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Head of Iran's Red Crescent Society, Pirhossein Kolivand, speaks to reporters in Tehran during a weekly press conference at the Foreign Ministry as the ministry's spokesman Esmail Baqaei looks on.
• IRNA

Snapback or return to deviation?

By Kamran Yeganegi
Foreign policy expert

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The West's recent threats of triggering the so-called "snapback mechanism" against Iran has once again exposed a fissure in the architecture of global legal and diplomatic norms. Designed initially as a safeguard to ensure Iran's compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the snapback clause has increasingly become a tool of coercion rather than a mechanism grounded in legal integrity. As policymakers and observers reevaluate the implications of this instrument, it is essential to revisit its legal foundations, geopolitical ramifications, and the broader consequences for multilateralism and international law.

Legal tool without legal ground?

The snapback provision, enshrined in United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015), was meant to restore sanctions automatically should Iran be found in "significant non-performance" of its nuclear commitments. However, the main sponsor of the clause—the United States—unilaterally walked out from the JCPOA in May 2018 under the Trump administration, relinquishing both its practical and moral standing to invoke its terms. The withdrawal raises a fundamental legal paradox: Can a country that has formally exited an agreement still claim rights and privileges embedded within it? The overwhelming consensus among international legal scholars is negative. Activating a mechanism from outside a framework not only undermines legal consistency but also erodes the legitimacy of multilateral agreements. The very spirit of *pacta sunt servanda*—the principle that agreements must be kept—depends on mutual adherence.

Weaponizing legal mechanisms

What we are witnessing today is not only a dispute over procedural legality but an evolving pattern in which international legal tools are being instrumentalized for unilateral geopolitical goals. Such a development is troubling. The snapback of sanctions was never designed to serve as a punitive shortcut circumventing diplomacy; rather, it was embedded as a last-resort safeguard within a broader framework of negotiated trust.

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IRCS chief: No crime worse than targeting health centers in conflicts

Israel's assaults 'disproportionately hit civilians'

International Desk

Head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) Pirhossein Kolivand on Monday denounced the Israeli regime for targeting several Iranian health centers during its last month's aggression against Iran, asking "Is there any crime worse than this?"

"Our headquarters was directly attacked twice. Globally, medical facilities are marked with 'No Honking' signs—yet here, they were hit with missiles, spreading terror," Kolivand said during the weekly press conference of Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei on Monday.

He added that the world must recognize this, asking, "is there any crime worse than this?"

"The greatest harm has been inflicted on civilians. Among the martyrs are 126

women and 41 children—none of whom were combatants," Kolivand said.

"Five of our relief workers were martyred after being directly targeted," he said, adding that the ambulance "was also set on fire."

According to Kolivand, a Red Crescent's helicopter was also targeted in an outright breach of the Four Geneva Conventions.

"No one has the right to attack medical personnel or civilians. Our mission is search and rescue; we exist to aid the people, yet we were deliberately obstructed and attacked," he said.

He explained that Iran has submitted "reports to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Human Rights Council, and the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court."

He said the ICRC representative in Iran accompanied him to Evin Prison, target-

ed on June 23, and Hamedan city, where food factories were bombed.

"The intensive care unit of Farabi Hospital was also attacked—I showed them all this evidence, emphasizing that these are clear violations of the Geneva Conventions," he stressed.

Over the 12-day war, "every conceivable form of atrocity" was committed against the Iranians, he said, adding, "many of my international counterparts have reached out to express solidarity and denounce" the Israeli aggression.

On June 13, Israel launched an unprovoked act of aggression against Iran, assassinating many high-ranking military commanders and nuclear scientists.

The Israeli attacks also targeted military and nuclear sites as well as vital non-military infrastructure, including a building of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), Evin Prison, health-



Pirhossein Kolivand
MEHR

care centers, outreach facilities, and both residential neighborhoods and rural communities, inflicting widespread civilian harm. These attacks also caused

over 900 civilian fatalities.

In response, the Iranian armed forces launched a retaliatory campaign against the Israeli regime.

Iran's top commander warns of 'regrettable, stronger response' to any aggression

International Desk

Iran's top military commander praised the country's Armed Forces for their response to the last month Israel's aggression against the country, warning that any repeated mistake would meet with "more regrettable and stronger response".

Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, chief of staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, made the remarks on Monday while visiting the facilities and servicemen of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC)'s Aerospace Force.

"It was the sharp sword wielded by the Aerospace Force that, through divine assistance, managed to cut off the enemies' heads and their hands," the commander said.

Intense Israeli airstrikes targeted the Islamic Republic between June 13 and 25, prompting the country to launch rapid and forceful counterattacks.

This reprisal, known as



Abdolrahim Mousavi
TASNIM

Operation True Promise III, focused on striking vital Israeli military, intelligence, and industrial targets, inflicting significant damage. Iran then struck Al-Udeid, the most important American airbase in West Asia, after the United States entered the fray by attacking Iranian nuclear sites.

The commander said the Aerospace Force's retaliation far surpassed its counterstrikes during the Iraq-imposed war in the 1980s.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he reassured the entire nation that "if the

enemy makes another mistake, our servicemen stand fully prepared to deliver a regret-inducing and stronger response."

Accompanying the official, the Aerospace Force's Commander, Brigadier General Majid Mousavi, produced a report on True Promise III. The document detailed the operation's achievements for the Iranian nation and the level of coordination that was observed among the force and other significant military sectors throughout the retaliation.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



German pres. blames US JCPOA withdrawal for current tensions on Iran's nuclear issue

International Desk

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said on Sunday that the United States' unilateral withdrawal from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal during Donald Trump's first term led to the current tensions over Iran's nuclear program.

Speaking during an interview with German public broadcaster ZDF, Steinmeier said that world powers and Iran reached an agreement on Iran's nuclear program in 2015 after long negotiations.

"However, the first Trump administration canceled this agreement, and Iran then further developed its nuclear program. All participants at that time, Europeans, Americans, Russians and Chinese, agreed that Iran should never acquire nuclear weapons. That consensus was broken by Trump's decision," Steinmeier noted.

Iran has always insisted



Frank-Walter Steinmeier
AFP

that its nuclear program is for civilian purposes and has rejected Western countries' accusations that it is pursuing nuclear weapons. Despite the US withdrawal from the agreement in 2018 and the Europe's failure to fulfil its commitments under the deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the Islamic Republic engaged in new negotiations with the US in April to show the peaceful nature of its nuclear activities.

However, a recent aggression by Israel and the US

on Iran's nuclear facilities, military sites and residential areas caused Tehran to cancel the negotiations with the US.

But, both sides have expressed their interest in resumption of negotiations to put an end to a decades-old dispute over Iran's nuclear program.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said on Monday that Tehran had "no specific date" for a meeting with the US.

"For now, no specific date, time or location has been determined regarding this matter," Baqaei said.

"We have been serious in diplomacy and the negotiation process, we entered with good faith, but as everyone witnessed, before the sixth round the Zionist regime, in coordination with the United States, committed military aggression against Iran", said Baqaei.

Baqaei also said Iran remains in contact with Britain, France, and Germany, the three European parties to the 2015 nuclear deal.

The Europeans have threatened to trigger the "snapback" mechanism under the 2015 agreement, which allows the reimposition of UN sanctions in the event of non-compliance.

There was "no legal, moral or political basis" for reimposing sanctions, according to Baqaei, as Iran was still committed to the 2015 agreement.

The ministry spokesman added that such a move would be met with an "appropriate and proportionate" response.

FM: Netanyahu 'openly dictating' US in talks with Iran



Abbas Araghchi
AFP

The Iranian foreign minister stated that Israel's prime minister has failed to achieve any of his objectives through the regime's latest war of aggression against Iran.

Abbas Araghchi commented that Benjamin Netanyahu is "openly dictating" what the US should or should not say or do in discussions with Iran, despite his failures during the recent aggression against the Islamic Republic.

He made these remarks in a social

media post in response to Netanyahu's assertion that Iran must limit the range of its missiles to 480 kilometers.

Araghchi described it as absurd to expect Iran to accept advice from "a war criminal."

He emphasized that Netanyahu's aspirations to undermine more than 40 years of peaceful nuclear advancements were unrealistic.

He noted that every one of the dozen Iranian scientists killed by mercenaries trained over 100 capable successors, who will demonstrate their capabilities to Netanyahu.

"But his arrogance doesn't end there. Having miserably failed to achieve any of his war objectives in Iran and compelled to turn to 'Daddy' when our powerful missiles targeted secret Israeli sites—which Netanyahu is still censoring—he is now openly dictating what the US should or

shouldn't say or do in talks with Iran," he stated.

On June 13, Israel launched a blatant and unprovoked act of aggression against Iran, assassinating many high-ranking military commanders, nuclear scientists, and ordinary civilians.

More than a week later, the United States also entered the war by bombing three Iranian nuclear sites in a grave violation of the United Nations Charter, international law, and the NPT.

In response, the Iranian Armed Forces targeted strategic sites across the occupied territories as well as the Al-Udeid air base in Qatar, the largest American military base in West Asia. On June 24, Iran, through its successful retaliatory operations against both the Israeli regime and the US, managed to impose a halt to the illegal assault.

Electricity shortages whittled down to less than 10,000 megawatts: Minister



Abbas Aliabadi

Economy Desk

Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi announced on Monday that the 20,000-megawatt power imbalance at the beginning of the current administration had decreased to less than 10,000 megawatts during peak consumption periods, stressing that the achievement had enabled the ministry to provide more electricity to industries. “Fortunately, the Ministry of Energy has been able to provide more electricity to industries and distribute energy more optimally. Power outages in the household sector have been minimal and during the day, and fortunately, we do not have blackouts at night. Therefore, it can be said that we have a difficult month ahead,

and we will overcome it with mutual cooperation,” Aliabadi said. Speaking to reporters after a parliamentary meeting, Aliabadi pointed to the extent of blackouts and the country’s water supply status, saying, “The Ministry of Energy has faced challenges in all periods, but this year we are facing a drought, which affects both water and electricity.” Regarding the water shortage for cooling in thermal power plants, he added, “The Ministry of Energy is trying to implement air cooling in these power plants, and due to the difficult conditions we are in, we ask people to cooperate in consuming less water and electricity, as in previous periods.” Elaborating on Ministry of

Energy’s plan for water and electricity reserves under the special conditions prevailing in the country, Aliabadi said, “The country has experienced consecutive droughts for five years, and this year we have received about 43.9% less water compared to the medium and long-term average, and this number changes over time. Given the emergency situation in four provinces, a special meeting was held to address the situation in such provinces.” The energy minister underlined that the main plan of the ministry is to control water consumption and added, “If people cooperate and observe the consumption pattern, resilience can be maintained until the rainy season. However, a

lack of necessary cooperation leads to the implementation of plans such as imposing penalties for excessive consumers and incentives for efficient consumers; therefore, meetings were held, and it was decided to inform people about the consumption pattern so that they can act accordingly.” Aliabadi said the ministry has plans underway to develop power plants and better manage consumption load, adding that more than a thousand power plants (with low megawatts) are being built across the country, which will be connected to the grid and supply local electricity. “This is a good opportunity to ensure our stability and increase resilience in the difficult times ahead,” he noted.

Tehran, Beijing underscore boost in container trains to bolster trade ties

Economy Desk

CEO of Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (RAJA) Jabbar Ali Zakeri and his Chinese counterpart on Monday placed a premium on increasing the number of container trains between the two countries. Zakeri and Guo Zhuxue met and discussed during the former’s trip to China to participate in the General Assembly of the International Union of Railways (UIC) and also the 12th World Congress on High-Speed Rail. The chairman of China Railways pointed to the deepening of cooperation between Tehran and Beijing in recent years, and commended the 2024 resumption of container trains between the two sides, expressing hope that bilateral cooperation would expand. Guo hailed Iran as an important partner within the framework of the “One Belt, One Road” initiative and emphasized the need for coordination to stabilize prices and fa-



CEO of Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (RAJA) Jabbar Ali Zakeri (2nd L) and his Chinese counterpart Guo Zhuxue (2nd R) meet in the capital Beijing, China, on July 14, 2025. ● IRNA

cilitate customs procedures in the southern corridor. The CEO of Iranian Railways also, referring to the historical relations between the two countries, outlined Iran Railways’ plan for developing the rail network and increasing transit and freight transport. Referring to the electrification

and double-tracking projects of the East-West corridor in Iran from Sarakhs border to Razi border, Zakeri said, “A contract for the electrification of about one thousand kilometers of this route, with the aim of increasing rail freight capacity from five million tons to 15 million tons, has been finalized

with one of the Chinese companies.” Stressing that the East-West corridor is divided into the three branches of northern, central, and southern, he said, “A proposal has been made by Afghanistan Railways to Iran regarding the construction of a railway line from Kashgar, China, to Afghanistan with a standard gauge in the East-West corridor. This is a good opportunity for Iran and China to establish integrated rail connectivity between these two countries with a standard rail line.” Zakeri, pointing to the investment of several foreign companies in the Aprin dry rail port, invited China Railways to invest in the strategic port.

Snapback or return ...

If international agreements can be activated, paused, or weaponized at the discretion of powerful actors irrespective of their current legal status, we risk entering an era where legal instruments are manipulated as tools of domination rather than cooperation. This undermines not just Iran’s sovereign rights, but the credibility of global diplomacy as a whole.

Geopolitical calculus behind snapback threats

The threat of the snapback of sanctions is rarely about technical non-compliance; it is often tied to broader objectives. For the United States and certain European allies, the invocation of the snapback can serve multiple purposes: to pressure Iran into further concessions, to influence domestic politics in Tehran, or to signal firmness to domestic and regional audiences. However, such tactics are fraught with risk. History has shown that coercive approaches, particularly when perceived as legally illegitimate, tend to entrench resistance rather than foster compliance. Furthermore, global perceptions of Western duplicity—exiting an agreement only to re-enter its punitive clauses—undermine trust not just in the JCPOA but in international diplomacy writ large. In a time when multilateralism is already under severe strain, such acts send a harmful message to other nations considering negotiated solutions to complex security challenges.

Reimagining legal integrity in global governance

The snapback debate is not solely about Iran or nuclear diplomacy. It is emblematic of a larger crisis in international law—namely, the gap between formal legal structures and the geopolitical realities that shape their application. When the enforcement of law becomes selective or expedient, the very idea of a rules-based international order comes into question.

This calls for a renewed commitment to legal coherence and multilateral accountability. The JCPOA was, and remains, a test case for the viability of negotiated diplomacy in resolving high-stakes security issues. If its provisions are to be respected selectively, the precedent set will ripple far beyond the Middle East.

Call for constructive engagement

Rather than reverting to punitive mechanisms with questionable legal grounding, the international community must recommit to diplomacy as the first—and not last—resort. Genuine engagement, mutual respect, and adherence to international norms are not signs of weakness; they are pillars of sustainable peace and stability. For its part, Iran has consistently signaled readiness to return to its JCPOA commitments, provided that sanctions relief is verifiably restored. The onus now lies with Western powers to decide whether they seek compliance through trust-building or coercion through legal manipulation. The international community must ask itself: Do we stand for law as a shared foundation or as a weapon wielded by the powerful? The answer will define not only the fate of the JCPOA but the credibility of international diplomacy for decades to come.

Iranian olive oil notches up global quality gold award

Economy Desk

The Iranian Agriculture Ministry announced on Monday that the country’s olive oil has won a gold medal for quality at the Global Olive Oil Stars 2025 in England. Karim Zolfaghari, head of the ministry’s farming mechanization department, said one of the processing industry units with an operating license from the Tehran Province Agricultural Jihad Organization succeeded in notching up a gold medal in the quality section of the latest global olive oil event, known as Global Olive Oil Stars 2025, in London. The international competition was held from June 27 to 28 with the participation of 427 product samples from 21 countries. “In this section of the event, the chemical and sensory quality of extra virgin olive oil, laboratory tests to check the level of phenolic compounds and their compliance with EU regulations, evaluation of added flavors for flavored olive oil, and packaging design were the criteria for selecting the best,” Zolfaghari said. The official stated that the number of active units with operating licenses from the Agriculture Ministry in the olive oil extraction industry is 63 units with a nominal production capacity



of 53,600 tons of various oils, including virgin and extra virgin. “Processing industries can play a key role in preventing waste, increasing product shelf life, creating added value, and generating foreign exchange from exports for the country,” Zolfaghari

said. “Regarding olives, a portion of the product produced in the country is also converted into various types of canned olives by processing industry units.” Olive oil is divided into several different types, each with its own specific characteristics and properties. The classification is usually based on color, taste, and acidity. Extra virgin olive oil is the highest quality olive oil, containing all the properties and benefits of olives. To produce this oil, perfectly healthy olives are washed and their oil extracted by pressing as quickly as possible after harvesting. This oil has a rich taste and essential vitamins, and due to the preservation of polyphenols and antioxidants, it offers anti-inflammatory and health benefits. Virgin olive oil is a type of olive oil produced from healthy, high-quality olives using the cold-pressing method. This oil has an acidity between 0.8% and 2% and has a mild taste and olive aroma. Virgin olive oil contains vitamins and antioxidants that are beneficial for health and can help reduce bad cholesterol. This oil is commonly used in sauces and cooking at medium temperatures and is a healthy and nutritious option for the diet.

Iran's doctrine rules out nuclear weapons: *MP*

Negotiation marks 'endgame of any conflict'

INTERVIEW *Alaeddin Boroujerdi (born March 21, 1951), an Iranian politician and member of the 12th Iranian Parliament representing the cities of Larestan, Khonj, Gerash, Evaz, and Juyom of the Fars Province, has previously served as the representative for the city of Boroujerd across the 6th to 10th terms of the Parliament. He has taken on the chairmanship of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee during the 7th, 8th, 9th, and the first two years of the 10th Parliament, and has held down posts such as Iran's ambassador to China and special envoy for Afghanistan in his diplomatic career. In an interview, Boroujerdi fielded questions about the recent 12-day war and related issues, as follows:*



How do you assess the brutal war imposed on our country by the Zionist regime and the United States over 12 days? What were its origins?

BOROUJERDI: This was indeed an imposed war as we have never been the ones to set off a conflict, nor will we ever be. We have always acted in line with the United Nations Charter, which recognizes the right of legitimate self-defense for all countries. We also stand up for our nation's right to defend itself. What we did was a valiant defense, and, time and again, the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution, as Commander-in-Chief, has warned that if the enemy makes a miscalculation against Iran and crosses the line, we will raze Tel Aviv and Haifa to the ground. The enemy brushed off the Leader's statements on the international stage as mere bravado, but what happened — despite the heavy censorship imposed by the Zionist regime and its military — let the world in on the fact that a new and emerging power had come onto the scene, changing the regional equation. It's worth recalling that since 1949, when this cancerous tumor was planted in the Islamic world by perfidious Britain, the Zionists have brought about dire conditions in the region by massacring the oppressed people of Palestine, displacing millions, and creating an unpleasant situation for the Islamic world. Despite all the wars waged by Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq against the Zionist regime, in every single one, Israel pushed forward and occupied more land.



This fed into the false notion that the Zionist army was invincible. But since 2000, Hezbollah, as a rising force in southern Lebanon, stood up to Israel. In 2006, the Zionist regime pulled together all its might to wipe out Hezbollah. Even then-US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice, during her visit to Lebanon, announced that an operation would soon begin to "close the Hezbollah file". Israel, under the pretext of two captured soldiers, launched an assault on Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, targeting only the Dahiyeh district of Beirut and southern Lebanon, thinking that, with what they considered the world's fourth most powerful army, Hezbollah would be wiped out in a matter of days. Yet, after several weeks, Israel found itself in dire straits against a lightly armed militia. Thousands of Israeli citizens were holed up in

shelters, factories had shut down, and the regime's cohesion was falling apart. Israel wanted to call it quits, but the US refused to end the war unless the "Hezbollah file" was closed. After about a month, when Hezbollah struck the regime's ultramodern corvette and Al-Manar broadcast its sinking, the Zionists finally threw in the towel at the Rome summit. The back-and-forth between Hezbollah and Israel continued in 2008, 2012, and 2018, with wars lasting 8, 10, and 18 days, respectively, in which Israel came up short. The balance of power shifted, and despite its hundreds of thousands of trained troops, tanks, aircraft, and warplanes, Israel fell short while Hezbollah came out on top. After Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, a new phenomenon emerged: Hamas concluded that instead of suffering casualties, it was better to go on

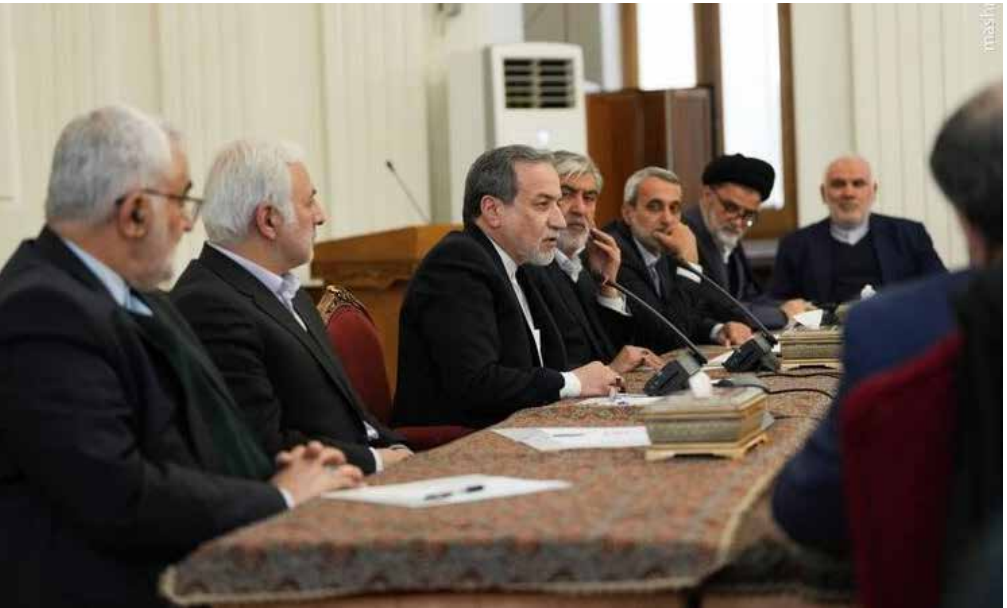
International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi (front-2nd R) looks at a poster of the five Iranian nuclear scientists that had been assassinated by Israel up to that point, during his visit to an exhibition showcasing Iran's peaceful nuclear achievements in Tehran, Iran, on April 17, 2025. ● **TASNIM**



Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu airs a televised message to "the Iranian people" on June 13, 2025, hours after he launched an illegal, brutal attack on residential buildings. ● **SCREENGRAB**

What was their goal in attacking Iran?

During the imposed 12-day war, the Zionists, by assassinating some of our military commanders, nuclear scientists, and civilians, and by violating our airspace, thought Iran would surrender. But within hours, replacement commanders were appointed by the Leader, and in less than 24 hours, the order to launch a counterattack was handed down, and the defense of the country got underway. The Zionists, relying on their capabilities and the Iron



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (3rd-L) speaks to the members of the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee on March 5, 2025. ● **MASHREGH NEWS**

In my view, those who, for any reason, prefer some other arrangement and sow discord on social media or public platforms should change tack because the enemy may try to run the same play again. We need this unity, and even if the war winds down completely, we'll still need national solidarity to get to the bottom of all our issues. We've often heard this call for unity from Imam Khomeini and the Leader.

Dome — on par with NATO's assets — expected victory. But by the eighth day, Israel saw the writing on the wall and called on the US to weigh in. The US targeted three of Iran's nuclear facilities. In response, Iran, with remarkable courage, struck back at America's base in Qatar, launching six 400-ton missiles at al-Udeid, the largest US airbase in the region. This forced Trump's hand to use Qatar as a go-between to broker a cease-fire. In other words, it was they who pushed for a cease-fire and an end to the war. Since Iran's policy has never been warmongering, it was decided to halt the conflict. However, the aftershocks of Iran's military operations, despite the Zionist regime's tight censorship, are starting to make headlines. It must be noted that, unlike their adversaries, who zeroed in on blind spots like Gaza, Iran's missiles, with pinpoint accuracy and after breaking through several layers of enemy defense, hit military targets directly — a major point of pride for Iran that brought down the aura of the Zionist regime. Of course, this war also brought to light some of our own weaknesses. Unlike during the eight-year war, when we had nothing to fall back on against Saddam's missiles, today we stand among the world's top five producers of missiles and drones. On this basis, beefing up defensive systems, plugging intelligence gaps to keep out enemy infiltration, and acquiring advanced fighter jets will put our armed forces in a position to tip the balance of power in the region, so the enemy won't even dare entertain the idea of attacking Iran.

During the 12-day war, even the overseas opposition rallied around the nation and the Islamic Establishment, shooting down the enemy's hopes of stirring up unrest. What's your take on this?
I believe a crucial link in the chain of miscalculations came into play through the Zionist regime. Netanyahu himself even uttered a few sentences in Persian, saying, "We've done our part, now it's your turn, people of Iran." But the Iranian people are truly courageous, honorable, and astute; At critical junctures,

they set aside all political and social differences and, both inside and outside the country — even those who were imprisoned for various reasons — banded together in a unified front to defend the nation. This unity crossed out the enemy's calculations, and one must truly commend this nation; The government and other officials should appreciate the people. While some economic and livelihood challenges remain, as the Leader has pointed out, the Iranian people are composed, brave, and discerning, which has raised our national standing in the world's eyes. The enemy thought that by targeting some of our military commanders, the fabric of the Islamic Establishment would come apart at the seams, and something major would break out for them. But thanks to the Leader's foresight, the command vacuum was filled in no time, the people stepped up, and something monumental happened — unity and cohesion will remain a key deterrent in the future.

What do you suggest for preserving and strengthening this national cohesion?
In my view, those who, for any reason, prefer some other arrangement and sow discord on social media or public platforms should change tack because the enemy may try to run the same play again. We need this unity, and even if the war winds down completely, we'll still need national solidarity to get to the bottom of all our issues. We've often heard this call for unity from Imam Khomeini and the Leader.

How can the link between negotiation and action in the field pave the way for Iran's success in potentially upcoming talks?
The 12-day imposed war turned the tables politically worldwide. For the first time, the Arab League, in a joint decision and statement, strongly condemned the Zionist regime's actions and declared support for Iran. Similarly, foreign ministers of Islamic countries, major parties like the Muslim Brotherhood, Al-Azhar University, and public opinion in Europe and America came out against Israel's actions toward Iran and Gaza, which



International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Grossi (2nd-L) visits the Fordow nuclear enrichment plant, central Iran, on November 15, 2024. ● AEOI

is highly significant. Naturally, the endgame of any military conflict is negotiation. Iran, after the eight-year war with Saddam's regime — backed by about 80 countries — sat down at the table for two years. At the time, there was pressure that the Arvand River should go to Iraq. Some inside the country believed Saddam was crazy and would attack again, but in the end, peace had to be accepted. Dr. Velayati (then foreign minister) said he would not sign a treacherous document that would compromise our territorial integrity, and ultimately, Imam Khomeini signed off on Velayati's approach. Today, we are undoubtedly in a position of strength, and the other side knows only a fraction of our capabilities was brought to bear in the 12-day war. Even the German foreign minister, during a visit to Tel Aviv, admitted that the casualty figures announced by Israel do not match the scale of destruction in Tel Aviv and Haifa — since one-third of the fake capital of the regime was destroyed, making them feel the pain of Gaza and Lebanon. If negotiations are to happen, they must be conducted with authority; the Supreme Na-

tional Security Council calls the shots, and the foreign minister is the executor. Criticism of Dr. Araghchi, the foreign minister, on social media is misplaced; These decisions are made at the highest level, with top military and intelligence officials present. In negotiations, we must set the terms, not the other way around — otherwise, talks will be pointless. Recently, Trump claimed that if Iran falls in line like Syria, he would lift sanctions. In my view, Trump needs a team of top psychologists and psychiatrists to sort him out. During Trump's first term, we met with the martyred Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, who said he hoped Trump would win, because "Trump's presidency would speed up America's downfall." For example, these days, we see Elon Musk — once Trump's close ally and a big reason for his election — falling out with him and seeking a new party, showing deep cracks in America's own ranks.

How was the response of international bodies to Israel's attack on Iran, and how might the Iranian Parliament's plan to suspend cooperation with the IAEA shake up international approaches?
One of the UN Security Council's official duties is to safeguard global security, but when a country is attacked, the UN looks the other way. Even when our nuclear facilities were hit, the IAEA, whose clear duty is to condemn such actions quickly, kept mum, showing that Grossi, the IAEA chief, is merely a puppet. Over the past two decades, under both ElBaradei and Amano, multiple inspection teams came over to Iran and reported to the Board of Governors on our peaceful nuclear activities. Yet, Grossi put out a completely false report, leading the Board to issue a resolution that gave Israel a pretext to kick off military operations against Iran. In my view, Grossi also be-

trayed the Agency severely, and the IAEA's credibility and reputation went down the drain with this false report. However, we moved quickly in the Parliament to call off all cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency. As a result, IAEA inspectors were shown the door, and all of the country's nuclear activities now carry on out of sight of the Agency's inspectors. Of course, Iran's commitment to forgoing nuclear weapons is serious, and, according to the military doctrine of the Islamic Republic and the Leader's fatwa, building a nuclear bomb has no place. The global experience — especially the bitter memory in public opinion of the criminal America's use of atomic bombs against Japan in World War II — serves as a lesson. Nevertheless, we will certainly press ahead with peaceful nuclear activities.

How do you assess the government's performance during the 12-day war?
Despite the criticisms leveled, the Pezeshkian government did what it took. Some people may not sign off on certain government actions as they expect officials to stand their ground firmly against their counterparts. Still, Iran today holds all the cards, and our strength should be visible in every dialogue and negotiation with other countries. Iran's policy and the Islamic Establishment's approach are to build up strong relations with its neighbors, and the government is pushing ahead with this policy in earnest. In my view, during the 12-day war, the government pulled out all the stops. For the enemy, it makes no difference who is in charge; Their only aim is to target Iranian officials. The reason the Zionists have assassinated our nuclear scientists is that they want to keep knowledge under wraps. But since we have renounced nuclear weapons, we must ramp up our conventional military capabilities for deterrence — and we will. The Iranian people can rest assured that the armed forces will showcase this power, just as they did in the 12-day war.

The interview first appeared in Persian on IRNA.



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (L) visits some of the residential buildings hit by Israel during its brutal war of aggression against Iran, in Tehran on July 1, 2025. ● president.ir

Asian U20 Wrestling Championships:

Freestyle glory completes team double for Iran

Sports Desk

Iran claimed the freestyle title at the Asian U20 Wrestling Championships in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, by grabbing a remarkable four golds, double silvers, and one bronze medal across 10 weight classes.

The Iranian squad collected 179 points to finish atop the team table, with India (157 points) and Kazakhstan (133 points) in the following spots.

The freestyle crown came after the Iranian Greco-Roman squad had walked away with the team trophy in the Kyrgyz capital on Thursday, thanks to four golds and five bronze medals.

Reigning Asian senior champion Abolfazl Rahmani brought the curtain down on a dominant campaign for the country on Sunday by beating Turkmenistan's Dovletgeldi Myradov 6-2

to the ultimate prize in the 86kg contests.

Mohammad-Mahdi Mamivand won a first gold medal for Iran on the final day of the competitions, courtesy of a superiority win (11-0) against Umarxon Muydinov of Uzbekistan in the 74kg showdown.

Tohid Nouri, meanwhile, had to settle for a silver medal in the 92kg class following a 6-1 loss to Uzbek wrestler Sherzod Poyonov.

Iranian boys had bagged four medals, including double golds, on the preceding night.

Ebrahim Elahi defeated Ariya Yoshida of Japan 8-3 for the gold medal of the 70kg division, while Erfan Alizadeh rounded off an emphatic run in the 97kg contests by securing a 5-0 victory over Kamil Kurugliyev of Kazakhstan in the final.

Abolfazl Shamsipour finished

his campaign with a silver medal after a 5-4 loss to Amit of India in the 79kg final, with Arshia Haddadi bouncing back from a last-four defeat against Kazakhstan's Nurdanat Aitanov to beat Kabe Matjanov of Turkmenistan 11-0 for a consolation bronze in the 57kg class.

Earlier in Bishkek, Payam Ahmadi (55kg), Ahoura Bouveiri (77kg), Mohammad-Hadi Seydi (97kg), and Abolfazl Fat'hi (130kg) headlined Iran's medal haul in the Greco-Roman event by notching up the golds in their respective weight classes.

Meanwhile, Seyyed Iman Hosseini (60kg), Mohammad-Javad Talebi (63kg), Gholamreza Abdevali (67kg), Amir-Mahdi Saeidinava (72kg) and Hamdireza Keshkar (87kg) won five bronzes as Iran lifted the team trophy with 185 points – followed by Kyrgyzstan (166pts) and Uzbekistan (151pts).



● IAWFIR

AFC Women's Asia Cup qualifiers:

Iran in pole position after Bhutan rout



Iran captain Zahra Qanbari (9) celebrates with teammates during a 7-1 victory over Bhutan at the AFC Women's Asia Cup qualifiers in Amman, Jordan, on July 13, 2025.

● AFC

Sports Desk

Iran celebrated a second successive victory at the AFC Women's Asia Cup qualifiers by hammering Bhutan 7-1 in Amman, Jordan, on Sunday.

The victory left Marziyeh Jafari's girls, who had eased to a 4-0 win against Singapore on Thursday, on top of the Group A table, thanks to a superior goal difference over Jordan.

Zahra Alizadeh's cool touch put Iran in front in the second minute before Fatemeh Shaban's double gave Team Melli a three-goal lead inside 10 minutes at the King Abdullah II Stadium.

Having stepped into the game

on the back of impressive wins against Singapore and Lebanon, Bhutan pulled one back through Deki Lhazom in the 12th minute, but Negin Zandi's composed finish restored the three-goal cushion in the 36th minute.

Iran continued to dominate the game after the break with Zandi smashing an effort into the side netting before Alizadeh's wonderful lob hit the crossbar.

Iranians' tenacity saw them add more goals late on through skipper Zahra Qanbari (81st), and substitutes Mohaddeseh Zolfi (83rd) and Roujin Tamrian (85th) to round off an emphatic scoreline as they stayed on course for a place at the finals.

"We delivered a much better per-

formance than our first game [against Singapore] and played with more cohesion in all parts of the pitch. That's a positive sign, and I just hope we keep improving," said Iran boss Jafari, who left her role at Bam Khatoon in April to take the national team job.

"Khatun had played the Bhutanese champion in the AFC Women's Champions League [last year], which gave us a good understanding of their tactical structure and weaknesses and helped us come up with the right game plan today," added Jafari.

Later in the day, Jordan hammered Singapore by five unanswered goals to close the gap on Iran in the table.

Next for Iran is a game against Lebanon on Wednesday, with Jordan taking on Bhutan.

Iran and Jordan will square off on Saturday in what promises to decide the top spot of the qualification group and a place in the 2026 finals in Australia next March.

Iranian fullback Moharrami joins Tractor

Sports Desk

Iran international fullback Sadeq Moharrami left Dinamo Zagreb to join Persian Gulf Pro League champion Tractor as a free agent on Sunday. Moharrami, 29, is a fourth summer signing for the northwest Iranian club, following center-back Farshad Faraji, striker Masoud Zaer-Kazemeini, and Croatian midfielder Tibor Halilović, who joined from top-flight side HNK Gorica in his home country last week. Moharrami enjoyed a trophy-laden time at Dinamo Zagreb since joining the club in 2018, winning the Croatian



● FFIRI

league title on six occasions, as well as double Croatian Cup triumphs and one Super Cup silverware.

He made 143 appearances in all competitions as a right back over two spells – either side of loan stint at Lokomotiva Zagreb – for Dinamo, finding the net once, while providing teammates with nine assists.

Moharrami has 29 international caps under his belt and played for Team Melli at the 2022 World Cup and the AFC Asian Cup last year, where a sidelining ligament injury saw him miss out on the best part of the World Cup Asian qualifiers.

Sinner rises above adversity to make Italian history

Sports Desk

REUTERS – Jannik Sinner spoke of his pride at overcoming months of adversity on and off the court after claiming his first Wimbledon title by dethroning rival Carlos Alcaraz on Sunday.

The ice-cool 23-year-old beat the Spaniard 4-6 6-4 6-4 6-4 to become Italy's first Wimbledon singles champion and claim his fourth Grand Slam title.

Sinner's third major came at this year's Australian Open where he retained the title despite the dark cloud of a possible ban for a doping violation hanging over his head. Tennis authorities found the world number one bore 'no fault or negligence' for a positive test for anabolic steroid clostebol – Sinner saying it had inadvertently entered his system via a massage from a team member – but he accepted a three-month ban from World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) in February.

His title on Sunday was his first since returning in May and came five weeks after losing an epic French Open final to Alcaraz in which he squandered three match points. "Very emotional, even if I don't cry," Sinner told reporters on Sunday. "It feels emotional because only me and the people who are close to me know exactly what we have been through on and off the court, and it



● REUTERS

has been everything except easy. "We've tried to push every practice session, even if I was struggling at times mentally. Maybe even more in practice sessions because I feel like when I play the match, I can switch off and just play. I believe that this helped me a lot."

Sinner said the way he lost to Alcaraz in Paris had actually made it easier to move on.

"I always tried to be honest with myself ... I always tried to accept it," he said. "I believe if you lose a Grand Slam final that way, it's much better like this than when someone kills you."

"I did a lot of intensity in every practice because I felt like that I could play very good. That's why I also said after Roland Garros that it's not the time to be down, because another Grand Slam is coming up, and I did great here."

Keshtkar, Dadmarz secure Greco-Roman spots at Wrestling Worlds

Sports Desk

Iranian wrestlers Mohammad-Mahdi Keshtkar and Pouya Dadmarz defeated their domestic opponents at the World Championships trials in Tehran on Sunday as the country competed the 10-man Greco-Roman squad for September's showpiece in Zagreb, Croatia.

A gold medalist in last December's National Championships, Keshtkar, who also won a silver in February's Ranking Series event, came out victorious in back-to-back encounters against former world champion Meysam Dalkhani in the 63kg showdown. Keshtkar defeated Dalkhani 8-0 in the first bout and then repeated the superiority victory (12-3) over the Takhti



Iranian Greco-Roman wrestler Mohammad-Mahdi Keshtkar (L) is seen in action against Meysam Dalkhani in a 63kg bout at the World Championships trials in Tehran, Iran, on July 13, 2025.

● IAWFIR

Cup gold medalist to punch his ticket for the Croatian capital.

Reigning world silver medalist Dadmarz, meanwhile, defeated teenage prodigy Armin Shamsipour – a world under-17 champion last year – by a 4-1 scoreline to remain on course for a third successive world medal in the 55kg division.

Joining Keshtkar and Dadmarz in the Iranian Greco-Roman squad are Olympic champions Saied Esmaeili (67kg) and Mohammad-Hadi Saravi



(97kg), plus world superheavyweight champion Amin Mirzazadeh (130kg), Ali Ahmadi-Vafa (60kg), Danial Sohrabi (72kg), Alireza Abdevali (77kg), Gholamreza Farrokhi (82kg), and Alireza Mohammadi (87kg), who won an impressive silver medal in last year's Paris Olympics.

Soak up beauty of Chamkhaleh Beach in Gilan Province

Iranica Desk

Chamkhaleh is a neighborhood in the central district of Langarud which some consider to resemble European cities. It boasts numerous attractions for travelers and offers exciting entertainment options. This area, with its relatively pleasant climate, and diverse range of hotels and accommodations, is a popular choice for many tourists visiting the north. The best times to visit Chamkhaleh are spring and early autumn, although many visitors also come during the summer, kojaro.com wrote.

Chamkhaleh is located 30 kilometers from Lahijan, 15 kilometers from Rudsar, and approximately 360 kilometers from Tehran, a journey that takes around five hours.

Chamkhaleh is one of the main tourist destinations in northern Iran. Thanks to having one of the best beaches in Gilan Province — often compared to European beaches — it attracts thousands of tourists each year.

Most of the local population belongs to the Gilak and Kurdish ethnic groups, with Gilaki and Laki Kurdish being the primary languages spoken in the area.

The residents are mostly relatives and acquaintances who know each other; however, in recent years, due to villa constructions, many non-locals have also settled here. The economy of Chamkhaleh is primarily based on agriculture, fishing, and livestock farming, with products like rice and watermelon — one of the region's famous agricultural products — being cultivated extensively.

Like other coastal cities, Chamkhaleh offers a variety of accommodation options. Besides the hotels operating in the area, you can also create memorable experiences by renting a villa or an apartment.

Sightseeing places

Chamkhaleh Beach is renowned as one of the cleanest beaches along the Caspian Sea, offering excellent recreational facilities and a vast, sandy shoreline free of stones. The tranquil envi-

ronment and well-maintained facilities provide visitors with a relaxing and enjoyable experience. If you are interested in sports, you can engage in beach soccer or volleyball, both of which are popular activities here. For adventure enthusiasts and thrill-seekers, Chamkhaleh's beach offers a variety of exciting options, including horseback riding, boating, jet skiing, and other water sports.

The prime seasons for swimming are during the warm months, particularly spring and summer, when the sea waters are inviting and safe for a refreshing swim. During these times, visitors can create unforgettable memories.

For those interested in more adventurous activities, rent-a-quad bike services are also available, allowing visitors to explore the coastline and surrounding areas in a fun and exhilarating way.

Thanks to the stone pavilions that are dotted along the beach, visitors can take a break and relax while enjoying the spectacular view of the sea. Numerous cafes and restaurants are conveniently located nearby, serving as perfect spots to unwind, enjoy a snack or a full meal, and soak in the scenic beauty of the area.

The best time to visit Chamkhaleh depends largely on your travel goals and preferences. Generally, spring and early autumn are considered the most suitable seasons for visiting this coastal city. In spring, particularly from March to late May, the weather tends to be mild and pleasant; rainfall decreases significantly, and the natural surroundings are at their lushest and most vibrant. This season is ideal for leisurely strolls along the beach, visiting the nearby rice paddies, and exploring the scenic countryside and nearby attractions.

Summer, despite being the busiest tourist season due to the warm weather and lively atmosphere, can be less comfortable for some visitors because of the high heat and humidity. However, if swimming and seaside recreational activities are your priorities, July and August are excellent months to visit, as the water is warm and the activities are abundant.



Chamkhaleh Beach
● tehranpress.com

Early autumn offers a peaceful retreat with cooler temperatures and fewer tourists. During this period, visitors can enjoy serene beaches, beautiful autumn foliage, and a tranquil atmosphere perfect for nature walks and relaxing getaways. It's an excellent time for sightseeing and appreciating the natural beauty of Chamkhaleh's landscape.

Winter months tend to be cold and rainy, making the area less popular among tourists. However, those seeking quietness, solitude, and a peaceful coastal retreat may find charm in visiting during the winter season, enjoying the calm, empty beaches, and the picturesque, moody seascapes.

Flamingo Island

One of the most exciting tourist attractions in Chamkhaleh is Flamingo Island, also known as Arshia. Located along the Caspian Sea coast, this island offers a variety of water-related activities and accommodation options, making it an ideal destination for leisure and relaxation. Visitors can enjoy not only jet skiing but also boat riding, fishing, and exploring the beautiful natural surroundings. The island's scenic beauty and recreational facilities make it a popular spot for families, couples, and adventure enthusiasts alike.

Adobe Bridge of Langarud

The Adobe Bridge (Pol-e Khesh-ti) of Langarud stands as one of



Adobe Bridge of Langarud
● wikipedia.org



Kiyakalayah Wetland
● ehgardi.ir

the most prominent historical monuments in Langarud. This impressive brick and mortar bridge, characterized by its multiple arch spans, dates back to the Ilkhanid period. It historically served as a vital connector, linking the old neighborhoods of the city and facilitating trade and transportation. This elegant and symmetrical structure is now celebrated as a symbol of the region's rich architectural heritage and draws many visitors and photographers. The bridge's

dimensions allowed ships to pass underneath, highlighting its importance as a maritime thoroughfare. Over the years, various restoration efforts have been undertaken to preserve this historic landmark and ensure its longevity as part of Langarud's cultural heritage.

Kiyakalayah Wetland of Langarud

Located south of Langarud and nestled within the heart of the city's urban landscape, Kiyaka-

layeh Wetland is one of the most scenic and ecologically significant wetlands in Gilan Province. Today, however, due to ongoing urban development and neglect by officials, this precious habitat faces the threat of destruction. Historically, the wetland covered approximately 800 hectares, but it has now been reduced to just 120 hectares.

Kiyakalayah Wetland, with its majestic alder trees, vibrant water lilies, and diverse migratory bird species, offers a captivating natural scenery. It also plays a crucial role as a vital water source for the surrounding rice paddies, supporting local agriculture and biodiversity. The best times to visit this wetland are during spring and early autumn, when the lush landscape is at its most vibrant and picturesque, providing visitors with an unforgettable experience of nature's beauty.

Gilan's coastal wonders

Gilan Province, located along Iran's Caspian Sea coast, is renowned for its lush landscapes, vibrant culture, and diverse ecosystems. This province is characterized by its verdant forests, extensive wetlands, scenic mountains, and tranquil beaches, making it a haven for nature lovers and adventure seekers alike. Gilan Province's temperate climate, especially during spring and early autumn, supports abundant agricultural activities, with rice paddies, tea plantations, and watermelon farms reflecting the region's rich farming tradition. The province's rich natural resources and scenic beauty attract numerous tourists annually, eager to explore its diverse attractions and pristine environments.

Coastal cities showcase the province's multifaceted appeal. These cities boast inviting beaches, natural ecosystems, and historical sites, blending tradition with modernity. Overall, Gilan Province's combination of natural beauty, cultural richness, and unique coastal attractions makes it a compelling destination for travelers seeking both relaxation and adventure along Iran's northern shores.



Chamkhaleh
● almasvila.com



President's message to Iranian diaspora

Pezeshkian: New chapter to begin with solidarity

Iran to pursue diplomacy using 'full political capacity'

Social Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Monday called on Iranians abroad to stand united with their homeland, pledging a new chapter of "hope" and "solidarity" in the wake of the country's recent 12-day war with Israel. In a message published by the president's office, Pezeshkian said his government would use "full political capacity" to steer the country away from war. The address marked Pezeshkian's first direct message to the Iranian diaspora since taking office in June. It followed weeks of high tensions triggered by Israel's

surprise military strikes, which killed Iranian commanders, nuclear scientists, and civilians, including women and children. The president framed Iran's missile response as "legitimate defense" under international law and said the retaliation had shattered the enemy's calculations. "We've never sought war," Pezeshkian said, "but we will never surrender." He stressed that Tehran remains committed to "constructive engagement" and reaffirmed Iran's longstanding position that its nuclear program is peaceful. "Experience shows that whenever Iran moves toward peace and stability, Israel interferes and escalates," he

added. Describing the recent domestic response as a show of national strength, Pezeshkian praised Iranians both at home and abroad for their "unprecedented unity." He called the grassroots mobilization during the conflict a "turning point" and credited Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei's "composure and firmness" with helping shape a nationwide front. Looking forward, Pezeshkian said his administration sees the solidarity forged during the conflict as an opportunity to better serve the people. "This is a season of renewal," he said, emphasizing the need for public trust, youth engagement,

and innovative thinking. "We must look critically at the past and build a new path through rationality and cooperation." He also vowed economic stability amid sanctions and war-related strain. Citing ongoing market surveillance, he assured citizens that the government is taking steps to prevent shortages of basic goods. "We are fully mobilized to protect livelihoods and ensure access to healthcare," Pezeshkian noted. The president closed by honoring those killed in the war and warning adversaries not to miscalculate Iran's resolve. "Our armed forces are at peak defensive readiness. Any future aggression will be met with even heavier blows."



Masoud Pezeshkian
● president.ir

Iran, Iraq, Pakistan agree on joint steps to ease Arbreen pilgrimage



Iran's Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni (c) stands with Iraqi Interior Minister Abdul Amir al-Shammari (l) and Pakistani Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi during a trilateral meeting in Tehran, Iran, July 14, 2025.
● IRNA

Social Desk

Interior ministers from Iran, Iraq and Pakistan met in Tehran on Monday to coordinate efforts for managing the annual Arbreen pilgrimage, which draws millions of Shia Muslims to Iraq each year. The meeting was hosted by Iran's Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni and attended by his Iraqi and Pakistani counterparts, Abdul Amir al-Shammari and Mohsin Naqvi, IRNA reported. Held ahead of this year's pilgrimage in early September, the trilateral summit focused on improving logistics, border control, and crowd management for the millions expected to travel, mostly by land, to the holy city of Karbala. Arbreen marks the end of the 40-day mourning period for Imam Hussein, a central figure in Shi'ite Islam. Iraq received over five million foreign pilgrims in 2024, with more than three million coming from Iran alone.

"We are fully ready to welcome pilgrims from all over the world," said al-Shammari, stressing Baghdad's "complete preparedness" under the directive of Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani. He called for continued Iranian support and urged Pakistan to better manage the return flow of its citizens to ease pressure on Iraqi border crossings. Naqvi, the Pakistani interior minister, pledged full support for Iraqi and Iranian plans and said Islamabad would not allow any Pakistani citizen to leave Iraq without proper documentation from January 2026 onward. "We want pilgrims to travel and return with the same caravans," he said, warning that undocumented stays had caused problems in past years. The ministers also agreed to form a trilateral working group to streamline coordination. Representatives from Iran and Iraq have already been appointed; Pakistan is expected to announce its delegate shortly. Al-Shammari urged all sides to "tight-

en field coordination" and update previous agreements where needed. Momeni described the talks as "constructive and warm-hearted" and said they had yielded "important decisions" on transportation, security, and health services for pilgrims. He praised Iraq's efforts to host millions and thanked al-Shammari for his personal involvement in smoothing operations. Alongside the ministers, governors from six Iranian border provinces—Ilam, Kermanshah, Khuzestan, Sistan-Baluchestan, West Azarbaijan, and South Khorasan—took part in the session, as did ambassadors from the three countries. Discussions touched on visa policies, border infrastructure and the deployment of volunteer groups and aid stations, or mawakib, inside Iraq. Naqvi also used the forum to condemn Israel's recent military campaign against Iran and praised Tehran's "legitimate defense." He thanked Iran's Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei for what he called "decisive leadership" during the 12-day war. Al-Shammari reminded attendees that Iraq had already begun preparations across all provinces and vowed to provide pilgrims with the "dignified services they deserve." He stressed that Arbreen's success depends on "mutual trust and synergy."

Iranian photographers shine at Florida museum awards

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian photographers Majid Hojjati and Armin Amirian took top honors at the 2025 International Photography Awards hosted by the Florida Museum of Photographic Arts (FMoPA), the museum announced on Monday. The annual contest, held in Tampa and regarded as one of the most prestigious of its kind in the United States, drew more than 2,500 submissions from 55 countries. This year's jury, composed of art and photography experts, highlighted innovation, cultural storytelling, and contemporary technique. Hojjati clinched the grand prize in the main competition with his image 'Eid Prayer,' which also won first place in the People/Portrait category. His second photograph, 'Stream of Life,' topped the Places/Landscape division. Amirian earned first prize in the Conceptual Photography category with a piece from his latest series. The museum described the work as "visually daring" and praised its nu-



anced cultural themes. FMoPA, one of only ten dedicated photography museums in the US, focuses on pushing the boundaries of photographic art. The museum will showcase the winning entries in a public exhibition running from July 15 through September 7 at its downtown Tampa location in Ybor City. The awards aim to spotlight global voices in visual storytelling. Organizers say this year's winners "pushed the envelope" in portraying human experience through the lens.

Iran showcases audio storytelling expertise at ABU Panel with NHK and RRI

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's national radio theater division joined broadcasters from Japan and Indonesia in a major international panel on audio storytelling at the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union's (ABU) Con-Fest in Kuala Lumpur, held from July 8 to 10, 2025, according to the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB). The session, titled 'Creative Uses of Sound in Radio Narratives,' was among the key panels of the three-day gathering, which drew delegates from 15 countries. Although Iran's presenter Mohsen Sohani, Director General of Performing Arts and Radio Namayesh, was unable to attend in person due to flight restrictions stemming from regional conflict, his team's presentation was broadcast as part of the official lineup. The pre-recorded presentation, produced in collaboration with veteran Iranian sound designer Farshad Azarnia, focused on cutting-edge audio narrative techniques. Through technical demonstrations and case studies from domestic productions, the session explored how Iran is "pushing boundaries" in using sound for immersive storytelling, organizers said. Azarnia's role in sound architecture and post-production was highlighted as "pivotal" in bringing the presentation up to international broadcast standards. Sohani described the contribution as "decisive" in matching the



caliber of global peers such as Japan's NHK and Indonesia's RRI, both of which presented alongside Iran. The panel drew strong engagement and was widely shared on ABU's digital platforms and featured in closing reports. According to IRIB, the exposure marked "a notable step" in strengthening Iran's international broadcasting profile. Sohani also credited Abbas Mohammadnejad, Director General of International Affairs at IRIB, and Meysam Mashaekh, an international affairs expert, for their coordination efforts. Their behind-the-scenes support was described as "crucial" to maintaining the organization's active presence in global media circles.

Iranian illustrators scoop top honors at Moscow book design fair

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian graphic designer Amir Najafi and illustrator Somayeh Mohammadi won top prizes at the Image of the Book competition in Moscow, held annually under the patronage of Russia's Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communications and the Moscow Book Designers and Illustrators Association. The event, which began in 2008 and went international in 2017, showcases outstanding work in six major categories, including fiction and non-fiction illustration, children's books, visual storytelling, and new artists, IRNA reported. This year, Najafi was the sole winner in the Best Book Cover Design category, while 'Vali,' illustrated by Mohammadi and written by Marjan Zarifi, clinched the

Best Picture Book award.

Najafi, who also serves as art director at Mehrak Publishing, was recognized for his cover designs on a series of children's titles, including 'Selfie with Mirza,' 'The Winter Without Shazdeh,' 'Like My Mother's Hands,' and 'The Boy Who Became a Crow'. All were published by Mehrak, a spin-off imprint of Sureh-Mehr, which gained independent status in 2022. The winning picture book 'Vali' tells the story of a lonely whale who, despite being surrounded by small fish friends, feels overwhelmed and heads to the Pacific Ocean in search of peace. The book has already racked up accolades at the Bologna Children's Book Fair in Italy and the Asian Festival of Children's Content in Singapore. 'Vali' was also among the selected works



at Illustrofest 7, an international illustration event held recently in Belgrade. Roughly 1,000 artists from various countries have been honored since Image of the Book opened its doors to global submissions. Iranian illustrators, riding a creative wave in children's publishing, have continued to make inroads on the international scene.