77kg), and Mohammad-Amin Hosseini (82kg).

The tournament will also serve as part of the Iranian team selection process for the World Championships and the Asian Games later in the summer.

Tehran, Ankara in talks over pre-World Cup friendly

Sports Desk

The Football Federations of Iran and Turkey are in talks over a friendly game between the two national teams next month, Iranian Sports Minister Ahmad Donyamali announced on Friday.

Both sides will be among the 48 teams competing at the upcoming FIFA World Cup, which will be cohosted by the United States, Mexico, and Canada from June 11.

Iran is scheduled to kick off its World Cup campaign against New Zealand at the SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles, California, on June 16, before facing Belgium at the same arena five days later.

The final round of the Group G fixtures will see Iran take on Egypt in Seattle, Washington, on June 26.

Turkey, meanwhile, defeated Kosovo 1-0 in one of four Eu-



Iranian national football team players walk onto the pitch for a friendly game against Nigeria in Antalya, Turkey, on March 27, 2026.

IRNA

ropean playoff finals last week to book a place in the finals for the first time in 24 years.

The European team will be part of Group D, alongside USA, Paraguay, and Australia. Despite all domestic league matches suspended in the country since February 28 following the breakout of a military conflict between Iran and a US-Israeli coalition, the

Iranian national team played in a friendly double header against Nigeria and Costa Rica in Antalya, Turkey, in the latest international break.

Team Melli fell to a 2-1 loss to Nigeria on March 27 but hammered Costa Rica 5-0 four days later.

Questions still remain regarding Iran's participation at the global showpiece after Don-

yamali said that the country's National Security Council "will make a final call on the matter." Last week, the Sports Ministry prohibited all Iranian teams and athletes from visiting "adversary countries" for safety reasons amid the ongoing war in the region.

US President Donald Trump said in mid-March that Team Melli would be "welcome to The World Cup", but he doesn't believe "it is appropriate that they be there, for their own life and safety."

However, FIFA President Gianni Infantino visited Antalya to watch Iran's victory over Costa Rica from the stands and offer his full backing for Team Melli despite Trump's bold remarks.

Iran will be looking to progress beyond the group phase at the World Cup finals for the first time in seven attempts.

Iran's 3x3 basketball team gearing up for Asian Beach Games

Sports Desk

The Iranian 3x3 basketball national team is preparing for the upcoming Asian Beach Games.

The sixth edition of the multi-sport event will kick off in Sanya, China, on April 22.

Despite all sporting competitions postponed in the country amid Iran's

ongoing military conflict with the United States and Israel, the Iranian eight-man squad has been involved in a training camp in the northern province of Mazandaran under head coach Mohammad Sistani since March 28.

In a recent visit that underscored the importance of the team's preparation, Javad Davari, the president

of the Iranian Basketball Federation, met with the players and the coaching staff, emphasizing the critical nature of the upcoming competition and its significance for the country. The federation president's visit and his assurance of full support have boosted the team's morale and created a positive atmosphere within the camp.



VARZESH3

US-Zionist coalition strikes Iranian infrastructure, including petrochemical plants in Khuzestan

Economy Desk

A US-Zionist coalition carried out airstrikes on Saturday targeting multiple Iranian infrastructure facilities, including five petrochemical companies in Khuzestan province and the Bushehr nuclear power plant complex, according to local officials.

Deputy Security and Police Governor of Khuzestan Valiullah Hayati told IRNA that multiple airstrikes occurred in various regions of the southwestern province, including Ahvaz, Mahshahr, and Shalamcheh.

A statement from the spokesperson for the emergency situation committee of the Mahshahr Special Petrochemical Economic Zone stated that the petrochemical companies Fajr 1 and 2, Regal, Amir Kabir, and Bu Ali, as well as the Mahshahr special zone, were targeted in the American-Zionist enemy airstrikes on Mahshahr in Khuzestan. According to the decision of the emergency command committee, all forces from active industrial units in the area were fully evacuated.

The statement announced that rescue, HSE, and firefighting teams arrived at the accident sites immediately and are currently extinguishing the fires. Meanwhile, the National



● TASNIM

Petrochemical Company announced that the situation is under control and the technical aspects and extent of damages incurred are under investigation.

According to Hayati, five injuries have been confirmed so far from the attack on the Mahshahr special petrochemical zone and Imam Khomeini Port.

Hayati emphasized that casualties, including martyrs and wounded, are likely, and further investigations are underway.

No toxic material leaks

He added that no toxic material leaks have occurred at the petrochemical plants in the special economic zone.

According to managers of Fajr Energy Persian Gulf, following strikes on Fajr 1 and 2, electricity to all Mahshahr petrochemical plants sup-

plied by Fajr Energy Persian Gulf has been cut off.

Border infrastructure hit

Hayati said the Shalamcheh border commercial terminal in Khorramshahr was targeted in an airstrike and sustained serious damage.

Additionally, one person was killed in a renewed enemy attack on the Bushehr nuclear power plant in southern Iran. On Saturday morning, a projectile struck the area surrounding the Bushehr nuclear power plant. As a result of the explosion wave and fragments from this attack, one of the auxiliary buildings of the plant was damaged, and unfortunately one of the physical protection staff members of the plant was martyred.

Previously, the American-Zionist enemy had struck the Bushehr nuclear power plant

complex three times since February 28.

Also, Ahmad Nafisi, the deputy governor of Hormozgan province announced that the invading US army and Zionist regime carried out a drone attack on the Bandar Khamir cement factory, which was met with alertness by forces stationed in the area and resulted in no casualties.

In response to attacks on Iranian infrastructure, several US and Israel-dependent industrial facilities in the region have been targeted. A recent statement by the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) had 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."

According to the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, from the start of the US-Israel war on February 28 to April 1, 90,000 residential, commercial, and office units in the private sector have been damaged.

According to the report, a total of 89,706 units in 24 provinces have been evaluated and registered for damage, of which 16,170 units are in major cities (cities with a population of one million or more), and 73,536 units are in other cities and villages.

Minister: President orders 6-million-ton strategic food reserve

'No shortage despite 90m population'

Economy Desk

Iran's Agriculture Minister announced Saturday that President Masoud Pezeshkian has issued an order to maintain minimum reserves of 6 million tons of essential agricultural products amid US-Israeli war launched on February 28. Speaking at a consultative meeting with members of the Parliament's Agriculture Commission, Gholamreza Noori Qezelgeh emphasized the importance of sustainable production and continuous supply of essential goods.

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

Noting that Iran has navigated a challenging year marked by ongoing regional conflicts, the minister identified effective management of essential goods supply and clearance as key to maintaining market stability.

"In a country of 90 million people, no serious shortage in goods supply has occurred," Noori Qezelgeh stated, contrasting Iran's situation with other nations in

the region. He pointed to the United Arab Emirates, where several million residents faced food shortages and empty store shelves, as well as Israel, which he said is confronting fundamental challenges in essential goods supply.

The meeting also emphasized supporting people's livelihoods during wartime conditions and strengthening the resistance economy in agriculture through cooperation between the government and Parliament.

During a separate visit to the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), Noori Qezelgeh met with agency CEO Hossein Jaber Ansari, managers, and journalists. The minister presented a comprehensive report on goods supply, strategic reserves, and market regulation, thanking journalists for their efforts in conveying government services and informing the public during wartime conditions.

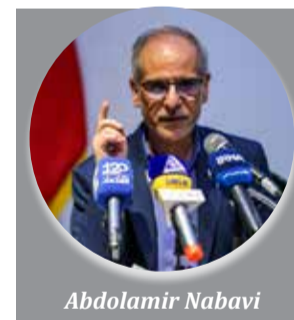
"Your cooperation and reporting, especially during sensitive times and important occasions, has played a significant role in advancing the ministry's goals and building public confidence, particularly regarding the supply of essential goods," the minister said.

Egypt considers war on Iran unjustified

INTERVIEW

The trajectory of Iran-Egypt relations over the past year can best be described as a "slow ascent". Despite numerous variables and various ups and downs, the two nations have reached a functional level of mutual understanding, fostering a positive outlook for their bilateral relations. Over the last 12 months, Tehran and Cairo have sought to maintain ties through a series of actions, decisions, and high-level contacts — the most significant of which was likely the signing of the new agreement between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency in the Egyptian capital, brokered by Cairo. Currently, Egypt finds itself positioned in the midst of a war imposed on Iran by the Israeli regime and the United States, as it strives to prevent further escalation and find a path toward ending the conflict.

The following is a translated excerpt from a dialogue with Abdolmir Nabavi, a regional affairs analyst and professor at the University of Tehran, regarding the state of Iran-Egypt relations during this past year of tension and upheaval.



Abdolmir Nabavi

Following Iran's retaliatory strikes on American bases in several Arab countries in the Persian Gulf, some of these capitals now find their relations with Iran strained. How will these tensions impact Iran's relations with Egypt as a major Arab power?

NABAVI: Regarding the impact of current tensions on Iran-Egypt relations, it must be said that these effects are already being felt. Egypt has been clear and transparent in its call for an end to the war, stating that hostilities must conclude as soon as possible. During a recent call between the presidents of the two countries, the Egyptian president emphasized this point. Currently, all Arab nations, including Egypt, are waiting for a formal end to the conflict, a cease-fire, and the clarification of preliminary results before articulating their positions more explicitly. Furthermore, while Egypt considers the attack on Iran to be unjustified, it has simultaneously urged Iran

to exercise restraint regarding attacks on regional Arab countries.

It is important to note that neither Egypt nor other regional Arab states desire the defeat or disintegration of Iran; such a scenario would carry devastating negative consequences for the entire region. However, they are equally unenthusiastic about Iranian hegemony or the re-strengthening of the Resistance Axis. Therefore, while Egypt wants an end to the conflict and does not wish for Iran's defeat, it also does not support an absolute victory for Iran. This duality explains why some countries maintain a cautious approach toward upgrading diplomatic ties.

What are Egypt's primary concerns regarding the ongoing and intensifying military tensions between Iran and the United States?

Egypt's actions are driven by two categories of concerns. The first are "general concerns" shared by Egypt



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (L) and his Egyptian counterpart, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi

● IRNA

and other Arab states in the region. The foremost worry is the escalation of the crisis into an all-out regional war, which could severely impact the economies and security of various nations, including Egypt. It is evident that as the crisis deepens, the existing pressures on the economic and security sectors of Arab nations will only intensify. The second general concern is that the war might result in a "total victory" for

either Iran or Israel. Neither outcome is acceptable to Arab nations, including Egypt, as it would lead to the emergence of a dominant regional hegemon and a subsequent redrawing of the political map — a scenario that serves none of these countries' interests. In reality, regional Arab states see their interests in maintaining a balance of power. If either Iran or Israel achieves hegemony and

becomes the sole regional superpower, it would shatter the previous equilibrium and increase political, economic, and security pressures on these countries in the years to come.

Egypt's third general concern is that a prolonged war and escalating crisis will harm its Arab allies, particularly the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. These nations have invested heavily in Egypt and main-

tain close military and security cooperation with Cairo. Any strain on their economies could disrupt and damage their investments in Egypt, as well as compromise bilateral military and security partnerships. Despite having a vulnerable economy, Egypt possesses one of the largest and most significant militaries in the region and cannot remain silent in the face of the current situation.

However, there are also two concerns specific to Egypt. The first is that a continuing crisis could harm the transit of ships and tankers through the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. If Yemen's Ansarullah (the Houthis) becomes more deeply involved in the conflict, maritime traffic will be disrupted. This would compromise Egypt's security in the Red Sea and cause a further decline in Suez Canal revenues. It is worth noting that during the previous round of maritime disruptions, Egypt's foreign revenue reportedly dropped by three to 10 bil-

lion dollars — a significant blow to an already fragile economy. A repeat of this would leave Egypt's economy and security even more vulnerable.

Egypt's other specific concern is the potential for a resurgence of radical activities in the region, particularly within its own borders. Experience shows that in times of war and crisis, terrorist groups and radical movements thrive on instability. The Egyptians are worried that the Sinai Peninsula — an area that has faced numerous security challenges in recent years — could be affected once again. Furthermore, there is a concern that groups like Hamas could exploit the situation to intensify their activities in Gaza. Consequently, Egypt stands to lose from a rise in regional radicalism, which is a key reason why it is advocating for the swiftest possible end to the hostilities.

The interview first appeared in Persian on IRNA.