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One year with Pezeshkian; his discourse foiled enemy’s plot

ANALYSIS

A full year has passed since Masoud Pezeshkian won Iran’s presidential election on July 5, 2024. During this time, both domestic and international developments—large and small—affected the trajectory of his government, with the most significant being the 12-day war waged by the Zionist regime of Israel and the United States, which inevitably disrupted the usual course of the 14th administration since the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran.

Against this backdrop, assessing the incumbent government—which has now completed a quarter of its term—logically calls for an evaluation given the promises and slogans declared by the president himself. From the moment the seasoned heart surgeon and veteran politician entered the presidential race, one phrase stood out as a recurring theme in his speeches: “National Unity.” This was not just a slogan but evolved into a central discourse and defining framework for his administration.

An examination of government appointments under the 14th administration clearly shows that Pezeshkian sought to bridge political and social divides through cross-partisan selections and the inclusion of specialists and professionals from various ethnic and religious backgrounds across all levels of government. In doing so, he fulfilled a key campaign pledge. Even critics have acknowledged that, in this regard, his efforts to engage diverse groups in building a strong Iran deserve passing marks.

This core message of unity came into sharp focus during the 12-day war, when the Zionist enemy launched a blatant act of aggression against Iran’s territory, aiming to sow internal discord and pursue separatist goals. The enemy, misreading the situation, mistakenly believed that internal grievances, protests, and dissatisfaction—which, while real, exist to some extent in nearly every society—had created deep rifts in Iranian society. They gambled that a military strike would trigger social unrest and bring the state to its knees.

But the reality played out in stark contrast. Rather than fueling disintegration, the attack galvanized public solidarity. Even routine frustrations and day-to-day complaints were momentarily set aside, as a single voice echoed in defense of the homeland. The people stood united, shoulder to shoulder, firmly resisting the enemy and defending the country’s sovereignty, Armed Forces, and territorial integrity with unwavering resolve.

While the external shock of war undeniably helped consolidate this national cohesion, the president’s peace-oriented discourse also played a significant role. As noted earlier, the government’s commitment to actualizing “unity” through inclusive appointments—across ethnic, religious, and local lines—proved instrumental in strengthening the fabric of society and fostering a sense of shared purpose among the country’s top officials and policymakers over the past year.

This approach also went a long way in narrowing the gap between the public and the state.

For years, a lack of local representation in government had left many citizens feeling sidelined. The new administration’s inclusive policies have helped reverse that sentiment, making people feel seen and heard.

Moreover, the Pezeshkian administration consciously steered clear of actions that could spark division or social tension, instead prioritizing decisions that would reinforce social cohesion. A case in point was the president’s opposition to the enforcement of the “Hijab and Chastity Law”—a move widely interpreted as a step toward reducing societal friction.

The idea of unity did not stop at the social level; it extended into the political sphere as well. A noticeable increase in cooperation among the three branches of power emerged, with regular coordination meetings led primarily by the president himself, aimed at aligning strategies and managing national affairs at the highest level.

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Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad addresses the 9th OPEC International Seminar in Vienna, Austria via video link on July 9, 2025.
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Health minister says nearly 700 civilians killed in 12-day war

‘Israeli strikes targeted seven hospitals, 11 ambulances’



National Desk

Iran's Health Minister Mohammad Reza Zafarghandi said on Wednesday that nearly 700 civilians were killed during recent Israel's unprovoked aggression against the country. Zafarghandi added that the Israeli regime also directly targeted seven hospitals and eleven ambulances during its aggression, which has claimed the lives of 1,100 people in Iran. The Iranian minister said that 18 medical personnel, including six doctors, lost their lives in the regime's strikes. Sajad Rezaei, Iran's deputy health minister, put the number of civilians wounded in the attacks at 5,750, saying that around 170 people are still hospitalized.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian in a statement on Wednesday appreciated efforts by the health sector's personnel, especially nurses, to help the wounded people in the Israeli strikes. Head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) Pirhossein Kolivand also said the Israeli strikes hit targets and hospitals in the vicinity of the Red Crescent building, which damaged around 1,500 hospital beds. Five IRCS members were also killed in Israel's attacks. Additionally, one helicopter and several ambulances belonging to the IRCS were destroyed. Iran's Foundation of Martyrs and Veterans Affairs said on Tuesday that death toll from the

Israel's aggression against Iran rose to 1,100. The Health Ministry had earlier announced the death of 935 people in the regime's attacks which began on June 13. Kolivand said that the death toll from the Israeli aggression includes 126 women and 41 children, which claimed the lives of civilians, nuclear scientists and the country's top military commanders. The US also joined the aggression by targeting the three Iranian nuclear facilities of Fordow, Natanz and Isfahan. A cease-fire proposed by the US put an end to the conflict on June 24 after Iran launched barrages of missiles at Israel's targets in the occupied territories and at the largest US military base in the Middle East in Qatar.

Riyadh hopes cessation of Iran-Israel war to ensure regional stability



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (L) meets Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman at Al-Salam Palace in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on July 8, 2025.

International Desk

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman on Tuesday expressed hope that a US-brokered unilateral cease-fire agreement between Iran and Israel would contribute to conditions that ensure regional security and stability. The Saudi crown prince made the remarks in a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in Jeddah where they reviewed Tehran-Riyadh relations as well as the latest regional developments. Bin Salman emphasized the kingdom's stance in supporting dialogue through diplomatic means as a path of resolving disputes. The Iranian foreign minister expressed his gratitude to the kingdom for its stance in condemning the Israeli aggression on the Islamic Republic and offered his appreciation for Bin Salman's efforts and initiatives to promote security and

stability in the region. The Israeli regime launched in the wee hours of June 13 an unprecedented wave of aggression on Iran's military and civilian infrastructure that claimed hundreds of lives, including women and children as well as a dozen top military brass. In response, the Iranian Armed Forces, led by the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), launched a powerful and unprecedented retaliatory campaign, Operation True Promise III, against the Israeli regime by targeting key military, intelligence, industrial, energy, and R&D facilities across the occupied territories. The United States, which had been in talks with Tehran about its peaceful nuclear program since April, carried out its own anti-Iran strikes on June 22 by targeting several key nuclear sites. The American onslaught was shortly met with the Islamic Republic's retaliatory

strikes on a major US military base in Qatar. The Israeli regime was forced on June 24 to declare a unilateral halt to its aggression, which was announced on its behalf by US President Donald Trump. The Iranian foreign minister also held talks with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah and Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman bin Abdulaziz.

'Fruitful conversations'

The Saudi Foreign Ministry underlined in a statement that during the meeting between Araghchi and Farhan, the two sides discussed the latest regional developments and efforts to achieve security and stability in the region. The Saudi defense minister said in a post on X that he met with the Iranian foreign minister and discussed various aspects of Riyadh-Tehran cooperation. "We reviewed various aspects of our cooperation. We also discussed regional developments and efforts to promote security and stability, along with several other topics of mutual interest," he wrote. Pointing to the Iranian foreign minister's meeting in Jeddah, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said on X that FM Araghchi held "fruitful conversations with Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman, FM Amir Faisal bin Farhan and Defense Minister Amir Khaled bin Salman about Iran - Saudi bilateral relations and latest developments in the region."

Top general lauds 'tactful' measures by police in Israel's aggression



Iran's Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi (L) meets with Police chief Brigadier General Ahmad Reza Radan in Tehran on July 9, 2025.

National Desk

Iran's Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi on Wednesday praised "tactful and decisive" measures by police forces during a recent Israel's aggression against the country. Mousavi in a meeting with the Iran's Police chief Brigadier-General Ahmad-Reza Radan commended police's actions in preserving public order, supporting the domestic logistical front during the conflict with Israel, and countering the enemy's hybrid and intelligence threats. During the meeting, the two officials reviewed the police's performance in the face of emerging threats against the country. Radan outlined police's measures during the recent conflict with Israel and pointed to the discovery and neutralization of several espionage networks and psychological operations linked to the Israeli regime and US spying services. "Through close cooperation with the country's security and intelligence institutions, we succeeded in identifying and arresting a number of spies, as well as

dismantling groups of Zionist mercenaries and thwarting their planned crimes." On Tuesday, Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Ground Force said in a statement thanks to the vigilance and insight of local people, the hideouts of several members of terrorist groups were detected in the coastal city of Chabahar in southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan. The statement said the IRGC Ground Force neutralized six terrorists in a swift operation. Several light and heavy weapons in addition to a substantial amount of explosives were also seized from the slain militants as well. The IRGC statement further highlighted that the eliminated individuals were planning to carry out a string of terrorist attacks in crowded public places. Sistan and Baluchestan Province, which borders Pakistan, has witnessed several terrorist attacks targeting both civilians and security forces over the past years. Terrorist groups carrying out attacks against Iranian interests in the south-eastern and southwestern parts of the country are believed to be linked to foreign spying services.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi

Cartoonist



China says willing to share military equipment achievements with 'friendly' countries

China has always taken a prudent, responsible approach to military exports and is willing to share the achievements of its equipment development with friendly countries, a Chinese defense spokesperson said on Tuesday. Jiang Bin, spokesperson for the Ministry of National Defense, made the remarks when commenting on recent reports that several countries are in discussions with China regarding weapon procurement plans that include China's J-10 fighter jet, Xinhua reported. Jiang also stressed the country's com-

mitment to playing a constructive role in regional and global peace and stability. China has transitioned to developing its own advanced aircraft—demonstrating growing self-sufficiency and competitiveness that may surpass Russia, experts say. Countries aiming to acquire advanced fighter jets are increasingly turning to China as it plans to ramp up exports and strategic partnerships, while showcasing its aircraft in military drills. A recent analysis by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)



revealed that Myanmar, Pakistan, Thailand, and the United Arab Emirates were the primary recipients of China's arms sales. The UAE had once eyed American F-35 jets.

Iran warns aggression on OPEC states violates law, threatens global energy supply

Economy Desk

Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad told an OPEC seminar that aggression against energy producers violates international law and threatens global stability, emphasizing that the global energy industry—especially oil—requires peace and stability to fulfill its role in safeguarding welfare at national, regional, and global levels in modern world. In a video message to the opening ceremony of the 9th OPEC International Seminar in Vienna, Austria, under the theme “Charting pathways together: the future of global energy,” Paknejad stressed, “This important seminar seeks to address the serious challenges threatening the global path towards a secure energy future,” as reported by IRNA. Stating that what is of great

importance is the situation in the Middle East, he said the long-standing cradle of the world's energy faces immediate threats resulting from the overt warmongering of the Zionist regime and the United States. The oil minister added that during this 12-day aggression by the Israeli regime, launched on June 13, over 5,000 were injured and more than one thousand were martyred. Among them are a significant number of innocent women and children, as well as university professors in the energy field and their families. According to Deputy Oil Minister Saeed Tavakoli, during the 12-day war, the country's gas infrastructure was targeted in multiple attacks, “including the South Pars Phase 14 refinery in Asaluyeh, the Fajr Jam refinery, export pipelines, and some ur-

ban facilities,” Tasnim reported. Based on reports recorded at the Crisis Management Headquarters and 194 centers across the country, the head of the National Iranian Gas Company reported that over 6,000 major operations were carried out including valve reconfiguration, network stabilization, pressure control and cooling, and firefighting. In some instances, these operations were completed in the shortest possible time and met international standards. In his message, Paknejad stated that the brutal military aggression against the territorial integrity of Iran, one of the world's principal and long-standing energy suppliers, “constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and the United Nations Charter.” He noted that the



Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad, via a video message, addresses the opening ceremony of the 9th OPEC International Seminar in Vienna, Austria, on July 9, 2025. ● SHANA

onslaught occurred while diplomatic negotiations concerning Iran's peaceful nuclear program were ongoing. Paknejad emphasized that any unstable situation, regardless of its cause – be it aggression or war – which leads to disruption in the smooth flow of oil and gas supply to international markets, increases uncertainty for energy producers and consumers and subjects national economies to varying degrees of economic hardship. Referring to the serious challenges that OPEC members, as well as OPEC+ countries, face



on the path ahead, he stated his belief that all must adopt a principled stance against resorting to war and using it as a tool to achieve political objectives, adding, “This approach will benefit no one.” The oil minister called on members to guide each other, both at the seminar and in all other engagements, towards recalling the principles of unity, stability,

and respect for the sovereign rights of nations, which are also stipulated in the ‘OPEC Statute’ and the ‘Charter of Cooperation’. Paknejad also emphasized that the Islamic Republic, as one of the founding members of OPEC in 1960, remains fully committed to the common ideals and objectives of this organization and welcomes the seminar as an opportunity for dialogue.

CAO reports Israeli damage to four civil aviation sites to ICAO



Economy Desk

Iran's Civil Aviation Organization (CAO) announced on Wednesday that it had reported the Israeli regime's ruinous strikes on the country's non-military aviation sectors to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Hamidreza Sanei, deputy head of CAO, stated that the Zionist regime's attack on four non-military aviation sectors of the country that caused huge damage is a clear example of “illegal interventions.” “The hostile regime inflicted 3 trillion tomans (\$34.48 million) in damage to people's property in one instance,” Sanei said. “Four attacks on the country's non-military aviation sectors were recorded, all of which have been reported to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in accordance with international protocols and regulations,” Tasnim reported. Emphasizing that these actions constitute clear examples of “illegal interventions,” he clarified, “According to international definitions, these attacks were carried out by a hostile country and must be pursued in international forums.”

Regarding damage details, he added, “During these attacks, two runways at Tabriz airport sustained serious damage. Isfahan airport also suffered damage, though less severe than Tabriz.” According to the official, “One of the country's radar systems was damaged during these violations.” Noting heavy damage to a private airport, he stated, “Unfortunately, Qazvin's Airport in Abiek, used by the private sector, was targeted by the Zionist regime. This airport was full of light and ultra-light aircraft, and unfortunately, the hostile regime destroyed 3 trillion tomans worth of people's property.” According to the latest reports, all airports across the country are operational except for Isfahan Airport, and domestic airlines are conducting their flights as usual. The airport, which Sanei stated had sustained serious damage in recent attacks, has been restored and will soon be reconnected to the network. The head of Iran Airports Company (IAC) Mohammad Amirani said that approximately 638 transit, domestic, and international flights received services from the company. Amirani told IRNA that on Tuesday a total of 224 domestic flights were operated in the country. Additionally, the total number of transit flights through the country's airspace reached 310 flights.

At BRICS summit: CBI prioritizes NDB expansion, sustainable project financing

Economy Desk

A delegation from the Central Bank of Iran at the BRICS Finance Ministers' meeting in Brazil emphasized facilitating the admission of new members to the New Development Bank (NDB) and its role in financing infrastructure projects and sustainable development. The Central Bank delegation, headed by Asghar Abolhassani, the CBI deputy governor, participated in the third meeting of deputy finance ministers and central bank governors, and the first meeting of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors of BRICS member states, held under the rotating presidency of Brazil on July 3 and 4 in Rio de Janeiro, IRNA reported on Wednesday. During these meetings, key topics raised included the imperative of multilateralism over unilateralism, the establishment of a unified payment infrastructure for the bloc, addressing climate change, and the critical need to bolster economic cooperation. The present BRICS member countries – consisting of Brazil, China, India, Russia, South Africa, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, and Ethiopia – delivered speeches. Iran, while outlining the Central Bank's efforts to control inflation and



strengthen the national currency's value through coherent monetary policies despite facing challenges from oppressive sanctions, and highlighting the sustained positive growth of the Iranian economy in successive past quarters, presented several points. The topics included emphasizing the BRICS group's key role as one of the important global economic coalitions, enumerating the country's economic capacities such as rich natural resources, strategic geographical location, and skilled human resources, stressing the need to enhance financial, banking, and economic cooperation among BRICS countries, the need to reduce dependence on traditional financial systems and achieve balance in the global economy, Iran's commitment to active participation in realizing BRICS' common goals, expanding

the use of national currencies in trade among group countries with the approach of reducing dependence on the dollar and achieving financial independence, integrating payment systems, facilitating the admission of new members to the NDB, and emphasizing the role of the bank in financing infrastructure projects and sustainable development. Furthermore, on the sidelines of the meetings, constructive meetings were held with officials from the ministries of finance and central banks of target countries to secure their support for Iran's membership in the NDB and expand banking cooperation. Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors of BRICS member states pose for a photo on the sideline of the first meeting held under the rotating presidency of Brazil on July 3 and 4 in Rio de Janeiro.

One year with ...

Pezeshkian, for his part, has consistently emphasized his alignment with the views of the Supreme Leader and pledged since his campaign to operate within the broader framework of policies laid out by the Leader for the country's development. The Leader, in return, has offered his full support to the president and the administration. Notably, when parliamentary oversight began to overstep its bounds and obstruct the government's workflow, the Leader intervened, advising lawmakers to exercise restraint. True to his campaign commitments, Pezeshkian also maintained close engagement with the public and the country's intellectual class after assuming office. He established a standing initiative to meet regularly with academics, experts, and elites, fulfilling his promise to tap into the country's wealth of human capital for its advancement and progress. Taken together, a fair evaluation of Pezeshkian's first year in office suggests that, despite numerous challenges—many of them external—the administration has made meaningful headway in strengthening social cohesion, inter-branch cooperation, and citizen participation in governance. In these key areas, the “Government of National Unity” has earned credible marks. There is reason to hope that the post-war surge in social capital—spanning not only the public but also various branches of power with differing political leanings—can be channeled into deeper cooperation. With this backing, and by leveraging domestic capabilities, the 14th administration may be able to take more decisive steps in the remaining three years to address economic challenges and better serve the people.

First phase of water transfer project to Isfahan accomplished

Economy Desk

The governor-general of Isfahan Province announced the first phase of the major project to transfer water from the Oman Sea to the province had been completed. Mehdi Jamali-Nejad on Tuesday stated that despite numerous obstacles and limitations, the first practical step towards supplying the water needed by Isfahan's industries had been achieved, as reported by IRNA.

The most significant advantage of the project is the cessation of water consumption by regional industries from the Zayandeh Rud River. He further delineated that the first step in implementing the project entails ending the consumption of Zayandeh Rud water by regional industries, which was accomplished through the completion of the first stage of the large-scale Oman Sea water transfer system to Isfahan, involving the construction of approximately 800 kilometers of transmission

pipelines, reservoirs, pumping stations, valves, and related connections. The governor-general underscored that this phase has enabled the transfer of 70 million cubic meters of desalinated seawater to Isfahan, equivalent to the total consumption of large industries. He said that in the first phase of the project, 70 million cubic meters of water are supplied via the Persian Gulf, and in the subsequent phase, the water transferred to the province will be sourced from the Sea of Oman.

Jamali-Nejad emphasized that in the initial stage following the project's inauguration, the Isfahan Refinery and industries in the north of the province will benefit from the water supply. He added that in the next stage, within the coming days, the Mobarakeh Steel Complex and southern provincial industries will also gain access to this source. Jamali-Nejad stressed, “Under no circumstances will this water be used for any new development of water-intensive and polluting industries around the

city of Isfahan.” Upon full implementation of the massive national project, 70 million cubic meters of desalinated Oman Sea water will be transferred to Isfahan in the first phase, and 400 million cubic meters in the second phase. According to officials, the project's execution is solely aimed at supplying water to the province's existing industries. They state there are absolutely no plans to use it to expand water-intensive industrial units.

Hidden dimensions of hybrid war against Iran



By Sajad Abedi
Political expert

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The recent Israeli war against Iran, beyond the exchange of military fire, have revealed the hidden and profound dimensions of a failed “midnight coup”. Although here this term does not mean the classic overthrow of the government by domestic armed forces, it does well to illustrate the covert, surprise, and targeted nature of operations that are taking place with the aim of weakening, destabilizing, and changing the regime from within.

What we witnessed in the scene of the recent confrontation was a perfect demonstration of hybrid warfare. In this type of battle, the front lines are not clear and the fronts of conflict expand from the military to the intelligence, cyber, security, and psychological dimensions. The ultimate goal of the Zionist regime and some of its allies in this strategy is to achieve regime change in Iran, or at least to destabilize and severely weaken it by imposing pressure from within. In some analyses, even the goal of dismembering Iran is proposed as a desirable scenario in the long term. This battle, in relative news blackout and away from the eyes of the media, is secretly eroding and changing internal equations.

The “midnight coup” is a name that well describes the multifaceted and covert nature of these operations. These actions include a range of tactics, all of which are aimed at undermining the pillars of power and creating internal chaos.

One of the most striking aspects of this “coup” is the focus on eliminating influential and prominent individuals. The assassination of nuclear scientists, military commanders, and security officials not only seeks to destroy strategic capabilities, but also aims to create a power vacuum, shock, and demoralize the country's decision-making and management system. These actions, just like a real coup, seek to decapitate the Islamic Establishment from above. The covert nature of these oper-



People observe fire and smoke from an Israeli attack on the Shahrn oil depot in Tehran, Iran, on June 15, 2025.

● GETTY IMAGES



The media, especially social networks, has become the main battlefield of cognitive warfare. The dissemination of false news, rumors, and propaganda with the aim of creating despair and hopelessness, increasing dissatisfaction, and fueling social divisions were key goals. Exaggerating economic problems, magnifying corruption, and insinuating the inefficiency of the Islamic Establishment, all with the aim of eroding popular support and creating a platform for widespread protests, are part of this soft coup.

ations and the lack of official accountability lend credence to the “midnight” term. In addition to physical assassination, targeting the country's critical infrastructure through cyberattacks or sabotage operations is another part of this strategy. Disrupting power grids, transportation systems, or financial sectors means paralyzing a country's lifelines. These actions, without requiring the physical presence of an attacker, can lead to public unrest, discontent, and even distrust in the effectiveness of government. The media, especially social networks, has become the main battlefield of cognitive warfare. The dissemination of false news, rumors, and propaganda with the aim of creating despair and hopelessness, increasing dissatisfaction, and fueling social divisions

were key goals. Exaggerating economic problems, magnifying corruption, and insinuating the inefficiency of the Islamic Establishment, all with the aim of eroding popular support and creating a platform for widespread protests, are part of this soft “coup”. Some analyses indicate that the Zionist regime and its allies saw the recent military conflicts as a platform to provoke internal rebellions and transform popular dissatisfaction into widespread anti-government protests. It was thought that the initial attacks could lead to the start of a color revolution. Although this part of the plan failed and Iranians came together in solidarity against the external threat, this itself indicates the hidden and subversive dimensions of this confrontation. The massive influx of arms aid to

the Zionist regime after the so-called cease-fire broke down can also be analyzed in the context of this “midnight coup”. This aid is not only necessary to replenish the regime's reserves and rebuild its military power after the conflict, but also serves as a strong deterrent message to Iran and its allies; a message that shows that the West's support for the Zionist regime is firm and stable, and that the regime will be fully equipped for any future scenario. In the face of this multifaceted and complex strategy, the Islamic Republic of Iran has also intensified its defense and intelligence strategies. Strengthening indigenous missile and drone capabilities to create deterrence, increasing security and intelligence measures to neutralize assassinations and sabotage,

managing the psychological atmosphere and confronting enemy propaganda, and trying to maintain national cohesion and internal solidarity are among the most important tools to confront this “midnight coup”. The current confrontation is not a purely military battle; Rather, it is a complex and multi-layered war in which the front lines have been drawn from the battlefield to the public mind and the depths of society. Understanding the dimensions of this “midnight coup” and being vigilant against its hidden conspiracies is the key to victory in this silent battle.

The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect Iran Daily's editorial stance.



Cleanup efforts are underway at a damaged building hit by Israeli missiles in Tehran, Iran, during the 12-day war.

● MAJID SAEEDI/GETTY IMAGES

Yazdani to wrestle in 97kg class on return to action, Dorostkar confirms

Sports Desk

Wrestling sensation Hassan Yazdani will move up to the 97kg weight category on return from a shoulder injury, Iranian freestyle team coach Pejman Dorostkar confirmed.

A winner of a national-high 10 world and Olympic medals, Yazdani had to undergo a second surgery on his injured shoulder in September last year – following an 86kg final loss at the Paris Olympics – before starting his rehabilitation program five months later in Tehran.

“Given his current weight condition and the two surgeries he’s had on his shoulder, I don’t think it would be wise for him to cut weight when he returns to action in one or two months. So, he will most likely compete in the 97kg division in the future. God willing, we’ll have the same strong and energetic wrestler that Iranian fans want to see,” Dorostkar said of Yazdani in an interview with the official website of the Iranian Wrestling Federation.

September’s World Championships in Zagreb, however, will come a bit too soon for Yazdani, which means the three-time world champion will miss the flagship global event of the sport for the first time in a decade.

When asked about Iran’s chances of winning the team title in Zagreb, Dorostkar said: “We will



Iranian freestyle wrestler Hassan Yazdani (blue singlet) is seen in action in the 86kg contests at the Paris Olympics on Aug. 8, 2024.

● olympic.ir

Zagreb ticket.

Joining Azarpira in the Iranian team are reigning world champion Amirhossein Zare’ (125kg), Olympic silver medalist Rahman Amouzad (65kg), and two-time world champion Kamran Qasempour (86kg), as well as Ali Mo’meni (57kg), Ahmad Mohammadnejad-Javan (61kg), Younes Emami (74kg), and Amirhossein Firouzpour (92kg).

The 70kg and 79kg slots remain up for grabs and will be decided after the final Ranking Series event of the season – starting next Thursday in Budapest – where Abbas Ebrahimzadeh and Sina Khalili (70kg) plus Mahdi Yousefi and Fariborz Babaei (79kg) will have to walk away with the ultimate prize in their respective divisions to stand a chance of a spot at the World Championships.

“Mohammad Nokhodi has entered the 79kg mix, despite being out of action with an injury since his bronze-winning campaign in last October’s World Championships. We also have decent wrestlers competing for the national team spot in the 70kg class,” the Iranian head coach added.

definitely have a tough job on our hands. Russia and the United States have dominated the world event in recent years, not to mention, Japan, Georgia, and

Azerbaijan will also be among the contenders, while there are individual stars from Bahrain, India, and Hungary in certain weight classes. We still have a

solid, decent squad, and will be focused on our own strengths.” Eight wrestlers have already secured a spot in the Iranian freestyle squad for the Wrestling

Worlds.

Olympic bronze medalist Amir-Ali Azarpira defeated Ahmad Bazri 3-0 in a domestic 97kg decider on Friday to punch his

AFC Women’s Asian Cup qualifiers:

Iranian girls to open campaign against Singapore

AFC – Iran will be seeking a winning start when they take on Singapore in a Group A tie at the AFC Women’s Asian Cup Australia 2026 qualifiers in Amman, Jordan, today.

Aiming to reach a second successive finals, Iran will aim to hit the ground running against a Singapore side who are under pressure following their 3-2 defeat to Bhutan on Monday. Head coach Marziyeh Jafari left her 13-year trophy-laden stint at Bam Khatoon FC to lead the Iranian team and has the core of the club

side at her disposal.

Goalkeeper Raha Yazdani, defender Atefeh Ramezani, midfielder Melika Motevalli and forward Zahra Ghanbari form the spine of the team as they look to transfer their understanding built at the club level to the international stage. Singapore, however, cannot be taken lightly – especially as a second defeat will be detrimental to their hopes of qualifying for the continental showpiece.

There are, however, injury concerns for Lionesses head coach Karim Bencher-

ifa with Ardhra Arul, Farah Nurzahirah, Syazwani Ruzi and Nurhidayu Naszri all forced off early in the Bhutan match.

Today’s other tie will see Bhutan aiming to build on their opening day success against a Lebanon side who fell 4-0 to Jordan on Monday.

Kim Tae-in’s side showed their quality against Singapore with three players – Yeshey Bidha, Dorji Edon and Sunita Rai – getting on the scoresheet with the South Asian side bidding to reach the Finals for the first time.

Iranian teen Dehqan joins Al Wahda

Sports Desk

Iranian teenage midfielder Mobin Dehqan joined Emirati top-flight side Al Wahda SC on a three-year contract on Tuesday.

Dehqan, 19, impressed as a deep-lying midfielder in 17 appearances for Kheybar FC in all competitions last season as the Iranian club finished 11th in the Persian Gulf Pro League table.

“I’m thrilled to join such a big club in the early stages of my professional career. This move is a big step forward in my life. I am grateful to the club to the club for trusting me and promise to put in all my efforts to help Al Wahda succeed next season,” Dehqan told Al Wahda of-



● alwahda-sc.com

ficial website.

Having made his international debut in July 2024, Dehqan has three goals under his belt in 14

matches for the Iranian under-20 side.

He will join fellow-Iranians Ahamad Nourollahi and Mohammad Qorbani

in his new team.

Al Wahda finished third to Shabab Al Ahli and Sharjah in the Emirati ADNOC Pro League last season.

Maresca ‘proud’ as Chelsea reach Club World Cup final

THE GUARDIAN – Enzo Maresca did not hide his pride after Chelsea defeated Fluminense with two brilliant goals from João Pedro to reach the FIFA Club World Cup final.

Maresca’s team encountered few problems as they maintained their push for Club World Cup glory after producing an impressive performance to defeat the last non-European team left in the competition.

Chelsea took huge satisfaction from seeing João Pedro mark his full debut by scoring twice

against his boyhood club. The forward joined from Brighton for £60m last week and was pivotal in his new team moving to within one win from being crowned club world

champions.

“We are very happy, very proud to play the final on Sunday,” Maresca said. “The reason why is because this is the first edition of the Club World

Cup. The best clubs in the world are here. For us to be in the final is something to be proud of.

“I know how difficult it is with all the games. Premier League top four, we won the Conference League and now a final here – it is fantastic.”

Maresca was delighted with João Pedro’s impressive display after coming in for the suspended Liam Delap. “I am very happy for João,” the head coach said. “He has quality to decide the game like today. We know he is a good player against teams that defend deep.”



● [DARREN WALSH/GETTY IMAGES](http://darren.walsh/Getty Images)



● [FFIRI](http://ffiri)

Iranica Desk

In the heart of the plains surrounding the city of Malayer in Hamedan Province, Alamdar-e Olya village quietly shines like a small gem. Nestled amidst winding dirt roads and scorched by the sun, this village may not be prominent on a map, but it embodies a living story of tradition, roots, and resilience within its soul.

The villagers of Alamdar-e Olya face a pressing struggle with water scarcity. Water — this vital river of life — is more scarce here than ever before. Currently, drinking water is supplied by tankers, but one or two tankers a week are insufficient to meet the community's needs. Men and women must walk down narrow alleys and along downhill routes to reach a spring, where they wash clothes and dishes by the water. They then carry water home in jugs and buckets, enduring hardship just to bring life's essential drink to their families.

For most of the year, the residents have access to water for only two or three months. During the remaining months, they rely on tanker deliveries or must trek to distant springs to fetch water, highlighting the ongoing struggle faced by this resilient community.

In this small village with a population of about 101 people and 38 families, there is one feature that sets it apart from others: an old bathhouse that still breathes, remains warm, and continues to steam.

At the entrance of the village, on the left and a few meters ahead of the cemetery, the cool shade of a mulberry tree gently touches your face.

According to a rural manager, the village once had an elementary school that was closed last year due to the low number of students. Now, the children must commute to nearby villages' schools to continue their education.

Armaghan Kordi, in an interview with ISNA, pointed to an old watchtower facing the bathhouse, situated roughly in the middle of the village. He explained, "The village had two watchtowers built at opposite ends, connected by an aerial corridor. Several years ago, one of the towers was demolished,

Story of tradition, struggle, revival in Alamdar-e Olya village of Hamedan



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IRNA

leaving only one remaining." Kordi further explained that the remaining tower was used as a traditional school (Maktabkhaneh) until about 40 years ago, but today it is on the verge of demolition. "We have repeatedly requested the Malayer Cultural Heritage Department to restore and pre-

serve it, but unfortunately, no action has been taken so far." She also mentioned that the village's bathhouse was registered as a national heritage site in 2020. Furthermore, two years ago, Malayer's Cultural Heritage Department allocated funds for its restoration, which has since been completed. Currently, the



IRNA

residents of the village are using the bathhouse. Kordi stated that the water for the bathhouse was previously supplied through a well. She recalled, "Until three years ago, the water was heated via a fire altar, with villagers taking turns lighting fires with firewood to provide the necessary heat.

However, for the past two years, it has been connected to the gas supply and is now heated in that manner." She emphasized, "Since nine years ago, the Housing Foundation or Parliament representatives had allocated no funds for the villages of Alamdar-e Sofla and Alamdar-e Olya. In other

words, no development projects have been carried out in the village during this period." According to Kordi, the only recent projects included partial piping in some homes, the construction of a water tank, and the upgrading of part of the village's electrical network in 2016.

She continued, "Many young people are migrating to the outskirts of the city and nearby villages such as Hajiabad and Rezvankadeh. The population of the village is aging, but with a few small projects carried out by the Housing Foundation, the residents are encouraged to stay. This has significantly helped in reversing the migration trend."

Ebrahim Jalili, head of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Department of Malayer, stated that the bathhouse in Alamdar-e Olya dates back to the Zandieh era.

He added, "The bathhouse is situated at the beginning of the village entrance, adjacent to the mosque and the watchtower. It was built on a slope and below ground level to ensure better water supply and to shield it from the weather across different seasons."

Jalili continued, "After walking up a few steps at the entrance, you reach the sarbineh (changing hall), which features four platforms and a central pool. This section connects to the warm bath and hot water storage via a four-meter corridor designed as a semi-arch. The warm bath spaces include the hot water storage, the hair-cutting section, the prayer platform, the cold water pool, and the main hall — all located at the far end of the bathhouse."

Pointing to the watchtower facing the bathhouse, Jalili emphasized, "This four-story tower was used for lookout purposes but has no significance for national registration."

According to a report from the Hamedan Province Water and Wastewater Company, out of 208 villages in Malayer, 80 are facing water stress. During the colder months, water is supplied to 29 of these villages by tanker, highlighting the ongoing challenges in ensuring adequate water supply for rural communities.

A look into historic Jaame Mosque of Marand

The Jaame (grand) Mosque of Marand, located in the heart of the city in East Azarbaijan Province, holds significant historical importance. According to a stucco inscription within the chambered room, dated 1106 CE, it is recognized as one of the oldest dated structures in northwest Iran. It is believed that the mosque was continuously

maintained during the reign of Abu Saeed Bahadur Khan, with annual taxes from non-Muslim territories contributing to its upkeep. The chambered room, built during the Seljuk Dynasty, features a square layout and three entrances. During the Ilkhanid era, it was restored and decorated, with additional bays

added on the northern and western sides. In recent times, the mosque has been expanded eastward, creating a covered area. A minaret in the southwest, likely from the same period as the chambered dome, was once part of the structure but has now been demolished. The mosque's stucco mihrab,

renowned for its exquisite decoration, is considered one of the masterpieces of stucco work worldwide. Marand is a city rich in history and culture, serving as a vibrant center in East Azarbaijan Province. It is famous for attractions such as castles, historic bridges, and local bazaars that showcase

traditional crafts. Its lively cultural scene and scenic parks make it a popular destination for visitors seeking both historical insights and natural beauty. The city's warm hospitality and diverse heritage reflect its importance as a cultural and strategic hub. The East Azarbaijan Province itself is known for its diverse

natural landscapes, from lush forests to arid plains, and has long been a crossroads of civilizations, fostering a unique blend of Azarbaijani, Persian, and Kurdish cultures. It plays an essential role in regional agriculture, industry, and tourism, attracting visitors with its scenic beauty and historical richness.



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Iran turns to global cultural allies after damage to heritage sites in Israel attacks

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran has formally accused Israel of endangering its cultural heritage during the recent 12-day war and says it will file an international complaint based on damage assessments currently underway, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri told reporters at a news conference in Tehran.

The minister said Iran had submitted multiple urgent letters to UNESCO at the height of hostilities, warning of possible attacks on its ancient sites. According to Salehi-Amiri, the UN agency passed Iran's concerns on to Israel, but "even UNESCO's warnings were ignored." Israel, along with the United States, withdrew from UNESCO in 2011 and no longer abides by its cultural protections.

The ministry, joined by archaeologists, museum officials, and national heritage NGOs, began transferring historic

artifacts from major institutions — including the National Museum of Iran and the UNESCO-listed Golestan Palace — to secure locations just days into the war. Emergency measures included the installation of "blue shields" on museum rooftops, signaling protected cultural sites under international law.

Critics online raised questions over improvised steps, such as wrapping chandeliers in plastic and rushed evacuations. But officials insisted that in the absence of wartime protocols or prior experience, museums had acted quickly under fire. Tehran endured nearly daily Israeli air raids during the conflict.

"The very fact that they moved priceless collections overnight under bombardment is commendable," said one senior preservation official. Authorities now aim to roll out war-specific crisis drills and protective guidelines during the current ceasefire.

Salehi-Amiri confirmed that Iran's government had approved a nationwide

directive requiring ministries to evaluate both direct and indirect wartime damage — including to infrastructure, cultural heritage, and human life — in preparation for a possible international lawsuit against Israel.

Ali Darabi, Iran's deputy minister of cultural heritage, stressed that both Israel and the US "have walked away from all binding UNESCO obligations" and must be held accountable. He called on the global community to enforce protections for heritage in conflict zones and ramp up legal penalties for violators.

Darabi also pointed to broader regional coordination. Iran is working with member states of the Civilizations Forum — launched by Armenia and Greece and including ten countries — to exchange expertise and, where possible, repatriate stolen or displaced cultural objects.

He said Iran's Tehran-based Center for Intangible Cultural Heritage, representing 24 nations, had issued diplomatic



notes during the war. Several member states released statements in support of heritage protection.

Responding to a proposal raised by a local journalist, Darabi said Iran would

push for global rules that bar attacks on cultural sites and punish states that do. "This must be a permanent agenda," he said, "because any advanced nation could face such threats in the future."

Spanish media praise Iran's 'At the End of the Night' after Valencia festival triumph



Arts & Culture Desk

Spanish media lauded Iranian drama 'At the End of the Night' following its twin acting wins at the 40th Cinema Jove Festival, which concluded on June 28 in Valencia. Local outlets described the series as "quietly powerful" and "psychologically rich," days after it clinched jury awards for Best Actor and Best Actress, ILNA reported.

Directed by Ida Panahandeh and

produced by Filmnet, the Tehran-set drama stars Parsa Pirouzfar and Hoda Zeinolabedin as a middle-class couple whose marriage unravels under emotional strain.

Critics singled out the show's subdued storytelling and visual restraint, which they say allow it to speak "without noise, yet be heard."

Valencia Plaza highlighted the "deep, internal performances"

by the two leads, calling them a window into "repressed emotions and human fragility." The series was praised for presenting a universally relatable portrait of emotional decay with no need for embellishment.

Europa Press placed the drama among the most resonant entries at this year's event. It described the show as a "precise and layered" exploration of contemporary societal tensions — from

economic anxiety to the erosion of connection — all distilled into one intimate domestic setting.

The Institut Valencià de Cultura, which runs the festival, said the 2025 edition centered on how younger creators interpret a shifting world. The Iranian entry, it said, offered a "real and global" view on human struggle through an unflinching lens.

The Valencia win marks the second international accolade for 'At

the End of the Night,' which also earned Panahandeh a Best Directing prize earlier this year at France's Series Mania.

Spanish commentators praised the work as "committed" and "honest," noting how it bypasses common tropes to depict Iran's social fabric in subtle, human terms.

The drama asks, as one reviewer put it, "how we might recover empathy and dialogue in a fractured world."

Iranian author, illustrator nominated for 2026 Astrid Lindgren Award



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Children's Book Council has nominated author Arman Arian and illustrator Hoda Haddadi for the 2026 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA), according to a statement released Wednesday in Tehran.

The award, established by the Swedish government in 2002 in memory of the beloved author Astrid Lindgren, is the world's most lucrative prize in children's literature. Valued at 5 million Swedish kronor (roughly \$470,000), it recognizes authors, illustrators, storytell-

ers, and reading promoters whose work upholds humanistic values and literary quality—regardless of nationality or language, ISNA reported.

Arian, nominated in the writers' category, is known for reimagining Iran's ancient myths and cultural narratives for young readers. His storytelling draws from sources like the Avesta, Shahnameh, and Bundahishn, blending classical inspiration with fresh, suspenseful, and psychologically rich plots.

The council praised his "deep and layered character-building" and his cinematic narrative style that fuses

traditional and modern elements.

His books don't cast children as passive readers but "thinking agents," the council said, noting that his fiction tackles themes like peace, anti-war values, superstition, women's roles, family, and civic engagement—without ever talking down to his audience.

In the illustrators' category, Haddadi was cited for her "evocative, collage-based visuals" and her ability to create a distinctly feminine and nature-infused world shaped by Persian literary heritage. Her art, often marked by vibrant textures, has earned multiple awards and reflects years of work in education across various age groups.

The ALMA is second in prestige only to the Hans Christian Andersen Award and is given annually to one or more individuals or organizations. In Iran, four bodies hold the right to nominate candidates: the Children's Book Council, the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, the Research Institute for the History of Children's Literature, and the Association of Children's Writers.

Winners of the 2026 award will be announced in Stockholm in March.

Iran wins global IEEE award, showcasing scientific resilience in crisis



Social Desk

The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) named its Iran Section the world's "Outstanding Section" for 2025, recognizing its top-tier performance in research, education, and technology outreach, according to a statement from Iran's ICT Research Institute on Tuesday.

The IEEE Outstanding Section Award is one of the group's highest honors and is granted to national branches that make a "significant impact" in advancing global engineering standards, ISNA reported.

Iran's selection comes at a time when the country is still reeling from regional instability and economic headwinds. Yet, its scientists and engineers "rose to the challenge," officials said, showcasing resilience and "unlocking talent" despite mounting external pressure.

The IEEE's selection committee, composed of senior members from around the world—evaluated sections based on rigorous benchmarks. Iran's branch

earned top marks for hosting high-level conferences and technical workshops, supporting cutting-edge research and innovation, and building academic-industry bridges through professional networking.

Officials also praised the branch for engaging in public science campaigns and promoting STEM education. "It's not just about technical work," one IEEE committee member noted, "Iran showed how engineering can serve society."

The award, viewed as a badge of credibility and a global endorsement, is expected to boost Iran's visibility across international academic and tech circles.

The Iran Section's involvement in regional and global IEEE initiatives also helped tip the scales in its favor.

Iran's recognition in 2025 underscores how scientific advancement can "cut through the noise" of political tension. While sanctions and conflict continue to shape the country's broader narrative, this award signals that Iran's tech community refuses to fall behind.