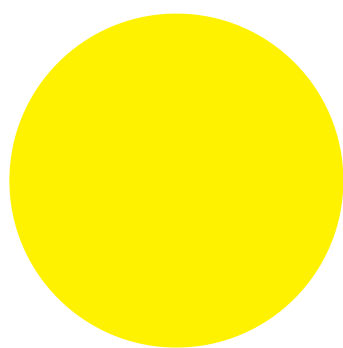


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Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces
Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi
IRNA

Wartime diplomacy part of national defense system

By Mostafa Alaei
Iran's former ambassador to Venezuela

OPINION

Israel, driven by ideological supremacy, hegemonic tendencies, and expansionist ambitions, has never been able to tolerate a powerful and influential Iran in the region. The Zionist regime has consistently sought to undermine Iran's sources of power. Over the years, it has attempted—particularly through soft power mechanisms—to create rifts between the Iranian people and the Islamic Republic. One need only consider the numerous Persian-language media outlets established for this very purpose. In parallel, Israel has continuously invested in enhancing its offensive and defensive military capabilities, always entertaining the idea of striking Iran. Prior to the outbreak of war with Iran, the Netanyahu regime, based on its own calculations, envisioned an early victory and the rapid fall of the Islamic

Republic on two fronts: first, through the targeted assassination of senior military commanders, which it believed would cripple Iran's defense system and pave the way for the collapse of national defense; and second, by inciting unrest among the population, expecting mass uprisings to aid in the social downfall of the state. A clear example of this miscalculation was Netanyahu's early speech addressed to the Iranian people—a message that was widely ridiculed in Iran. Contrary to these assumptions, the Iranian public, spotting the grave threat to national sovereignty, thwarted the regime's schemes. Some citizens expressed their resistance through massive displays of support in public events and rallies, while others rejected the deception of Israel's psychological warfare. United under one national flag, the Iranian people foiled the Zionist regime's plots. Such societal mobilization should not be underestimated.

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Iran doubts Israel's truce compliance; warns of response: *Top general*

National Desk

Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces said on Sunday that Tehran has doubts about Israel's commitment to a US-proposed unilateral cease-fire that ended their 12-day conflict, warning that the country's Armed Forces are ready to respond forcefully to any new aggression by the regime. Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi said in a phone call with his Saudi Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman that Iran did not start the war but responded with full might. The most serious escalation

to date between the two sides erupted on June 13, when Israel launched a bombing campaign in Iran that killed more than 600 people including civilians, top military commanders and nuclear scientists.

The fighting derailed nuclear talks between Iran and the United States, a staunch ally of Israel's.

"We did not start the war, but we have responded to the aggressor with all our power," Mousavi said, six days into the cease-fire unilaterally announced by US President Donald Trump.

The United States joined the Is-

rael aggression by carrying out strikes on the three Iranian nuclear facilities of Fordow, Natanz and Isfahan.

According to Iran's Health Ministry, at least 627 civilians were killed and 4,900 injured during the 12-day Israel's onslaught against Iran.

In response, Iranian Armed Forces targeted Israel's military sites with a barrage of advanced missiles, which pierced through Israel's once-vaunted multilayered defense system. Retaliatory attacks by Iran on Israel killed 28 people, according to Israeli authorities.

The regime and the US invad-

ed Iranian territory despite the restraint shown by the Islamic Republic, while indirect negotiations with the United States were underway, Mousavi said.

"These two regimes have shown that they do not adhere to any international rules and norms, and this was proven to the world in the imposed 12-day war," he noted.

Meanwhile, the commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps' Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters in a statement said that Iran's Armed Forces are monitoring the enemy's movements and are fully prepared to confront any aggression.



Abdolrahim Mousavi
IRNA

Hossein Hassani Sa'di said that the country's Armed Forces will not hesitate for a moment to defend Iran's territorial integrity. The Iranian nation proved to

the enemy that in the face of any bullying and aggression it becomes more united and disappoints its enemies, he said in the statement.

Deputy FM refutes Trump's claim of planned resumption of talks

International Desk

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Majid Takht-Ravanchi on Sunday rejected as "incorrect" US president's claim that a time has been fixed for resumption of nuclear negotiations between Tehran and Washington.

"No agreement has been made on the issues that are being raised," Takht-Ravanchi said, adding that,

"What the Americans are saying is not true."

US President Donald Trump claimed on Wednesday that US and Iranian officials will talk next week on Iran's nuclear program. "We may sign an agreement, I don't know," Trump said.

A day later, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said that the Trump administration does not have any meetings scheduled with Iran.

"We don't have anything scheduled as of now,"

Leavitt told reporters during Thursday's press briefing, adding that she spoke with Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff on Thursday morning and the administration continues to be in "close communication" with the Iranians and intermediaries such as the Qataris.

"We are in touch, and if there is a meeting, we will let you know, as we always do," Leavitt said.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also said on

Thursday that Iran currently has no plan to meet with the United States.

The Iranian foreign minister said Tehran was assessing whether talks with the US were in its interest. Since April 12, Iran and the US held five rounds of talks to resolve a decades-long dispute over Iran's nuclear program. However, Israel's 12-day aggression against Iran, which began on June 13, derailed the nuclear talks.

Judiciary: Israeli strike on Evin prison claimed 71 lives, including civilians



International Desk

Iran's Judiciary's spokesman Asghar Jahangir said on Sunday that last week's Israeli strike on Tehran's Evin prison during the 12-day aggression on Iran killed at least 71 people.

"In the attack on Evin prison, 71 people were martyred including administrative staff, youth doing their military service, detain-

Jahangir also noted that a number of people were injured in the Israeli strike, some of whom were treated on site and others were taken to hospital.

The strike on June 23 destroyed part of the administrative building at Evin.

Images shared by the Judiciary showed destroyed walls, collapsed ceilings, scattered debris, and broken surfaces across waiting areas at the facility.

The judiciary said that Evin's medical center and visiting rooms had been targeted.

On Tuesday, a day after the strike, the Judiciary said that the Iranian prison authority had transferred inmates out of Evin prison.

From the first day of its unprovoked aggression against Iran, the Israeli regime repeatedly targeted civilian infrastructures.

The regime's attacks killed more than 600 people, including women and children, nuclear scientist and top military commanders.

Iran calls on UNSC to identify Israel, US as 'initiators' of 12-day war

International Desk

Iran called on the UN Security Council to identify the Israeli regime and the United States as the "initiators" of a recent act of aggression against the Islamic Republic and hold them to account for the damage inflicted on Iran.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in a letter to the secretary-general and the president of the UN Security Council reminded the council of its primary responsibility in maintaining international peace and security.

Since the beginning of Israel's aggression against Iran on June 13 in a clear violation of the UN Charter, many residential areas, civilians, and civilian infrastructure have been deliberately targeted, constituting a blatant breach of international law, he said.

Several hospitals and relief centers were also attacked, amounting to a grave violation of international humanitarian law, the Iranian foreign minister said, adding that energy facilities were also targeted with the apparent aim of disrupting the daily lives of people.

Araghchi also referred to the attacks by Israel and the US on Iran's nuclear facilities which are under the supervision of the In-



ternational Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the cities of Qom, Arak, Natanz, and Isfahan, calling them "a flagrant violation of the UN Charter, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), IAEA safeguards agreements, and its relevant resolutions."

Israel's unprovoked aggression against Iran claimed the lives of more than 600 people and wounded 4,900 others. The United States also joined the Israel aggression by carrying out strikes on the three Iranian nuclear facilities of Fordow, Natanz and Isfahan.

The conflict came to a halt under a US-declared cease-fire that took effect on June 24. The UN Security Council must hold the perpetrators of the aggression accountable and take action to prevent the recurrence of such crimes to fulfil its duty of maintaining international peace and security, the Iranian foreign minister underlined.

Wartime diplomacy part ...

It served not only as an act of defiance but also as a form of deterrence during wartime, and it is expected to contribute to future deterrence strategies.

Through a combination of military valor and decisive pre-emptive measures, alongside the resilience of its indigenous nuclear capabilities, the Islamic Republic of Iran has proven that efforts by Israel and the United States to destroy its nuclear and missile programs are entirely unrealistic—more suited to Hollywood fiction than to practical reality.

Moreover, in this conflict, as in the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, nearly all nations either directly or indirectly supported Israel. Iran was not fighting back Israel alone. Nonetheless, Iran's

defense might pushed these adversaries back and asserted its position on the global stage. This demonstration of military power will have lasting effects on future deterrence and has affirmed Iran's enduring presence in the international arena.

In the aftermath of active hostilities, the Islamic Republic must take urgent steps to enhance its national air defense capabilities and establish a new intelligence framework to take out internal espionage networks.

In the meantime, Iranian diplomacy remained active throughout the conflict. A prime example was the participation in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation meeting in Istanbul, which resulted in a resolution condemning the United States and Israel for violating Iran's territorial integri-

ty—a resolution that drew reactions from US officials. Even during the clashes, the Iranian Foreign Ministry remained engaged in dialogue with the officials of three European nations and the European Union, despite the fact that the US attack on nuclear facilities brought those talks to a halt. It is crucial, therefore, to recognize that diplomacy, even during wartime, constitutes an essential component of a nation's defense apparatus. In critical moments, it can safeguard national interests and compel adversaries to respect them via military power. The outbreak of war does not signify the end of diplomacy; rather, it marks the beginning of its true test. At such times, diplomacy itself becomes a strategic tool for deterrence and the protection of national interests.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Ministry of Economy drafts post-war support packages for industries, businesses

Economy Desk

In line with supporting large industries and businesses in compensating for the repercussions of the 12-day war with the Israeli regime, the Ministry of Economy, in cooperation with the Reconstruction Headquarters and coordination with the Plan and Budget Organization, formulated support packages for approval by the government.

Iran's Economy Minister Ali Madanizadeh, during a meeting at Tehran Customs in the presence of the Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref, stated, "With the start of the Zionist regime-imposed war against the country, defensive and supportive measures were prioritized on the Ministry of Economy's agenda," Tasnim reported.

The minister, referring to the formulation of support packages for large industries and businesses, said, "In cooperation with the Reconstruction Headquarters and coordination with the Plan and Budget Organization, compensatory approaches for factories and public establishments will commence."

"The support package for large industries has been approved in the government's infrastructure committee and

will be issued after approval by the cabinet," he said.

"Additionally, a support package for businesses is also being formulated." The minister of economy also announced the formation of an insurance fund to compensate for damages from the 12-day war.

Madanizadeh said that during the war time, necessary directives for the separation and identification of dangerous and essential goods were issued in the customs domain. Accordingly, with the measures taken, the immediate clearance of warehouses regarding dangerous materials commenced."

He added, "Through the round-the-clock efforts of customs, goods clearance was carried out at high speed." During the meeting, Head of Iran's Customs Faroud Asgari stated, "Approximately 33 percent of all essential goods imports during the 12-day imposed war occurred."

Asgari continued, "Also, with the cancellation of flights at Imam Khomeini International Airport, Bazargan Customs was designated as the alternative customs office for medicine imports." Announcing that 140 customs offices are currently active in the country, Asgari said, "The three dry ports of Sirjan, Yazd, and Apadana Tehran are



Iran's Economy Minister Ali Madanizadeh
● IRNA

also fully prepared to directly transfer goods from the port to these customs offices for clearance."

Asgari recalled, "Before the start of the war, 18,300 tons of goods were cleared daily, but during the days of the war,

about one million tons of essential goods were released by customs staff, experiencing 87% growth."

Turkish Airlines to resume Iran flights as Tehran reopens airspace



Economy Desk

Turkish Airlines announced Sunday it will resume flights to Iran on Monday, following Tehran's expansion of international overflight access after a two-week suspension prompted by the war with the Israeli regime that ended under a ceasefire.

Bilal Eksi, Director General of Turkish Airlines, confirmed in a post on the social media platform X that the airline's flights to Tehran and Mashhad will resume starting Monday, ISNA reported.

Turkish Airlines had suspended its flights to Iran following the Zionist regime's military incursion into Iranian territory and Iran's

retaliatory strikes, which lasted 12 days. During the period, some Turkish Airlines aircraft were in Iran, but their return was facilitated as soon as airspace restrictions were lifted.

Iran has expanded access for international overflights to its airspace days after the war with the Israeli regime ceased.

Spokesperson for the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development Majid Akhavan said on Saturday that only international transit flights would be able to pass through the skies over the central and western Iran, adding that airlines can also use the eastern half of the country's airspace, which had already been opened to domestic and international flights, Press TV reported.

Also on Sunday, Akhavan extended suspensions of domestic/international flights in northern, southern, and western Iran until 14:00 Monday (June 30), adding, "Per Civil Aviation Coordination Committee resolution and safety assessments, while eastern airspace remains open to all flights, central/western airspace now only permits international transit flights."

The ministry spokesman said on Saturday

that airports in the north, south, and west of Iran, including Tehran's Mehrabad and Imam Khomeini International Airports, were not authorized to process flights.

Akhavan said that related authorities were still assessing flights to airports in other parts of Iran and the general situation of the country's airspace.

He later told the semi-official ILNA news agency that the main airport in Tabriz in northwestern Iran was the only airport damaged in Israeli attacks, adding that the facility would soon reopen after repair works on its runway.

The official said that major international airlines would resume their operations in Iran as soon as the country opens all parts of its airspace.

Akhavan said that pilgrims remaining in Saudi Arabia since early June, when they finished performing their Hajj rituals, are returning to Iran via a northeastern airport in the country's second-largest city of Mashhad.

Airlines started to avoid the Iranian skies on June 13, when the Israeli regime launched an unprovoked aggression against the

country.

The Iranian airspace was partially opened on June 25, a day after the United States said it had brokered a unilateral ceasefire between Iran and the Israeli regime.

Meanwhile, Hossein Khanlari, CEO of the Islamic Republic of Iran Airlines, denied rumors of closed air borders, saying, "To date, no country has closed its air borders to Iran," Mehr reported.

Regarding the return of remaining Hajj pilgrims in Saudi Arabia, Khanlari added, "Through coordinated arrangements in the eastern part of the country and the activation of Mashhad Airport, the route from Medina to Mashhad has been established, and the 20,000 remaining pilgrims will gradually enter the country directly from Saudi Arabia."

He further stated, "Accordingly, Iran Airlines' scheduled flight on the Mashhad to Karachi route will be operated tomorrow from Mashhad Airport. The Islamic Republic of Iran Airlines has not yet operated domestic flights from its flight stations and, in this regard, complies with the regulations of the Civil Aviation Organization."

Iranian firm breaks Israeli monopoly on beauty device



Economy Desk

An Iranian knowledge-based firm has succeeded in localizing and bringing to the domestic market an advanced device in the beauty industry, previously manufactured exclusively by the Zionist regime globally.

The "Solatrix" device has diverse applications in beauty and treatment and is

offered at a significantly lower price than its foreign counterpart.

In a talk with ISNA, Afshin Motlaq, sales manager of the knowledge-based company, introduced the advanced device, saying, "The Solatrix is one of the advanced types equipment in the beauty industry. Before us, only the Zionist regime in the world produced it. We are the second country to have localized this device."

"This device utilizes a highly precise motor with unparalleled performance in beauty treatments," he explained.

According to the sales manager, "Nearly 100 Solatrix devices have been installed domestically to date, but exports have not yet begun as the final license was recently issued."

Due to sanctions, Iran could not import such devices. Now, the firm produces it with the same global quality but at a much lower price, he said.

He further noted, "Numerous clinical

trials on this device show its quality not only competes with the Israeli model but even outperforms it in some aspects."

Motlaq pointed to 10 years of activity in medical equipment, particularly in women's health, dermatology, and beauty, saying, "We have produced over six different devices in this field, all technologically advanced, with many incorporating unique technologies."

Over 100 exported to Europe, Mideast

Highlighting certifications, he stated, "All devices produced by the company hold licenses from the Ministry of Health and the European CE mark," and confirmed exports to European and Middle Eastern countries.

"Over 2,000 devices have been sold domestically, and more than 100 exported to countries including Turkey, Spain, England, Germany, Iraq, and Australia. All our devices are commercialized and

have passed clinical trials and obtained Ministry of Health licenses."

Regarding the CE mark, Motlaq stated that the firm is the only beauty company to obtain this certification for the products. Consequently, besides clinics, some governmental centers use our devices."

According to the manager, "Over 50 people are directly employed in technical, production, sales, and support teams."

Challenges for knowledge-based firms

Addressing challenges, he criticized, "Contrary to propaganda, knowledge-based companies lack real support. Our issue isn't importers; we actually need competition with foreign brands to improve quality. Sanctions, lack of infrastructure, and export difficulties are our main challenges."

He emphasized, "If real support is provided to manufacturers, we don't need to eliminate competitors. Healthy com-

petition fosters growth and quality improvement."

Criticizing support institutions' performance at tech exhibitions, he revealed, "Our experience at foreign exhibitions like Arab Health [held in Dubai in January] showed no real support for Iranian companies. Booths given to producers were in remote halls with no visitors. Even in sponsored delegations, some seemingly supportive organizations quote exorbitant prices, then claim to cover 70% - while the remaining 30% exceeds standard tour prices."

On biases against Iran's beauty industry, Motlaq expressed, "This industry still faces prejudice, with some officials avoiding it despite its potential for job creation, revenue generation, and healthcare services. Another serious problem is smuggling of beauty equipment. Low-quality, non-standard devices freely enter the market while domestic producers struggle to obtain licenses."

Iranian nation 'backbone' of Islamic Establishment: *Professor*

Diplomacy, military prowess align perfectly

INTERVIEW

From the early hours of Friday, June 13, 2025, to the morning of Tuesday, June 24, 2025, one of the most significant chapters in the book of Iran's history was turned. Over these 12 days of military aggression by the Zionist regime and the United States against Iran's borders, we witnessed a resounding defense by both the government and the people. This blatant act of aggression against Iran, which took place in the midst of negotiations with the United States and under the pretext of a political report from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), not only dealt a blow to diplomacy but also called into question the credibility of many international institutions and advocates of established norms. In an interview with Irna, Jalal Dehghani Firoozabadi, a university professor and international relations analyst, shed light on this military incursion, its consequences, and the outlook for Iran's foreign relations.



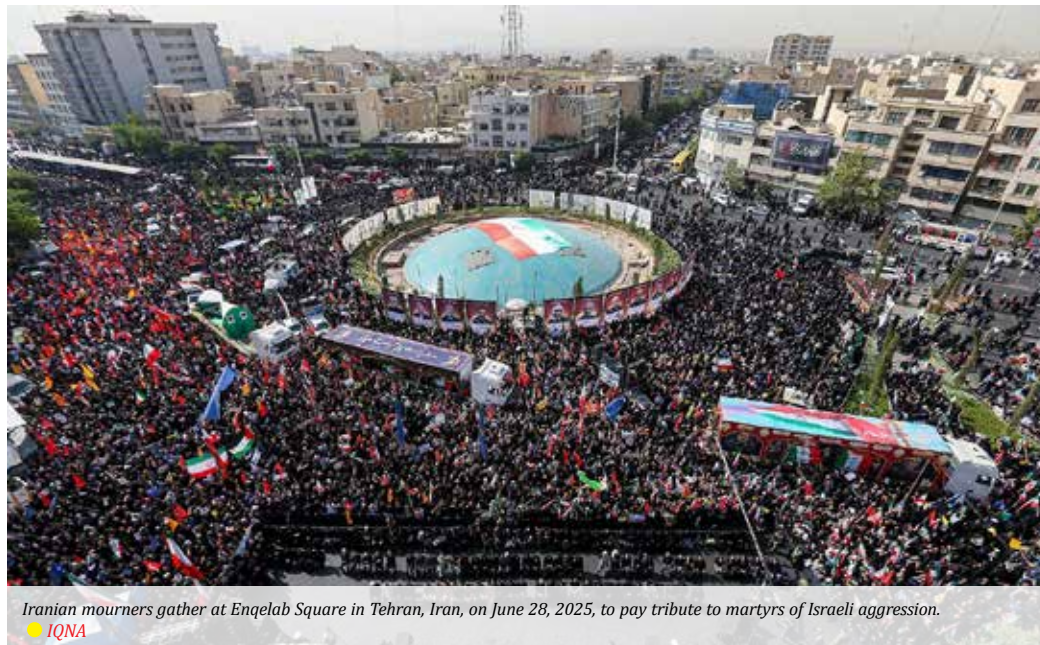
Jalal Dehghani Firoozabadi

The Israeli regime's military aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran was recently brought to a halt. Regardless of whether this unilateral cease-fire will hold, did the Israeli cabinet achieve the objectives it had in mind?

DEHGHANI FIROOZABADI: First and foremost, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the brave armed forces and the resilient people of Iran, and to pay tribute to the noble and dignified Iranian nation and our courageous fighters. Perhaps Israel, and especially its criminal prime minister, did not openly spell out their true objectives. Nevertheless, both Israel and the United States have repeatedly stated their intention to wipe out Iran's nuclear capabilities. At times, they have also spoken of reining in Iran's missile power. Yet, as previously anticipated and raised by some, three major operational goals can be identified: first, to eliminate Iran's nuclear capabilities; second, to restrict or destroy Iran's missile power; and third, to reduce or eliminate Iran's regional presence.

However, there were also broader political aims at play. In his first interview after the conflict broke out, Netanyahu addressed the Iranian people, declaring that Israel is not at war with Iranians and just wants to set them free. Such statements and slogans speak volumes about their underlying intention: regime change in the Islamic Republic of Iran. How did they hope to achieve this? By stirring up chaos, unrest, and disorder. Their analysis was that the Iranian people were dissatisfied and weary, and that the Islamic Republic had lost its popular support. They believed that if an air strike took place, the ground forces would rise up from within the people themselves. I can say with confidence that their most important goal — beyond damaging Iran's nuclear, missile, and regional capabilities — was to undermine the Islamic Republic's defensive strength. But their main political objective, regime change, was found to be out of reach. They did not even fully achieve their other declared goals.

In my view, Iran's nuclear capabilities have not been destroyed either. Even now, there is debate within the United States as to whether this military strike on nuclear facilities actually wiped out Iran's nuclear potential. Physical equipment and facilities may have been damaged, but the indigenous knowledge, technology, and expertise are still there and, in my opinion, have not been lost. So, it can be said that the Zionist regime's attacks on Iran, while inflicting losses — especially with the martyrdom of our beloved compatriots and the damage caused — fell short of their main objectives. I say this not just as an Iranian, but as an outside observer: They did not



Iranian mourners gather at Enqelab Square in Tehran, Iran, on June 28, 2025, to pay tribute to martyrs of Israeli aggression.

IQNA

even achieve their minimum goals, apart from the aforementioned harm they inflicted on the country.

America's entry into the conflict and the bombing of Fordow can be analyzed from two perspectives. Some believe it was simply to appease Netanyahu, while others argue that the US entered the war with the clear aim of wiping out Iran's nuclear industry. What is your take on the White House's involvement?

These two views are not necessarily at odds with each other. In other words, Trump and the United States want to win, both the war and the peace. This means there was an overarching plan in place, undoubtedly drawn up before the Muscat negotiations began, and the US was in the loop. In my opinion, without US logistical, military, equipment, and weapons support, Israel simply would not have had the capacity to carry out offensive operations or mount an effective defense. We saw Trump repeatedly boast that they have the best weapons and that the Israelis certainly use them efficiently. In recent days, Trump has also frequently used the pronoun "we" in his remarks, making it clear he saw himself as a partner in these operations — which, in my view, he truly was.

In fact, the entire Western world and NATO got drawn into this affair. One could say we have just experienced a second sacred defense against the world. The Iranian nation showed, just as during Saddam Hussein's attack — when all the powers of East and West threw their weight behind the enemy — that today, too, NATO and Western European countries stand squarely behind Israel. Could it be any clearer than when the German Chancellor says, "This is the dirty work Israel is doing for all of us"? That says it all.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the Americans were indirect-

ly involved from the outset. When they sensed they could score some points from this military aggression, they jumped in directly. Whether this analysis is accurate, or whether there is precise information to back it up, I cannot say; However, some believe that what America did was more a show of force than a strategically significant move as nothing decisive was actually accomplished — especially given the lingering doubts about whether the Fordow facility was truly destroyed.

Was the US able to achieve its stated goal of destroying Iran's nuclear facilities?

There are serious doubts swirling around this issue, and the hot topic in the US right now is that Iran's nuclear facilities have not yet been destroyed. This is something that has really gotten under Trump's skin, prompting him to declare that the facilities have been "completely destroyed" and that such reports are false. On the one hand, Trump is eager to show off his military might — the same bravado he always puts on display — and on the other, he wants to claim, "I was the one who said Iran should never get nuclear weapons, and I was the one who stripped Iran of its nuclear capabilities and wiped out its facilities." He kept bringing this up both during negotiations and throughout the conflict. Now, he's putting on more of a peacemaker act, trying to paint himself as the region's savior and even praising Iran. His remarks clearly play into the theater of war. Essentially, he's trying to cash in on the "war card" to build up his military credentials, while at the same time casting himself as the man of peace, the one who brokered a cease-fire. Both sides of this coin are present in his behavior; He wants to make it look like the peace and cease-fire were all thanks to him. In my view, it shouldn't go unmen-

tioned that Trump's pressure on Netanyahu and other Israeli leaders was not without effect, and this pressure pushed them to call off their operations. Part of the story, however, is that Israel really couldn't keep up with Iran's counterattacks and was forced to bring Trump into the picture for support. Trump, for his part, said that if he was to be the one to end things, his word should be heeded.

A major question making the rounds in public opinion is whether the American president's behavior is rooted in his personality or if it's simply a tactic to push his own agenda — especially since just a few days ago, he considered regime change in Iran likely, and soon after started thanking Iran.

When it comes to assessing the reasons behind the president's contradictory behavior — whether it stems from his personality or is a tactic to further his aims — both aspects are at play. From a personality perspective, everyone has by now caught on to Trump's psychology; He is a narcissist who sees himself as exceptional. Even

during election campaigns, he shared a picture of himself with the words: "He's on a mission from God." However, part of this behavior is also deliberate and calculated, meaning it's part of his game — even in negotiations. He leans on a strategy of ambiguity and confusion, making it so the other side can't quite figure out where he stands. Some have even said that his diplomacy is essentially a diplomacy of deception.

In defending the country, the military is one pillar and diplomacy is another, and these two must move forward in tandem. We kept our military readiness at its peak, and it cannot be said that because we were negotiating, we were not prepared militarily. That's simply not the case. Israel carried on with its strategy of confusion and ambiguity during the imposed war, hoping to bog down the other side, but in my view, it failed. The Islamic Republic of Iran, except for the initial surprise on the first day, quickly regrouped and rebuilt its strength, and the adversaries didn't achieve their goals — nor have they now.

The American approach to negotiations and operations, especially under Trump, hinges on maximalism — he sets the bar extremely high so the other side will settle for less. For example, Netanyahu floated the idea of regime change on the first day, but that fell flat. Trump, however, never said it outright. Even after the attack, J.D. Vance, Trump's vice president, announced, "We are not at war with Iran at all. We are at war with Iran's nuclear program. We don't want a regime change." So, in Trump's view, he puts forward a maximalist goal so the other side will settle for less — in other words, he "shoots for the moon so they'll settle for the stars." Thus, this behavior is both a matter of personality and a negotiation and operational tactic, especially for Trump.

As of this interview, the war has come to a halt, and indirect negotiations between Iran and the US are ongoing. Can any analysis be offered at this stage? Has this



Now, Trump's putting on more of a peacemaker act, trying to paint himself as the region's savior and even praising Iran. His remarks clearly play into the theater of war. Essentially, he's trying to cash in on the "war card" to build up his military credentials, while at the same time casting himself as the man of peace, the one who brokered a cease-fire.



US President Donald Trump (l) holds up his fist while staring blankly forward with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at his side at the White House in Washington on April 7, 2025.

● BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP



round of diplomacy fallen into the war trap? Was the whole negotiation process just a smoke-screen for war?

In the foreign policy toolbox, there are various instruments: military, security, defense, political, economic, commercial, and cultural. Foreign policy is not a box with only one tool inside. Depending on the issue, circumstances, and the country's situation, one tool may be used more, or all may be brought into play at the same time. Using diplomacy alongside military power is both logical and necessary. I have previously said that foreign policy can be likened to a twin-engine aircraft. You can't say the left engine is more important than the right; the two complement each other. These two paths — diplomacy and military — are like two parallel rails that intersect at the station of national interests and security. Sometimes we board the diplomacy train, sometimes the military train, and sometimes both carry us more quickly to our destination. In any case, our destination is the station of national interests and security. Diplomacy never shuts down during wartime; Rather, it moves at different speeds depending on the circumstances. In times of peace, it's only natural for diplomacy to take the driver's seat. Now that we have used our military tools to their limits, diplomacy will, by nature, step up and play a greater role. During the war, diplomacy backed up military power; Now, the field must rally behind diplomacy. These two forces must work hand in glove — they are two sides of the same coin, like the blades of a pair of scissors. At this juncture, we need an active diplomacy. Active diplomacy means setting the agenda, the terms, the manner, and the venue of talks ourselves. In my view, Iran should lay out clear objectives and state under what conditions it is prepared to negotiate. Whether we call it direct negotiation, dialogue, or a summit makes little difference; The substance remains the same. Wars usually wind down through diplomacy. There are two ways a war ends: Either one side is completely wiped out — which hasn't happened — or military operations are halted, as is the case now. From this point forward, diplomacy must chart the exit strategy. That means, on the diplomatic and political front, we must have a clear plan for disengagement. Whether now is the right time for talks depends on the judgment of decision-makers and policymakers, but we must certainly hammer out clear goals and a transparent agenda — under what conditions we negotiate, and under what conditions we do not. Even talks with Europeans, if they can be called negotiations or dialogue, should be put under this microscope. One of the most crucial functions of diplomacy during war is to translate military might into political power and to realize national objectives. The foreign ministers of the three European countries and the EU's foreign policy chief must get the message loud and clear: The strategic designs of the West, Israel, or the US have not panned out, and this is how we defend our interests. They shouldn't expect that if we are attacked, we will simply turn the other cheek. If they are fighting under the assumption that we must give up our nuclear and missile capabilities, that's simply not realistic. Diplomacy is sometimes mistaken for surrender, but surrender is not negotiation — words matter. In Persian, when we say "let's negotiate," we do not mean "let's sur-



People help firefighters to get to their destination during Israel's ruthless attacks on residential buildings in Tehran, Iran, on June 13, 2025. ● TASNIM

render." We have a separate word for surrender. So, it's important to note that negotiation does not necessarily mean backing down or admitting defeat. In fact, one can go into talks with an assertive and proactive approach, setting clear and specific terms for dialogue. Naturally, someone who has failed to achieve their aims on the battlefield should not expect to win them at the negotiating table. Anyone who could not bring us to our knees or cripple our missile power in battle should know not to expect such outcomes in negotiations. If Trump's idea of negotiation is to achieve such goals — or if Europe harbors similar ambitions (which is even worse as it plays a destructive role behind the scenes) — we must enter talks with a well-crafted plan. Israel, in a sense, acts as a proxy for the West and the US in the region and wages war against us. Therefore, we too must map out a diplomatic and political solution and draw up an exit strategy, and we will certainly need support from the field. Without such backing, diplomacy is like a gun with no bullets; Just as when someone comes to the table with a power-based approach, we must meet them on equal footing.

Should the cessation of aggression hold, what changes should the Islamic Republic of Iran make in its relations with neighbors, its two strategic partners Russia and China, and Europe? Do these relationships need to be reassessed, for better or worse?

Most experts believe a balanced foreign policy is the right fit for Iran, both in terms of its diplomatic, geographical, and regional portfolio. Naturally, our policy "basket" should give special weight to neighborly relations, regionalism, and an Eastern outlook, while also keeping ties with the West — provided these are based on mutual respect and shared interests. I have often said that if the US recognizes three things — the existence of the Islamic Republic, the identity of our political establishment, and Iran's national interests (none of which are outlandish by international standards) — based on mutual respect, then we can strike a balanced relationship with all countries. I am not a proponent of an "all-East or all-West" policy, but our diplomatic portfolio should be diverse and varied so we can draw on different options as needed. We must put national interests front and center and weigh what those interests require — whether ties with the West, East, South, or the region should be conditional or not. The neighborhood policy must be bolstered as one of the bright spots during this recent aggression was the support from neighboring and regional countries, as well as their efforts to head off the war. In my view, Israel — or even

Trump himself — more than deceiving us (which I do not believe), had pulled the wool over the eyes of some regional countries. The Arab states have now come to realize that Iran's geopolitical weight is a stabilizing anchor in the region, and that only Iran can keep the balance in check against Israel and, by extension, the US. This is a historic lesson for the Arabs. Some of the support and condemnation — even from a country like Egypt, which surprisingly took on a mediating role and adopted positive positions, or from Pakistan — shows that everyone has come to the conclusion that if the Islamic Republic were absent, a power vacuum would emerge and Israel's black hole would swallow up the entire region.

The most important takeaway from the 12-day war against Iran was the remarkable outpouring of public support for the country. How do you assess this solidarity? Has safeguarding the concept of "Iran qua Iran" shot back to the top of the public agenda?

First of all, let's not sell ourselves short or beat ourselves up. The Iranian nation has shown its true colors as a people with deep roots. A nation with 2,500 years of history is a far cry from a regime cobbled together by the Sykes-Picot Agreement. This was a major lesson for the region, and we must also wake up to this self-awareness. I must admit, the conduct of the Iranian people was a real eye-opener. People whom no one expected to stand up for Iran's existence did just that, and the Iranian nation swept aside the false dichotomy between "the Islamic Republic" and "Iran" altogether. This war produced two major surprises: first, our offensive and missile capabilities. Everyone knew we had the hardware, but I don't think anyone expected this level of quality and quantity. The second, and perhaps even more important, was the strategic surprise delivered by the Iranian people. The regime-change strategy of Israel and the US was, in my view, well thought out — except for one thing: They misjudged the Iranian nation, and it backfired spectacularly. They assumed the people would rise up in revolt, but instead, Iranians proved to be the backbone of the establishment — and we must cherish this core not only in wartime but in peace as well. If today we say the diversity of tastes, languages, ethnicities, and races all rallied to defend the territorial integrity and existence of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and if the whole nation shouldered the burden of war, then we must also preserve this diversity. The lesson is that the nation at war is the same nation at peace, and this unity must be maintained.

The resurgence of public support and people power was a strategic game-changer that threw a wrench into the entire strategic playbook of Israel and the US — a point of utmost importance. Iran's national power or deterrence stands on four pillars: missile, regional, nuclear, and popular. If you ask me, the most crucial pillar of Iran's power and deterrence is its people. With all the strength and impact of the armed forces — which I would never want to downplay — it was the Iranian people, in the form of popular forces and the Basij, who stood their ground and defended Iran's territorial integrity. In this second sacred defense, the people's role was paramount. Though the war lasted just 12 days, if you ask me, the Iranian people pulled off wonders worthy of 12 centuries. We must preserve this diversity and vibrancy as it is Iran's greatest national and security asset.

Given that during these 12 days, many analysts hammered home the idea that the ultimate goal of the US and Israel was the disintegration of Iran, what approach should the government and leadership take on board to ensure Iran does not fall into that trap?

The Iranian people were truly astonishing in their support. Interestingly, someone asked me why there were so many attacks on Tabriz. One theory was that the aim was to stir up separatists and show that being part of the Islamic Republic comes at a cost. But you didn't see a single person lashing out in a negative way. If even one had, you can bet various networks would have blown it out of proportion! The fact that they couldn't find even one such case is incredibly valuable. Historically, our ethnic groups have always been on the front lines defending Iran's existence. Even if they don't

speak Persian and live on the borders, they have shown the greatest courage in defending Iran's frontiers. When you look at Azerbaijan, Kermanshah, Ilam, and Ahvaz, you have to tip your hat. The people went above and beyond, and now it's our turn. Anyone who can serve this nation now has a historic duty on their shoulders. Despite all the grievances, criticism, and dissatisfaction, what became clear in these circumstances was the difference between patriots and those who are rootless — their true nature was revealed. It became obvious that anti-national elements are a tiny minority. Their numbers are negligible; If they could, they'd be stirring up anti-Islamic Republic protests abroad. But no true patriot was willing to team up with the enemy against their homeland and mother. As someone once said, Iranian art isn't just about showing the Persian language; Persian speakers are few, but Iranians are many. It was shown once again that being Iranian and being a Persian speaker are not one and the same. One interviewee who spoke for the homeland could barely speak Persian, but he was Iranian. In the reconstruction phase, we must act justly. If you ask me, the priority is the borders — the border regions, the deprived areas. It's fine to rebuild Tehran, but let's start with those who have lost everything — their only apartment, their only shop. They must come first. Restorative justice is about rebuilding fairly; We must prioritize deprived areas and people and treat everyone equally. This nation has proven itself as the backbone of the establishment. In war, you see what is just talk and what is reality. These people now need services, social security, insurance, and healthcare. Many compatriots are now wounded, disabled, or bereaved, their homes destroyed, their loved ones lost. We must tap into other budgets for these people and simply prioritize fairly. Right now, it is the government's duty to see to the needs of those who have been hit hardest and are most vulnerable. We must serve these people. In these circumstances, a "service jihad" must be kicked off — in the public sector, municipalities, government, and even among the people themselves. One of the wonders was that, just like in the early days of the Islamic Revolution, people banded together and helped each other. In the end, one can only salute the honor of the Iranian nation — it's hard to find words to thank these people enough.

The article first appeared in Persian on IRNA.

Diplomacy is sometimes mistaken for surrender, but surrender is not negotiation — words matter. In Persian, when we say "let's negotiate," we do not mean "let's surrender." We have a separate word for surrender. So, it's important to note that negotiation does not necessarily mean backing down or admitting defeat. In fact, one can go into talks with an assertive and proactive approach, setting clear and specific terms for dialogue. Naturally, someone who has failed to achieve their aims on the battlefield should not expect to win them at the negotiating table. Anyone who could not bring us to our knees or cripple our missile power in battle should know not to expect such outcomes in negotiations.



The conductor of the Tehran Symphony Orchestra pays respect to the audience that came to see them give an open-air performance at the Azadi (liberty) square of Tehran on June 25, 2025, to commemorate the Iranians martyred in the Israeli military attacks. ● TASNIM



Iranian women determined to defy odds in Asian Cup qualifiers

Sports Desk

Despite a hampered preparation plan, the Iranian girls have set sights on a successful campaign at the upcoming AFC Women's Asian Cup qualifiers in Amman, Jordan. Iran will be joined by the host country, Lebanon, Singapore, and Bhutan in Group A of the qualifiers, where only one place in next March's finals in Australia will be up for grabs. The event in the Jordanian capital will be a first major test for new Iran coach Marzieh Ja'fari, who took over from Maryam Azmoun in May, after Team Melli had failed to win a single game in 12 outings across different competitions – suffering eight defeats, while finding the back of the net only twice in the process. Having led Bam Khatoun to 11 top-flight titles, as well as an impressive last-eight finish at the inaugural AFC Women's Champions League in March, Ja'fari will be looking to build on a decorated career at the Iranian club football, though the 42-year-old faces significant challenges in her new role. The Iranian girls' training camp in Tehran was disrupted by the 12-day

conflict between the country and Israel, while Ja'fari's players have only played in a couple of friendly victories over Iraq earlier in the month since the end of the domestic league in March.

Injury setbacks have added to Iran's problems in recent weeks, as Arefeh Seyyed-Kazemi and Haji Dabbaghi will miss the visit to Amman, with Mona Hamoudi facing a race against time to reach full fitness for the tournament.

Iran will begin its qualification campaign against Singapore on July 10, before facing Bhutan three days later at the at the King Abdullah II Stadium.

Ja'fari's girls will square off against Lebanon in their penultimate outing and hope to remain in contention with a place in the finals when going head-to-head with Jordan on July 19. Backed by the home support and familiar with Amman's seasonal heat, Jordan will be the favorite to advance from the five-team group, though history favors Iran, as a shootout victory over the Jordanians saw Team Melli celebrate a maiden qualification for the 2022 finals.



● FFIRI

Iran freestyle squad confirmed for Budapest Ranking Series

Sports Desk

Iran will be represented by 12 freestyle wrestlers at the upcoming the Polyak Imre & Varga Janos Memorial – starting July 17 in Budapest, Hungary.

Milad Valizadeh (57kg), Reza Mo'meni, Ebrahim Khari (61kg), Yasin Rezaei (65kg), Abbas Ebrahimzadeh, Sina Khalili (70kg), Reza Shakeri (74kg), Mahdi Yousefi, Fariborz Babaei (79kg), Ali Savadkouhi (86kg), Mobin Azimi (92kg), and Abolfazl Babalou (97kg) will vie for success across different weight classes at the final UWW Ranking Series event of the season.

The 79kg contests will serve as part of Iran's World Championships trials, as either Asian champion Yousefi or Babaei – whoever gets the better result in Budapest – will face four-

time world medalist Mohammad Nokhodi for a place in September's showpiece in Zagreb. Eight freestyle wrestlers have already secured their place in the Iranian squad for the world event – including Younes Emami, who defeated Amirmohammad Yazdani in an all-Iranian 74kg final at the Ulaanbaatar Open earlier in June to remain on course for a third world medal.

Kamran Qasempour came out victorious against Abolfazl Rahmani in a domestic head-to-head in Tehran to seal the 86kg spot, 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 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.

The Iranian 97kg slot will be decided when Ahmad Bzari – also a gold medalist in Ulaanbaatar – lock horns with Olympic bronze medalist Amir-Ali Azarpira in a domestic showdown in the coming weeks.



● LAWFIR

'It's not football': Maresca furious after Chelsea's two-hour weather delay

THE GUARDIAN – A furious Enzo Maresca suggested that the US is not fit to host the Club World Cup after Chelsea's 4-1 victory over Benfica in the last 16 was delayed for almost two hours in Charlotte because of a severe weather event. Chelsea were 1-0 up and cruising towards the last eight when play was stopped with five minutes of normal left at the Bank of America Stadium after a lightning strike in the area. The teams were ordered off the pitch by the officials had to stay warm in their respective dressing rooms before play resumed after an hour and 53 minutes.

There was further frustration for Chelsea when a controversial last-minute penalty allowed Benfica to force extra-time. The Premier League side eventually pushed through to win 4-1, four hours

and 38 minutes after kick-off, but there was concern about off-pitch events a year before the men's World Cup is held in Canada, Mexico and the US. "For 85 minutes we were in control of the game," Maresca said. "After the break, the game changed completely. For me it's not football. It's already seven, eight, nine games that they suspended. I think it's a joke to be honest, it's not football. It's not for us. You cannot be inside. I struggle to understand. I can understand that for security reasons, you suspend the game. But if you suspend seven, eight games, that means that probably [this] is not the right place to do this competition."

Storms have caused six games, all held in different cities, to be suspended during the tournament. Teams also had to deal with a heatwave covering much of the east and

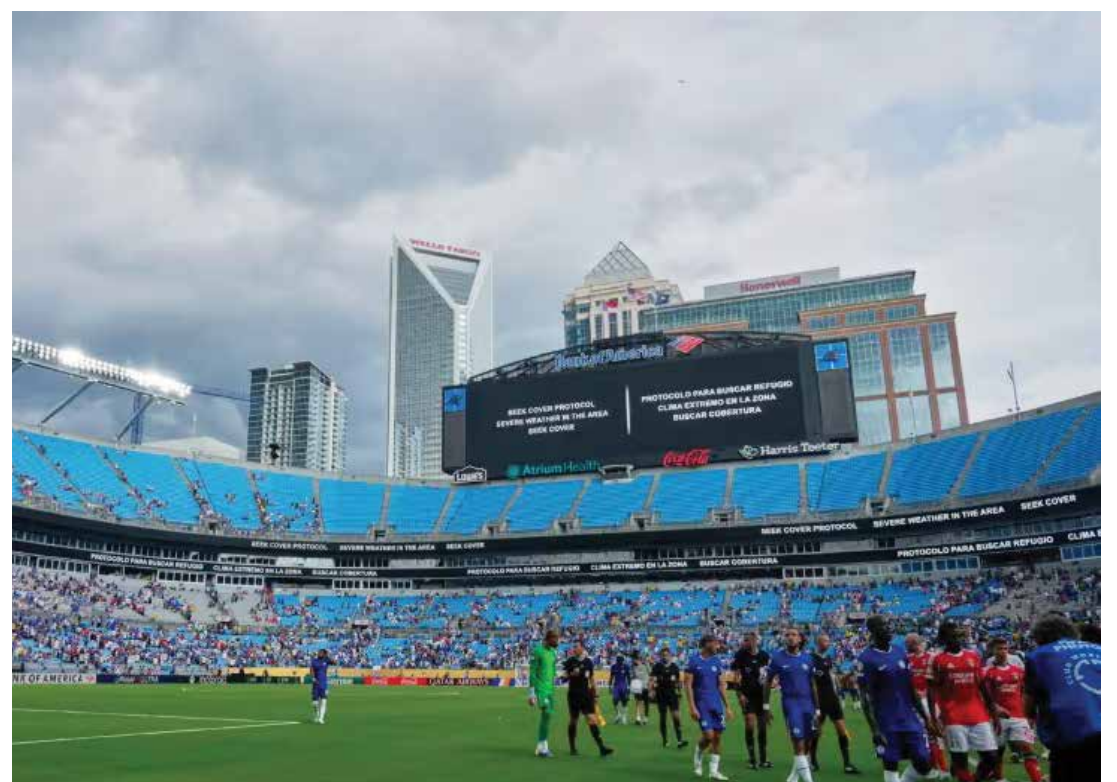
centre of the US.

"It's something that you struggle to understand. But we tried to go out, continue in the same way, knowing that it was difficult. It's not random that for 85 minutes, we didn't concede nothing. And then for five minutes, we conceded a few chances. Why? It's because it started a completely different game." Chelsea, who have lost Moises Caicedo to a one-game ban, will face Palmeiras next after taking advantage of Benfica going down to 10 men in extra-time with goals from Christopher Nkunku, Pedro Neto and Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall.



Chelsea and Benfica players walk off the pitch due to a severe weather condition during a FIFA Club World Cup last-16 game in Charlotte, NC, US, on June 28, 2025.

● CHRIS CARLSON/AP



Architectural beauty of Jaame Mosque of Farumad



Iranica Desk

If you have an interest in history, you can explore a historical book, watch a historical movie, or visit the Jaame Mosque of Farumad. Despite some physical damages, certain buildings can transport you back in time and stimulate your imagination. The stuccoes of the Jaame Mosque, along with its deep vaults and decorative elements from different eras, can take you on a journey into the past. The Jaame Mosque is situated near the road connecting Shahrud and Mashhad, in a village bearing the same name — Farumad. This village is located in Meyami, northeast of Shahrud, Semnan Province. The mosque features a two-ivan plan. Although there is no specific inscription indicating its date of construction, similarities with other two-ivan mosques in Khorasan Razavi Province suggest that it was built during the

Khwarazmian dynasty. Adjacent to the mosque is the tomb of Ibn Yamin, a 14th-century poet. The city of Farumad gained fame following the movements of the Sarbadars, a group of religious dervishes and secular rulers who rose to power in western Khorasan during the disintegration of the Mongol Ilkhanate. Covering approximately 820 square meters, the structure of the Jaame Mosque comprises two ivans on the north and south, with two smaller ivans flanking them. There is a sanctuary on the eastern side of the southern ivan, two arcades surrounding the courtyard, and a vaulted room on the west side of the northern ivan. The western sanctuary has been mostly destroyed, with only a small part remaining. However, the stuccoes and intricate tile works from the fourth to the seventh centuries adorn other parts of the mosque. These decorations, combined with turquoise tiles,

offer rich insights into architectural styles, particularly those of Khwarazmian architecture. There is speculation that the mosque was built atop an ancient fire temple, but no definitive evidence supports this claim. One of the mosque's most beautiful features is its northern entrance portal, decorated with brickwork, stucco, and tablets. The altar, adorned with turquoise and ultramarine stucco, is located on the southern side of the mosque. The Jaame Mosque has been registered on Iran's National Heritage List. Farumad is a small historic village is renowned for its rich cultural heritage and ancient architecture. Despite its small size, Farumad has historically played a significant role in the region's history, especially during the era of the Sarbadars. Along with its historical sites, Farumad is known for its peaceful rural scenery and traditional lifestyle, giving visitors a glimpse into

Iran's rich cultural tapestry. Semnan Province is a diverse and historically significant region located in northern Iran. Known for its varied landscape, the province features vast deserts, lush green plains, rugged mountains, and fertile valleys. The city of Semnan, the provincial capital, has a rich history dating back thousands of years, with archaeological sites that reflect its importance as a trade and cultural hub in ancient Persia. Semnan Province features a semi-arid climate characterized by hot summers and cold winters. The temperature can fluctuate significantly between day and night, with variations reaching up to 50 °C. The region experiences minimal rainfall overall, with most of the precipitation occurring in the northern mountainous areas, where the higher altitudes help retain more moisture. These climatic conditions influence the local ecology and the agricultural practices within the province.

Borujerd's rich heritage of handicrafts, artisanal skills

Iranica Desk

The production of various handicrafts, each reflecting its own customs and culture, has transformed Borujerd into one of the important cities of Lorestan Province in this field. In addition to renowned industries such as Chit Bafi (textile weaving) and Varsho Sazi (nickel silverware crafting), as well as other arts and techniques for which this city is famous, its favorable climate, beautiful natural surroundings, and central location have historically fostered the development of diverse crafts and arts. Today, however, some of these crafts have been forgotten for various reasons, while new ones have been introduced. Nickel silverware crafting is the most notable handicraft of Borujerd, which, with over two centuries of prosperity, has established the city's name both inside and outside the country. Its diverse

products include water dispensers, trays and cups, braziers, rosewater sprays, and samovars. The craft of making these items has been prevalent since the Seljuk and Safavid periods, reaching its peak during the Qajar era. Other traditional crafts of Borujerd include Givah Bafi (weaving a type of traditional shoes), sock knitting, kilim weaving, and Jajim Bafi (weaving a type of traditional floor covering). Copperworking has also been a thriving profession in Borujerd, and today, the name of Rasteh Mesgarha (Blacksmiths' Corridor) in the old bazaar still evokes the reputation of this craft. Numerous records and accounts attest to the popularity of Borujerd's handicrafts among notable figures, resident foreigners, and tourists. Metalworking crafts include nickel silverware crafting, goldsmithing, blacksmithing, knife making, and lock making. Woodworking industries and related handicrafts include the con-

struction of doors and stained glass windows with innovative and diverse designs, decorative ceiling work in valuable buildings, marquetry, carving, pierced work, Jajim weaving and Qalam-Kari (decorative painted textiles). Mehdi Goudarzi, the head of the Borujerd Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department, told ISNA, "Out of the 292 handicraft branches covered by Lorestan Province's Cultural Heritage Organization, 39 are native to the city. Currently, about 700 artisans and craftspeople are active in various handicraft fields." He highlighted that in 2019, Borujerd was registered as the National City of Varsho Sazi, and some infrastructure has been established to position the city as a global hub for this craft. The mayor of the city, appointed as the secretary of the national city, is planning to install signs bearing the title of the National City for Varsho Sazi at the city entrances and exits. Goudarzi added that the dossier for the global registration of Borujerd's Varsho Sazi is currently being finalized and submitted to the ministry. It will undoubtedly be forwarded to UNESCO, as Borujerd has the capacity to register this art because it is unique and specific to the city. "The Varsho Sazi House, spanning three floors and nine rooms, has been completed and equipped to host workshops, training sessions, and a display section for Varsho Sazi products. Currently, 80 artisans are active in Varsho Sazi within the city, making this craft one of the most prominent handicrafts of the area."



Varsho Sazi
● hamshahronline.ir



Givah Bafi
● hamshahronline.ir



Varsho Sazi
● IRNA



VP urges policy revision as public, opposition unite in Iran's defense

Social Desk

Iran's First Vice President Mohammadreza Aref on Sunday said the unprecedented national unity following Israeli airstrikes earlier, drawing support even from opposition groups, signals the urgent need to "revisit and revise" four decades of domestic policies. Speaking at the headquarters of the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) in Tehran, Aref said Iranians turned out in large numbers across the country to mourn victims of the June 13 strikes, including scientists, military commanders, and civilians, IRNA reported. He likened the public response to the funerals of top officials killed in June 28, 1981 bombing. "Even those critical of the system, opposition voices, marginalized media, joined the people in defense of the homeland," Aref noted, calling the show of solidarity a "second epic" and proof that internal dissent does not equal disloyalty. Aref warned that despite a ceasefire,

"this war isn't over," pointing to what he called the direct involvement of Israel and its backers, including the United States, in imposing the conflict mid-way through Iran's indirect talks with Washington. He accused the West of "sabotaging" diplomatic progress. "They were just steps away from an agreement, then war was forced upon us." According to Aref, the goal of Israel's attack was swift regime change. "They thought Iran would collapse in two or three days," he said. "But the people, despite economic hardship and valid frustrations, stood up for their country. They went all in." Referring to Israel's track record, Aref said, "You can't trust a regime that honors no agreement." He stressed that Iran must remain prepared for future aggression. Calling for a nationwide effort to maintain unity, Aref suggested a "bold reassessment" of cultural and social policies. "We need to ask ourselves honestly whether the path we've fol-



First Vice President Mohammadreza Aref (C) meets with IRNA CEO Hossein Jaberi-Ansari (4th R) during a visit to the news agency's head office in Tehran, Iran on June 29, 2025.

● fvpresident.ir

lowed over the last 40 years still serves the people. The answer might demand courage." Aref said the response to the June war proved Iran's capacity for resilience, scientific, military, and civil. He highlighted the role of homegrown technology and praised national media coverage, noting that nine journalists were killed in the field. "Even once-hostile outlets closed ranks to defend the country's identity," he added. He emphasized that "scientific progress belongs to humanity, not just one nation," urging Iran to share its advances while continuing to build defensive capabilities. He also pointed to IRNA's role in fostering national dialogue and consensus, claiming that unity forged in crisis



must now be preserved by choice. "If our state media had launched a campaign for consensus-building, it could've taken months. The enemy did it in less than 24 hours," he said. Aref stressed that genuine service to

the public must shed any top-down, paternalistic attitudes. "You can't claim to serve the people while deciding for them from above," he said, urging IRNA to open space for public discourse on reform.

Two Iranian actors awarded at Valencia's Cinema Jove Festival



Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian actors Parsa Pirouzfar and Hoda Zeinolabedin won best actor and actress awards at the 40th edition of the Valencia International Film Festival – Cinema Jove, Spain, for their performances in the drama series 'At the End of the Night,' organizers said. Directed by Ida Panahandeh

and produced by Mohammad Yamini, the series secured two special jury prizes in the acting category. The awards were announced at the festival's closing ceremony, though the cast and crew were unable to attend due to ongoing regional tensions, ILNA reported. Produced for the Iranian streaming platform Filmnet, the series tells the sto-

ry of a working-class family in Tehran struggling to stay together amid mounting social and economic pressures. The show first aired in spring 2024 and was met with strong reviews and wide audience acclaim. Cinema Jove, held annually in Valencia from June 19 to 28, focuses on innovative and socially-driven storytelling in cinema and television. It is considered one of southern Europe's prominent festivals spotlighting emerging voices in film and TV. The Iranian series had previously picked up the Best Director award earlier this year at France's 2025 Series Mania Festival, further cementing its international success. Festival officials praised the production for its "honest portrayal of resilience and human connection in the face of adversity."

Iranian short animations to be screened at Italy's Int'l Cartoon Club Festival



Arts & Culture Desk

Two Iranian short animations, 'Jiroft' and 'The Splint,' produced by Iran's Documentary, Experimental and Animation Film Center (DEFC), will be showcased in competition at the 41st International Cartoon Club Festival in Rimini, Italy. The event runs from July 12 to 18 across various venues in the city, ILNA

reported. According to a statement from the center, Cartoon Club is among Italy's most important festivals dedicated to animation, comics, and gaming. It offers a platform primarily focused on short animations, including narrative, educational, experimental, and computer graphic works. In addition to film screenings, the festival features exhibitions, educational

and social projects, workshops in local schools, and publishes related books and catalogs. Both 'The Splint,' directed by Mehdi Sedighi, and 'Jiroft,' by Marjan Keshani, have garnered multiple international appearances prior to this event. The festival's venues span from Rimini's historic city center to its coastline, providing a varied cultural backdrop for the diverse programs.

Iran dismisses threat to national heritage sites after Israeli nuclear claims



Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian heritage authorities on Sunday dismissed concerns over the safety of the country's cul-

tural sites following Israeli allegations about enriched uranium storage near the historic city of Isfahan. Speaking to ILNA, veteran cul-

tural heritage expert Seifollah Aminian said Iran's museums and archaeological sites are "not under threat," despite growing international concerns after a recent claim by the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In an interview with Fox News earlier this week, IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi alleged Iran is hiding "480 kilograms of highly enriched uranium" at a location near a historic site outside Isfahan — a central tourism hub home to centuries-old monuments from the Safavid era and earlier. The statement raised alarm

among preservationists and sparked speculation about the vulnerability of Iran's cultural heritage in the event of renewed military war with Israel. However, Aminian, who has spent decades restoring and protecting heritage sites in Isfahan and Kashan, downplayed the threat. "There is no danger facing Iran's heritage sites, especially in Isfahan," he said, adding that "protective measures are in place, and military defense systems in the region will certainly shield historic monuments." The concern follows the aftermath of a 12-day war between Iran and Israel, during which

dozens of civilians were killed in what Tehran called "brutal" Israeli attacks. The escalation prompted Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Reza Salehi Amiri, to call on UNESCO for "urgent support" to protect Iranian heritage from possible damage in future hostilities. The 1954 Hague Convention prohibits direct attacks on cultural property during armed conflict. But heritage experts warn that such international agreements have limited deterrence in conflicts involving actors who do not respect global norms. Aminian echoed this skepticism,

stating that "no one can trust the Zionist regime to abide by UNESCO principles." Still, he insisted that Iran's military posture acts as a strong deterrent and that collaboration between the Islamic Republic and the Tourism Ministry ensures full preparedness. "Experts have already briefed the authorities. There's no imminent threat to national or world heritage sites under current circumstances," Aminian said. Isfahan, often called the cultural heart of Iran, is home to UNESCO-listed sites such as Naqsh-e Jahan Square and numerous mosques and palaces dating back over a millennium.