

Ya Sayyed, We're Here!

Despite new obstacles,
countless Iranians
travel to Beirut for
Nasrallah's funeral

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After the funeral, revenge for Sayyed Nasrallah begins ▶ Page 5

Leader highlights 'remarkable' surge in pro-Palestine activism around the world

TEHRAN – Statements by Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution, made during a meeting with the Minister, deputies, and managers of the Ministry of Intelligence on February 19, 2025, were released on Saturday.

The release coincided with the commemoration event honoring the "Martyrs of the Intelligence Community" and marking the 40th anniversary of the Ministry's establishment.

During the meeting, Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized that one of the remarkable traits and strengths of the Ministry of Intelligence has been its sustained commitment to a Revolutionary spirit and approach over the years. "The Ministry of Intelligence is truly a Revolutionary organization committed to the Revolution. Just as the veteran members of this ministry remained Revolutionary, the new personnel are also moving along the path of the Revolution, which is a great blessing," he stated.

The Leader emphasized that the only solution and beacon of hope for the country amidst its challenges lies in upholding the principles of the Revolution. "Overcoming problems in any of the economic, political, cultural, and social sectors of the country relies on trusting in God, commitment to the principles of the Revolution, and diligently pursuing the implementation of good plans and laws already in place, while also compensating for previous shortcomings," he added.

Ayatollah Khamenei underscored that planning for the implementation of the country's affairs and the resolution of issues is part of the necessary and essential measures. "What's important is achieving tangible and favorable results, because if the results of meetings, plans, and schedules do not yield a tangible and desirable outcome, they will be pointless. A favorable outcome can only be achieved when there is continuous follow-up."

The Leader stated that a key responsibility of the country's intelligence agency is to cooperate with the government. "The Ministry of Intelligence must have full cooperation with all government administrations to enable the established government to effectively carry out the heavy responsibility of governing the country."

Ayatollah Khamenei further noted that the Ministry of Intelligence's cooperation with the government entails carrying out good intelligence work. ▶ Page 3

Army launches large-scale military drills along Iran's southern shores

TEHRAN – On Saturday, Iran's Army (Artesh) commenced the first day of extensive "Zolfaqar-1403" military maneuvers, spanning a strategically vital region.

The exercise area encompasses Iran's southern Makran coastline, the Sea of Oman, and extends into the northern reaches of the Indian Ocean.

Featuring diverse units, including ground troops, air defense systems, and unmanned vehicles, the drill aims to strengthen Iran's defensive capabilities and assess newly developed, domestically-produced weaponry.

Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari highlighted the exercise's role in enhancing deterrence against potential threats and cautioned against any acts of aggression toward Iran. He clarified that this exercise is a routine component of Iran's commitment to combat readiness and is distinct from any potential negotiations on military limitations.

'Palestinian People Governing Palestine' is the basic principle for post-war Gaza

By Prof. ZHANG Yuan

SHANGHAI – The Gaza crisis, which lasted 16 months, is a major tragedy of contemporary humanity. No people want to be passively exposed again to the ravages of a war that has devastated their lives. After the ceasefire in Gaza, post-war governance in the region should proceed as quickly as possible. The forced relocation proposed by the interventionist powers violates the internationally recognized basic human rights requirements of sovereignty integrity and security of existence.

The principle of "Palestinian People governing Palestine", which China has put forward on the question of Palestine, is the core principle of the post-war governance of Gaza. It means that Palestinian affairs should be decided by the Palestinian people themselves, and that responsible major powers should work together to oppose the forced intervention or domination of external forces in the Middle East in the

post-war governance process of Gaza. The Chinese government supports the Palestinian people in leading the governance of the Gaza Strip.

I. Post-war reconstruction of Gaza must respect Palestinian sovereignty and territorial integrity

The year 2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the victory in the world anti-Fascist War, the 80th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, and the 80th anniversary of the establishment of the Yalta system after World War II. The world order has experienced decades of evolution and has gone through trials and hardships. While the world order is likely to be at a juncture of dramatic change and rebuilding in the current revival of geopolitics domi-

nated by increasingly overt territorial ambitions. However, no matter how the world order changes, it should not be at the expense of the well-being of the weak and the dignity of the people.

Forced relocation and military occupation by external countries and external military forces against the will of the Palestinian people are all denial of the advocacy for sovereignty and autonomy to the Palestinian people.

II. Internal reconciliation is a guarantee of the authority's ability to govern

Regarding the internal Palestinian power struggle, China's view has always valued, encouraged, emphasized and promoted internal unity, believing that internal reconciliation through negotiation and speak-

ing with one voice is the embodiment of a strong and powerful national capacity.

For the current Palestinian situation, factional divisions will lead to governance failures, and "The Beijing Declaration on Ending Division and Strengthening Unity", signed by 14 Palestinian factions in Beijing in 2024 with China's facilitation, is precisely the creation of internal Palestinian conditions for the implementation of the two-state solution.

Using political dialogue to resolve the distribution of governance power within Palestine, enhancing the authority of the Palestinian National Authority while improving its governance capacity, and absorbing and learning from the positive experience of other countries in state governance and peacebuilding will contribute to Palestine's internal political stability and facilitate the Palestinian Authority's unified jurisdiction over all Palestinian territories.

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Tehran notes sale of Shahed drones is legal as Western groups work to fuel Iranophobia

TEHRAN – Iran has reiterated that its domestically developed Shahed drone—one of the world's most advanced unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)—is legally available for international sale.

"Any nation committed to using the drone solely for defensive purposes can apply to purchase it," Iran's Permanent Mission to the United Nations stated in a post on X on Friday.

The statement comes in response to the recent display of the Shahed drone at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Washington, D.C., an event known for amplifying anti-Iran sentiment. ▶ Page 2



Iran a suitable platform to show Eurasia trade capabilities: Pezeshkian

TEHRAN- Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian said that Iran is a suitable platform for showing the capabilities of Eurasian countries in trade exchanges and economic prosperity.

He made the remarks when visiting the 3rd Eurasia Expo in Tehran on Friday.

The president stated that the fundamental policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is friendly relations with neighboring and friendly countries and said: "Together and with joint investments in various economic fields, in addition to increasing economic prosperity, we can contribute to the stability and strength of our relations."

Iran's geographical location is the best route for the corridor and routes connecting Eurasia with the Persian Gulf and the open seas, he further emphasized.

After the funeral, revenge for Sayyed Nasrallah begins

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT – Sunday's funeral will be immortalized in the history of the struggle against imperialism. The day after, the greatest revenge begins, revenge for our greatest leader whose commandments, the most prominent of which is not to "distance ourselves" in a time of betrayal, will resonate forever.

To hear an oppressed nation calling for your help, who is one of the subjugated, marginalized, and disenfranchised nations in the world, like the Yemenis and the Palestinians, do you remain silent? Can the bearers of the legacy of Martyr Sayyed Nasrallah "distance themselves?"

The answer requires exploring the depths of Hezbollah and Sayyed Nasrallah's doctrine.

In 2015, in one of the most important periods of his life, Sayyed Nasrallah said: "If you ask me, I would say that the most honorable thing I have done, throughout my life, is that speech I gave the day after the Saudi war on Yemen. This is the greatest thing I have done in my life."

In 2018, at the height of the escalation of US-led Saudi attacks on Yemen, Sayyed Nasrallah considered Yemen "the new arena of resistance against arrogance." As the victories of the Yemenis began to be evident on the ground, he became more optimistic, stating: "The nation that stands firm in the face of challenges will achieve



victory."

Whoever knows the centrality of the Palestinian cause in his ideological system and what he has done for it, and then hears this statement about Yemen, will automatically link it to his commitment to the two prophetic hadiths: "The greatest jihad is a word of truth in front of an unjust ruler" and "whoever hears a man calling out, 'O Muslims,' and does not answer him, is not a Muslim."

Martyr Sayyed Nasrallah explained the meaning of the later hadith, noting that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not say "Muslim," but rather "a man," meaning that helping this oppressed person is obligatory, even if he is not a Muslim, each according to their ability, and the least of it is to proclaim "the word of truth."

Martyr Sayyed Nasrallah put this firm conviction into practice. Thus, to "distance himself" was

asking him to disbelieve, to disobey his Lord, and to abandon his religious, ethical, and moral obligations.

Every free person who participates in the funeral will be nothing but a hypocrite if they "distance themselves" by ignoring the tragedies of the oppressed around the world, Muslims and non-Muslims.

Let no one think that the martyrdom of the Sayyed meant that we will "distance ourselves". Starting today, the responsibility that will fall on our shoulders is not to distance ourselves but to implement the commandments of Sayyed Nasrallah.

The mother idea on which Hezbollah and many other resistance movements were founded is that martyrdom is not the end of the path, but rather a sacrifice required for the perpetuation of the cause.

The blatant statement of Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, following the assassination of Sayyed Nasrallah that "beheading Hezbollah" will bring "salvation" to Lebanon is a fundamental misreading of the heavy price that these fools will pay in the near future.

When Sayyed Abbas al-Moussawi, Nasrallah's predecessor, was assassinated in 1992, the US-led Israeli aggression failed to defeat resistance. Rather it led to its escalation.

The assassination of a revolutionary leader like Sayyed Nasrallah, along with the resistance leaders in Palestine, Yemen, Iraq, and Iran has alerted millions around the world to confront imperialist hegemony, especially in West Asia, Latin America, and Africa.

In physics, we used to study that when a big star consumes its hydrogen, it explodes and scatters into space. Then these scattered gases accumulate to form new, brighter stars. This is how Sayyed Nasrallah's martyrdom will create several brilliant stars.

Despite all the threats, we reiterate the words of our great martyr: "We must not despair. Despair is the trait of the weak, the losers, those who lack will and determination. As for you, as for us who stood in the face of the violent storms, endured, stood firm, and triumph, we must not allow despair to creep into our hearts."

Hamas frees six captives in Gaza

Six Israeli captives have been released in Gaza's Nuseirat, Rafah and Gaza City, in exchange for 602 Palestinians held in Israeli jails.

The family of deceased Israeli captive Shiri Bibas confirmed that her remains have been identified after a body returned from Gaza on Thursday was discovered to belong to another person, Al Jazeera reported.

The final captive was released on Saturday in Gaza City without ceremony.

Hisham al-Sayed was last seen in a video recording broadcast by Qassam Brigades on June 28, 2022, during which the armed wing of Hamas announced "a deterioration in the health of one of the enemy's prisoners" before publishing for the first time scenes documenting his health condition.

The Israeli captive's family hails from the little-known village of al-Sayed in Negev, where he grew up in a Bedouin community that has been marginalized for decades by Israeli policies.

He was captured on April 20, 2015, after infiltrating the Gaza Strip through a breach in the security fence.

His family has claimed in media statements

that he suffers from mental illness and that his health condition was deteriorating before he was captured. They have denied that he was associated with any Israeli military service.

Eliya Cohen, 27, Omer Shem Tov, 22, and Omer Wenkert, 23, all seized from the site of the Nova music festival in the Oct. 7, 2023 attack on southern Israel, were handed over to the Red Cross and transported to Israeli forces, Gulf Today reported.

Tal Shoham, 40, and Avera Mengistu, 39, were released in southern Rafah earlier.

Shoham was taken into Gaza from Kibbutz Be'eri along with his wife and two children, who were freed in a brief truce in November 2023. The six are the last living hostages from a group of 33 due to be freed in the first stage of the ceasefire deal that took effect on Jan. 19.

Around 60 more captives, less than half of whom are believed to be alive, remain in Gaza.

Hundreds of Israelis gathered in the rain in what has become known as Hostages Square in Tel Aviv. Some lit candles under photos of the Bibas family, whose bodies were returned this week, and others cheered as they watched the release on screen. Among those watching the



release broadcast on a large screen was Yael Alexander.

Her son, a soldier and a dual US-Israeli national, was captured from a military base near Gaza in the October attack.

In return for the captives, Israel was to release 602 Palestinian prisoners and detainees held in its jails in the latest stage of a ceasefire deal that has largely held.

They included 445 Gazans rounded up by Israeli forces during the war, as well as dozens of convicts serving lengthy or life terms, according to Hamas.

Arab 'mini' summit ends without issuing official statement

Persian Gulf Arab countries, Egypt and Jordan held a "mini" unofficial summit in Saudi Arabia on Friday amid Arab efforts to present a counterplan to US President Donald Trump's proposal to transfer Palestinians from the Gaza Strip to Egypt and Jordan, which also aims to rebuild Gaza and reject the displacement of its people from it.

A source close to the Saudi government confirmed to AFP that the summit "was held and concluded this afternoon" on Friday, noting the "absence" of the Sultanate of Oman. No official statement was issued regarding the meeting, Middle East Monitor reported.

The Saudi state-run Al Ekhabariya channel published a photo of the participants at the summit held in Riyadh without specifying its location or agenda.



The photo showed Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman with United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan and National Security Advisor Sheikh Tahnoun Bin Zayed, Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber

Al-Sabah, Jordanian King Abdullah II and Crown Prince Hussein Bin Abdullah, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi and Bahraini Prime Minister Prince Salman Bin Hamad Al-Khalifa.

The Egyptian presidency confirmed that Al-Sisi left Riyadh after: "Participating in an informal

meeting on the Palestinian issue."

Saudi Arabia sought to lower expectations by confirming on Thursday that the meeting was an "informal, brotherly meeting" and that its decisions would be related to the agenda for the emergency Arab summit set to be held in Egypt on March 4.

Ahead of the meeting, there was talk of disagreements that might ruin the summit over who would rule Gaza and the issue of funding reconstruction in the Strip, which has been destroyed by Israel in its war on resistance forces, including Hamas, following the October 7 attack. However, the summit gained importance because it reflects a rare Arab consensus on rejecting the displacement of Palestinians at a time when Trump is presenting proposals that could affect the situation in the Middle East.

Agency reported.

Citing a Russian intelligence report, he claimed that Rutte has been issuing instructions to Zelenskyy, urging him to hold his position until Ukraine negotiations begin.

"This is, without a doubt, a bacchanalia (chaos and inappropriate behavior). Rutte is blatantly overstepping and violating his functional duties," Lavrov asserted.

Commenting on the Ukrainian settlement, the minister criticized the Zelenskyy government, claiming it is "consuming" hundreds of billions of dollars that could otherwise be used for the development of nations in need.

The minister said not all NATO members have adopted an "aggressive stance," noting that some are reluctant to spend money on Ukraine or submit to "Zelenskyy's demands."

Lavrov accuses NATO chief of direct intervention in Ukraine

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov accused NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte of intervention in the Ukraine settlement, criticizing him for "issuing instructions" to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Speaking at a news conference in Johannesburg, South Africa, Lavrov slammed Rutte's meddling in the Ukraine settlement process, calling it an example of political chaos, Anadolu

'Palestinian People Governing Palestine' is the basic principle for post-war Gaza



From page 1 ► III. Permanent ceasefire and the two-state solution as the way forward for the fundamental settlement of the question of Palestine

China's support for a political solution to the question of Palestine is based on the two-state solution from the UN. The fulfillment of the principle of "Palestinian People Governing Palestine" is the only way to truly and effectively advance the long-term goal of the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the basis of the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the achievement of lasting peaceful coexistence between Palestine and Israel.

China is a practitioner of friendship and cooperation among nations, a promoter of mutual understanding among civilizations and a builder of a community with a shared future for mankind. In the MENA, China is a builder of peace in the region. Against the backdrop of some countries' proposal to forcibly transfer Palestinians from Gaza to neighboring countries, insisting on "Palestinian People Governing Palestine" is all the more precious. The principle of "Palestinian People Governing Palestine" reaffirms the Palestinian people's inalienable right to existence and self-determination. Internally, the Principle of "Palestinian People Governing Palestine" is conducive to enhancing the Palestinian national identity; externally, if all forces respect the principle of "Palestinian People Governing Palestine" on Palestinian territory, it will inevitably help reduce the risk of further complica-

tions in the Middle East situation.

With the intensifying games among the major powers in the Middle East, the principle of "Palestinian People Governing Palestine" not only safeguards the rights of the Palestinian people but also constitutes a clear rejection of unilateralism and power politics. War had brought painful memories to the people, and opposition to war should be the consensus of the government, the elite and the people in the troubled region. Major responsible powers and international organizations should negotiate a more balanced solution to the Palestinian-Israeli issue on the public platform of the international community. And any program, any arrangement for the future of Gaza, must respect the will of the Palestinian people, including the respect and recognition by all countries of the world that both Gaza and the West Bank belong to the Palestinian territory.

In upholding the principle of "Palestinian People Governing Palestine", the international community should also work together to solve Gaza's post-war governance problems of insufficient funding aid and humanitarian assistance that the post-war governance of Gaza will inevitably face. Otherwise, the lack of rational governance programs and adequate funding for governance will lead to ineffective governance, and even exacerbate the humanitarian crisis.

Dr. ZHANG Yuan, Professor, The Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University, China

Trump fires top general CQ Brown in shake-up at Pentagon

US President Donald Trump has fired the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff CQ Brown, the highest-ranking officer in the country, as part of a major shake-up of top military leadership.

"I want to thank General Charles 'CQ' Brown for his over 40 years of service to our country," Trump posted on social media. He said five other top officers were also being replaced, BBC reported.

Gen. Brown was the second black officer to hold the post, the holder of which advises both the president and the secretary of defense on national security.

US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth had previously said that Gen. Brown should be fired because of his "woke" focus on diversity, equity and inclusion programs in the military.

Later on Friday, Hegseth announced the firings of two additional senior officers: Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Lisa Franchetti and Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. Jim Slife.

Franchetti was the first woman to lead the US Navy.

All three top officers removed on Friday were appointed by Trump's predecessor, Joe Biden.

Hegseth said in a statement: "Under President Trump, we are putting in place new leadership that will focus our military on its core mission of deterring, fighting and winning wars."

Trump said he would nominate Air Force Lt. Gen. Dan Caine - a career F-16 pilot who most recently served as CIA associate director for military affairs - as the new chairman of the joint chiefs of staff.



Last year, at the Conservative Political Action Conference, Trump recalled first meeting Gen. Caine in Iraq. "He looked better than any movie actor you could get," Trump told the audience.

In the same speech, he praised the military but said it was "woke at the top".

Gen. Brown had been visiting troops at the southern US border on Friday, roughly two hours before Trump's post announcing his departure.

Rumors had been swirling this week that the president would remove the commander, whose term was set to expire in 2027.

Gen Brown made headlines in 2020 when he spoke out about race following the death of George Floyd.

Palestinian families from Gaza take Canadian government to court

Palestinian families are suing the Canadian government after a temporary scheme that grants visas to Palestinians from Gaza with family ties to the country has been beset by delays.

The scheme has come under fire for its complexity and ineffectiveness in issuing visas, Middle East Eye reported.

Marku and Lee, an immigration and refugee law firm in Toronto, filed a case on February 6 on behalf of 53 Palestinian families who are currently in the Gaza Strip to ask the Federal Court of Canada to process the applications without delay.

The firm says half their clients are children,

the youngest of whom is seven months old. They expressed concern that the Canadian government had let the applications "sit in limbo" while conditions in Gaza had progressively worsened and the enclave had become uninhabitable since the scheme was launched more than a year ago.

They said their clients' Canadian family members had petitioned on behalf of their relatives within a month of the application, and their applications had not yet proceeded to the next stage. The Canadian families petitioning on behalf of their relatives remain concerned for their family members' lives.