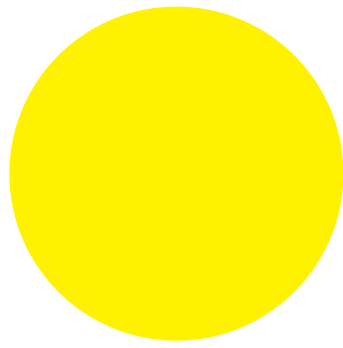


Another 20 ships transit Strait of Hormuz under IRGC surveillance



3 >



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IranDailyWeb

Army downs intruding drone in Persian Gulf

Iranian strike on US base in Kuwait injures five, damage two expensive UAVs

2 >

OPINION



Humiliation of finding secret Israeli bases in Iraq

4 >



CAVA Women's Volleyball Championship: Iran's golden girls defeat Kazakhstan to defend title

6 >



Sar Aqa Seyyed village considered for national tourism project

7 >

Mexican prints reframe war, nationhood at Tehran museum

8 >



Visitors gather in a gallery hallway featuring framed prints and banners during the 'Eleven Artworks by Mexican Printmakers' exhibition at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art in Tehran, which runs from May 23 to June 7, 2026. TMOCA

Oman likely to stand firm on neutrality in Hormuz dispute

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE

As Iran is coordinating with Oman on establishing a new legal regime for the Strait of Hormuz and collecting fees from transiting vessels, the US Treasury secretary has recently warned Muscat that it could face American penalties if it imposed charges for passage through the strategic waterway. Earlier, US President Donald Trump had also threatened that Oman would be "blown up" if it impeded free navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.



Emad Abshenas

He believes Oman has consistently pursued a policy of neutrality and will continue to insist on maintaining that position in the current dispute.

IRAN DAILY: Can the recent US threats

against Oman be viewed as a sign of Washington's concern over the expansion of strategic cooperation between Tehran and Muscat on the security of the Strait of Hormuz and a possible erosion of traditional US influence over this vital passage?

ABSHENAS: Broadly speaking, the United States, in its ongoing negotiations with Iran, is highly focused on restoring its position in the region among Arab states and the wider international community after the embarrassment suffered by the US military during the war with Iran. One reason behind these threats against Oman may be linked to that objective.

Another factor is that Oman was among the Arab countries that strongly opposed the use of its territory by the United States against Iran, a stance that caused dissatisfaction in Washington.

Oman is a country that has generally sought to play a neutral role and has consistently insisted that its neutrality be respected. US officials have found this position frustrating, and these threats can be seen as a response to that frustration. What is surprising is the silence of Arab countries regarding such an explicit threat against an Arab state that is a member of the Arab League. On the other hand, even the United Nations has remained silent regarding these remarks.

This demonstrates how international institutions have increasingly lost their identity and effectiveness.

What impact could such threats have on Oman's strategic calculations? Could Muscat be compelled to adjust some of its policies in order to avoid tensions with Washington, or, conversely, might these pressures strengthen Oman's determination to preserve its independence and even deepen cooperation with Iran?

Based on my understanding of Oman, it is likely that the country will continue to insist on maintaining its neutral position.

Page 3 >



Army downs intruding drone in Persian Gulf

Iranian strike on US base in Kuwait injures five, damage two expensive UAVs

International Desk

Iran has shot down a drone over Qeshm Island in the Persian Gulf, the Army said on Saturday amid renewed military tensions between Tehran and Washington, which pose a threat to a ceasefire in place since early April. "The compact and lightweight drone belonging to the aggressor US-Zionist enemy was detected and shot down by the Army Air Defense Force," a statement by the Army's Public Relations Department read. On Tuesday, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) also announced that its air defense units had brought down a US MQ-9 drone flying over Iran's airspace in the Persian Gulf. The IRGC added that its forces also fired at an RQ-4 drone and an intruding F-35 fighter jet, forcing them to leave Iran's airspace.

Attack on Kuwait military base

Iran also responded to an attack on the port city of Bandar Abbas airport on Thursday by firing ballistic missiles at a US military base in neighboring Kuwait.

The IRGC said it had deliberately targeted the US base, noting that the site had been used to launch an earlier American attack.

The Guards vowed that any future acts of aggression would be met with a stronger response, saying that responsibility for any escalation would rest with the party initiating hostile actions.

According to a report by Bloomberg, the Iranian missile strike on the Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait has wounded five American service members and caused serious damage to two MQ-9 Reaper drones.

The report claimed Kuwaiti air defenses



This picture shows the wreckage of an Orbiter unmanned aircraft shot down by the Iranian Army in the skies over Qeshm Island, southern Iran, on May 30, 2026.

intercepted an Iranian Fateh-110 missile before it reached its intended target. However, debris from the intercepted projectile fell onto the US-operated Ali Al Salem Air Base, causing the injuries and damage.

Since April 8, Iran and the US have been observing a ceasefire mediated by Pakistan to give a chance to diplomacy to end the US-Israeli aggression against Iran.

The US and Israel waged a war against Iran on February 28, almost eight months after they carried out unprovoked attacks on the country. Iran retaliated against the strikes by



launching a barrage of missiles and drone attacks on the Israeli-occupied

territories as well as on US bases in regional Arab countries.

Qatar says temporary Hormuz fee negotiable

Iran's decisions on strait not 'provisional': Iranian MP

International Desk

Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said on Saturday that temporary legal fees for transit through the Strait of Hormuz is negotiable and could help restore normal passage through the key waterway.

Short-term charges used for mine clearing or similar purposes can be considered, the Qatari official said at an Asian defense conference in Singapore.

However, he said that Doha objects to permanent legal fees, arguing that it would impact consumers.

The comments were in response to a question about talks between Iran and Oman to impose a permanent toll system to formalize control of maritime traffic through Hormuz, one of the world's most important trade routes. Iran



has effectively closed the waterway in response to US-Israeli aggression that began in late February, triggering an energy crisis.

"Qatar and also the partners in the [Persian] Gulf stated very clearly that charging fees will always impact the consumer, so we are against this," Sheikh Saoud said at the Shangri-La Dialogue.

"But for certain times that they say they will use it for mine-clearing or some usage of the fees for a temporary time, this is something that is

negotiable."

The US, Europe and Middle East nations like the United Arab Emirates have rejected the notion of any tolls for passage through Hormuz.

Alireza Salimi, a member of the Parliament's Presiding Board, said on Saturday that the parliament is expected to review and approve legislation formalizing Iran's management and sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz.

Salimi said the legislative body will "soon" vote into law a measure gov-



Vessels are pictured anchored in the Strait of Hormuz off Bandar Abbas in southern Iran.

ISNA

erning Iran's management over the Strait of Hormuz. He added that all details related to the plan will be approved and finalized by Parliament.

The Strait of Hormuz is shared between Iranian and Omani territorial waters, Salimi emphasized, and therefore no other country will be allowed to make decisions regarding the waterway.

"When [US President Donald] Trump and others say the Strait of Hormuz must be opened, this issue concerns us, and we will not allow them to decide," Salimi said.

The lawmaker stressed that decisions on managing the Strait of Hormuz "are not tactical or temporary" but rather "definite and permanent."

Trump betraying diplomacy for third time: Leader's advisor

A senior advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution warned that US President Donald Trump is betraying diplomacy in favor of war for the third time with his aggressive actions.

In a post on his X account on Saturday, Mohsen Rezaei wrote, "As predicted, the US President is betraying diplomacy for the third time."

"By continuing the maritime blockade and making excessive demands in negotiations, he has proven more than ever that he is not a man of negotiation and is pursuing other goals," he added.

Rezaei, also a former chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), had previously told China's CGTN network that Iran "will break the blockade either through negotiation or, if not, through direct action."

He also said earlier that the Americans have no choice but to negotiate, and that continuing this war would lead them into a very dark tunnel.

"America is coming toward us in darkness, while we monitor their every move," he said.

Iran has shut down the strategic corridor to enemies and their allies in re-



Mohsen Rezaei
IRNA

tiation for the United States' and the Israeli regime's latest bout of unprovoked aggression against the country. It began applying far stricter controls after US President Donald Trump announced continuation of an illegal naval blockade of Iranian vessels and ports on April 13 in violation of the terms of a ceasefire he had unilaterally announced earlier that month. The two sides have been holding intermittent talks to end the war permanently.

Israel expands ground offensive on Lebanon

International Desk

Israel launched fresh strikes across south Lebanon Saturday after ordering evacuations from more than a dozen locations a day after its premier said Israeli forces had pushed even deeper into Lebanese territory. Lebanon's Army said a "targeted" Israeli strike wounded two soldiers near the southern city of Nabatieh, just a day after military delegations from both countries held landmark security talks in Washington.

The military talks in the US capital came ahead of US-brokered negotiations early next week -- the fourth round since the latest Israel-Hezbollah conflict erupted.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA) reported Israeli sev-

eral strikes in the south, including artillery fire near the mediaeval-era Beaufort castle.

The Lebanese presidency announced in a statement that President Joseph Aoun and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam had agreed "to intensify contacts to put an end to these condemned Israeli practices" ahead of the new round of talks with Israel scheduled for June 2 and 3.

Aoun and Salam discussed "Israeli attacks and their expansion to a number of southern cities and villages, especially in the districts of Tyre and Nabatieh, in addition to the continued bombing and bulldozing of houses, and the destruction of historical landmarks in the south". Also on Saturday, Hezbollah resis-

tance group said it fired rockets at the northern Israeli town of Kiryat Shmona.

The group said it also ambushed Israeli soldiers near Ghandouriyeh in southern Lebanon, adding that it forced them to withdraw, and fired rockets at a military base in north Israel.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced on Friday that Israeli forces had advanced beyond the Litani river that runs around 30 kilometers (20 miles) north of the frontier.

Israeli strikes on the south killed 11 people on Friday, according to the Health Ministry in Beirut.

The ministry says that Israeli attacks have killed more than 3,300 people since March 2.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Another 20 ships transit Strait of Hormuz under IRGC surveillance



A cargo boat navigates the sea on April 28, 2026 on Qeshm Island, Iran in the Strait of Hormuz. **ASGHAR BESHARATI/GETTI IMAGES**

Economy Desk
Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps said on Saturday that 20 commercial vessels travelled through

the Strait of Hormuz over the past 24 hours after obtaining permission. The IRGC said in a statement that the vessels passed through the stra-

tegic waterway following "authorization and coordination" with its naval forces, Tasnim News Agency reported. "Control and smart moni-

toring of the Strait of Hormuz is being carried out with authority, and any aggression will be met with crushing blows," the statement added.

under a US naval blockade, which President Donald Trump imposed in mid-April, aiming to pressure Tehran into a peace agreement after the 40-day conflict.

In a post on Truth Social on Friday, Trump said Iran would be required to remove any remaining mines in the Strait of Hormuz, while the United States would lift its naval blockade on ships entering or leaving Iranian ports. However, Iranian maritime sources cited by Tasnim rejected interpretations that the blockade had been lifted, saying naval restrictions remained in place and that vessels continue to receive warnings from US Central Command (CENTCOM).

According to Tasnim, Iranian sailors said the naval blockade of Iranian ships was still in effect and that US forces had issued warnings to stop vessels trying to break through the restricted zone, ordering them to turn back or face potential fire.

Tehran stocks log first all-green trading session as benchmark jumps

Economy Desk

Iranian stocks recorded an unprecedented all-green trading session on Saturday, with no listed shares trading in the red during part of the day and more than 700 ticker symbols locked in buy queues on the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE). According to Tasnim News Agency, the TSE experienced one of its most unusual trading days, with all sectors and both large- and small-cap stocks trading in positive territory. Market data showed green dominated the trading board throughout the session in what Tasnim described as a first for Iran's stock market.

Tehran's main stock index gained 79,723 points at the close of trading to hit 4.153 million points. Major index-heavy stocks, including National Iranian Copper Industries Co., Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Co., Social Security Investment Co., Mobarakeh Steel Co., and Iran Khodro Co., along with dozens of other shares, all traded in the green, helping drive a broad-based market rally.

FMLI alone contributed 16,000 points to the benchmark index's rise. Other stocks that significantly supported the index included Esfahan Oil Refining Co., Bank Mellat, and Bandar Abbas Oil Refining Co.

Among the most actively traded stocks, Bank Mellat recorded transactions of 10 billion shares worth 1.1 trillion rials, while Sepico traded 19 million shares valued at 7.6 billion rials and Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Co. traded 1.1 billion shares worth 295 billion rials.

The gains came after months during which the TSE faced heavy pressure from wartime conditions, uncertainty and a prolonged trading halt, prompting many market participants to adopt a cautious outlook.

Trading on the TSE resumed after an 80-day suspension on May 19, with Iranian equities ending the session stronger than expected and showing early signs of stability following the prolonged halt caused by the war.

The stock market had been closed since Feb. 28 following US and Israeli attacks on Iran and the outbreak of war.

US-Iran trade rises 47% in Q1 2026 despite import decline



IRNA

195th among sources of US imports in the first quarter of 2026.

Iranian news agency Tasnim, citing the Census Bureau figures, noted that trade dynamics shifted in March 2026, a month marked by US-Israeli war on Iran that broke out in late February. During that month, US exports to Iran totaled \$1.2 million, down 64% from \$3.4 million in March 2025, while imports from Iran rose to \$300,000 from \$100,000 a year earlier.

Eqtesad-e Moaser, another Iranian outlet, similarly reported the monthly decline in US exports against the backdrop of the conflict, while highlighting the threefold increase in imports from Iran during the same period.

Economy Desk
Total trade in goods between the United States and Iran surged by 47% in the first quarter of 2026 from a year earlier to \$16.2 million, according to US Census Bureau data cited by Iranian media. US exports to Iran climbed 53% to \$15.8 million in

the January-March period, while imports from Iran fell 42% to \$400,000, the data showed.

Despite the quarterly increase, bilateral trade remains minimal in the context of both countries' global commerce. Iran ranked 164th among destinations for US exports and

Iran to import 300 MW from northern neighbors for summer peak

Economy Desk

Iran will import 300 megawatts of electricity from Turkmenistan and Armenia during this summer's peak load, a senior energy official said, adding that an exchange of up to 1,000 MW with Russia remains part of future agreements.

"300 MW of electricity will be imported from Turkmenistan and Armenia during this summer's peak load," Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi, deputy minister of energy, told the Iranian Labour News Agency (ILNA). "Exchange of 1,000 MW of electricity with Russia is part of future agreements."

Rajabi Mashhadi said Iran is importing the 300 MW from these two neighbors while also maintaining electricity exports to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Asked whether the 40-day US-Israeli war that began in late February had disrupted Iran's electricity exchanges, he said the conflict had not caused damage because the facilities were not targeted.

"In general, both Turkmenistan and Armenia have good cooperation with Iran on electricity supply," he said.

On grid synchronization with Russia, Rajabi Mashhadi said the interconnection remains part of future agreements, with



MEHR

productive understandings reached on developing a link via Armenia's network. "After the necessary lines and facilities for connecting the grid between Iran and Russia are built, technically it is possible to exchange up to 1,000 MW between the two countries," he said. Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi recently said the country is in a significantly better position regarding energy supply for this summer.

"Currently we have no deficit in electricity production, but this year we must reach a capacity that allows us to manage maximum consumption, and the entire system must align with this goal," Aliabadi said. The ministry's spokesperson earlier said electricity demand was expected to rise "by more than 5% this year," after Iran's peak electricity consumption hovered around 79,000 megawatts last summer.

Oman likely to ...

Even regarding the proposal raised by Iran that Tehran and Muscat jointly collect transit fees, Oman sought to preserve its neutrality. That is why the threats issued by US officials were largely meaningless, since Oman was not actively pursuing such a course of action. The two countries were still engaged in negotiations, and no agreement had been reached.

At the same time, Oman has every legitimate right to reach agreements and understandings with its northern neighbor. Furthermore, the entire Persian Gulf sits on a continental shelf. From the perspective of international law, these waters are not considered international waters but rather part of the continental shelf shared by Iran and Oman.

The fact that Iran and Oman have not collected transit fees in previous years, or have not restricted the passage of foreign vessels, does not mean they lack legal rights. International law grants both countries the right to reach an agreement on a specific legal regime governing this strait, which is shared exclusively by Iran and Oman.

The statements made by US officials are inconsistent with international law. Unfortunately, however, it increasingly appears that international law itself has little practical standing today. It should be emphasized that Oman had neither endorsed nor rejected the issue of collecting transit fees. Iran merely raised the proposal, and Oman listened to it. If the United States believes such threats can alter

Oman's position or force it to change its relationship with Iran, that seems unlikely. Oman has adopted a policy of friendship and neutrality and remains deeply committed to it. It is expected to continue pursuing this approach of maintaining friendly relations with all parties while preserving its neutral stance.

In the long term, how could such an approach affect Oman's level of trust in the United States?

Well, much of the world today has become distrustful of Washington, including Oman. Even America's European allies have become increasingly skeptical. During the illegal war launched by the United States and Israel against Iran, Trump appealed to European countries to partici-

pate. However, hostility toward Trump in the international arena had become so widespread that they declined to do so. The remarks directed at Oman—a country widely viewed as neutral and peace-oriented—will only intensify resentment toward both the United States and Trump. Even if regional countries do not openly support Oman, they are likely to sympathize with it privately in this matter.

What message do these threats send to other Arab states along the Persian Gulf that maintain close ties with the United States? Could this approach raise doubts about Washington's respect for the decision-making independence of its regional partners and encourage them to diver-

sify their security and political relationships?

The first question is whether these countries genuinely possess independent sovereignty. In practice, they appear to have little autonomy or independent political will. If they did possess such will, they would be expected to respond appropriately. Instead, they remain silent, hearing these threats and insults without reacting.

If these countries have the necessary determination, they should move toward diversifying their foreign relations and reducing their dependence on the United States.

The real question, however, is whether such a determination exists. Whether they are prepared to act in the interests of their countries and their peoples remains open to doubt.

Humiliation of finding secret Israeli bases in Iraq



By Paul R. Pillar

Non-resident senior fellow at
GU's Center for Security Studies

OPINION

It is difficult to imagine anything more uncomfortable and embarrassing for leaders of Iraq than clandestinely established Israeli military bases on Iraqi territory.

Two such bases were revealed recently when an Iraqi shepherd stumbled upon one of them in the sparsely populated western desert of Iraq and reported its presence to Iraqi authorities before the Israelis killed him.

Any such outpost — established by any foreign entity, for any purpose — without the permission of the sovereign country in which they are located would be a problem. The problem for Iraq is multiplied by the fact that the bases were established by Israel, making it an especially sensitive matter for Arab governments because of the Israeli subjugation of Palestinian Arabs and doubly so since Israel's assault on the population of the Gaza Strip, which is considered a genocide by rising number of scholars, human rights organizations, and a UN Commission of Inquiry.

Exacerbating the situation further is the purpose of the Israeli bases, which was to facilitate armed attack against Iraq's neighbor, Iran. The bases were part of staging for the war that Israel and the United States launched in February and that Iraq, like other Arab countries in the Persian Gulf, certainly did not want. Even before the current war, Iraq has suffered from being drawn into the US-Israeli conflict with Iran. Six years ago, Iran fired missiles at bases in Iraq that housed American troops in retaliation for a US attack at the Baghdad airport that killed senior Iranian military and political figure Qassem Soleimani and several others, including an Iraqi militia commander.

The launching of the current US-Israeli war has resulted in more Iranian strikes on US-related targets in Iraq, as well as Saudi attacks on pro-Iranian armed

groups in Iraq. Iraq has suffered economically from the war at least as much as other Arab states in the region because of the interruption of oil exports through the Strait of Hormuz, and probably more than some of the other oil producers. Saudi Arabia can ship up to 7 million barrels per day of its production through a pipeline to the Red Sea. The United Arab Emirates has a pipeline that can bring 1.8 million barrels per day to the Gulf of Oman, and it is building a second pipeline to add to that capacity. Iraq's geography does not give it comparable options for bypassing the Strait of Hormuz. Besides exporting what it can through Turkey, it recently initiated tanker truck traffic through Syria. But these routes will make up for only a fraction of the 80% of its oil exports that it has lost since the start of the war. Given the close operational ties between the Israeli military and US Central Command (CENTCOM), it is highly likely that US officials were aware of the Israeli bases in Iraq. From Iraq's point of view, for the United States to allow its partner Israel to establish such a presence was the first US offense. An additional offense may have been to keep

Iraqi officials in the dark about that presence, although it is possible that some Iraqi officials had at least an inkling of that presence but to avoid embarrassment did not discuss it openly. Either way, this episode can only hurt US efforts to shape Iraqi policy.

The principal US demand being placed on Iraq is to reduce Iranian influence in the country, which especially takes the form of pro-Iranian armed groups. The pressure that the United States exerts on Iraq in support of that demand has included interruption last month of funding for, and cooperation with, Iraqi security services. The Iraqi government has attempted a balancing act to maintain good relations with both the United States and Iran. The matter of the secret Israeli bases will make Iraqi leaders even less inclined than they might otherwise have been to tip the balance in favor of the United States, especially to the extent that they need to respond to Iraqi public opinion and not just to US pressure.

The motivations of both Iraq and Iran to maintain stable and even cordial relations with each other remain. Those motivations are rooted in memories of

Men gather around the husk of a destroyed pickup truck that was driven by a local shepherd, who was reportedly struck by Israeli forces and buried by locals at a grave nearby, in the Najaf desert in southwestern Iraq on May 12, 2026.

QASSEM AL-KAABI/AFP

the enormously costly Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, in which hundreds of thousands died on both sides. Iraqi leaders also need to be aware of the unease that Israeli bases — established for the express purpose of attacking Iran — understandably cause in Tehran, and the potential they carry for future Iranian strikes on Iraqi territory.

Leaders of other Arab countries besides Iraq will take note of this episode about the Israeli bases and think about what it means for future security ties with the United States. The experience of this year's war, in which those ties meant that Persian Gulf Arab countries became targets more than they were protected, already has raised doubts among those countries about the value of such ties. The possibility that Israeli activities, undisclosed to the Arab governments themselves, might accompany security arrangements with the United States will amplify those doubts. A reasonable observation about the war that the United States launched against Iraq in 2003 was that the US won the initial phase of the war but lost the peace. Complications like secret Israeli bases on Iraqi territory mean losing it even more. The episode also illustrates a hazard of the United States concentrating so much of its attention in this region on military postures and on opposing Iran.

The article first appeared on *Responsible Statecraft*.

Satellite images from Airbus DS taken on March 8, 2026, and analyzed by the AP appear to show a human-made track dug out at the site, some 250 kilometers (155 miles) southwest of the capital, Baghdad. The track runs in a straight line in a dried-out lake bed from northwest to southeast and measures about 1.5 kilometers (1 mile). That's long enough for takeoffs and landing for warplanes.

AP

“

Leaders of other Arab countries besides Iraq will take note of this episode about the Israeli bases and think about what it means for future security ties with the United States. The experience of this year's war, in which those ties meant that Persian Gulf Arab countries became targets more than they were protected, already has raised doubts among those countries about the value of such ties.



Secret Israeli bases scandal roiling Iraqi politics



By Paul Iddon
Freelance journalist based in the Middle East

OPINION

In a deeply embarrassing development for Baghdad, Israel established two forward-operating bases (FOBs) for supporting air campaigns against Iran on federal Iraqi territory in a flagrant violation of Iraq's already fragile sovereignty. The Wall Street Journal reported the first base's existence, in the barren Nukhaib desert southwest of the Shia shrine cities of Najaf and Karbala, on May 9. The New York Times further revealed Sunday that Israel also set up a second base somewhere else in the country's western desert regions that it operated for over a year and even used during the June 2025 12-day war. A Bedouin shepherd accidentally stumbled upon one of the bases on March 3 and alerted the Iraqi military, a move his family believes resulted in his subsequent death. An Iraqi reconnaissance mission dispatched the following day was bombed, killing a soldier and injuring two others. In Baghdad, some pinned the blame on former prime minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani, and Iraqi officials accused the US of helping conceal the first base.

Raised stakes

Caroline Rose, a senior director at The Soufan Center, noted that the desert region near Najaf and Karbala was always perceived as "a strategic site to conduct covert, special operations," adding that the Israeli presence was of great significance. "While the base appears to be small in scale, only accommodating special forces and emergency rescue responders, it's the ability for Israel to establish a physical presence that ultimately raises the stakes for both Iran and Iraq," Rose told The New Arab on Wednesday, preceding the revelation of a second base. "For Iran, this represents increased vulnerability as Israel demonstrated a capacity to establish a foothold in a neighbouring country — without a secured agreement with the Iraqi government-and dodge detection of its presence for months," she said. "For the Iraqi government, this ultimately creates greater pressure from both Iran and Iran-backed groups operating in the country, forces that had long called for American withdrawal and more aggressive positioning against Israel." Ceng Sagnic, US director of the Jerusalem Center for Security and Foreign Affairs and chief of analysis at the geopolitical consultancy firm TAM-C Solutions, outlined the various reasons Israel required FOBs in Iraq. Israel's large-scale air campaign with the US, which saw a staggering 250 Israeli jets surging into Iranian airspace on the war's first day, necessitated an "immense level of support operations". And Israel, unlike the US, doesn't have any known access to regional bases, including American ones. Also speaking before the NYT report on Sunday, Sagnic told TNA that it was unlikely Israel established only one makeshift FOB for the Iran war, adding that it

might've been the only one subsequently dismantled, "which is why we know about it".

Kristin Ronzi, a Middle East and North Africa analyst at the risk intelligence company RANE, outlined how the location of these bases "provided significant secrecy and facilitated covert operations" due to their "remoteness and distance" from cities. Furthermore, "Israeli airstrikes provided cover and helped conceal" them, she told TNA.

Nothing to see here

After the WSJ report, Baghdad scrambled to save face, launching a publicised operation in the area with the unobtrusive codename "Imposing Sovereignty". On May 12, Iraqi Army Chief of Staff General Abdul Amir Rashid Yarallah visited the area of the first base with a senior military delegation. "Iraqi officials have tried to downplay the reports because the situation puts Baghdad in a diplomatic predicament as it balances ties between the US and Iran," Ronzi told TNA. "Furthermore, the establishment of an Israeli military base within Iraqi territory is a significant embarrassment for Iraqi security forces and exposes their vulnerabilities," he added. "Yarallah's military delegation is likely a way to demonstrate the military's presence in the area, further downplay these reports and try to move past this." Rose similarly assessed that Yarallah's delegation was a way to "reassert Iraqi control and insight into local security conditions". "This represented a key blind spot for the Iraqi federal government and a key point of contention both with Iran and Iran-aligned groups within the Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF) — a network that the US is putting pressure on Baghdad to disempower and disassemble," she said. "By sending a security detail to investigate local developments, Baghdad is seeking to reassert the image that it is in the driver's seat." Ronzi expects that US knowledge of the

Israeli presence could "further entrench pro-Iranian factions' political positions" in Iraq, shifting them further towards Iran. Additionally, it simultaneously "risks emboldening" Iraqi nationalists to push for reduced US-Iraq relations.

"Even so, there will likely still be pragmatic Shiite factions and other minority groups that do not want to risk a diplomatic confrontation with the US, especially since the US holds significant economic and security leverage over Iraq," she said.

"Even though the incident will likely anger Iraqi factions across the political spectrum, many will still want a more pragmatic approach to dealing with it, likely through more rhetorical and symbolic means, if publicly addressed."

The US troop presence in Iraq, now confined to the autonomous Kurdistan Region, has been authorised by Baghdad since the US returned to Iraq in 2014 to help combat the Islamic State (IS). Conversely, Iraq never had diplomatic relations with Israel and would never authorise any Israeli military presence.

"With no Status of Forces Agreement or any sort of arrangement for an Israeli military installation — whether permanent or temporary — in Iraq, this does represent a breach of Iraqi sovereignty, though it is not the first time that Iraq has been used for operations against Iran," Caroline Rose said. Sagnic views this as part of the central Iraqi government's general inability to control "vast patches of its territory" and lack of capacity to establish such control anytime soon.

Israel wouldn't have serious difficulty exploiting this vacuum, secure in the knowledge that the Iraqi government was unlikely to "have even gathered information about the existence" of FOBs on its soil.

Historically unprecedented

Ronzi noted that while Israel has conducted operations in Iraq before, this incident was truly unprecedented. Establishing military bases within federal



↑ Iraqi Army Chief of Staff General Abdul Amir Rashid Yarallah (L) boards a helicopter during an operation in the desert southwest of Najaf, Iraq. ● IRAQI MINISTRY OF DEFENSE



US knowledge of the Israeli presence could "further entrench pro-Iranian factions' political positions" in Iraq, shifting them further towards Iran. Additionally, it simultaneously "risks emboldening" Iraqi nationalists to push for reduced US-Iraq relations.

↓ Iraqi Army forces launch an investigative operation in the Nukhaib desert, southwest of Karbala and Najaf, Iraq, on May 17, 2026, after reports of an unauthorized Israeli military presence in the area. ● ALI JABAR/AP

Iraqi territory and "seemingly without the Iraqi government's knowledge" represents a "brazen breach" of Iraqi sovereignty.

"Previous incidents of Israeli violations of Iraqi sovereignty, in addition to this latest one, indicate Israel's capability to operate within Iraqi territory," Ronzi said.

Sagnic argued that it's fair to say that "technically," the incident represents the "only documented operational Israeli military presence" on Iraqi soil.

"Other than limited-scale and advisory roles played by different Israeli agencies and the military in support of the Kurds in the 1970s, and of course the air strikes since the 1960s, no other documented operational military presence or activity of Israel was reported from Iraq," he said.

Israel was long known to have destroyed Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor in Baghdad in a historic June 1981 air strike. Much more recently, it's widely believed to have carried out strikes against Iraqi groups-related targets in 2019.

Scapegoating Sudani

"The accusations against Sudani are likely in part because he was the caretaker prime minister at the time of the incident and amid speculation that the Iraqi government was complicit in US efforts to conceal the base," Ronzi said.

"But there is also a degree of Sudani's political rivals capitalising on the speculation and ongoing accusations to place the blame for the incident not just on him but also on his allies in the national security and intelligence communities."

Sagnic reiterated that the Iraqi state system is "far from any position" to "weigh itself" against regional rivals, with its strength instead assessed through internal power rifts with the Kurdistan Regional Government and little else.

Consequently, no one in the central government "reasonably expects intact sovereignty," with the flagrant Israeli breaches treated as "yet another political tool" mainly for domestic consumption.

"The revealed Israeli operation inside Iraq is also likely to be used in that same local power struggle, with accusations traded among rival figures as if anyone could have detected that base, let alone stopped it," Sagnic said. Yarallah's visit and accusations against Sudani should be "read in that context" as well.

"The revelation is therefore unlikely to have a broader impact on Iraq-US relations, or even Iran-US relations," Sagnic added.

"Inside Iraq, it will simply add another line item to the long list of political disputes among rival factions."

RANE's Ronzi anticipates that Iraqi security forces will "increase their presence" in more remote parts of the country and conduct "internal investigations into Iraq's national security and intelligence services," although the Iraqi government will "likely continue to downplay" the whole affair.

She concluded by predicting that while political rivals will likely capitalise on these revelations to some extent, "over time, it will likely largely blow over".

The article first appeared on The New Arab.

CAVA Women's Volleyball Championship: Iran's golden girls defeat Kazakhstan to defend title



Shabnam Alikhani holds aloft the trophy as Iranian players and coaching staff pose with their gold medals at the CAVA Women's Volleyball Championship in Kathmandu, Nepal, on May 29, 2026.

● CAVA

Sports Desk

Iran secured back-to-back crowns at the CAVA Women's Volleyball Championship thanks to a 3-1 (25-18, 19-25, 25-15, 25-21) victory over Kazakhstan in Friday's final showpiece at the NSC Indoor Hall in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Outside-hitter Fatemeh Khalili, who went on to pick up the tournament's Most Valuable Player prize for the second year in a row, led the scoring for Iran with 15 points, while opposite spiker Elaheh Poursaleh (14) and middle blocker Reihaneh Karimi (11) also finished in double figures as Iran capped off the event with a perfect 5-0 record, moving up to 41st in the latest FIVB Women's Rankings – eighth in Asia.

Kazakhstan's Tatyana Yatskiy, meanwhile, chipped in a game-high 17 points, with Kristina Belova and Zhanna Syroyeshkina adding 14 and 11, respectively.

Stepping into the tournament on the back of a historic feat in the

previous edition – which delivered Iran's maiden international gold medal since the women's national team program was launched in 1963 – South Korean head coach Lee Do-hee's team dominated in Kathmandu, routing Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Kazakhstan to top the pool table before beating the host in the semifinals, not conceding a single set in the process.

Iran's dominance was further reflected in the individual awards, as Khalili was also named the Best Outside Hitter – alongside Kazakhstan's Kristina Belova – while Poursaleh and team captain Shabnam Alikhani received the Best Opposite and Setter prizes, respectively. India's Shilpa Rajendran Nair Sindhu and Kazakhstan's Yuliya Fomenko were selected as the Best Middle Blockers, while India's Sathi Das earned Best Libero honors.

Earlier in the day, India beat Nepal 3-1 (25-22, 25-23, 15-25, 25-22) to finish with the bronze medal, with

the host nation, Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Bangladesh in the following spots.

The Iranian girls, who have been away from the country since April 21 for an unprecedented preparatory program ahead of a congested international calendar, will look to build on the CAVA glory when they get their Pool B campaign underway at the AVC Women's Nations Cup against Indonesia in Candon, Philippines, on Saturday.

Iran played Indonesia twice in last year's edition, winning a five-set thriller in the pool phase but suffering a 3-1 setback in the classification match to settle for a sixth-place finish. Lee's side will follow the opener with games against Hong Kong, Kazakhstan, and defending champion Vietnam, before taking on Lebanon on the final day of the group stage on June 12. The top two in the group table will progress to the semifinals, with the final showpiece to be staged at the Candon City Arena on June 14.

Wrestling U17 Asian Championships: Iran marches to Greco-Roman crown

Sports Desk

Iran was in a league of its own in the Greco-Roman competition at the U17 Asian Championships, collecting eight medals – including six golds – across 10 weight classes to lift the team trophy in Da Nang, Vietnam, on Friday.

The remarkable medal haul saw Iran dominate the standings with 205 points, while Kyrgyzstan edged Uzbekistan for the runner-up spot despite both countries finishing on 161 points.

The final day of the Greco-Roman event, however, was hardly one to remember for the Iranian squad, which missed out on gold in the remaining three weight classes.

Esmaeil Zaherdoust had to settle for silver in the 71kg division after suffering a 9-0 superiority defeat to Baeli Nuraliev in the final, while Mahdi Gholamian defeated Kazakhstan's Alinur Toleugali by fall to claim a bronze medal in the 80kg category.

Hamed Dehqanzadeh, meanwhile, was one of two Iranians – alongside Ahmad Badraddini (51kg) – to finish the tournament empty-handed after a 9-0 defeat to China's Yunqi Chu in the 65kg bronze-medal bout.

Friday's results came after Iran had captured six gold medals in seven weight classes on the opening day of the Greco-Roman competition.

Ali-Akbar Akoo capped the glorious day for the country by defeating Kazakhstan's Arystan Temergali 8-1 in the 110kg final.

Armin Esmaeil opened Iran's account with an 8-2 victory over Uzbekistan's Tokhirjon Karimov in the 45kg final, while another Iran-Uzbekistan showdown saw Ali Esmaeili beat Javokhir Sharifboev 4-1 to claim the 48kg title.

Vahid Ashiri secured the 55kg gold medal with a 3-1 victory over Kyrgyzstan's Syimyk Askarov.

Amirreza Tahmasbpour stormed to the 60kg title, recording three victories without conceding a single point – including two by superiority – on his way to

the final before dispatching Kyrgyzstan's Baeli Zhamaulinov 9-0.

Amirreza Mehri also finished on a high in the 92kg category, rounding off his campaign with a 3-1 victory over South Korea's Jongyeon Na.

Freestyle flyer

The Iranian freestyle team, meanwhile, got off to a flying start on Saturday, claiming two medals – including the 80kg gold – across the opening three weight classes.

Amirali Ferasati secured the title in style by routing India's Mandeep Mandeep 10-0 in the final, recording his third superiority victory in four matches.



Iranian wrestlers and coaching staff pose with the Greco-Roman team trophy at the U17 Asian Championships in Da Nang, Vietnam, on May 29, 2026.

● IAWFIR

Amir-Abbas Lotfinejad bounced back from a 4-3 semifinal defeat to eventual champion Rihito Hiura by

beating Kyrgyzstan's Khanatemir Ismanov 5-2 to earn bronze in the 65kg division.

Kiarash Torabi suffered an

early exit in the 71kg category, falling 2-1 to Tajikistan's Idris Bakhromov in the second round.

Asian U20 Athletics Championships: Shahpari wins silver in 3000m steeplechase

Sports Desk

Iran's Hanieh Shahpari claimed the country's second women's silver medal at the Asian U20 Athletics Championships on Friday, finishing runner-up in the 3000m steeplechase in Hong Kong, China.

The Iranian athlete clocked a personal-best 10:26.34, shattering the senior national record of 10:29.24, which she had previously set, to finish behind Japan's Rei Taya, who crossed the line in 10:22.52.

Uzbekistan's Sadafbonu Nusratilloeva also produced a personal-best performance, taking bronze in 10:37.32.



Hanieh Shahpari celebrates with the Iranian flag after winning the women's 3000m steeplechase silver medal at the Asian U20 Athletics Championships in Hong Kong, China, on May 29, 2026.

● iranathletics.ir

Shahpari's silver medal, which secured her a place at the World Athletics U20 Championships in Eugene, Oregon, in August, came

after Maryam Ahmadi had also won silver in the women's 1500m on the opening day of the competition.

Ahmadi finished in a

personal-best 4:33.35, behind Sri Lanka's Dilki Nehara, who won gold in 4:31.41. South Korea's Song Dawon took bronze with a time of 4:35.42.

Iran rallies past Gambia in pre-World Cup friendly

Sports Desk

Iran came from behind to beat The Gambia 3-1 in a friendly in Antalya, Türkiye, on Friday ahead of the FIFA World Cup, which will be co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico from June 11.

Center-back Omar Colley gave the West African side – ranked 116th in the latest FIFA Men's World Ranking – the lead, tapping in from close range in the 42nd minute, only for his strike to be canceled out by young full-back Aria Yousefi two minutes after the restart.

Amir Qalenoee's men built on their second-half momentum to go ahead through Ramin Rezaeian's superb strike from the edge of the box just before the hour mark, before

skipper Mahdi Taremi netted his 58th international goal with a left-footed effort from a tight angle in the 68th minute.

Iran will open its World Cup campaign against New Zealand in Inglewood, California, on June 15 before facing European heavyweight Belgium at the same venue six days later.

The team will then travel to Seattle, Washington, to take on Egypt in its final group-stage fixture at Lumen Field on June 26.

With eight third-placed teams from the 12 groups advancing to the round of 32, Iran will fancy its chances of securing a first-ever place in the knockout stage at the seventh attempt.

Iranian defender Ali Nemati (R) is seen in action with Gambia's Salieu Drammeh during a friendly game at Mardan Sports Complex, Antalya, Türkiye, on May 29, 2026.

● UMIT BEKTAS/REUTERS



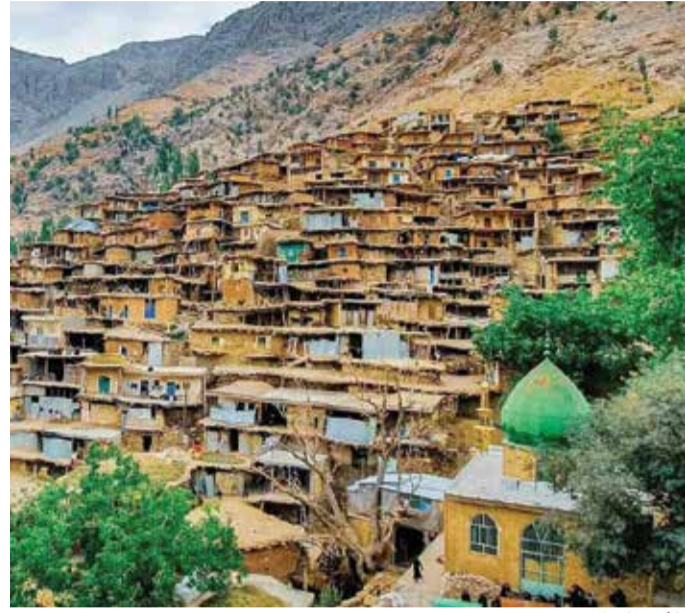
Sar Aqa Seyyed village considered for national tourism project

Iranica Desk

The historic stepped village of Sar Aqa Seyyed in Kuhrang, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province, is being considered for designation as a national tourism project due to its distinctive architecture, historic fabric and exceptional natural and tourism potential, a senior cultural heritage official said. Farhad Azizi, Director General of National and World Heritage Sites at Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, made the remarks during a visit to tourism attractions in Kuhrang, according to [chtn.ir](#). "Kuhrang boasts unique landscapes and exceptional tourism potential," Azizi said, according to [chtn.ir](#). He noted that the main focus of the visit was Sar Aqa Seyyed village, where discussions were held on strategies for the pres-

ervation, development and sustainable use of the village's cultural and tourism assets. According to Azizi, officials reviewed ways to utilize local and provincial resources, as well as national financial support, to designate Sar Aqa Seyyed village as a national tourism project. He highlighted the village's distinctive architectural features and well-preserved historic fabric as key factors supporting the proposal. "Sar Aqa Seyyed is among the country's most significant and valuable villages," he said, adding that its development requires a precise, expert-driven plan based on a clear implementation framework. Azizi stressed that the objective is to leverage the capacities of Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province, Kuhrang and national support mechanisms to facilitate the village's recognition as

a national project. He added that preserving Sar Aqa Seyyed's architectural and historical heritage, while improving residents' quality of life and providing essential infrastructure, are among the initiative's top priorities. The official emphasized that, through cooperation among relevant institutions and provincial authorities, efforts will focus on overcoming existing challenges and taking effective steps toward the sustainable development of Sar Aqa Seyyed and the expansion of its tourism sector. The picturesque village of Sar Aqa Seyyed is one of the most captivating natural attractions in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province, nestled amidst the verdant Zagros Mountains. The stepped architecture, authentic traditional clothing, and customs of the rural inhabitants, along with



● [virgoolio](#)

its unspoiled and awe-inspiring natural surroundings, are some of the village's outstand-

ing features. In recent years, owing to the growing interest from nature enthusiasts, the

village has gained recognition, with even foreign tourists making their way to this area. With its limited amenities, this village is an ideal destination for those seeking tranquility in secluded rural areas. During the colder seasons, the village's population dwindles, while in warmer times, it sees an influx of tourists. Despite the area's potential for tourism, the residents lead traditional lives due to the limited facilities. According to archaeologists, Sar Aqa Seyyed village, like many others nestled in the mountains, served as one of the earliest human settlements, dating back thousands of years. Presently, the only historical record available for the village is a genealogy of the Imamzadeh buried there, indicating that a person named Isa and his relatives lived in this village over 600 years ago.

New bronze museum planned in Lorestan Province

Iranica Desk



● [chtn.ir](#)

The head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization of Lorestan Province has emphasized the historical and cultural significance of the renowned Lorestan bronzes, saying that the establishment of a dedicated bronze museum in the province would make it a unique museum in western Iran. Ata Hassanpour stated that, once completed and inaugurated, the museum is expected to become the leading museum in western Iran, showcasing the region's rich archaeological heritage, [ISNA](#) wrote. He noted that the cultural

sphere associated with the Lorestan bronzes extended beyond present-day Lorestan Province to include parts of what are now Hamadan, Ilam and Kermanshah provinces. This broad geographical distribution, he said, reflects the origins of the bronze artifacts in the Central Zagros region. Hassanpour pointed to two major archaeological sites — Sorkh Dom-e Lori in Kuhdasht and Sangtarashan in Khorramabad — as key evidence supporting the region's status as the birthplace of the celebrated bronzes. Archaeological excavations conducted before and after the 1979 Islamic Revolution uncovered approximately 2,000 bronze

objects from these sites. According to Hassanpour, the artifacts originated from two prehistoric temples dating back around 3,000 years. He emphasized that a particularly significant aspect of the discoveries is that the bronzes were recovered directly from their original archaeological layers and are preserved in the region where they were found — a rare circumstance in Iran that adds considerable value to both the artifacts and the proposed museum. The official also highlighted the presence of copper and tin deposits in the mountains of Lorestan. These minerals were the primary raw materials used in bronze pro-

duction, providing further evidence of the region's longstanding role as a center of bronze craftsmanship. Hassanpour expressed hope that the establishment of the bronze museum would help the province gain greater recognition for its cultural and historical heritage and strengthen its position as a major cultural and tourism destination in western Iran. He added that the project would represent a significant cultural achievement not only for Lorestan Province but for the entire western region of the country, with the potential to become one of Iran's leading centers for heritage tourism and archaeological research.

Mysteries surround 1,500-year-old Zij-e Manijeh

Iranica Desk

Roughly 15 kilometers before the ancient city of Sarpol-e Zahab, Kermanshah Province, just below a mountain pass that appears to embrace the sky and overlooks what seems like a paradise-like landscape, lies a village that has for centuries hosted a mysterious and enigmatic historical structure at its heart. Locals in the region each recount different legends and romantic tales about this monument. Some say that when Farhad fell deeply in love with Shirin and began carving through Mount Bisotoun to reach her, his rival Khosrow Parviz, enraged by the love story, had Farhad killed and later exiled Shirin to a palace near Sarpol-e Zahab — believed by some to be this very structure, which has now become a historical monument. However, the name of the monument somewhat distances it from the tale of Shirin and Farhad. The site is known today as Zij-e Manijeh, and for this reason some locals associate it with another romantic narrative — the tragic story of Bijan and Manijeh from the *Shahnameh*. According to this version, the site is believed to have been the place where Manijeh stayed for

a time after Bijan, son of Giv, was rescued from a deep and dark pit in which Afrasiab, the Turanian king and Manijeh's father, had imprisoned him, until he was saved by the hero Rostam.

Taq-e Gara, and a historical spring, has led some researchers to suggest that the site may once have functioned as a caravanserai. Regardless of the various interpretations, what is clear is the

multiple corridors. In its eastern and western sections, there are several rooms, though the original number remains unclear. Some believe there were once around 30 rooms on each side, while today only about

13 to 14 remain intact. Located along the Kermanshah-Sarpol-e Zahab road in a strategically important area surrounded by other historical remains, the monument stands as a magnificent Sassanid structure that has endured for more than a millennium and a half, overlooking the changing fortunes of the region. One of the reasons this site is considered significant among the province's historical heritage is its remarkable state of

preservation. Despite being over 1,500 years old, it remains one of the best-preserved Sassanid-era structures still standing. Even the 2017 earthquake in Sarpol-e Zahab, which caused widespread destruction in the region, did not damage the monument, further highlighting its structural strength. Given its favorable condition and the presence of scenic mountain passes and other historical sites in the surrounding area, the monument has strong potential to become a major tourist attraction in the province. In past years, proposals were even made to develop it into a Sassanid-style hotel through private investment, but the plan was never realized, leaving the site largely overlooked. The head of the Sarpol-e Zahab Cultural Heritage Department also believes that Zij-e Manijeh could play a greater role in regional tourism, although he emphasizes that the best use for the site would be its conversion into an eco-tourism accommodation facility. He notes that achieving this requires the development of infrastructure to attract investors. Mozafar Gholami said that parts of the site were turned into a garden before the victory of the Islamic Revolution and stressed the need to acquire and integrate these areas into the monument, which would require substantial funding. He added that due to the monument's age and the gradual deterioration of some sections over time, restoration work has been carried out in several phases, although funding has been limited and insufficient, underscoring the need for greater financial allocation. Gholami further noted that Zij-e Manijeh is an important yet relatively unknown Sassanid monument in Iran, registered on the National Heritage List in 2005, and that with proper investment it could become a major tourism hub in western Iran.



Although these two stories remain local oral traditions, others argue that the word "Zij" refers to an astronomical table or observatory, suggesting that the structure may have functioned as a Sassanid-era observatory around 1,500 years ago. However, the building's unique architecture makes this claim difficult to verify. The presence of an ancient paved road nearby, along with another mysterious and still-unexplained structure known as

monument's distinctive architecture — including entrances, arches, dome-like ceilings, and construction materials consisting of rubble stone and gypsum mortar — all of which suggest that the site was likely a large palace or mansion dating back to the Sassanid era, possibly used as a winter residence by kings in this warm region. According to [ISNA](#), Zij-e Manijeh, also called Manijeh Castle, is a large complex featuring a grand hall connected by mul-



● [TASNIM](#)

Mexican prints reframe war, nationhood at Tehran museum

Arts & Culture Desk

The Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMOCA) mounted a rare exhibition of Mexican printmaking that traces the intertwined narratives of war, resistance and national identity, presenting works from its collection as part of its ongoing 'Art & War' series in Tehran. Titled 'Eleven Artworks by Mexican Printmakers,' the exhibition opened on May 23 in the museum's main hall, bringing together 11 works that illuminate how conflict and social upheaval have shaped modern artistic expression.

At the center of the exhibition are two significant prints from the 1920s by renowned Mexican muralists and printmakers David Alfaro Siqueiros and José Clemente Orozco. The works capture the struggles of the Mexican people during a transformative era marked by revolution and political change. They are accompanied by nine contempo-

rary prints that revisit themes of independence, collective memory and social identity through diverse artistic languages.

Crowd interest extends run Museum officials have now extended the exhibition through June 7 following public interest in the showcase.

The extension coincides with a message from Mexican Ambassador to Iran Guillermo Puente Ordorica, who welcomed the exhibition and described Mexican printmaking as a powerful vehicle for artistic expression, social communication and political reflection.

He said the tradition, shaped in the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution, had evolved beyond its aesthetic dimension to convey collective experiences, historical memory and aspirations for social justice.

Ordorica said the exhibition offered visitors an opportunity to engage with a visual tradition that reflects universal themes of

identity, resilience and human dignity. He added that its inclusion in TMOCA's 'Art & War' series fostered dialogue between different artistic traditions on the impact of conflict and crises on human experience.

"I am confident this exhibition will contribute to strengthening cultural understanding between Mexico and Iran and allow the public to appreciate the richness of an artistic tradition deeply connected to Mexico's social history," the envoy said.

The exhibition forms the third chapter of TMOCA's 'Art & War' initiative, which examines the impact of armed conflict on artistic movements and cultural discourse across the world. By revisiting works from its collection through the lens of war, the museum invites viewers to reflect on how twentieth-century artistic schools emerged from periods of upheaval and how those legacies continue to resonate today.

Curators frame the exhibition



Visitors gather in a gallery hallway featuring framed prints and banners during the 'Eleven Artworks by Mexican Printmakers' exhibition at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art in Tehran, which runs from May 23 to June 7, 2026.

● TMOCA

within the broader role of museums as cultural bridges in a fragmented world, echoing this year's International Council of Museums theme, "Museums Unite Worlds." Through the voices of artists from Iran and abroad, the program seeks to underscore shared human experiences amid division and conflict.

The exhibition also highlights the historical significance of Mexican printmaking, often regarded as one of the most accessible and socially engaged forms of visual art. Emerging from the cultural renaissance that followed the Mexican Revolution, artists such as Diego Rivera, Orozco and Siqueiros forged a powerful visual language that



blended modernist influences with Indigenous traditions, shaping generations of politically engaged artists worldwide. Many of the contemporary works on display originate from the celebrated 'Carpeta' portfolio project launched in 2010 by Mexico's National Print Museum to commemorate the bicentenary of the country's independence and the centenary of

its revolution. TMOCA acquired Portfolio No. 22 in 2012, adding a landmark collection of Mexican graphic art to its holdings. Rich in technical innovation and patriotic symbolism, the prints on view reveal how art can transform the scars of history into enduring cultural memory, allowing distant struggles to speak across borders and generations.

Persian art puts down new roots in London

Arts & Culture Desk

The sixth Iranian Contemporary Art Biennial, titled 'With My Roots,' brought together artists from across the global Iranian diaspora at London's Mall Galleries from May 23 to 30, showcasing the growing international reach of Iranian contemporary art in one of the British capital's most prominent cultural venues.

Organized by Capital Art London and inaugurated during a private preview on May 22, the exhibition featured 182 works selected from more than 530 submissions. The final collection represented 127 Iranian artists residing in 17 countries, offering a broad survey of contemporary artistic expression shaped by cultural heritage, personal experience and global engagement, IRNA reported.

Located beside Buckingham Palace on The Mall, the gallery's exhibition spaces were transformed into a vibrant showcase of painting, photography, digital art, installation and video. The biennial sought to highlight artistic voices that move beyond technique alone to explore iden-



tity, memory and the enduring influence of Iranian culture across generations and geographies.

The event attracted a diverse audience of international visitors, collectors, art professionals and members of the Iranian community, underscoring the expanding visibility of Iranian artists on the global cultural stage and their ability to forge cross-border connections through visual storytelling.

A centerpiece of this year's edition was 'Eternal Iran,' a special exhibition dedicated to the richness and continuity of Iranian civilization. The section featured 15 works by acclaimed Iranian miniature master Hossein Ali Machiani, whose paintings reflected the elegance of classical Persian miniature traditions while engaging contemporary audienc-



Sculptures and paintings are displayed during the sixth Iranian contemporary art biennial, titled 'With My Roots,' at the Mall Galleries in London, Britain, May 22-30, 2026, featuring a collection of 182 works by 127 Iranian artists from 17 countries.

● IRNA

es through themes of cultural continuity and artistic authenticity. According to organizers, 305 works advanced to the jury stage before 182 pieces were selected for display. By bringing together emerging talents and internationally recognized practitioners from the United Kingdom, Europe, North America and the Middle East, 'With My Roots' offered a sweeping portrait of contemporary Iranian creativity and opened new avenues for cultural dialogue, artistic exchange and engagement with the global art market.

Minister calls for dynamic new role in heritage research

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri called on Saturday for a sweeping overhaul of the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, urging the institution to prioritize archaeological excavations, future-oriented studies, and policy-driven research during a meeting with its senior managers and academics in Tehran.

Salehi-Amiri said the institute should evolve from a largely archival body into a dynamic center for strategic knowledge production, capable of addressing emerging cultural and tourism challenges while helping shape national policymaking, CHTN reported.

The minister identified systematic archaeological excavations as a key research priority, highlighting the historical and archaeological potential of western and central Iranian



provinces such as Hamedan and Qazvin.

He also called for a dedicated program to document, study, and protect Tehran's cultural heritage, with particular attention to the ancient urban centers of Rey and Varamin and other historically significant sites surrounding the capital.

Salehi-Amiri said Iran possesses more than two million manuscripts, describing the collection as a civilizational treasure that underpins the country's historical memory and scholarly traditions. He also stressed

the importance of preserving Iran's linguistic diversity, saying regional languages and dialects form an integral part of the nation's intangible cultural heritage.

Framing the institute as a cornerstone of Iran's cultural governance system, the minister urged stronger cooperation between its research departments and the ministry's specialized agencies, including the tourism sector, to improve coordination and enhance policy outcomes.

He also emphasized the need to cultivate a new generation of heritage specialists by expanding opportunities for young researchers to work alongside leading scholars and experts.

"The institute must become a reference center for knowledge production, foresight studies and scientific solutions," Salehi-Amiri said, adding that safeguarding Iran's historical memory should go hand in hand with shaping the country's cultural future.

WHO honors Iranian with 2026 tobacco control award

Social Desk

The World Health Organization (WHO) awarded its 2026 World No Tobacco Day prize for the Eastern Mediterranean Region to Abdolhossein Khosropanah, secretary of Iran's Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, recognizing his role in advancing national strategies aimed at preventing tobacco use through cultural and educational policies.

According to an official report released by WHO on Saturday in connection with World No Tobacco Day 2026, Khosropanah was honored for helping steer Iran's tobacco control framework toward preventive and culture-based measures, elevating the issue from a primarily health-related concern to a broader social and educational prior-



ity.

A centerpiece of the initiative was the adoption of a comprehensive national document outlining challenges, strategies, executive responsibilities, and coordinated actions for the cultural and social prevention of tobacco consumption. The framework brought together educational, cultural, and executive institutions under a unified roadmap for the first time.

WHO highlighted several measures associated with the initiative, including the assignment of clear responsibilities to key ministries and public institutions, a stronger focus on prevention in schools and educational environments, and enhanced monitoring mechanisms designed to curb indirect tobacco promotion in cultural products.

The recognition coincides with WHO's 2026 World No Tobacco Day theme, "Unmasking the Appeal: Exposing Industry Tactics on Tobacco and Nicotine Products," which seeks to counter marketing strategies that target young people and promote nicotine addiction.

Behnaz Valizadeh, another prominent figure in Iran's tobacco control efforts, was also recognized for contributions in the field.