OPEN-SOURCE PRESS INTELLIGENCE

Iranian Press Monitor

Daily Front-Page Intelligence

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FOUR READINGS OF ONE CHINESE SENTENCE EDITION

Ten front pages of 26 Shahrivar 1405, read alongside nine outlet channels; Tehran Times was not available at the time of compilation.

Front pages published the morning of 17 September 2026, reflecting events through late 16 September local

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


تحول برای چه کسی؟
پیام چین را باید شنید
نارضایتی چین از فروپاشی تفاهم
وانگ یی، وزیر امور خارجه چین در دیدار با سیدعباس عراقچی، وزیر امور خارجه ایران خواستار آن شد که ایران و آمریکا به تفاهم‌نامه اسلام‌آباد بازگردند و نگذارند تنش‌های منطقه‌ای به دریای سرخ کشیده شود
سازندگی

Front page: Sazandegi

Executive Summary

The lead judgment of this edition concerns the chokepoint file, and it rests on a question mark. Javan, the IRGC-affiliated daily, gave its cover to «عاقبت‌اندیشی در تنگه‌ها», thinking about consequences in the straits, under a standfirst that asks directly: with the strait staying closed and a naval blockade in place, is Iran under more pressure, or America and the world? The paper then says the answer can be found in the evidence. Closure of the Strait of Hormuz is not an ordinary policy in this system; it was set out personally by the serving Leader in his first message in March 2026 as a tool of pressure to be maintained. A Guard-affiliated newspaper does not put the cost-benefit of that policy into interrogative form on page one unless the policy is being argued about somewhere above the paper. This monitor has spent four cycles recording chokepoint advocacy moving down-market, from institutional voices to cartography to academic interviews. Today it moved further: into a question.

The occasion is Chinese. Wang Yi met Abbas Araghchi in Beijing on 16 September and said China is willing to strengthen dialogue and cooperation with Iran and to safeguard Iran's legitimate rights and interests; that Beijing does not wish to see regional tensions spilling over into Yemen and the Red Sea; and that Iran and the United States should stay rational and restrained. Four Iranian surfaces printed that statement this morning and no two printed the same thing. Kayhan's channel makes China a guarantor: «آماده‌ایم قاطعانه از حقوق ایران دفاع کنیم», we are ready to defend Iran's rights resolutely, with both restraint clauses removed. Sazandegi gives its entire cover to «نارضایتی چین از فروپاشی تفاهم», China's displeasure at the collapse of the understanding, and reads the same words as a reprimand. Etemad files it under «دعوت به گفت‌وگو», an invitation to dialogue. Iran Daily, the government's own English surface, prints safeguard inside scare quotes and commissions an analyst to call the Chinese move "low-cost, low-risk mediation". One statement, four Iranian meanings, distributed exactly along the fault line the chokepoint file runs on.

The most consequential sentence in the batch is in Sazandegi's day-column and it is single-sourced. Fereydoun Majlesi, a former Iranian diplomat, opens «پیام چین را باید شنید», China's message must be heard, by attributing to Wang Yi remarks on «ضرورت بازگشایی تنگه هرمز», the necessity of reopening the Strait of Hormuz, alongside a return to the Islamabad memorandum and an end to the Red Sea crisis, and says these should be read as a serious warning rather than as ordinary diplomacy. No other Iranian surface in the batch prints a Chinese request to reopen the strait. The wire record does not contain that formulation in those words, though at least one Western outlet framed the Beijing visit as Chinese pressure to open the strait. This monitor carries the attribution as Sazandegi's and not as a verified Chinese text. If it is accurate, the largest buyer of Iranian oil asked Tehran to end the closure four days before its president meets the American president, and Kayhan printed the same meeting as a promise of protection.

Against the argument about leverage stands a fact about leverage that reached no front page at all. Bloomberg reported on 16 September that Saudi Aramco is working to restore about half the capacity of the East-West pipeline within days, with full capacity targeted in roughly six weeks, after the line was shut on 10 September following drone attacks. That pipeline is Riyadh's route around Hormuz to the Red Sea, and its closure has been a standing element of the coercion case this monitor has tracked since early September. The item ran this morning on Vatan-e Emrooz's own Telegram channel, attributed to Bloomberg, and did not appear on Vatan-e Emrooz's front page or on any other. A hardline daily that has built covers out of adversary documents for two consecutive cycles declined to print the one adversary document that subtracts from the argument. Negative evidence of this kind is a finding, not a gap.

The domestic half of the edition escalated by a factor this monitor cannot check. Jam-e Jam banners «۳۱ میلیون جان‌فدا در میدان», 31 million jan-feda in the field, and says the organising phase for registrants in the

«جان فدای ایران» campaign begins shortly; Javan's body text carries the same 31 million figure with a campaign spokesman attached. One cycle ago the largest figure in this campaign's vicinity was 600,000 registrations, sourced to the IRGC's Tehran commander. Charsoogh repeats the thousand-battalions-in-a-hundred-minutes claim that has now travelled unchanged between three titles in three cycles. The Friday rally itself is confirmed and dated: the Muhammad Rasulullah Corps of Greater Tehran's advertisement, which ran at the foot of Etemad's front page on 16 September, now runs on Javan, same route, same hour, Imam Hossein Square to Navvab Crossroads, 8 a.m. on Friday 27 Shahrivar, dedicated «به نیابت از آقای شهید ایران», on behalf of Iran's martyred Aqa. A number that grows fiftyfold in one cycle without acquiring a register is a claim about confidence rather than a count of people, and the route and the hour remain the only testable part of it.

The Red Sea file that Wang Yi named is moving in the opposite direction from the file he asked about. The Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree announced on 16 September that Yemeni forces had shot down a Royal Saudi Air Force F-15 over Marib with a locally made munition; al-Masirah aired footage, Riyadh has not responded and the claim is not independently verified. Jam-e Jam gave that claim its entire cover photograph, Kayhan added a taunt to Saudi pilots, and Javan's rail runs «تمکین امریکا مقابل انصارالله», America's submission before Ansarullah. In the same window Ansarullah rejected Saudi accusations that it had targeted Mecca, Vatan-e Emrooz's channel carried «انصارالله خطاب به عربستان: تقدس‌نمایی مانع حملات ما نخواهد شد», and Yemen's Supreme Political Council escalated the religious register further. Tehran's press is amplifying a widening Yemen-Saudi front on the same morning that its most important trading partner asked it to keep regional tensions out of the Red Sea.

The succession's silence held for a fourth consecutive cycle and was tested against a harder case than yesterday's. No message, speech or quoted remark from the Leader appears on any of the ten front pages or in any of the nine channels read. The occasion available was a great-power intervention on the maritime file that the Leader personally defined in March, on the eve of a scheduled Xi-Trump meeting at which the war and the strait are expected to be discussed. The office that set the policy said nothing about the first serious external pressure on it, while the mobilisation campaign filling the same front pages is dedicated to his assassinated predecessor by name.

Two findings cut across the camps rather than along them. First, sourcing quality split inside a single front page: Vatan-e Emrooz banners Ursula von der Leyen's 90 billion euro figure for extra EU fossil-fuel imports, which is accurate and checkable, directly above a cover built on three Antony Blinken quotations for which no primary text, venue or date could be located. Jomhouri Eslami prints the same European figure with the payer identified correctly; Hamshahri prints an equivalent order of magnitude, 100 billion dollars, and attaches it to «آمریکایی‌ها», Americans. Second, the institutional argument is being made by a paper that is not reformist: Jomhouri Eslami runs Iran's election to the IAEA General Committee and the third US House war powers resolution in adjacent columns, both of which are arguments for remaining inside the institutions the hardline front pages have been arguing to leave.

Net assessment: this is the first edition in the monitored series in which the pressure on the chokepoint policy is external, specific and printed. The war coverage is unchanged in volume and largely unchanged in claim, the mobilisation numbers are larger and no better sourced, and the economic dailies have again run a self-contained agenda in which the exchange rate, not the strait, is the operative variable, with Ta'adol carrying no war content on page one at all and leading instead on the launch of Iran's first foreign-currency investment fund. What is new is that a great power with standing asked, that the request was reported four different ways in one morning, and that the Guard's own daily answered it by reopening the argument rather than by closing it. The risk of overreading is that Javan has posed rhetorical questions before and answered them in the expected direction, and that the Chinese reopening request rests on one columnist's paraphrase. The risk of

underreading is that the last time this monitor saw a policy move, it moved through exactly this sequence: argument widened to a domestic audience, institutional voices withdrawn, then a question on a friendly front page.

BOTTOM LINE One sentence from the Chinese foreign minister reached four Iranian front pages this morning as four different sentences, and the paper that had the least reason to hesitate, the IRGC-affiliated daily, responded by putting the closure of the Strait of Hormuz back on its own cover as a question.

CRITICAL SOURCING NOTE Ten front pages published the morning of 26 Shahrivar 1405 were read as images, nine Persian from the NewspaperTasnim album posted at 01:39 UTC and one English from the Newspapers_Iran album posted at 04:31 UTC. The stale-batch guard passed on the first attempt against the album's own printed Jalali date, so no page here is carried over from a previous day. Nine outlet channels were read; agency wires (Defa Press, Fars News, Nour News) are used for corroboration and threat context only and are labelled as claims. Kayhan appears on channel evidence alone, since it is not in the scan album, and its day-column was not retrievable. Tehran Times and khamenei.ir were not available at the time of compilation. Items checked against non-Iranian reporting before being characterised: the Beijing meeting and Wang Yi's quoted formulations; von der Leyen's 90 billion euro figure and the argument she used it for; the unverified Houthi claim to have downed a Saudi F-15 over Marib; the US House war powers resolution of 15 September, passed 220-204, non-binding and not taken up by the Senate; Iran's 15 September election to the IAEA General Committee; the PUK delegation's Tehran visit; and the Bloomberg report on the East-West pipeline restoration. Flagged as single-source and not adopted: the three Blinken quotations on Vatan-e Emrooz's cover, for which no primary text could be located; the 31 million registration figure; and Sazandegi's attribution to Wang Yi of a call to reopen the Strait of Hormuz. Correction to the previous edition: 16 September corresponds to 3 Rabi' al-Thani 1448; three mastheads in today's batch print 4 Rabi' al-Thani for 17 September.

Macro Trend Analysis

1 One external statement, four institutional translations

Kayhan makes China a guarantor by deleting the restraint clauses, Sazandegi makes it a reprimand and leads its whole cover on it, Etemad makes it an invitation to talks, and the government's English surface holds it at arm's length with scare quotes and an analyst calling the mediation low-cost and low-risk. On 16 September this monitor distinguished opportunistic convergence, four newsrooms reading one document four ways, from directed convergence, six titles attacking one broadcast in identical terms. Today's spread is the first case in the series where the divergence tracks a live policy dispute rather than editorial temperament, which makes it diagnostic rather than merely varied.

2 The chokepoint argument reached the question stage

Over four cycles the case for the closed strait has moved from institutional statements to a satellite map, then to an academic interview, then to a Washington Post citation, and now to an interrogative headline on the IRGC-affiliated daily. Etemad's note column runs «بازی با کارت گلوگاه‌ها», playing the chokepoint card, on the same morning. Kayhan's only maritime line is that no vessel escapes Iranian surveillance, which is a capability claim and not a position. Four consecutive cycles in which the Leader's office daily has had the file available in its strongest form and stated no position on it.

3 The material basis of the leverage is being restored, and nobody printed it

Saudi Aramco is working to return about half of the East-West pipeline within days after its 10 September shutdown, with full capacity targeted in about six weeks; the US energy secretary said on 14 September that

the Hormuz bypass would reopen soon. Vatan-e Emrooz carried the Bloomberg report on its own channel and kept it off its front page. No other title carried it at all. The press that has spent a month arguing that the bypass being shut proves the coercion works has declined to report the bypass reopening.

4 Mobilisation numbers are growing faster than their sourcing

600,000 registrations on 16 September, sourced to a named IRGC commander, became 31 million on 17 September across two titles with a campaign spokesman and no register. The thousand-battalions-in-a-hundred-minutes claim has now moved unchanged between Hamshahri, Sobh-e No and Charsoogh across three cycles. The only element that is dated, routed and testable is the Friday assembly itself, now advertised on a second surface at T-1.

5 The Yemen-Saudi front is widening while Beijing asks for the opposite

An unverified Houthi claim to have downed a Saudi F-15 took a full front-page photograph on the state broadcaster's daily and a taunt on Kayhan's channel; Ansarullah publicly rejected Saudi accusations of targeting Mecca; Yemen's Supreme Political Council escalated in religious terms. Wang Yi's stated concern was precisely that regional tensions should not spill into Yemen and the Red Sea. Riyadh continues to be handled across the spectrum as an isolate, with Etemad's «پادشاهی در بن‌بست» a fourth consecutive cycle of that framing.

6 Sourcing quality is now bifurcating inside single front pages

Vatan-e Emrooz banners a checkable European Commission figure above a cover built on three unverifiable quotations attributed to a former US Secretary of State. Jomhouri Eslami builds an entire page from a European figure, an IAEA election, a US House vote and a presidential meeting, all verifiable, and spoils it with an unsourced global opinion poll. Hamshahri takes a European cost figure and attaches it to Americans. The variance is no longer between camps; it is within pages.

7 The economic press is running a war-free agenda

Ta'adol's front page carries no war content at all on day 198: handset prices as a currency problem, the launch of Iran's first foreign-currency investment fund, a record on the exchange. Charsoogh names the sitting health minister and charts a tripling of treatment inflation, its second consecutive cover naming a minister with a labelled series. Etemad, a political daily, leads on the gap between the exchange and the real economy. Three titles, three variations on the same proposition: the dollar, not the strait, is the operative variable.

Key Judgments

KJ-1 **[HIGH]** The closure of the Strait of Hormuz is being argued about inside the system, and the evidence is that the IRGC-affiliated daily put its cost-benefit on page one as a question. Javan's cover is «عاقبت‌اندیشی در تنگه‌ها», thinking about consequences in the straits, under «نگاهی به راهبرد کنترل آبراهه‌ها» and a standfirst that asks whether the closed strait and the naval blockade press harder on Iran or on America and the world, then says the evidence supplies the answer. The policy was set out personally by the serving Leader in his first message of 12 March 2026 as a tool of pressure to be maintained. Across four cycles this monitor has watched the case for it migrate from institutional voices to cartography to an academic interview to a foreign citation; an interrogative headline on a Guard-affiliated surface is the next step in that sequence, not a departure from it. The alternative reading, that Javan poses rhetorical questions in order to answer them in the expected direction, is real and the page does argue for the closure. What the alternative does not explain is the timing: the question appears the morning after Beijing pressed Tehran on that exact file. The significance is that the strongest domestic constituency for the

closure is now publishing the argument for it rather than the assertion of it, which is what a position looks like shortly before it is traded.

KJ-2 [HIGH] One Chinese statement produced four incompatible Iranian meanings in a single morning, and the spread maps onto the chokepoint dispute rather than onto editorial temperament. Wang Yi's Beijing remarks of 16 September, verified against wire reporting, contained three elements: willingness to safeguard Iran's legitimate rights and interests, unwillingness to see regional tensions spill into Yemen and the Red Sea, and a call for Iran and the United States to stay rational and restrained. Kayhan's channel prints only the first, hardened into «آماده‌ایم قاطعانه از حقوق ایران دفاع کنیم». Sazandegi prints the second and third as the story and leads its whole cover «نارضایتی چین از فروپاشی تفاهم». Etemad files it as «دعوت به گفت‌وگو». Iran Daily quarantines safeguard in scare quotes and prints an analyst calling the mediation low-cost and low-risk. On 16 September this monitor read four readings of one Pentagon document as opportunistic convergence. Today's four readings are of a text that constrains Iran rather than indicting its adversary, which is why the divergence is informative: outlets discard the clauses that cost their camp something. The significance is that the Iranian press has just shown, in a single cycle, which parts of a great-power offer each institutional family is prepared to carry.

KJ-3 [MODERATE] Beijing may have asked Tehran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, and only one Iranian surface says so. Sazandegi's day-column by the former diplomat Fereydoun Majlesi opens on Wang Yi's remarks concerning «ضرورت بازگشایی تنگه هرمز», the necessity of reopening the Strait of Hormuz, together with a return to the Islamabad memorandum and an end to the Red Sea crisis, and instructs readers to treat them as a serious warning rather than as routine diplomacy. Sazandegi's own front-page deck carries the memorandum and the Red Sea but not the reopening. No other title in the batch carries it in any form. The wire record of the meeting does not contain that formulation, although at least one Western outlet characterised the visit as Chinese pressure to open the strait, which is consistent with the column without confirming its wording. The confidence is held at moderate because a single columnist's paraphrase is the entire Iranian evidentiary base, and because a reformist paper has an obvious interest in the claim being true. The significance is that if it is accurate, the constituency for reopening now includes Iran's principal oil customer, four days before a scheduled Xi-Trump meeting at which the war and the strait are expected to be raised, and the indicator to watch is whether any official Iranian source repeats the formulation or denies it.

KJ-4 [HIGH] Negative evidence, and it is the sharpest of the cycle: the restoration of the Hormuz bypass reached an Iranian channel and no Iranian front page. Bloomberg reported on 16 September that Saudi Aramco is working to bypass a damaged section and return about half the East-West pipeline's capacity within days, with full capability targeted in roughly six weeks, after the 1,200-kilometre line was shut on 10 September following drone attacks launched from Iraq; the US energy secretary said on 14 September that the bypass would reopen soon. Vatan-e Emrooz posted the Bloomberg item to its own Telegram channel this morning and printed neither it nor any version of it on its front page, which instead carried unverifiable quotations attributed to a former American secretary of state. No other title in the batch mentions the pipeline. The same paper built covers out of adversary documents on 16 September and again today, so the omission is not a sourcing limitation but a selection. The significance is that the physical premise of the coercion argument, Riyadh having no way around the strait, is being removed while the argument continues to be printed, and the gap between the two is now measurable in days.

KJ-5 [MODERATE-HIGH] The mobilisation figure grew roughly fiftyfold in one cycle without acquiring a source, which is evidence about confidence rather than about turnout. Jam-e Jam banners «۳۱ میلیون جان‌فدا در میدان» with the organising phase said to begin shortly; Javan carries the same 31 million with a campaign spokesman; Vatan-e Emrooz's channel adds a press briefing by the campaign's headquarters spokesman and the claim that nearly all top-tier officials have registered. One cycle earlier the operative number was 600,000 registrations for a related exercise, sourced to a named IRGC commander. Charsoogh again prints a thousand jan-feda battalions ready in a hundred minutes, a figure that has now moved unchanged between three titles across three cycles. No register, sample or verification mechanism is offered for any of it. The benign reading is that a national campaign genuinely scaled after two hundred nights of nightly gatherings and that 31 million is a cumulative sign-up count of low commitment. The significance either way is the same: the testable part of the campaign is Friday's assembly, and its attendance against a claimed 31 million registrants is the measurement this edition sets up.

KJ-6 [HIGH] The Friday mass mobilisation is confirmed at T-1 on a second surface with an unchanged route, hour and dedication. The Muhammad Rasulullah Corps of Greater Tehran's advertisement, «رزمایش و اجتماع بزرگ مردم / جان فدای ایران / به نیابت از آقای شهید ایران», an exercise and grand popular assembly on behalf of Iran's martyred Aqa, ran at the foot of Etemad's front page on 16 September and today runs on Javan: Friday 27 Shahrivar 1405, 18 September, 8 a.m., Imam Hossein Square to Navvab Crossroads. Charsoogh carries the assembly in its own copy. Yesterday this monitor read the placement on a reformist surface as the Guard buying reach it does not hold; the move to a Guard-affiliated surface at T-1 is consistent with saturation rather than with reconsideration. The significance is that this remains the edition's one hard forward indicator with a time and a route attached, that it carries an exercise component and not only an assembly, and that its dedication names the assassinated predecessor and not the serving Leader.

KJ-7 [MODERATE-HIGH] The Yemen-Saudi front is being amplified in Tehran on the morning Beijing asked for it to be contained, and the lead item is an unverified claim. The Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree announced on 16 September that Yemeni forces downed a Royal Saudi Air Force F-15 over Marib using a locally made munition; al-Masirah aired footage showing a launch, wreckage and armed men beside a tail section with Saudi markings; the claim is not independently verified and Riyadh has not responded. Jam-e Jam gave it the entire cover photograph under «شکار F-15 به سبک یمن», Kayhan's channel added «یمن به تمکین امریکا مقابل انصارالله», and Javan's rail ran «خلبانان عربستان: پرواز با شما برگشتن‌تان با ما». In the same cycle Ansarullah publicly denied targeting Mecca and told Riyadh that «تقدس‌نمایی» will not stop its operations, and Yemen's Supreme Political Council escalated in religious terms. Wang Yi said explicitly that China does not wish to see tensions spill into Yemen and the Red Sea. The significance is that the Iranian press is investing its most valuable front-page space in the one theatre its principal partner named as the thing to avoid, and that it is doing so on a claim whose evidentiary basis is a video.

KJ-8 [MODERATE-HIGH] Negative evidence, fourth consecutive cycle and now tested against a harder case: the Leader is absent from every surface read. No message, speech, decree or quoted remark attributed to the Leader appears on any of the ten front pages or in any of the nine outlet channels. The occasion available today was the first substantial external pressure on the maritime policy he personally announced in March 2026, on the eve of a scheduled Xi-Trump meeting at which the war and the strait are expected to be discussed; on 16 September the occasion was the two hundredth night of the gatherings. Meanwhile the mobilisation campaign that fills these same front pages is dedicated in an IRGC corps' own advertising copy to «آقای شهید ایران», Iran's martyred Aqa. khamenei.ir was not reachable at compile time, so this rests on the absence of any relay across eleven Iranian surfaces rather than on a check of the

office's publication record, which is a weaker form of the finding and is reported as such. The significance is that the office is not spending its voice on the file where its voice would be most consequential, and a fifth consecutive silence would make this the most durable negative finding in the series.

KJ-9 **[MODERATE-HIGH]** Sourcing discipline is now varying within single front pages rather than between camps, and today's clearest case is on one page. Vatan-e Emrooz banners «رئیس کمیسیون اروپا: ... ۹۰ میلیارد یورو هزینه اضافه», which is accurate: Ursula von der Leyen put the EU's additional fossil-fuel import bill since late February at 90 billion euros and cited Strait of Hormuz shipping restrictions, in an argument for domestic clean energy. Directly beneath it the paper builds its whole cover on three quotations attributed to Antony Blinken about American failure and Gulf states seeking terms with Tehran, for which no primary text, venue or date could be located at compile time; the nearest verified item is Blinken's public rejection, in March 2026, of a Trump characterisation of his position on military action. Jomhouri Eslami prints the same European figure with the payer identified correctly and then spoils an otherwise checkable page with an unsourced global opinion poll. Hamshahri prints an equivalent magnitude, 100 billion dollars, and attaches it to «آمریکایی‌ها». The significance is that the frequency of externally-verifiable sourcing has been this monitor's best proxy for editorial confidence, and a page that mixes both registers is evidence of a newsroom reaching for authority it does not have for its lead.

KJ-10 **[MODERATE]** The case for staying inside international institutions is now being made by a non-reformist front page. Jomhouri Eslami runs «شکست آمریکا در کنفرانس عمومی آژانس», reporting Iran's election to the General Committee of the IAEA General Conference, in an adjacent column to «تصویب سومین قطعنامه در مجلس نمایندگان آمریکا برای پایان دادن جنگ با ایران». Both are verified: Iran was elected by secret ballot at the 70th General Conference on 15 September over reported US objections, and the House passed a war powers resolution 220-204 the same day, the third such vote, sponsored by Seth Moulton with seven Republicans crossing. Both are also arguments against the hardline programme printed on other pages: an Agency Iran is winning inside is not an Agency to withdraw from, and an American legislature voting three times to end the war is a reason to wait it out rather than to escalate. On 16 September the same counter-argument appeared on the principlist Sobh-e No. Two non-reformist surfaces in two cycles is a pattern rather than an exception. The caveat is that Jomhouri Eslami is editorially independent of both blocs and its positions do not predict the principlist camp's. The significance is that the withdrawal case is now answering opponents inside its own half of the press.

KJ-11 **[MODERATE-HIGH]** The Iranian press converted a non-binding congressional vote into an American capitulation signal, and two titles did it in the same cycle. Jam-e Jam's deck says Washington's military cost has passed 38 billion dollars and «کنگره برای سومین بار خواستار توقف این جنگ شد»; Jomhouri Eslami prints «تصویب سومین قطعنامه در مجلس نمایندگان آمریکا برای پایان دادن جنگ با ایران». The vote is real: 220-204 in the House on 15 September. What both pages omit is that it is a concurrent resolution, is not presented to the president, that the Senate has not passed its own, and that the preceding two votes in June and July changed nothing. The 38 billion dollar figure also continues the arithmetic drift this monitor flagged on 16 September, when the government daily's channel carried it against the Pentagon Inspector General's audited 33.4 billion; the number has now moved from a channel to a front page without acquiring a source. The significance is that Tehran is building an expectation of American withdrawal on procedural events that cannot produce one, and expectations built that way are expensive to unwind when the Senate does not act.

KJ-12 [MODERATE] The economic press printed no war and one new instrument, and the instrument is the more informative of the two. Ta'adol's front page on day 198 contains no war content: handset prices treated as a currency problem under «موبایل در تله دلار», a record on the exchange, and a photograph of the launch of subscriptions for Iran's first foreign-currency investment fund in Shahrivar 1405 under «خوف و رجا در بازار سرمایه». Charsoogh names the sitting health minister Mohammad-Reza Zafarghandi and charts a tripling of treatment inflation, its second consecutive cover naming a minister against a labelled series. Etemad leads on the gap between the exchange and the real economy as a warning to policymakers. A state that opens a legal channel for households to hold hard currency is usually responding to households already holding it illegally, and it is doing so in the same week that two economic dailies put named ministers and labelled inflation series on their covers. The significance is that the domestic financial file is generating concrete policy events while the diplomatic file generates readings of one sentence, and the economic press has stopped treating the war as the explanation for either.

KJ-13 [LOW-MODERATE] Hamshahri's blockade-defiance cover is the softest reading of the siege available in the Iranian press, and it depends on Chinese supply. «اتوبوس‌ها رسید، محاصره شکست», the buses arrived, the siege is broken, gives the top half of a municipal daily's front page to the arrival of 31 articulated buses, attributed to the municipality spokesman as having entered «به‌رغم محاصره ادعایی آمریکا», despite America's claimed siege. The quotation panels state that 200 further articulated buses are under contract with China. The word «ادعایی», claimed, applied to the blockade by a Tehran municipality daily is a notable register: it treats the siege as an American assertion rather than as a condition. The reading is held at low-moderate confidence because a municipal daily celebrating a municipal delivery is the least political explanation available and probably the correct one. The significance is that the one front page in the batch that measures the blockade against a physical delivery concludes it is broken, and that the delivery came from the state whose foreign minister spent the same morning asking Tehran to change course.

Named-Figure Tracker

Figure	Role / relevance	Today's framing	Flag
Wang Yi	Foreign Minister of China	Guarantor on Kayhan, source of displeasure on Sazandegi, inviter on Etemad, low-risk mediator on Iran Daily; credited by Sazandegi's day-column with calling for the Strait of Hormuz to be reopened	WATCH
Abbas Araghchi	Foreign Minister of Iran	Received in Beijing; Iran Daily decks him as hoping for a US return to diplomacy to end the war	WATCH
Masoud Pezeshkian	President of Iran	Front-paged by Jomhouri Eslami telling the PUK president that regional problems are solvable through cooperation, dialogue, fairness and justice	WATCH
Bafel Talabani	President of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, Iraq	Second day of a Tehran visit at the Iranian foreign ministry's invitation; photographed with the president	WATCH
Antony Blinken	Former US Secretary of State	Vatan-e Emrooz's entire cover, credited with confessions of American failure and of Gulf	TARGET FRAMING

Figure	Role / relevance	Today's framing	Flag
		states seeking terms with Tehran; no primary text located	
Donald Trump	President of the United States	«روایت باخت ترامپ», the narrative of Trump's defeat, on Vatan-e Emrooz; Hamshahri attributes a 100 billion dollar fuel bill to «جنگ ترامپ»	TARGET FRAMING
Ursula von der Leyen	President of the European Commission	Quoted accurately on 90 billion euros of additional EU fossil-fuel import costs by two front pages, with the clean-energy argument she made it for removed	COERCION SPOKESMAN
Yahya Saree	Military spokesman, Ansarullah	Source of the unverified Saudi F-15 shootdown claim that took Jam-e Jam's cover photograph	NEW NAMED FIGURE
Mohammad-Reza Zafarghandi	Minister of Health	Named on Charsoogh's cover as the author of a tripling in treatment inflation	WATCH
Fereydoun Majlesi	Former Iranian diplomat, Sazandegi columnist	Author of the day's flagged editorial and the only Iranian source for a Chinese call to reopen the Strait of Hormuz	NEW NAMED FIGURE
Rahman Ghahremanpour	Iranian international-relations analyst	Etemad's interlocutor for «پادشاهی در بن‌بست», a monarchy at a dead end, continuing the Riyadh-as-isolate framing	WATCH
Seth Moulton	US Representative, sponsor of the 15 September war powers resolution	Unnamed on the Iranian pages, which report the vote as Congress demanding a halt for a third time	absence noted
The Leader	Supreme Leader of Iran (Mojtaba Khamenei)	Absent from all ten front pages and all nine channels for a fourth consecutive cycle; the mobilisation campaign on those pages is dedicated to his assassinated predecessor	absence noted

Headline Summary Table

Outlet	Lead Headline (English)	Orientation	Theme	Threat signal
Sazandegi	China's displeasure at the collapse of the understanding	Reformist (Kargozaran party)	Beijing as pressure to re-enter the Islamabad memorandum	LOW-MODERATE: de-escalation advocacy framed as a great-power reprimand
Iran Daily	China FM says willing to 'safeguard' Iran's rights	Government English-language daily (IRNA)	Chinese mediation relayed with visible reservation; no Hormuz position for a fifth cycle	LOW: diplomatic opening received cool

Outlet	Lead Headline (English)	Orientation	Theme	Threat signal
Etemad	The bourse's run-up	Reformist daily of record	Asset-price warning above an invitation to dialogue; chokepoint treated as a card	LOW-MODERATE: talks framed as invitation, no mobilisation advertising
Kayhan (channel)	China's foreign minister: we are ready to defend Iran's rights resolutely	Hardline, Leader's office appointee as managing editor	China as guarantor, restraint clauses removed; Hormuz reduced to a surveillance claim	HIGH: great-power backing asserted, unverified shootdown amplified
Javan	Thinking about consequences in the straits	Hardline principlist, IRGC-affiliated	Cost-benefit of the closed strait reopened as a question; Friday rally advertised at T-1	MODERATE-HIGH: chokepoint closure re-argued rather than asserted
Jam-e Jam	Hunting the F-15, Yemeni style	State broadcaster's daily (IRIB)	Unverified Yemeni shootdown claim as cover art, plus 31 million mobilisation registrations	HIGH: unsourced battle and mobilisation claims above the fold
Vatan-e Emrooz	The narrative of Trump's defeat	Hardline principlist	American strategic defeat narrated through unverifiable Blinken quotations, above a verified European cost figure	MODERATE-HIGH: high-confidence defeat claims on mixed sourcing
Jomhouri Eslami	The consequence of America's war on Iran: global protests intensify over the unbridled rise in fuel prices	Traditional clerical establishment, editorially independent	The war's cost to the West, plus Iran's IAEA election and the third US House resolution	MODERATE: adversary-attrition framing on largely verifiable sources
Hamshahri	The buses arrived, the siege is broken	Tehran municipality daily, centrist	Blockade defiance demonstrated through a municipal bus delivery contracted with China	LOW-MODERATE: siege treated as an American claim rather than a condition
Charsoogh	Zafarghandi's prescription for the people: treatment inflation tripled	Economic daily	Named minister and a labelled health-inflation series, beside «two hundred nights: no to negotiation»	MODERATE: distributional indictment alongside explicit rejection of talks
Ta'adol	Mobile phones in the dollar trap	Economic daily	No war content on page one; currency, the exchange, and Iran's first foreign-currency investment fund	LOW: war absent from the front page entirely

Per-Paper Front-Page Analysis

Iran Daily

Government's English-language daily, published by IRNA

“Foreign investment doubles as government seeks to tap idle savings” «(published in English; no Persian lead)»

LOW: diplomatic opening relayed with visible reservation; no chokepoint or mobilisation content



- Main: "Foreign investment doubles as government seeks to tap idle savings", a domestic economic lead across the full width of page one, above the war and the diplomacy.
- Main photo: "China FM says willing to 'safeguard' Iran's rights", decked "Araghchi hopes US return to diplomacy to end war", over a photograph captioned as the Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi shaking hands with Iran's foreign minister Abbas Araghchi in Beijing on 16 September. The scare quotes around safeguard are the government's own English surface holding the Chinese formulation at arm's length.
- Exclusive interview: "China edges into low-risk mediation between Iran, US", with the geopolitical researcher Ahmad Rashidinejad, who tells the paper China is pursuing a strategy of "low-cost, low-risk mediation" aiming to avoid exposing itself to heavy political risks. The standfirst notes that a mediating role was "earlier attempted, with limited or negligible results, by Oman, Qatar, and Pakistan", and that many analysts judged those states lacked the necessary capacity. It ties the opening to Xi Jinping's statement that Beijing is ready to work with BRICS members to help restore peace and stability in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf.
- Top ear: "Iran needs to leverage BRICS membership for economic resilience", an interview item.
- Sub-item: "Iran maps out plan to revive international tourism through cultural diplomacy", and "Varmi island shows dynamic nature of Persian Gulf".
- Sport: Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games, "Jamshidi stars as Iran beats Bahrain to progress to basketball semis".
- Absence: no Strait of Hormuz item, no Oman or Salalah item, and no mobilisation item appears anywhere on the page. This is the fifth consecutive cycle in which the government's English surface has printed no Hormuz position.

> **ANALYST NOTE** The government's English page did two things worth recording. It printed the Chinese offer with scare quotes and then commissioned an analyst to call the mediation low-cost and low-risk, which is an unusually cool reception for a headline the Leader's-office daily is carrying as a guarantee. And in the same column it stated, in the government's own English voice, that Oman, Qatar and Pakistan produced limited or negligible results, which is the first explicit written-off of the Omani track on this surface. The Hormuz silence now runs to five cycles and is again filled with material that commits Tehran to nothing.

Jam-e Jam

State broadcaster's daily, published by the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB)

HIGH: unverified battle-damage claim elevated to cover art, joined to a 31 million mobilisation figure with no provenance

"Hunting the F-15, Yemeni style" «شکار F-15 به سبک یمن»



- Main: «انصارالله با فناوری بومی خود شاهکار جدیدی خلق کرد», Ansarullah created a new masterpiece with its own indigenous technology, over a full-width photograph of an aircraft tail section bearing Saudi markings with armed men posed around the wreckage. The underlying event is a claim: the Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree announced on 16 September that Yemeni forces shot down a Royal Saudi Air Force F-15 over Marib with a locally made munition, and al-Masirah aired footage. The claim has not been independently verified and Riyadh has not responded. Kayhan's channel runs the same story with the taunt «یمن به خلبانان عربستان: پرواز با شما برگشتن‌تان با ما», Yemen to Saudi pilots: the flying is up to you, the coming back is up to us.
- Banner: «۳۱ میلیون جان‌فدا در میدان», 31 million jan-feda in the field, with the standfirst that the organizing phase for those who registered in the «جان‌فدای ایران» campaign will begin shortly. This is the largest mobilisation figure yet printed in this monitor's window; on 16 September Vatan-e Emrooz carried 600,000 registrations sourced to the IRGC's Tehran commander.
- Sub-item: «فروپاشی روایت آمریکا», the collapse of America's narrative, with the deck «همزمان با افشای خسارات گسترده پایگاه‌های آمریکا در حملات موشکی دلاورانه ایران، هزینه نظامی واشنگتن از ۳۸ میلیارد دلار گذشت و کنگره برای سومین بار خواستار توقف این جنگ شد»: as damage to American bases is disclosed, Washington's military cost has passed 38 billion dollars and Congress has for a third time demanded a halt. The congressional element is verifiable and materially narrower than printed: the House of Representatives passed a war powers resolution 220-204 on 15 September, sponsored by Seth Moulton, with seven Republicans crossing; concurrent resolutions are not presented to the president and the Senate has not passed its own.
- Sub-item: «ناتو؛ واقعیت‌های یک کشتار دسته‌جمعی», NATO: the facts of a mass killing, illustrated with destroyed vehicles and a bulk-materials yard.
- Right rail: a stacked column of eight signed commentary portraits running from «پایان دوره‌ای که استعمار در احسن خلق» through media, judiciary and economic bylines, plus «جوانان؛ سرمایه سینمای انقلاب», youth as the capital of revolutionary cinema, and «عملیات نجات زائر خردسال امام رضا(ع)».

ANALYST NOTE The state broadcaster's daily gave its cover to a claim it cannot verify and its banner to a number it cannot source, and joined them to a congressional vote it described accurately in direction and inaccurately in weight. The 38 billion dollar figure is the same one the government daily's channel carried on 16 September against the Pentagon Inspector General's audited 33.4 billion, which means the drift this monitor flagged yesterday has now moved from a channel onto a front page. Track whether the 31 million figure

acquires a source, and whether IRIB's daily keeps running unverified Yemeni battle claims above the fold now that it has one that photographs well.

Hamshahri

Tehran municipality daily, centrist, managing director Mohsen Mahdian

LOW-MODERATE: blockade-defiance framing built on municipal procurement, with an energy-cost figure of uncertain attribution

"The buses arrived, the siege is broken" «اتوبوس‌ها رسید، محاصره شکست»



- Main: «ورود ۳۱ اتوبوس دوکابین به کشور» over a photograph of articulated buses flying Iranian flags, with the attribution «سخنگوی شهرداری: اتوبوس‌ها به‌رغم محاصره ادعایی آمریکا وارد کشور شد», the municipality spokesman saying the buses entered the country despite America's claimed siege. The whole top half of the page is a municipal procurement delivery framed as a war outcome.
- Kicker panels: four quotation blocks under the photograph give «اتوبوس ۱۰۱ دوکابین تاکنون در تهران فعال شده‌اند که این ۳۱ اتوبوس هم به آنها اضافه می‌شود»; «۲۰۰ اتوبوس دوکابین قراردادش با چین بسته شده است و بقیه اتوبوس‌ها هم وارد کشور می‌شود»; «۸۳ درصد of bus lines renewed in the current municipal term; and a 2,500-bus figure for the remainder of the term. The supplier named for the outstanding order is China, on the same morning the Chinese foreign minister dominates three other front pages.
- Sub-item: «صدای ایران در کنگره آمریکا», Iran's voice in the US Congress, reporting that a protest by a woman of Iranian descent against anti-Iran sanctions disrupted the US Treasury Secretary's congressional hearing; the photograph shows a placard reading SANCTIONS KILL IRANIANS.
- Sub-item: «دنیا تاوان جنگ آمریکا را می‌دهد», the world pays the price of America's war, decked «جنگ ترامپ هزینه سوخت آمریکایی‌ها را ۱۰۰ میلیارد دلار افزایش داد و صادرات انرژی متحدانش را زمین‌گیر کرد». The ~100 billion order of magnitude matches the European Commission president's 90 billion euro figure for extra EU fossil-fuel imports (about 104 billion dollars), which two other front pages this morning attribute correctly to Europe; Hamshahri attaches it to «آمریکایی‌ها», Americans. Treat the payer as unresolved.
- Sub-item: «پایان گروگانگیری‌های گانگسترهای معتاد», with the deck that police intelligence broke a kidnapping ring that had modelled itself on Hollywood films.

ANALYST NOTE Hamshahri is the one front page in the batch that treats the war as a logistics problem it has solved: thirty-one buses, a named supplier, a percentage of lines renewed. That is a municipal daily converting a delivery into a rebuttal of the blockade, and it is the softest available reading of the same siege that Javan's cover treats as a strategic question. The figure to watch is the transposed energy number: an order-of-magnitude cost the European Commission published to argue for European energy independence is reprinted on a Tehran front page as America's own bill.

Javan

Hardline principlist daily, affiliated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps

MODERATE-HIGH: chokepoint closure re-argued rather than asserted, alongside a routed mass mobilisation at T-1

"Thinking about consequences in the straits" «عاقبت‌اندیشی در تنگه‌ها»



- Main: under the kicker «نگاهی به راهبرد کنترل آبراهه‌ها», a look at the waterway-control strategy, the standfirst asks «با بسته ماندن تنگه و محاصره دریایی، ایران بیشتر تحت فشار است یا امریکا (و جهان)؟ برای پاسخ درست می‌توان شواهد زیادی را مشاهده کرد»: with the strait staying closed and a naval blockade in place, is Iran under more pressure, or America and the world? The framing is interrogative rather than declaratory, and it is printed by the IRGC-affiliated daily about a closure the Leader personally endorsed in his first message in March.
- Banner: «همه «جان فدا» شدیم», we have all become jan-feda, over a photograph of a chador-clad woman holding a rifle. The body carries the campaign spokesman putting registrations at 31 million and describes battalion-level organisation at centres, matching Jam-e Jam's banner figure across institutional lines.
- Op-ed: «باید به جنگ ادراکی دشمن، پاتک هنری زد», the enemy's cognitive war must be met with an artistic counter-attack, attributed to the head of the Artists' Basij Organization at an international arts event.
- Right rail: «تمکین امریکا مقابل انصارالله», America's submission before Ansarullah, and «گاز به کمک بنزین آمد», gas comes to petrol's aid, an energy-substitution item printed on the same page as the strait argument.
- Banner ad: the same paid advertisement that ran at the foot of Etemad's front page on 16 September now runs on Javan, «رزمایش و اجتماع بزرگ مردم / جان فدای ایران / به نیابت از آقای شهید ایران», an exercise and grand popular assembly on behalf of Iran's martyred Aqa, «جمعه ۲۷ شهریورماه ۱۴۰۵ ساعت ۸ صبح, میدان امام حسین تا چهارراه نواب», Friday 18 September at 8 a.m. from Imam Hossein Square to Navvab Crossroads, signed by the Muhammad Rasulullah Corps of Greater Tehran.
- Sub-item: rail notes headed «جان‌فدا؛ روایت آماری یک ملت در متن جنگ», jan-feda as the statistical narrative of a nation inside the war, and a second note on deterrence and power generation over two hundred days.

ANALYST NOTE The significant item on this page is the question mark. An IRGC-affiliated daily put the cost-benefit of a closed strait and a naval blockade on its own cover as an open question and then answered it with evidence rather than with doctrine, on the morning after the Chinese foreign minister pressed Tehran on the same file in Beijing. The paper that would be expected to carry the closure as settled policy is instead carrying the argument for it, which is what advocacy looks like when the policy is being contested somewhere above the paper. Track whether any office adopts «عاقبت‌اندیشی» language, and note that the Friday rally advertisement has now been placed on both a reformist and a Guard-affiliated surface at T-1.

Vatan-e Emrooz

Hardline principlist morning daily

MODERATE-HIGH: high-confidence claims of American strategic defeat built on one verified figure and one unverifiable quotation set

"The narrative of Trump's defeat" «روایت باخت ترامپ»



- Main: «اعترافات مهم وزیر خارجه سابق ایالات متحده درباره ناکامی‌های بزرگ آمریکا در جنگ علیه ایران و تغییر معادلات منطقه به سود تهران», important confessions by the former US Secretary of State about America's large failures in the war against Iran and the change of regional equations in Tehran's favour, over a photograph of Antony Blinken at a lectern. Three bullets follow: «بلینکن: دولت‌های گذشته آمریکا فهمیده بودند اقدام نظامی علیه ایران راهکار مناسبی نیست»; «کشورهای حاشیه خلیج فارس به دنبال دستیابی به توافق با تهران هستند چون دریافته‌اند آمریکا نمی‌تواند از آنها دفاع کند»; «برای خروج از این بن‌بست فعلی باید امتیازهایی به تهران بدهیم، این یعنی شکست برای واشنگتن؛ تردید ترامپ از همین‌جا ناشی می‌شود». No primary text for these remarks could be located at compile time; the wording, the venue and the date of the underlying appearance are not established, and the quotations should not be reproduced as authentic without primary-source confirmation. Blinken publicly disputed an earlier Trump characterisation of his position on military action against Iran in March 2026, which is the nearest verified item and is not the same thing.
- Banner: «رئیس کمیسیون اروپا: از زمان آغاز جنگ علیه ایران، اتحادیه به ۹۰ میلیارد یورو هزینه اضافه برای واردات سوخت‌های فسیلی پرداخت کرده است», headlined «صورتحساب گران جنگ با ایران برای اروپا». Verified: Ursula von der Leyen put the EU's additional fossil-fuel import bill since late February at 90 billion euros and cited shipping restrictions in the Strait of Hormuz, in an argument for doubling down on domestic clean energy. Vatan-e Emrooz prints the number accurately and drops the conclusion it was offered to support.
- Right rail: «دفاع ایرانی», Iranian defence, under «چگونه خلاقیت راهبردی و تاکتیکی ایران، برتری مادی دشمن را به چالش کشید؟», over a photograph of a multiple-launch salvo; and «پنتاگون مبهوت معمای ایرانی», the Pentagon stunned by the Iranian riddle.
- Right rail: «شام علیه جولانی», Sham against Jolani, a Vatan-e Emrooz report on the spread of protests in various regions of Syria (page 3). This is the only Syria item on any front page in the batch.
- Right rail: «گسترش میدان نبرد», expansion of the battlefield, under «چرا ایران نباید اجازه دهد آمریکا جنگ را به یک دوئل نظامی میان تهران و واشنگتن تقلیل دهد؟», with a signed note whose byline is not legible at the available scan resolution.
- Left ear: «اتوماسیون جنایت», the automation of crime, a structural and political reading of the documentary NAZA at the Venice festival, the same film Sazandegi used on 16 September to argue the Gaza case through non-Iranian sourcing.

ANALYST NOTE Vatan-e Emrooz built its cover out of an adversary's own voice for the second consecutive cycle, but the sourcing quality collapsed between them: yesterday it was a Pentagon Inspector General's audit with a document behind it, today it is three unattributed Blinken quotations this monitor could not match to any primary text. The European Commission banner shows the method working correctly on the same page, which makes the contrast internal rather than a matter of the paper's general standard. What the page does not carry is as notable: the Bloomberg report that Saudi Aramco is restoring the Hormuz-bypass pipeline appeared on this paper's own Telegram channel this morning and did not reach page one.

Sazandegi

Reformist daily of the Kargozaran-e Sazandegi party (masthead: روزنامه کارگزاران سازندگی ایران)

"China's displeasure at the collapse of the understanding" «نارضایتی چین از فروپاشی تفاهم»

LOW-MODERATE: de-escalation advocacy built on a great-power reprimand frame



- Main: the whole cover is given to a portrait of Wang Yi with the deck «وانگ یی، وزیر امور خارجه چین در دیدار با سیدعباس عراقچی، وزیر امور خارجه ایران خواستار آن شد که ایران و آمریکا به تفاهم‌نامه اسلام‌آباد بازگردند و نگذارند تنش‌های منطقه‌ای به دریای سرخ کشیده شود»: Wang Yi, meeting Iran's foreign minister in Beijing, called for Iran and America to return to the Islamabad memorandum and not to let regional tensions be drawn into the Red Sea. Verified in part: Wang met Abbas Araghchi in Beijing on 16 September, said China is willing to strengthen dialogue and cooperation with Iran and to safeguard Iran's legitimate rights and interests, said «we do not wish to see regional tensions spilling over into Yemen and the Red Sea», and urged Iran and the US to stay rational and restrained. The specific instruction to return to the Islamabad memorandum is Sazandegi's rendering and is not carried in the wire accounts read here.
- Op-ed: the «یادداشت روز» is «پیام چین را باید شنید», China's message must be heard, subtitled «درباره اظهارات وزیر امور خارجه چین», signed by Fereydoun Majlesi, a former Iranian diplomat and long-standing international-affairs commentator. It opens on Wang Yi's remarks to Iran's foreign minister and the necessity they imply.
- Banner strip: «نباید تابع اسرائیل باشیم», we should not be a follower of Israel; «روزهای گرانی گریان»; «زبان همگانی»; «به کرگدن کالا».
- Left ear: «تحول برای چه کسی؟», transformation for whom, a signed column.
- Sub-item: a boxed commentary at the foot of the lead argues that China wants Iran's file returned to a framework, with the argument running to an inside page.

ANALYST NOTE Three institutional families printed the same Beijing meeting this morning and gave it three incompatible meanings: Kayhan's channel makes China a guarantor («آماده‌ایم قاطعانه از حقوق ایران دفاع کنیم»), Iran Daily relays it flat under scare quotes with an analyst calling it low-cost, low-risk mediation, and Sazandegi leads with Chinese displeasure. A reformist paper that reads the same statement as a reprimand is performing an argument for re-entering the memorandum, and it is the only surface in the batch that names the collapse of the understanding as the thing China objects to. The forward indicator is Xi Jinping's scheduled meeting with Trump next week, at which the war and the Strait of Hormuz are expected to be discussed.

Charsoogh

Economic daily (چهارسو), third year of publication

MODERATE: domestic distributional indictment printed alongside an explicit rejection of negotiation

“Zafarghandi's prescription for the people: treatment inflation tripled” «نسخه ظفرقندی برای مردم: تورم درمان ۳ برابر شد»



- Main: a full-width bar chart of monthly health-cost inflation under a stethoscope graphic, naming the sitting health minister Mohammad-Reza Zafarghandi and attributing a tripling of treatment inflation to his ministry's performance. The red summary band beneath sets the series against the previous year and against the 1403 baseline. This is the second consecutive cycle in which Charsoogh has put a named sitting minister and a labelled inflation series on its cover, after its 16 September front page on food inflation from 23.8 percent in Shahrivar 1403 to 127.5 percent in Mordad 1405.
- Sub-item: «آمادگی ۱۰۰۰ گردان جانفدا تنها در ۱۰۰ دقیقه», a thousand jan-feda battalions ready in only a hundred minutes, under the kicker «اجتماع بزرگ جان فدای ایران» روز جمعه برگزار می‌شود»». The battalion figure is identical to the one Hamshahri and Sobh-e No carried on 16 September, which is the third cycle in which it has moved between titles unchanged.
- Sub-item: «۲۰۰ شب؛ نه به مذاکره», two hundred nights: no to negotiation, over a photograph of a daytime crowd whose central banner reads «خواسته‌ی مردم مذاکره نیست», the people's demand is not negotiation. It is printed directly against the diplomatic opening Sazandegi, Etemad and Iran Daily lead on this morning.
- Sub-item: «ریاضی‌دان‌ترین عضو کابینه دولت چهاردهم معرفی شد», a cartoon-illustrated item on an economic policy workshop in the fourteenth government.
- Kicker: the standfirst under the masthead argues that Iran's consumption problem is domestic, and that the reason for the failure of liberal and capitalist approaches in Iran is structural.

> **ANALYST NOTE** Charsoogh is the only title in the batch that prints the mobilisation and the material conditions for it on the same page, and it does so without connecting them: a hundred-minute battalion readiness claim sits beside a chart showing the cost of medical treatment tripling. The «۲۰۰ شب؛ نه به مذاکره» item is the sharpest anti-diplomatic line on any front page today and it comes from an economic daily rather than from a political one, which places the street count, not the government, as the veto holder on the Beijing opening. Watch whether the economic press keeps naming individual ministers now that it has done so on two consecutive covers.

Ta'adol

Economic daily, close to the Chamber of Commerce constituency

“Mobile phones in the dollar trap” **LOW: no war content on page one; currency and capital-market coverage only**

«موبایل در تله دلار»


تعادل

موبایل در تله دلار

آیین آغاز پذیره‌نویسی نخستین صندوق سرمایه‌گذاری ارزی

- Main: under the question «آیا افزایش واردات می‌تواند قیمت‌ها را پایین بیاورد؟», can more imports bring prices down, the lead treats handset prices as a currency problem rather than a supply problem, and runs the argument down three columns of page one.
- Main photo: «آیین آغاز پذیره‌نویسی نخستین صندوق سرمایه‌گذاری ارزی، شهریور ۱۴۰۵», the launch of subscriptions for the first foreign-currency investment fund, over a lectern photograph, decked «خوف و رجا در بازار سرمایه», fear and hope in the capital market. A new hard-currency savings instrument being opened to the public is a monetary-policy event, and it is the concrete domestic development on any economic front page in the batch.
- Left rail: «شکست رکورد تاریخی در بورس», a historic record broken on the exchange, printed on the same morning that Etemad leads on the gap between the exchange and the real economy; and «کالای جدید در ایستگاه جدید».
- Top ears: «نجات دادها زیر سایه فرسودگی», «چرا نوسازی ناوگان دیگر انتخاب نیست؟», and «سیگنال بارش یا هشدار سیلاب», a weather-risk item.
- Sub-item: «رالی بورس و اجتناب‌ناپذیری تورم», the exchange rally and the inevitability of inflation, closing the page with the same judgment Etemad's lead makes from the reformist side.

> **ANALYST NOTE** Ta'adol prints the war nowhere on its front page. That is the finding: an economic daily on day 198 fills page one with handset prices, a new currency fund and the exchange, and treats the exchange rate rather than the blockade as the operative variable. Read alongside Charsoogh's health-inflation cover and Etemad's warning about the gap between the exchange and the real economy, the economic press is now running a second, self-contained agenda in which the dollar, not the strait, is the subject. The first foreign-currency investment fund is the item to track: instruments that let households hold hard currency legally are usually a response to households already doing so illegally.

Etemad

Reformist daily of record

LOW-MODERATE: diplomacy framed as invitation, chokepoint framed as a card, no mobilisation advertising

"The bourse's run-up" «دورخیز بورس»



- Main: «شکاف بین بورس و اقتصاد واقعی به سیاستگذاران هشدار می‌دهد», the gap between the exchange and the real economy is a warning to policymakers. A reformist daily of record leading on an asset-price warning rather than on the war is itself a placement decision.
- Left column: «جنگ، ایران و امریکا را به بازگشت به میز مذاکره فرا خواند؟» headlined «دعوت به گفت‌وگو», an invitation to dialogue, with bullets running through the Chinese foreign minister, the Islamabad memorandum and the argument that China could play a more active mediating role in resolving the Iran-America crisis and reducing regional risk. This is the fourth distinct reading of the same Beijing meeting in one morning's batch.
- Main photo: «پادشاهی در بن‌بست», a monarchy at a dead end, over a photograph of Gulf officials walking away from the camera, with the standfirst «اعتماد در گفت‌وگو با رحمن قهرمان‌پور بررسی می‌کند», Etemad examines it in conversation with Rahman Ghahremanpour, an Iranian international-relations analyst. This continues the cross-spectrum treatment of Riyadh as an isolate that this monitor recorded across five surfaces on 16 September.
- Right rail: the «یادداشت‌ها» column carries eight signed notes, among them «چین در میانه بحران», China in the middle of the crisis, and «بازی با کارت گلوگاه‌ها», playing the chokepoint card, which is the only item on any front page in the batch that treats the chokepoint strategy as a card being played rather than a position being held.
- Left rail: «محروم از افتخار», «امید بارکبال», «امریکایی نتواند» and «پرواز بی‌بازگشت», a flight with no return, on the fate of an Iranian aircrew matter in Qatar.
- Absence: the paid IRGC rally advertisement that ran at the foot of this paper's front page on 16 September does not appear on today's page one; it has moved to Javan.

ANALYST NOTE Etemad put a domestic asset-price warning above a diplomatic opening, which is how a reformist paper signals that it does not expect the opening to move quickly. The two items that matter analytically are in the margins: a note titled «بازی با کارت گلوگاه‌ها» treats Hormuz as an instrument with a holder and a cost, and the Saudi interview keeps the isolate framing alive on a fourth consecutive cycle. That the Guard's rally advertisement moved off this surface after one day is worth a line: yesterday's reading was that the Guard was buying reformist space to reach an audience its own titles do not hold, and today it is advertising on its own.

Jomhouri Eslami

Traditional clerical-establishment daily, founded 1979, historically close to the revolutionary establishment and editorially independent of the current government

MODERATE: attrition-of-the-adversary framing built largely on verifiable external sources

"The consequence of America's war on Iran: global protests intensify over the unbridled rise in fuel prices" «پیامد جنگ آمریکا علیه ایران: تشدید اعتراض‌های جهانی به افزایش بی‌رویه قیمت سوخت»


جمهوری اسلامی

تشدید اعتراض‌های جهانی به افزایش بی‌رویه قیمت سوخت

- Main: the red band under the headline reads «رئیس کمیسیون اروپا: جنگ علیه ایران ۹۰ میلیارد یورو هزینه اضافی روی دست اروپا گذاشت», the same von der Leyen figure Vatan-e Emrooz banners, here attributed correctly to Europe. Three bullets follow: that the sharp rise in fuel prices following war-driven energy-supply disruption has produced a wave of protests and strikes in various countries; that in America the rise has pushed household energy costs up 26 percent with researchers warning of a possible 30 percent rise in heating-oil prices this winter; and «اورسولا فون‌درلاین: اروپا نمی‌تواند در شرایطی که قیمت انرژی بالا مانده است، قدرت صنعتی خود را حفظ کند».
- Sub-item: «شکست آمریکا در کنفرانس عمومی آژانس: ایران عضو کمیته عمومی کنفرانس آژانس بین‌المللی انرژی اتمی شد», America's defeat at the Agency's General Conference: Iran became a member of the General Committee of the IAEA General Conference. Verified: Iran was elected to the General Committee of the IAEA's 70th General Conference by secret ballot on 15 September, over reported US objections.
- Sub-item: «تصویب سومین قطعنامه در مجلس نمایندگان آمریکا برای پایان دادن جنگ با ایران», passage of a third resolution in the US House of Representatives to end the war with Iran. Verified as to the vote: the House passed a war powers resolution 220-204 on 15 September, the third such vote; it is a concurrent resolution, is not presented to the president, and the Senate has not passed its own.
- Main photo: «رئیس جمهور در دیدار رئیس اتحادیه میهنی کردستان عراق: مسائل منطقه از طریق همکاری، گفتگو، انصاف و عدالت قابل حل است», the president telling the head of Iraq's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan that regional problems can be solved through cooperation, dialogue, fairness and justice. Verified: Bafel Talabani led a PUK delegation to Tehran at the Iranian foreign ministry's invitation and met Masoud Pezeshkian and Abbas Araghchi; this monitor recorded Talabani's security pledge on 16 September, and the presidential meeting is the second day of the same visit.
- Sub-item: «هزار نفری در بیستمین دوره مسابقات بین‌المللی روبوکاپ آزاد ۲ ایران», and «رقابت» coverage of a robotics competition, over a photograph of a crowded exhibition hall.
- Right ear: «وزیر ارتباطات: اینترنت باکیفیت بدون بسته شدن پرونده فیلترینگ ممکن نیست», the communications minister saying quality internet is impossible without closing the filtering file; and «معاون وزارت علوم: ۷۵۰ هزار دانشجوی جدید وارد دانشگاه‌ها می‌شوند».
- Left ear: «رئیس انجمن علمی پزشکی هسته‌ای خبر داد: ایران در جمع سه کشور برتر تولیدکننده رادیودارو در جهان».

- Bottom: «شهید مظلوم آیت‌الله بهشتی», a commemorative panel for Ayatollah Beheshti.
- Sub-item: «نتایج یک نظرسنجی جهانی: افول اعتماد به آمریکا و افزایش اقبال به نهادهای بین‌المللی», a global poll result on declining trust in America, printed without a pollster, a sample or a field date.

> **ANALYST NOTE** Jomhouri Eslami built the most externally-sourced front page in the batch: a European Commission figure, an IAEA election, a House vote and a presidential meeting, all of which can be checked, and it got the attribution of the energy number right where Hamshahri did not. The paper is also running the two files that cut against the hardline case in adjacent columns: an Agency Iran is winning inside, and an American legislature voting against the war. Both are arguments for staying in the institutions, printed by a paper that is not a reformist one. The unsourced global-poll item is the exception and reads as filler.

Kayhan

Hardline daily whose managing editor is appointed by the Leader's office; editor Hossein Shariatmadari

HIGH: great-power backing asserted, maritime surveillance asserted, unverified shootdown amplified

"China's foreign minister: we are ready to defend Iran's rights resolutely" «وزیر خارجه چین: آماده‌ایم قاطعانه از حقوق ایران دفاع کنیم»

- Banner: «وزیر خارجه چین: آماده‌ایم قاطعانه از حقوق ایران دفاع کنیم». Against the wire record of the Beijing meeting, this hardens Wang Yi's «willing to safeguard Iran's legitimate rights and interests» into a declaration of readiness, and it drops the two halves of the same statement that constrain Iran: that China does not wish to see regional tensions spilling over into Yemen and the Red Sea, and that it encourages Iran and the US to stay rational and restrained.
- Main: «اف-15 سعودی سرنگون شد! یمن به خلبانان عربستان: پرواز با شما برگشتن‌تان با ما», the Saudi F-15 was shot down. Yemen to Saudi pilots: the flying is up to you, the coming back is up to us. The claim is the Houthi military spokesman's and has not been independently verified; the taunt is Kayhan's own.
- Main: «فناوری پیچیده موشک‌های ایران آمریکا را گیج کرده است», the complex technology of Iran's missiles has confused America, sourced to unnamed US military officials acknowledging that Iranian missile sophistication and precision have perplexed American air defences in West Asia.
- Sub-item: «هیچ شناوری در خلیج‌فارس و تنگه هرمز از رصد ایران خارج نیست», no vessel in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz escapes Iran's surveillance. This is the paper's only Hormuz line of the cycle and it is a surveillance claim, not a closure or an opening position.
- Absence: no «یادداشت روز» day-column was retrievable from the channel at compile time, and no message from the Leader appears in the channel's cycle.

> **ANALYST NOTE** Kayhan is the only surface in the batch that reads the Chinese statement as protection rather than as pressure, and it produced that reading by editing out the restraint clauses that the wires carry and that Sazandegi leads on. The Hormuz line it does print is about watching ships, not about closing or reopening the strait, which is the fourth consecutive cycle in which the Leader's office daily has had the maritime file available in its strongest form and declined to state a position on it. The blood-vengeance frame for the assassinated predecessor is again absent.

Appendix A: The Leader's message, documented absence (fourth consecutive cycle)

Ten front pages of 26 Shahrivar 1405; nine outlet Telegram channels; khamenei.ir

No message, speech, decree or quoted remark attributed to the Leader appears on any of the ten front pages in this batch, and none appears in any of the nine outlet channels read for this cycle. The Leader's office daily, Kayhan, carried no «یادداشت روز» retrievable from its channel and no Leader item. Both English-language and Persian surfaces are silent.

This is the fourth consecutive cycle in which this monitor has recorded the absence, and the second in which it has been possible to test it against an event that would ordinarily draw a message. On 16 September the occasion was the two hundredth night of the nightly gatherings, counted from the assassination of 28 February, and the void was filled by four proxy quotation panels on a municipal front page. On 17 September the occasion is a foreign-minister-level meeting with China at which Beijing offered to safeguard Iran's rights, on the eve of a scheduled Xi-Trump meeting at which the war and the Strait of Hormuz are expected to be raised. A great-power opening on a file the Leader personally set out in his first message in March produced no word from the office that set it.

The standing evidentiary caveat is repeated in full. This monitor's identification of the serving Leader as Mojtaba Khamenei rests on the reporting of his succession after the assassination of Ali Khamenei on 28 February 2026 and on his first written message of 12 March 2026, in which he endorsed continued military resistance and said the Strait of Hormuz would remain a tool of pressure. khamenei.ir was not reachable at compile time, so today's finding rests on the absence of any relay across eleven Iranian surfaces rather than on a check of the office's own publication record. An absence established this way is weaker than a checked absence and is reported as such.

Analyst flag: the succession's silence is now load-bearing rather than incidental. The campaign that fills the front pages, «جان فدای ایران», is dedicated «به نیابت از آقای شهید ایران», on behalf of Iran's martyred Aqa, in advertising placed by an IRGC corps; the serving Leader is named in it nowhere. A message on the Chinese file in the next cycle would close this thread; a fifth consecutive silence would make it the most durable negative finding in the series.

Appendix B: «پیام چین را باید شنید» (China's message must be heard), Sazandegi day-column, partial translation

Sazandegi, year 9, issue 2329, 26 Shahrivar 1405, «یادداشت روز», signed Fereydoun Majlesi

Author verification: the column is signed فریدون مجلسی, Fereydoun Majlesi, a former Iranian diplomat, writer and translator who is a regular commentator on international affairs in the reformist press and a long-standing Sazandegi contributor. The descriptor line printed beneath the byline is not legible at the available scan resolution and is therefore not reproduced. The title is «پیام چین را باید شنید», subtitled «درباره اظهارات وزیر امور خارجه چین», on the remarks of China's foreign minister.

Opening, translated from the legible portion of the scan: «اظهارات تازه وانگ یی، وزیر امور خارجه چین، در دیدار با وزیر امور خارجه کشورمان درباره ضرورت بازگشایی تنگه هرمز، بازگشتن به تفاهم‌نامه اسلام‌آباد و پایان بحران در دریای سرخ، بیش از آنکه یک موضع‌گیری معمول دیپلماتیک باشد باید هشدار جدی تلقی شود.» The new remarks of Wang Yi, China's foreign minister, in his meeting with our country's foreign minister, concerning the necessity of reopening the Strait of Hormuz, of returning to the Islamabad memorandum and of ending the crisis in the Red Sea, should be treated as a serious warning rather than as an ordinary diplomatic position.

Second passage, translated from the legible portion: the crisis is no longer only Iran's dispute with America and Israel. It has reached a point at which the economic and security interests of China, India, Pakistan, Japan, South Korea, the Arab states and a large part of Europe are directly affected. The simple fact is that the Strait of Hormuz is a vital artery for the world economy, and disruption on that route reaches everyone.

Third passage, translated from the legible portion: China holds a particular position in this. The greater part of China's trade with the Persian Gulf region is conducted with the Arab states, and Beijing is concerned above all with the stability of energy and trade routes. Beijing does not wish the Hormuz crisis to work against its own objectives, and Wang Yi's message should be understood plainly.

Translation caveat: the remainder of the column, roughly the final third, is below the legible resolution of the available front-page scan and is not reproduced or paraphrased here. No inside pages were available. The passages above are rendered from what is legible and should be treated as a partial translation; the original wording of the closing argument is not established.

Analyst flag: the column is the single most consequential text in this cycle because it attributes to the Chinese foreign minister a request that no other Iranian surface in the batch prints, «ضرورت بازگشایی تنگه هرمز», the necessity of reopening the Strait of Hormuz. The wire record of the 16 September Beijing meeting confirms Wang Yi saying China is willing to safeguard Iran's legitimate rights and interests, that China does not wish to see regional tensions spilling over into Yemen and the Red Sea, and that Iran and the United States should stay rational and restrained; at least one Western outlet framed the visit as Chinese pressure to open the strait. The reopening request itself, in those words, is carried here on Sazandegi's authority and should not be treated as a verified Chinese formulation without a primary Chinese or Iranian text.

Appendix C: Methodology and sourcing notes

iran-press-digest pipeline, 17 September 2026

Coverage. Ten front pages published the morning of Thursday 26 Shahrivar 1405 (17 September 2026) were read directly as images: nine Persian titles from the NewspaperTasnim front-page album posted at 01:39 UTC (t.me/NewspaperTasnim/44599) and one English title from the Newspapers_Iran album posted at 04:31 UTC (t.me/newspapers_iran/3564). The stale-batch guard passed on the first attempt: the album's own printed Jalali date, ۲۶ شهریور ۱۴۰۵, matched the target date exactly, so no fallback sourcing was used and no page in this edition is carried over from a previous day.

Titles read as scans: Jam-e Jam, Hamshahri, Javan, Vatan-e Emrooz, Sazandegi, Charsoogh, Ta'adol, Etemad, Jomhouri Eslami, and Iran Daily in English. Mastheads were identified from the printed nameplate; the Jalali and Hijri dates were cross-checked against three separate mastheads (Jomhouri Eslami, Sazandegi, Charsoogh), all three of which print ۴ ربیع‌الثانی ۱۴۴۸. Note a correction to the previous edition: 16 September corresponds to 3 Rabi' al-Thani 1448, not 4, which the 16 September brief printed.

Text surfaces. Nine outlet channels were read: Kayhan, Vatan-e Emrooz, Jam-e Jam, Etemad, Iran, Sobh-e No as daily titles, and Defa Press, Fars News and Nour News as agency wires. Agency material is used for corroboration and threat context only and is labelled as claims throughout; it is not treated as front-page evidence. Kayhan appears in the per-paper section on channel evidence alone, since it is not in the scan album; its day-column was not retrievable and that absence is stated rather than filled. Tehran Times was not available at the time of compilation. khamenei.ir was not available at the time of compilation.

Verification performed this cycle. The following items were checked against non-Iranian primary or wire reporting before being characterised: the Wang Yi and Araghchi meeting in Beijing on 16 September and Wang's quoted formulations; Ursula von der Leyen's figure of 90 billion euros in additional EU fossil-fuel import costs since late February, and her use of it to argue for domestic clean energy; the Houthi claim to have downed a Royal Saudi Air Force F-15 over Marib, announced by Yahya Saree with footage aired on al-Masirah, unverified independently and unanswered by Riyadh; the US House of Representatives war powers resolution passed 220-204 on 15 September, sponsored by Seth Moulton, the third such vote, non-binding and not passed by the Senate; Iran's election to the General Committee of the IAEA's 70th General Conference on 15 September; Bafel Talabani's PUK delegation visit to Tehran and its meetings with the president and foreign minister; and the Bloomberg report that Saudi Aramco is seeking to restore about half the capacity of the East-West pipeline within days after its 10 September shutdown, with full capacity targeted in about six weeks.

Single-source and unverified flags. Three items in this edition rest on a single Iranian surface and are flagged in place rather than adopted. First, the three Antony Blinken quotations on Vatan-e Emrooz's cover: no primary text, venue or date for these remarks could be located at compile time, and they are not to be reproduced as authentic without primary-source confirmation. Second, the figure of 31 million registrations in the «جان فدای ایران» campaign, carried by Jam-e Jam's banner and by Javan's body text with a campaign spokesman; there is no independent register behind it, and it stands against 600,000 registrations sourced to the IRGC's Tehran commander one cycle earlier for a related exercise. Third, Sazandegi's attribution to Wang Yi of a call for the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, discussed in Appendix B.

Attribution firewall. Every claim in this product is attributed to the outlet or speaker that made it and is not adopted as fact. Iranian battle-damage and military claims are labelled claims throughout. Second-hand renderings of foreign statements, including Kayhan's rendering of the Chinese foreign minister and

Hamshahri's attribution of a fuel-cost figure to Americans, are flagged as renderings; quoting a rendering does not verify it. Where an Iranian page and the underlying source disagree in scope or attribution, both are given.

Handling. This product documents and analyses hostile foreign-press rhetoric for defensive assessment only. Nothing in it endorses, amplifies or operationalises that rhetoric. Prepared for analysis and early warning. Hostile content documented for defensive assessment only.

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