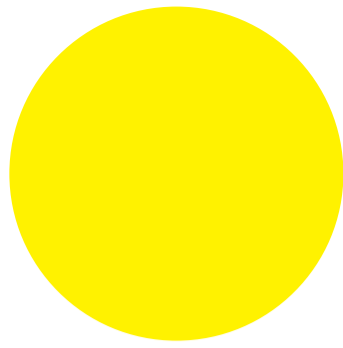


Gov't approves energy, workers support plan amid wartime squeeze

3 >



Iran Daily

Vol. 8105 • Thursday, April 30, 2026 • Ordibehesht 10, 1405 • Dhu al-Qadah 12, 1447 • 100,000 rials • 8 pages



irandaily.ir

newspaper.irandaily.ir

IranDailyWeb

Iran reserves right to counter 'insolent' US piracy: UN envoy

US bears 'full responsibility' for fallout from seizure of vessels

2 >

Iran to ICRC: US-Israeli strikes amount to war crimes

Deputy FM says int'l humanitarian law exists 'in name only'

2 >



President of the Committee of the Red Cross Mirjana Spoljaric Egger (C), accompanied by head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society Pir Hossein Kolivand (R), visits an area in Tehran, Iran damaged by airstrikes during the recent US-Israeli war on April 29, 2026.

dolat.ir



War on Iran eroding nuclear non-proliferation

4 >



Asian Beach Games: Gold rush as Iran revels in water polo, wrestling glory

6 >



War damage spurs urgent conservation efforts at Golestan Palace

7 >



Art guards timeless name as Iran marks Persian Gulf Day

8 >

Iraq PM-designate faces fragile mandate amid weak public, factional backing

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

Iraq's dominant parliamentary bloc nominated Ali al-Zaidi, a businessman and political newcomer, for prime minister after weeks of wrangling within the Coordination Framework. The bloc had initially backed former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, but after public US opposition and threats to suspend aid, alongside reported objections to incumbent Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, the alliance shifted toward



Ali Bidboo

a compromise nominee to break the deadlock. In an interview with Iran Daily, Iraqi

affairs expert Ali Bidboo said al-Zaidi was chosen not through consensus but by majority vote, arguing he lacks backing from both the Iraqi public and key political factions, casting doubt on his ability to deliver on his pledges.

IRAN DAILY: With figures such as Nouri al-Maliki initially in contention, what internal and regional factors led to another option ultimately emerging for the premiership? How do you assess the roles of the United States and Iran in this choice?

BIDBOO: After the United States effectively crossed Nouri al-Maliki off the list, another red line was drawn against al-Sudani following the recent [Iran] war and developments linked to his strong support for the Resistance Front. Two incidents appear to have altered Washington's assessment of al-Sudani. The

first was the repeated targeting of the US embassy in Baghdad, as well as the US consulate in Erbil. The second was the ambush on the road leading to Baghdad airport that left American soldiers and personnel wounded.

After various names were floated, Ali al-Zaidi eventually emerged. Yet his nomination was not supported by figures such as Humam Hamoudi or Abu Alaa al-Walai, partly because of his background and financial ties developed with certain parties. In fact, no consensus was reached; the decision was made through majority voting. When the Coordination Framework issued its letter assigning al-Zaidi to form a government, figures including al-Sudani, Nouri al-Maliki and Hadi al-Amiri declared support, citing the number of seats under their control. But figures such as Ammar al-Hakim and Ahmad al-Asadi did not specify their

parliamentary weight, and their support appeared personal rather than institutional. The names of Hamoudi and Abu Alaa al-Walai were absent altogether.

Al-Zaidi has spoken of turning Iraq into a balanced state regionally and internationally. What message does that carry for domestic and external actors?

In Iraq, a figure lacking sufficient backing — without support from the street on one side and from powerful parties on the other — will naturally struggle to achieve the success envisioned, let alone establish equilibrium in foreign policy. Al-Zaidi, not being fundamentally a political or security figure, may have been designated prime minister, but the street reacted with considerable shock. There had been expectations for a strong figure, not someone with little public profile whose identity is primarily economic

and who has sought to push through his path via party financial networks.

Without such support, he will not be able to project a balanced Iraqi posture internationally or in files involving the United States, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Also, if al-Zaidi acts solely in line with the preferences of several Coordination Framework leaders and runs affairs accordingly, he would naturally be reduced from prime minister to, in effect, an employee of the Coordination Framework.

That may, perhaps, suit some actors who prefer a new premier who neither builds a political party nor pursues an independent political role, but simply follows the directives of several Framework leaders. It should also be borne in mind that it remains unclear whether the cabinet can even secure a parliamentary vote of confidence.

Page 2 >



Iran reserves right to counter 'insolent' US piracy: UN envoy

US bears 'full responsibility' for fallout from seizure of vessels

International Desk

Iran's ambassador to the United Nations underlined that Iran reserves all rights to duly confront the United States' seizure of Iranian vessels as part of Washington's continued illegal blockade against the country.

In a letter dated Wednesday, Amir Saeid Iravani said he was writing "to bring to the urgent attention" of the UN Security Council the "continuing internationally wrongful acts of the United States through yet another piracy-style seizure and deliberate targeting of commercial vessels, namely the M/T Majestic and M/T Tifani."

Iravani pointed to a public statement released earlier by a US attorney, describing it as "an explicit and deliberate admission of internationally wrongful conduct." He noted how the attorney had "boasted of the pirate-style seizure" of the two vessels and the subsequent stealing of 3.8 million barrels of Iranian oil.

"The US attorney's statement clearly confirms that the United States armed forces

have interdicted, boarded, and forcibly seized Iran's commercial vessels on the high seas on the basis of their bullying attitude," the letter read.

"Such conduct is nothing but another clear example of US addiction to lawlessness and constitutes a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular Article 2(4)," he added.

Such actions against vessels engaged in legitimate commercial activity also pose a direct threat to maritime safety and security, and escalate the volatile situation in the region, the ambassador underscored. The United States bears full and undeniable international responsibility for the consequences of such atrocities, Iravani noted, stressing, "The Islamic Republic of Iran has every right, in accordance with international law, to counter these insolent actions."

He called on the Security Council to condemn the seizures, demand the immediate and unconditional release of all seized vessels, cargo, and property, and take measures to prevent their recurrence. The United States began taking such



US forces seize a Guyana-flagged tanker in the Indian Ocean on April 23, 2026.
● US Department of Defense

measures against Iranian vessels, despite President Donald Trump's announcement on April 7 of a two-week lull in unprovoked American aggression against the Islamic Republic. Tehran has condemned the blockade as a violation of the terms of the ceasefire and reciprocated by closing down the strategic Strait of Hormuz to all traffic with the exception of the vessels that manage to obtain permission from relevant Iranian authorities for transit through the chokepoint. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei also condemned the US for what he called the "outright legalization of piracy and armed robbery on the high seas."

"Welcome to the return of the pirates — only now, they operate with government-issued warrants, sail under official flags, and call their plunder 'law enforcement,'" he said on Monday.



"The United States must be held fully accountable for this brazenly lawless behavior, which strikes at the heart of international law and international free

trade, and threatens the basic principles of maritime security," he added. Iran's military has vowed to decisively retaliate the acts of "piracy" by the US military forces against Iranian ships.

Iran to ICRC: US-Israeli strikes amount to war crimes

Deputy FM says int'l humanitarian law exists 'in name only'

International Desk

Iran's deputy foreign minister told the head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on Wednesday that US and Israeli military actions against Iran constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity, including attacks on civilian structures.

Kazem Gharibabadi met with ICRC President Mirjana Spoljarik in Tehran, where he detailed "130,000 civilian, residential, hospital, school and infrastructure targets" which were hit by US and Israeli militaries during the recent aggressions against Iran. He cited specifically a deadly attack on the Minab school in southern Iran, which he said was carried out intentionally.

At least 167 people, most of the students, were killed in the missile attack on the Minab school. "If these actions represent the civilization the West and the US champion and seek to impose on other nations under the guise of democracy, human rights and their own way of life, then the people of the world reject that civilization," Gharibabadi said.



Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi (R) and the Head of the International Committee of the Red Cross Mirjana Spoljarik pose for a photo during a meeting in Tehran, Iran, on April 29, 2026.
● IRNA

He added that international law and international humanitarian law "exist in name only," accusing aggressors of disregarding them entirely. He also criticized international bodies for failing to respond adequately or condemn the unlawful aggression and war crimes committed by the US and Israel against Iran. Gharibabadi further said that some regional countries had supported military aggression against Iran by providing territory, facilities and military assets. "With these documented forms of support, certain neighboring states cannot be considered neutral," he said. "Legally, they are part of this aggression, and Iran was left with no choice but to respond proportionally to deter and repel attacks originating from those countries."

Spoljarik, who arrived in Tehran to meet with Iranian officials, emphasized the need for all parties to respect international humanitarian law in armed conflicts. She expressed hope that continued diplomacy and talks could lead to an end to hostilities and bring peace and stability to the region. Accompanied by Iran's head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society Pirhossein Kolivand, she also visited several sites in the capital Tehran, where severely targeted by the US and Israeli militaries during the recent aggression. Earlier on the day, she also held a separate meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. During the recent aggression, the US and the Israeli regime intentionally targeted Iran's infrastructure, nuclear sites, hospitals, schools, scientific centers and many other civilian structures.

IRGC to unlock US arms tech from 15 unexploded missiles in south

International Desk

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said it has discovered 15 unexploded US missiles in the southern Iranian province of Hormozgan and thousands of bomblets in the northern province of Zanjan, less than a month after a US-Israeli aggression on Iran halted with a ceasefire.

The IRGC's Imam Sajjad Corps, based in the provincial capital of Bandar Abbas in Hormozgan, said in a Sunday statement that its bomb disposal teams had successfully neutralized more than 15 heavy American missiles in the province. The statement said the missiles were mostly of the GBU and BLU types and other advanced models, adding that the weapons had been transferred to technical and research units of the IRGC for reverse engineering.

It said the Imam Sajjad Corps had neutralized or destroyed more than 60 missiles and drones, including bunker busters, cruise missiles, and advanced drones, since the beginning of the US-Israeli aggression in late February.

The force said that it had successfully concluded bomb disposal operations related to the recent war of aggression in all areas of Hormozgan province.

Meanwhile, IRGC's Ansar al-Mahdi Corps, based in the provincial capital of Zanjan, also issued a statement on Sunday, saying that its bomb disposal teams had recovered more than 9,500 bomblets in various parts of the province.

The statement said that the small munitions had been dropped during the US-Israeli aggression through the use of cluster bombs as part of aerial mining operations, with the purpose of contaminating critical and sensitive locations across the



province. It said IRGC bomb disposal teams in Zanjan had also neutralized or destroyed some 55 rockets and missiles during the recent US-Israeli aggression, including a GBU-57 bunker buster, which was successfully defused and handed over to qualified authorities.

The precedent is not theoretical, because Iran's 2011 capture of a single intact American RQ-170 Sentinel stealth drone near Kashmar produced a decade-long expansion of indigenous stealth UAV capability, resulting in the operational Shahed-171 Simorgh and Shahed-191 Saeqeh combat drone fleet. This time, however, Iran is not studying one stealth aircraft but a broader portfolio of American strike systems, including GBU-series bunker busters, BLU cluster munitions, cruise missiles, precision-guided bombs, and reportedly even neutralized MQ-9 Reaper and Harop-type unmanned systems.

The GBU-57, weighing approximately 30,000 pounds or roughly 13.6 tones, represents the US most powerful non-nuclear bunker-buster and was specifically designed to destroy deeply buried hardened targets such as Fordow and Natanz.

Iraq PM-designate faces ...

Given the fallout from the recent war, economic pressures on Iraq, and al-Zaidi's economic background, can it be said Baghdad is trying to shift priorities from geopolitical files toward economics and reconstruction?

Since 2018, after Iraq was able to fully defeat the ISIS, the Iraqi governing establishment and political actors reached the conclusion that security and political matters should no longer override economic priorities.

In fact, all governments that came after 2018 placed economic concerns at the forefront, and the parties supporting them shared those priorities. Naturally, they sought to advance Iraq's development partly because it generates political popularity. Bringing in a figure with an economic profile fits precisely within that framework, where the

economy remains the primary tool for Iraq's development.

That stems from a conviction among Iraqi decision-makers and leaders that the economy produces security for Iraq. Al-Sudani, for example, managed to attract \$100 billion in investment and launch multiple projects. It is natural that al-Zaidi, should he win parliament's confidence, would proceed along the same track.

What impact will this choice have on resistance groups, particularly the position of the Popular Mobilization Forces and their relationship with the central government?

Al-Zaidi's name was originally raised at a meeting attended by Nouri al-Maliki and al-Sudani at the home of Faleh al-Fayyadh, head of the Popular Mobilization Forces. It would therefore be difficult to expect al-Zaidi, if appointed

prime minister, to take decisions contrary to the positions of the PMF.

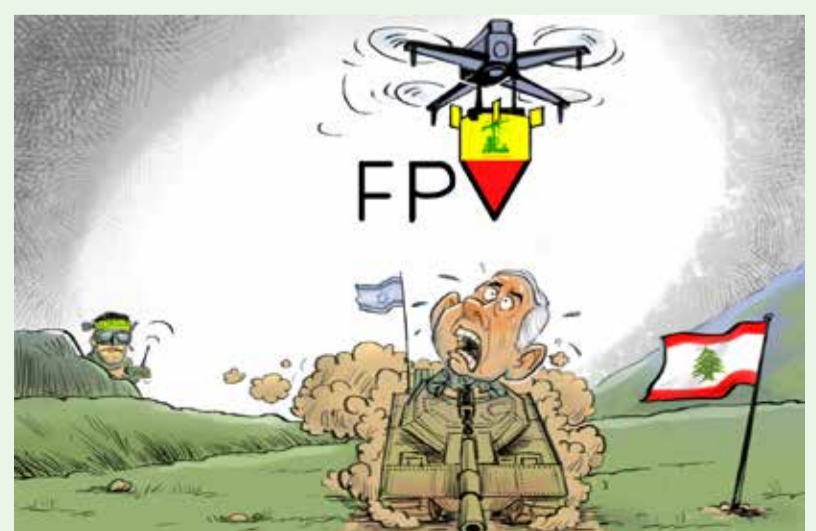
At the same time, given pressure from the US government, developments in Iraq are likely to move toward the resistance factions and the PMF taking on a more organized and institutionalized form, with weapons, financial ties, economic relations and military structures all becoming clearly defined to the state.

Whoever becomes prime minister will be compelled, because of intense US pressure — particularly over dollar transfers to Iraqi banks, which could trigger economic difficulties — to regulate the PMF and Iraq's resistance groups. But naturally, that is unlikely to lead to excessive tension. These matters will be managed through negotiations and dialogue between Iraqi domestic leaders and resistance leaders.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Gov't approves energy, workers support plan amid wartime squeeze

Economy Desk

Iran's cabinet has approved a package of measures covering energy consumption management, renewable power development and workers support, First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref said on Wednesday, citing wartime conditions and the need to maintain critical infrastructure.

"A set of decisions in the areas of energy consumption management, development of renewable power plants and strengthening workers' livelihoods was approved," Aref said, describing the outcomes of the cabinet meeting, according to fvpresident.ir.

"These measures have been adopted in light of wartime conditions and the necessity of maintaining the country's infrastructure stability," he said, adding that the decisions were also taken "following the illegal aggression by the enemy against the country's energy infrastructure, with the aim of ensuring service continuity and supporting the public."

Iran remains in wartime conditions. Tehran and Washington agreed to a



On Wednesday, lawmaker Nasrollah Pejmanfar said that under a resolution by the Economic Committee, \$1.85 billion had been allocated to SATBA to build 7,000 megawatts of renewable capacity. Of that amount, \$1 billion has already been disbursed by the National Development Fund, with a further \$300 million expected to be paid in the coming days.

Iran's installed solar capacity has exceeded 4,000 megawatts and is planned to reach 7,000 megawatts by mid-June, contingent on financing and infrastructure. Authorities are also aiming to raise solar generation capacity to 11,000 megawatts by the end of summer, Tarzatab said.

He added that a plan to equip schools with solar systems is underway to promote clean energy use and reduce dependence on fossil fuels, with North Khorasan selected as the first province for implementation. Under the scheme, each school could be fitted with a solar unit of around 5 kilowatts, with the possibility of expanding capacity, while equipment will be provided by SATBA and affiliated contractors.

temporary ceasefire on April 8 with Pakistan's mediation after a 40-day war launched by the United States and Israel on February 28.

Aref said the cabinet approved a package proposed by the Energy Ministry to manage consumption and secure energy supply, covering multiple aspects of energy management.

Under one measure, "regulations aimed at removing barriers to the construction of renewable power plants, which were valid until March 21, 2026, were extended with amendments to facilitate continued development through supportive measures and streamlined procedures," he said.

"Developing renewable energy is one of the gov-

ernment's key policy priorities to enhance supply stability and reduce reliance on limited resources, and this path will be pursued seriously," Aref added.

Solar power investment posts 2.5-fold rise

Separately, investment in solar power plants has increased 2.5-fold, Deputy

Energy Minister and head of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA), Mohsen Tarzatab, said during a visit to a 72-megawatt plant in North Khorasan Province on Wednesday. Iran invested \$1.2 billion in the sector last year, including \$800 million allocated from the National Development Fund, according to IRNA.

Iran oil surges past \$110 as blockade fears rattle global markets



Economy Desk

Prices for Iranian crude climbed by more than \$3 on Tuesday, pushing some grades above \$110 per barrel, according to data published by Oil-Price, as global oil markets surged on concerns over a prolonged US blockade.

Iran's light crude for delivery to northwest Europe rose by \$3.07 to \$108.80 per barrel, while heavy crude and Forozan Blend were priced at \$106.90 and \$107.15, respectively.

In the Mediterranean market, Iranian light crude was assessed at \$108.15 per barrel, with heavy crude at \$106.00 and Forozan Blend at \$106.25.

The highest price was recorded at Egypt's Sidi Kerir port, where Iranian light crude reached \$110.05 per barrel. Heavy crude and Forozan Blend were priced at \$107.90 and \$108.15, respectively.

Oil prices have climbed

sharply following reports that the United States is preparing for an "extended" blockade of Iran.

Brent crude rose to around \$115 per barrel on Wednesday, after closing just above \$110 on Tuesday evening. Prices later eased slightly to \$114.37 by midday BST, according to BBC data.

The gains follow a report by the Wall Street Journal that US President Donald Trump has instructed aides to prepare for extending the ongoing blockade of Iran's ports, aiming to pressure Tehran into a peace agreement after a 40-day war.

Iran said it would continue monitoring traffic through the Strait of Hormuz in response. Under new conditions set by Tehran, only commercial vessels with prior authorization are allowed to transit the strait, while ships linked to the United States, Israel and other "hostile states" are barred.

Oil prices have fluctuated sharply since the conflict

began on February 28, with the Strait of Hormuz — a key route for about one-fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas supply — effectively restricted for weeks.

Iran has significantly curtailed shipping through the strait in response to US and Israeli strikes launched in late February. Citing tanker tracking data, HFI Research has said Iran could continue producing and storing oil for roughly two more months. Data from TankerTrackers indicates that 20 very large crude carriers (VLCCs), combined with onshore storage capacity of about 50 million barrels, would sustain exports for approximately 53 days at a rate of 1.7 million barrels per day.

Tanker tracking data and media reports show Tehran has loaded at least 4.6 million barrels of crude, worth nearly \$400 million, at its export terminals in recent days, with an additional four million barrels appearing to have crossed the blockade line.

Ministry says automakers steel sheets secured via IME

Economy Desk

Industry Ministry said steel sheet supplies for automakers are being met through the Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) and warned of legal action against price gouging, as authorities move to stabilize the market following recent disruptions.

"With the supply of steel on the Iran Mercantile Exchange, the sheets required by automakers have been provided, and this process continues on a regular basis," ministry spokesperson Ezzatollah Zarei told IRNA.

"On Monday, 160,000 tons of steel sheets were offered in the IME, of which 90,000 tons were sold," Zarei said.

Zarei said the increased supply of steel sheets through the exchange would lead to price moderation and eventually a decline in steel prices, adding that injecting steel sheets into the market would meet producers' needs and there was no cause for concern.

Separately, Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Mohammad Atabak said on Monday that Mobarakeh Steel Company has been tasked with supplying steel sheets to downstream and affiliated companies through imports at prices



approved by the Organization for Supporting Consumers and Producers. "Of course, alongside imports, we are also pursuing the approach of increasing steel production capacity in the country," he said.

Rasoul Khalifeh Soltani, a member of Iran's steel association, said on Sunday the ministry has placed smart and targeted imports of steel slabs and hot-rolled sheets on its urgent agenda.

Zarei warned that any producer or supplier raising prices on the pre-text of shortages linked to damage at Mobarakeh Steel during the recent war would face legal action. He said the Organization for Supporting Consumers and Producers is continuously monitoring the market, in coordination with enforcement authorities, to address violations.

In recent weeks, some traders in the open mar-

ket have raised prices of steel-related products, including automobiles, citing alleged shortages following damage to Mobarakeh Steel's infrastructure during the conflict. Car prices have surged over the past two weeks, with sellers attributing the increases to a lack of steel sheets. Mobarakeh Steel Company (MSC), based in the central province of Isfahan, and Khuzestan Steel Company in the southwestern Khuzestan province were hit multiple times during the American-Israeli war that began on February 28. MSC is working to restore stable production after parts of its lines were damaged during the hostilities.

Western sanctions on Iran, along with damage from recent military attacks on production infrastructure, have further intensified challenges facing the sector.

Imam Khomeini Airport rebounds with 15 routes, 30 daily flights



Economy Desk

Flight operations at Iran's Imam Khomeini International Airport have expanded to 15 destinations, led by services to China, Turkey, Iraq, Qatar, India and Oman, as daily takeoffs and landings reached 30, the airport city company's managing director said, signaling a steady recovery since the country's airspace reopened earlier this week.

"Flights from this airport have increased from six flights per day after the reopening of the country's airspace to 30 flights per day of takeoffs and landings," Ramin Kashef Azar told ISNA on Wednesday.

Operations resumed at 6 a.m. on Saturday with an Iran Air Hajj flight to Medina. On the first day of resumption, flights served three destinations; five days later, the airport now connects to 15 cities across Asia and the Middle East.

Current destinations include Beijing, Guangzhou, Shanghai, Shenzhen and several other Chinese cities, as well as Istanbul, Yerevan, Delhi, Muscat, Doha, Baghdad, Najaf and Kabul, Kashef Azar said.

International flights are currently operated by seven domestic airlines, and the number of carriers is expected to grow in the coming days, he added.

SCI: Annual inflation hits 53.7% in first month of year

Economy Desk

Iran's consumer price index (CPI) rose sharply in the first month of the new Iranian year starting March 21, with annual inflation reaching 53.7% and prices continuing their upward trend, data from the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) showed on Wednesday.

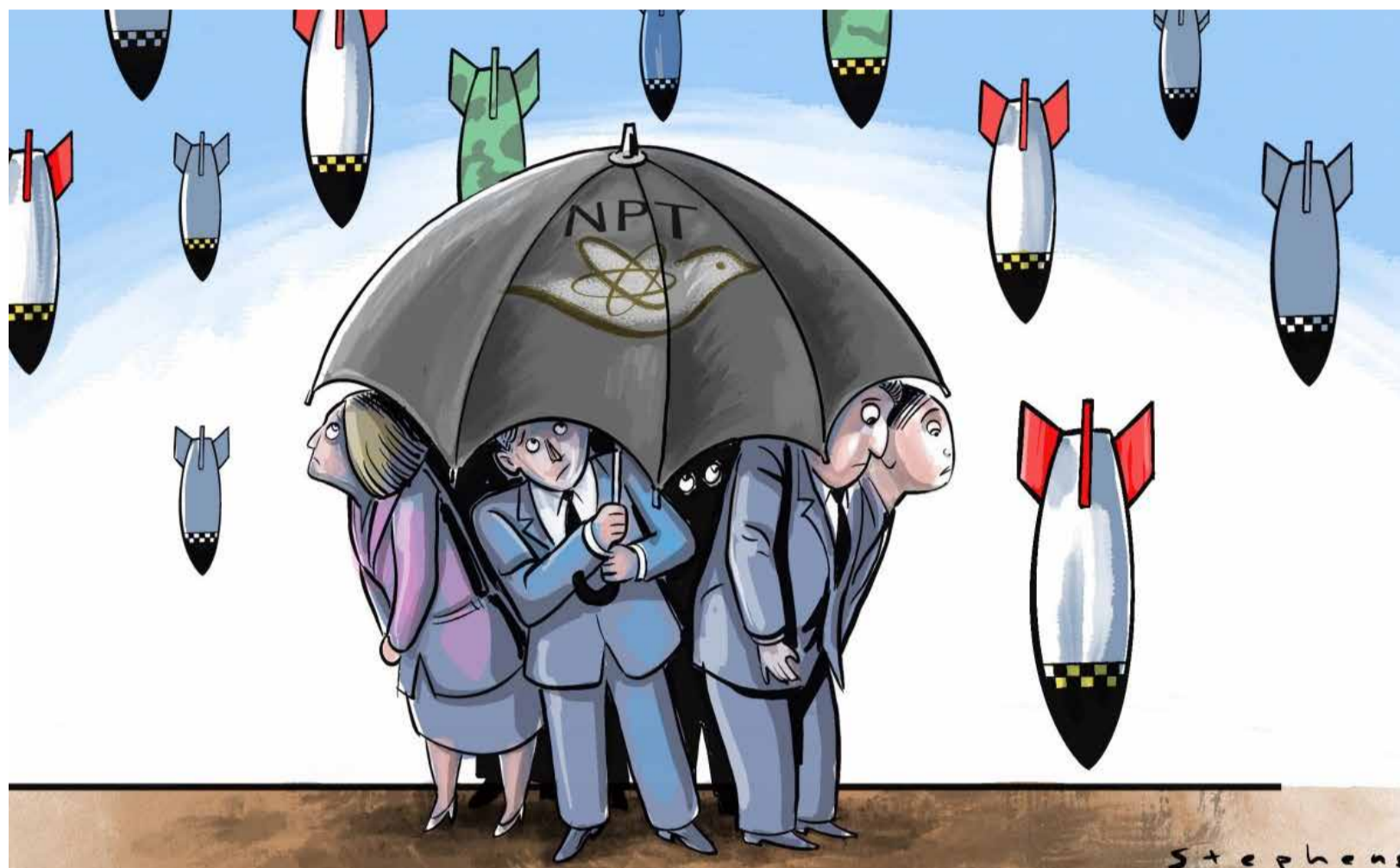
The CPI for Iranian households stood at 569.3, marking a 5.0% increase from the previous month and a 73.5% rise compared with the same month a year earlier, IRNA reported.

Year-on-year inflation reached 73.5%, meaning households paid on average more than 73% higher for a similar basket of goods and services compared with the same period last year.

Monthly inflation was recorded at 5.0%, with prices for food, beverages and tobacco rising by 5.6%, while non-food goods and services increased by 4.5%.

The annual inflation rate, measured over the 12 months to the current month, rose to 53.7%, up 3.1 percentage points from the previous month, indicating continued upward pressure on prices at the start of the year.

War on Iran eroding nuclear non-proliferation



● CRAIG STEPHENS/SCMP



By Olamide Samuel

Former special envoy of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy

OPINION

On April 27, states party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) have gathered in New York to begin their five-year review of its function. This year, the review conference has opened under the shadow of the war that the US and Israel launched on Iran under the pretext that it was about to develop a nuclear weapon.

As the 191 state parties have gathered to review the NPT, the grand bargain at the heart of this treaty will be put on trial. The treaty, which entered into force in 1970, is the central agreement through which most states accepted the current nuclear order. Non-nuclear-weapon states under the treaty (including Iran) have agreed never to acquire nuclear weapons, while the five recognised nuclear-weapon states (the US, the UK, France, China and Russia) have agreed to curb the spread of nuclear weapons, and to also to pursue the disarmament of their own nuclear stockpiles.

All parties to the NPT retain the right to pursue peaceful nuclear technology, under safeguards overseen by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Every five years, states meet to review whether that bargain is still being honoured. That is why this conference is happening now.

The problem is that Iran's case now raises a deeply uncomfortable question for the review conference: Does NPT membership offer any degree of protection for its non-nuclear-weapon states? To be fair, Iran is unlike any other non-nuclear-weapon state under the NPT. The IAEA has raised questions about Iran's unresolved safeguards issues, limited inspector access and its accumulation of uranium enriched far beyond normal civilian needs.

Yet, the agency has not found any evidence of a structured weapons programme. Despite that conclusion — confirmed by US intelligence — the US, an

official nuclear state, and Israel, an unofficial nuclear state, decided to attack Iran. This coercive approach to resolving concerns about nuclear activities is extremely damaging to the NPT. If the issue was uncertainty about what Iran's nuclear facilities are up to, then bombing them does not create any clarity. If the issue was limited access for weapons inspectors, waging war and blockading the country would not make inspections easier. If the issue was nuclear latency, attacking safeguarded sites risks teaching other states that remaining below the weapons threshold provides neither reassurance nor protection.

This is the darker lesson now hanging over the review conference in New York. Iran's working papers submitted to the conference, raise important issues. Tehran evokes Article IV of the treaty and the right to peaceful nuclear technology. It argues that attacks on safeguarded facilities violate the very logic of the treaty. It points to Israel's position outside the NPT, and to the long-unfulfilled

promise of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

One does not have to accept Iran's entire case to see why these arguments will resonate with other conference attendees. They speak to a wider anxiety among non-nuclear-weapon states: That the rules are observed when applied to the weak, and are bent when applied to the powerful.

It does not help that the location of the review conference is in the US — a party to the ongoing conflict, which is trying to impose by force commitments that are already outlined in the NPT and that Iran, as a signatory, had agreed to. If the war had not started, this could have been a convenient venue for the US and Iran to hold supplementary talks to resolve differences.

But the war, as well as other violations — such as the abduction of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro — put US commitment to international law and UN-facilitated diplomacy under question. Notwithstanding all this, Iran's

existing mission and technical experts may be well placed to carry a quieter parallel track at the review conference. In the coming four weeks, the NPT state parties have work to do. They can reaffirm that attacks on safeguarded nuclear facilities are unacceptable. They can press Iran on safeguards without pretending force is needed for verification. They can place the enrichment debate within the treaty's actual terms, and remind the US that zero enrichment is not an NPT requirement. They can also bring up the issue of the regional imbalance created by Israel's nuclear opacity and non-membership.

As the conference begins, it is important to remember the key role the NPT has played in curbing the spread of nuclear weapons for over 50 years. Preserving the treaty is key to maintaining this state of affairs. That is why, at the review conference, states parties should categorically refuse to let the NPT's basic bargain be rewritten by war.

The article first appeared on Al Jazeera.



“

All parties to the NPT retain the right to pursue peaceful nuclear technology, under safeguards overseen by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Every five years, states meet to review whether that bargain is still being honoured. That is why this conference is happening now. The problem is that Iran's case now raises a deeply uncomfortable question for the review conference: Does NPT membership offer any degree of protection for its non-nuclear-weapon states?



France's Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot speaks during the 11th Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on April 27, 2026.

● ANGELA WEISS/AFP

Nuclear weapons didn't save lives in 1945, wouldn't today either



By Ivana Nikolić Hughes
Member of the Scientific Advisory Group to the NPT

By Peter Kuznick

Director of the Nuclear Studies Institute at American University



OPINION

False historical narratives abound in our contentious and divided world, as leaders and complicit historians endeavor to use public understanding of the past to push policies and gain control in the present. One of the most egregious cases is the widely accepted account of the decision by US leaders to drop the atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9 of 1945, respectively.

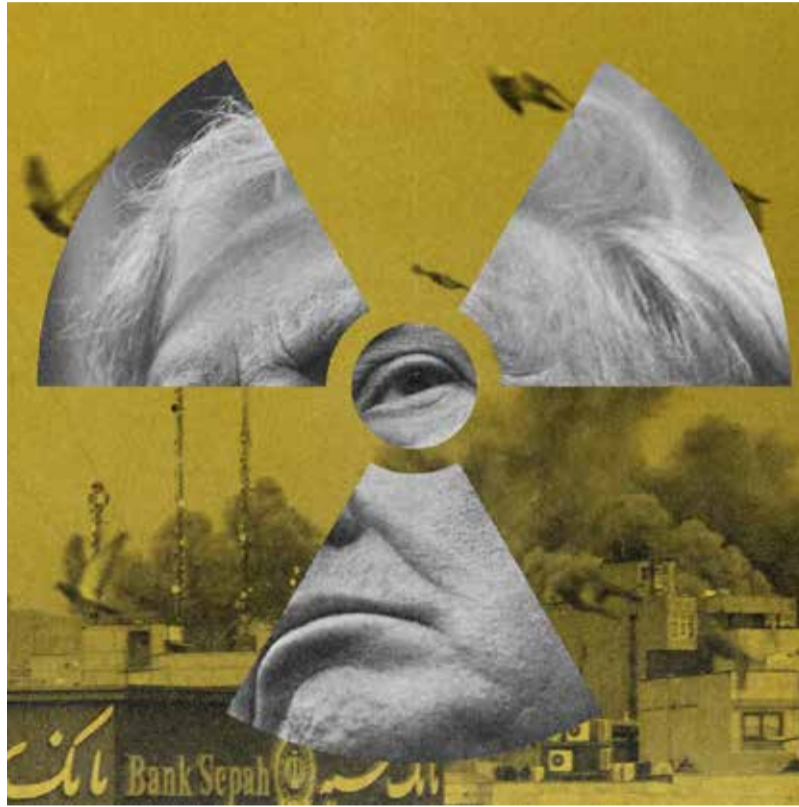
The generally held view, which is frequently taught in schools across the US and beyond, is that the bombings were necessary to save lives, both American and Japanese; just how many lives were saved has itself been subject to debate, though President Harry Truman claimed half a million US lives in his 1955 memoirs. This assessment is not only disputed by the facts, but it ignores the realities of what the bombings meant for the initiation of the Cold War and the future of humanity, in a world long awash with civilization-ending weapons.

Most importantly, the bombings quite simply were unnecessary. There were at least three ways that Japanese surrender could have been induced without the instantaneous killing of more than a hundred thousand civilians and another several hundred thousand men, women, and children being subjected to third-degree burns, injuries, and radiation exposure that would either end their lives shortly thereafter, or cause health problems in the years and decades following the fateful attacks.

One option was that the US could have altered the surrender terms to make them acceptable to the Japanese. What most Japanese leaders wanted in early August of 1945 was to keep their Emperor and the kokutai or emperor system. The Americans, who knew this from intercepted cables, should have accepted this term; they would eventually agree anyway out of self-interest. Sadly, most of Truman's top military and political advisors urged this course of action, but Truman, with the support of Secretary of State Jimmy Byrnes, refused.

Another possibility was to allow the Soviet Union to proceed with its ground invasion upon declaring a war on Japan at midnight on August 8. The Joint Intelligence Staff of the Joint Chiefs of Staff predicted on April 11, "If at any time the USSR should enter the war, all Japanese will realize that absolute defeat is inevitable." As Japan's Supreme War Council stated in May, "At the present moment when Japan is waging a life-or-death struggle against the US and Britain, Soviet entry into the war will deal a death blow to the Empire." Japan would have surrendered once it saw that it would be fighting both the US and the Soviet Union. Moreover, President Truman knew that the Soviets were about to invade, and wrote at least twice that that would end the war.

The last, albeit arguably the weakest, alternative was to demonstrate the enormous power of the atomic bomb by exploding it, as was done on July 16 in New Mexico, in the presence of foreign leaders, and as was recommended by a group of scientists in the Franck Report. Such a display could



● SAM WHITNEY/THE NEW YORK TIMES

have exerted sufficient pressure on the Japanese government, especially in conjunction with the changed surrender terms and a warning about Soviet entry, to precipitate Japanese surrender. In fact, seven of America's eight five-star admirals and generals in 1945 said the bombs were either militarily unnecessary, morally reprehensible, or both. Truman's personal chief of staff Admiral William Leahy, who also chaired the meetings of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the use of the atomic bombs put us on the moral level of the "barbarians of the dark ages". General Douglas MacArthur wrote that the Japanese would have "gladly" surrendered months earlier if we'd told them they could keep the emperor.

Beyond the fact that there were multiple ways to ensure the end of the war without committing the gravest nuclear crimes, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki represent a violent entry into the nuclear age, with historians and scientists arguing that they mark the beginning of the Cold War, rather than the end of the hot one. By fancifully hoping that the bombs would force Japanese surren-

der before the Soviets made too much ground, the US sought to diminish the Soviet contribution to the final outcome of the war that consumed Europe and much of Asia. At the same time, the US leaders also managed to demonstrate to the Soviets their possession of a "new weapon," failing to recognize, as many of the scientists did at the time, the near certainty of a nuclear arms race that indeed came to pass and haunts us to this day. And the Soviets, who knew clearly that the Japanese were defeated and desperate to surrender because the Japanese had sought Soviet assistance in securing better surrender terms, saw themselves as the real target and not Japan — a view that was shared and stated explicitly by Manhattan Project head General Leslie Groves. Groves admitted, "There was never from about two weeks from the time I took charge of this Project any illusion on my part that Russia was our enemy, and the Project was conducted on that basis." Furthermore, the bombings didn't just set up a decades-long rivalry between the two states that stood diametrically opposed to each other in their ideologies and economic systems at that



very moment, it also set the world on a path toward nuclear weapons possession by many more states, nine at the latest count. Although nuclear weapons have not been used in a time of war ever since, their development and testing have left deep scars and much devastation around the world. And they have continued to threaten the world ever since.

Perhaps most shockingly, the US used these unnecessary weapons knowing full well that it was opening up the door to ending life on our planet. Robert Oppenheimer warned the top political and military officials on May 31 that within three years we'd probably have weapons between 700 and 7000 times as powerful as the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima. Upon receiving the report at Potsdam of how powerful the Alamogordo bomb test was, Truman wrote in his diary, "We have discovered the most terrible bomb in the history of the world. It may be the fire destruction prophesied in the Euphrates Valley Ear, after Noah and his fabulous Ark."

Why does getting this story right matter now?

At a moment when President Trump has repeatedly threatened to bomb Iran "into the Stone Age," genocidally declaring "a whole civilization will die tonight," which Congressman Adam Smith (D-WA) called "the ravings of a homicidal lunatic," some have argued that like the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, using a nuclear weapon or weapons on Iran would be the right choice, the moral choice, the winning choice. Such a stance should not be repudiated just on a moral level, but on a historical level, too.

Tucker Carlson recently stated that Trump is threatening to use weapons that have never been used in time of war before. We agree. The atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki bear little to no resemblance to the kinds of weapons in today's arsenals of not just the US, but all nine nuclear armed possessors. The differences are not only in the amount of energy they can produce, or the physical processes that underlie them, but also in the way in which they could be delivered in a matter of minutes via submarine-launched or intercontinental ballistic missiles. It is highly unlikely that a pilot would be dropping the bombs on Iran, the way that Paul Tibbets and Charles Sweeney did at the dawn of the nuclear age.

The argument has been made that lives would be saved if a nuclear weapon or weapons were used by Israel to attack Iran. This so-called argument fails to recognize not just the errors of history embedded in such statements, but also the threat that such an attack would pose to Israel and the whole world. Trump supporters like Mark Levin have done the same. And J.D., "the alleged dove," Vance has announced that the US has "tools in our toolkit that we so far haven't decided to use," but "the president...can decide to use them, and he will decide to use them if the Iranians don't change their course of conduct." All these bloodthirsty provocateurs could start by learning the actual history, followed by some basic facts of what would happen to Israel if it were attacked with even several Hiroshima-style bombs. They should then review the rich scientific literature on what would happen to the planet and humanity in case of a full-blown nuclear war. We look forward to hearing about their conclusions.

This article was first published in Arabic by Al Jazeera.



Most importantly, the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki quite simply were unnecessary. There were at least three ways that Japanese surrender could have been induced without the instantaneous killing of more than a hundred thousand civilians and another several hundred thousand men, women, and children being subjected to third-degree burns, injuries, and radiation exposure that would either end their lives shortly thereafter, or cause health problems in the years and decades following the fateful attacks.



A reference to the anti-Trump "No Kings" protests is left on a building at Tehran's prestigious Sharif University of Technology that was damaged in a US-Israeli air strike.

● MAJID-ASGARIPOUR/REUTERS

Asian Beach Games: Gold rush as Iran revels in water polo, wrestling glory



Members of the Iranian water polo team pose with the men's gold at the Asian Beach Games in Sanya, China, on April 29, 2026. **ISNA**



Aliakbar Zaroudi celebrates with the Iranian flag after winning a beach wrestling gold at the Asian Beach Games in Sanya, China, on April 29, 2026. **IWFIR**

Sports Desk

Iranians enjoyed a gold-laden run on the penultimate day of action at the Asian Beach Games in Sanya, China, grabbing top prizes in water polo and beach wrestling on Wednesday. In men's beach volleyball, however, the Iranian duo of Abolhassan Khakizadeh and Amirali Qalenoee settled for silver after a straight-set loss (21-15, 21-12) to the high-profile Qatari pair of Cherif Samba and Ahmed Janko.

It marked the Iranian team's second setback in Sanya against the Olympic bronze medalists. Wednesday's morning-session results saw Iran jump to third place in the medals table with seven golds and one silver, China has dominated the Games on home soil with 50 medals – including 22 golds – with Thailand, which has collected 10 golds, eight silvers, and six bronze medals, in the second spot.

Iran's gold rush began with

a hard-fought 3-2 water polo victory over China in the men's final outing. After dropping the first set 2-1, Iran bounced back to win the next two sets 3-2 and 4-1. China leveled the scoreline with a fourth-set 3-2 win, sending the match to a shootout. Iran had the last laugh, prevailing 3-2 in penalties to finish atop the round-robin table with five wins in as many matches – securing the country's first water polo gold in six editions of the Games.

"We came here with the goal of winning the gold medal, and this is the result of our long-term training," said Iran's Amin Qavidel. "China is a very strong and young team. Sanya has brought us good luck, and we appreciate the excellent organization by the host."

In men's beach wrestling, Iran stole the show with a clean sweep of four gold medals. Aliakbar Zaroudi opened Iran's account with an emphatic 3-0 victory over India's Siddharth in

the 70kg final. The second gold came at 80kg, where Ali Gholami pinned Muhammad Asad Ullah of Pakistan in the final.

The other final featuring Iranian and Pakistani wrestlers saw Amirhossein Kavousi defeat Muhammad Inam 3-0 in the 90kg showdown, refusing to let the former world champion settle into his usual defensive shell.

In the +90kg final, Seyyed Amirreza Sahraei beat China's seven-foot-tall Da Lu 3-0, dashing the host nation's hopes of winning

at least one gold in the men's division.

Represented by 57 athletes across 10 sports, the Iranian delegation had bagged two gold medals prior to Wednesday's action at the multi-sport event, which concludes with the closing ceremony today.

Hassan Ajami got Iran off the mark by winning gold in men's shot put on Sunday, followed by the men's kabaddi team stunning India 44-31 to claim the top prize on Monday.

Iranian FS wrestlers to ramp up preparations with 10-day camp

Sports Desk

The Iranian freestyle wrestling team is ramping up its preparations for upcoming international tournaments after naming a 13-man roster for a 10-day training camp set to begin May 10.

With September's Asian Games and the World Championships in October fast approaching, head coach Pejman Dorostkar and his staff are eager to finalize their 10-man squad.

Milad Valizadeh (57kg), Ahmad Mohammadnejad-Javan (61kg), Rahman Amouzad (65kg), Sina Khalili (70kg), Mohammad Nokhodi (79kg), Kamaran Qasempour (86kg), and Amirhossein Zare' (125kg) have received call-ups for the upcoming camp. All seven have already secured their places at the World Championships under the national team selection process.

Valizadeh, Qasempour, and reigning world champion Zare' claimed gold at the Asian Championships in Bishkek in early April to lock in their spots. Javan and Khalili also earned shots at world glory despite settling for bronze in their respective weight classes in the Kyrgyz capital.

Meanwhile, Amouzad and Nokhodi – gold and bronze medalists, respectively, at last year's World Championships – are set to return to the global stage after their domestic rivals turned in poor performances at the Asian Championships.

Peyman Ne'mati suffered a first-round exit in the 65kg division, while under-20 world champion Mahdi Yousefi fell to Olympic gold medalist Razambek

Zhamalov of Uzbekistan in the 79kg quarterfinals.

The race for the remaining three spots, however, remains wide open. June's Ranking Series event in Ulaanbaatar, the International Takhti Cup, and domestic trials are expected to settle the 74kg, 92kg, and 97kg classes.



IWFIR

All eyes will be on the 97kg division in the coming months, with two global stars – Hassan Yazdani and Amirali Azarpira – in the mix despite shaky recent form.

Yazdani, winner of a national-record 10 world and Olympic medals, made a statement return to action on the final day of the Iranian Wrestling Premier League last December. He had been sidelined for 489 days after undergoing shoulder surgery, which cost him the 86kg final at the Paris 2024 Olympics.

The Iranian sensation appeared

back to his ruthless best when he cruised to three technical-superiority victories en route to the Zagreb Open final in February. However, a comprehensive 13-3 loss to unheralded American Stephen Buchanan – the first technical-superiority defeat of Yazdani's career – raised serious doubts about his bid for an elu-

But if Azarpira is knocked out before meeting Yazdani, he will get a second chance against his compatriot at a future event, the Iranian Wrestling Federation has confirmed. The domestic battle at 92kg will also be one to watch, as Amirhossein Firouzpour and Mohammad-Mobin Azimi look to build on strong results over the past 12 months to aim for World Championships success. Firouzpour, a winner of four combined junior and under-23 world golds, bagged Asian gold last year and then marked his senior World Championships debut with a bronze medal. Azimi, meanwhile, won the title at last October's U23 World Championships before dominating the 92kg event at the Asian Championships, where he reached the top of the podium without conceding a single point.

The 74kg race will feature Amir-Mohammad Yazdani and Younes Emami, both of whom have struggled with consistency throughout their careers. The Asian Championships were barely a campaign to remember for two-time world silver medalist Yazdani, who had to recover from a quarterfinal loss to world champion Yoshinosuke Aoyagi of Japan to finish with a consolation bronze.

Emami already has two world bronze medals to his name but left last year's World Championships empty-handed, following a quarterfinal defeat to eventual gold medalist Kota Takahashi of Japan and a loss to Slovakia's Tajmuraz Salkazanov in the bronze-medal match.

A gold medal at the Takhti Cup, even without facing Yazdani, will be enough for Azarpira to punch his ticket to the world event.

Bulgarian star Nikolov set to join Foolad ahead of AVC Champions



CEV

Sports Desk

Bulgarian volleyball star Aleksandar Nikolov has reached an agreement with Foolad Sirjan to join the Iranian club as a supporting player for the upcoming AVC Men's Champions League – starting May 13 in Pontianak, Indonesia.

The 26th edition of the elite clubs' competition also serves as the continental qualification path for the FIVB Men's Club World Championship, with the two finalists booking their place in the global showpiece. Under the Asian tournament regulations, participating teams are required to field at least two international stars. In compliance with that rule, Foolad Sirjan has brought in Nikolov, a world-class outside hitter playing for Volley Lube in the Italian top flight, who won the silver medal with his country at last year's World Championship in the Philippines.

In addition to Nikolov, Iranian international outside hitter Pouria Hosseinkhanzadeh, who finished the club season with Al Arabi in the Qatari Volleyball League, is also set for a reunion with his former club as a supplementary player for the Asian event.

Foolad is a two-time champion in the continental event, lifting the trophy in 2021 and 2024, but missed out on the podium at the 2025 showpiece in Japan after a straight-set defeat against the hosts, Suntory Sunbirds, in the third-place match. A bronze winner at the 2024 World Club Championship, Foolad led the Iranian Premier League table with 16 wins from 18 games in the regular season before the domestic top flight is on the verge of being declared null and void by the Iranian federation amid the country's military conflict with the United States and Israel.

War damage spurs urgent conservation efforts at Golestan Palace

Iranica Desk

The director of Golestan Palace UNESCO World Heritage site announced that after urgent safety measures are completed to remove immediate risks and stabilize the structure, plans for full restoration will begin following a detailed damage assessment under stable conditions.

In an interview with Mehr News Agency, Afarin Emami, director of the Golestan Palace complex, emphasized that immediate full restoration is not currently possible. She said the first priority is emergency protection and stabilizing the building to prevent secondary damage, mehnews.com reported.

She explained that threats such as roof damage caused by impacts, rainwater infiltration, and the entry of birds or urban animals must be addressed quickly before any comprehensive res-

toration work can begin.

As a first step, roofs and windows have already been covered as part of the initial emergency protection process. However, because some hidden structural damage may exist, a more precise technical assessment is now required to guide the next phase of emergency measures.

Emami also announced that joint meetings of the Strategic Committee and Technical Committee are now being held weekly, instead of every one or two months as in the past, due to the urgent circumstances. Experts and veteran specialists are attending these meetings to speed up and improve decision-making.

According to her, a comprehensive coded damage survey is expected to be completed within about 10 days. This will help determine priorities for conservation work, including identify-



IRNA

ing unstable sections, detached decorative elements, and how they should be stabilized or re-located.

Regarding the palace's histor-

ical objects, she said around 90% of the items have been properly packed and transferred to secure storage. Only objects considered too risky to

move remain on site. Fortunately, none of the artifacts suffered serious damage. Only a few branches of chandeliers were damaged by the blast wave and

can be repaired.

She added that the explosion in the Arg Square area particularly affected architectural decorations, especially wooden elements. The damage is scattered throughout the complex, but more severe in areas such as Shams-ol-Emareh and the Marble Throne Hall.

Emami stressed that a significant portion of hazard-removal work has already been completed to prevent further deterioration. However, final cost estimates may change once the full damage assessment is finished.

On the reopening date, she said no exact timeline can yet be announced, since it depends on factors such as funding, stable conditions, and broader decisions by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage. However, the complex may reopen gradually in phases, possibly even while restoration work continues.

Over 4m use ecolodges amid war

Iranica Desk

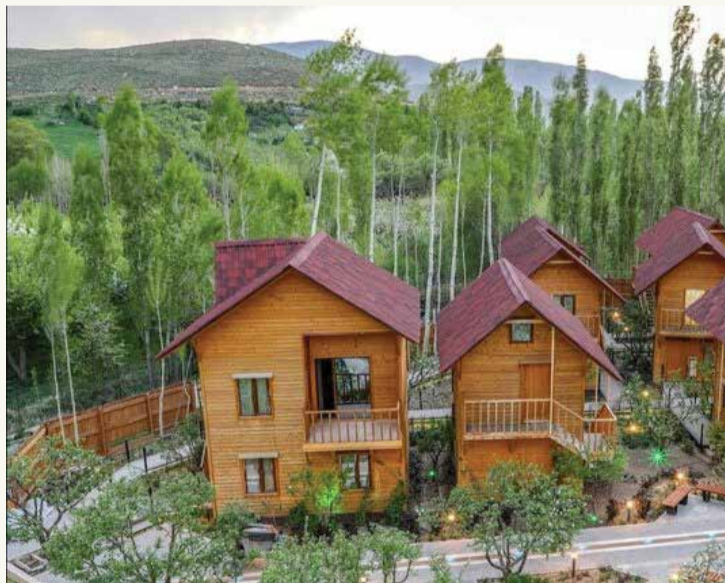
More than four million people were accommodated in ecolodges during the third imposed war, with villages playing a significant role in terms of both the number of visitors and the length of their stays.

Speaking to IRNA, Seyyed Mostafa Fatemi, Director General for Domestic Tourism Development at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, said that during the conflict triggered by Israel and the US, many travelers moved to villages in high-demand provinces such as Mazandaran, Gilan, and Ardabil, IRNA reported.

help preserve the culture and identity of villages while also promoting rural traditions, reverse migration, handicrafts, and local cuisine.

Fatemi added that during crisis situations such as the recent war, ecolodges demonstrated a different function by serving as safe shelters for people who had relocated from cities to villages. He said these accommodations effectively acted as a form of cultural and security-oriented passive defense, helping preserve part of the tourism cycle while providing a secure environment for citizens.

The tourism official also addressed accommodation costs,



IRNA

He said that when free accommodations — often offered to friends and acquaintances of ecolodge managers — were also included, these lodgings experienced an average occupancy rate of around 60 percent.

Fatemi noted that in addition to the northern provinces of Gilan, Mazandaran, and Ardabil, southern provinces and even provinces directly affected by the war were also able to host guests in ecolodges.

He described ecolodges as a successful model in Iran, saying they

stating that 3,900 ecolodge units are currently active across the country, with the highest number located in Mazandaran Province. He explained that lodging prices vary from province to province depending on standards, the type of services offered, climate, and seasonal demand.

He also said that companies operating under the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts are responsible for developing and implementing accommodation standards for such establishments.

Behdeh village emerges as key cultural tourism destination

Iranica Desk

Nestled in the quiet hinterlands of the Persian Gulf and surrounded by mountains that bear witness to centuries of life and perseverance among southern communities, lies a village where history and culture unfold amid untouched natural landscapes. Behdeh village, located in the central district of Parsian in Hormozgan Province, stands as a unique blend of heritage and environment.

Behdeh, which was ranked sixth in national evaluations of Iran's designated tourism villages, is today recognized as one of the most important cultural tourism destinations in Hormozgan Province. It is distinguished not only by its natural setting and traditional architecture, but also by a rich collection of historical sites and ancient rituals, forming a living repository of civilization in the Persian Gulf hinterlands, according to chtn.ir.

With a history spanning several thousand years, Behdeh preserves traces of human settlement from pre-Islamic eras through the medieval Islamic period. Situated along ancient trade routes in southern Iran, the village has long been home to communities that adapted to harsh environmental conditions and developed innovative ways of life suited to the region.

Within its fabric, the imprint of southern Iranian vernacular architecture is clearly visible. Traditional homes built from local materials, narrow alleyways, and climate-responsive structures designed to cope with heat and water scarcity together reflect a valuable model of southern Iranian lifestyle and culture. At the heart of the village, atop a mountain bearing the same name, stands the historic Kalat-e Behdeh Castle. This en-



chn.ir

during stronghold has guarded the region for centuries. Its remains, dating from the Sassanid period to the early Islamic era, highlight the area's strategic importance. The site was officially registered as a national heritage monument, and has since been recognized as one of the most significant historical attractions in Parsian. Its elevated position overlooking the village and surrounding plains demonstrates the builders' advanced understanding of defensive architecture.

The existence of such structures in mountainous terrain reflects the engineering ingenuity of past societies in securing water resources and ensuring safety in difficult landscapes. The Dilav well, carved directly into rock, is considered a remarkable example of traditional water management technologies in arid regions.

Behdeh's heritage is not limited to the fortress alone. Numerous surrounding sites

each narrate a part of the region's cultural and historical identity. Among them are Hasht Berkeh, meaning Eight Ponds, is an ensemble of ancient cisterns built to collect and store rainwater — an example of indigenous water management knowledge in southern Iran's dry climate.

The archaeological site of Beratesh is another important location, preserving evidence of ancient human settlement. Additionally, the presence of the ancient Charo tradition — linguistically linked in Middle Persian to sarooj a type of mortar — suggests that early inhabitants were familiar with advanced construction techniques and durable building materials.

Engineering ingenuity is further reflected in structures such as the Faryab Water Mills, which harnessed flowing water to grind grain. Likewise, the Giri Konar Tunnel represents another engineering marvel, designed to channel rainwater and manage flood flows, showcasing traditional expertise in water control and resource utilization. Together, these structures

demonstrate that the inhabitants of this region not only adapted to harsh climatic conditions but also developed creative solutions to maximize the use of natural resources.

The combined presence of these historical and natural assets has positioned Behdeh as one of Hormozgan Province's leading cultural tourism destinations. Its recognition among Iran's top tourism villages further underscores its significant potential in the tourism sector.

Behdeh is more than a village; it is a living narrative of history, culture, and human resilience. From the ancient fortress to water reservoirs, mills, and hydraulic tunnels, every element reflects a long tradition of indigenous knowledge and traditional engineering.

Preserving and introducing this valuable heritage is of great importance not only for the local community but also for Iran's broader cultural and historical legacy. Today, Behdeh has the potential to become a major cultural tourism hub in southern Iran, telling the story of thousands of years of life in the hinterlands of the Persian Gulf for generations to come.

Art guards timeless name as Iran marks Persian Gulf Day

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran marked National Persian Gulf Day on April 30 with nationwide cultural events and the launch of the 16th International Persian Gulf Cultural and Artistic Festival, as officials urged artists to turn historical memory into lasting creative expression, the Culture Ministry said.

The annual observance, held on April 30, commemorates the 1621 expulsion of Portuguese forces from the Strait of Hormuz and has evolved into a flagship cultural platform projecting Iran's historical identity through film, music, visual arts and research.

In a message to the festival, Culture Minister and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi framed the Persian Gulf as more than a geographic label, describing it as a "living narrative" of Iran's civilizational continuity.

He urged cultural figures to render the "truth" of national sacrifice in artistic

form, arguing that memory must be actively produced to endure across generations.

The festival unfolds this year against a charged backdrop, with recent months reinforcing themes of resilience and national unity. Cultural programming has increasingly foregrounded heritage as both archive and expression, linking historical legacy with contemporary identity-building.

Alongside the festival, officials in the southern province of Hormozgan unveiled the national heritage registration plaque for the historic Shajareh Tayebeh School in Minab.

The site, associated with a deadly wartime attack that killed 168 civilians, has been formally recognized as a place of collective memory and "resistance," marking efforts to institutionalize remembrance through cultural preservation.

Authorities say such designations expand the scope of heritage policy

beyond architecture to include sites shaped by modern history. The move also aligns with broader initiatives to anchor regional identity in tangible landmarks, particularly along Iran's southern littoral.

National Persian Gulf Day has, over the past two decades, become a focal point for cultural diplomacy and domestic engagement. Through festivals and public events, Iran has sought to reinforce the historical usage of the name while channeling artistic production into narratives of continuity, sovereignty and coexistence.

Organizers say this year's edition places added emphasis on interdisciplinary work and youth participation, aiming to embed historical awareness within contemporary creative practice.

As Salehi put it, the most decisive victories risk fading without cultural representation, a reminder that art remains central to how nations remember, and how they endure.



Iran calls for legal case on Golestan Palace, pushes UNESCO action

Arts & Culture Desk

A senior Iranian Foreign Ministry official on Wednesday urged an accelerated legal and diplomatic drive to document damage to cultural assets and prepare a case on Golestan Palace for international adjudication, including at The Hague.

Speaking at a specialized forum on safeguarding civilizational heritage held at Golestan Palace, Ahmad Hamisi, head of the ministry's international organizations department, said Tehran must swiftly compile "official" records, finalize damage assessment forms and build legal dossiers that will underpin claims before arbitration bodies and international courts, IRNA reported.

He stressed that enhanced protection mechanisms through UNESCO remain "pursuable," but warned delays in submitting documentation risk forfeiting



Golestan Palace's Mirror Hall was damaged, after US-Israel strikes in March, with intricate mirrorwork shattered. ● IRNA

opportunities. "The first stage is information," he said, adding that Iran has already drawn global attention through a 120-page report on cultural damage circulated to embassies, prompting UNESCO to condemn attacks on heritage sites.

Citing precedents, including the 2017 threat by former U.S. president Donald Trump against Iranian cultural sites and UNESCO's response, Hamisi said the international environment is receptive to firm reactions on cultural threats and should be leveraged to increase pressure.

He called for elevating Golestan Palace into a symbol of "cultural

victimhood" through a draft resolution, drawing a parallel with Mosul's global status after the destruction wrought by the Daesh terrorist group.

Hamisi also outlined plans to stage a dedicated exhibition at UNESCO headquarters within two months, featuring images, footage and verified reports to present the full scope of the incident.

Fatemeh Davari, adviser to the deputy for cultural heritage, said assessment forms have been prepared for 35 cultural properties, with separate evaluations planned for World Heritage sites. She added that museums and cultural centers require urgent, coordinated action.

US-Israel strikes damage 449 health facilities in Iran, 40,000 treated free

Social Desk

Iran's emergency chief said Wednesday that 449 healthcare and medical facilities across the country were damaged during what officials call the "Third Imposed War," while more than 40,000 wounded people received free treatment as the health sector remained fully operational throughout the conflict.

Speaking at a press conference at Ardabil University of Medical Sciences, Jafar Miadfar said 26 emergency personnel were killed and 118 injured during the hostilities. Miadfar said the damage extended to 74 logistical support units, 62 ambulances, 54 emergency bases and 42 hospitals, with nine hospitals completely destroyed and forced out of service.

He said four of Iran's air ambulance helicopters and the country's only marine emergency ves-



Extensive damage to Gandhi Hospital in northern Tehran following US-Israeli airstrikes on early March 2026. ● IRNA

sel — used to transfer patients from Hormuz to Bandar Abbas — were struck by the United States and Israel.

"The health sector was present with 100% capacity," Miadfar said, adding that all victims were treated free of charge. He said 1,283 surgeries were performed during the war.

Among the injured were 5,046 women and 2,018 people under 18, he said. The youngest fatality was a three-year-old child, while the oldest was 88.

Miadfar said 30 of Iran's 31 provinces and 272 cities came under

attack, with only North Khorasan Province spared.

He also highlighted the performance of Ardabil's medical university, calling it one of the country's top 10 institutions in pre-hospital emergency care.

Iran currently operates 4,500 ambulances nationwide, but 3,000 are worn out and due for replacement, Miadfar said, adding that 20 new ambulances are set to be procured for Ardabil Province.

Iranian officials say the conflict began on February 28, as Tehran was engaged in serious negotiations with Washington, when the United States and Israel launched strikes on multiple locations across Iran.

Iran post-war tourism revives as arrivals show early increase

Arts & Culture Desk

The early signs of renewed foreign arrivals are emerging as conditions stabilize, adding that Iran has put in place the infrastructure and strategic planning to host a broad influx of international visitors, Deputy Tourism Minister Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpey said on Wednesday.

Addressing a meeting of senior tourism officials attended by Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri, Mohseni Bandpey pointed to a 48.5% rise in inbound tourists in the first month of the last Iranian year as evidence of "real demand" for travel to Iran.

He attributed the increase to active tourism diplomacy and sustained engagement with target markets, according to ISNA.

As part of that outreach, Iran last spring hosted 16 tour operators from 26 countries, a move he said helped "showcase" the country's cultural assets and expand its international visibility. The ministry now expects that, with a ceasefire or a de-



finite end to wartime conditions, pent-up demand could translate into a sharp recovery in arrivals, requiring "maximum readiness" across the sector.

Mohseni Bandpey stressed the role of media and private-sector associations in advancing tourism goals, urging managers to maintain open channels with stakeholders and uphold transparency and accountability.

"Engagement is essential," he said, describing participatory governance as a cornerstone of effective tourism management. He also cited newly approved regulations under Iran's Seventh Development Plan as a "key step" in smoothing the path for sectoral growth, say-

ing the framework creates more favorable conditions for both domestic dynamism and international outreach. The deputy minister highlighted more than 80 provincial visits by Salehi-Amiri that brought attention to counties with tourism, heritage and handicrafts potential, calling the approach a driver of more balanced regional development.

He added that dividing the country into nine tourism zones and deploying managers in the field, particularly during crisis periods, has strengthened oversight and improved travel management. Digital tools and real-time monitoring of travel flows have enabled quicker, more precise decision-mak-

ing, he said, while the national Travel Services Coordination Headquarters remains a "central pillar" for aligning agencies and ensuring coherent operations.

Looking ahead, Mohseni Bandpey said a draft strategic tourism document is being prepared based on multiple scenarios, prioritizing "protection," "resilience" and the rebuilding of Iran's national tourism brand.

He also pointed to government-backed support and incentive packages for industry stakeholders, approved following directives from the president, as measures designed to sustain activity, bolster resilience and steer the sector toward long-term, sustainable growth.