



Minab buries remains of 32 children killed in US school carnage

More than 62 body fragments belonging to 32 students martyred in a US airstrike on an Iranian elementary school have been identified through DNA testing and buried, nearly five months after the attack that killed 168 people, most of them children. The remains, recovered during weeks of search operations at the Shajareh Tayyebah School in Minab and surrounding areas, were carried through the streets of Hormozgan Province in a funeral procession Wednesday before burial at the city's martyrs' cemetery, Press TV reported. Grieving parents and other citizens gathered earlier at the site where coffins were prepared to bid a final farewell to what remained of their children. Mojtaba Qahramani, head of Hormozgan's judiciary, said that despite multiple specialized search operations at the school and its environs, no trace has been found of seven-year-old Makan Nasiri, a first-grader who remains the only victim whose body has never been recovered.

Qahramani told the Fars news agency that the US missile struck directly at the location where Makan was standing at the moment of impact. An empty grave has been prepared for Makan, while his personal belongings including a bloodstained sweater and a single sneaker are preserved in a glass display case at a nearby mosque. His parents have spent months searching for any sign of their son. "Where am I supposed to look for my son?" his father asked in an interview earlier this year, his eyes filled with tears. The February 28 strike on the Shajareh Tayyebah School occurred on the first day of the US-Israeli military aggression against Iran and is considered the terrorist war's deadliest attack on civilians. Iranian officials put the death toll at 168, including 120 students and 26 teachers. More than 110 people were wounded. Investigations indicate three precision-strike Tomahawk missiles hit the school. The school



People carry coffins containing the DNA-identified remains of 32 children killed in a US airstrike on Shajareh Tayyebah Elementary School during a funeral procession in Minab, southern Iran, on July 22, 2026, nearly five months after the attack on February 28, 2026. ● ISNA

was struck three separate times. The attack has drawn condemnation from the United Nations and human rights groups. "The families of the little girls who were killed are entitled to the truth of how this happened," Ravina Shamdasani, a UN Human Rights Office spokesperson, said. The 62 fragments buried Wednesday were identified as

belonging to 32 students, according to Minab Governor Mohammad Radmehr. Among them were remains of Amirali Kamali, identified after five months of searching. The recovered fragments had been awaiting DNA identification for weeks before the funeral ceremony. Minab's prosecutor said 73 boys and 47 girls were among the

students killed. The dead also included seven parents who had rushed to the school to retrieve their children after hearing reports of airstrikes on Tehran. The school is set to be registered as a national site in Iran, recognizing its significance as a symbol of sacrifice and resilience. Months after the strike, the Pentagon has refused to complete a standard intelligence review that would establish exactly what happened, according to multiple US officials and media reports. The military completed the first two stages of its assessment within days of the strike, confirming terrorist US forces hit the school. But the final intelligence review, standard pro-

cedure for incidents involving mass civilian casualties, was never ordered. Senior US military commanders reportedly bypassed warnings in critical targeting databases that intelligence on Iranian targets was severely outdated. The decision to ignore the warnings was made for "expediency," as commanders rushed to finalize target lists at the outset of the war. President Donald Trump, in a Fox News interview, said the findings may never be made public. "I don't think anybody is ever going to be able to say what happened there," he said. When pressed on satellite imagery showing fragments of a US Tomahawk missile at the site, Trump suggested the images could be "AI generated." More than two dozen Democratic senators demanded answers, writing that "there is no justification for withholding an unclassified accounting of what happened, what went wrong, and what the Department is doing to prevent recurrence".

UNESCO reaffirms concern over damage to Golestan Palace



Arts & Culture Desk

UNESCO renewed its concern over damage to Tehran's UNESCO-listed Golestan Palace during the 48th session of the World Heritage Committee in Busan, South Korea, reaffirming that protecting cultural heritage during armed conflict is a binding international obligation, Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts said on Wednesday. The discussion brought renewed international attention to the Qajar-era palace, months after UNESCO first reported that blast waves and falling debris had damaged parts of the World Heritage site during military strikes on Iran. While the Busan meeting did not adopt a new resolution on the palace, the organization reiterated its longstanding call for all states to uphold international conventions safeguarding cultural property. "Protecting cultural heritage during armed conflict is a binding obligation under the 1954 Hague Con-

vention and other international legal instruments," UNESCO said, urging all parties to refrain from actions that could endanger sites of outstanding universal value. UNESCO previously reported that blast waves damaged sections of Golestan Palace, including historic stained-glass windows, ornate Orsi lattice windows, mirrorwork, carved wooden doors and parts of several ceremonial halls. Inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2013, Golestan Palace is one of Iran's best-preserved Qajar royal complexes and a landmark that reflects the evolution of Persian architecture and decorative arts during the 19th century. UNESCO said it will continue monitoring the condition of cultural heritage sites in Iran and elsewhere in the region through its international protection mechanisms, underscoring that preserving humanity's shared heritage remains a collective responsibility even in times of conflict.

Minister calls Persian foundation of Iran's national identity

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Culture Minister Abbas Salehi called on state institutions to treat the preservation of the Persian language as a cultural mission rather than a bureaucratic obligation, saying that Persian remains the cornerstone of Iran's national identity and one of the country's most powerful instruments of cultural influence. Salehi, speaking during the first coordination meeting of the Persian Language Preservation Council on Tuesday, said safeguarding Persian required "a greater sense of responsibility" as the language faced mounting pressures from digital technologies, social media and artificial intelligence, while stressing that protecting it was a shared national duty extending beyond the Ministry of Culture, CHTN reported. "We should not regard this responsibility merely as an administrative or legal obligation. It must be seen as a cultural mission," he said. Describing Persian as "the main pillar of our national identity," Salehi said the language had bound together generations of



Iranians for more than a millennium, allowing modern readers to engage directly with masterpieces such as Ferdowsi's 'Shahnameh'. That continuity, he said, has helped preserve Iran's historical memory and strengthen national cohesion among the country's diverse ethnic communities. He also portrayed Persian as a major component of Iran's soft power, saying the language continues to shape cultural ties across Central Asia, Anatolia and

the Indian subcontinent. Recalling his recent visit to Kyrgyzstan for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization culture ministers' meeting, Salehi said he found a striking reminder of that legacy at the Chingiz Aitmatov House Museum, where the celebrated Kyrgyz writer's family genealogy had been written in Persian. "Many countries know Iran through the Persian language before they know it through its natural resources," Salehi said. "One

Iran's Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Abbas Salehi (c) speaks during the first coordination meeting of the Persian Language Preservation Council on July 21, 2026. ● farhang.gov.ir

of Iran's greatest assets in global cultural engagement is the Persian language." The minister also announced that the Ministry of Culture has established a dedicated Office of Persian Literature and Language within its Cultural Affairs Department to strengthen policy coordination and executive work on language preservation. He said the office was created after officials concluded that the ministry lacked an independent structure devoted exclusively to Persian, although its launch was delayed by the Ramadan War. Salehi said the new office, headed by prominent poet Gholamreza Tariqi, would work alongside the Persian Language Preservation Council to reinforce both preventive measures and positive initiatives aimed at promoting the language across Iranian society.

Iran cinema sets four-month attendance record with 116,000 in one day

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian cinemas drew a record 116,095 moviegoers nationwide on July 21, setting the highest single-day attendance of the Iranian year that began on March 21, according to official box office data, as the country's theatrical market extended its post-conflict recovery and sustained a strong upward trend. The new milestone surpassed the previ-

ous 2026 record of 106,000 admissions set on June 2, indicating growing public enthusiasm for theatrical releases and reinforcing the rebound of Iran's cinema industry after the disruption caused by the imposed war, ILNA reported. Online ticketing platform Cinematicket accounted for 81% of all online ticket sales, highlighting the continued shift toward digital ticket purchases. The latest figures marked the busiest

cinema day of the first four months of the current Iranian year, reflecting what industry officials described as broad public welcome for domestic screenings and a strengthening box office performance. Several Iranian productions are currently driving admissions, including 'The Pool', 'The Death Bath', and 'The Underwear', alongside other titles showing across theaters nationwide.

