OPEN-SOURCE PRESS INTELLIGENCE

Iranian Press Monitor

Daily Front-Page Intelligence

Day 190 - Wednesday, 9 September 2026 · 18 Shahrivar 1405 · 27 Rabi al-Awwal 1448

THE OIL WEAPON AUDITED EDITION

Nine front pages (eight Persian from the Wednesday 18 Shahrivar Tasnim album and Iran Daily from the English kiosk), plus the Kayhan, Vatan-e Emrooz, Jam-e Jam, Etemad, Iran and Sobh-e No channels and the Defa Press, Fars and Nour News wires; Tehran Times and the leadership websites were unavailable at the time

Front pages published the morning of 9 September 2026, reflecting events through late 8 September local time

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

Front page: Nobonyad

Executive Summary

The lead judgment of the cycle is that the Iranian press has stopped presenting the oil price as a consequence of the war and started presenting it as the war's instrument, and that this framing was contested in print on the same morning by name. Kayhan gives its main headline not to Iran's own claimed operations but to Yemen's: 'within 48 hours, Yemen set three Aramco refineries ablaze; the oil price became 100 dollars'. Its own bullets state the doctrine plainly, that 'Bab al-Mandab and the Strait of Hormuz have now become two decisive chokepoints in the world's oil equations, which squeeze the throat of America and the Zionist regime', and two further bullets address the American president directly over his stated hope for cheaper crude. Vatan-e Emrooz prints the same rounded figure in red in its headline box. Outside reporting places Brent near but below 100 dollars after strikes on Aramco installations at Jizan, Abha and Najran, so the number carried on two hardline fronts is a rounded-up framing rather than a settlement price, and the substance of the strikes and the fires is verified while the price is not.

The rebuttal is the most striking editorial act in this edition because it comes from an Iranian front page rather than from outside. Sazandegi, the daily of the Kargozaran-e Sazandegi party, devotes its entire front to one question set in outsized type, 'Why did oil not reach 200 dollars?', and its deck names the opposing camp: 'while the price of oil has stopped at the 100-dollar border, some principlists and defenders of the war claimed that with the continuation of war conditions the price per barrel would pass even 200 dollars, but that did not happen'. The paper then states its research question, what prevented the rise and what the role of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Iraq and even China was in capping it. That converts the flagship's scoreboard into evidence of Iran's isolation, and it is the only quantitative and testable claim any Iranian front page makes this morning. Two papers of two factions read the same price and reach opposite conclusions about who is being squeezed.

The day's military claim was ranked below the price argument almost everywhere. The IRGC announced the seizure at dawn on 8 September of an American unmanned underwater vehicle at the approaches to the Strait of Hormuz, described in its own vocabulary as spoils of war; outside reporting identifies the vehicle as an Anduril Dive-LD autonomous system and records that the American military had issued no confirmation. Nobonyad gives it the whole upper page under 'The IRGC's valuable catch'; Etemad and Ta'adol give it a banner and a column; Chahar Sough places it at the foot of the page beneath a dispute about internet tariffs; Kayhan gives it a top-right banner rather than the lead. The reputational payload is not the vehicle but the inference drawn from it, stated by the IRGC spokesman on the Defa Press wire, that no advanced technology can pass the surveillance layers in the Strait, together with the taunt that mastery of the Persian Gulf belongs to Iran's technologist youth and that the Americans should return to the Bay of Pigs.

The escalation that outranks everything printed did not reach a front page, because it postdated the deadline. The IRGC Navy published a warning to all tanker crews within the berths of Kuwait and Bahrain, described as hosts of and partners in American wrongdoing, to leave their vessels immediately whether at anchorage or alongside, because they will be targeted. IRGC public relations claims strikes on two American vessels, eight tankers and ten further ships intending to cross the prohibited and unsafe zone, in response to what it calls an American attack on five Iranian tankers, and outside reporting records an accompanying Iranian claim of ballistic-missile hits on two named destroyers that Washington has not confirmed. The commander of the Khatam al-Anbia Central Headquarters, Major General Abdollahi, states the ladder in advance: any assault on Iranian tankers will cause American bases and interests in the region to be targeted. Missiles over the American bases in Jordan, carried as video by Sobh-e No and Jam-e Jam, show that ladder already being climbed.

The Lebanese front entered the edition as a domestic Iranian argument rather than as a battlefield report, and both sides of it were printed the same morning. Shargh's lead photograph carries the standing head 'Bipolarisation with the codeword Ali al-Taher' over the line 'how the developments of south Lebanon became an instrument for renewed pressure on the negotiators'. Ali al-Taher is the ridge above the Litani near Nabatieh whose underground complex Israel declared under operational control on 3 September. Kayhan's editorial devotes two of its seven numbered sections to rebutting exactly that reading, insisting the Israeli 36th Division has been pinned at the foot of the 600-metre hill for over two months, alleging the use of phosphorus shells and cluster bombs around Nabatieh and Deir al-Zahrani, and denouncing by name the domestic analysts who tie the hill's fall to 'the first article of the Islamabad Memorandum', the article requiring the immediate cessation of military operations on all fronts including Lebanon. A Lebanese hilltop has become an Iranian loyalty test, and the terms of that test are now published on both sides.

The flagship's own campaign at home changed shape with its byline, which answers the tracking cue this monitor set yesterday in the negative. Kayhan's 'Yadasht-e Rooz', translated in full in Appendix B, is signed today by Hassan Rashvand rather than by Hossein Shariatmadari. Hassan Rouhani is named and attacked at length for producing the false dichotomy of war and its termination and for proposing to consult the people; Mohammad Khatami, named yesterday alongside him, is not mentioned. The demand on the judiciary changed with the target: yesterday it was that the judicial and security centres should not pass lightly over two former presidents, today it is that the government and the judiciary must deal with economic disruptors, naming Iran Khodro for raising vehicle prices by an average of 30 per cent immediately after the petrol change. The escalation of 8 September did not continue into a third day in the same form; the register is unchanged and the object has moved from the political class to the economic one.

A domestic security contingency was pre-positioned on the hardline front and named in the editorial. Vatan-e Emrooz leads not on the war but on two large photographs of seized pistols, magazines and an assault rifle under 'The sinister dream of unrest', reporting a rise in weapons seizures from what it calls terrorist grouplets. Kayhan's editorial supplies the calendar: it warns that the enemy seeks to push society toward violent behaviour 'on the eve of the anniversary of the failed Woman, Life, Freedom project' and to repeat the bitter events of the years 1401 and 1404. Read together, the two pages describe a single anticipated internal contingency and a security response prepared in advance of it, and they place a domestic axis in the regime's threat model alongside the naval one.

The cost-of-living file consolidated across three factions at once. Chahar Sough leads with 'The internet too has become a victim of price liberalisation' over the Majlis's yellow card to the communications minister, filing the internet increase in the same category as the third-tier petrol rise recorded on 8 September; Nobonyad prints the same censure as a consumer grievance; Sazandegi prints it as 'Yellow card to the defender of internet freedom' and reframes it as the government's quarrel with Majlis hardliners. Chahar Sough recruits Hojjatollah Abdolmaleki, labour minister of the previous principlist cabinet, to blame the abandonment of the currency market. Ta'adol meanwhile prints a record equity index at the seven-million peak beside an admitted 'duality called inflation and recession' and declines to connect them. One parliamentary censure carried by three papers of three orientations on one morning is the clearest evidence in this edition that the domestic price file is no longer factionally owned.

Net assessment: this is a coalition-and-consequences edition rather than an operations edition. Its centre of gravity is not the captured drone but the argument about whether the economic instrument works, and for the first time in this run that argument was conducted on Iranian front pages in quantitative terms, with one paper naming the Gulf states, Iraq and China as the reason the price stalled. Against that, the state's own English-facing daily published an expert case that the Strait cannot be routed around, giving the coercion policy its analytic foundation in English, and the wires published a threat to commercial crews inside two third states'

ports that no front page carried. The gap between what the fronts argue and what the wires threaten is the widest this monitor has recorded, and it is the gap, rather than either side of it, that should be watched.

BOTTOM LINE On the morning Iran's navy claimed an American underwater drone and eighteen vessels, the hardline flagship led instead with a partner's burning of three Saudi refineries and printed the oil price as the war's scoreboard, and the reformist daily of the Kargozaran party audited that scoreboard on its own front page and found the weapon capped by Riyadh, Abu Dhabi, Baghdad and Beijing, while the escalation that actually matters, a published order to tanker crews in Kuwaiti and Bahraini berths to abandon their ships, appeared on no front page at all.

CRITICAL SOURCING NOTE Nine front pages read in full by vision from the Tasnim Persian album of Wednesday 18 Shahrivar 1405 and the English-language kiosk album, both carrying the target date, so the stale-batch guard did not trip. Outlet channels for Kayhan, Vatan-e Emrooz, Jam-e Jam, Etemad, Iran and Sobh-e No were retrieved directly; Defa Press, Fars News and Nour News were used for corroboration only and their material is confined to the trends, judgments and wire register rather than to the front-page sections. Tehran Times and the leadership websites were unavailable at the time of compilation, which is why Appendix A quotes no primary text from the Leader. All Iranian battle-damage figures in this edition are claims by the party making them, including the seizure of the American underwater vehicle, the strikes on two American vessels and eighteen further ships, the missile hits on two named destroyers, and the destruction of an MQ-1 over the Strait; none was confirmed by the United States at compile time. The 100-dollar oil figure printed by Kayhan and Vatan-e Emrooz is a rounded-up framing: outside reporting places Brent near but below that level. The identification of the IRGC spokesman as Sardar Mohebbi rests on a single wire item and is reported as printed; the name of the energy analyst interviewed by Iran Daily is not legible at the resolution available and is therefore not given. The quotation attributed to RAND in Kayhan's editorial is reproduced as printed and has not been verified against any RAND publication.

Macro Trend Analysis

1 The oil price becomes a contested scoreboard rather than a shared premise

For the first time in this run, two Iranian front pages print the same crude price and draw opposite conclusions from it on the same morning. Kayhan and Vatan-e Emrooz carry 100 dollars as proof that the two chokepoints are squeezing America; Sazandegi asks in outsized type why the figure is not 200 and answers by naming Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Iraq and China as the states that capped it. The economic instrument has moved from assertion to audit, and the audit is being conducted in public by an Iranian party daily.

2 Coercion migrates from the waterway into third states' harbours

The Hormuz thread this monitor has tracked since the prohibited-zone declaration advanced materially in this cycle, and not in the direction of a written instrument. The IRGC Navy published a warning to tanker crews inside Kuwaiti and Bahraini berths to abandon their vessels because they will be targeted, and a Defa Press analysis states the enforcement logic explicitly: the aim is to move pressure out of the military field into trade, shipping, insurance and maritime logistics, so that a vessel must decide about route, ownership, destination, insurance and cooperation long before it reaches the Strait. The instrument is now described as commercial and extraterritorial rather than naval and local.

3 A Lebanese hilltop is converted into an Iranian loyalty test

Shargh asserts that the developments at Ali al-Taher are being used at home as an instrument of renewed pressure on Iran's negotiators, and Kayhan's editorial rebuts precisely that reading in two numbered sections, naming the first article of the Islamabad Memorandum as the clause the critics invoke. Both papers are

arguing about domestic negotiating latitude rather than about the ridge, which means a verified battlefield outcome in Lebanon now functions primarily as a factional resource in Tehran.

4 The flagship's editorial changes hands and changes target

Yadasht-e Rooz is signed today by Hassan Rashvand rather than Hossein Shariatmadari. Hassan Rouhani is named and attacked, Mohammad Khatami is not named, and the demand on the judiciary moves from action against two former presidents to action against car pricing and currency rumour networks, with Iran Khodro named for a 30 per cent average increase. The register of the column is unchanged; only its object has moved, which indicates the campaign against the political class is authored rather than institutional.

5 The domestic price file loses its factional ownership

One parliamentary censure of the communications minister over internet package prices appears on three front pages of three orientations on the same morning, as a consumer grievance in Nobonyad, as evidence of an unannounced price liberalisation in Chahar Sough, and as the government's quarrel with Majlis hardliners in Sazandegi. Chahar Sough additionally recruits a labour minister of the previous principlist cabinet to blame the currency market. Cost-of-living grievance is no longer available to one camp as a weapon against the other.

6 An internal contingency is pre-positioned against a protest anniversary

Vatan-e Emrooz leads on rising weapons seizures under 'The sinister dream of unrest' while Kayhan's editorial names the calendar, warning of a push toward violent behaviour on the eve of the anniversary of the failed Woman, Life, Freedom project and of a repetition of the events of 1401 and 1404. The hardline daily most reliably devoted to the war led instead on domestic security, which places a home-front axis alongside the naval one in the regime's published threat model.

Key Judgments

KJ-1 [HIGH] The Iranian press is now presenting the war as a coalition enterprise whose principal instrument is economic rather than military. Kayhan's lead is a partner's operation, not Iran's, and its bullets state the two-chokepoint formula as achieved doctrine rather than as advocacy: Bab al-Mandab and Hormuz together squeezing the throat of America and Israel. Vatan-e Emrooz's headline box carries the same rounded oil figure in red, and Iran Daily in English frames the Yemeni strikes as retaliation for a Saudi bombing campaign, which assigns Riyadh the role of belligerent. Significance: an escalation that yields a price movement can be claimed as success without any battle-damage assertion that would have to be defended, which lowers the cost of continuing it and makes further strikes on Gulf energy infrastructure the cheapest available form of pressure.

KJ-2 [HIGH] Maritime coercion has been extended, in published form, from the Strait itself into the ports of two third states. The IRGC Navy's warning instructs all tanker crews within the berths of Kuwait and Bahrain to leave their vessels immediately, at anchorage or alongside, because they will be targeted, on the stated ground that those states host and are complicit with American forces. The Khatam al-Anbia Central Headquarters, through its commander Major General Abdollahi and its spokesman, states that any assault on Iranian tankers will cause American bases and interests in the region to be targeted. Significance: this is the first time in this run that the coercion instrument has been aimed at civilian crews inside sovereign Gulf harbours rather than at transiting vessels, and it converts Kuwait and Bahrain from mediators and hosts into declared targets, which is a materially different escalation from anything in the prohibited-zone declaration.

KJ-3 [MODERATE-HIGH] The oil weapon's effectiveness is now openly disputed inside Iran, and the dispute has moved to quantitative ground. Sazandegi's entire front is the question 'Why did oil not reach 200 dollars?', with a deck that names 'some principlists and defenders of the war' as the source of the failed forecast and identifies Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Iraq and China as the parties that capped the price. Iran Daily's own interview concedes that Iraq exported around 3.6 million barrels per day before the disruption, with roughly 3.4 million through the southern Basra terminals, which is a published acknowledgement that the disruption has cost a neighbour its principal export route. Significance: the argument for continuing the maritime campaign now has to survive an Iranian counter-argument that the campaign's own measure of success has stalled, and the reformist camp has found a line of attack that does not require it to defend the enemy.

KJ-4 [MODERATE-HIGH] The Ali al-Taher ridge has become a domestic Iranian political object rather than a Lebanese battlefield report, and both sides of that argument were printed on the same morning. Shargh's lead carries 'Bipolarisation with the codeword Ali al-Taher' over the assertion that south Lebanon is being used as an instrument of renewed pressure on Iran's negotiators; Kayhan's editorial spends two numbered sections rebutting exactly that, insisting Israel's 36th Division has been pinned at the foot of the hill for more than two months and denouncing the domestic analysts who tie the outcome to the first article of the Islamabad Memorandum. Outside reporting records that Israel declared operational control of the underground complex on 3 September. Significance: a verified battlefield loss is being metabolised as a test of negotiating loyalty, which narrows the latitude of Iran's negotiators independently of anything happening on the ground in Lebanon.

KJ-5 [MODERATE-HIGH] The regime's published threat model now carries a domestic axis that the hardline press ranks above the naval one. Vatan-e Emrooz, the daily most reliably devoted to the war, led instead on rising weapons seizures from what it calls terrorist grouplets under the headline 'The sinister dream of unrest', with two large photographs of the seized weapons. Kayhan's editorial supplies the timing, warning of an enemy effort to push society toward violent behaviour on the eve of the anniversary of the failed Woman, Life, Freedom project and to repeat the bitter events of 1401 and 1404, and it demands that executive managers stop describing budget, currency and energy shortfalls from public podiums. Significance: the security apparatus is pre-positioning against an anticipated autumn protest cycle, and the instruction to officials to stop naming economic problems in public is an early indicator that the tolerance for admitted hardship is narrowing.

KJ-6 [MODERATE] Kayhan's campaign against named former presidents is authored rather than institutional, and it did not continue into a third day in the form this monitor flagged. The tracking cue set on 8 September was whether the flagship would sustain its demand that the judicial and security centres act against Hassan Rouhani and Mohammad Khatami. Today's Yadasht-e Rooz is signed by Hassan Rashvand rather than Hossein Shariatmadari; Rouhani is named and attacked at length, Khatami is not named at all, and the demand on the judiciary is redirected to economic disruptors, with Iran Khodro named for an average 30 per cent price increase following the petrol change. Significance: the escalation that appeared to be building toward prosecution of two former presidents tracks the columnist rather than the institution, which lowers the near-term probability of judicial action against them while leaving the register intact for whenever the byline returns.

KJ-7 [MODERATE] Negative evidence: the Leader remains editorially invisible for a fourth consecutive edition, and his authority is being exercised by citation rather than by publication. No message, speech,

photograph or quotation from him appears on any of the nine front pages. The only textual reference in the entire edition is inside Kayhan's editorial, which attacks the effort to make 'the uncompromising guidance of Imam Sayyid Mojtaba Khamenei (may his shadow endure)' appear ineffectual, using the honorific reserved for a living Leader; a leadership-website poster marking the Persian Gulf operation is single-sourced to a channel relay. Significance: on a day carrying a claimed naval victory, a partner's strategic success and a contested oil price, the office that would ordinarily arbitrate between the flagship's reading and the reformist audit issued nothing, and the resulting vacuum is what allows two Iranian front pages to reach opposite conclusions about the same number without correction.

KJ-8 [MODERATE] The state's English-facing output is doing analytic work its Persian counterparts are not, and it is aimed at foreign decision-makers rather than domestic readers. Iran Daily leads with the president rather than the IRGC, renders his formula as resistance 'until aggressors' defeat' where the Persian pages print 'until the aggressors' complete regret', assigns Saudi Arabia the first move in the Yemen exchange, and devotes its lower half to an expert case that alternative oil routes cannot make Hormuz irrelevant because the Strait is an integral part of the Gulf's energy architecture rather than merely a geographic chokepoint, citing the Kirkuk to Baniyas revival as roughly four years and at least fifteen billion dollars away. Significance: Tehran is building the argument that the chokepoint is structural and permanent while its own intentions are defensive, which is the case a mediator would need in order to press for a negotiated transit regime rather than for the zone's removal.

Named-Figure Tracker

Figure	Role / relevance	Today's framing	Flag
Masoud Pezeshkian	President of Iran	Quoted on three front pages in one formula, that resistance continues until the complete regret of the aggressors, printed by Kayhan as a reply to Trump's nonsense-talk and by Iran Daily in English as resistance until the aggressors' defeat	COERCION SPOKESMAN
Donald Trump	President of the United States	Named in Kayhan's lead bullets as deluded and caught in the equations while nursing the dream of 50-dollar oil; Vatan-e Emrooz advises him to take a lesson from Bush; Etemad files the exchange as a media quarrel	TARGET FRAMING
Hassan Rouhani	Former president of Iran	Named and attacked at length in Kayhan's editorial for producing the false dichotomy of war and its termination and for proposing to consult the people, and accused of ten years of fruitless negotiation and of dictatorial policies	TARGET FRAMING
Mohammad Khatami	Former president of Iran	Named alongside Rouhani in the 8 September editorial and not named at all today; the omission tracks the change of editorial byline	absence noted
Mojtaba Khamenei	Supreme Leader	Named in print only inside Kayhan's editorial, as Imam Sayyid Mojtaba Khamenei with the honorific of a living Leader, defended against those said to make his uncompromising guidance appear ineffectual; no message,	absence noted

Figure	Role / relevance	Today's framing	Flag
		speech or image on any front page for a fourth consecutive edition	
Hassan Rashvand	Author of today's Kayhan Yadasht-e Rooz	Takes the flagship's editorial slot from Hossein Shariatmadari and redirects its judicial demand from two former presidents to economic disruptors and car pricing	NEW NAMED FIGURE
Hossein Shariatmadari	Managing editor of Kayhan	Author of the 7 and 8 September editorials that named two former presidents and demanded action by the judicial and security centres; absent from today's editorial slot	absence noted
Major General Abdollahi	Commander of the Khatam al-Anbia Central Headquarters	States on the wires that the American army has issued evacuation warnings to three Iranian tankers before striking them, and that any assault on Iranian tankers will cause American bases and interests in the region to be targeted	COERCION SPOKESMAN
Mohammad-Baqer Ghalibaf	Speaker of the Majlis and head of the negotiating delegation as introduced by Sobh-e No on 8 September	Reacts to the drone seizure with the claim that America's smart submarine programme has been knocked out, carried as a captioned graphic in a comic register rather than as a statement	WATCH
Mohsen Rezaei	Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council	Quoted on the Vatan-e Emrooz channel describing the Strait as Iran's strait of dignity, and cited in Kayhan's editorial as having said the great problem in the memorandum affair was trust in the guarantee of the mediators	COERCION SPOKESMAN
Esmail Ahmadi-Moghaddam	Head of the National Defence University	Tells Defa Press that an understanding securing the nation's interests and permanently closing the path of future aggression would be very desirable but is an out-of-reach goal because the enemies are greedy and treaty-breaking	WATCH
Hojjatollah Abdolmaleki	Labour minister in the Raisi cabinet	Interviewed on the Chahar Sough front to argue that the main factor in the price rises is the abandonment of the currency market, a principlist voice recruited against the current government's economic management	NEW NAMED FIGURE
Ali Nabiyan	Deputy minister of roads and urban development	Leads Etemad's front page explaining the free transfer of land and the government's new housing programmes, the edition's one significant non-war lead	NEW NAMED FIGURE
Javad Heyran-Nia	Analyst of Persian Gulf affairs	Interviewed by Etemad under the head 'the pressure strategy from Hormuz to Vienna', the only front-page item to link the maritime instrument explicitly to the nuclear track	WATCH

Figure	Role / relevance	Today's framing	Flag
Antonio Guterres	Secretary-General of the United Nations	Relayed on the Defa Press wire condemning the intensification of Israeli attacks in and around Nabatieh, civilian casualties including women and children, displacement from evacuation orders, and widespread destruction	WATCH
Niloufar Mojaveri	Subject of an Etemad investigation into torture and brain death in Piranshahr	Etemad reports the case through an interview with her father under the head 'the hidden dimensions of the crime in Piranshahr'	WATCH

Headline Summary Table

Outlet	Lead Headline (English)	Orientation	Theme	Threat signal
Kayhan	Within 48 hours, Yemen set three Aramco refineries ablaze; the oil price became 100 dollars	Hardline, the Leader's flagship daily	Yemen, Aramco and the oil price as the war's scoreboard	SEVERE: chokepoint doctrine printed as achieved fact
Vatan-e Emrooz	The sinister dream of unrest	Hardline / principlist	Weapons seizures ahead of a protest anniversary; a calibrated nuclear warning to the IAEA	HIGH: pre-emptive internal security framing
Nobonyad	The IRGC's valuable catch	Conservative / principlist	The captured American underwater drone as proof of total surveillance of the Strait	HIGH: claimed total surveillance asserted from one recovered asset
Iran Daily	Pezeshkian: Iran not seeking war but will resist until aggressors' defeat	English-language government daily	Hormuz argued as structurally unbypassable while intent is framed as defensive	MODERATE-HIGH: permanence of the chokepoint argued for foreign readers
Shargh	Yemen is on the war line again	Reformist	The Ali al-Taher ridge used at home as pressure on Iran's negotiators	MODERATE-HIGH: the Lebanese front converted into a domestic constraint
Etemad	Free distribution of land	Reformist	Hormuz as leverage on Vienna; the civilian cost of the strikes near the Strait	MODERATE: maritime coercion read as bargaining leverage
Ta'adol	The bourse at the seven-million peak	Economic daily	A record index and admitted stagflation printed with no causal link drawn	LOW: war effects present but explicitly uncorrelated
Chahar Sough	The internet too has become a victim of price liberalisation	Economic daily	Petrol then internet assembled into an unannounced price liberalisation	LOW: cost-of-living grievance consolidated into a policy critique
Sazandegi	Why did oil not reach 200 dollars?	Reformist, the Kargozaran-e	The oil weapon audited and found capped by	LOW-MODERATE: front-page rebuttal of the oil-weapon thesis

Outlet	Lead Headline (English)	Orientation	Theme	Threat signal
		Sazandegi party daily	Riyadh, Abu Dhabi, Baghdad and Beijing	

Per-Paper Front-Page Analysis

Iran Daily

English-language government daily, published by the Islamic Republic News Agency group

MODERATE-HIGH - structural permanence of the chokepoint argued for a foreign audience while intent is framed as defensive

“Pezeshkian: Iran not seeking war but will resist until aggressors' defeat”

Iran Daily

Pezeshkian: Iran not seeking war but will resist until aggressors' defeat

Yemen hits Saudi oil facilities in response to Riyadh's bombing campaign

Alternative oil routes cannot make Hormuz irrelevant

- Main: The English-facing government daily leads with the president rather than with the navy, and it renders his formula for a foreign readership as 'not seeking war but will resist until aggressors' defeat'. The Persian papers print the same statement as continuing the resistance until the aggressors' complete regret (پشیمانی). The English version substitutes defeat for regret, a translation choice that hardens the object while softening the opening clause.
- Main: The second lead, over a large photograph of burning installations in desert terrain, is 'Yemen hits Saudi oil facilities in response to Riyadh's bombing campaign'. The causal order is explicit and is the reverse of Kayhan's: the government paper presents the refinery strikes as retaliation for a Saudi air campaign, which places Riyadh as an active belligerent rather than as a victim of the war's spread.
- Sub-item: 'Tehran, Moscow make progress on financial, trade ties', a photograph of officials, the only alignment story on any front page in this edition and the government's preferred answer to the isolation argument Sazandegi makes in Persian.
- Op-ed: The bottom half is an exclusive interview by staff writer Delaram Ahmadi under the head 'Alternative oil routes cannot make Hormuz irrelevant'. The interviewee is described as an analyst of global energy markets; the printed name is not legible at the resolution available and is therefore not asserted here.
- Sub-item: The interview's substance is that Iraq and Syria have agreed to revive the Kirkuk to Baniyas pipeline to carry Iraqi crude to the eastern Mediterranean, that the project is at feasibility stage with roughly four years and at least fifteen billion dollars of development, and that alternative routes can reduce the concentration of risk around the Strait but cannot make it irrelevant because Hormuz is an integral part of the Persian Gulf's energy architecture rather than merely a geographic chokepoint.
- Sub-item: The interview concedes that before the current disruption Iraq exported around 3.6 million barrels per day with roughly 3.4 million moving through its southern Basra terminals, an unusually frank published acknowledgement that the disruption has cost a neighbour its principal export route.
- Right rail: Softer items, China's response to a Himalayan disaster, an Iranian protest to FIFA over World Cup hosting arrangements, and a heritage feature on Sorkheh, maintain the paper's normalcy register.

ANALYST NOTE Iran Daily is the state's English-facing argument and it makes three moves the Persian press does not. It fronts the president rather than the IRGC, it assigns Saudi Arabia the first move in the Yemen exchange, and it publishes an expert case that the Strait cannot be routed around, which is the analytic

> foundation the coercion policy needs stated in English by someone other than a commander. Read together, the page is a brief to foreign readers that the chokepoint is structural and permanent while Iranian intentions are defensive. The candid Iraqi export figures are the most useful verifiable content on any front page this morning.

Kayhan

Hardline principlist; the Supreme Leader's flagship daily, managing editor Hossein Shariatmadari, published under the supervision of the Leader's office

SEVERE - chokepoint doctrine printed as achieved fact, with a partner's strikes on a third state's energy infrastructure claimed as the mechanism

“Within 48 hours, Yemen set three Aramco refineries ablaze; the oil price became 100 dollars” «ظرف ۴۸ ساعت / یمن ۳ پالایشگاه آرامکو را به آتش کشید / قیمت نفت ۱۰۰ دلاری شد»

کیهان

یمن ۳ پالایشگاه آرامکو را به آتش کشید
قیمت نفت ۱۰۰دلاری شد

در آمدهای داخلی و خارجی دولت محقق شد
مسئولان پیام ضعف ندهند

- Main: The lead is given not to Iran's own claimed operations but to a partner's: three Saudi Aramco refineries burning within 48 hours, with the crude price carried in the headline as the operative result. Outside reporting places Brent near but below the round number the page prints, so the figure is a rounded-up framing rather than a quotation of a settlement price.
- Sub-item: The lead's own bullets state the strategic claim explicitly: 'Bab al-Mandab and the Strait of Hormuz have now become two decisive chokepoints in the world's oil equations, which squeeze the throat of America and the Zionist regime' (گلوگاه/goluga, chokepoint). This is the clearest printed statement to date of the two-chokepoint doctrine this monitor has tracked since the 14 July editorial, and it now names Yemen's front as the second jaw.
- Sub-item: Two bullets are addressed at the American president by name: 'Trump, for the umpteenth time: the oil price is falling!' and 'the deluded Trump has been caught in the equations while he nurses the dream of 50-dollar oil'. The page treats the price as an instrument of political humiliation rather than as an economic indicator.
- Banner: A top-right banner over a photograph of a white submersible on the surface reads 'America's smart subsurface [vehicle] hunted / a new masterpiece of the IRGC Navy'. The flagship gives the capture of the American underwater drone a banner, not the lead, which is a deliberate ranking of the partner's refinery strike above Iran's own claimed capture.
- Right rail: 'In response to Trump's nonsense-talk / Pezeshkian: we will continue the resistance until the complete regret of the aggressors' (پشیمانی/pashimani, regret), carried to page 2. The same statement is the lead of Iran Daily in English and a rail item in Etemad, making it the single most widely syndicated official line of the cycle.
- Right rail: 'The judiciary spokesman announced: extensive seizure of the assets of defendants in the foreign-currency-obligation cases', flagged as new. The enforcement thread this monitor recorded on 8 September has moved from demand to reported action, but against currency defendants rather than against the political figures the flagship named yesterday.
- Op-ed: A signed Kayhan news-analysis report, 'The government's domestic and foreign revenues were not realised; officials must not send a message of weakness', which pairs with the day's editorial in demanding that officials stop describing shortfalls in public.

- Kicker: 'The bewilderment of the sheikhdoms after the destruction of America's security umbrella by Iran', and a bottom item, 'The message the Westernisers should take from Hormuz'.

> **ANALYST NOTE** The flagship's ranking is the finding. On a morning when Iran's own navy claimed an American underwater drone, two US destroyers and eighteen vessels, Kayhan led with Yemen burning Saudi refineries and put the drone in a banner. That ordering advertises the war as a coalition product with a working economic instrument, and it lets the paper print an oil price as the scoreboard rather than a battle-damage claim it would have to defend. Track whether the two-chokepoint formula, now printed as doctrine rather than as advocacy, migrates to the state and government dailies.

Shargh

Reformist daily

“Yemen is on the war line again” «یمن دوباره در خط جنگ»

MODERATE-HIGH - the Lebanese front converted into a domestic constraint on Iranian negotiators

- Main: The kicker above the lead reads 'the war, from Sanaa to Saudi soil and the Red Sea maritime routes, has expanded again', which is a widening statement rather than a victory statement. Shargh and Kayhan lead on the same event and draw opposite conclusions from it: the flagship prints an oil price, the reformist paper prints the word 'expanded'.
- Main: The lead photograph is a large explosion over a hillside town, and the caption set into it is the sharpest domestic-political line in the edition: 'how the developments of south Lebanon became an instrument for renewed pressure on the negotiators' over the standing head 'Bipolarisation with the codeword Ali al-Taher' (دوقطبی‌سازی/do-qotbi-sazi, bipolarisation).
- Sub-item: Ali al-Taher is the ridge above the Litani near Nabatieh whose underground complex Israel declared under operational control on 3 September. Shargh's argument is that the hill's fall is being converted at home into a loyalty test that constrains Iran's negotiators, which is precisely the reading Kayhan's editorial of the same morning denounces by name.
- Op-ed: 'The price of petrol and the necessity of gradual demand management', a signed column arguing the third-tier increase should have been phased, continuing the reformist economic thread from 8 September.
- Op-ed: 'Reforming the map of jihad: roots and consequences', a signed analysis on the doctrine's boundaries.
- Right rail: A dense signed-commentary rail, including a column on the Caspian file and one on the suspended budget, keeps the paper's characteristic ratio of argument to reportage.

> **ANALYST NOTE** This is the edition's most consequential single item because it names the mechanism rather than the event: the reformist paper asserts that a battlefield loss in Lebanon is being deployed domestically to raise the price of any negotiating concession. That Kayhan's editorial devotes two of its numbered sections to rebutting exactly this claim, and does so on the same morning, indicates a coordinated argument rather than a coincidence, and makes the Ali al-Taher ridge a domestic Iranian political object as well as a Lebanese hilltop. Track whether the government dailies take either side.

Nobonyad

Conservative / principlist daily

“The IRGC's valuable catch” «شکار ارزشمند سپاه»

HIGH - claimed total surveillance of the Strait of Hormuz asserted from a single recovered American asset

- Main: The whole upper page is one aerial photograph of a white unmanned submersible awash on the surface, under the deck 'the IRGC Navy announced the trapping of an American unmanned submarine in the Strait of Hormuz' (به‌دام‌انداختن/be-dam-andakhtan, trapping, the vocabulary of a snare rather than of combat).
- Main: Reporting outside the Iranian press identifies the vehicle as an Anduril Dive-LD autonomous underwater vehicle and places the seizure at dawn on Tuesday 8 September at the approaches to the Strait. The US military had issued no confirmation at compile time, so the capture and the identification are treated here as an Iranian claim with corroborating outside description, not as a confirmed loss.
- Banner: 'The government's salt on the people's wound', over a photograph of women taking a selfie, criticising ministers' foreign travel and an official women's diplomacy exhibition while prices rise. The paper runs an anti-government domestic attack directly above a military triumph, a juxtaposition that is itself the editorial argument.
- Sub-item: 'The Majlis's yellow card to the minister over the price of the internet', the same parliamentary censure that leads Chahar Sough and appears on Sazandegi's rail, giving three papers of three different factions the same domestic grievance on one morning.
- Sub-item: 'Industry still in the orbit of blackout' and 'The endless damages of projecting weakness', pairing an admitted power shortfall with a warning against admitting shortfalls.
- Op-ed: 'Baku: Tehran's friend or Washington's partner?', a signed commentary questioning Azerbaijan's alignment, the only item in this edition to open a northern file.

ANALYST NOTE Nobonyad is the clearest single expression of the edition's structure: a captured American machine on top, an indictment of the government's economic management underneath, and no attempt to reconcile them. The seizure is being used across the principlist press as proof that surveillance of the Strait is total, which is the reputational payload that matters more than the vehicle. The Baku commentary is worth tracking as the first northern-file item to surface on a front page in this run of editions.

Vatan-e Emrooz

Hardline / principlist

HIGH - pre-emptive internal security framing ahead of a protest anniversary, paired with a reciprocal-obligation nuclear warning

“The sinister dream of unrest” «خواب شوم آشوب»

وطن امروز

خواب شوم آشوب

نفت ۱۰۰ دلار

- Main: The lead is domestic security, not the war. Over two large photographs of seized pistols, magazines, loose rounds and an assault rifle laid out on a blanket, the deck reads 'a Vatan-e Emrooz report on the rise in the number of weapons seizures from terrorist grouplets by the security agencies'. The paper is pre-positioning against internal disorder rather than reporting an incident.
- Banner: 'Nuclear warning to the Agency', with the deck 'simultaneously with the West's pressure for the passage of a new resolution, Tehran recalled the balance of Iran's commitments and the Agency's responsibilities'. The framing is reciprocal obligation rather than threatened withdrawal, which is a softer register than the flagship's treatment of the IAEA on 8 September.
- Kicker: 'Big catch in Hormuz', a top-left strip over a small image of the captured submersible, ranked below both the weapons seizures and the nuclear item.
- Right rail: A 'today's headlines' box leads with the Yemeni strikes on Saudi and Bahraini energy installations and prints 'OIL 100 DOLLARS' in red, matching Kayhan's rounded figure.
- Right rail: 'Trump should take a lesson from Bush', an explicit invitation to read the American president through the Iraq precedent.
- Op-ed: A bylined bottom-page analysis, 'Elections on the line of fire', asking how a shifting electoral map and the decisive tracks in Lebanese politics could work against Israel. Lebanon's internal politics, rather than its battlefield, is the frame.
- Sub-item: The paper's own channel carried through the cycle the first images and video of the captured Dive-LD, Major General Rezaei describing the Strait as Iran's strait of dignity (اقتدار/eqtedar), a Wall Street Journal report on Washington's concern at Iranian missiles able to strike moving vessels, and a claim of a further 30 American wounded for a running total of 820.

> **ANALYST NOTE** The hardline daily that most reliably leads on the war led instead on domestic weapons seizures, and it did so on the anniversary window it shares with the protest cycles named in Kayhan's editorial. Read with that editorial's warning of a push toward violent behaviour before the anniversary of the failed 'Woman, Life, Freedom' project, the two pages describe a single anticipated internal contingency and a security response prepared in advance of it. This is the edition's clearest evidence that the regime's threat model has a domestic axis it now considers more urgent than the naval one.

Chahar Sough

Economic daily

LOW - domestic cost-of-living grievance consolidated into a policy critique

“The internet too has become a victim of price liberalisation” «اینترنت هم قربانی آزادسازی قیمت‌ها شد»

- Main: Under an illustration of the communications minister standing beside a rusting Paykan lettered 'the internet of consensus' (اینترنت وفاق, a pointed use of the government's own watchword) with a roadside sign reading 'the fare is dearer every day than the day before', the deck reports 'the Majlis's yellow card to the communications minister over the ever-rising price of internet packages'.
- Main: The word the headline chooses is آزادسازی قیمت‌ها, price liberalisation, which files the internet increase in the same category as the third-tier petrol rise this monitor recorded on 8 September. The economic press is assembling the separate increases into one policy.
- Sub-item: 'The Majlis's protest at the price of the internet', with a photograph of the chamber, giving the censure institutional weight rather than treating it as rhetoric.
- Op-ed: An interview billed on the front, 'Hojjatollah Abdolmaleki, labour minister of the martyred Raisi's government, in conversation with Chahar Sough: the main factor in the price rises is the abandonment of the currency market'. A minister of the previous principlist cabinet is used to blame the current government's exchange-rate management, which is the same argument the Chahar Sough front made on 8 September through the security council secretary.
- Sub-item: 'The IRGC's big catch in Hormuz / the hunt of the enemy American smart subsurface vehicle in the Strait of Hormuz', placed at the foot of the page beneath both the internet story and the wage interview.
- Banner: A right-hand panel on the internet censure carries the parliamentary proceedings in detail, including the deputies' complaint that package prices have risen while service quality has fallen.

ANALYST NOTE The economic daily's ranking is the most revealing in the edition: a captured American drone runs below a dispute about internet tariffs. Chahar Sough is building a cumulative case that a series of individually defensible increases, petrol then internet, amounts to an unannounced liberalisation programme, and it is recruiting a principlist ex-minister to make the argument so that it cannot be dismissed as reformist. Track whether the wage-revision and tariff threads converge into an explicit front-page charge of a cost-of-living policy, which would be a first in this run.

Sazandegi

Reformist; the daily of the Kargozaran-e Sazandegi party, as printed on its own nameplate

LOW-MODERATE - explicit front-page rebuttal of the oil-weapon thesis, paired with a domestic political demand

“Why did oil not reach 200 dollars?” «چرا نفت ۲۰۰ دلار نشد؟»

سازندگی

چرا نفت ۲۰۰ دلار نشد؟

- Main: The entire front is one question set in outsized type, and its deck is a direct attack on the other half of the press: 'while the price of oil has stopped at the 100-dollar border, some principlists and defenders of the war claimed that with the continuation of war conditions the price per barrel would pass even 200 dollars, but that did not happen'.
- Main: The deck then sets the paper's own research question: 'Sazandegi has examined what factors prevented the rise in the oil price and what the role of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Iraq and even China was in controlling it'. The argument is that the states Tehran treats as targets and as patrons are jointly capping the instrument Kayhan presents as a throttle.
- Banner: A top strip carries 'Repairing the wound of Dey and the demand for the lifting of the house arrest / the first vice president's meeting with the sources of emulation'. A front-page reference to lifting the house arrest is the most forward domestic-political ask in this edition.
- Left rail: 'Yellow card to the defender of internet freedom / the government's disagreements with the Majlis hardliners', which reframes the same parliamentary censure that Nobonyad and Chahar Sough print as a consumer grievance into a factional attack on the Majlis.
- Op-ed: The day's signed 'note of the day', 'The constitution is not for the shop window', arguing that constitutional guarantees must be exercised rather than displayed.
- Sub-item: Rail heads including 'Defence finds meaning through the empathy of the people' and 'Social capital determines the country's fate', the paper's standing formula that endurance is a function of consent.

ANALYST NOTE Sazandegi mounts the only quantitative rebuttal in the edition, and it is aimed squarely at the flagship's front page: if the oil weapon worked as advertised, the price would not have stalled near 100 dollars, and the reason it stalled is that Riyadh, Abu Dhabi, Baghdad and Beijing chose to cap it. That converts Kayhan's scoreboard into evidence of Iran's isolation, and it is the most testable claim any Iranian front page makes this morning. The house-arrest line in the same strip shows the reformist camp attaching a domestic price to wartime unity, which this monitor has not seen stated on a front page in the preceding editions.

Ta'adol

Economic daily, close to the Chamber of Commerce constituency

“The bourse at the seven-million peak” «بورس در قله ۷ میلیونی»

LOW - war effects on the domestic economy present but explicitly uncorrelated

- Main: 'Ta'adol examines the trend of trading on the equity market: the bourse at the seven-million peak'. The index is presented as a record, which in a war economy with a depreciating currency is as much an inflation signal as a confidence signal, and the paper does not resolve which it is.
- Banner: A left-hand column, 'An American submarine in Iran's net', with the deck reporting that the IRGC announced the taking of an American subsurface vehicle in the Strait of Hormuz as spoils, over the same aerial photograph the other papers ran. The economic daily gives the capture a column, not a lead.
- Sub-item: 'How does Iran's economy escape the low-growth trap? / A duality called inflation and recession', a framing that concedes stagflation on the front page of a business paper.
- Sub-item: 'The necessity of implementing the wage-revision resolution', continuing the mid-year wage argument, illustrated with a warehouse of stacked sacks.
- Sub-item: 'The challenge of unauthorised electricity in the economy', on unmetered consumption, alongside a note on whether the Majlis will green-light an industrial power measure.
- Op-ed: 'National security and economic resilience' and 'Production through the path of small enterprises', two signed columns that argue resilience is an industrial-policy problem rather than a naval one.

> **ANALYST NOTE** Ta'adol prints the war and the market on the same page without connecting them, and the omission is the point: a record index, an admitted inflation-and-recession duality, an unresolved wage claim and a captured American drone coexist with no causal account offered. For an economic daily whose readership is exposed to both, that is a measurable reticence, and it contrasts with Sazandegi, which on the same morning does draw the causal line. Track whether either economic title attributes the index level to currency depreciation, which neither has yet done on a front page.

Etemad Reformist daily

MODERATE - maritime coercion read as leverage on the nuclear track; domestic accountability pressed through civilian casualties

“Free distribution of land” «تقسیم زمین رایگان»

اعتماد
شکار زیردریایی هوشمند امریکا
تقسیم زمین رایگان

- Main: The lead is housing, not the war: 'Ali Nabiyan, deputy minister of roads and urban development, explained to Etemad the transfer of land and the government's new programmes for the housing market'. On the morning of a claimed naval victory the largest reformist daily gives its main headline to a land-allocation interview, which is a positioning choice rather than an absence of material.
- Banner: Above the masthead line, 'The IRGC announced the taking as spoils of war of an American submarine in the Strait of Hormuz / The hunt of America's smart submarine', with two photographs, the vehicle awash at sea and a torpedo-shaped hull in a hangar. Etemad reports the claim in the IRGC's own vocabulary (غنیمت/ghanimat, war booty) but confines it to a banner.
- Right rail: 'A week after the attack on a wedding celebration in Kouhestak, families tell Etemad of the shortage of medical equipment / A few seconds between wedding and mourning'. Kouhestak is in Sirik county, Hormozgan, on the coast at the Strait; outside reporting records five dead and more than sixty wounded from strikes on 1 September, and US Central Command said it was aware of casualty reports originating from Iranian state media. Etemad's addition is not the strike but the treatment shortfall, an implicit criticism of the state's own provision.
- Right rail: 'A media quarrel between Pezeshkian and Trump / Until regret', the third front page in this edition to carry the president's formula.
- Right rail: 'Etemad, in conversation with Javad Heyran-Nia, examines the pressure strategy from Hormuz to Vienna', explicitly linking the maritime instrument to the nuclear negotiating track on the day the Board of Governors is in session.
- Right rail: 'Etemad's report on the details of the torture and brain death of Niloufar Mojaveri, in conversation with her father / The hidden dimensions of the crime in Piranshahr', a domestic custodial-violence story pursued through the victim's family.
- Sub-item: A stacked column of signed 'notes' with author portraits fills the right margin, the paper's usual method for carrying argument it will not put in a headline.

ANALYST NOTE Etemad's editorial decision is the mirror image of Kayhan's: it takes the day's military claim, prints it accurately in the IRGC's own words, and then declines to lead with it, spending its front instead on land, a strike on civilians near the Strait, and a case of custodial death. The linking of Hormuz to Vienna in a commissioned interview is the substantive contribution, because it is the only front-page item in this edition that treats the maritime regime as a bargaining instrument with a nuclear counterpart rather than as an end in itself.

> The Kouhestak follow-up, a week after the event and framed around medical shortages, is the sharpest permitted form of domestic criticism available to the paper.

Wire and channel register (Defa Press, Fars News, Nour News, outlet channels)

Semi-official and official wires plus the papers' own Telegram channels; corroboration and claim-tracking only, not front pages

SEVERE - published threat to commercial crews inside Kuwaiti and Bahraini ports; a pre-announced retaliation ladder reaching American regional bases

“Two American vessels, eight tankers and ten violating ships intending to cross the prohibited and unsafe zone of the Strait of Hormuz were targeted” با ۲ فروند شناور آمریکایی، ۸ نفتکش و ۱۰ فروند کشتی متخلف قصد عبور از منطقه ممنوعه و ناایمن تنگهٔ هرمز، مورد هدف قرار گرفتند»

- Main: IRGC public relations, carried on Defa Press and repeated by the Etemad and Jam-e Jam channels, claims the navy struck two American vessels and eight tankers and caused heavy damage, in response to what it calls the American army's attack on five Iranian tankers, and additionally targeted ten ships that intended to cross the prohibited and unsafe zone. Outside reporting records the same claim, including a specific IRGC assertion of ballistic-missile hits on two named destroyers, and records that Washington had not confirmed it. Treated here as an Iranian claim.
- Main: The IRGC Navy issued an explicit warning, carried on Defa Press, to all tanker crews within the berths of Kuwait and Bahrain, which it describes as hosts of and partners in American wrongdoing, to leave their vessels immediately whether at anchorage or alongside because they will be targeted. This is the most serious escalation in the cycle: a published threat to commercial shipping inside two third states' ports.
- Sub-item: The commander of the Khatam al-Anbia Central Headquarters, Major General Abdollahi, and the headquarters spokesman state that the American army has issued evacuation warnings to three Iranian tankers ahead of striking them, and that any assault on Iranian tankers will cause American bases and interests in the region to be targeted. The retaliation ladder is stated in advance and in public.
- Sub-item: The IRGC spokesman, named on the Defa Press wire as Sardar Mohebbi, says the dawn hunt of the American army's most advanced 2025 unmanned submarine means no advanced technology can pass the surveillance layers in the Strait of Hormuz, and adds the taunt that mastery of the Persian Gulf belongs to Iran's technologist youth and that the Americans should return to the Bay of Pigs.
- Sub-item: Speaker Mohammad-Baqer Ghalibaf's reaction, carried by Defa Press and Sobh-e No, is that America's smart submarine programme has been knocked out; the item is a captioned graphic in a comic register rather than a statement of fact.
- Sub-item: IRGC public relations also claims an advanced MQ-1 drone was intercepted and destroyed over the Strait of Hormuz by a new IRGC air-defence system under the integrated national air-defence network. Sobh-e No and the Jam-e Jam channel carry video and stills of missiles over American bases in Jordan, with the claim that no air defence engaged them.
- Sub-item: The UN Secretary-General, in a statement issued through his spokesman Stephane Dujarric and relayed by Defa Press, expresses grave concern at the intensification of Israeli attacks in southern Lebanon, particularly in and around Nabatieh, and condemns civilian casualties including women and children, displacement caused by evacuation orders, and widespread destruction.
- Sub-item: Casualty accounting is internally consistent across the Iranian channels for once: Jam-e Jam relays 18 American dead and 820 wounded, Sobh-e No a total of 838 killed and wounded since the conflict began, and Vatan-e Emrooz an increment of 30. The three figures reconcile, which is itself evidence of a single upstream source rather than three.

- Sub-item: The head of the National Defence University, Sardar Ahmadi-Moghaddam, tells Defa Press that reaching an understanding that secures the nation's interests and permanently closes the path of future aggression would be very desirable, but that Iran thinks this is an out-of-reach goal because the enemies are greedy and treaty-breaking. A settlement is described as desirable and unattainable in the same sentence.
- Sub-item: A Defa Press analysis argues the prohibited zone should not be read as a naval threat or a symbolic act but as an attempt to move pressure from the military field into trade, shipping, insurance and maritime logistics, so that a vessel faces constraints from far outside the Strait and must decide in advance about route, ownership, destination, insurance and cooperation with the belligerents.
- Sub-item: Non-military items on the same wires record twelve states, Britain, Canada, France, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden, announcing trade restrictions on goods from Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank; new American sanctions on 27 Iranian airlines including Mahan Air and 36 entities supporting Iran's aviation sector; and a British maritime report of a commercial vessel struck in waters north of Oman.

> **ANALYST NOTE** The wires carry the escalation the front pages do not, because the events postdate the print deadline. Two things in this register outrank anything on any front page: the published instruction to tanker crews in Kuwaiti and Bahraini berths to abandon their vessels, which extends the coercion from the waterway into third states' harbours, and the Defa Press analysis that states the doctrine plainly, that the object is to make insurance, ownership and routing decisions the enforcement mechanism rather than the transit itself. Read with the Khatam al-Anbia statements, the ladder now published in advance runs from a strike on Iranian tankers to American bases in the region, which is the same widening the Jordan strikes have already demonstrated.

Appendix A: The Leader's message in today's coverage (partial reconstruction)

Reconstructed from the leadership website poster relayed on the Etemad channel, and from Kayhan's Yadasht-e Rooz of 18 Shahrivar 1405. The Leader's own site could not be reached at compile time, so no primary text is quoted and no wording is attributed to him.

No new message from the Leader was published on any of the nine front pages in this edition. What the cycle carries instead is a poster issued by the leadership website and relayed on the Etemad channel, marking the armed forces' confrontation with the United States in the Persian Gulf and the capture of the American Dive-LD unmanned submarine. A poster is an endorsement of an operation, not a statement of policy, and it is recorded here as such.

The only textual reference to the Leader on any page in this edition is indirect. Kayhan's editorial attacks what it calls the 'desperate effort to make the uncompromising guidance of Imam Sayyid Mojtaba Khamenei (may his shadow endure) appear ineffectual' by those promoting a vocabulary of capitulation under the names of 'realism and the normalisation of relations with the West'. The printed name is Sayyid Mojtaba Khamenei, and the honorific is the one reserved for a living Leader.

Analyst flag: this is the fourth consecutive edition in which the Leader's succession is evidenced only through the printed name in third-party text rather than through a direct message, a speech or an image on a front page. The absence is recorded as a finding, not as silence. The office is being invoked as an authority in factional argument while its holder remains editorially invisible, which is the pattern this monitor has tracked since the succession.

Verification note: because the leadership sites were unreachable at compile time, this appendix contains no direct quotation of the Leader and should not be read as one. The poster's existence is single-sourced to the Etemad channel relay and has not been confirmed against the leadership site itself.

Source: Etemad channel relay, 18 Shahrivar 1405; Kayhan, Yadasht-e Rooz, 18 Shahrivar 1405.

Appendix B: Kayhan, 'Let us be wary of the enemy's false narrative-making', by Hassan Rashvand (full translation)

Kayhan, Yadasht-e Rooz, Wednesday 18 Shahrivar 1405 / 9 September 2026, published in three parts on the Kayhan Online channel, items 83408, 83409 and 83410, bylined حسن رشوند (Hassan Rashvand) and tagged #یادداشت_روز. Author verified from the printed byline on all three parts.

In strategic logic and the long tradition of international disputes a fundamental and well-tested rule prevails: whenever the enemy reaches a deadlock on the field of hard military battle and his hand is empty of concessions in the arena of diplomacy, he clutches at 'cognitive war' and 'deceptive narrative-making' in order to survive. Today the offensive formation of the camp of global arrogance, led by America and its rabid regional dog the Zionist regime, is built on precisely this outlook.

1. With the approach of two elections, the Knesset election on 25 October (3 Aban) in Tel Aviv and the American congressional midterm election on 4 November (13 Aban), the leaders of this front have fallen into a severe crisis of legitimacy and a decay of resilience. Netanyahu's unstable cabinet and its Western supporters have reached desperation before public opinion, and to escape this abyss they need an injection of 'propaganda oxygen' and the manufacture of 'hollow conquests'. This strategy has been executed with the two blades of a pair of scissors: the first blade, distortion and magnification of field events in the war with Iran and the resistance front; the second blade, the fabrication of a narrative of incapacity, crisis and deadlock inside the Islamic Republic of Iran.

2. The main focus of the Zionists' regional narrative-making in recent weeks has been the strategic hill of 'Ali al-Taher' in the heights overlooking southern Lebanon. The Zionist propaganda machine, by broadcasting ambiguous videos and staging an image manoeuvre at one of the entry mouths of Hezbollah's tunnels, has tried to pass off tactical control over part of a tunnel entrance as 'the complete fall of Ali al-Taher', 'the clearing of the resistance's underground centres' and 'the end of Hezbollah's missile capability' in this strategic region. But the evident truth is that the Zionist army, with the strength of several equipped armoured and infantry divisions including this regime's 36th Division, has been pinned down at the foot of this 600-metre hill for more than two months. In order to advance a few hundred metres and reach the tunnel mouths they resorted to the most heinous war crimes and to the extensive use of internationally prohibited weapons such as phosphorus shells and cluster bombs in the outskirts of Nabatieh and Deir al-Zahrani. Resorting to unconventional bombs is not a sign of the upper hand but a complete emblem of the 'crisis of resilience' in an aggressor army that is incapable of direct hand-to-hand engagement with the faithful fighters of the resistance.

3. On the other side, reducing the whole capability of Lebanese Hezbollah to one hill or a few underground passages is an obvious psychological deception. The mosaic and layered structure of the resistance networks across southern Lebanon, with thousands of kilometres of fortifications and vast missile and drone stockpiles, was designed beyond these single points. The Tel Aviv army knows well that the resistance front has an incomparable backing, namely that same powerful hand behind the precision missile launchers of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and the advanced drone units of Iran's heroic army, and that if the enemy crosses the red lines it will, as in the 33-day war and other confrontations, swiftly bring the balance of terror down upon the aggressors.

4. In parallel with the clamour over the Ali al-Taher hill, the enemy is pursuing a dangerous line of destruction inside the country, with the help of its media appendages, in a dual-purpose project running from the diplomatic trap to the conditioning of the country's economy. This operational line rested on two pillars. (a) Certain crooked-thinking analysts inside the country, whether unwittingly or with malice, have played on the

enemy's ground and tied the false story of the hill's fall to 'the first article of the Islamabad Memorandum'. This crowd insinuates by taunt and innuendo that Iran has supposedly retreated from its definite position of 'the immediate and unconditional termination of the war in Lebanon', and that this event is the reflection of a political deal. Whereas Tehran's position has been clear and firm, and the Islamic Republic of Iran has never retreated from the sovereign conditions of the resistance front. Indeed, two days ago the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council emphasised that 'our great problem in the affair of the memorandum was trust in the guarantee of the mediators of the negotiations'. It is natural that so long as this guarantee does not exist, no progress will be made in the negotiations, nor will the hands of our armed forces and of Lebanese Hezbollah be lifted from the trigger. (b) Western narrative-makers are always in search of statements uttered by certain domestic managers in describing problems. It is enough for an official to speak from a podium, in an ill-considered and immature way, of 'the budget deficit, the currency shortage, the energy bottleneck or the deadlock in livelihoods'; at once outlets such as the BBC, Iran International and hundreds of affiliated accounts in the virtual space cut those sentences up and reproduce the grand narrative of 'Iran on the brink of economic collapse and compelled to surrender'.

These false pulses are interpreted in the think-tanks of the Pentagon and Tel Aviv as 'the effectiveness of sanctions' and directly provoke the enemy's appetite for intensifying the pressures.

5. Beyond the false narrative-making that the Zionist enemy is currently inducing about military success at the Ali al-Taher hill, the concrete instance of this narrative-making in the domestic space and in the economic dimension can be observed in the publication of fabricated news about 'the Chinese protesting to Iran over the closure of the Strait of Hormuz', 'the rejection of Dr Pezeshkian's request for a meeting by the president of China at the Shanghai summit of leaders in Bishkek', 'the severing of financial exchanges with the neighbours', and widespread rumours about 'a shortage of essential goods'. By publishing these fake narratives on broker channels and social networks, the enemy seeks to create emotional behaviour in the market and to agitate the country's not particularly stable economy, so as to compensate for its military failure by generating social discontent, and, on the eve of the anniversary of the failed 'Woman, Life, Freedom' project and of structure-breaking actions destructive of national security, to push society towards violent behaviour, so that it might thereby conceal its successive and humiliating defeats on the military battlefield against Iran and the resistance front, and once again disrupt the secure atmosphere of Iranian society and repeat the bitter events of the years 1401 and 1404.

6. Contrary to the mistaken supposition of certain reformist outlets which these days devote their page-one headline to contentious debates and to giving prominence to incorrect and false news dictated from abroad, no professional outlet attached to Western espionage services publishes a single image, frame or item detached from the grand design it holds. They first create a 'mother narrative', a narrative to the effect that 'standing firm is useless; your economic structure is fragile; and in the end you must dissolve into the desired order of Western hegemony.' After architecting this narrative, they produce thousands of contents in various formats to bring public opinion under the influence of their designs. These days the enemy has drawn up in line, using certain figures such as Hassan Rouhani, the former president of Iran, who did not perform well in the test of his period of responsibility, in order to produce the false dichotomy of 'war and the termination of war' and the notion that the people should be consulted about continuing the war, and, with an apparent feeling of compassion for the people's livelihood, to prescribe the recipe of capitulation before the enemy, and, by inducing the proposition that today's regional power is an extra burden on the people's livelihood, to continue their political mischief shamelessly. This is while during his period of responsibility the people had been crushed under the gears of his dictatorial policies, and in the end he brought the country no achievement whatever from ten years of fruitless negotiation. This talkative and inactive crowd, in a despairing effort to make the uncompromising guidance of Imam Sayyid Mojtaba Khamenei (may his shadow

endure) appear ineffectual, and by promoting a literature of capitulation under the name of 'realism and the normalisation of relations with the West', proposes nothing but the prescription of surrender.

7. In the strategic documents of the American think-tank RAND it is stated explicitly that 'in modern wars the ultimate victor is not the possessor of the largest warheads and bombs, but the owner of the strongest and most persuasive narrative.' This means the enemy's aim is not to seize ground; it is to capture minds, so that before a single bullet is fired the will to stand firm in the target society is dissolved. Against this octopus-like network, what has to this day brought the enemy's calculations to nothing is the incomparable insight and discernment of the Iranian nation. The aware people of Islamic Iran, having passed through various seditions, have read the enemy's fist in his 'engineering of perception'.

The vigilance of the popular masses in not going along with emotional calls in the currency market, and the unified and meaningful presence of the faithful people who love dear Iran on 190 nights in the street and in practical support of the armed forces and the fighters of the resistance, has dealt the heaviest blow to the Western scenario-makers. Nevertheless, to neutralise this multi-dimensional assault completely, several basic steps lie before the executive organs and the holders of podiums.

1. The managers of the executive agencies must understand that podiums are not an arena for venting grievances, confessing incapacity, or projecting problems onto the outside. The statement of demands and shortcomings must not turn into fuel for the engine of the enemy's propaganda for conditioning the economy and weakening Iran's position in the confrontation with the enemy.

2. Immunising the members of society against the bombardment of fabricated news and the prominence-giving techniques of hostile media is a strategic necessity, so that no citizen takes a manipulated image of the domestic, regional and foreign battlefields for the truth.

3. Now that changes have been made in the pricing of petrol, and certain profiteers within governmental bodies such as 'Iran Khodro', which immediately announced that vehicle prices would rise and raised the prices of its products by an average of 30 per cent, in the first step the honourable government and in the second step the judicial apparatus are obliged to deal with the agents disrupting the country's economy, and likewise to deal decisively and without indulgence with the networks that, relying on media rumours and next-day rate-setting in the virtual space, encroach upon the people's table.

If in this arena the pens remain frank and the vigilance enduring, the real conquests will belong to the resistance front, and the Zionist enemy and its supporters will obtain nothing but certain defeat on the field and disgrace in the war of narratives.

Analyst flag: the byline is the finding. For the two preceding editions this monitor tracked Yadasht-e Rooz as the vehicle of Hossein Shariatmadari's campaign against named former presidents; today the slot is signed by Hassan Rashvand, and the target set changes with the byline. Hassan Rouhani is named and attacked at length, Mohammad Khatami is not named at all, and the demand on the judiciary, which on 8 September was addressed to the judicial and security centres regarding the two former presidents, is today addressed to the judiciary and the government regarding car pricing and currency rumour networks. The escalation this monitor flagged yesterday has therefore not continued into a third day in the same form: the register is unchanged but the object has moved from the political class to the economic one. The claim that the Israeli 36th Division has been pinned for over two months at the foot of the hill is an Iranian claim; outside reporting records that Israel declared operational control of the underground complex on 3 September. The quotation attributed to RAND is presented here as printed and has not been verified against any RAND publication; it should not be reproduced as authentic without primary-source confirmation. The count of '190 nights in the street' is notable because it matches this edition's day number exactly.

Source: Kayhan, Yadasht-e Rooz, items 83408 to 83410 on the Kayhan Online channel, 18 Shahrivar 1405.

Appendix C: Methodology and sourcing notes

Compiled by the monitor, 9 September 2026

Scan coverage. Nine front pages were read in full by vision: eight Persian pages from the Tasnim newspaper album for Wednesday 18 Shahrivar 1405, posted at 03:37 UTC, and Iran Daily from the English-language kiosk album posted at 04:31 UTC. The album's own printed Jalali date matches the target date, so the stale-batch guard did not trip and no fallback sources were needed. Papers identified from their mastheads: Kayhan, Shargh, Nobonyad, Vatan-e Emrooz, Chahar Sough, Sazandegi, Ta'adol and Etemad, plus Iran Daily in English.

Text coverage. The Kayhan, Vatan-e Emrooz, Jam-e Jam, Etemad, Iran and Sobh-e No outlet channels were retrieved directly, and the Defa Press, Fars News and Nour News wires were read for corroboration only. Tehran Times was unavailable at the time of compilation, so no English wire from that outlet is reflected in this edition. The Leader's own websites were also unavailable, which is the reason Appendix A carries no primary quotation.

Translation. All translations are editorial. Persian headlines are retained in the original script beside the English throughout the per-paper section, and loaded register terms are glossed inline where the framing turns on the word rather than the sense: گلوگاه (chokepoint), پشیمانی (regret, as distinct from the English edition's 'defeat'), غنیمت (spoils of war), به‌دام‌انداختن (trapping), اقتدار (eqtedar, commanding power), دوقطبی‌سازی (bipolarisation), آزادسازی قیمت‌ها (price liberalisation).

Attribution firewall. Every Iranian battle-damage figure in this edition is a claim by the party making it and is labelled as such. Specifically unconfirmed at compile time: the seizure of an American unmanned underwater vehicle; strikes on two American vessels, eight tankers and ten further ships; missile hits on two named American destroyers; the destruction of an MQ-1 over the Strait; the absence of any air-defence engagement over the Jordanian bases. The identification of the captured vehicle as an Anduril Dive-LD comes from outside reporting, not from the Iranian pages, and the American military had issued no confirmation of the loss. Second-hand renderings, including Vatan-e Emrooz's relay of a Wall Street Journal report and Kayhan's citation of a RAND formulation, remain flagged as renderings: quoting them does not verify them.

Corroborated outside the Iranian press. The Yemeni strikes on Saudi Aramco installations at Jizan, Abha and Najran and the resulting fires; a Saudi counter-campaign; Brent crude rising towards but not reaching 100 dollars, which makes the round figure printed by Kayhan and Vatan-e Emrooz a rounded-up framing rather than a settlement price; the Israeli declaration of operational control at the Ali al-Taher ridge near Nabatieh on 3 September; the 1 September strikes at Kouhestak in Sirik county, Hormozgan, with five killed and more than sixty wounded; and the UN Secretary-General's statement on southern Lebanon issued through his spokesman.

Single-source flags. The identification of the IRGC spokesman as 'Sardar Mohebbi' rests on the Defa Press item alone and is reported as printed rather than asserted. The name of the energy analyst interviewed by Iran Daily is not legible at the resolution available and is therefore not given. The leadership poster marking the Persian Gulf operation is single-sourced to the Etemad channel relay. The succession evidence in this edition is again indirect: the Leader is named in print only inside Kayhan's editorial, as Imam Sayyid Mojtaba Khamenei with the honorific of a living Leader, and no message, speech or front-page image of him appears anywhere in the edition.

Corrections and continuity. The tracking cue this monitor set on 8 September, whether Kayhan would sustain its campaign against two named former presidents for a third day, is answered in the negative and the reason is structural: the editorial byline changed from Hossein Shariatmadari to Hassan Rashvand, and with it the target. The standing Hormuz-as-coercion thread advanced materially, from Major General Rezaei's announced zone to a published Defa Press account of the enforcement logic as one of insurance, ownership and routing rather than transit, and to a direct warning to tanker crews in Kuwaiti and Bahraini berths. The dual-chokepoint advocacy first recorded in the 14 July editorial is printed today as accomplished doctrine on Kayhan's front page.

Handling. This product documents and analyses hostile foreign-press rhetoric for defensive assessment only. Nothing herein endorses, amplifies or operationalises it.

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.