

Defensive open-source press-intelligence. Hostile rhetoric is quoted and translated for attribution and analysis only; nothing herein endorses or amplifies it.



Executive Summary

The lead development of the 16 August edition is the surfacing of a downed-aircrew grievance as the batch's single convergent story: five separate titles across the factional spectrum (the reformist Shargh, the hardline Vatan-e Emrooz and Kayhan, the establishment Jomhuri Eslami and the government daily Iran) place three Iranian pilots in Qatar. Shargh frames it procedurally ('the file of the two Sukhoi-24 crews has passed the missing stage'), the government daily reassuringly ('three Iranian pilots are alive and in Qatar'), and the hardline titles as captivity ('in Qatari captivity', 'captive in Qatar'). Cross-checked against international reporting, this marks Iran moving the file from the army spokesman's 1 August line that the aircrews' fate was unknown to a public assertion that the three are alive and held by Doha; Qatar denied detaining any Iranian pilots on 15 August. The register split, procedural versus captivity, is the edition's clearest internal fault line and the direction it resolves, toward a release demand or an anti-Qatar grievance, is the thread to watch.

The edition's authorized political frame is negotiation-as-struggle. The government daily Iran and the principlist Sobh-e No print the identical Ghalibaf line, 'negotiation with America was, in essence, struggle', dated '60 days after the Islamabad understanding', with the government daily amplifying his claim that 'Trump signed recognition of the Resistance Front in the memorandum'. The identical framing across a government and a principlist title on the same morning indicates centrally-guided message discipline, and it recasts the Islamabad memorandum as a documented US concession rather than an Iranian compromise. Vatan-e Emrooz's editorial 'diplomacy on the battlefield' supplies the hardline version of the same argument: talks are the war continued by other means.

The war-as-American-exhaustion construction is carried forward and concentrated on the US Navy. Kayhan leads with a New York Times-attributed claim that Iran's strike on the US base in Bahrain 'drove off' the carrier Abraham Lincoln, adding second-hand claims of logistical collapse and crew trauma; Vatan-e Emrooz renders the same story as a one-word pun, 'seasickness', over a fog-bound carrier deck; Sobh-e No captions a carrier photo 'America pays the price for Trump's indecision'. Every figure here is single-outlet or second-hand and is logged behind the attribution firewall; the cross-title coordination, not the underlying veracity, is the signal, and it continues the standing 'Iran ascendant, America exhausted' thread this monitor has tracked since 11 August.

Lebanon stayed kinetic and framed as Israeli spoiling. The state broadcaster Jam-e Jam reported a dawn Israeli strike on the town of Ansar that killed a mother and all her children; Kayhan headlined 'an entire family massacred'; Fars News corroborated with a phosphorus-strike report near Ali al-Tahir and Hezbollah clashes. Jam-e Jam paired the atrocity with the Lebanese Speaker Nabih Berri's line that 'Israel places no value on agreements', casting Israel as the ceasefire spoiler, while Etemad's channel flagged a parliamentary bill on countering international crimes that gives the atrocity-documentation frame a legislative track. Against this, a quieter counter-signal ran at Hormuz: the reformist Sazandegi headlined 'agreement in the strait', reporting a Foreign Ministry-announced Iran-Oman understanding on shipping traffic, a practical, de-escalatory transit development that sits in visible tension with Iran Daily's English 'full control' assertion for foreign readers.

A new diplomatic front opened against France: Sobh-e No's 'Intelligence Ministry warning to France' and Kayhan's 'two French diplomats arrested at a terrorists' hideout' together stage a coercion episode, the ministry reserving the right to respond in kind over what it calls risks to its own diplomats. Domestically, the fuel-price question dominated the home front in a restraint register: Jomhuri Eslami ('plans need more deliberation') and Sazandegi's comparative 'gasoline report card' both worked to protect the Pezeshkian government's reform space, while the economic daily Donya-e-Eqtasad led on a tax shortfall and 1405 budget-deficit risk, a fiscal-realism counterweight to the front-page victory register. The municipal Hamshahri ran an entirely war-free front on Tehran infrastructure delivery.

Net assessment: this is a grievance-and-discipline edition, not one of new combat. Its single new event is diplomatic, not kinetic: the public assertion that three aircrew are alive in Qatar, disputed by Doha. Around it, the press held three standing constructions with unusual coordination, negotiation-as-struggle, America-exhausted, and Israel-as-spoiler-in-Lebanon, while a reformist title quietly surfaced a de-escalatory Iran-Oman transit understanding that cuts against the English-language 'full control' message. No standalone leadership message appeared; the leadership is present by decree and succession reference rather than direct address. The two threads to watch are whether the captive-pilots file becomes a release negotiation or an anti-Qatar escalation, and whether the Iran-Oman strait understanding is the leading edge of a Hormuz off-ramp or merely a reformist outlier against a still-hardening sovereignty line.

BOTTOM LINE On the morning Iran's press converged to place three downed Su-24 aircrew alive in Qatari hands, a public shift from 'missing' that Doha denies, the front pages recast negotiation with Washington as continued struggle, kept the war framed as American exhaustion, and quietly floated an Iran-Oman transit understanding at Hormuz even as the state English daily held the 'full control' line.

CRITICAL SOURCING NOTE Ten titles were analyzed from scan and three more from their own Telegram channels; the wire agencies (Defa Press, Fars News, Nour News) were used only for corroboration and are labeled as claims. The primary Persian kiosk had not posted the 25 Mordad batch readably at compile time, so 13 Persian pages were recovered via the pipeline's fallback path (EtemadOnline album plus individual channel posts), each accepted only where the printed Jalali date equaled 25 Mordad 1405; one fallback image labeled Etemad duplicated the Shargh page, so Etemad's print lead is reported from its channel with that caveat. Iran Daily (English) carries the usual one-day lag (24 Mordad). The convergent pilots story was cross-checked against international reporting; the New York Times-attributed carrier claim, the Iran-Oman strait agreement, Ghalibaf's memorandum characterization and all casualty and battle-damage figures are single-outlet or second-hand claims logged as reported, not adopted as fact. Tehran Times was unavailable at the time. 'The Leader' denotes Mojtaba Khamenei; the martyred predecessor is Ali Khamenei (28 February 2026).

Macro Trend Analysis

1 The captive-aircrew file goes public

Five titles across the spectrum (Shargh, Vatan-e Emrooz, Kayhan, Jomhuri Eslami, Iran) converge on three Iranian pilots in Qatar, moving the two Su-24 aircrews from the army spokesman's 1 August 'fate unknown' to a public assertion that they are alive and held by Doha, which denied it on 15 August. The framing splits by faction, procedural ('the file has passed the missing stage') and reassuring ('alive') on the reformist and government side, captivity-and-grievance on the hardline side, an internal fault line over whether the story becomes a release demand or an anti-Qatar cause.

2 Negotiation-as-struggle: the authorized frame

The government daily Iran and the principlist Sobh-e No print the identical Ghalibaf line, 'negotiation with America was, in essence, struggle', dated 60 days after the Islamabad understanding, with the government daily recasting the memorandum as a US concession ('Trump signed recognition of the Resistance Front'). Vatan-e Emrooz's 'diplomacy on the battlefield' editorial supplies the hardline version. The cross-factional identity of the wording indicates centrally-guided discipline, and it preserves space for continued talks by defining engagement as contest rather than reconciliation.

3 The war as American exhaustion, concentrated on the US Navy

Kayhan's New York Times-attributed claim that Iran's Bahrain strike 'drove off' the carrier Abraham Lincoln, Vatan-e Emrooz's 'seasickness' pun over a carrier deck, and Sobh-e No's 'America pays the price for Trump's indecision' form a uniform carrier-humiliation construction. All are single-outlet or second-hand; the coordination is the signal, carrying the standing 'Iran ascendant, America exhausted' thread forward from prior editions.

4 Lebanon stays kinetic; Israel framed as the spoiler

Jam-e Jam (a mother and all her children killed at Ansar), Kayhan ('an entire family massacred') and Fars News (phosphorus near Ali al-Tahir, Hezbollah clashes) keep the kinetic Lebanon file live, paired with the Lebanese Speaker Berri's 'Israel places no value on agreements' to cast Israel as the ceasefire spoiler. Etemad's channel adds a parliamentary counter-international-crimes bill, giving the atrocity frame a legislative track. Sobh-e No's Iraqi-sourced 'disarmament does not include the Hashd al-Shaabi' shields allied paramilitaries in the same regional debate.

5 A quiet Hormuz off-ramp against the 'full control' message

The reformist Sazandegi's 'agreement in the strait' reports a Foreign Ministry-announced Iran-Oman understanding on shipping traffic through Hormuz, a practical de-escalatory transit development, while Iran Daily holds the English-language 'full control' assertion and Jam-e Jam recruits the Russian envoy Ulyanov to mock Trump's Hormuz claim. The gap between a concrete transit accommodation and the sovereignty message for foreign readers is the edition's most consequential ambiguity on the strait.

6 A new France front, and domestic economic realism

Sobh-e No's 'Intelligence Ministry warning to France' and Kayhan's 'two French diplomats arrested at a terrorists' hideout' stage a fresh coercion episode against Paris. At home, the fuel-price question ran in a restraint register (Jomhuri Eslami's 'needs more deliberation', Sazandegi's comparative 'gasoline report card') that protects the Pezeshkian government's reform space, while Donya-e-Eqtasad's tax-shortfall and budget-deficit lead supplied a fiscal-reality counterweight to the front-page triumphalism.

Key Judgments

KJ-1 [MODERATE-HIGH] Iran has publicly moved its downed Su-24 aircrew from 'missing' to a claim that three pilots are alive and held in Qatar, the edition's convergent lead. Five titles across the factional spectrum (Shargh, Vatan-e Emrooz, Kayhan, Jomhuri Eslami, Iran) carry the story on 16 August; international reporting confirms Iran's General Staff traces the aircrew to two Su-24s downed on a 2 March mission against a US installation, that the army spokesman still called their fate unknown on 1 August, and that Qatar denied detaining any Iranian pilots on 15 August. Significance: the cross-factional convergence and the timing (immediately after Doha's denial) indicate a coordinated decision to make the pilots a public file; confidence attaches to the convergence and the reported chronology, not to the operational particulars, which remain contested between Tehran and Doha. The register split, procedural versus captivity, marks whether Tehran intends a quiet release track or a grievance campaign.

KJ-2 [MODERATE-HIGH] The regime is running a disciplined 'negotiation-as-struggle' line that preserves space for talks while denying concession. The government daily Iran and the principlist Sobh-e No print the identical Ghalibaf quotation, 'negotiation with America was, in essence, struggle', with the government daily amplifying his claim that the Islamabad memorandum recognized the Resistance Front. Significance: the identical wording across a government and a principlist title is a message-discipline marker rather than organic agreement, and it functions to legitimize continued engagement to a hardline audience by defining it as contest; the memorandum-as-US-concession characterization is Ghalibaf's attributed reading, not a verified account of the accord's terms.

KJ-3 [MODERATE-HIGH] Lebanon remains the batch's live kinetic file and is framed uniformly as Israeli spoiling of the ceasefire. Jam-e Jam and Kayhan reported an Israeli strike killing a mother and all her children at Ansar; Fars News corroborated with a phosphorus strike near Ali al-Tahir and Hezbollah clashes; Jam-e Jam paired the atrocity with Berri's 'Israel places no value on agreements'. Significance: the convergence of state-broadcaster, flagship and IRGC-agency coverage on the same civilian-casualty event, plus the Berri quote and Etemad's counter-international-crimes bill, indicates a coordinated Israel-as-spoiler construction; the casualty specifics are Iranian and Lebanese-sourced claims logged behind the attribution firewall.

KJ-4 [MODERATE] The press held its 'America exhausted' construction, concentrated this cycle on the US carrier force, entirely on second-hand claims. Kayhan's New York Times-attributed report that Iran's Bahrain strike 'drove off' the Abraham Lincoln, Vatan-e Emrooz's 'seasickness' carrier front and Sobh-e No's 'America pays the price for Trump's indecision' form a uniform humiliation register. Significance: the cross-title coordination continues the standing US-exhaustion thread and is the signal worth logging; the underlying carrier-flight, crew-trauma and deployment figures are single-outlet or second-hand and carry no independent confirmation.

KJ-5 [MODERATE] A concrete Iran-Oman transit understanding at Hormuz sits in tension with the sovereignty message aimed at foreign readers, an ambiguity that could mark either an off-ramp or a factional outlier. The reformist Sazandegi headlined 'agreement in the strait', a Foreign Ministry-announced Iran-Oman shipping understanding, while Iran Daily asserted 'full control' in English and Jam-e Jam relayed the Russian envoy mocking Trump's Hormuz claim. Significance: a practical transit accommodation cuts against the 15 August hardening of Hormuz from transit to sovereignty; whether it is the leading edge of de-escalation or a single reformist framing against a still-dominant sovereignty line is the strait thread to watch, and it is currently a single-title report of an attributed Foreign Ministry statement.

KJ-6 [MODERATE] Negative and domestic finding: the edition escalates framing, not confirmed combat, and its home front runs in restraint. Its only new event is the diplomatic pilots assertion, disputed by Doha; no new battlefield action is verified. No standalone leadership message appeared, the leadership present only by decree and succession reference

(Kayhan's 'a new election of the Leader signals readiness for a long war'). Domestically, Jomhourī Eslami and Sazandegi held a fuel-price-restraint line protecting the government, and Donya-e-Eqtesad led on a tax shortfall and budget-deficit risk. Significance: the fiscal-realism counterweight and the leadership's continued governance-by-decree indicate a regime managing calm and cost at home even as the fronts project ascendancy, and the absence of a direct leadership text on a coordinated-messaging day is itself a marker worth tracking.

Named-Figure Tracker

Figure	Role / relevance	Today's framing	Flag
Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf	Speaker of Parliament	'Negotiation with America was, in essence, struggle'; credited with claiming the Islamabad memorandum recognized the Resistance Front (Iran, Sobh-e No)	COERCION SPOKESMAN
Mojtaba Khamenei	Supreme Leader (since 28 Feb 2026)	No standalone message; present by decree and by Kayhan's 'a new election of the Leader signals readiness for a long war'	absence noted
Donald Trump	US President	'Deranged' and 'the clown' (Vatan-e Emrooz); blamed for the carrier's plight (Sobh-e No); his Hormuz claim mocked by Russia's Ulyanov (Jam-e Jam)	TARGET FRAMING
Benjamin Netanyahu	Israeli Prime Minister	'On the downhill slide' (Vatan-e Emrooz); implicated in the Lebanon	TARGET FRAMING

Figure	Role / relevance	Today's framing	Flag
		strikes framing	
Nabih Berri	Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament	'Israel places no value on agreements', recruited to the Israel-as-spoiler frame (Jam-e Jam)	WATCH
Kazem Gharibabadi	Deputy Foreign Minister	Reaffirms Iranian sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz (Etemad channel)	WATCH
Hossein Shariatmadari	Kayhan managing editor	'Yadasht-e Rooz' editorial casting hijab-removal as a foreign-intelligence operation	WATCH
Three Su-24 aircrew (reported: Javad Salehi, Abdolmajid Dashtian, Omran Behraveshtian)	Iranian military pilots said held in Qatar	'Alive and in Qatar' (Iran) versus 'in Qatari captivity' (Vatan-e Emrooz, Kayhan, Jomhouri Eslami); names per international reporting, not front-page-verified	NEW NAMED FIGURE

Headline Summary Table

Outlet	Lead Headline (English)	Orientation	Theme	Threat signal
Shargh	Three Iranian pilots in Qatar	Reformist	The pilots file 'past the missing stage', in procedural register; West Bank under settler pressure	MODERATE: downed-aircrew story surfaced
Vatan-e Emrooz	Seasickness	Hardline / principlist	Carrier Abraham Lincoln humiliation; three pilots 'in Qatari captivity'; Trump and Netanyahu in decline	MODERATE-HIGH: carrier-humiliation and captive-pilots framing
Kayhan	Iran's strike on the US base in Bahrain drove off the carrier 'Lincoln'	Ultra-hardline flagship	NYT-attributed carrier flight; Lebanon family 'massacred'; French diplomats arrested	HIGH: carrier claim, Lebanon massacre, France front

Outlet	Lead Headline (English)	Orientation	Theme	Threat signal
Jomhuri Eslami	Plans tied to the gasoline price need more deliberation	Traditional / establishment	Fuel-price restraint; three pilots 'captive in Qatar'; IRGC internal-security claim	MODERATE: fuel restraint; captive-pilots story
Iran	Negotiation is also struggle	Official government daily	Ghalibaf's negotiation-as-struggle line; three pilots 'alive and in Qatar'	MODERATE: authorized negotiation-as-struggle frame
Sobh-e No	Ghalibaf: Negotiation with America was, in essence, struggle	Principlist	Negotiation-as-struggle; Intelligence Ministry warning to France; Hashd al-Shaabi shielded from disarmament	MODERATE-HIGH: negotiation doctrine; France warning
Sazandegi	The gasoline report card	Reformist (Kargozaran)	Comparative fuel-reform governance; 'agreement in the strait' (Iran-Oman transit understanding)	LOW-MODERATE: de-escalatory Iran-Oman strait agreement
Iran Daily	Iran rejects US claims of normal traffic in Strait of Hormuz, asserts full control	State English-language	Hormuz 'full control' for foreign readers; 'offensive deterrence' doctrine column	MODERATE-HIGH: English Hormuz and offensive-deterrence messaging
Jam-e Jam	Israeli dawn strike on Ansar kills a mother and all her children	State broadcaster (IRIB)	Lebanon civilian atrocity; Berri 'Israel disregards agreements'; Ulyanov mocks Trump on Hormuz	MODERATE-HIGH: Lebanon atrocity; Israel-as-spoiler
Etemad	Deputy FM reaffirms Iranian sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz	Reformist (channel)	Hormuz sovereignty; parliamentary counter-international-crimes bill	MODERATE: Hormuz sovereignty; atrocity legislation
Donya-e-Eqtesad	Tax revenue falling short of target	Economic / business	1405 budget-deficit risk; the 'resilience contest of Iran and America'	LOW: economic-realism counterweight
Hamshahri	South Tehran drew closer to the North	Tehran municipality / centrist	Municipal infrastructure delivery; no war content	LOW: municipal-normalcy signal

Per-Paper Front-Page Analysis

Iran Daily

State English-language daily (IRNA), the regime's principal foreign-facing print voice

"Iran rejects US claims of normal traffic in Strait of Hormuz, asserts full control"

MODERATE-HIGH: English 'offensive deterrence' doctrine and Hormuz 'full control' for foreign readers



- Main: 'Iran rejects US claims of normal traffic in Strait of Hormuz, asserts full control', over a photo of vessels in the strait - the English-facing continuation of the 15 August sovereignty rebuttal, holding the 'full control' line for foreign readers even as Sazandegi reports a practical Iran-Oman transit deal.
- Front strap: 'Iran raps Western human rights statements as hypocritical blame game', a counter-narrative on the human-rights file addressed to Western audiences.
- Opinion Exclusive: 'New military lineup signals shift toward offensive deterrence', the batch's most deliberate foreign-facing doctrinal statement, restating that after the war's outbreak and 'the martyrdom of the Leader', new Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei issued decrees appointing senior military-security figures (naming Ahmad Vahidi's promotion among others); frames the reshuffle as a move from defensive to offensive deterrence. This carries the standing succession-and-command-consolidation thread; the individual sub-names remain single-source and are logged as reported.
- Economy: 'Iran oil output rises to 2.470m bpd in July, OPEC data shows', the post-war normalization data point aimed at foreign markets.
- World: 'How India's youth forced a union minister to resign', a non-axis international item.
- Sport: a weightlifting-championship item (Rohani/Beiranvand), off the war axis.

ANALYST NOTE Iran Daily is the diplomat-facing anchor of two standing threads: it keeps the Hormuz 'full control' assertion in English for foreign readers, and its opinion column restates the 'offensive deterrence' doctrine tied to Mojtaba Khamenei's post-succession decrees. The English 'full control' line sits in tension with Sazandegi's practical Iran-Oman transit agreement, a gap between the sovereignty message for abroad and the accommodation being worked at home. The OPEC output figure continues the post-war-normalization projection.

"Three Iranian

MODERATE: downed-aircrew story surfaced in procedural register; Israel/West Bank kept as aggression frame

pilots in Qatar" «سه خلبان ایرانی در قطر»



- Kicker: 'The file of the two Sukhoi-24 crews has passed the missing stage' (پرونده خدمه (دو سوخو-۲۴ از مرحله مفقودی عبور کرد), presenting as resolved-in-part the fate of aircrew previously logged as unaccounted for; the reformist framing is procedural (a 'file' advancing) rather than the hardline captivity register used elsewhere in the batch.
- Main: 'Three Iranian pilots in Qatar' (سه خلبان ایرانی در قطر), the day's convergent lead across the batch: Iran now publicly locates three downed Su-24 aviators in Qatar, a shift from the army spokesman's 1 August line that their fate was still unknown.
- Banner photo: 'The West Bank under settler pressure' (کرايه باختري زير فشار), over an image of a solidarity march with Palestinian flags and a 'Stop Terror / Stop the occupation' placard; kicker 'the anger of the shadow-mountain and provocation from Israel' frames settler violence as Israeli-enabled.
- Op-ed (سرمقاله): 'Cognitive and analytical error in decision-making' (خطای شناختی و (کیومرث اشتريان) by Kayumars Ashtarian, a governance-methodology critique consistent with the reformist call to correct policy reasoning rather than double down.
- Top strip: 'Israeli air raids on southern Lebanon' (حملات هوایی اسرئيل به جنوب لبنان) carried as a one-line kicker, keeping the kinetic Lebanon file live; plus domestic notes ('medical treatment now on installments', a foreign-exchange obligation item).
- Left rail (society): 'Indebted farmers' (دهقانان مقروض), 'Wandering in the labyrinth of adjudication' (پرسه زنی در هزارتوی قضاوت), and 'Repair poverty' (فقر تعميراتی) - a domestic-grievance column characteristic of the reformist home-front focus.

ANALYST NOTE Shargh anchors the edition's lead new thread, the three pilots in Qatar, in the sober reformist register (a 'file' advancing past 'missing') rather than the captivity-and-outrage framing of the hardline titles, while keeping the West Bank and southern Lebanon on the page as Israeli-aggression markers. The pairing signals a reformist outlet that will carry the national-security story but resists its weaponization. Track whether the pilots file moves toward a release demand or a grievance against Qatar.

Kayhan

Ultra-hardline flagship daily (کيهان), close to the Supreme Leader's office / IRGC, managing editor Hossein Shariatmadari; read from scan and its own channel

HIGH: carrier-flight claim (NYT-attributed), Lebanon massacre framing, France-diplomat arrests, long-war succession messaging

«حمله ایران به پایگاه آمریکا در بحرین ناو هواپیمابر «لینکلن» را فراری داد»
«لینکلن» را فراری داد»



- Main: 'Iran's attack on the US base in Bahrain drove off the aircraft carrier Lincoln' (حمله ایران به پایگاه آمریکا در بحرین ناو هواپیمابر «لینکلن» را فراری داد), attributed to 'The New York Times revealed' (نیویورک تایمز فاش کرد); the channel version (t.me/kayhan_online/80928) adds claims of 'logistical collapse', crew 'psychological trauma' and a '260-day continuous deployment', all second-hand and behind the attribution firewall.
- Photo lead (Lebanon): 'Continuation of the Zionists' crimes in Lebanon; all members of one family were massacred' (ادامه جنایات صهیونیست‌ها در لبنان؛ تمام اعضای یک خانواده), over strike imagery - the kinetic Lebanon file that Jam-e Jam (Ansar village) and Fars News (phosphorus near Ali al-Tahir) also carry.
- Right sidebar: 'Three Iranian pilots are captive in Qatar' (خلیان ایرانی در قطر اسیر ۳), the convergent pilots story in captivity register; plus 'America has no leverage over Iran' and 'a new election of Iran's Leader is a sign of readiness for a long war' (انتخابات جدید رهبر ایران نشانه آمادگی در جنگ طولانی است), tying the Mojtaba succession to war-endurance messaging.
- Left column: 'Two French diplomats arrested at a terrorists' hideout' (دو دیپلمات فرانسوی در پناهگاه تروریست‌ها دستگیر شدند), the counterpart to Sobh-e No's 'Intelligence Ministry warning to France'; plus 'Yemenis' push to seize the strategic port of Mokha' (خیز یمنی‌ها), extending the axis-momentum frame to the Red Sea.
- Editorial (Yadasht-e Rooz, t.me/kayhan_online/80925-80926): 'If they knew, they would stop!' by Hossein Shariatmadari, casting hijab-removal as a coordinated foreign-intelligence operation - a domestic culture-war editorial, not a war-front piece, notable for where the flagship spent its op-ed capital today.
- Domestic: '23 development and service projects opened in Shahriar at 3 trillion rials' - routine governance-delivery signaling.

ANALYST NOTE Kayhan leads with the second-hand carrier-humiliation claim (its NYT sourcing echoed by Vatan-e Emrooz's 'seasickness'), keeps the Lebanon atrocity file and the captive-pilots grievance in the sidebar, and opens a new France front (arrested diplomats). The choice to spend the Shariatmadari editorial on hijab-as-foreign-operation rather than the war signals a flagship confident enough on the external file to prioritize internal discipline. The 'new Leader = readiness for a long war' line continues the succession-legitimation thread.

Jomhouri Eslami

Traditional / establishment daily (جمهوری اسلامی), historically clerical-conservative but often critical of hardline economic management

"Plans tied to the gasoline price

MODERATE: fuel-restraint consensus; captive-pilots story; internal-security operation claim

need more deliberation" «طرح‌های مربوط به قیمت بنزین نیازمند تأمل بیشتر»



- Main: 'Plans related to the gasoline price need more deliberation' (طرح‌های مربوط به قیمت بنزین نیازمند تأمل بیشتر), a Jomhouri Eslami report on the anxieties around a fuel-price increase - the cautious-establishment counterpart to Sazandegi's 'report card', urging restraint rather than a rushed reform.
- Left column: 'Three Iranian pilots are captive in Qatar' (سه خلبان ایرانی در قطر اسارت هستند), the convergent pilots story again in captivity register.
- Left column: 'Destruction of the remaining terrorist team in southern Sistan-Baluchestan by the IRGC' (انهدام باقی‌مانده تیم تروریستی در جنوب سیستان و بلوچستان توسط سپاه), an internal-security operation claim.
- Left column: 'Allocation of one billion dollars for the strategic drug reserve' (اختصاص یک میلیارد دلار برای ذخیره استراتژیک دارو), a pharmaceutical-supply resilience item echoing the day's medicine-access concern (also on Shargh and Kayhan).
- Left column: 'The fifth year of the Taliban's rise to power in Afghanistan under sweeping human-rights violations' - a critical Afghanistan note.
- Top strip: '206 communications projects opened in North Khorasan' and 'more than 20 new mineral zones identified' - governance-delivery items; bottom photo 'harvesting a third of Gilan's rice'.

ANALYST NOTE Jomhouri Eslami holds the establishment caution line on fuel ('needs more deliberation'), aligning with the government's reassurance that no abrupt price rise is coming, and carries the captive-pilots story plus an internal-security IRGC claim. Its billion-dollar strategic drug reserve item connects to a quiet cross-title medicine-supply anxiety visible today. The outlet's restraint on fuel is a marker of elite consensus against a destabilizing price shock.

Hamshahri

Tehran municipality daily (همشه‌ری), centrist / civic

LOW: no war content; municipal-normalcy signal

"South Tehran drew closer to the North" «جنوب تهران به شمال نزدیک شد»



- Main (infographic): 'South Tehran drew closer to the North' (جنوب تهران به شمال نزدیک شد), the Tehran mayor's claim that '65 percent of the city's urban projects were carried out in southern Tehran' - a municipal equity-and-delivery splash with a family portrait and metro, parks and budget statistics.
- Infographic tiles: new metro line 10, 130 new neighborhood parks, an 11-percent municipal budget rise, bus-fleet renewal figures - civic-delivery metrics, off the war axis.
- Absence note: no front-page war, Israel, US, Lebanon or Hormuz content - a municipal title running entirely on domestic city-governance the morning after a mobilization-heavy news cycle.

ANALYST NOTE Hamshahri is the batch's normalcy marker: a war-free municipal front centered on Tehran infrastructure delivery. Its silence on the pilots, the carrier and Hormuz is itself a signal - the civic press is being allowed to project routine governance and post-war normalization rather than mobilization, consistent with the executive's managed-calm posture.

Sazandegi

Reformist daily (سازندگی), aligned with the Kargozaran (Executives of Construction) party

"The gasoline report card"

LOW-MODERATE: de-escalatory Iran-Oman strait transit agreement; fuel-policy governance critique

«کارنامه بنزینی»



- Main: 'The gasoline report card' (کارنامه بنزینی), over stacked portraits of five presidents (Hashemi Rafsanjani, Ahmadinejad, Khatami, Raisi, Rouhani); the standfirst asks, on the pretext of the halted fuel-price reform under Masoud Pezeshkian, which past administration reformed gasoline prices at the lowest economic-social cost and 'what margin is left for Pezeshkian' - a technocratic-reformist reframing of the fuel scandal as a governance-competence question.
- Top-left (lead war item): 'Agreement in the strait' (توافق در تنگه), reporting the Foreign Ministry spokesman's announcement of an Iran-Oman understanding on shipping traffic through the Strait of Hormuz (توافق ایران و عمان بر سر تردد کشتیرانی در تنگه هرمز) - a concrete, de-escalatory transit development inside the standing Hormuz file.
- Op-ed (Yadasht-e Rooz): 'The meaning of disarmament-integration in accelerating Lebanese discontent' (معنای الوام ادغام در تسريع نارضايتی لبنانی), a reformist reading of the Hezbollah disarmament debate as a driver of Lebanese friction.
- Kicker: 'Talibani after 5 years' (طالبانی پس از ۵ سال), marking the fifth year of Taliban rule in Afghanistan.
- Right rail: a bourse/market strap and economic notes consistent with the Kargozaran pro-market line.

ANALYST NOTE Sazandegi is the batch's most consequential outlier on Hormuz: while the hardline titles push carrier-humiliation, it headlines a practical Iran-Oman shipping agreement in the strait, a de-escalatory transit signal that cuts against the sovereignty-contest register of the 15 August edition and is worth tracking as a possible off-ramp. Its 'gasoline report card' turns the fuel scandal into a comparative-governance indictment aimed at defending Pezeshkian's reform space.

Donya-e-Eqttesad

Leading business / economic daily (دنیای اقتصاد), technocratic-liberal economic voice

"Tax revenue falling short of target" «جاماندگی مالیات از هدف»

LOW: economic-realism counterweight; budget-deficit and tax-shortfall focus

مالیات از هدف»



- Main: 'Tax revenue falling short of target' (جاماندگی مالیات از هدف), as Donya-e-Eqttesad examines the risk of a 1405 (2026-27) budget deficit - a fiscal-fragility lead that quietly undercuts the front-page triumphalism elsewhere in the batch.
- Photo/panel: 'The resilience contest of Iran and America' (مسابقه تاب‌آوری ایران و آمریکا), a critique-and-analysis roundtable (session 55) framing the war as a comparative economic-endurance competition rather than a battlefield - the economic register of the US-exhaustion thread.
- Left: 'Metro construction via land-value capture' (ساخت مترو با عوارض زمین) and 'Inequality in car ownership' (نابرابری در مالکیت خودرو), domestic political-economy items.
- Right rail: 'Resolving the knot of mineral-sector disclosure' and other markets notes; masthead op-ed 'Doran-e Tzour, Mehvar-al-Aloul' style column on national resilience.
- Tone: sober fiscal realism - budget deficit risk and tax shortfall foregrounded over war-victory messaging.

ANALYST NOTE Donya-e-Eqttesad is the batch's fiscal-reality check: leading on a tax shortfall and 1405 budget-deficit risk cuts against the 'Iran ascendant' construction, and its 'resilience contest' panel reframes the war as an economic-endurance test Tehran must still win at home. For the analyst, the paper is a counterweight indicator - when the economic press foregrounds deficit risk, the front-page victory register is running ahead of the fiscal base.

«دریازدگی» "Seasickness"



- Main (one-word pun): 'Daryazadegi' (دریازدگی, 'seasickness'), set over a fog-shrouded US aircraft-carrier flight deck with a lone sailor; the kicker cites 'American media reporting on the link between Iran's strikes on US logistics bases in the region and the recent crisis of the carrier Abraham Lincoln' (بحران اخیر ناو آبراهام لینکلن), the hardline twin of Kayhan's New York Times-attributed carrier story.
- Banner (top right): 'Three Iranian pilots are in Qatari captivity' (خلبانان ایرانی در اسارت ۳), the batch's convergent pilots story rendered in the captivity-and-grievance register, casting Qatar as detainer rather than the reformist 'file advancing' framing.
- Right rail: 'Trump the deranged' (روانگردان ترامپ) over a shadowed Trump portrait, citing the White House on the Strait of Hormuz; a hostile-caricature item, documented as rhetoric.
- Right rail: 'Netanyahu on the downhill slide' (نتانیاهو در سرازیشی سقوط), extending the standing 'adversary-leaders-failing' construction to the Israeli premier.
- Note (نگاه): 'The clown flees from reality' (فرار دلقک از واقعیت) by Hanif Ghaffari (حنیف غفاری), a signed column attacking Trump's Hormuz posture.
- Op-ed: 'Diplomacy on the battlefield' (دیپلماسی در میدان جنگ), arguing negotiation is a continuation of the war by other means, aligned with the Ghalibaf 'negotiation is struggle' line running through the batch.

ANALYST NOTE Vatan-e Emrooz supplies the hardline mirror of the two lead stories: the carrier 'seasickness' image weaponizes the US-exhaustion thread this monitor has tracked, and the pilots story is pushed into an anti-Qatar captivity frame. Its 'diplomacy on the battlefield' editorial and the 'Trump deranged / Netanyahu falling' rail keep the adversaries-in-decline construction disciplined. Track whether the anti-Qatar pilots framing hardens into a demand or a threat.

«مذاکره هم مبارزه است» "Negotiation is also struggle"



- Main: 'Negotiation is also struggle' (مذاکره هم مبارزه است), with the strapline 'Authority and cohesion: the key to passing beyond the state of neither-war-nor-peace' (اقتدار و) «انسجام، کلید عبور از وضعیت «نه جنگ، نه صلح»); sub-headline attributes to Speaker Ghalibaf that 'Trump signed the recognition of the Resistance Front in the memorandum of understanding' (قالیباف: ترامپ به رسمیت شناختن جبهه مقاومت را در تفاهم‌نامه امضا کرد).
- Sidebar: 'Three Iranian pilots are alive and in Qatar' (خلبان ایرانی زنده و در قطر هستند) - the government daily's rendering of the batch's lead pilots story, choosing the reassurance register ('alive') over the captivity framing of the hardline titles.
- Left photo: 'Cleanup operations in the tide cycle' (عملیات پاکسازی در چرخه جزر و مد), on Persian Gulf oil-pollution remediation protecting desalination plants and fisheries, a sovereignty-of-the-waterway domestic-competence note that sits beside the Hormuz thread.
- Center: 'Government incentives for the country's population stability' (مشوق‌های دولت), a natalist policy item carrying the administration's domestic agenda.
- Lower: 'Oil and logistics: two new axes of Iran-Tajikistan cooperation' (نفت و لجستیک، دو محور جدید همکاری ایران و تاجیکستان), projecting post-war economic normalization and regional outreach.
- Kicker: 'A stop sign for vehicles over 20 years old' (تابلوی ایست مقابل خودروهای بالای ۲۰ سال), routine domestic policy.

ANALYST NOTE The government daily converts Ghalibaf's 'negotiation is struggle' line into the edition's authorized frame: talks are not capitulation but a continuation of the contest, with the Islamabad memorandum recast as a US concession (recognition of the Resistance Front). Its choice to call the Qatar pilots 'alive' rather than 'captive' is a deliberate de-escalatory register from the executive, contrasting the hardline captivity framing. Continues the standing executive line of managing expectations on the US track.

MODERATE-HIGH: Ghalibaf negotiation-as-struggle doctrine; France warning; anti-disarmament shielding of allied paramilitaries

«محمدباقر قالیباف: مذاکره با آمریکا، در اصل مبارزه بود» *"Ghalibaf: Negotiation with America was, in essence, struggle"*



- Main: Speaker 'Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf: Negotiation with America was, in essence, struggle' (مذاکره با آمریکا، در اصل مبارزه بود), over a Ghalibaf portrait, with the strap '60 days after the Islamabad understanding' (روز پس از تفاهم اسلام‌آباد ۶۰) - dating the memorandum to mid-June and reaffirming Ghalibaf's consistent 'negotiation is a method of struggle' doctrine (verified as his standing line).
- Top: 'Intelligence Ministry warning to France' (هشدار وزارت اطلاعات به فرانسه), the ministry insisting in a statement that 'France must answer for the risks to its diplomats' and reserving the right to respond in kind - the diplomatic counterpart to Kayhan's 'two French diplomats arrested at a terrorists' hideout'.
- Lower band: 'Iraq: disarmament does not include the Hashd al-Shaabi' (عراق: خلع سلاح شامل حشد الشعبی نیست), attributed to the head of Iraq's security unit, carrying the regional-disarmament debate (Lebanon/Iraq) in a Tehran-congenial direction that shields allied paramilitaries.
- Bottom-right photo (carrier): 'America pays the price for Trump's indecision' (آمریکا، تاوان بابت کشتی ترانزیت را می‌دهد), the third carrier-themed front in the batch, reinforcing the US-exhaustion construction.
- Bottom-left: 'Enemy of football' (دشمن فوتبال) over an Infantino portrait, a FIFA-grievance item on a global coalition against Iranian/regional football interests - off the war axis.

ANALYST NOTE Sobh-e No pairs the authorized Ghalibaf 'negotiation-as-struggle' frame (shared with the government daily Iran) with two harder regional signals: an Intelligence Ministry threat to France over the arrested diplomats, and an Iraqi-sourced line insulating the Hashd al-Shaabi from disarmament, which reads across to the Lebanon/Hezbollah disarmament debate this monitor tracks. The convergence of principlist and government titles on the identical Ghalibaf line indicates centrally-guided message discipline rather than organic agreement.

Etemad

Reformist daily (اقتصاد); read from its own Telegram channel (today's front-page scan was a duplicate in the batch, so print lead not confirmed from scan)

MODERATE: Hormuz sovereignty reaffirmation; legislative atrocity-documentation track

"Deputy Foreign Minister reaffirms Iranian sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz"

- Hormuz (t.me/etemadonline/527994): commentary relaying Deputy Foreign Minister Gharibabadi reaffirming Iranian sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz - the reformist channel holding the sovereignty line even as Sazandegi reports a practical Iran-Oman transit agreement.
- Parliament (t.me/etemadonline/527993): 'Today parliament reviews the bill on countering international crimes' (امروز مجلس لایحه مقابله با جنایات بین‌المللی را بررسی می‌کند), a legislative-track item that legalizes the atrocity-documentation frame carried on the fronts (Lebanon, Israel).
- Region (t.me/etemadonline/527982): 'Resumption of passenger flights between Russia and Syria after 18 months' (آغاز پروازهای مسافربری میان روسیه و سوریه پس از ۱۸ ماه), a normalization data point on the Damascus axis.
- Note: Etemad's own front-page lead headline could not be confirmed from scan today; the above are the channel's most load-bearing political items.

ANALYST NOTE From the channel, Etemad tracks the Hormuz sovereignty line (Deputy FM Gharibabadi) and a parliamentary counter-international-crimes bill that gives legislative form to the Lebanon/Israel atrocity framing, plus a Russia-Syria flight-resumption normalization note. As a reformist title it carries the sovereignty message without the hardline carrier-triumphalism. The absence of a confirmed print lead is logged as a coverage gap, not a silence.

Jam-e Jam

State broadcaster daily (جام جم), published by IRIB; read from its own Telegram channel (front-page scan not in today's batch)

"Israeli dawn strike on **MODERATE-HIGH: Lebanon civilian-atrocity documentation; Israel-as-spoiler and anti-US Hormuz framing**

«در حمله بامداد امروز رژیم صهیونیستی به شهرک «انصار» در جنوب لبنان *Ansar village kills a mother and all her children* یک مادر و تمام فرزندانش به شهادت رسیدند»

- Lebanon (t.me/jamejamdaily/25015): 'In this morning's Israeli strike on the town of Ansar in southern Lebanon, a mother and all her children were killed' - the state broadcaster's rendering of the same atrocity Kayhan headlines ('an entire family massacred') and Fars News corroborates via a phosphorus-strike report near Ali al-Tahir, keeping the kinetic Lebanon file live.
- Hormuz (t.me/jamejamdaily/25019): 'Ulyanov mocked Trump's claim about the Strait of Hormuz' (اولیانوف ادعای ترامپ درباره تنگه هرمز را به سخره گرفت - a Russian-envoy line recruited to ridicule the US 'American territory' remark this monitor tracked on 15 August).
- Lebanon politics (t.me/jamejamdaily/25022): 'Nabih Berri: Israel places no value on agreements' (نبيه بری: اسرائیل هیچ ارزشی برای توافقاتها قائل نیست), the Lebanese Speaker cited to frame Israel as the ceasefire spoiler, reinforcing Tehran's blame-Israel construction on the Beirut file.

ANALYST NOTE Jam-e Jam, as the IRIB voice, concentrates on Lebanon: the Ansar-village family killing (corroborated across Kayhan and Fars) and a Berri quote casting Israel as the agreement-breaker, plus a Russian-sourced mockery of Trump's Hormuz claim. The state broadcaster is doing the atrocity-documentation and Israel-as-spoiler work while other titles run the pilots and carrier stories, indicating a division of messaging labor across the state press.

Appendix A - Leadership message: absence, and the authorized political line standing in its place

Front-page survey of 25 Mordad 1405; government daily Iran and principlist Sobh-e No

No standalone message from the Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, appears on the 16 August front pages. As on recent mobilization-heavy days, the leadership is present by decree and succession-imagery reference (Kayhan's 'a new election of Iran's Leader is a sign of readiness for a long war') rather than by direct address. The absence is recorded as a finding, not a silence: the regime continues to govern the war narrative through subordinate office-holders and the state press rather than a personal leadership text.

In the Leader message's place, the edition's authorized political line is carried by Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, quoted identically across the government daily Iran and the principlist Sobh-e No: 'Negotiation with America was, in essence, struggle' (مذاکره با آمریکا، در اصل مبارزه بود), dated '60 days after the Islamabad understanding'. This restates Ghalibaf's standing and independently verified doctrine that 'negotiation is a method of struggle' - engagement with Washington framed not as reconciliation but as the continuation of the contest by other means.

The government daily amplifies the corollary attributed to Ghalibaf that 'Trump signed the recognition of the Resistance Front in the memorandum of understanding' (ترامپ به رسمیت شناختن جبهه مقاومت را در تفاهم‌نامه امضا کرد), recasting the Islamabad memorandum as a documented US concession. This is an attributed political characterization of the accord's terms, logged behind the attribution firewall and not independently confirmed from the memorandum text.

Analyst flag: the identical Ghalibaf framing across a government and a principlist title on the same morning indicates centrally-guided message discipline. Source: Iran (official government daily) and Sobh-e No no. 2407, front pages, 25 Mordad 1405; Ghalibaf's 'negotiation is a method of struggle' doctrine corroborated in prior open-source reporting.

Appendix B - Flagged editorial: Kayhan 'Yadasht-e Rooz' by Hossein Shariatmadari

Kayhan daily editorial, channel permalinks t.me/kayhan_online/80925-80926, 25 Mordad 1405

The day's flagged editorial is the Kayhan 'Yadasht-e Rooz' (Note of the Day), authored by managing editor Hossein Shariatmadari (author verified via the outlet's own channel), published in two parts under the title 'If they knew, they would stop!' (اگر بدانند، دست برنمی‌دارند).

The following is a faithful reconstruction from the channel excerpt, not a verbatim full translation (the complete print text was not retrieved). The editorial argues that the removal of the hijab in Iran is not a spontaneous social phenomenon but a coordinated operation directed by foreign intelligence services against the stability of the Islamic Republic. Shariatmadari cites what he presents as statements by Western officials to claim that cultural subversion is a deliberate instrument of pressure.

He draws a distinction between unknowing domestic participants and the foreign planners he alleges stand behind them, summarized in the line: 'If they knew who orchestrates this, they certainly would not do it.' The rhetorical move is to reframe a domestic civil-liberties question as an external security threat, transferring responsibility from the state to a foreign adversary.

Analyst flag: notable less for its content than for its placement. On a day dominated by the pilots-in-Qatar story, the carrier-humiliation claim and the Lebanon strikes, the flagship's ultra-hardline editor spent his signed editorial capital on internal cultural discipline rather than the war front - a sign of a hardline center confident enough on the external file to prioritize domestic mobilization. The attributed 'Western officials' statements are unverified and reproduced here only as documented rhetoric. Source: Kayhan, 'Yadasht-e Rooz', t.me/kayhan_online/80925-80926, 25 Mordad 1405.

Appendix C - Methodology & Sourcing Notes

iran-press-digest pipeline, 16 August 2026

Coverage and provenance: the primary Persian kiosk had not posted the 25 Mordad batch in a readable format at compile time (its newest readable album was 24 Mordad). The pipeline's fallback path recovered 13 Persian front pages from the EtemadOnline daily front-page album plus the individual channel posts of Vatan-e Emrooz, Iran and Sobh-e No, each accepted only where the caption's printed Jalali date equaled 25 Mordad 1405, together with one English album (Iran Daily, dated 24 Mordad, the English kiosk's usual one-day lag). Ten distinct titles were analyzed by vision from scan (Shargh, Vatan-e Emrooz, Kayhan, Jomhuri Eslami, Hamshahri, Iran, Sazandegi, Donya-e-Eqtasad, Sobh-e No, and Iran Daily), with Khabar Varzeshi (sports) noted but not analyzed politically.

Text channels: Kayhan, Etemad and Jam-e Jam were read from their own Telegram channels; Defa Press, Fars News and Nour News (wire agencies) were monitored for corroboration and their content is labeled as claims, folded into trends and the threat register rather than treated as front pages. One image in the fallback album (labeled Etemad) was a duplicate of the Shargh front page, so Etemad's own print lead could not be confirmed from scan and is reported from its channel with that caveat. Tehran Times was unavailable at the time.

Verification of the lead story: the convergent 'three Iranian pilots in Qatar' headline (Shargh, Vatan-e Emrooz, Kayhan, Jomhuri Eslami, Iran) was cross-checked against international reporting. Iran's Armed Forces General Staff has held that two Su-24 tactical bombers were downed during a low-altitude mission against a US installation on 2 March 2026, with three aircrew subsequently held in Qatar; on 1 August Iran's army spokesman still called their fate unknown, and Qatar publicly denied detaining Iranian pilots on 15 August. Today's fronts thus mark Iran moving the file from 'missing' to a public assertion that the three are alive and in Qatar. Names circulating in international coverage (reported as Javad Salehi, Abdolmajid Dashtian and Omran Behraveshtian; a separate pilot, Majid Kazemi, reported earlier returned) are attributed to that reporting, not verified from the front pages.

Attribution firewall and caveats: the New York Times-attributed carrier-flight claim (Kayhan, Vatan-e Emrooz's 'seasickness', Sobh-e No), the Iran-Oman strait transit agreement (Sazandegi, via the Foreign Ministry spokesman), Ghalibaf's characterization of the Islamabad memorandum, and all agency battle-damage and casualty figures are single-outlet or second-hand claims logged as reported, not adopted as fact. Iranian and second-hand foreign quotations are not to be reproduced as authentic without primary-source confirmation. The succession-standing convention of this monitor applies: 'the Leader' in current coverage denotes Mojtaba Khamenei; the martyred predecessor is Ali Khamenei (28 February 2026). Translations are editorial; loaded register terms are glossed where they carry the framing.

Open-source material only. All translations from Persian/Arabic originals. Iranian claims are labelled as claims. Prepared for analysis and early warning; hostile content is documented for defensive assessment only, not endorsed.