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8 >



# Iran Daily

Vol. 7848 • Tuesday, June 03, 2025 • Khordad 13, 1404 • Dhu al-Hijjah 07, 1446 • 100,000 rials • 8 pages



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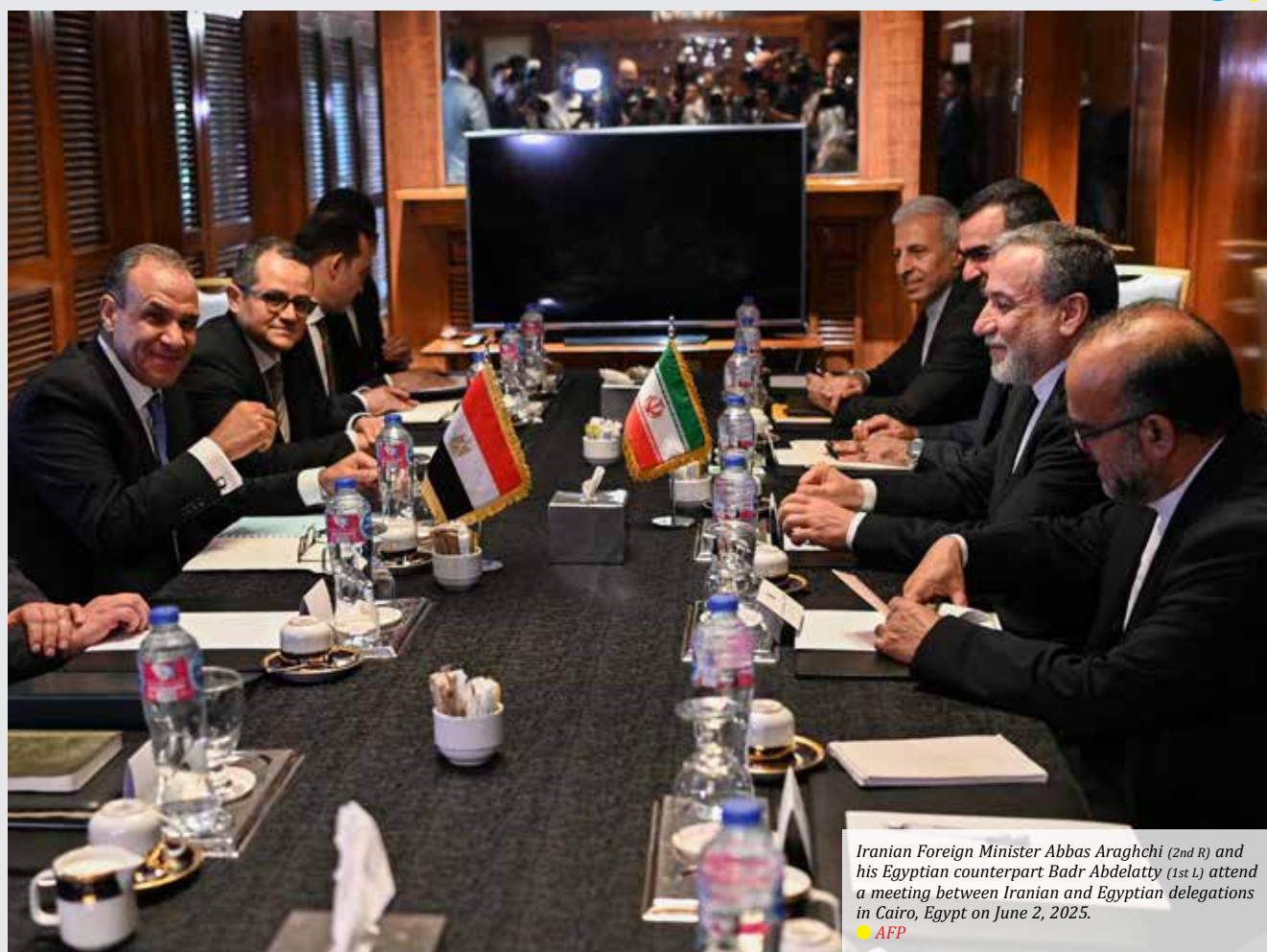
| IranDailyWeb

## ECO members in Tehran voice readiness to cooperate in transport modes 3 >

### Araghchi: No deal if goal is to 'deprive' Iran of peaceful nuclear activities

Egypt welcomes efforts for conclusion of Iran-US talks

2 >



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (2nd R) and his Egyptian counterpart Badr Abdelatty (1st L) attend a meeting between Iranian and Egyptian delegations in Cairo, Egypt on June 2, 2025.

• AFP



### 'National Unity' in political conduct of Imam Khomeini

INTERVIEW  
EXCLUSIVE

On the 36th anniversary of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's passing, a timely conversation revisits one of the founding principles of Iran's Islamic Republic: national unity. As President Masoud Pezeshkian pledges a "government of unity," Iran Daily sits down with political scholar Yahya Fowzi to explore how Imam Khomeini turned unity into a strategic imperative — not by erasing diversity, but by building strength through it. What lessons does Imam Khomeini's vision hold for Iran's society today? And how might his model of inclusive consensus shape the country's political future? Check out page five for an exclusive look. [See pages 4-5 >](#)

### Regional shifts set stage for closer Iran-Egypt ties



By Ebrahim Rahimpour  
Former Iranian deputy FM

O P I N I O N  
E X C L U S I V E

Over the past months, Tehran and Cairo have been engaged in efforts to restore diplomatic ties, with developments unfolding in the Middle East pointing out to a good opportunity for them to warm up relations.

Diplomacy is a real-world practice that comes with its own complexities. If countries approach diplomacy as a long-term game grounded in the safeguarding of national interests, and if they keep in mind that the balance of power never stays static, then they are more likely to navigate the shifting tides of international affairs effectively.

Over time, political re-alignments, alliances, ruptures, and re-engagements ebb and flow, and nothing remains fixed. The true art of diplomacy lies in playing the international chessboard wisely, making strategic moves and striking the right balance with those states with which one interacts most frequently in the global give-and-take of international relations. [Page 2 >](#)



### Tehran rejects Finland's espionage claims as 'strange'

2 >



### World Cup Asian qualifiers: Iran names squad for double dead rubbers

6 >



### Timeless beauty of Qasr-e Dasht in heart of Shiraz

7 >

### Gardian Dam, Jolfa Substation officially opened in northwestern Iran 3 >





# Araghchi: No deal if goal is to 'deprive' Iran of peaceful nuclear activities

## Egypt welcomes efforts for conclusion of Iran-US talks

### International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Monday that a nuclear deal with the US would not be possible if the goal of the negotiations is to "deprive Iran of its peaceful nuclear activities."

"If the goal of the negotiations is to gain reassurance and confidence that Iran is not seeking nuclear weapons, then in my view, reaching an agreement is possible," he said in a joint press conference with Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty in Cairo where he also met with the head of the UN atomic agency Rafael Grossi.

"But if the goal is to deprive Iran of its peaceful activities, then certainly no agreement will be reached," he continued.

Araghchi, who arrived in Cairo on Sunday night for a two-day visit to Egypt and Lebanon, said that Iran has a peaceful nuclear program and is prepared to provide this assurance to any party or entity.

"We have nothing to hide in this regard."

The remarks came after Grossi on Monday called for more transparency from Iran following a leaked report

that claimed Tehran had stepped up uranium enrichment.

Since April 12, Iran and the US have held five rounds of nuclear talks to resolve a decades-old dispute over Iran's nuclear program.

Both sides have described the talks as "positive and constructive."

However, in recent weeks, the two countries have clashed over the issue of uranium enrichment in Iran, which Washington says must be brought to zero. Tehran maintains its nuclear program is exclusively for civilian purposes and views its enrichment industry as a red line.

Oman's Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr al-Busaidi, who has been mediating between Iran and the US, presented elements of a US proposal for a nuclear deal between during a short visit to Tehran on Saturday.

### Response to US proposal

"We will give an appropriate response to the American proposal soon. This response will be based on the positions and principles of the Iranian nation and will protect the rights of the Iranian nation," the Iranian foreign minister said.

Araghchi emphasized that there will

be no agreement without respect for Iran's right to enrichment. He underlined that Iran's uranium enrichment is entirely peaceful and a scientific achievement.

"Enrichment is our right based on international treaties, and this right cannot be taken away from Iran."

### Removal of sanctions

Araghchi also said that Iran's main demand in the negotiations is the lifting of the "oppressive sanctions against the Iranian nation."

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei said on Monday that it would have to see if there are changes in the US position on sanctions.

"I regret to inform you that the American side has not yet been willing to clarify this issue," he said in a weekly press conference in Tehran.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty said Cairo welcomes Oman's mediating efforts in the talks, adding that, "We are ready to provide any necessary support for the success of the peaceful path to reaching an agreement on the Iranian nuclear issue."

### Israel's crimes in Gaza

The Iranian foreign minister also held



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (L) and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi meet in Cairo on June 2, 2025.  
● IRAN'S FOREIGN MINISTRY

a separate meeting with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, during which Araghchi called on Muslim countries to take "collective and effective" measures to end Israel's crimes in Gaza and the regime's expansionism and occupation in Lebanon and Syria.

He said the oppressed people of Palestine in Gaza are suffering a "painful" situation as the Israeli regime contin-

ues its genocidal war in the besieged Strip.

The Egyptian president, for his part, said his country has made efforts to stop Israeli genocide in Gaza.

Sisi added that Egypt's stance is based on controlling and preventing the escalation of tensions and establishing peace in the region as well as safeguarding the interests of Muslim nations.

## Tehran rejects Finland's espionage claims as 'strange'

### International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry on Monday rejected claims made by Finland's government that Iran had spied on the European country.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said that such a report was strange to us from a country with which we have had "logical relations and we have never heard such cases from them."

"We consider this claim in line with the coordinated approach of European countries to exert pressure on Iran," Baqaei said in his weekly press conference.

Th spokesman said that Iran summoned Finnish ambassador on Saturday and asked for an explanation for the claims for which no documents have been presented.

Finland's Security and Intelligence Service (Supo) on Friday accused Iran of espionage and the possible use of criminal groups for subversive activities in the country.

The country's security service did not specify what kind of information Iran seeks but cited a broader



Esmail Baqaei  
● IRNA

rise in espionage threats.

Supo claimed that Iran's tactics could include recruiting organized crime groups to carry out operations in Finland. The agency did not provide details on what kinds of acts might be involved but claimed that similar Iranian-linked plots have been uncovered elsewhere in Europe.

It is noted that for the first time, Finland has officially added Iran to the list of countries that conduct espionage activities against Helsinki. Previously, only Russia and

China were publicly named.

Supo said Iran's actions reflect deteriorating relations with Western countries and highlighted that the threat is growing in other Nordic countries as well.

The warning from Supo came amid similar concerns raised by Sweden earlier this year. In its March annual threat assessment, the Swedish Security Police (SAPO) claimed that Iran had escalated its intelligence activities and was increasingly using "criminal networks" within Sweden.

## Ukraine attack on Russian bombers overshadows peace talks in Turkey

Peace talks between Russia and Ukraine in Istanbul ended barely an hour after they began on Monday, a day after a massive Ukrainian drone attack on Russia's nuclear-capable strategic bombers.

The talks – the second such direct contacts between the sides since 2022 – had already begun nearly two hours later than scheduled with no explanation of the delay, Reuters reported.

Although the atmosphere was subdued and dialogue brief, the talks did yield an agreement to conduct a new prisoner exchange and Ukraine said another round of talks was on the agenda.

In Russia, before the talks began, angry war bloggers had called on Moscow to deliver a fearsome retaliatory blow against Kiev after Ukraine on Sunday launched one of its most ambitious attacks of the war, targeting Russian nuclear-capable long-range bombers in Siberia and elsewhere.

Ukraine and Russia have issued starkly different assessments of the damage done to Russia's fleet of strategic bombers – a key element in its nuclear arsenal – but it was clear from publicly available satellite imagery that Moscow had suffered some serious equipment losses.

"The eyes of the whole world are focused on the contacts here," Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan had told the Russian and Ukrainian delegations at the start of talks as



MURAD SEZER/REUTERS

they faced off against each other on opposite sides of the room in the sumptuous Ciragan Palace by the Bosphorus.

He said the aim of the meeting was to evaluate the conditions for a cease-fire, to discuss a possible meeting between the Russian and Ukrainian presidents, and to look at more prisoner exchange opportunities.

Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustem Umerov, who headed Kiev's delegation, announced after the talks that a new prisoner exchange had been agreed to follow up on the biggest prisoner swap of the war brokered at the last round of talks.

He said the new exchange would focus on those severely injured in the war and on young people.

Umerov also said that Moscow had handed its own draft peace accord to Ukraine and that Kiev – which has drawn up its own version – would review the Russian document.

## Regional shifts set ...

On Monday, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi visited Egypt on his third official trip to the North African country since taking office in 2024. Also last year, President Masoud Pezeshkian met with his Egyptian counterpart on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Russia. Proposals were exchanged, and dialogue was kept alive.

The region has since been shaken up by major developments, including in Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine, particularly in the Gaza Strip in the wake of the Israeli war. Perhaps the most significant shift has been the dissolution of the Muslim Brotherhood, an event that is far from minor. This move has reshaped the strategic landscape of the Arab world, especially in relation to Turkey, with consequences both positive and negative. Savvy diplomacy means using these developments as openings for new strategies and decisions.

In light of these development, the dynamics on the ground have changed. For some countries, these changes have proved costly, while others have reaped benefits. It now appears that a golden window of opportunity has opened

for Iran and Egypt to restore their diplomatic ties, as a new regional arena has emerged in the aftermath of the Gaza conflict. Israel has once again surfaced as the central concern for Arab nations and regional states. Countries like Egypt and Jordan Lebanon are viewing Israel with renewed seriousness, a regime, which by its very nature, has never taken a benevolent stance toward Muslim nations or its surrounding region, and it continues to pursue longstanding ambitions.

Given these threats and surrounding developments, a new diplomatic mission is not only appropriate, but it is timely. Of course, its success depends on the practicality of the proposals on offer, but even mere dialogue is a significant move. Progress must be made step by step. Egypt holds enormous potential in terms of population, geography, and strategic location. Most importantly, both Iran and Egypt are home to two of the oldest civilizations in the Islamic world. Such heritage provides fertile ground for expanding cooperation in various sectors. Such an endeavor will require serious work and expert-level discussions, but the potential for mutual gain is unmistakable.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist





# Gardian Dam, Jolfa Substation officially opened in northwestern Iran

Economy Desk

The Gardian Dam and the Jolfa 132-kV Substation became operational on Monday in an official ceremony attended by Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi in East Azarbaijan Province. The Gardian earth-fill dam, featuring a clay core, has a crest length of 1,350 meters and a reservoir capacity of 10 million cubic meters. It will provide coverage for 2,200 hectares of land in the Aras region in the northwest of Iran, IRNA reported. The updated cost for implementing the project is approximately \$12.2 million. The Jolfa 132-kV Substation project, with a capacity of 40 Mega Volt-Ampere (MVA), has been implemented to provide stable electricity for drinking water and agricultural purposes. The updated cost for implementing the project is approximately \$6.1 million. The operational start of the dam

is regarded as a fundamental step in flood control, recharging groundwater aquifers, and supplying water for the agricultural sector. Other objectives for inaugurating the project include storing 10 million cubic meters of water during non-agricultural seasons to supply water for 2,200 hectares of agricultural land, creating tourism potential for the Aras Free Zone, increasing agricultural productivity, and boosting the region's economic prosperity. Furthermore, the project's socio-environmental effects include job creation in the region, enhanced agricultural productivity, regional economic prosperity, development of tourism potential in the free zone, optimal utilization of the country's water rights from the Aras River (on the northwestern border), and the storage of water during non-agricultural seasons. Supplying power for the five

pumping stations of the Aras Exploitation Development Plan, aimed at irrigating 9,050 hectares of land in the Golfaraj and Yekanat plains, is an objective of the Jolfa 132/20-kV Substation. Additionally, the project's social impacts include providing sustainable development infrastructure in the Jolfa region, supplying stable electricity for the utilization of 9,050 hectares of farmers' lands, and stabilizing the border population through the creation of sustainable employment in the area. On the sidelines of his visit to East Azarbaijan to inaugurate water and power projects and review provincial progress, Aliabadi also announced that over 38,000 new power plant construction permits have been issued nationwide. He stated, "Through essential planning to attract investment, the government has also enabled private-sector electricity sales and exports."



## ECO members in Tehran voice readiness to cooperate in transport modes

Economy Desk

Iranian Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadeq stated on Monday that one of the most pivotal themes in the 13th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport in the capital Tehran was the expression of readiness across all modes of transport by the entire ECO members. "One of the most crucial themes in this meeting was definitely and unequivocally the declaration of readiness in all modes of rail, road, maritime, and air transport by all ECO members," Sadeq said on the sidelines of the international meeting, as reported by ISNA. "In the port sector, coastal states proposed their readiness to provide logistics sites for landlocked member countries," she added. The 13th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport was held in Tehran on Monday, and the 'Tehran Declaration' was issued after the gathering, according to the Iranian roads minister. Five ministers and three deputy ministers attended the 13th session of ECO member ministers, alongside the ECO secretary-general, the secretary-general of the International Road Transport Union (IRU), the president of the ECO Trade and Development Bank, and a representative from Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA). Key viewpoints were presented during the session. In her address, the Iranian roads minister emphasized transport's role in regional and economic development, adding, "Focusing on enhancing regional cooperation, leveraging the region's vast capacities, and the critical role of transport in this regard are priorities for the Iranian gov-



ernment." Highlighting Iran's strategic advantages, she noted, "Iran enjoys a unique geographical position in West Asia, with access to open waters via the Persian Gulf and oceans as well as over 250,000 kilometers of roads, and 15,000 kilometers of railways at North-South and East-West crossroads. These capacities, combined with international cooperation, create immense opportunities for transport and transit development in the region." **Multimodal corridors** Meanwhile, addressing reporters on the meeting's sidelines, Sadeq stated, "Another key point emphasized in this session was multimodal corridors among member states — corridors integrating rail, road, and maritime transport — and joint bilateral and multilateral initiatives undertaken by ECO countries." "Another key agenda item was the digitization and integration of transport documents, particularly in road transport. This initiative plays a crucial role in facilitating transport,

reducing transit times, and accelerating commercial exchanges," she underscored. Symbolic ECO transit train departs from Aprin Concurrently with the ECO meeting, the symbolic ECO transit train departed from Tehran's rail dry port, known as Aprin, to demonstrate Iran's pivotal role in regional transit and member states' serious commitment to transit development, said the managing director of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (RAI). Jabbar Ali Zakeri said, "This symbolic train is part of active ECO transit trains currently traversing Iranian territory. Today, we aimed to tangibly showcase the positive outcomes of decisions made in transit cooperation to ECO member ministers and representatives." According to Sadeq, "This train holds great significance as a symbol of joint projects and their implementation." The train, which had departed from Turkey and proceeded to Aprin, Iran, then will reach Turkmenistan and onward to Central Asia.

## CBI proposes SCO joint bank to enhance monetary ties

Economy Desk

The governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) announced on Monday that the Islamic Republic had submitted a proposal for the establishment of a joint bank for member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Mohammadreza Farzin, who traveled to China to attend the SCO Central Bank Governors Meeting, stated, "We have submitted the proposal to establish a joint bank for SCO member states to the organization and will follow up until results are achieved," ISNA reported. Farzin described the purpose of his trip as examining strategies to enhance monetary and banking cooperation among member states, as well as holding bilateral meetings with SCO central bank governors. "Establishing a comprehensive joint bank to handle part of the monetary and banking transactions among members is on this meeting's agenda," he added. The CBI governor described the SCO as an important regional organization, noting, "Ten countries — including major economies like China, India, and Russia — are members, representing 45% of the world's population and a significant share of the global economy."



Regarding the SCO Central Bank Governors Meeting's agenda, Farzin stated, "This meeting pursues two main objectives. One is establishing the SCO Joint Bank with participation from all members, and the second is creating infrastructure for financial transactions. We support both initiatives." He emphasized that, "We support a bank that pursues development goals while maintaining commercial functionality." "If we can establish settlement and financing infrastructure among SCO members, we can distance ourselves from the unilateralism long practiced by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). This creates an opportunity for Eastern and regional nations to pursue multilateral objectives in monetary and banking operations," Farzin added.

## Minister highlights judicial support for Iranian businesspersons in Iraq

Economy Desk

Iranian Justice Minister Amin Hossein Rahimi announced expanded judicial protections for Iranian merchants and economic stakeholders in Iraq. Following a meeting with his Iraqi counterpart Khalid al-Shwani in Tehran, Rahimi was quoted by IRIB as saying, "Judicial support for our nation's traders, merchants, and entrepreneurs conducting economic activities in Iraq was among the issues examined at this joint meeting to facilitate bilateral trade." During the meeting with his Iraqi counterpart, Rahimi noted that US financial sanctions have created difficulties for Iranian merchants in Iraq, calling for the Iraqi government's cooperation and assistance in this regard to develop cooperation between the two countries. Shwani also emphasized the deep historical ties between both nations, describing his country as "Iran's strategic partner."



Iranian Justice Minister Amin Hossein Rahimi meets Iraqi counterpart Khalid al-Shwani in Tehran on June 2, 2025. ● MAJID KHAHI/ISNA

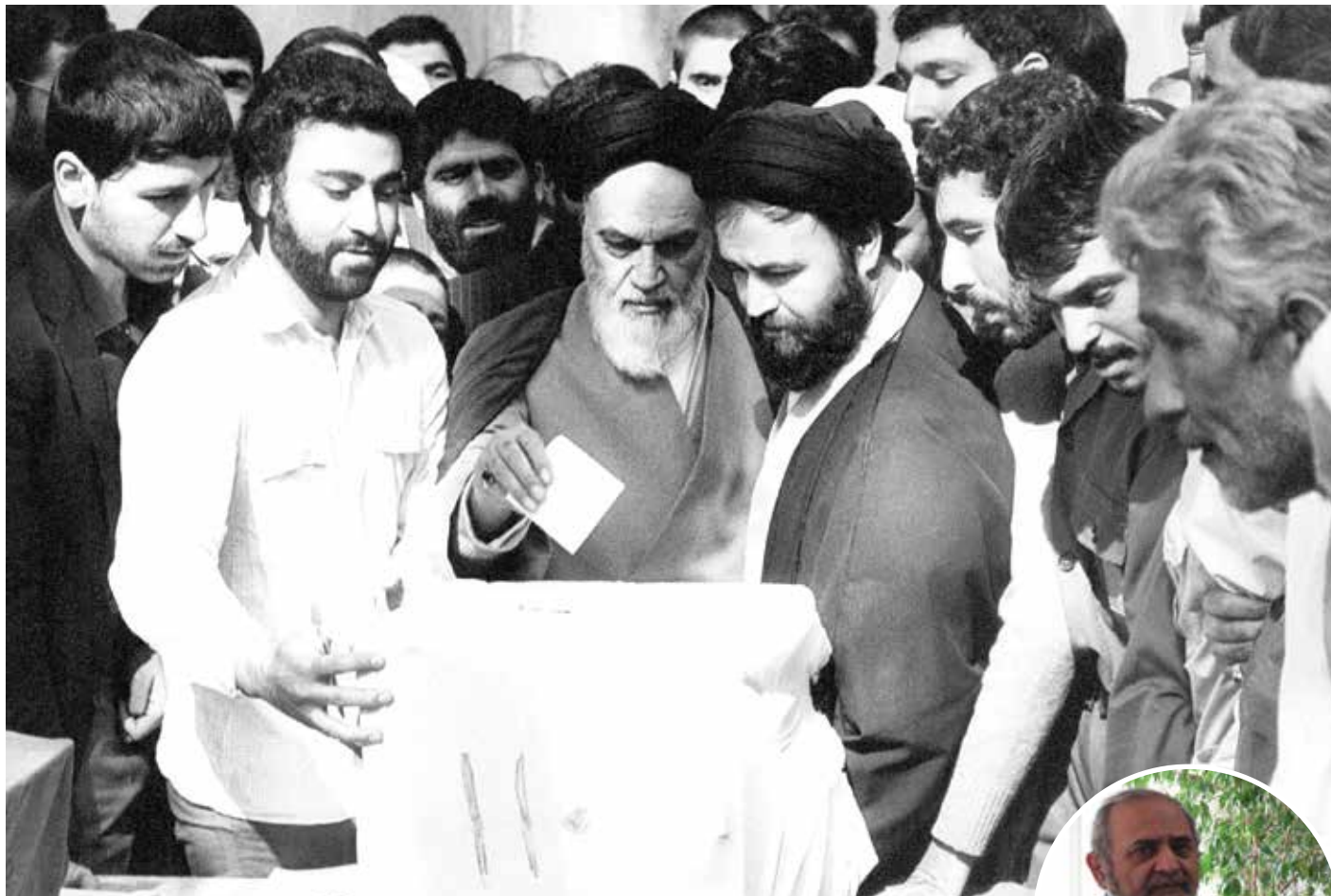


# ‘National Unity’ in political conduct of Imam Khomeini

## INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has been insisting that he will be leading a government of “National Unity” and has shown it to be true, especially in picking his cabinet members. From the perspective of the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini as well, National Unity is not just a social necessity but a pivotal strategy for the continuity and stability of the Islamic Revolution.

To explore the role of National Unity in Imam Khomeini’s political conduct, we sat down with Yahya Fozzi, a political science professor and faculty member at the Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies. He believes that Imam Khomeini, with a realistic view of Iran’s diverse social fabric, was convinced that without national consensus, cohesion and national strength simply cannot be built up. Therefore, from his viewpoint, National Unity is a rational and strategic necessity for Iran’s survival.



The late founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (c) casts his vote in the Islamic Republic referendum in Qom, central Iran, on March 30, 1979.

● IRNA



Yahya Fowzi

### IRAN DAILY: What place does National Unity hold in Imam Khomeini’s thoughts?

**Fowzi:** Imam Khomeini never wrote off National Unity as a mere fantasy; rather, he regarded it as a religious, rational, and political necessity for the survival and power of the Islamic establishment — a necessity that still rings true and inspires today. In his political thought, National Unity was not only a political strategy during the Islamic Revolution but also the cornerstone for the Islamic establishment’s stability during its consolidation phase. With a realistic grasp of Iran’s ethnically, religiously, and intellectually diverse society, Imam Khomeini believed that only through collective agreement and acceptance of diversity could unity and integration be brought about.

### How do democracy and unity relate to Imam Khomeini’s practical approach?

In practice, Imam Khomeini managed to bring together opposing political groups, diverse social classes, and even critics under slogans like “all together” and “be one hand”. This unity was not a short-term tactic but a religious, rational, and ethical imperative — a necessity that turned democracy into the backbone of National Unity. For him, without broad popular participation and respect for the people’s role, no unity could last. Imam Khomeini saw democracy as the tool to realize unity — not just to legitimize the political establishment but as an efficient mechanism to iron out social, cultural, and political conflicts. He viewed republicanism not in opposition to Islam but as its extension. He believed that referring disputes to the people’s vote was the best way to peacefully navigate social tensions.

The pinnacle of this thinking was the Islamic Republic referendum, where despite emphasizing the establishment’s Islamic nature, Imam Khomeini left the final say to the people. In fact, unity in his thought was neither possible nor legitimate without tapping into the platform of democracy.

### What common ground does National Unity and social justice share in Imam Khomeini’s political conduct?

If social justice means realizing the divine and contractual rights of society’s members, then from Imam Khomeini’s perspective, National Unity cannot stand without social justice. Unity is achieved only when all social groups, regardless of religious, ethnic, or political status, feel their rights are respected within the governing structure. Thus, securing divine rights such as human dignity, freedom, self-determination, and inherent rights — as well as contractual rights like those enshrined in the constitution approved by the people — is both a prerequisite and the core of any lasting National Unity.

### Can Imam Khomeini’s thought offer a theoretical model for unity in a pluralistic society? How does this model maintain unity while recognizing diversity?

Undoubtedly, Imam Khomeini’s intellectual framework can lay down a theoretical and indigenous model for achieving unity in pluralistic societies. This model rests on two pillars: recognizing the realities of Iranian society and relying on the religious and rational foundations of Islam. Imam Khomeini accurately saw Iranian society as a mosaic of ethnicities, religions, languages, and intellectual currents — from Marxists

and liberals to Kurds, Baluchs, Turkmens, Arabs, and Lors. Religious diversity (Shia, Sunni, Zoroastrian, Christian, Jewish) is another fundamental reality of Iran. He understood society’s layers well and did not write off ethnic, religious, linguistic, or political diversity as a threat. Instead, he believed this diversity, if steered toward national goals, would be a national strength. Rather than wiping out or cracking down on differences, he stressed coming together around common interests and shared enemies. This shows that unity, in Imam Khomeini’s view, is a moral, rational, and strategic necessity for Iran’s survival. Drawing on the Qur’an, the Prophet’s tradition, and the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt, alongside the verse “And We made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another,” he emphasized recognizing ethnic and cultural differences to foster interaction and mutual understanding. Moreover, the concept of “unity in diversity” has a central place in our philosophical and mystical tradition, especially in later interpretations of Mulla Sadra’s philosophy. This view allows for dialogue, difference, and diversity within cohesion and unity, seeing all humans as divine manifestations and emphasizing tolerance and coexistence. In Shia jurisprudence and principles, concepts like practical reason, establishment’s expediency, and the rule of the more important serve as tools to preserve social unity.

### How can we translate Imam Khomeini’s thoughts into today’s language to make it more accessible for the younger generation and responsive to current political complexities?

Imam Khomeini’s thought is not a historical relic but a strategic treasure for our times — provided it is expressed in contemporary language and with precise audience awareness. For today’s generation, facing new social, media, and global complexities, his ideas must be revisited in a modern, practical language. The spirit of Imam Khomeini’s thought on the necessity of social unity rests on three principles:

- Acknowledging cultural and social differences,
- Emphasizing people’s legal and religious rights,
- And utilizing dialogue and consensus-building to create social cohesion.

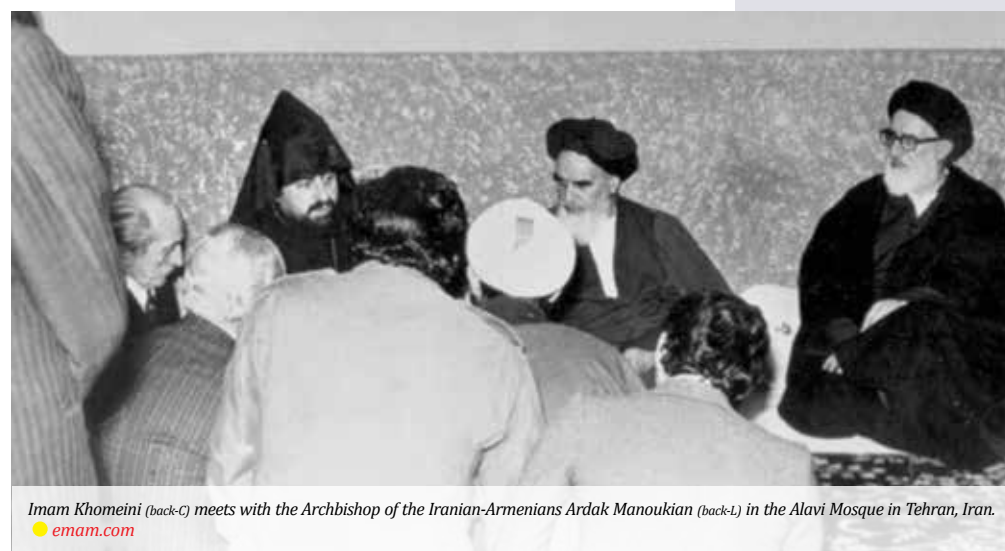
These three principles remain timeless keys to unlocking today’s challenges and can be articulated in a way that resonates with the younger generation.

### Is National Unity in Imam Khomeini’s thought about forced consensus, or does it envision intercultural dialogue and intellectual-political interaction?

A cornerstone of sustainable National Unity is consensus-building, which is based on intercultural dialogues, intellectual interactions, and political tolerance. This approach was evident in Imam Khomeini’s conduct during the first decade of the Islamic Revolution — when the political establishment was being determined, the constitution drafted, and even in dealing with opponents and critics. That’s why Imam Khomeini backed televised debates between opposing groups (as long as they refrained from violence) and pushed consensus-building through these talks, ultimately leaving the final arbiter to the people’s vote. This consensus-building laid the groundwork for the political establishment and constitution to be approved by a decisive majority and helped the people stand behind the political establishment during various crises.



A cornerstone of sustainable National Unity is consensus-building, which is based on intercultural dialogues, intellectual interactions, and political tolerance. This approach was evident in Imam Khomeini’s conduct during the first decade of the Islamic Revolution — when the political establishment was being determined, the constitution drafted, and even in dealing with opponents and critics. That’s why Imam Khomeini backed televised debates between opposing groups (as long as they refrained from violence) and pushed consensus-building through these talks, ultimately leaving the final arbiter to the people’s vote.



Imam Khomeini (back-C) meets with the Archbishop of the Iranian-Armenians Ardak Manoukian (back-L) in the Alavi Mosque in Tehran, Iran.

● eamam.com



## O P I N I O N

In the account of the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei of Imam Khomeini, he is depicted as a powerful force, capable of stirring up the boundless ocean of nations and whipping it into a storm.

According to this narrative, Imam Khomeini viewed nations as interconnected oceans; When their anger is stirred up and they boil over, they can break apart the ships of tyrannical leaders and send them under. The Leader, by painting a vivid picture of how Imam Khomeini saw the people, identifies emotion, compassion, and thought as the threads that tie together the Imam and the nation. He states that the Imam, as the father of this nation, holds the reins of this connection: "When the Imam orders the youth and the children of this nation to defend, when he calls for mass mobilization, this roaring sea will rise up; On that day, every job will become one job: military service... On the day the Imam wills it, and in the manner and order he sets out, the entire nation will be mobilized from start to finish. That will be the day of the death of imperialist power and the day that power is buried in this land."

But what was the source of the Imam's power to win over the people and set the ocean of nations against tyranny and global imperialism? What forged the bond of emotion and thought between the Imam and his followers?

In his account, Ayatollah Khomeini points to the martyrdom of Ayatollah Mostafa Khomeini in 1977, noting, "The nation, though potentially revolutionary, had not yet been truly stirred up at the time; Only a mighty storm can shake an ocean — one great martyrdom and, in response, one great patience."

He goes on to explain that the

## Imam of compassion, emotion, and thought

ISNA



Founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini waves to the people after he returned from exile in February 1979.

khamenei.ir

people's rallying around the late Imam was due to his spiritual and heavenly character: "This great heart, this great spirit, this spirit of God, with great patience, lent eternal grandeur to this event. 'The death of Mostafa was a hidden divine kindness'; This is the perspective of a spiritual man, a heavenly man,

a leader who rules over hearts before minds; A leader whose patience, humanity, spirituality, and mysticism win over even the hardest of hearts — something that defies any material formula."

Addressing those still left open-mouthed and astonished by the revolutionary events of that era,

Ayatollah Khamenei identifies Imam Khomeini's patience as the factor that set off the storm in the ocean of the nation, and portrays him as a spiritual, Islamic leader whose influence and endless reliance on God set him apart from all other leaders. In the Leader's telling, the storm in the nation's ocean was the

result of the knowledge people gained about the Imam following the martyrdom of his son. "The father's conduct in the face of this tragedy elevated him tenfold; Even the greatest and most unyielding spirits bowed down before this greater soul, and all declared their faith. He showed he was a leader, a superman, a noble human being, and the event was set in motion."

It might be assumed that this event was the victory of the Islamic Revolution, but it appears that an even greater event "was set in motion," with the Revolution's triumph and subsequent victories springing from it. The event was a golden moment, when the people came to know their Imam, and God, by testing the Imam with a great trial and his passing it, placed the reins of the nation's emotion, compassion, and thought in his hands.

In the wake of this great event, "the Iranian nation proved that it loved its leader more than anything or anyone else, more than any motive or orientation; It showed it valued its leader. Our nation's cry rang out so thunderously in the suffocating, foggy, and poisoned atmosphere of the world that even the enemies could not bring themselves to doubt it. Those who could not come to terms with the fact that the greatest revolution of the past half-century — a century of revolutions, movements, surges, and leaps — was being led by a spiritual man, by this Imam and great leader, were forced to bow before the thunderous cry of the Iranian nation. The Iranian nation managed to get this message across — a message the world watched and pondered with disbelief — reaching even the furthest corners of the Western world. The Iranian nation showed it knows its leader, approves of him, loves him with all its being, and that he is dearer to it than anything or anyone else."

The article first appeared in Persian on Tasnim news agency.



Addressing those still left open-mouthed and astonished by the revolutionary events of that era, Ayatollah Khomeini identifies Imam Khomeini's patience as the factor that set off the storm in the ocean of the nation, and portrays him as a spiritual, Islamic leader whose influence and endless reliance on God set him apart from all other leaders.

## Ayatollah Khomeini's institution-building far-sighted

### Aligned with needs of Revolution, Iraqi-imposed war

## O P I N I O N

Following the victory of Iran's Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini set up a range of institutions, each with its own distinct purpose. Some of these bodies played a pivotal role and were simply indispensable during the Iran-Iraq War. The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Guard Corps (IRGC), the Construction Jihad, the Basij Force, and the Supreme Defense Council were among the organizations that sprang up under Imam Khomeini's orders prior to the outbreak of hostilities in September 1980.

Institution-building stood out as a crucial aspect of Imam Khomeini's military and defense thinking throughout the war and its aftermath, leaving a lasting mark on the course of events.

According to the renowned Western thinker Joseph Nye, the ability to anticipate crises, gear up for them, and put in place systems to tackle emergencies is a hallmark of a transformative leader. From this vantage point, a wise leader, either before a crisis breaks out or as soon as the first signs crop up, must take the initiative and

set up institutions to confront looming threats, thereby shoring up the necessary preparedness.

In truth, Imam Khomeini's foresight and particular skill in institution-building, tailored to the Revolution's needs, gave rise to revolutionary organizations that helped keep the establishment afloat and powerful for years to come — an achievement widely recognized as one of his greatest strengths.

Moreover, Imam Khomeini's willingness to seek counsel and delegate authority during the war stood out as a hallmark of his wartime leadership. This can be seen in the way he took on board various factors and perspectives during critical junctures of the conflict. Evidence shows that at key moments — such as the entry into Iraqi territory after the liberation of Khorramshahr in May 1982, and the decision to call an end to the war by accepting the cease-fire in July 1988 — Imam Khomeini regarded consultation with experts as the linchpin of his decision-making.

He frequently sought input from specialists on all aspects of the conflict, including diplomatic



Commanders of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) meet with Iran's Commander-in-Chief Imam Khomeini (back-C) during the Iraqi-imposed war (1980-1988).

IRDC

initiatives, cease-fire acceptance, and decisions within the framework of international organizations.

The sheer scale and technical nature of the war meant that Imam Khomeini handed over

responsibility for certain executive and technical matters to government officials, while he himself mapped out the overall strategy and kept a close eye on its implementation. This included orders such as the creation

of the Supreme Defense Council and the foresight to plan for a successor to the Commander-in-Chief.

The article first appeared in Persian on ISNA.

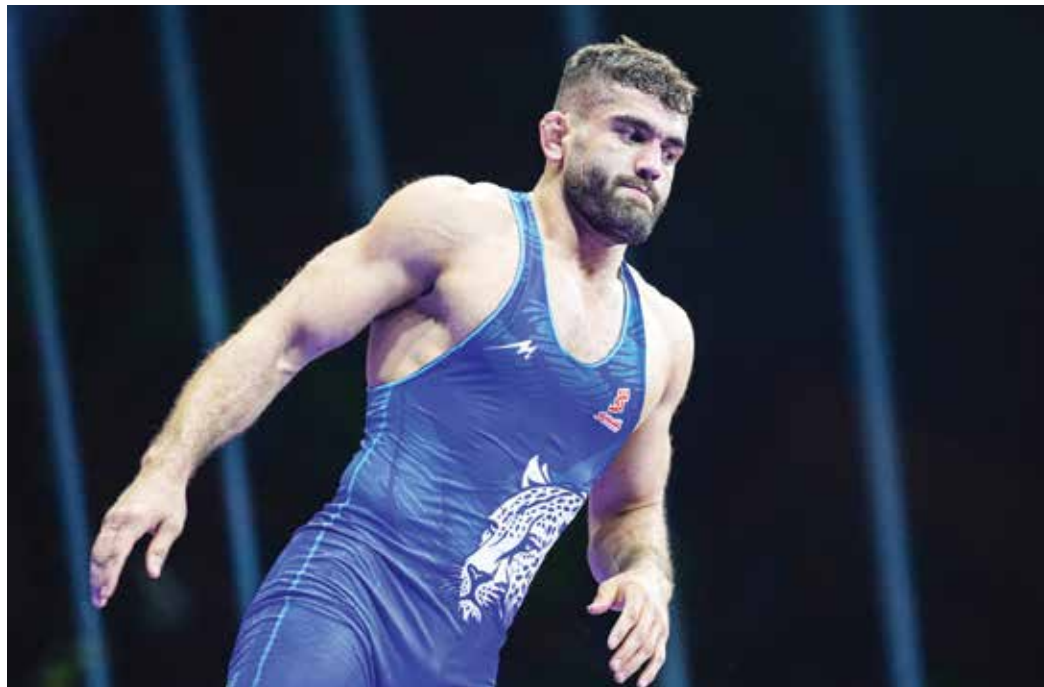


In truth, Imam Khomeini's foresight and particular skill in institution-building, tailored to the Revolution's needs, gave rise to revolutionary organizations that helped keep the establishment afloat and powerful for years to come — an achievement widely recognized as one of his greatest strengths.



## UWW Ranking Series:

## Babaei, Bazri bag golds in Ulaanbaatar to stay on selection course



Iranian wrestlers Fariborz Babaei (L) and Ahmad Bazri won the freestyle 79kg and 97kg gold medals, respectively, at the Ulaanbaatar Open in Mongolia. ● IAWFIR

## Sports Desk

Iranian freestyle wrestlers Fariborz Babaei and Ahmad Bzari walked away with the ultimate prize in their respective weight classes at the Ulaanbaatar Open to remain in contention with a place in the Iranian squad for September's World Championships in Zagreb. An International Takhti Cup champion in May, Babaei maintained his impressive form at the third Ranking

Series event of the season by defeating Magomet Evloev of Tajikistan 4-0 to win the gold medal in the 79kg contests. However, the debate over the Iranian 79kg slot for the world showpiece remains far from settled, as reigning Asian champion Mahdi Yousefi still fancies his chances of booking a Zagreb ticket – despite losing to Babaei in the Takhti Cup final – while four-time world medalist Mohammad Nok-

hodi recently entered the fray after recovering from a knee surgery. Meanwhile, Bazri also built on a gold-winning run at the Takhti Cup to go all the way in Ulaanbaatar, outmuscling the host's Gankhuyag Gambaatar 8-0 in the final. Standing between Bazri and a spot in Zagreb is Amirali Azarpira, who also underwent a surgery on his injured knee after claiming the Olympic bronze in Paris last summer.

Elsewhere in the Mongolian capital, Aliakbar Fazli and Mohammadali Amouzad were dealt a massive blow in their bid to secure a national team spot after missing out on the top podium in the 70kg event. Amouzad left the competition empty-handed, suffering a 10-6 loss to his fellow Iranian in the semifinals before a 7-5 defeat against Mongolia's Tulga Tumur-Ochir in the third-place contest.

Fazli, meanwhile, had to settle for a silver medal following a 6-0 loss to neutral participant Konstantin Kaprynov. Seven Iranians have already secured a national team spot for September's showpiece, including Younes Emami, who defeated Amirmohammad Yazdani in an all-Iranian 74kg final in Ulaanbaatar to remain on course for a third world medal. Kamaran Qasempour came out victorious against Abol-

fazl Rahmani in a domestic head-to-head in Tehran last week to seal the 86kg slot, while reigning world champion Amirhossein Zare' (125kg) and Ali Mo'meni (57kg) won the Takhti Cup golds to punch the Zagreb ticket, joining Ahmad Mohammadnejad-Javan, Rahman Amouzad, and Amirhossein Firouzpour. Mohammadnejad-Javan will be the Iranian 61kg wrestler, thanks to a gold-winning run at February's

Zagreb Open, as well as an Asian bronze in March. Olympic silver winner Amouzad will chase a second world 65kg gold after domestic rivals Yassin Rezaei and Ali Khorramdel had below-par runs at the Ranking Series season-opener in February, while Firouzpour's dominant campaigns at the Asian Championships and the Zagreb Open, convinced the Iranian coaching staff to pick him for the world 92kg contests.

## World Cup Asian qualifiers:

## Iran names squad for double dead rubbers

## Sports Desk

Iran head coach Amir Qalenoee named the 28-man squad for the upcoming double-header against Qatar and North Korea at the World Cup Asian qualifiers. Iran sits atop the Group A table with 20 points, three clear of second-placed Uzbekistan and seven above the United Arab Emirates with two games to spare. A 2-2 home draw against Uzbekistan last time out in March guaranteed a top-two finish in the group for Team Melli and direct qualification for next year's finals in the United States, Mexico, and Canada. Iran will play away to Qatar in Doha's Jassim bin Hamad Stadium on Thursday, before concluding the qualifiers against bottom-side North Korea at Tehran's Azadi Stadium next Tuesday.

Fourth in the group with 10 points, Qatar, which will have Spaniard Julen Lopetegui as the new head coach, will be desperate to collect all points on the home turf, which will keep the reigning Asian champion in contention with a third-place finish and a place in the final group phase of the qualifiers. Qatar is the last team to have beaten Iran in a competitive game – a 3-2 victory in the Asian Cup semifinals in February 2024 – though Al Annabi was hammered 4-1 when the two sides met in the qualifiers in Dubai last October. Shabab Al Ahli striker Sardar Azmoun is ruled of the upcoming fixtures with an injury, with Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh and Ali Alipour – the top two leading marksmen in the newly-finished Iranian top-



● FFIRI

flight season – joining Interstriker Mahdi Taremi and Ittihad Kalba's Shahriar Moghanlou in the Iranian frontline.

Injured winger Alireza Jahanbakhsh will also miss the games, making way for Sepahan's Mohammad-Mehdi Mohebbi, who will hope

to make his senior international debut after bagging nine goals and 10 assists in 37 appearances across all club competitions.

Wizard winger Mahdi Qayedi will also aim to bring his impressive club form to international duty, having contributed with six strikes and double assists in five UAE Pro League outings for Ittihad Kalba. Right-back Sadeq Moharrami, who is set to join Sepahan as a free agent from Dynamo Zagreb, has received a first call-up by Qalenoee in 16 months, having recovered from a torn ligament injury he suffered against the UAE at the Asian Cup.

The following is the full Iranian squad:

**Goalkeepers:** Alireza Beiranvand (Tractor), Payam Ni-azmand (Persepolis), Seyyed Hossein Hosseini (Esteghlal), Mohammad Khalifeh (Ittihad Kalba) **Defenders:** Shoja Khalilzadeh (Tractor), Aref Aqasi (Trac-

tor), Morteza Pouraliganji (Persepolis), Milad Mohammadi (Persepolis), Ali Ne'mati (Foolad Khuzestan), Mohammad-Amin Hazbavi (Sepahan), Saleh Hardani (Esteghlal), Sadeq Moharrami (-), Omid Nourafkan (Sepahan) **Midfielders:** Arya Yousefi (Sepahan), Saeed Ezza-tollahi (Shabab Al Ahli), Mohammad Karimi (Sepahan), Mohammad Qorbani (Al Wahda), Amirmohammad Razaqnia (Golgothar Sirjan), Rouzbeh Cheshmi (Esteghlal), Mohammad-Javad Hosseinejad (Dinamo Makhachkala), Mohammad-Mahdi Mohebbi (Sepahan), Saman Qoddous (Ittihad Kalba), Mahdi Qayedi (Ittihad Kalba), Mahdi Hasehmnejad (Tractor) **Strikers:** Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh (Tractor), Mahdi Taremi (Internazionale), Ali Alipour (Persepolis), Shahriar Moghanlou (Ittihad Kalba).

## Gauff speeds past Alexandrova, heads into French Open quarters

**REUTERS** – Second seed Coco Gauff brushed aside Russian Ekaterina Alexandrova 6-0 7-5 on Monday to move into the French

Open quarter-finals and stay on course for her first title in Paris. The American world number two must have

thought she would have an easy morning session after powering through the first set in sensational fashion but the Russian

bounced back in the second to test her opponent. "The whole match I played well. She stepped up her game in the second set.

Overall I thought I played great," Gauff said. "I move well on clay, really comfortable with sliding and moving on the sur-

face. The most physical surface for sure and I do well in that department." Gauff is the youngest American player to have

reached at least the fourth round at seven consecutive Grand Slams since Venus Williams between 1997-1999.





# Timeless beauty of Qasr-e Dasht in heart of Shiraz

In the heart of the ancient and majestic city of Shiraz, the capital of Fars Province, lies a pleasant and charming neighborhood that captivates visitors: Qasr-e Dasht. It's a place where anyone can spend a moment or two wandering through its beautiful alleyways, experiencing the timeless charm that has persisted for generations. Perhaps fewer travelers and tourists are aware of or recognize this beautiful area; however, local residents frequently visit it for leisurely walks and memorable moments. The neighborhood boasts notable attractions including Qasr-e Dasht Street, Afifabad Street, Valiasr Street, Roya Park, and the Shajarian Pedestrian Path, among others. These sites collectively contribute to the neighborhood's allure, blending historical charm with modern-day conveniences. Qasr-e Dasht is renowned for its unique gardens. Situated in the northwest of Shiraz, approximately four kilometers from Ma'aliabad neighborhood, it is considered one of the oldest and most famous neighborhoods of the city. The exquisite gardens of Qasr-e Dasht flourished during the reign of Karim Khan Zand and subsequent rulers, forming a lush landscape that once symbolized the prosperity of Shiraz. Yet today, the neighborhood faces threats from illegal constructions and urban encroachments, which risk damaging its historic and natural beauty, IRNA wrote. Green spaces and the historic, old fabric of any city are its heart and soul. Their preservation is vital for maintaining the city's cultural and environmental heritage, and their loss would lead to irreplaceable damage to the city's identity. In earlier times, due to Shiraz's smaller geographical size, the Qasr-e Dasht neighborhood was considered a summer resort area for the surrounding countryside. Its lush gardens and cool breezes made it an idyllic escape from the heat. However, with the city's expansion over the years, it has become fully integrated into the urban fabric. Today, it is conveniently accessible and remains one of the most cherished parts of Shiraz. Visiting its alleyways offers a nostalgic journey back in time — walking beneath the shade of towering trees that peek over mudbrick walls, into alleyways lined with history — scenes that are increasingly rare in today's bustling cities. The beautiful gardens and narrow alleys of this neighborhood have remarkably preserved their authenticity over the years, making it an attractive destination for both tourists seeking a

historical experience and locals longing for serene hideaways. Many houses within Qasr-e Dasht are nestled amid these gardens, some of which are centuries old, adding to the neighborhood's timeless appeal. The gardens of Qasr-e Dasht feature various fruit trees, including grapevines, persimmons, and pomegranates. Today, the neighborhood attracts many visitors, and young couples come here frequently to take memorable photographs during their celebrations. One of the most enchanting parts of this neighborhood is Shah Parian Alley, which, with its lush and verdant trees, creates an inviting and peaceful atmosphere — an ideal setting for reflection and relaxation. The most famous street in this neighborhood also bears the name Qasr-e Dasht. It extends from the southeast to the northwest of the city and includes numerous smaller side streets. Much of this main street, particularly toward its northern end, is lined with tall, majestic trees on both sides, providing shade and aesthetic beauty. The western section of Qasr-e Dasht Street is also surrounded by many beautiful gardens that are worth exploring, offering glimpses of Shiraz's verdant scenery. Another significant street in the area is Afifabad Street, named after the historic Afifabad Garden of Shiraz, known for its lush environment and historical significance. Valiasr Street in Shiraz is highly popular and well-known, much like its counterpart in Tehran. It is lined with a variety of cafes, shops, and stores, and its parks and green spaces make it a favorite spot for relaxation and social activities for people from all walks of life. Zargari Street, situated within the Qasr-e Dasht neighborhood, is considered a luxurious and upscale street. If you are seeking quality dining experiences, this is an excellent area to explore. Similarly, Rahmatabad Street is one of the neighborhood's old and nostalgic areas, boasting more mature, vibrant trees and alleyways that surpass others in beauty. This street offers a perfect opportunity to indulge in the refreshing ambiance and experience the vitality of the towering trees in the lush gardens — an experience that can rejuvenate the senses. Barq Street is recognized as one of the city's more economical streets, hosting numerous shopping centers and markets. Visitors can find a wide variety of high-quality products at reasonable prices, making it a practical shopping destination. Meanwhile, Mala Sadra Street is filled with bazaars and shopping centers—an ideal place

for buying souvenirs and local handicrafts to take home.

### Roya Park Shiraz

Roya Park is one of the oldest parks in the Qasr-e Dasht neighborhood. Its very beautiful and charming environment makes it an ideal place for residents and visitors to spend a few hours relaxing and enjoying recreational activities. Whether for a peaceful walk, family outings, or outdoor gatherings, the park provides a tranquil escape. Facilities here include a children's playground, various sports equipment, benches, and clean restrooms, making it a comfortable spot for all visitors.

### Imamzadeh Shahzadeh Mohammad

Located in the center of Qasr-e Dasht, Imamzadeh Shahzadeh Mohammad is a revered shrine. According to tradition, its lineage traces back to Imam Musa al-Kadhim (PBUH), the seventh Imam of Shia Muslims, making it a significant spiritual site. The shrine has undergone renovations several times over the years, preserving its religious and historical importance. It continues to attract pilgrims and visitors who come to pay their respects and enjoy the peaceful atmosphere of this sacred location.

### Navabi Garden

Among the many gardens in Qasr-e Dasht, Navabi Garden stands out as a popular destination. Situated close to Qasr-e Dasht Square, this lush garden dates back to the Qajar era, making it a historical gem. Within the garden, there is a house or mansion that once served as a residence for notable figures; unfortunately, this building is now in a very dilapidated state. Despite this, the garden's natural beauty remains appealing, drawing visitors seeking calm amid its greenery.

### Shajarian Pedestrian Path

The Shajarian Pedestrian Path, also called the Salamat Road of Qasr-e Dasht, extends over 3.5 kilometers, featuring a dedicated three-kilometer bicycle route. The cycling and walking paths are completely separated, ensuring safety for all users. The walkway includes multiple sports fields, a reading area, an ice skating rink, a fountain, shaded sitting areas, and numerous spaces for groups and individuals—catering to both children and adults. It is well-lit, allowing for safe use during early mornings and evenings, making it a popular spot for exercise and leisure.

### Naseri Garden

Covering around 11,000 square meters, Naseri Garden is situated in alley 59 of Qasr-e Dasht. Once known for its lush greenery and vibrant trees, it was a favorite retreat for residents and visitors alike. However, in recent years, many of its trees have been destroyed for reasons that remain unclear. Despite this loss, the garden still holds significance as a peaceful green space that reflects the neighborhood's rich natural heritage.

### Golestan Cinema Complex

For a modern entertainment option, the Golestan Cinema Complex in the northern part of Qasr-e Dasht offers a comfortable environment for movie lovers. Opened in 2016, it features three halls equipped with the latest audio-visual technology, providing high-quality screenings. Its close proximity to the metro makes it easily accessible for tourists and locals. After exploring Shiraz's scenic summer gardens and historical sites, this cinema complex provides a pleasant and convenient way to relax and enjoy contemporary entertainment.

### Historical overview

The expansive 1,300-hectare area of Qasr-e Dasht in northwestern Shiraz has a rich historical background. It is considered one of the city's most prosperous and storied regions, alongside other notable sites such as bazaars, mosques, the Vakil Bathhouse, Naser Garden, and Takieh Haft Tanan. During the Zand dynasty, this neighborhood was famously called Hezar Bagh, meaning "Thousand Gardens," reflecting its countless lush gardens and grand mansions, many of which resembled castles overlooking the plains of Shiraz. The neighborhood's name and identity are deeply rooted in its extensive gardens along the outskirts of ancient Shiraz. Its picturesque beauty, the attention of Shiraz's wealthy classes, and the presence of magnificent, palace-like homes all contributed to its fame. Although much of its former splendor has faded, the wide, tree-lined streets, remnants of old estates, and historic gardens still evoke its glorious past. Today, the best time to appreciate Qasr-e Dasht's beauty is during spring, when the area bursts into color with blooming flowers and lush greenery. The visual splendors, combined with the fragrant scent of blossoms, create a uniquely enchanting atmosphere — a scene that leaves a lasting impression and invites visitors to experience the timeless charm of Shiraz.



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# Iran to open health tourism offices in five Persian Gulf states

## Social Desk

Iran will launch health tourism offices in five Persian Gulf countries later this month, Deputy Tourism Minister Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpey said on Monday, touting the country's growing medical tourism appeal. Speaking on the sidelines of the 3rd ECO International Health Tourism Conference in Hamedan, Bandpey confirmed that "reception offices" will soon be operational in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Oman, Qatar, and Kuwait. The move follows a specialized diplomatic panel hosted in Shiraz two weeks ago, attended by ambassadors from the five Persian Gulf states. Bandpey noted that Iran is among the "top 18 destinations" for medical tourism globally. He said the country has made significant strides in fields such as cosmetic surgery, dentistry, liver transplants, infertility treatment, chemotherapy, and orthopedics. Official figures from the Ministry of Intelligence and the Health Ministry show Iran received 1 million health tourists

in 2022, generating €2 billion in revenue. Despite the rise in demand, Bandpey stressed that medical tourism must not "delay or disrupt" services for Iranian citizens. "We've agreed that domestic patients should not be kept waiting," he said, adding that Iran currently has extra capacity to accommodate foreign patients. Bandpey said Iran's dormant Health Strategy Council resumed activity six months ago after a two-year pause. Three sessions have been held, and a new directive has been drafted to clarify policy and include all stakeholders. He emphasized the need for a clear national brand to tackle middlemen, standardize treatment costs, and promote the country's capabilities. An open call for branding proposals in the health tourism sector will be issued on June 9, with a cash prize awarded to the best idea. A pilot program for registering and admitting international patients is underway in South Khorasan. According to Bandpey, the Tourism Ministry handles

logistics "up to the hospital gate," while the Health Ministry manages medical services. Discharge times and treatments will be logged in a new digital system. He also said the system would later roll out in Isfahan, Qom, Mazandaran, and Tehran. The initiative involves both the private sector and government, including the Medical Council, Chambers of Commerce, and the Ministry of Intelligence. Meanwhile, a new flight route linking Oman, Shiraz, and Nowshahr will support the plan. "Health tourists will discover Iran's history and culture, and that brings them back," Bandpey noted. Iran's failure to "win trust" remains a hurdle, he admitted, despite having highly skilled physicians. A new framework is being designed to clarify who provides services, where, and at what cost — "in a scientific and standardized way." Hamedan Governor Hamid Molanouri Shamsi said the province had upgraded its infrastructure for the ECO event. "We're brand-building in health



tourism," he said, adding that AI and knowledge-based panels were part of the event agenda. He said demand for investment is rising along with tourism. With rail and air projects underway, and regional proximity to four provinces, Hamedan aims

to become a key player in Iran's health tourism push. Flights to Mecca, Mashhad, and other domestic destinations have resumed after a three-year pause. "Our airport now ranks among the best in infrastructure," he said.

## Iran, Jakarta ink cultural agreement



## Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Cultural Center in Indonesia and Jakarta Arts Council signed a cooperation agreement at the Iranian Embassy in Jakarta, aiming to deepen "practical" cultural and artistic exchanges between the two countries. The memorandum of understanding was signed in the presence of senior cultural officials from both sides. It sets out plans for joint exhibitions, artist exchanges, and shared literary and cinematic programs. Bambang Prihadi, head of the Jakarta Arts Council, welcomed the deal but stressed that it must "go beyond ceremony" and lead to action.



Head of Jakarta Arts Council Bambang Prihadi (2nd L) and Iran's Cultural Attaché Mohammadreza Ebrahimi hold the signed agreement in Jakarta, Indonesia.

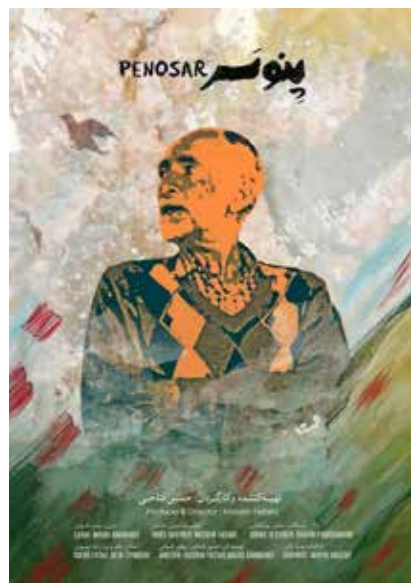
● ILNA

"We know Iran not only as an Islamic country, but as a nation with a deep legacy in civilization, literature, and the arts," Prihadi said. He called Iranian cinema "a major player" in the region and globally, and said he hoped the deal would provide a "solid foundation" for broader collaboration. Iran's cultural attaché, Mohammadreza Ebrahimi, highlighted the role of his office as a "bridge" for connecting Indonesian and Iranian institutions. He proposed holding an online forum for poets, writers, and artists from both countries to "lay the groundwork" for future projects. Prihadi welcomed the idea and said his council stood "fully ready" to help make it happen. Ebrahimi pointed to past successes, noting that several Persian works have already been translated into Indonesian. One example was Man-e-Ou by Reza Amirkhani, released in 2022, which he said was "well received." The agreement outlines regular reporting every six months and the formation of a joint working group to ensure follow-through. Both sides voiced hope that the deal would mark the beginning of "deep and lasting" cultural ties between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Indonesia.

## Iranian documentary 'Penosar' awarded at Hungarian festival

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Hossein Fattahi took home the top documentary prize at Hungary's 9th Zsigmond Vilmos International Film Festival for his visually striking film 'Penosar,' organizers said. The festival was held from May 27 to 31, ILNA reported. The award was announced at the closing ceremony of the festival, held annually in Szeged since 2017 in memory of Hungarian-American cinematographer Vilmos Zsigmond. The event celebrates achievements in cinematography and visual storytelling. 'Penosar,' produced and directed by Fattahi, tells the story of an elderly shepherd who paints scenes from nature directly onto rocks and boulders in the mountains of northern Iran. The film, shot across several seasons in the Savadkuh region of Mazandaran Province, captures both the rugged beauty of the landscape and the artist's intimate bond with it.



The documentary previously earned an honorary diploma at the 5th Uvality Festival in France.

## Iran's 'The West Sky' wins top prize at Golden Knight in Crimea



Iranian feature film 'The West Sky,' directed by Mohammad Asgari and produced by Habib Vali-Nejad, took home the top prize for Best Fiction Film at the 35th Golden Knight festival, organizers said. The festival ran from May 22 to May 29, in the city of Novy Kherson in the Russian-controlled Sevastopol region of Crimea.

Produced by Iran's Soureh Cinema Organization and Farabi Cinema Foundation, 'The West Sky' tells the story of Iranian Army helicopter pilots in the early days of the Iran-Iraq war, highlighting their role in pushing back enemy forces. The Golden Knight festival, launched in 1992 under the motto "For moral ideals, for the exaltation of the human spirit," is one of the most prominent cultural events in the Russian-speaking world. This year's edition featured more than 200 screenings from 20 countries, including Russia, Iran, Germany, Switzerland, Turkey, India, China and Serbia. The event focuses on films with ethical, spiritual, and cultural themes. Organizers say its independent approach has earned the trust of socially conscious filmmakers across the globe.



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