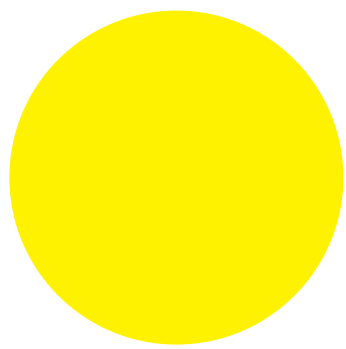


UNESCO head
condemns
Israeli killing of Iranian
media workers

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Iran Daily

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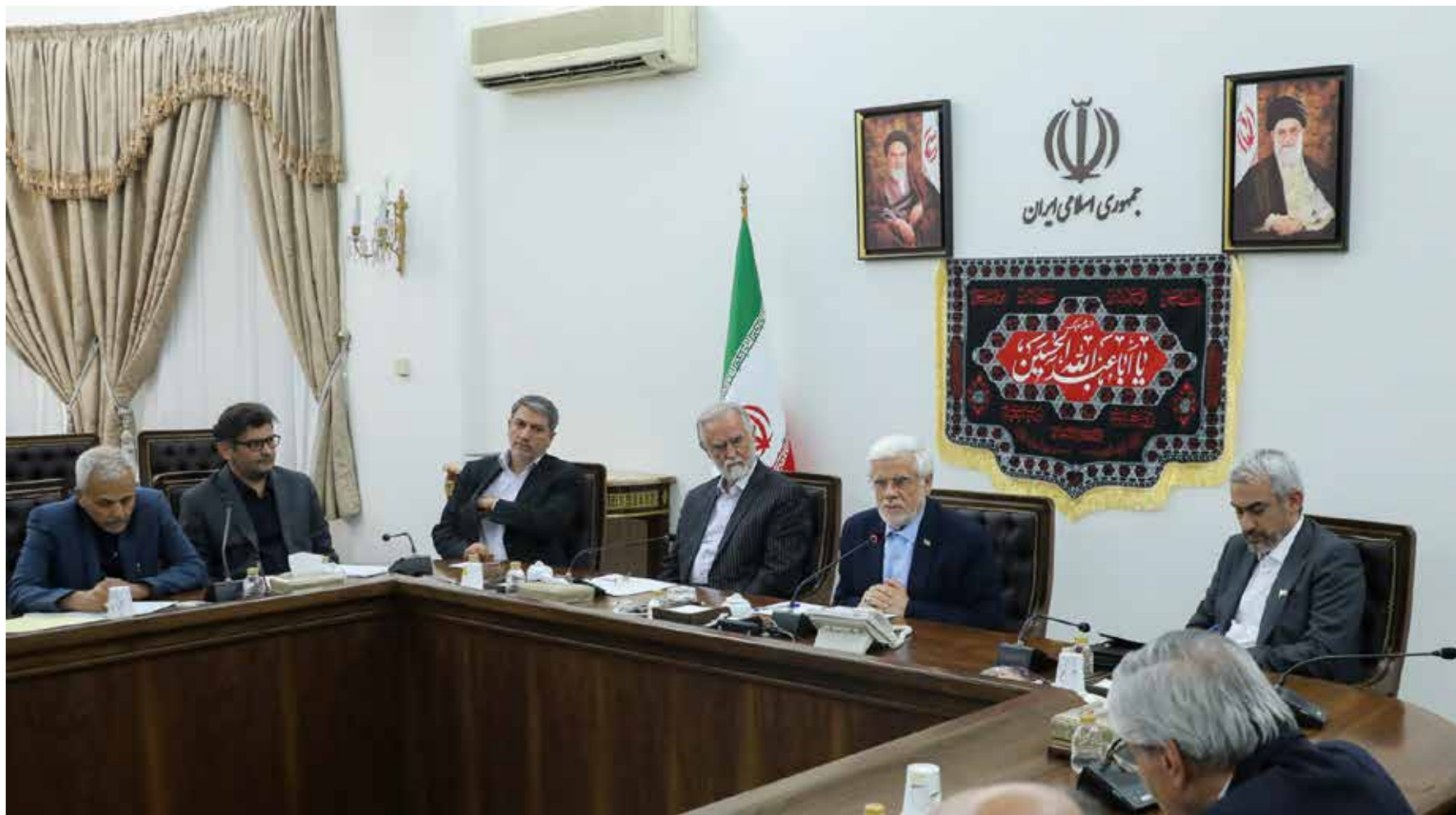
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Europeans have no grounds to trigger snapback mechanism: *FM*

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Veep praises Iranians for foiling Israel's overthrow plot

Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref (2nd R) speaks at a meeting with Economy Minister Ali Madanizadeh (R) and a group of former economic officials in Tehran on July 18, 2025.
● fvpresident.ir

Political Desk

First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref said on Friday that Iranians thwarted the enemies' plan to "subvert" the Islamic Republic during the 12-day-long aggression that Israel launched on June 13.

"It became clear that the enemies came with the intention of subversion," Aref said at a meeting with Economy Minister Ali Madanizadeh and a group of former economic officials.

He added that Iran's adversaries had miscalculated the public's response to the conflict.

"The enemies expected people to take to the streets on the second day of war, and that by the third day Iran would enter negotiations to surrender — but we saw what really happened, and their analysis proved wrong," Aref pointed out.

The senior official hailed the Iranian public for maintaining economic discipline under pressure, noting that "contrary to expectations, there was no rush whatsoever" to shop for essential goods.

He went on to call the Iranian people "the commanders and generals of the economic front" and lauded local shopkeepers who sold their goods "at cost or even for free" during the war, which came to a halt on June 25 under a US-proposed ceasefire.

Aref said Iran had achieved success on the economic front during the conflict "because of the presence of the people," and urged continued calm and preservation of "social capital, which is the backbone of victory on all fronts".

Reiterating the government's priorities, he stressed that public welfare and the economy remain "a fundamental principle and the top priority of all our plans".

Elsewhere in his remarks, Aref urged political groups to promote national unity as "our collective covenant" that must be upheld "in action, not just in words and statements".

He added that the Pezeshkian government welcomed "practical proposals" from experts and political factions to help steer the country forward.

"No party, group, or organization has submitted even a single-page letter with an executable suggestion; Instead, only slogans or general guidance were offered — guidance that only has value when coupled with practical proposals," Aref said.

Israel's far-right perspective, escalation of Mideast war

By Katayoun Maleki &
Mohammad Hossein Vahedi
Political science researchers

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Among the numerous factors fueling the intensification of conflicts in the Middle East, the increasing influence of the far-right in Israel's political structure is a topic that has been less independently examined but plays a central role in the recent developments. A movement that was largely on the fringes of official politics a decade ago has now become a determining factor in major security decision-making. The consequences of this shift in position have extended beyond Israel, leading to regional dynamics and a broader cycle of violence. One of the prominent features of this movement is its reliance on a specific interpretation of Jewish religious texts that emphasizes the "divine promise of the land." In this view, the presence and sovereignty of Jews over all historical territories is not only a political demand but is considered a religious duty. Consequently, delegitimizing the political rights of Palestinians is not just an option in the framework of political competition but is defined as part of executing divine will. This perspective has rendered common concepts in international relations, such as the right to self-determination, meaningless under this ideological framework.

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Europeans have no grounds to trigger snapback mechanism: *FM*

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told his European counterparts Friday they have no grounds for reactivating UN sanctions after they threatened to do so in coming months unless there is progress in nuclear talks. "If EU/E3 want to have a role, they should act responsibly and put aside the worn-out policies of threat and pressure, including the 'snap-back' for which they (have) absolutely no moral (or) legal grounds," Araghchi said on X. The remarks came after Araghchi held a conference call with his British, French and German counterparts and European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas. The European diplomats told Araghchi of "their determination

to use the 'snapback' mechanism – which allows for the reimposition of all international sanctions against Iran – in the absence of concrete progress" towards a new deal on Iran's nuclear program "by the end of the summer", the French Foreign Ministry said. French officials have previously indicated that means by the end of August. Last month, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said that the Europeans would be "justified" in seeking a snapback of UN sanctions lifted under a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and major powers, later abandoned by US President Donald Trump. "Without a firm, tangible, and verifiable commitment from Iran, we will do so no later than the end of August," he told reporters. Iran and the United States held

several rounds of nuclear negotiations through Omani mediators before Israel launched its 12-day war on June 13. Trump's decision to join Israel in striking Iranian nuclear facilities effectively ended the talks. The aggression against Iran claimed the lives of more than 1,000 Iranians, most of them civilians. Iran-US talks However, both Tehran and Washington have signaled willingness to return to the table, though Tehran has said it will not give up its right to the peaceful use of nuclear power. "It was the US that withdrew from a two-year negotiated deal -coordinated by EU in 2015- not Iran; and it was US that left the negotiation table in June this year and chose a military option instead, not Iran," Araghchi told

the European officials. Araghchi said that "any new round of talks is only possible when the other side is ready for a fair, balanced, and mutually beneficial nuclear deal."

Threat of sanctions does not help diplomacy

Last week, Araghchi told French newspaper Le Monde that, "The threat of sanctions does not help diplomacy." Araghchi said triggering the "snapback" mechanism would have the same effect as a military attack. "We support the constructive role of the three European countries in rebuilding the JCPOA (Iran 2015 nuclear deal), provided they avoid provocative and unconstructive actions such as threatening the "snapback" mechanism, which



Abbas Araghchi
REUTERS

would have the same effect as a military attack", Araghchi said. The so-called snapback mechanism allows for the return of anti-Iran sanctions suspended under the 2015 nuclear deal, from which the US withdrew in 2018

and its European parties failed to fulfill their commitments under the deal. But the deal expires in October giving the parties to it a fast looming deadline to invoke the clause.

Syria tensions escalate as clashes resumes in Sweida Death toll rises to nearly 600

International Desk

Renewed clashes broke out overnight between Druze armed groups and members of Bedouin clans in southern Syria, and government forces were preparing to deploy again to the area Friday after pulling out under a cease-fire agreement that halted several days of violence earlier this week, officials said. Government security forces agreed with some of the Druze factions that they would re-enter the area to impose stability and protect state institutions, according to two Syrian officials who spoke Friday on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly. Thousands of people remained displaced by the violence and the United Nations has been unable to bring in much-needed humanitarian and medical aid because of ongoing clashes. Syrian government forces pulled out of the Druze-majority southern province of Sweida after days of clashes with militias linked to the Druze religious minority that threatened to unravel the country's fragile post-war transition.

Israel's intervention

The conflict drew airstrikes against Syrian forces by the Israeli regime in defense of the Druze minority before most of the fighting was halted by a truce announced Wednesday that was mediated by the US, Turkey and Arab countries. Under that agreement, Druze factions and clerics would be left to maintain internal security in Sweida, Syria's interim President Ahmad al-Sharaa said Thursday.



A fighter from Bedouin tribes walks past a burnt vehicle in the Al-Mazraa village in Syria's southern Sweida Province, as clashes with Druze gunmen continue on July 18, 2025.
BAKR ALKASEM/AFP

The clashes initially began between Druze militias and local Sunni Muslim Bedouin tribes Sunday before government forces intervened, nominally to restore order, but ended up taking the Bedouins' side against the Druze. The fighting killed hundreds of people over four days, with allegations that government-affiliated fighters executed Druze civilians and looted and burned homes. Israel intervened, launching dozens of airstrikes on convoys of government fighters and striking the Syrian Defense Ministry headquarters in central Damascus in a major escalation of its involvement. After the cease-fire and withdrawal of government forces, clashes once again flared between the Druze and Bedouin groups in parts of Sweida Province. State media reported Druze militias carried out revenge attacks against Bedouin communities, leading to a wave of displacement.

The governor of neighboring Daraa Province said in a statement that more than 1,000 families had been displaced to the area from Sweida as a result of "attacks on Bedouin tribes by outlaw groups." In Sweida "there are severe disruptions to supply routes, with insecurity and road closures blocking aid deliveries," Adam Abdelmoula, UN Resident and Humanitarian Affairs Coordinator in Syria, said in a statement Friday. The United Nations called for an end to the "bloodshed" and demanded an "independent" investigation of the violence, which has claimed nearly 600 lives since Sunday, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The renewed fighting raised questions over the authority of interim president, whose interim government also has difficult relations with the Kurdish minority in the northeast and the Alawite minority on the Mediterranean coast.

Top general: Iran air defense will make enemies regret any mistake

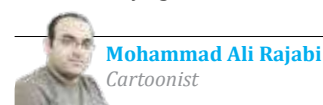
National Desk

Iran's top military official said on Friday that the country's air defense units proved during the last month US-Israel's aggression that they will make enemies regret "any mistake". Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, Chief of the General Staff of Iran's Armed Forces, visited the national air defense headquarters on Friday, where he honored the "martyrs, wounded, and war veterans" of the recent aggression and expressed gratitude to all air defense personnel for their service. "Air defense, standing on the front line of our sky's protection, has proven its ability to withstand all levels of threats and to make the enemies of the Iranian nation regret their mistakes," he said on the sidelines of the visit. His remarks come in the aftermath of a blatant and unprovoked Israeli aggression that began on June 13, targeting senior Iranian military officials, nuclear scientists, and civilians. The US later came to help Israel in the illegal aggression by striking three Iranian peaceful nuclear facilities. Iran responded by targeting key locations across the occupied Palestinian territories and launching attacks on the US Al-Udeid air base in Qatar — Washington's largest military installation in West Asia. Iran's retaliatory campaign compelled the Israeli regime to announce a unilateral ceasefire on June 24. Mousavi added that the downing of a large number of enemy aircraft demonstrated not only Iran's operational strength but also the determination and courage of its air defense forces. "If the enemy ever dares to attack our beloved country again, with God's help, it will



Chief of the General Staff of Iran's Armed Forces Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi (3rd L) visits national air defense headquarters in Tehran on July 18, 2025.
IRNA

be met with even harsher blows and suffer a greater defeat than before," he stressed. He also pointed to the need to keep pace with evolving threats, calling for continuous updates and modernization of defense systems, along with innovation, agility, and reliance on domestic scientific and technological capacity. Meanwhile, the IRGC chief said on Thursday emphasized full preparedness of the Islamic Republic to strike the enemy once again. Major General Mohammad Pakpour, Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) chief commander, made the remarks during a meeting with Iran's Army Chief Major General Amir Hatami. Major General Hatami, for his part, condemned the Israeli regime for being the main threat to peace and security in West Asia. "We pledge that, God willing, the Army and the IRGC will stand side by side and hand in hand—as a divine army—to work for the elevation of Iran's proud flag and the security and power of Islamic Iran," Hatami added.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

Iran rejects US accusations of supplying arms to Yemen

Iran firmly dismissed US allegations of supplying military equipment to Yemen, labeling them as "unfounded" and part of Washington's ongoing media campaign against Tehran. On Thursday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei described the US claims as a deceitful attempt to distract from the true issues plaguing the region, namely the Israeli regime's acts of aggression and its crimes against regional

nations. The US Central Command (CENTCOM) claimed in a post on X on Wednesday that a military group known as the Yemeni National Resistance Forces (NRF) seized a 'massive' Iranian weapons shipment bound for Yemen's Ansarullah movement. He noted that Washington is trying to justify its military presence and provide excuses for its destabilizing actions in partnership with Israel.

According to Baqaei, the military and political support the United States provides to Israel has enabled the regime to escalate its genocidal campaign in Gaza and the occupied West Bank, while simultaneously violating the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Syria and Lebanon. Israel has carried out acts of aggression against Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, Gaza and Iran.



Iran launches its first titanium concentrate plant in Kerman

Economy Desk

Iran inaugurated its first titanium concentrate plant in Kerman Province via video conference on Thursday, with President Masoud Pezeshkian presiding.

The Kahnuij Titanium Concentrate Plant, holding into proven reserves of 150 million tons, represents the first operational unit of the project. Constructed at a cost of 30 trillion rials (approximately \$51.7 million), it will create 1,100 jobs and meet the majority of Iran's titanium demand, particularly for the domestic dyeing industry.

Two more units are planned for this year, with an annual production capacity of 130,000 tons.

During the online conference, Pezeshkian called for the continuation of its second and third phases to achieve alloy steel production.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony, Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Mohammad Atabak also characterized the project as unique, stating, "This project is one of the unique factories established for the first time in the country."

"This plant will establish the first link in the titanium processing chain and

part of the strategic titanium chain for the country, including the production of colorants and pigments," he added.

The minister described entering the operational cycle of such plants as a factor in reducing raw material sales and creating value chains for wealth generation in the mineral industries sector.

He expressed hope that subsequent phases would achieve success in producing concentrate for alloy steel, noting it would continue in two additional phases.

Import substitution objectives

The minister emphasized that pigment is essential for domestic dyeing and paint production, expressing confidence that establishing such factories would halt "the outflow of foreign currency."

He noted the complex would create direct employment for 300 people and indirect employment for 800 people, adding, "The titanium plant will achieve alloy steel production in later stages, providing significant support to the industry."

Public-private partnership model

Atabak also highlighted that this com-

plex is "a prominent example of government cooperation with the private sector."

"IMIDRO (the Iranian Mines & Mining Industries Development & Renovation Organization) made the mines available to the private sector, which then utilized its technology and expertise to bring the plant to fruition."

He specified, "The titanium mine spans 40 square kilometers with proven reserves of 150 million tons and potential reserves possibly reaching 250 million tons."

"The localization of this expertise by the private sector has been successfully accomplished. These strategic reserves can be converted into commercial reserves, with benefits accruing to local communities," the Minister added.

According to IRNA, this mine in Kahnuij county constitutes the largest titanium reserve in Iran and West Asia. The plant commenced operations with an



annual production capacity of 130,000 tons at 45% grade.

Meanwhile during the minister's visit to Kerman on Wednesday, two mining projects were inaugurated and launched. The simultaneous copper and zinc production plant in Jiroft was inaugurated with an annual capacity of 20,000 tons of copper and 10,000 tons of zinc.

South Kerman IMT officials confirmed

this plant is the country's first private-sector copper and zinc concentrate processing unit, established on 25 hectares of land and generating direct/indirect employment for 700 people.

The operational implementation of the power transmission line project to the Sarduih mines in Jiroft, as the largest infrastructure project of the IMIDRO in the field of electricity supply, also began Wednesday.

National renewable capacity to reach to 4,000 MW by March



Economy Desk

Iran aims to increase its national renewable energy capacity to 4,000 megawatts by March 2026, according to the head of the country's Power Generation, Transmission, and Distribution Management Company (Tavanir).

Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi stated in an IRNA interview, "Renewable capacity has risen to approximately 2,000MW, up from last year's 1,300MW."

Rajabi Mashhadi affirmed that planned measures and ongoing initiatives will boost national renewable capacity to 4,000 MW by

March 2026.

The government had granted all administrative departments a deadline - effective June 21 - to supply part of their required electricity from solar energy.

Rajabi Mashhadi underscored these projects' role in reducing grid imbalances, noting, "Privately developed 5kW rooftop plants will substantially augment national supply capacity."

He further noted, "These 5kW plants are installed on residential rooftops and can meet required electricity demand."

Meanwhile, Iran's Vice President for Rural and Deprived Area Devel-

opment proposed that provincial authorities establish solar farms in villages to generate income and incentivize rural population retention.

Abdolkarim Hosseinzadeh stated on Thursday, "Solar plants in villages can address both energy imbalance and income issues," suggesting cooperatives could facilitate village solar farm development.

Tehran's key solar plant nears launch

Meanwhile, Tehran's largest solar power plant will commence operations imminently, according to Farhad Shabihi, CEO of Tehran Regional Electric Company.

In an IRNA interview, Shabihi confirmed the project has entered its final implementation phase, "Accelerated progress ensures this facility will soon support grid stability."

He emphasized the plant is part of Iran's national 3,000MW renewable program, which involves constructing 1,000 decentralized 3MW plants under centralized management.

"The company's objective extends beyond power generation to rapidly addressing grid imbalances and reducing strain on the national net-

work - a goal visibly materializing in less than six months," he added.

Shabihi further highlighted, "The construction of Tehran Regional Electric's 3.6MW plant represents one of the most unique implementation experiences. Merely one day after its official groundbreaking ceremony (February 6, 2025), it immediately transitioned to operational phase."

Next-generation solar panels

Regarding technical specifications, Shabihi explained that the company utilizes "new-generation 595W N-type bifacial dual-glass panels for each module, domestically manufactured."

"Over six full panel rows are already installed. Site excavation, foundation work, and concrete pouring are fully completed," he said.

The CEO pointed to the project's installation of Tehran's first solar energy storage system as a notable aspect, stating, "We are negotiating with a specialized energy storage firm. If agreed, this will be Tehran's first industrial-scale solar battery installed as a pilot on this plant - marking a significant stride toward maximizing solar energy utilization."

Israel's far-right perspective ...

The impact of this religious interpretation on Israel's security policy is also evident. A policy that appears defensive has, in practice, transformed into a form of aggressive deterrence that is alien to diplomatic mechanisms and primarily relies on the principle of preemptive strikes. As a result, not only has the possibility of political compromise diminished, but many military actions—whether in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, or even against Iran—can be analyzed in a context of ideological and religious confrontation.

Furthermore, the connection between the far-right and formal power structures, especially in recent cabinets led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, has led to the formation of a fragile yet effective coalition. Parties that include figures such as Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich advocate for moving beyond moderate, negotiation-based solutions. They have replaced diplomatic frameworks with a discourse of absolute resistance, disregarding the principles of international law.

Many of Israel's military actions cannot be analyzed solely through the lens of security calculations. These actions, especially during periods of internal crisis, serve functions such as political cohesion, diverting public opinion, or strengthening the coalition's position for the far-right. From this perspective, war is not merely a tool of defense or deterrence but is also viewed as a form of political capital.

Ultimately, the issue goes beyond a territorial or even ethnic conflict. What accelerates the tensions is the dominance of a discourse that seeks to justify its policies via metaphysical narratives. The Middle East will not see stability as long as such narratives remain at the top of the decision-making hierarchy.

The far-right party possesses not only a security perspective but also a metaphysical and transcendental view of the world. This leads to a shift in Israel's approach toward the countries it has aggressed against and even regional states. For instance, the Zionist regime is unwilling to allow the transfer of F-35s to Turkey by the US. Moreover, the party and movements with a messianic and apocalyptic outlook dominating Israel are not willing to compromise. They aspire to territorial sovereignty from the Nile to the Euphrates and are even intolerant of larger and more powerful countries in the region, such as Iran and Turkey.

South Azadegan oil field output boosted by 38,000 bpd

Economy Desk

The head of Petropars Group declared that over the past 10 months, drilling, completion, and commissioning of 17 wells across various reservoir layers at the South Azadegan oil field have boosted production at this shared field by 38,000 barrels per day.

"It is also projected that completing acid stimulation operations on six additional wells will add approximately 14,000 barrels to daily production capacity," Hamidreza

Saqafi added.

He stated that during this period, Petropars, as Iran's largest oil Exploration and Production (E&P) company, successfully executed drilling and well-completion operations across multiple reservoir strata relying on domestic expertise and specialists' dedication, IRNA reported.

The Petropars CEO emphasized that in pursuit of maximizing output, "acid stimulation of six wells has been conducted with meticulous selection of acids and addi-

tives."

He further noted that bringing these wells online will substantially increase production capacity, adding that two additional wells have been successfully drilled and completed; following acid stimulation, these will contribute roughly 3,000 barrels to daily production.

Saqafi highlighted that in subsurface operations, Petropars has taken a major step toward self-sufficiency and enhancing national production capacity by tendering 50 electrical submersible



pump (ESP) packages. This process leverages Iranian manufacturers' capabilities while facilitating technology transfer from reputable foreign partners.

Sustainable waste models for local change

Turkey's zero waste success inspires change

PERSPECTIVE

Waste management has turned into an environmental and social crisis in Iran, with 58,000 tons of waste being generated daily, 75% of which is buried in an unjustified manner. Meanwhile, the neighboring country of Turkey has successfully implemented the "Zero Waste" plan, setting an example for the world.

According to Euronews, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, the speaker of the Iranian Parliament, recently stated in an open session of the parliament, "There are very simple issues with no financial or technological difficulties that have not been solved yet. Waste is one of them. If we cannot solve the waste problem, what can we solve?"

Waste management in Iran has even received people's complaints and police intervention. Recently, the inability to manage waste has taken on a strange form, with northern Iranian cities dumping their waste in the city of Damavand. This is while in 2024, Iran ranked 121st in the world in controlled waste management.

The speaker of the Parliament further said that only the central city of Isfahan separates waste at the source, whereas in other parts of Iran, a crisis is unfolding.

Meanwhile, the Turkish first lady has launched a movement, called "Zero Waste", in her country since 2017. It was approved by the UN in early 2023, which even named March 30th after it.

Graveyard for waste

Speaker Qalibaf, who was once the mayor of the capital and responsible for Tehran's waste management, once talked about generating electricity from waste incineration in Tehran during the presidential election campaign in 2017. However, such a project never saw the light of day and its true merits remained unknown.

The Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources, and Environment Committee of the Iranian Parliament has recently submitted a report on the status of waste management in the country. According to the report, the

occupation of land for waste burial, water pollution due to leachate penetration, the production of greenhouse gases, and not using the resources for recycling cause annual damage of 1070 billion Rials to the environment, excluding the costs of treating diseases caused by improper waste disposal.

The report also expresses that 58,000 tons of waste are generated daily in Iran, 75% of which is buried in an unjustified manner. Shina Ansari, the vice president of Iran and the head of the Department of Environment (DoE), also said in the same parliamentary session where the report was presented that 93% of urban waste in Iran is disposed of in an unhygienic and piling manner. She said

that annually, nearly 21 million tons of ordinary waste, 150,000 tons of hospital waste, 35 million tons of industrial waste, 170 million tons of agricultural waste, 8 million tons of hazardous waste, and 150 million tons of construction waste are produced.

One of the largest landfills in Iran is in Aradkooh in southern Tehran, which has been cited several times as the source of bad smells that fill the road from the airport to Tehran. NASA published a report in October 2022, describing the Aradkooh region as one of the largest methane-producing areas in the Middle East. Dariush Gholizadeh, the head of the National Center for Air and Climate Change at the DoE, confirmed that the methane-emitting cloud in southern Tehran

cannot be denied.

There is no transparent performance report available on the Aradkooh site, which is the largest and most important waste management site in Iran for hospital waste. However, the Aradkooh waste incineration site can seemingly only process 200 tons of Tehran's waste, which is about 5% of the city's 7,000 tons of waste. It is said that only some Iranian cities including Tehran, Nowshahr, Shiraz, and Mashhad have waste incineration facilities.

Temporary landfills become permanent

Many of the landfills that no executive or administration has been able to deal with were initially temporary, but over the decades, they have become a complex problem. For example, the Saravan landfill in southern Rasht, which discharges 15 liters of leachate into the ground and neighboring

rivers every second, was once defined as a temporary landfill. This landfill started operating on five hectares of forest land allocated in July 1984 as a temporary measure, but over 40 years, it has expanded to 25 hectares.

In April 2022, the people of Saravan protested against the foul smell and its effects. Tired of the foul smell and environmental consequences, they gathered in April 2022 to protest against the dumping of waste. When none of the officials paid attention to their protests, the people blocked the path of the garbage trucks, and the police intervened, arresting some of the protesters. After that, Ahmad Vahidi, the then-Minister of Interior, promised to solve the problem within a year, but the problem still persists.

Another landfill, located near the Kalshur River and its wetlands in Nishapur, was also initially allocated as a temporary site for waste disposal 30 years ago, but since then, it has become a permanent one. This site, which could have been a tourist destination for the people of Nis-

hapur, has become a source of pollution.

Another problematic landfill is the Amol landfill, which is located near a lake. The late Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi had set a one-month deadline to relocate it in 2022, but his order was never implemented, and the problem persists.

The leachate from the Amol landfill, as well as those in Amol City, Babol City's Anjili, and Azadshahr City, has polluted the forests and soil of the northern provinces. Narges Azari, the former head of the environmental and urban affairs department at the Center for Strategic Research, in an interview with the Farsi-language Payam-e Ma newspaper, said, "We are witnessing the most expensive and ineffective waste management in [the northern province of] Gilan." Other examples of improper landfills include Sofeyreh in Ahvaz and Barmshour in Shiraz.

Despite the fact that the Waste Management Act was passed in 2004 and its executive bylaw was developed in 2005, there has been no significant improvement in waste management. It seems that the way waste disposal charges are determined and their ineffectiveness in



Waste is piled up in the Amol landfill next to a lush forest in Northern Iran.
● HASSAN SHIRVANI/IRNA



⬆ Crows scavenge for food in the Saravan landfill near the northern city of Rasht, Iran, on November 9, 2017.
● IRNA



⬆ A worker looks around his unhygienic surroundings in one of the largest landfills in Iran in Aradkooh, southern Tehran, on September 13, 2021.
● ALIREZA MASOUMI/ISNA

changing people’s behavior prevents the source separation of waste. In the meantime, municipalities and city council members often refer to the “waste mafia” and waste pickers as the cause of chaos in this field. According to a recent parliamentary report, there are an estimated 14,000 waste pickers in Tehran alone, 4,700 of whom are children, and many of them are Afghan migrants.

Secret dumping, landfill accidents

Before the recent parliamentary session and the reading of the waste report, Damavand city’s Environment Department announced the discovery of waste that had been dumped

by six trucks from northern cities and left on the outskirts of Damavand. This approach to waste management has caused accidents, too. For example, in June 2013, a landslide at the Barmshour landfill in Shiraz killed seven people. The incident occurred when firefighters were trying to put out a fire at the landfill, and the garbage mound suddenly collapsed, burying 12 firefighters and municipality employees under it. Rescuers managed to save five people, but seven others died.

Turkey’s zero-waste experience

Although Iran has had some positive experiences in waste recycling and management, it still lags far behind its neighbor,

Turkey. For example, Hayedeh Shirzadi, an Iranian environmental entrepreneur, started a waste recycling company in Kermanshah in 1996, but due to obstruction by the Kermanshah municipality, she was unable to launch it until 1998. Her story shows the extent of the waste management problem in Iran. In neighboring Turkey, Emine Erdogan, the wife of the president, has been promoting the “Zero Waste” idea since 2017, which has not only improved waste management in Turkey but also prompted the UN to mark March 30th as “Zero Waste Day”. The plan was first implemented among the military and presidential staff. It eventually found its way among the people of Turkey and be-

came a cultural phenomenon. Interestingly, Turkey, with its global greenhouse gas emissions of 1 percent, was one of the few countries that did not join the Paris Agreement until 2021, along with Iran, Eritrea, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen. However, in 2021, the Turkish Parliament approved the agreement. Now, by successfully implementing its “Zero Waste” plan, Turkey has shown a different side of itself to the world. In Iran, however, not only are city and government officials unable to manage waste, but there is also no social movement among the people to address the issue. Perhaps Turkey’s “Zero Waste” experience can be a lesson, as it has prompted cashiers to ask

customers whether they want a plastic bag, instead of assuming that they do. The same phenomenon has already happened in European chain stores as well. Moreover, advertisements on plastic bags in Europe and Turkey promote waste reduction, whereas in Iran, chain stores give away plastic bags for free, and the bags only advertise the store’s logo, with no mention of waste management or reduction. On the other hand, a look at civil activities in Iran shows that not only has no similar movement emerged to improve waste management in Iranian cities, but even campaigns that have been launched to pressure city management to change its

waste management policies have been ineffective. For example, a campaign was launched in Ahvaz in 2021 and 2022 to force the municipality to pay attention to waste management, but it yielded no results. The mayor of Ahvaz, who took office in 2021, removed all waste collection contractors under the pretext of fighting corruption, despite the fact that the city lacks sufficient waste bins. Although the people of Ahvaz protested against the lack of waste bins from January 2022 to June 2022, there was no change in the city’s waste management or an increase in the number of waste bins.

The article first appeared in Persian on Salamat News.



Two large compost turners operate over the Aradkooh landfill in southern Tehran, Iran.
● HASSAN SHIRVANI/IRNA

Volleyball Nations League:

Iran returns to winning ways, revives last-eight ambitions

Sports Desk

Iran bounced back from a setback against Poland to beat China 3-0 (28-26, 25-21, 25-16) in Week 3 of the FIVB Men's Volleyball Nations League in Gdansk on Friday.

Stepping into the game less than 24 hours after an exhausting five-set battle against the European powerhouse, Roberto Piazza's men showed remarkable resilience to secure a fifth win in the preliminaries and stay in contention for a place in the VNL Finals.

The straight-set victory left Iran in the ninth spot of the 18-team table with 16 points with two rounds of fixtures remaining in the preliminary round. The top seven of the table will join host China in the Finals – starting with the quarterfinals in Ningbo on July 30.

Morteza Sharifi produced yet another prolific performance with a game-high 15 points – including three aces – while fellow outside-hitter Amirhossein Esfandiar and star opposite Amin Esmaeilnejad also finished in double figures for Iran, chipping in 12 and 10 points respectively.

China had team captain and opposite Jiang Chuan as the leading scorer with 11 points, one more than middle blocker Li Yongzhen. "This match was very important for

us," Esfandiar said in an on-court interview. "Before the match, our coach told us that we had three finals to play because we want to qualify for the Finals. We won the first one, now there are two more to come and we'll use the day off tomorrow to prepare for them."

Next for Esfandiar and his teammates is a formidable test in reigning Olympic and VNL champion France today, before Iran concludes the preliminary campaign against Bulgaria at Gdansk's Ergo Arena on Sunday.

"Today we should celebrate, but we must also focus and prepare for our next match against France – which will be extremely tough. As I've said before, it will be a second final for Iran," Piazza said of today's showdown.

Pleased to have a full day of recovery for his players, the Italian coach said: "Tomorrow we'll need to recover some players – Pourya [Hosseinkhanzadeh] wasn't fully fit, so he didn't play today and needs more rest. Other guys like Morteza, who really pushed themselves to the limit, also need recovery time. I don't want Morteza to train tomorrow. We probably won't have an intense session, but we still need to practice. That's just how it works – if you want to win, you've got to put in the work."



Iranian middle-blocker Eisa Nasseri (66) hits a spike during a straight-set victory over China at the FIVB Men's Volleyball Nations League in Gdansk, Poland, on July 17, 2025.



AFC Women's Asia Cup qualifiers:

Iran to face do-or-die battle against Jordan

Sports Desk

Iranian girls will step onto the pitch against Jordan today in their AFC Women's Asia Cup qualification campaign in Amman, knowing anything but a victory over the host will end their bid for a place in next March's finals in Australia.

Iran's hopes of a second successive appearance at the continental showpiece suffered a major blow after a shock 3-1 loss to Lebanon, which had been without a point prior to the game, on Wednesday.

Lebanese striker Christy Maalouf, who plays for French club VGA Saint-Maur, scored a hat-trick, with Fatemeh Shaban finding the net for Iran, as Lebanon inflicted a first defeat in the qualifiers on Marziyeh Jafari's side. The setback was followed by Jordan's

3-0 win against Bhutan later in the day as the host moved atop the Group A table with a perfect nine points – three clear of second-placed Iran – ahead of today's showdown at the King Abdullah II Stadium.

Iran head coach conceded that her team paid a heavy price for the mistakes against Lebanon but vowed that Iran will bounce back in the decisive final game in Amman.

"This defeat is entirely my responsibility. My players gave everything they had and fought to win, but this is football. Individual mistakes can change the course of a game," said Jafari after Wednesday's game.

"The truth is we didn't play well. We made too many mistakes in both defense and attack. After conceding the second goal, the players' focus wavered, and we couldn't capitalize on

our chances. In football, if you don't score, you're bound to lose.

"This game is a wake-up call. We must play with greater seriousness and concentration against Jordan. Our focus now is on the players' mental and physical recovery because we have a crucial match on Saturday. There's only one way to reach the Asian Cup, and that's by beating Jordan. Nothing is over. We will fight with everything we have for this victory."

Having enjoyed comfortable wins against Singapore (4-0) and Bhutan (7-1), Iranian girls will face their toughest test yet in Amman against an in-form Jordan, which has scored 12 goals in three games, while conceding none. Maysa Jbarah has found the net in every game and Iran will have to contain the 35-year-old forward if it is to secure all points.

Marathon world record holder Chepngetich suspended for doping

BBC – Ruth Chepngetich, the women's marathon world record holder, has been provisionally suspended by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) after testing positive for a banned substance. The diuretic hydrochlorothiazide (HCTZ) was detected in a sample collected from Kenyan Chepngetich on 14 March, the AIU said in a statement. Chepngetich, 30, broke the world record to win the Chicago Marathon in October 2024, clocking a time of two hours, nine minutes and 56 seconds. HCTZ is used clinically to treat fluid retention and hypertension and is prohibited at all times under the World Anti Doping Agency (WADA) code. Chepngetich's time in Chicago sur-

passed Ethiopian Tigst Assefa's previous record set at the 2023 Berlin Marathon by nearly two minutes. Used commonly as a masking agent, HCTZ has a minimum reporting level of 20 nanograms per millilitre (ng/mL) in urine. Chepngetich's sample showed 3,800 ng/mL. Chepngetich was not provisionally suspended by the AIU at the time of notification on 16 April. However, on 19 April, she opted for a voluntary provisional suspension while the AIU's investigation was ongoing. "In the intervening months, the AIU continued its investigation and today issued a notice of charge and imposed its own provisional suspension," AIU head Brett Clothier said.

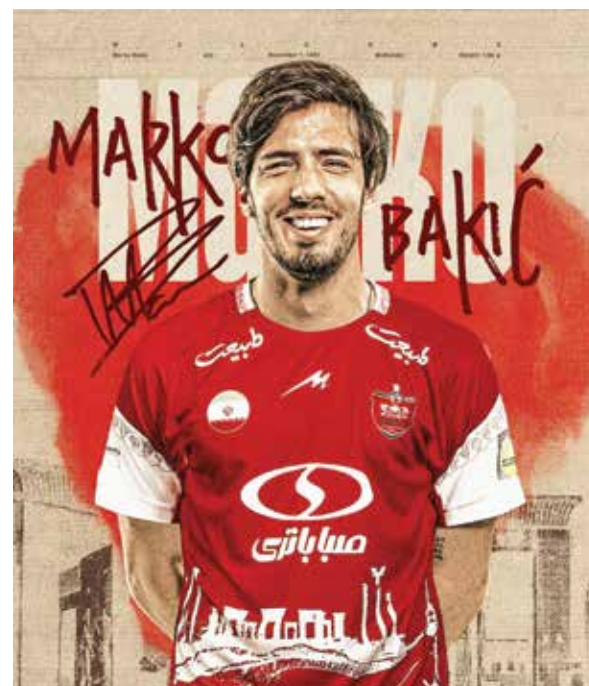
Persepolis signs Montenegrin midfielder Bakic

Sports Desk

Persepolis signed Montenegrin international midfielder Marko Bakic on a one-year contract – with the option of a 12-month extension – on Thursday, the Persian Gulf Pro League club announced.

Bakic, 31, joins the Tehran Reds as a free agent from OFI Crete, after bagging nine goals and six assists in 80 appearances during two-and-a-half season at the Greek top-flight side. Capable of playing as both a deep-lying midfielder and a number eight, the former Fiorentina player is the seventh summer signing for Persepolis – and first under new head coach

Vahid Hashemian, who replaced Turkish Isamil Kartal earlier in July – ahead of the new season. Persepolis finished third in the Iranian league last season – the Reds' lowest finish in a decade – and crashed out of the domestic cup last-16, as well as the league phase of the AFC Champions League Elite, before the Turkish head coach parted ways with the club in the aftermath of the 12-day war between Iran and Israel last month. Having made his international debut in August 2012, Bakic has 35 caps under his belt, with his latest appearance in the Montenegrin shirt coming in a friendly 2-2 against Armenia in June.



Hamedan’s tinsmithing heritage rescued from oblivion

Iranica Desk

Tinsmithing is one of the industries that survived the tumult of the World Wars I and II. This form of industrial art, which began in Eastern Europe amidst the upheavals of these devastating wars, eventually reached Hamedan towards the end of that period. The emergence and expansion of this art and industry were driven by the scarcity of raw materials needed to produce items essential for both urban and rural communities. As the flames of global conflict engulfed cities worldwide, production and agriculture faced decline and destruction. During this challenging era, the most practical option for producers and consumers was to utilize materials that were easily accessible and could be processed swiftly into everyday tools and devices. During that time, tinplate emerged as the most suitable raw material. Its availability, coupled with its flexibility, made it ideal for the rapid and cost-effective production of household items necessary for societal life.



Mohammad-Baqer Zarabiyan.
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Khosrow Mohammadi, an archaeologist and the director of the Hamedan Endowment Museum, shared with ISNA that Mohammad-Baqer Zarabiyan — the last surviving tinsmith in Hamedan, who passed away recently — used to say that, due to the dire conditions in Iran between the two World Wars, his father, Nourali Zarabiyan, sought employment and income to support his family’s well-being. With most jobs in Iran shut down and daily life severely disrupted, he decided to emigrate. Nourali, amid the chaos of war, traveled from Hamedan to Turkey, and from there, by train, to Europe. As

he recounted to his son, he was wandering in a German city when a shop caught his attention — particularly because of the metal products displayed for sale inside. His ancestors’ profession was minting, which involved working with various metals and alloys. With some familiarity with this craft, he was naturally attracted to that shop and its diverse metalworks. He visited daily, carefully observing the objects displayed through the shop window. One day, the shopkeeper, Ford, noticed Nourali’s frequent visits and invited him inside, encouraging him to try his hand at creating similar items.

Impressed by his innate ability to bend and shape tinplate, Ford praised his talent. Nourali worked there for two years, honing his craft and gaining valuable experience. Mohammadi continued, Nourali, after two years abroad, had to return to Iran due to concerns for his elderly mother. Ford had given him a tin-bending machine, which he brought back to Hamedan. “Mohammad-Baqer began following in his father’s footsteps in Hamedan, becoming recognized as the second-generation tinsmith of the city. He continued this craft after his father’s passing, producing a variety

of tools and everyday objects as long as there was demand from the people of Hamedan.” Mohammadi added, “After the wars ended and economic conditions improved, the use of metal objects and tinplate gradually declined, replaced by plastics and other materials. Consequently, Mohammad-Baqer, faced with the decreasing popularity of tinplate goods, eventually abandoned the craft and pursued other professions.” In 2014, he experienced a turning point after meeting Parviz Azkaei, a researcher specializing in the history, geography, language, and culture of Hamedan —

who, coincidentally, was his neighbor. He described that, following this encounter, he felt a spark of inspiration. He prayed to God for help in recalling the tools and devices he used to make in the past, and to understand how each was crafted. This spiritual reflection marked the beginning of his efforts to revive the art and industry of tinplate making. This archaeologist added, over the course of several months, Mohammad-Baqer meticulously reconstructed all the works he had observed from his father during the two wars, as well as some of the pieces he had produced himself. From this process, he compiled a collection

of 150 artifacts. The reunion of Azkaei and Mohammad-Baqer prompted a new idea from Azkaei. Mohammadi explained, “Azkaei, who was very familiar with this art-industry and had recently dedicated his library to the Central Library of Hamedan, advised Mohammad-Baqer to meet with me so that his reconstructed works could be organized and preserved.” He stated, “When I first visited Zarabiyan’s shop, I was struck by the multitude of artifacts displayed there. After speaking with him and understanding the background and significance of his works, I decided to support this unparalleled

artist-craftsman to the best of my ability. Therefore, I approached the then-director-general of the Organization of Endowments and Charity Affairs (OECA) of Hamedan Province and explained the situation.” “The result of my efforts was the approval of the provincial officials at that time. As a result, Mohammad-Baqer’s works were donated to the Hamedan Endowment Museum, where they found a peaceful home. The official deed of endowment was signed during a formal ceremony at the shrine of Imamzadeh Abdullah (PBUH), in the presence of media representatives,” he added. This archaeologist concluded, “In this way, two prominent figures and distinguished personalities of Hamedan’s cultural scene contributed significantly to reviving the art-industry of tinplate making. Their efforts helped preserve this valuable heritage for future generations. Unfortunately, today we mourn the passing of both of them, and what remains for us are the memories, photographs, and videos of those great men.”

Master and Student Mosque of Tabriz; reflection of Persian Islamic heritage

Iranica Desk

Tabriz, a city rich in history and culture, is home to numerous remarkable mosques that exemplify Persian Islamic architecture in East Azarbaijan Province. These mosques are renowned for their intricate tile work, stunning domes, and rich historical significance, serving as both religious centers and symbols of the city’s artistic heritage. Among these, the Master and Student Mosque (Ostad Shagerd Mosque) stands out as a notable example. The mosque is located in the old square of Tabriz. It was constructed in 1363 CE by Amir Sheikh Hassan Chupan, also known as Ala Aldin. Originally, it was called Alaiyya, but later became known as Suleymanieh

Mosque due to the presence of the Mongol prince Suleyman. The current name of the mosque derives from its manuscripts, which were written by Abd Alah Sirfi, the most renowned calligrapher of the Ilkhanid period, along with one of his students. Although there are no direct indications of the original structure, archaeological excavations of the dome uncovered samples of traditional tile work and manuscripts, providing valuable clues to its historical craftsmanship. The existing architectural form of the mosque primarily dates back to the Qajar period, reflecting the stylistic elements of that era. Rashid Aldin in his historical chronicle, Jami al-Tawarikh, mentions that: “Amir Sheikh Hassan resided in

Tabriz and constructed several prominent structures in the old square of the city, such as a mosque, school, and convent, all within a short period. Among these, there was no mosque in Tabriz comparable to it in terms of decoration.” Numerous mosques in Tabriz exemplify the city’s long-standing tradition of religious and architectural excellence, making it a significant hub of Islamic art and history in Iran. Tabriz’s historical buildings reflect Iran’s rich cultural and architectural heritage, showcasing intricate designs, ancient craftsmanship, and revolutionary styles. These structures highlight the city’s significance as a center of art, religion, and history, preserving its legacy through centuries of diverse influences.



● visitiran.ir



UNESCO head condemns Israeli killing of Iranian media workers

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has condemned the killing of two Iranian media workers during Israeli airstrikes on the IRIB headquarters in Tehran last month. On Thursday, UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay called for a thorough and transparent investigation into the incident, Press TV reported. She emphasized that the media infrastructure of every country is protected under international humanitarian law, as it is classified as a civilian institution. Azoulay referenced UN Security Council Resolution 2222, which mandates the protection of media workers during armed conflicts. The Israeli strike claimed the lives of Nima Rajabpour, the editor-in-chief of IRIB's news channel, and Masoumeh

Azimi, an administrator. The attack also injured several other media personnel. On June 16, the Israeli regime executed an act of aggression by targeting a building belonging to the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) in Tehran. The assault involved at least four bombs, striking the main facility housing IRIB's news department while a live broadcast was in progress. The transmission was briefly interrupted before Hassan Abedini, IRIB's news director and deputy for political affairs, went on air to condemn the attack. At the time of the bombardment, news anchor Sahar Emami was presenting the news. Despite the tremors caused by the initial strike, she remained on air and continued the broadcast. Moments later, another explosion filled

the studio with smoke and dust, compelling her to evacuate. She returned shortly after to join Abedini and recount her harrowing experience. This escalation followed Israel's earlier aggression on June 13, where a series of attacks resulted in the martyrdom of numerous high-ranking military commanders, nuclear scientists, and civilians in Iran. A week later, the United States escalated the conflict by bombing three Iranian nuclear sites, violating the United Nations Charter, international law, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). In retaliation, 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 success-



ful retaliatory operations against both the Israeli regime and the US, managed to impose a halt to the illegal assault.

Deputy minister hails Isfahan's Chahar Bagh as 'living memory' of Iran's cultural identity



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Deputy Minister of Handicrafts Maryam Jalali called Isfahan's Chahar Bagh boulevard a "living memory" of Iran's identity-driven culture and economy during a public ceremony on July 17, in the historic heart of the city. The event, titled "The Narrative of

Love and Art," drew prominent Iranian artists, artisans, and cultural and religious figures to Chahar Bagh, a 17th-century boulevard once central to Safavid urban planning. Jalali praised the coordinated efforts behind the gathering and described Chahar Bagh not simply as a street but as a "fourfold devotion" reflecting the spiritual and social life of the Iranian people across generations. She said Chahar Bagh had witnessed "sacred scenes" from funerals of fallen soldiers to national celebrations and religious mourning. "This is our historical memory," Jalali told the audience, emphasizing the role of grassroots religious groups in preserving and reviving the cultural heritage of the boulevard. She said such groups work not out

of duty, but with "soul and passion," challenging the view that informal civic groups lack discipline. In a sweeping cultural reflection, Jalali connected the historic architecture of Chahar Bagh—lined with mosques, bathhouses, schools, and bazaars—to a deeper national ethos where worship, cleanliness, trade, and craftsmanship merge. "Our nation is rooted in this structure," she said, adding that Iranian identity is tied to "devotion and skill." She noted that the people of Isfahan were raised on the "tea of mourning ceremonies" and described traditional handicrafts not as luxury goods but as vital "bioskills." "Our economy has always grown side by side with our identity," she said, invoking the spiritual legacy of Imam Hussein and the

formative role of religious ritual in Iranian social cohesion. Jalali described the local artistic tradition as inseparable from daily life, "If they needed a tablecloth, they block-printed one. If they wanted a ceiling, they created mirrorwork and muqarnas." From utensils to avenues, "Isfahan created beauty," she said. She praised the presence of master artisans at the event, saying their calloused hands and white hair were "worthy of a kiss." She called for public remembrance of those who crafted Isfahan's famed decorative arts—engraving, marquetry, plasterwork, and mirror mosaics. The deputy minister stressed that the country's intangible heritage, rituals, stories, and art forms, must form the foundation of a culturally driven

economy. She closed by relaying a message from Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, who supports unity based on "rationality and consensus" across the three sectors. Jalali said the minister believes that hotels should serve not only as lodgings but as guest houses for cultural exchange. "When the name of Hussein is invoked," she said, "we gather—in mosques, schools, parliaments, or bazaars—as one family." Jalali urged that the art booths set up during the event become part of daily life and help shape a global understanding of Iran's "narrative of love and art" through spiritual tourism. "Hand in hand," she concluded, "we will rebuild Iran and the spirit of the Iranian people."

Tehran to build four secure repositories for museum artifacts, city official says

Arts & Culture Desk

Tehran will build four secure storage facilities across the capital to protect valuable historical artifacts in the event of natural disasters or other emergencies, according to Ahmad Alavi, head of the Cultural Heritage Committee of Tehran's City Council. The project, aimed at safeguarding Iran's rich historical legacy, comes as officials ramp up efforts to shield the city's museum collections from risks such as earthquakes or potential attacks. "We've agreed to construct secure repositories in four locations across Tehran to house archaeological and museum objects," Alavi said. The plan is part of a broader national strategy to improve emergency preparedness and protect cultural assets considered vital to Iran's identity. Tehran, which sits near several active fault lines, remains vulnerable to major earthquakes. The secure units are expected to increase the "security coefficient" of the city's antiquities in case of crisis scenarios. Each of the four sites will be strategically located to allow for swift access and



distribution, though exact locations have not yet been disclosed. The move also reflects a shift in policy toward long-term preservation and decentralization of collections currently concentrated in central museums. Iran's cultural authorities have previously warned that the country's heritage sites and artifacts face growing threats from urban development, environmental degradation, and regional instability. The new facilities are expected to be climate-controlled, earthquake-resistant, and designed in consultation with national heritage and emergency response agencies.

Iran to host 2026 global meeting on intangible heritage centers

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran will host the 2026 annual gathering of UNESCO's Category 2 Centers focused on intangible cultural heritage, according to the outcome of a virtual summit held under the leadership of Fumiko Ohinata, Secretary of the 2003 Convention, in Paris. The online meeting, chaired by UNESCO, drew over 80 participants, including heads of Category 2 centers from Bulgaria, Algeria, Peru, the UAE, Iran, China, South Korea, and Japan. The session focused on reviewing the past year's activities and setting the agenda for 2025–2026. Iran's regional center in Tehran presented a detailed progress report and unveiled new proposals for its upcoming Action Plan. Iran's renewed bid to host the 2026 edition was confirmed after scheduling conflicts led to the 2025 summit being shifted online. According to Ohinata, overlapping events, including the MONDIACULT World Conference in Spain, necessitated keeping both UNESCO and Tehran's



center staff in sync, prompting a virtual format for the 2025 session. Nonetheless, she said Iran's offer "remains firmly on the table" and is already on the organization's agenda. Representing Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Ministry, Atousa Momeni, Director-General of the Tehran-based center, outlined key achievements. These included educational initiatives, digital outreach tools, regional capacity-building, and on-the-ground collaboration with local communities across 24 countries under its mandate. The Tehran center also introduced its proposed roadmap for 2025–2026, which will be reviewed at the next Governing Board meeting ahead of implementation. The plan lays out regional

training programs, digital archive expansion, and increased grassroots involvement. UNESCO's Deputy for Intangible Cultural Heritage, Susanne Schnuttgen, applauded Tehran's recent women-led initiative aimed at empowering nomadic women through heritage programs. Originally scheduled for June 22–25, 2025, in Tehran, the event was postponed due to what she called an "unforeseen regional crisis." Still, she praised the center's outreach efforts and its plan to hold the program in hybrid form as "a smart move that keeps the dialogue going." Ali Darabi, Iran's Tourism Deputy Minister and Chair of the Regional Center's Governing Board, called the Tehran center "a strategic arm of Iran within UNESCO," underlining its leadership role in delivering on the 2003 Convention's goals across West and Central Asia. He extended gratitude to Ohinata and the UNESCO secretariat for what he described as "keen awareness, sound judgment, and steadfast support."