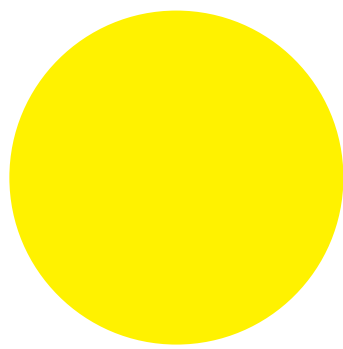


Official warns unapproved alterations could prolong UNESCO bid for Zanzibar Bazaar



Iran says 350 government employees killed during US-Israeli aggression

Oman presents regional mechanism for Strait of Hormuz to Iran: **Report**



Vessels are seen stranded at the Strait of Hormuz off Iran's territory as a man walks on the beach on July 27, 2026.



Tehran, Ashgabat discuss transport, energy deals, form joint committee



Triumph of diplomacy product of timely decision-making



U17 Wrestling World Championships: Iran out to dethrone US, fend off Russia to reclaim freestyle title

Netanyahu faces uphill battle in pushing Trump toward war with Iran

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

As Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu travels to Washington for talks with President Donald Trump, reports have emerged of differences between Israel and the United States over their approach to Iran. While both sides have described the disagreements as minor, the possibility of deeper divisions has also been raised.

Javad Heiran-Nia, an international affairs expert, told Iran Daily that differences do exist but are largely tactical. However, he stressed that the clearer picture provided by the consequences of the 40-day war with the Iran has made it more difficult for Netanyahu to persuade Trump to favor military action over diplomacy.



IRAN DAILY: Are the reported disagreements between Washington

and Tel Aviv part of a media campaign designed to create the impression of a rift between the two allies, or do they reflect genuine and significant differences over their objectives, strategies and approach to the war?

HEIRANNIA: Differences between the United States and Israel, particularly over Iran, have always been a subject of discussion. However, the timing at which such differences emerge must also be taken into account. The issue has resurfaced as Netanyahu prepares to travel to the United States. It has been reported that, during this visit, Netanyahu will seek to persuade Washington to put military options back on the table, including attacks on new targets such as the Kolang mountain. In effect, Netanyahu wants to convince the United States to keep the conflict going. However, if Trump's remarks are taken as the basis for assessment, it appears that the United States is currently giving priority to diplomacy. It has halted its attacks and has concluded that the issue of the Strait of Hormuz cannot be resolved through a military campaign.

Differences between Netanyahu and Trump had also been discussed before the war. At that time, however, there was no clear picture of the consequences and outcomes of an attack or a military campaign, and the potential repercussions could not be assessed with much precision.

As a result, even if differences existed before the war, Netanyahu was able to persuade the United States to launch a military campaign and become involved in the conflict. The situation is different now. There is a much clearer picture of the consequences of the war for the United States, making it less likely than before that Washington will again fall into the trap of Netanyahu's arguments.

The effects and consequences of the 40-day war have become clear, and the continuation of military attacks has failed to achieve the strategic objectives outlined by the United States, whether in terms of bringing about regime change or destroying Iran's missile and nuclear programs. It is now clear that a military campaign is fundamentally incapable of achieving those objectives. Moreover, it could

disrupt energy exports from regional countries and affect not only energy prices but also the prices of related goods.

Therefore, if Trump were to act in line with Netanyahu's objectives, it would impose even greater costs on the United States and its regional allies. This is unlikely to be in the interests of either Trump or the United States.

Thus, differences do exist. Before the war, Netanyahu was able to persuade Trump to launch a large-scale military attack. Under the current circumstances, however, persuading him to do so again will be a far more difficult task.

If a rift does exist, what is the main source of the disagreement? Should it be viewed merely as a tactical difference, or does it point to deeper and more strategic divergences in the two sides' objectives?

The differences are tactical and have always existed over various regional issues, although the United States' approach has generally not been such as to harm Israel's interests. In some cases, tactical disagreements have emerged, with Israel either com-

plying with the US position or, at other times, succeeding in persuading Washington to adopt a more maximalist approach.

It can be said that both sides are aligned in their efforts to confront Iran but differ over the methods they favor. For example, the United States prefers diplomacy, while Israel favors war.

Could a possible divergence in the approaches of the United States and Israel create an opportunity for Iran to raise the costs of continuing the war for the opposing side by strengthening deterrence and pursuing diplomacy?

Yes. This is the key issue. Through deterrence—whether by horizontal escalation, meaning expanding the war across the region and diversifying the targets being struck, or by closing the Strait of Hormuz, which is referred to as vertical escalation—Iran has created a tool of threat and pressure through its ability to damage the global economy, US interests in the region and the interests of Washington's regional allies.

Oman presents regional mechanism for Strait of Hormuz to Iran: *Report*



A small fishing boat sails in the foreground as a commercial vessel is anchored in the Strait of Hormuz in southern Iran on July 27, 2026.

● ISNA

International Desk

Oman has reportedly presented a proposal to Iran for a joint regional mechanism to manage the Strait of Hormuz with voluntary fees. The Omani proposal has regional backing and was presented to Iranian officials over the weekend in Tehran

by an Omani delegation, a Persian Gulf source told Reuters on Tuesday. The proposal is based on the Strait of Malacca, which connects the Indian and Pacific Oceans and is jointly managed by the states bordering it: Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. Under the proposal, those who use the Strait of Hormuz would voluntarily

ly contribute to a fund that finances the cost of managing navigation, environmental protection and search and rescue, among other services. Management of the Strait of Hormuz — which carried a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas before the conflict — has become the main hurdle in talks to bring the US aggression against Iran to an end and a flashpoint for repeated returns to conflict. Iran has said the strait cannot go back to its pre-war status where shipping flowed freely and has drafted a plan to charge environmental fees for vessels transiting the waterway. The United States and its allies say imposing any such charges would violate the principle of freedom of navigation in international waters. Iran, however, maintains that the strait is not international waters but consists of the territorial waters of

Iran and Oman, and says charging fees to transiting vessels is permitted under international law.

Iran shut down the chokepoint to enemies and their allies after February 28, when the US and the Israeli regime began their latest bout of wholesale unprovoked aggression against the Islamic Republic.

It began exercising far stricter controls after US President Donald Trump announced continuation of an illegal naval blockade of Iranian vessels and ports in spite of a ceasefire that the US president, himself, had declared on April 7.

In May, Iran officially launched a new mechanism for governing maritime traffic through the strategic strait, with the Islamic Republic warning vessels against refusing to coordinate their pending transits with Iranian authorities and using routes other than the supervisory management zone defined by Tehran.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi discussed the Strait of Hormuz with his Omani, Saudi and Japanese counterparts on Monday.

"He emphasized the need to strengthen

cooperation and advance joint diplomatic efforts to establish stability in the region, and lift the insecurity imposed on the Strait of Hormuz due to the aggressive actions of the United States," according to Iran's Foreign Ministry statement.

The phone calls were held as tensions escalated in the region due to renewed US acts of aggression and Iran's response to the US attacks.

However, a pause in fighting over the weekend has raised hopes of a diplomatic solution that would allow shipping to resume in the Strait of Hormuz.

Araghchi said on Friday that the current instability in the Strait of Hormuz and the surrounding area is entirely due to the US's violation of its commitments and its disruption of the fulfillment of Iran's responsibilities under Clause 5 of the Pakistan-brokered Memorandum of Understanding.

The US has breached the MoU of June 17 by attempting to conduct unauthorized naval maneuvers in the Strait of Hormuz, prompting the Iranian Navy to intercept the ships to uphold the agreement.

Iran says 350 government employees killed during US-Israeli aggression

National Desk

Iranian government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani said on Tuesday that more than 350 government staff have been killed in US-Israeli attacks since the war began five months ago.

"While meeting with the families of the martyrs, I must remind you that during these days more than 350 government employees have attained martyrdom while serving," Mohajerani told a news conference.

"From the engineer who sacrificed his life on top of BTS towers to maintain people's communications in Hormozgan, to the wiremen who died to keep the electricity flowing, and the dedicated doctors and nurses. Mentioning these loved ones is a tribute to them so they know we consider ourselves indebted to their sacrifice and are grateful for their impeccable efforts."

Iran's Health Ministry



A residential building is damaged as a result of an airstrike by the United States on Iran.

● IRNA

said on Monday that at least 60 people were killed and 670 others were wounded in the latest US strikes on Iran. Mohajerani also gave some details about the damage inflicted to the country's infrastructure during the renewed US strikes on Iran.

"Fishing boats, which were the only source of livelihood and employment for fishermen in the region were severely damaged, in addition to tourism businesses,"

Mohajerani said.

The spokesperson added that 12 bridges and two tunnels were also targeted in the latest US strikes.

She also said the Bushehr airport in southwest Iran has been rendered inoperable following recent US strikes and requires complete reconstruction.

"We saw the remains of a refurbished aircraft that had been purchased to serve the people, but it was destroyed by a mis-

sile that struck it directly, leaving only a small part of its tail intact."

The Bushehr Meteorological Center "which is completely of a civilian nature, has almost nothing left of it," she added. During the escalation, the US struck Iran, while Tehran responded by targeting US military facilities and equipment in several Arab countries. The spokesperson also said Iran lost about 230 million cubic meters of its gas production capacity because of the war with the US and Israel. Iran in April demanded compensation for the destruction caused by US and Israeli attacks. An early estimate indicated it suffered about \$270b in direct and indirect damage since the start of the war on February 28.

No Hormuz passage for those taking payouts from Iran's frozen assets: *Iran*

International Desk

Iran warned countries and international companies that receiving any compensation payment from Iran's assets frozen abroad will mean they will be completely cut off from transit in the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters announced on Tuesday that it views a recent announcement by US President Donald Trump about compensating countries and entities for damage inflicted on their ships in the Persian Gulf from Iran's frozen assets as "illegal".

The command, which is in charge of coordinating Iranian armed forces during war and crisis times, said ship owners will face consequences if they receive such compensation.

"...we declare to all companies and countries that welcome Trump's proposal and use Iran's blocked assets under this pretext, that from now on, the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran will not allow any of their vessels to transit through the Strait of Hormuz," said the statement. It added that the damage caused to cargo ships and tankers in recent months has been a result of the insecurity caused by the US military in the region.

It also said that ships that have suffered damage have violated navigation protocols announced by Iran for safe sailing in the Strait of Hormuz and have chosen to travel "through the illegal and unsafe route" south of the Strait.

Iran has imposed strict controls on transit through Hormuz since the early days of the US-Israeli aggression on the country on February 28.

Iran agreed to gradually ease the restrictions under a memorandum of understanding signed with the US last month that sought to permanently end the aggression and lift sanctions from the country.

However, passage through Hormuz came under renewed checks and controls after the US failed to uphold those terms of the understanding that exclusively delegated the responsibility for controlling the strait to Iran.

The Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters also in an earlier statement warned the United States that threats against Iranian commercial vessels and oil tankers will not go unanswered, as Washington persists in its war of aggression and attempts to impose an illegal naval blockade on the Islamic Republic.

It noted that over the past days, Ameri-



can forces have threatened Iranian ships operating in the country's coastal and territorial waters as part of their unlawful efforts to enforce a maritime siege against Iran.

"This action by the United States is regarded as the expansion of war in the region," the statement stressed. "Just as the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran have proven on the battlefield, they will not leave any threat or act of evil by the terrorist army of that country unanswered and will confront it decisively."

The headquarters reaffirmed Iran's unwavering determination to defend its sovereignty and maritime rights against foreign provocations.

The Islamic Republic has repeatedly demonstrated its capability and resolve to protect national interests and respond appropriately to aggression, ensuring that regional stability cannot be undermined by external powers seeking confrontation.

This latest warning comes as the US continues its pressure tactics against Iran through illegal means, which Tehran has consistently rejected as clear violations of international law and a direct threat to peace and security in West Asia.

Iran and the US signed the memorandum of understanding last month to end the cycle arising from the latest bout of unprovoked American-Israeli aggression against the Islamic Republic, which had begun on February 28.

Under the understanding, Iran agreed to allow fee-free maritime transit through the strait for a period of 60 days.

In compliance with the MoU, the Islamic Republic devised a special maritime route for vessels to cross the chokepoint, while warning against transit through illegal routes.

The US has, however, been trying to escort transit through the strait along an illegal passageway, prompting the Islamic Republic to shut the corridor until Washington ended its interference in regional maritime movement.

Netanyahu faces uphill ...

This leverage remains relevant and effective at the current stage. It factors into US calculations and affects the way Washington considers potential attacks and defines the targets it may strike.

This appears to be the most important factor in the current wartime equation. The reason the United States appears to prioritize diplomacy over Israel's preferred approach is precisely Iran's deterrent capability, its ability to regionalize the conflict, and the issue of the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait which could also be added to this equation.

How do you assess the upcoming meeting between Netanyahu and Trump? Are the two sides seeking to narrow their differences and reach a common position on how to proceed with their approach towards Iran?

Trump's remarks ahead of the visit—that the United States will not become more deeply involved in a war with Iran on the basis of Israeli intelligence—indicate that he prefers diplomacy.

The visit may therefore carry a risk for Netanyahu: rather than Israel persuading the United States to adopt its preferred course, Washington may seek to impose its own demands on Israel.

Given Trump's remarks, the current regional atmosphere and the efforts being made by regional countries—including Oman's new initiative to manage the Strait of Hormuz in coordination with Iran, which some sources have said has shown initial signs of success and has been welcomed by countries including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates—it appears that diplomacy and a negotiated settlement are the preferred options. Netanyahu is unlikely to be able to persuade Trump, through the intelligence he is expected to provide, to launch an all-out war or enter into a full-scale conflict with Iran.

Tehran, Ashgabat discuss transport, energy deals, form joint committee



Economy Desk

Iranian Roads and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sadeq on Tuesday discussed implementing bilateral agreements with Turkmenistan in transport, energy, gas, electricity and infrastructure development during meetings with senior Turkmen officials, while the two sides agreed to establish a joint committee to follow up on the deals, IRNA reported on Tuesday. During her visit to Ashgabat, Sadeq met Turkmen President Serdar Berdimuhamedov, Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov, Transport Minister Mammetkhan Chakyev and the Turkmen co-chair of the two countries' Joint Economic Cooperation Commission. "The meetings reviewed issues including improving the

quality and capacity of transport fleets, developing infrastructure across all transport sectors, as well as matters related to energy, gas and electricity."

She said the two sides also agreed to establish a committee under the Joint Economic Cooperation Commission to follow up on the issues discussed and facilitate their implementation.

Separately, Turkmenistan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that Berdimuhamedov and Sadeq reaffirmed their commitment to the continued development of constructive relations between the two neighboring countries.

According to the statement, Berdimuhamedov described Sadeq's meetings with Turkmen officials as an important step toward the further development of bilateral ties.

The ministry said the two sides noted that dialogue between Tehran and Ashgabat was developing on the basis of mutual respect and understanding, both bilaterally and within international organi-

zations, including the United Nations.

It added that the two countries emphasized the importance of trade and economic relations and highlighted the key role of the Joint Intergovernmental Economic Cooperation Commission in expanding bilateral cooperation and advancing implementation of agreements reached at the highest levels.

In a separate meeting, Sadeq and Turkmen Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov, who co-chair the Joint Economic Cooperation Commission, reviewed the current state and prospects of bilateral cooperation as well as cooperation within international organizations, particularly the United Nations, Iran's Roads and Urban Development Ministry said.

The two sides also discussed trade and economic issues, exchanged views on strengthening the role of the commission, and reaffirmed their commitment to expanding cooperation in all areas of mutual interest, the ministry said.

Iranian Roads and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sadeq (L) and Turkmen Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov pose for a photo after their meeting in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, on July 28, 2026.
● IRNA

Top copper firm holds one-fifth of world's projects under construction

Iran ranks first globally in 'committed' copper development capacity



Economy Desk

Iran's National Iranian Copper Industries Company (NICICO) holds 10 of the world's 51 copper development projects currently under construction, the highest number of any company globally, a senior executive said, adding that all of Iran's projects are classified at the highest investment confidence level.

According to the latest assessment, the global copper industry has 51 development projects under construction in 2026 with a combined capacity of 7 million metric tons of contained copper, of which 10 projects belong to NICICO, Gholamreza Molataheri, the company's deputy for strategic planning and development, said at the company's recent extraordinary general meeting.

614,000 tons copper capacity by 2030

Molataheri said NICICO accounted for 9% of the world's copper development capacity.

"Iran, with 614,000 metric tons of copper mine development capacity by 2030, ranks third globally in cop-

per development project capacity after Chile and Peru," he said.

"However, all of Iran's development projects are classified at the highest investment confidence level, 'Committed,' placing the country first in the world in terms of committed copper development project capacity."

"Between 2026 and 2030, the National Iranian Copper Industries Company plans to implement 10 committed projects, which will add 2.723 million metric tons of concentrate production capacity and 614,000 metric tons of contained copper production capacity to the country's output upon completion."

More than 5.6b euros in development contracts

Molataheri said NICICO currently had more than 5.6 billion euros in development contracts under implementation.

"About 189 million euros worth of these projects came on stream last year, while the remaining projects will be completed and gradually brought into production this year and in the coming years," he said.

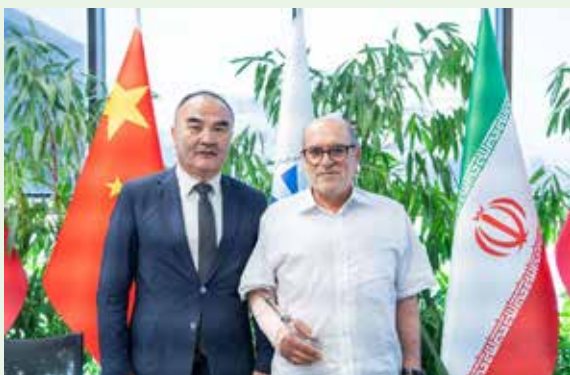
Iran-China chambers agree on joint trade, logistics centers

Energy Desk

The Tehran Chamber of Commerce and China's Khorgos International Chamber of Commerce agreed to expand trade and logistics cooperation and establish joint business initiatives during the opening of the Chinese chamber's representative office in Tehran, officials said on Tuesday.

The agreements, announced at the ceremony, include establishing a joint trade center, opening business service centers in Iran and China, creating a joint logistics service center, launching a shared business information platform and setting up a permanent exhibition of Iranian products in the Khorgos Free Trade Zone. The opening of the representative office followed meetings between a Khorgos trade delegation, led by Khorgos International Chamber of Commerce President Ma Fuming, and Iranian businesses in the transport and logistics, e-commerce and dried fruit sectors, as well as customs officials, according to IRNA.

During the meetings, the two sides reviewed progress in implementing previous agreements. The two business chambers have recently called for greater use of the Khorgos dry port in China's Xinjiang region, on the border with Kazakhstan, to strengthen Iran's role in international transport corridors.



'An important step'

Ma described the establishment of the representative office and a joint trade center between the two chambers as an important step toward expanding economic cooperation and facilitating bilateral trade.

"Experts based at this office will provide Chinese companies with services including tax and legal consulting, customs clearance assistance and other trade-related services," Ma said.

"In the next phase, the Khorgos International Chamber of Commerce will open an office in Khorgos for the Tehran Chamber of Commerce to provide Iranian companies with services including trade settlement, transport, customs, taxation, laws and regulations, and other support needed to facilitate cross-border trade and economic cooperation."

Ma said the delegation's talks with Iranian business representatives had resulted in several agreements to expand cooper-

ation, including establishing a joint trade center and business service centers in both countries.

"Another agreement is to establish a joint logistics service center to provide the infrastructure needed for transport and logistics projects between the two countries," he said.

"In addition, both sides also agreed to establish a shared information platform to give Iranian and Chinese companies direct access to regulations, business opportunities and other information needed for economic cooperation."

Khorgos tax, logistics advantages

Tehran Chamber of Commerce President Mahmoud Najafi Arab said the chamber had long sought to develop alternative trade routes and complete international trade corridors, adding that expanding cooperation with the Khorgos Free Trade Zone, jointly developed by China and Kazakhstan, had become part of that strategy.

Tehran Chamber of Commerce President Mahmoud Najafi Arab (R) and Khorgos International Chamber of Commerce President Ma Fuming pose for a photo following a meeting in Tehran on July 28, 2026.
● IRNA

"Because of its strategic location, Khorgos has significant potential to expand Iran's trade with China and other countries in the region," Najafi Arab said.

"In addition to its road and rail transport infrastructure, the zone offers incentives such as a 20-year tax exemption for industrial investment, which can provide valuable opportunities for Iranian businesses."

Najafi Arab said a significant share of Iran's exports to China was shipped in bulk.

"Establishing packaging and processing facilities in Khorgos can increase the added value of Iranian products and facilitate their distribution to northern and central China," he said.

"With access to both rail and road networks, Khorgos offers an efficient route for Iranian exports to China and imports from China."

He added that another key agreement was to establish a permanent exhibition of Iranian products in the Khorgos Free Trade Zone to enable Iranian producers to showcase and market their goods continuously in China.

Triumph of diplomacy product of **timely** decision-making

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

Following the 40-day war, and the violation of the memorandum of understanding by the United States, indications of escalating regional tensions have emerged in recent days; a trend that has strengthened the possibility that confrontations between Iran and the United States, particularly in southern Iran and the Strait of Hormuz, may enter a broader phase.

In such an atmosphere, two approaches have, more than before, become prominent in political and expert circles. One perspective holds that Iran should, by relying upon its operational capacities, consolidate its achievements and, through increasing pressure upon the opposing side, create the conditions necessary for securing its rights and interests. Conversely, another perspective maintains that, under present circumstances, priority should be accorded to transforming operational achievements into political and diplomatic outcomes, and likewise to preventing the imposition of further costs arising from the continuation of tensions and confrontations. Within this framework, Mohammad Reza Dehshiri, dean of the Faculty of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in an exclusive interview with Iran Newspaper, emphasizing that "the field and diplomacy are two sides of the same coin," stressed that success in foreign policy is realized when harmony and synergy exist among operational, diplomatic, media, and public-opinion capacities. He likewise underscored the importance of the temporal element in diplomacy, stating that the proper management of time in negotiations plays a decisive role in capitalizing upon operational achievements, and that any delay or rashness may affect those achievements.

Mohammad Reza Dehshiri



An Iranian man carrying flatbreads walks past an anti-US mural featuring Iran-US talks, next to the former US embassy in Tehran on February 26, 2026.
● AFP

IRAN: With the commencement of the 40-day war, and the establishment of a ceasefire, as well as the tensions that emerged following the violation of commitments and understandings by the United States, it became evident that today the field and military power have become the most important instruments in determining equations. This is despite the fact that Iran, in the course of recent military tensions, has succeeded in creating a deterrent and costly balance for the United States in the region. What is your assessment of these conditions?

DEHSHIRI: In my view, the field and diplomacy exist not in opposition, but in interaction and synergy with one another. The field is the support of diplomacy, and diplomacy transforms the achievements of the field into political achievements. In other words, that which is attained in the operational arena may, in the process of negotiations, become political capital.

Naturally, following the second imposed war, two additional dimensions have been added to this equation: one is the media, and the other is the street. From this perspective, it may be stat-

ed that we are confronted with a quadrilateral phenomenon, in which the field, diplomacy, the media, and public opinion perform complementary and interwoven roles, and the success of each depends, to a considerable extent, upon coordination with the remaining dimensions. Within this context, the issue of narrative construction possesses particular significance. It is essential that greater consultation, coordination, and cooperation emerge among various institutions and actors in this sphere, so that contradictory and inconsistent narratives are not transmitted to the opposing side. The emphasis of the Leader upon unity and cohesion among all forces pertains precisely to this matter.

Consequently, just as coordination must exist in the spheres of the field and diplomacy, coherence and synergy are likewise indispensable in the realm of declared policy and narrative construction. Such coherence may contribute to the formation of an effective, integrated, and

persuasive narrative, and prevent divergences in narratives from disrupting the process of deriving political and diplomatic benefits from operational achievements.

Given recent developments, it appears that the course of confrontations has changed in comparison with the 40-day war, and that tensions are gradually and systematically increasing. Does this indicate a transformation in the pattern of warfare and a movement by the parties toward a managed war of attrition, or could it constitute a prelude to the emergence of a new comprehensive war? What is your analysis of present conditions? Under current circumstances, both parties have arrived at the conclusion that the complete elimination or destruction of the opposing side is not possible. This reality is among the most important factors influencing their behavior. In other words, the United States has concluded that achieving objectives such as changing the political system or partitioning Iran is not feasible, while, on the other hand, Iran is likewise not pursuing the complete destruction of the United States.



Experience has demonstrated that the United States has thus far undertaken no effective measure for implementing its previous commitments, and this issue has rendered Iran's level of confidence in Washington's conduct extremely limited. From this perspective, the utilization of diplomacy under current circumstances rests less upon optimism regarding the behavior of the opposing side, and more upon the objective of preventing further costs and damages, transforming operational achievements into political achievements, and elucidating the Islamic Republic of Iran's narrative concerning developments.

Under such circumstances, that which acquires paramount significance is the imposition of one's will upon the opposing side. For instance, regarding the Strait of Hormuz, Iran's objective is to preserve and exercise effective control over this strategic passageway, whereas the United States endeavors to prevent the consolidation of such control. From this perspective, the present process may be analyzed within the framework of a "war of wills"; a war in which each side endeavors to advance its demands by increasing the costs imposed upon the other.

Iran has performed more successfully in this process because, on the one hand, it benefits from its geopolitical advantages and geographical position, and on the other hand, it possesses the necessary legitimacy for defending its interests. Likewise, the employment of asymmetric warfare tactics has provided Iran with the possibility of imposing costs and generating pressure upon the opposing side.

The important point is that we are confronted with a hybrid war; a war that is not confined solely to the military sphere. Media, economic, political, social, intelligence, and cyber dimensions all influence the course of developments simultaneously, and each forms part of the equation. Accordingly, both sides endeavor to realize their objectives through the utilization of this entire assemblage of instruments. Nevertheless, the principal distinction between the approaches of Iran and the United States is that the United States, because of time constraints and domestic and international considerations, prefers that this confrontation be resolved as swiftly as possible; by contrast, Iran has endeavored, through managing and rendering the issue more challenging, to impose greater costs upon the opposing side, and thereby strengthen its position in this contest of wills.

At the present juncture, si-

multaneously with operational developments, we are also witnessing increased diplomatic activity, and it appears that active diplomacy is preparing the ground for a new round of negotiations. In your opinion, is Iran, at this stage, merely utilizing operational pressures to alter American behavior, or is the principal strategy the simultaneous utilization of the capacities of the field and diplomacy? Which approach may prove more effective?

The Islamic Republic of Iran has never abandoned the negotiating table and diplomacy. That which we have witnessed throughout previous years is that the United States has repeatedly violated its commitments and understandings, and has refrained from implementing them. Therefore, Iran's presence in the diplomatic arena signifies the preservation of a responsible approach and an emphasis upon resolving issues through political channels.

While simultaneously utilizing operational capacities, Iran also endeavors to convey the message that it continues to regard diplomacy as one of the principal avenues for pursuing and securing national interests. In reality, war and diplomacy are two sides of the same coin, and both serve the purpose of securing national interests. Active participation in the diplomatic arena is pursued with the objective of preventing the imposition of further costs upon the country, reducing potential damages, and deriving political benefits from existing achievements.

Naturally, this does not signify trust in the opposing side. Experience has demonstrated that the United States has thus far undertaken no effective measure for implementing its previous commitments, and this issue has rendered Iran's level of confidence in Washington's conduct extremely limited.

From this perspective, the utilization of diplomacy under



US Vice President JD Vance gives a thumbs up sign as he boards Air Force Two after attending talks on Iran in Islamabad, Pakistan, on April 12, 2026.
● JACQUELYN MARTIN/AP

current circumstances rests less upon optimism regarding the behavior of the opposing side, and more upon the objective of preventing further costs and damages, transforming operational achievements into political achievements, and elucidating the Islamic Republic of Iran's narrative concerning developments.

Within this framework, diplomacy, in addition to its political function, performs an important role in persuading public opinion and preventing the formation of erroneous perceptions, particularly among neighboring countries, so that Iran's positions and responses to American actions may be elucidated for regional audiences within a clear and precise framework.

Some experts maintain that, in strategic calculations, timely decisions concerning the utilization of diplomatic capacity may diminish part of the operational achievements. What is your view?
Yes, one of the most important components of diplomacy is the management of time. Time performs a decisive role in di-

plomacy, and every intelligent strategy must remain conscious of, and sensitive to, the temporal element. If, at a juncture when negotiations should commence, delay occurs, part of the opportunities and achievements attained may be lost. Conversely, rashness and premature entry into negotiations may likewise prevent the complete utilization

of existing capacities. Therefore, neither delay nor haste is desirable. That which possesses importance is the identification of the appropriate moment for utilizing diplomacy; in such a manner that, in proportion to operational achievements, diplomatic capacities may be employed efficiently and effectively for

securing and consolidating national interests. In other words, the success of diplomacy depends, to a considerable extent, upon selecting the correct time for transforming the achievements of the field into political achievements.

The article first appeared in the Persian-language newspaper Iran.



By Michael Froman
President of the Council on Foreign Relations

O P I N I O N

Much of the commentary on the war in Iran has focused on whether the mounting costs of Operation Epic Fury are worth it. The most common question I hear now, though, is how does this all end? The choice now before President Donald Trump may be to pick between the lesser of three unattractive options: a dramatic escalation, a conciliatory deescalation, and a continuation of today's messy stalemate. The first approach would be to shoot our way out. Trump is reportedly giving this serious thought, having said earlier that he is considering a restart to sustained and high-intensity strikes akin to the start of Operation Epic Fury. In his own words, "[Iran hasn't] received enough pain yet." Or, as Secretary of State Marco Rubio put it recently, the United States could pursue a strategy of a "head for an eye". The United States could strike Iranian critical infrastructure — including oil and gas facilities, power plants, critical transportation infrastructure, and desalination facilities — in the hopes of wreaking further havoc on the Iranian economy and society. But the cruel logic of this approach is obvious, and we have avoided it for good reason. Strikes of this nature could cause a humanitarian crisis in Iran, stain the United States' moral standing, and would by no means guarantee capitulation from Tehran. That is to say nothing of the Pandora's box that a "total war" might open, placing the Persian Gulf states' critical infrastructure, energy and power facilities, civilian population centers, as well as desalination plants at the top of Iran's target list. Trump could also put boots on the ground, including to seize Kharg Island — which facilitates the lion's share of Iran's oil exports — and secure a strip of Iranian territory adjacent to the Strait of Hormuz to ensure safe passage for vessels transiting the



US Navy sailors prepare for flight operations on the flight deck of the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln in support of Operation Epic Fury on March 4, 2026. ● US NAVY

strait. But such operations would put thousands of US warfighters and prized naval assets at risk. The United States could also begin to re-target senior Iranian leaders. But Tehran has proved remarkably adept at replenishing itself, if not stiffening its resolve, in the wake of such strikes. As Ray Takeyh and Reuel Marc Gerecht aptly observed in a recent essay for the Wall Street Journal, "Tehran has a wartime advantage over Washington because the ruling Iranian elite wants to fight and has been willing to endure far more pain than Donald Trump." That brings me to the second option that the president could consider: deescalation. In practice, this runs the risk of looking like capitulation. The United States could significantly scale back its military presence, declare victory (again) with respect to most of Operation Epic Fury's stated military objectives, and accept — at least to some degree — Iran's

grip on the Strait of Hormuz. The costs of the war are already high, and it's not clear whether the president or the American people have an appetite for such costs. Three US military service members were killed in Iran's recent attack on Muwaffaq Salti Air Base in Azraq, Jordan, bringing the total to 18 service members killed and nearly 450 wounded. New polling shows 68 percent of Americans believe the Iran war was not "worth fighting". Then there are the strategic costs, namely a further and accelerated draw-down of munitions, which are already in short supply, and the repositioning of forces from priority theatres, such as the Indo-Pacific. This option would be a hard sell politically. If the United States were to implement the provisions of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding as written, Iran would remain in a position to continue to choke off the Strait of Hormuz at will — or at least charge a toll for passage while kicking down the road any real discussion of unresolved issues around its nuclear program. A unilateral deescalation would also shatter the confidence of our partners

in the region — not to mention partners elsewhere — in the United States as a trustworthy guarantor of security. Suffice it to say that both the escalatory and deescalatory options before Trump are both unappealing. That is why he has understandably tried to chart a middle course: a tit-for-tat strategy of strikes and new deal offers playing out simultaneously in the military and diplomatic domains. But it remains to be seen whether this approach is likely to succeed on either front. The costs mount every day, and the ultimate outcome is far from clear, but given the perils of a significantly more dovish or hawkish approach, the current conflict in the strait may become the new status quo. The Strait of Hormuz is neither fully open nor closed. The ceasefire is punctuated by attacks almost daily, though it might be producing "shooting in a more moderate manner" to borrow

Small boats line the shore as cargo ships and other commercial vessels appear anchored in the Strait of Hormuz off Bandar Abbas, Iran, on July 27, 2026. ● RAZIEH POUDAT/ISNA

the president's own words. And the price of oil is high, though seemingly not crippling to the global economy, at least as of today. In the absence of a breakthrough on either the military or diplomatic front, this state of affairs is calcifying. So, how long could this all last? The astrophysicist J. Richard Gott offered an infamous rule of thumb: absent better information, the odds are even that a phenomenon will endure at least as long as it already has. By that grim arithmetic, the five-month-old stalemate in the strait stands an even chance of grinding on through the end of this year. And every month it continues, its odds of surviving the next only improve. If you don't find that logic persuasive, there are always the prediction markets. Expectations there put a 50 percent chance on commercial vessel traffic in the Strait of Hormuz "returning to normal" (a proxy for the end of conflict) by the end of 2026 — basically aligning the wisdom of crowds with a Princeton astrophysicist. Go figure.

The article was first published by the Council on Foreign Relations.



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U17 Wrestling World Championships: Iran out to dethrone US, fend off Russia to reclaim freestyle title

Sports Desk

Iran will be among the traditional favorites, alongside the United States and Russia, for the team title when the freestyle competition at the U17 Wrestling World Championships gets underway in Baku on Thursday. Having had to settle for runner-up finishes behind Team USA over the past two years, the Iranian squad will face an even more daunting task in its bid to claim a first team crown since 2023. Unlike the previous four editions, wrestling powerhouse Russia will be eligible for team points at this year's championships, while Japan, host Azerbaijan and India could also emerge as serious contenders. However, head coach Sadeq Goudarzi's team will look to build on a successful Asian Championships campaign in May, where it collected eight medals – including four golds – across 10 weight classes to beat Japan and India to the freestyle title in Da Nang, Vietnam. Mahdi Damercheli – one of the four Iranian gold medalists in Da Nang – will represent the country in the 45kg class, with U17 Pan-American champion Rylen Wax of the United States, Russia's national champion Aldar Badmaev and reigning U17 European champion Marko Kvasniuk of Ukraine also among the favorites. Amirali Ragheb will be eager to improve on his Asian silver

medal in the 48kg division, though Uzbekistan's Farrukh Makhmudov, who defeated the Iranian in May's final, will again be in the field, along with host wrestler Huseyn Rzazade, Ukraine's Volodymyr Boiko – the U17 European silver medalist – and Russia's Kirill Kondrashov, last year's European U15 champion. Asian champion Benjamin Ashofteh will be among the leading contenders in the 51kg class, which also features Asian silver medalist Masamune Ushimado of Japan, American Evan Restivo and Russia's Islam Kurakhmaev, a rising prospect from Dagestan. Arman Elahi will enter the 55kg competition as the Asian champion, looking to fend off challenges from Japan's Kyosuke Ikeda and Kazakhstan's Temirlan Murat, who finished behind the Iranian in Da Nang. American Chase Karenbauer and Russia's Mustafa Bersanukaev will also be in the mix, alongside Georgia's European bronze medalist Temuri Tutarashvili and Uzbekistan's Jakhongir Tulkunov, who gave Elahi his toughest bout in Vietnam. Mohammad-Taha Ganjeh, a bronze medalist at the U17 Asian Championships, will represent Iran in the 60kg category, where India's Sitender will compete as the defending world champion. The field also includes U17 European champion Sergei Karmrian of Russia, runner-up Mykyta Kuzmenko



of Ukraine and Asian champion Bekzodbek Ibrohimov of Uzbekistan. In the 65kg division, Iran will be represented by unheralded Sam Arshad, who faces a stiff challenge from American Arseni Kikiniou, who made history by winning medals in both freestyle and Greco-Roman last year, Puerto Rico's Jovani Solis and Russia's Magomed Ibragimov. In what appears to be a wide-open 70kg division, Iran's Reza Shamsipour, who was not part of the Asian Championships squad, will face U17 Asian champion

Adilet Rysbay of Kazakhstan, U17 European champion Nikolay Iliev of Bulgaria, Russia's Mokhammad Baisultanov and American Camryn Howard. Iran's Amirali Ferasati dominated the 80kg field to win Asian gold in Da Nang and is expected to mount another strong challenge in Baku, though home favorite and U17 European champion Nihad Suleymanli will have other ideas. Mohammadreza Issazadeh was one of only two Iranians to miss the podium at the Asian Championships and will need to deliver

a much-improved performance in the 92kg division, which also features U17 European champion Abdurazak Shabanov of Russia, European silver medalist Ali Dadaev of France and U17 Pan-American champion Salah Tsarni of the United States. Amirhossein Esmali will look to avenge his defeat to India's Arush Rana in the U17 Asian final should the pair meet again in the 110kg division. Host wrestler and returning world bronze medalist Hakim Taghiyev will be aiming to upgrade his medal on home soil, while U17 European



Iranian freestyle wrestlers are seen in action during an U17 national team's training session in Tehran, Iran, on July 8, 2026.

● YASSIN BAHRAMI/LAWFIR

champion Murtaz Bagdavadze of Georgia, silver medalist Stefan Stefanov of Bulgaria, Russia's Magomed Omarov and American Peter Mocco are also among the wrestlers to watch in the heavyweight class.

"We have carefully analyzed our opponents and also taken into account the conditions of competing in Azerbaijan," Goudarzi said ahead of his team's departure for Baku.

"Because of the 40-day war and the unavailability of our wrestlers, we missed a couple of warm-up tournaments, but our strength and conditioning coach worked around the clock to ensure the wrestlers reached the required level of physical and technical readiness," added the former Olympic silver medalist. Beyond immediate results, Goudarzi stressed that developing the next generation of elite wrestlers remains the program's long-term objective.

"Our priority is building a strong pipeline for Iranian wrestling, helping these wrestlers progress to the senior level and ultimately win Olympic gold medals.

"I believe these boys can bring many good days to Iranian wrestling. I hope the Iranian people remember their names."

WSPS World Cup Novi Sad 2026:

Javanmardi misses podium on long-awaited return

Sports Desk

Iranian para shooting great Sareh Javanmardi had to settle for a fourth-place finish in the mixed 50m pistol SH1 event at the first WSPS World Cup of the season in Novi Sad, Serbia, on Monday. Nicknamed the "Pistol Queen," the four-time Paralympic champion, who announced in June that she would come out of re-

tirement to pursue a second Asian Para Games gold medal in October, delivered a score of 535 to top the elimination round. She then finished third in the combined elimination and qualification standings to advance to the final, but ultimately missed out on a podium finish. The 41-year-old still did enough to secure qualification for September's World Championships in Changwon, South Korea –

where she will make her first appearance in seven years – as well as the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Para Games, which begin on October 18. Javanmardi appeared to have brought the curtain down on her illustrious career after winning the women's 10m air pistol title at the Paris 2024 Paralympics, citing "personal reasons as well as certain circumstances within the Iranian sports structure" for her

decision. The decorated shooter, however, had a change of heart and resumed training with the national team in recent months. Ali Galavi was the other Iranian in action in the mixed 50m pistol event in Novi Sad but failed to progress to the final after posting 523 points to finish 11th in qualification. Nevertheless, the result was enough for him to secure a place at the upcoming Asian Para Games.



● ISNA

CAVA Beach Volleyball Championships:

Iranian pairs claim men's gold, bronze

Sports Desk

Iran capped a dominant campaign at the CAVA Beach Volleyball Championships by winning the men's gold and bronze medals on the final day of the tournament in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The Iranian duo of Abbas

Pourasgari and Alireza Aqajani defeated Kazakhstan's first team in straight sets, 21-19, 21-5, in Monday's final to lift the title and complete an unbeaten run of six victories. The pair had already secured qualification for the 2026 Asian Beach Volleyball Championships by reaching the final.

Iran also collected the bronze medal through Abolhassan Khakizadeh and Amirali Qalenoee, who defeated Kazakhstan's second team 21-11, 21-16 in the third-place playoff. Khakizadeh and Qalenoee, who teamed up to win silver at April's Asian Beach Games, advanced to the semifinals as Group A winners after recording four consecutive victories over Kazakhstan, two Uzbek teams and the Maldives. Their only defeat came against Kazakhstan's first team in the last four. Rahman Raoufi and Abdolraouf Bastegani served as the team's coaches, while Nader Ansari was the delegation leader. The two medals took Iran's volleyball medal haul across all disciplines into double figures over the past four months.



● volleyball.ir

World Fencing Championships:

Pakdaman crashes out in men's saber last 16

Sports Desk

Iran's Ali Pakdaman suffered a last-16 exit in the men's individual saber event, capping a disappointing campaign for the country's quadruple at the World Fencing Championships in Hong Kong. The former Asian champion claimed five successive victories to advance from the preliminary rounds. He then defeated Matteo Neri – a member of Italy's team that won gold at the previous edition – 15-13, before edging American William

Morrill by the same scoreline. Pakdaman's run ended with a 15-6 defeat to Egypt's Mohamed Amer. Russia's Pavel Graudyn defeated South Korea's Do Gyeong-dong 15-7

in the final to win the title, while Amer and Romania's Radu Nițu shared the bronze medals. Mohammad Fotouhi, Nima Zahedi, and Taha Kargarpour were the

other Iranian fencers in the men's saber event. All progressed from the preliminary phase but failed to advance beyond the round of 64.

Zahedi was beaten 15-13 by Uzbekistan's Sardor Abduraimbekov in his second knockout bout, while Kargarpour overcame Ukraine's Oleksiy Statsenko 15-11 before losing 15-11 to Russia's Kamil Ibragimov. Fotouhi, meanwhile, suffered a 15-10 defeat to Saudi Arabia's Adel Almutairi in the opening knockout round.



● Jiji

UNESCO recognition to make Alamut 'global narrative'

Iranica Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts has said the inscription of the Alamut Castles and their associated fortifications on UNESCO's World Heritage List has elevated the site beyond regional significance, transforming it into a global cultural narrative that should be interpreted in accordance with its rich historical and civilizational legacy.

Speaking to IRNA, Reza Salehi-Amiri outlined the ministry's roadmap for preserving and promoting Iran's cultural heritage, describing a three-stage approach to safeguarding the nation's historical assets.

"The first level is the civilizational value of these monuments, which are as valuable to the country as gold reserves are in mines," he said. "The second involves identifying, protecting, restoring, and registering them at the national level so they become recognized by the Iranian people. The third is introducing these treasures to the world through inscription on UNESCO's World Heritage List."



● IRNA



● ISNA

Referring to the recent inscription of the Alamut on UNESCO's World Heritage List, Salehi-Amiri described the achievement as

highly significant, saying the site had immediately moved from being viewed as a regional landmark to becoming part of a

global historical narrative.

"From today onward, the story of Alamut must be presented in a way that reflects its long history, the legacy of Hassan-e Sabbah, who lived there, the seven fortresses, the unique construction materials and techniques used in their buildings, the strength of the fortifications, their distinctive architecture, and all the elements that define this remarkable site," he said.

The minister noted that more than two decades of research had been devoted to the millennium-old Alamut before its nomination dossier was submitted to UNESCO.

"The dossier was presented to UNESCO in such a comprehensive manner that it was inscribed without difficulty," he said.

Salehi-Amiri explained that the site followed the official heritage conservation process, beginning with identification, restoration, and protection, followed by national registration before ultimately achieving World Heritage status.

"What gives a historical site its true significance is its civilizational value," he said. "The

older a monument is, the richer its civilizational importance becomes, and this site has a history spanning one thousand years."

Emphasizing the identity-forming role of historical monuments, Salehi-Amiri said civilization represents the evolution, continuity, and historical identity of a nation.

"When we speak of civilization, we are speaking of the evolution, continuity of life, and identity of a people throughout history — an identity that inspires value, vitality, and hope while connecting the Iranian past with its future," he said.

He added that Iran's civilizations embody the study of ancestry, history, culture, and art, and stressed that preserving, restoring, and passing this legacy on to future generations is a national responsibility.

Commenting on Iran's World Heritage record, the minister said that of 1,248 properties inscribed on the World Heritage List worldwide, Iran now accounts for 30 sites, a position he described as highly distinguished. He added that another 58 Iranian sites remain on UNESCO's Tentative List.

"With its great civilization, rich culture, and resilient and virtuous people, Iran stands as a symbol of a glorious history in the world," he said.

The Alamut Castles and their associated fortifications were inscribed as Iran's 30th tangible cultural property on UNESCO's World Heritage List during the 48th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, held in Busan, South Korea.

Constructed between the 11th and 13th centuries CE, the fortifications demonstrate sophisticated knowledge of geography, water-resource management, communication routes, defensive architecture, and spatial planning. Beyond their military and political importance, the sites also served as major intellectual centers of their time and are closely associated with renowned Persian scholar Khwaja Nasir al-Din Tusi.

Located in the Alamut region of Qazvin Province, Alamut Castle is regarded as one of the finest examples of military and strategic architecture in Iranian history. The fortress stands approximately 105 kilometres northeast of the city of Qazvin, near the village of Gazor Khan.



Reza Salehi-Amiri
● IRNA

Nowruz-e Darya preserves centuries-old maritime legacy of southern Iran

Iranica Desk

The Persian Gulf, a historic expanse that has long served as a cradle for cultures, rituals, and beliefs, has witnessed the formation of traditions passed down from generation to generation among the inhabitants of Iran's southern shores. For centuries, the coastal communities of Hormuzgan Province have shaped their lives around the rhythm of the sea, the patterns of the winds, climatic changes, and the patterns of the stars. This deep connection with the marine environment has given rise to a collection of maritime rituals, each reflecting a part of the region's cultural identity.

Among these traditions, "Nowruz-e Darya" (Sea Nowruz) holds a special place. The ritual represents the maritime knowledge of Iranians, their respect for nature, and the inseparable bond between humans and the sea. Once widely observed among sailors and fishermen along the Persian Gulf coast, Nowruz-e Darya was not merely a cultural celebration but also a symbol of the beginning of a new season of maritime activities and the start of major voyages, according to chn.ir.

The Persian Gulf has historically been one of the world's most important routes of communication, playing a significant role in the exchange of goods, ideas, and cultures among different civilizations. The presence of peoples from Asia, Africa, and Europe in the region contributed to the development of a dynamic and multilayered culture among its



inhabitants — a culture shaped by the interaction of Iranian, maritime, and climatic elements. Living by the sea, the people of Hormuzgan have developed distinctive customs and traditions rarely found elsewhere in Iran. Rituals related to rainfall, weather and sea forecasting, maritime ceremonies, traditional music, and Nowruz-e Darya are among the region's intangible cultural heritage, preserving the knowledge and experiences of past generations.

In Iranian culture, Nowruz has always symbolized renewal, the beginning of a new cycle, and the rebirth of nature. However, for sailors in southern Iran, the concept carried a broader meaning. They did not view Nowruz solely as the start of a new year but also as an indication of changing natural conditions, calmer seas, and the appropriate time to begin maritime journeys.

Traditional sailors of the Persian Gulf relied on their detailed understanding of weather patterns, winds, and seasonal changes to



● chn.ir

determine the timing of their activities. Their experience showed that seasonal transitions and weather conditions were directly linked to the safety of voyages. For this reason, Nowruz became one of the key markers in the traditional maritime calendar.

The combination of indigenous knowledge and natural phenomena gave rise to a ritual that later became known as Nowruz-e Darya — a day when sailors



expressed gratitude to God and honored the bounty of the sea while celebrating the beginning of a new period of maritime activity. According to historical and cultural accounts, Iranian sailors held Nowruz-e Darya on August 1 (10 Mordad in the Iranian calendar) every year. They regarded the occasion as a time when the sea became calmer, a suitable season for navigation began, and new voyages could be launched.

During the ceremony, sailors carried flowers, plants, and green branches of trees, particularly tropical plants and fruits, with them and offered thanks while at sea. These offerings symbolized humanity's respect for nature and gratitude for the sea — an environment that for centuries has been a source of livelihood, sustenance, and connection between southern Iran and the wider world.

After the ceremony and a day of celebration and gathering, sailors returned to their shores and ports. From the following day, they resumed maritime journeys, fishing, and trade with renewed hope and trust.

Nowruz-e Darya is more than a ritual; it is part of the traditional knowledge system of Iranian sailors. Over centuries, coastal communities developed valuable maritime expertise by observing nature, wind movements, the sky, and the behavior of the sea. This knowledge was reflected in the construction of traditional vessels, the selection of mari-

time routes, identifying suitable seasons for travel, and methods of fishing and trade.

The maritime culture of the Persian Gulf encompasses a wide range of skills, terminology, beliefs, music, and rituals that have emerged from Iranians' historic relationship with the sea. Nowruz-e Darya is among the most significant expressions of this culture, demonstrating how humans have established a deep and lasting relationship with their natural surroundings. Today, as lifestyles change and traditional forms of navigation decline, many ancient rituals face the risk of fading away. However, rediscovering and introducing such heritage can play an important role in preserving the historical identity of coastal communities.

Nowruz-e Darya tells the story of a centuries-old relationship between the people of Hormuzgan and the Persian Gulf — a relationship that extends beyond economy and livelihood and remains present in the beliefs, music, rituals, and everyday life of the region's people.

The tradition serves as a reminder that, for the people of southern Iran, the sea is not merely a geographical feature; it is an essential part of their historical memory, culture, and identity. Preserving Nowruz-e Darya means safeguarding a body of knowledge developed by past generations through experience, patience, and a profound understanding of nature — a valuable element of Hormuzgan's cultural heritage that can be introduced to future generations.



Official warns unapproved alterations could prolong UNESCO bid for Zanzan Bazaar

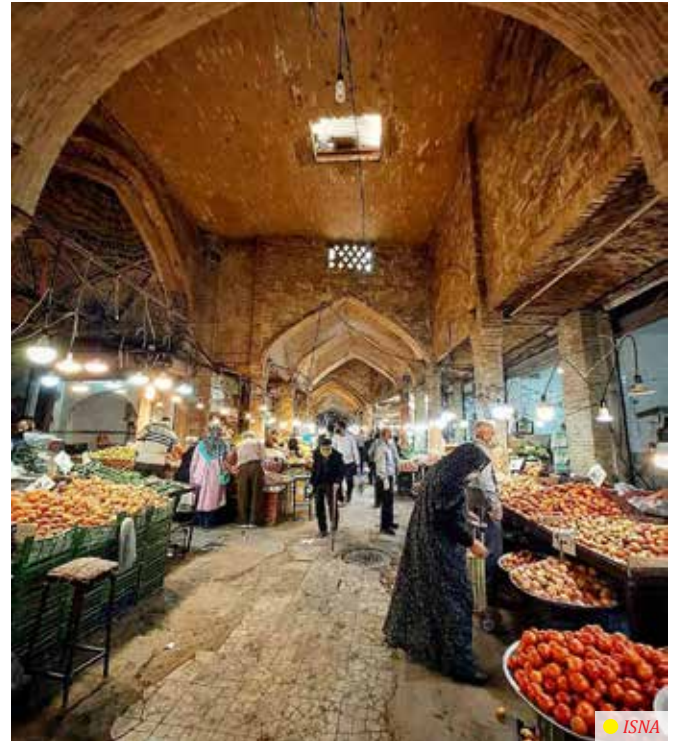
Arts & Culture Desk

Unauthorized and non-expert alterations in the protected zone of Iran's historic Zanzan Bazaar could delay its bid for UNESCO World Heritage status for years, a local official warned on Tuesday, citing concerns over the site's authenticity, infrastructure and conservation. Mehdi Baqeri, head of Zanzan city's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Office, told IRNA that Zanzan Bazaar, described as Iran's longest roofed bazaar, was "an unparalleled gem" at the heart of the city and represented not only an architectural complex but also the economic, historical and cultural lifeblood of the region. Baqeri said securing UNESCO recognition was a "complex and lengthy process" based on stringent Outstanding Universal Value criteria. He said the nomination faced key obstacles, in-

cluding UNESCO's requirements for preserving the site's physical integrity and authenticity. He added that the historic quarter also faces challenges in urban infrastructure and public services, noting that UNESCO applied strict standards for disaster management, fire safety, electricity, gas, sewage systems and waste management in historic areas. "As a living commercial complex, the bazaar requires safety infrastructure upgrades to measure up to international standards," the official said. Baqeri said decades of unauthorized changes in land use, structural interventions in shop units, the use of incompatible construction materials during restoration work and alterations in parts of the bazaar had taken a toll on its historical authenticity. To achieve World Heritage inscription, the site requires "vi-

sual clean-up and the revival of traditional restoration techniques," a costly process that also depends on the cooperation of all shopkeepers, he said. Baqeri noted that authorities were drawing up "a comprehensive management plan" covering not only the physical fabric of the bazaar but also its visual buffer zone and the impact of surrounding urban development. He said much of the bazaar was privately owned, making conflicts between shopkeepers' property rights and cultural heritage protection rules one of the biggest obstacles to the nomination process. "Reaching a win-win model in which businesspeople participate as the bazaar's principal custodians will take time and require careful engagement with stakeholders," Baqeri added. Located in the center of Zanzan,

the historic bazaar dates back to the Qajar era. Construction began around 1790 under the orders of Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar and was completed around 1800 during the reign of Fath-Ali Shah Qajar. Covering about 15 hectares, the bazaar has long served not only as a commercial hub but also as a center for the city's cultural and social life, providing a venue for the exchange of ideas and the preservation of national and religious traditions. Its architecture, featuring caravanserais, covered courtyards, mosques and numerous bath-houses, has made it one of Iran's most significant tourist attractions and enduring examples of architectural heritage. The Zanzan Bazaar, which is listed on Iran's national register of historic monuments, has 56 entrances and alleyways, 940 shops and accommodates 51 categories of trade.



Iranian animation to hit Russian silver screen in memory of Minab kids

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian animated feature "The Legend of Sepehr" will be shown in Russian theaters from late August, with its Russian distributor preparing a special memorial event for schoolchildren killed in a US missile strike on a school in the southern Iranian city of Minab. The film, produced by Mehdi Jafari Jozani and directed by Emad Rahmani and Mehrdad Mehrabi, is due to be played across Russia after completing its domestic run in Iran and moving into international distribution, Khabar Online reported on Tuesday. According to the Russian distributor, the release has been scheduled for late August to coincide with the end of Russia's extended school holidays, a timing intended to provide a better opportunity for families and children to attend cinemas. The distributor said agreements, together with an



amendment to the distribution contract, have secured the film's theatrical and public exhibition rights for Russia and several countries in the region. Alongside the commercial release, the distributor said it was coordinating a special event dedicated to solidarity with and remembrance of the Minab

schoolchildren. Details of the event will be announced once arrangements have been finalized. The planned memorial follows the US missile strike on Shajareh Tayyebbeh School in Minab on February 28, which killed at least 168 people, including 150 schoolboys and schoolgirls aged between seven and 12. The attack has been remembered in Iran and beyond as despicable crime. The Legend of Sepehr is a family fantasy adventure centered on themes of family, responsibility, courage and standing up to darkness. It follows Sepehr, a courageous teenager, and his loyal companion Babo as they set out on a journey to save their family and homeland. The Russian-language version has been registered in Russian film databases under the title "Легенда о Сепере", while the film's trailer has been released on the Kinopoisk VOD platform.

Khosroabad Palace to become 'premier museum' after renovation

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran plans to turn the restored Khosroabad Palace in the western city of Sanandaj into "one of the country's premier museums" after conservation work is completed, a senior cultural heritage official said on Tuesday, as authorities continue to repair damage to historic sites following the recent war with the United States and Israel. Leila Khosravi, director general of museums at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, made the remarks during a visit to the western province of Kurdistan, where she inspected museums and historical monuments as part of a nationwide program to assess their condition, monitor their status and review their conservation needs, ISNA reported. Khosravi said the historic Khosroabad Palace had gone through significant restoration work and was scheduled to become one of the country's premier museums once the project is completed, allowing it to play a greater role in showcasing the history, culture and identity of Sanandaj. She said the palace was among dozens of historical sites damaged during the recent war involving US and Israeli attacks on Iran, with most of the damage affecting



architectural decorations, orosi windows and wooden structures. "Given that a significant number of the country's museums are housed in historical buildings, some architectural elements and display cases were also damaged. However, thanks to measures taken by the ministry, historical and cultural objects were transferred to secure storage before any damage occurred, and fortunately none of the cultural and historical artefacts or properties in Kurdistan province were damaged," Khosravi said. She said restoring orosi windows, architectural decorations and wooden structures should top the list of priorities. The ministry would also support the province's museums by upgrading and standardizing storage facilities, improving controls for the preservation environment, including temperature and humidity, and providing the funding required for conservation work.

Khosravi said the ministry also planned to fortify protective infrastructure at museums across Kurdistan province by reinforcing security equipment, updating protection systems and supplying surveillance cameras to improve the safeguarding of historical artefacts. The Khosroabad Palace Museum in Sanandaj, the capital of Kurdistan, was built in 1808 by Amanollah Khan Ardalan, the then governor of the province. The complex goes back to the Qajar era, although parts of the building feature decorative elements in the Zand style. The palace served as the seat of the Ardalan Kurdish ruling family and is regarded as an important symbol of Kurdish heritage in the region. It functioned at times as a political and military headquarters but was used mainly for official ceremonies and celebrations, including the wedding of a daughter of Qajar ruler Fath Ali Shah to Amanollah Khan's son. Covering about 6,000 square metres, the palace is regarded as one of western Iran's most distinctive historic buildings, featuring elaborate plasterwork, brickwork and tile decorations. It was added to Iran's National Heritage List in 1977 and now operates as a museum and tourist attraction.



Train driver hailed for saving Iranian leopard with quick action

Social Desk

The Department of Environment (DoE) praised the "responsible" action of a train driver whose swift response prevented a passenger train from striking an Iranian leopard trapped inside a railway tunnel in the northern Savadkuh region. The DoE described the driver's move as a "valuable demonstration of responsibility, commit-

ment to wildlife conservation and respect for environmental considerations" throughout the country's rail transport network. It said the rescue of the endangered animal showed that transport infrastructure development and the protection of the country's natural heritage could go hand in hand. The department also called for continued cooperation to strengthen environmental safe-

guards along Iran's transport corridors and expressed hope that broader collaboration would provide stronger protection for valuable wildlife species, particularly the Iranian leopard. A video that went viral two days ago showed the train driver's timely response saving the life of an Iranian leopard after it became trapped inside a tunnel on the Savadkuh railway line. After spotting the leopard on

the tracks, the driver applied the brakes and reduced the train's speed, giving the animal enough time to leave the tunnel safely and preventing a collision. The Iranian leopard is one of the country's flagship wildlife species and is under the threat of extinction, while transport routes, including railway lines, are regarded as among the factors putting pressure on its habitat.