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President Masoud Pezeshkian (2nd L) addresses a meeting in Tehran on August 16, 2025 during which he remotely opens a factory to process associated petroleum gas (APG) in western Iran.
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Iran should not let others cash in on its disputes

Time ripe to address issues with US

By Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh
International affairs analyst

OPINION
EXCLUSIVE

Several smaller regional states have been playing off the rift between Iran and the United States, trying to link their own disputes with Tehran to Washington to secure concessions. A case in point was the "Zangezur Corridor" issue between Armenia and Azerbaijan—an approach that is now being mirrored elsewhere, including in Lebanon. Iranian Officials must once and for all put an end to this chronic challenge namely the exploitation of Iran-US tensions by others for their own gain. Iran cannot allow its issues to be used as a bargaining chip in the hands of others. In such a context, Tehran must settle its issues with Washington and, in parallel, move within a framework of regional security. At this juncture, if Iran's actions send a message other than peace, they will not only fail to pay off but will also leave the country worse off.

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Araghchi: Armenia's prosperity, peace in Caucasus play part in Iran's border security

Pezeshkian to depart for Armenia, Belarus on Monday



Abbas Araghchi
● AFP

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi underlined the strategic importance of relations between Iran and Armenia, saying that peace in the South Caucasus region and the prosperity in Armenia contribute to the security of Iran's borders.

In an article published by Armenia Press ahead of a Monday visit by the Iranian president to Armenia, Araghchi said Iran commits itself to establishing peace and stability in the region and stresses that ensuring security, lasting peace, and implementing any projects in the region depend on respecting the territorial integrity, national sovereignty, and security of all countries.

Araghchi said Iran is steadfast in supporting peace and stability in the South Caucasus region, adding that Tehran favors an Armenia with high level of pros-

perity and welfare – issues that contribute to the security of Iran's borders.

The visit by Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to Armenia comes after a peace agreement reached between Iran's northern neighbors — Armenia and Azerbaijan — on August 8.

Referring to deep relations between Iranian and Armenian nations, he said Iran was one of the first countries to recognize Armenia's independence in 1991, a decision that reflects the depth of their relations and Iran's commitment to supporting its neighbors during significant historical moments. Armenians in Iran are the largest religious minority in the country and actively participate in all aspects of social life in Iran, he said.

"The geopolitical outlook of our region highlights the strategic importance of our relations. The interests of Iran and Armenia are increasingly intertwined

amid global uncertainty and regional developments. Our shared borders are not merely a geographical fact but a bridge for cooperation in energy, transportation, human relations, and regional security," Araghchi said.

Pointing to the importance of Pezeshkian's visit to Armenia, Araghchi said the trip is not just a diplomatic meeting but a reaffirmation of the two countries' commitment to open new horizons in their relations.

According to presidential political advisor Mehdi Sanaei, Pezeshkian is scheduled to depart on Monday evening for a two-day tour to Armenia and Belarus. Sanaei said improving bilateral relations with Armenia and Belarus, especially in the trade, and signing cooperation documents would be on the president's agenda during the visits, adding that the trips had been scheduled for June but were postponed.

Pezeshkian condoles with Pakistan, offers support over deadly floods

International Desk

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian expressed condolences to the prime minister and the people of Pakistan following the deaths of hundreds of people in the country's recent floods. In a message on Saturday, Pezeshkian expressed the sincere sympathy of the Iranian government and people to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, as well as the government and people of Pakistan, following the devastating flood in parts of the neighboring country.

He also emphasized Iran's readiness for any cooperation and humanitarian and relief assistance to the affected people.

Pakistani authorities said on Saturday that flash floods triggered by heavy monsoon rains across northern Pakistan have killed at least 344 people in just 48 hours.

The majority of deaths, 324, were reported in mountainous Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, the National Disaster Management Authority said. Most were killed in flash floods and collapsing houses, while at least 137 others were injured.

The provincial rescue agency said around 2,000 rescue workers were engaged in recovering bodies from the debris and carrying out relief operations in nine districts, where rain was still hampering efforts.

"Heavy rainfall, landslides in several areas, and washed-out roads are causing significant challenges in deliv-



People gather near a damaged vehicle and scattered debris following a flash flood in Mingora in northern Pakistan's mountainous Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province on August 16, 2025.
● AFP

ering aid, particularly in transporting heavy machinery and ambulances," said Bilal Ahmed Faizi, spokesman for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's rescue agency.

The provincial government has declared the severely affected mountainous districts of Buner, Bajaur, Swat, Shangla, Mansehra and Battagram as disaster-hit areas.

The meteorological department has also issued a heavy rain alert for Pakistan's northwest, urging people to take "precautionary measures."

Eleven more people were killed in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, and another nine in the northern Gilgit-Baltistan region, national officials said.

Five more were killed when a local

government helicopter crashed due to bad weather during a relief mission on Friday.

The monsoon season brings South Asia about three-quarters of its annual rainfall, vital for agriculture and food security, but it also brings destruction.

Landslides and flash floods are common during the season, which usually begins in June and eases by the end of September.

Pakistan is one of the world's most vulnerable countries to the effects of climate change and is contending with extreme weather events with increasing frequency.

Monsoon floods in 2022 submerged a third of the country and killed around 1,700 people.

Tehran reiterates warning about foreign interference in Caucasus region

International Desk

Iran's government spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani warned that involvement of transregional actors in the Caucasus equations could have long-term negative consequences for peace and stability of the region.

Mohajerani in an article published in Iran's newspaper said Tehran has openly expressed its concerns about any foreign presence in the region after Armenia and Azerbaijan reached a US-brokered peace agreement which has granted Washington development rights to a strategic transit route across the strategic area.

The Iranian official noted that Iran's concern arises from the historical experience of the region, where the interference of transregional powers has complicated crises and prolonged the path to peace.

Iran believes that the most sustainable solutions for the Caucasus region should be come up with cooperation and dialogue among the regional countries, not from pressure and dictation by external actors, Mohajerani said.

She said that experience in other parts of the world shows that agreements made without considering the sensitivities and real interests of neighboring countries, or those imposed by external pressure, either fail to be implemented or collapse at the first political crisis.

Back on August 8, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani Pres-



Fatemeh Mohajerani
● IRNA

ident Ilham Aliyev signed the US-mediated peace deal at the White House.

The accord includes the creation of a transit corridor through Armenia to connect Azerbaijan to its enclave of Nakhchivan – a longstanding demand of Baku. Under the deal, the United States will have development rights to the corridor – dubbed the "Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity" (TRIPP) – in the strategic, resource-rich region.

Iran has long opposed the modification of the corridor – often referred to as Zangezur – fearing it would cut the Islamic Republic off from the Caucasus.

Christian-majority Armenia and Muslim-majority Azerbaijan have feuded for decades over their border and the status of ethnic enclaves within each other's territories. The nations went to war twice over the disputed Karabakh region, which Azerbaijan recaptured from Armenian forces in a lightning 2023 offensive, sparking the exodus of more than 100,000 ethnic Armenians.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

Iran should not...

To break free from the current deadlock, Iran needs to shed old taboos. Experience has shown that taboos

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such as refusing to negotiate with the US, or resorting only to indirect talks, have brought no benefit to Iran and instead imposed heavy costs on its people. The time has come for Iran to enter into direct negotiations with Washington and resolve its disputes, particularly as many of the issues that once divided the two countries have now lost relevance, paving the way toward an agreement. Unlike Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who thrives on confrontation, Washington is currently looking for diplomacy, and Iran has the chance to resolve its problems

directly with the US.

Given developments in recent months, Iran and the US are no longer immediate threats to one another. What must be avoided is the transformation of the Iran-Israel standoff into an Iran-US confrontation. Netanyahu's push against Tehran in the wake of the October 7, 2023 attacks and the subsequent war on Gaza was driven step by step to drag Washington into a clash with Tehran—something that must not be allowed to succeed.

In any prospective talks, Iran should steer clear of intermediaries and prolonged indirect channels, since such arrangements only serve Israel's interests. Tehran and Washington need to sit face to face at the negotiating ta-

ble, and today the conditions for doing so are more favorable than before. A workable agreement could be within reach.

At present, Iran's and America's incentives to negotiate are in fact closer to each other than America's alignment with Israel. Washington has signed some \$4 trillion worth of economic contracts in the region, the execution of which hinges on security. Iran, too, is actively seeking to establish and preserve regional stability. By contrast, Israel stands out as the lone actor undermining security.

Against this backdrop, Iran must shed outdated taboos, directly address its regional challenges, and move toward resolving its differences with the US.



NGL plant comes on stream in Ilam Province with 240 mcf/d capacity

Oil minister: Gas flaring to end by early 2029

Economy Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian inaugurated via video conference on Saturday the NGL 3100 project to collect associated petroleum gas (flare gas) in Ilam Province.

The official commissioning of the NGL 3100 petro-refinery project in Dehloran was attended virtually by the oil minister, senior executives of the oil industry, and high-ranking provincial officials of Ilam at the project's operational site, IRNA reported.

Oil Minister Mehdi Paknejad stated that with the launch of one of the largest flare gas recovery projects in southern Ilam, efforts are underway to manage, utilize, and ultimately end gas flaring by March 2029.

The \$1.6 billion national project, built on 100 hectares, is tasked with collecting associated gas from the Dehloran, Danan, Azar, Cheshmeh-Khosh, and Paydar-e Gharb oil fields.

Its main goals include preventing gas flaring, supplying feedstock to the Dehloran petrochemical complex, improving efficiency, reducing emissions, and generating added value in the gas production cycle.

The NGL 3100 project consists of constructing a gas and NGL plant, nine feedstock and product pipelines, seven intermediate valve stations, a main substation, and a power transmission line from the power plant to the operational site.

The final products of this industrial complex include the valuable compound +C2, which will serve as the main feedstock for the Dehloran petrochemical olefin units — a key element in completing the petrochemical value chain and boosting economic returns.

Construction of the major national project began on August 27, 2016.

Referring to the oil minister's report on annual savings of \$700 million through flare gas collection and the revenues generated, Pezeshkian said this means such an amount of gas was previously being wasted, and by recovering it, the actual financial gain is effectively doubled.

The oil minister further explained that NGL 3100 has initially come on stream with a daily capacity of 80 million cubic feet, which will rise by another 45 million cubic feet by the end of October. Paknejad added that an additional 40 million cubic feet will be added by the end of this year (March 20, 2026), enabling the complex to reach its full capacity of 240 million cubic feet per day.

He noted that associated gas from northern Dezful in southern Ilam is collected at two compressor stations and transported to the complex through more than 350 kilometers of pipelines. According to the minister, at the facility the gas undergoes dehydration, sweetening, and separation to produce fuel gas for power plants, +C2, LPG, sulfur, and gas condensates.

He emphasized that around 85 percent



● SHANA

of the equipment and materials, as well as all implementation services, were supplied by domestic manufacturers and contractors. This approach created more than 4,500 direct jobs during construction, 150 direct jobs during operation, and 3,000 indirect jobs.

Paknejad further stated that since the beginning of the current administration (last August), flare gas recovery initia-

tives — including Rag Sefid-1, surplus gas in Gachsaran, and reduced flaring at 12 refineries in South Pars — have increased the daily associated gas recovery capacity by 280 million cubic feet. With NGL 3100 and other projects nearing completion, the capacity will surpass 600 million cubic feet per day by year-end.

Ilam Province, which holds over six per-

cent of Iran's oil reserves and 11 percent of its gas reserves, is considered one of the country's major energy hubs. Currently, the western province produces more than 200,000 barrels of oil and around six million cubic meters of gas per day. With the full operation of NGL 3100, the province's gas production capacity will rise to 10 million cubic meters per day.

Kerman, Chinese investor ink \$90m deal for auto project

Jiroft ferrochrome plant contributing to tech transfer to Iranians: Beijing



Kerman Governor General Mohammad Ali Talebi (R) and Chinese investor Qingyi Pan shake hands after signing a memorandum of understanding in Jiroft, Kerman Province, on August 15, 2025. ● IRNA

Jiroft ferrochrome plant, the investor said the plant's operations will provide opportunities for technology transfer to Iranians in Kerman Province. The plant is being built with the participation of the Chinese investor and an initial investment of 20 trillion rials (roughly \$21.5 million).

According to IRNA, Qingyi Pan told reporters that there are plans to invest in ferrochrome, steel, and minerals in Kerman Province.

He noted that the first phase of investment in Kerman, in Jiroft, would focus on ferrochrome production, which will also generate 500 jobs.

The foreign investor added that after ferrochrome, investment will target high-density polyethylene (HDPE) and steel production. With HDPE and ferrochrome, the steel-making process will be carried out.

Regarding the environmental concerns, he said, "We do not have environmental problems. Our machinery meets good environmental standards and will not cause any issues."

Qingyi further stated that Jiroft is well-suited for investment due to its mineral resources, proximity to ports, and the support of capable local officials.

Economy Desk

A foreign investor from China signed a tripartite memorandum of understanding with the Kerman governor general and the Jiroft governor to implement a \$90 million car assembly project in Kerman Province.

The MoU, signed between the top Kerman officials and Qingyi Pan, a Chinese investor, aims to implement the \$90 million project for car assembly and create 800 jobs in Jiroft, IRNA reported.

The agreement was concluded with the goal of balanced development, support for investors, and harnessing the capacities of Jiroft County.

After the start of the first phase of the Jiroft ferrochrome plant and observing the support and cooperation of provincial officials, the Chinese investor expressed interest in investing in the automotive industry. Construction of the first phase

of the Jiroft ferrochrome plant also began on Friday in the presence of the Kerman governor general, other officials, and the Chinese investor, marking a step toward ending the export of raw materials in the country's largest producer of chromium.

Based on the agreement on the car assembly project, the Chinese investor is to provide \$90 million in two phases for the import and assembly of passenger cars in Jiroft.

The project is planned to be completed within 36 months and is expected to create 800 direct jobs.

The main purpose of the MoU is to combine the province's material and non-material resources to provide assurance, facilitate licensing, and accelerate investment activities toward achieving sustainable and balanced development in Kerman.

Meanwhile, on the sidelines of the opening ceremony of the

Domestic investment in free zones 80% above target in first quadrimester

Economy Desk

Approved domestic investment in the first four months of the current year (began on March 20, 2025) reached 2,095 trillion rials (about \$2.25 billion), marking an 80 percent increase, according to Iran's High Council of Free Trade & Industrial and Special Economic Zones. The top council said the total approved domestic investment in the first four months

of the current year amounted to 2,095 trillion rials — a figure that shows more than 80 percent growth compared to the target set for this period, Mehr reported.

Compared to the same period last year, when domestic investment stood at 2,185 trillion rials (about \$2.35 billion), the latest figures indicate the continuation of the upward trend in attracting domestic capital and the role of



● IRNA

free zones in the country's economic development.

According to ISNA, the realized domestic investment in the coun-

try's free zones during the period showed a significant 21 percent increase compared to the same period last year.

Iran-Qatar trade posts 66% surge in four months

Economy Desk

Iran's commercial attaché in Qatar announced a 66 percent increase in trade volume between Iran and Qatar during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20, 2025) compared to the same period last year.

According to ILNA, citing the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO), Abbas Abdolkhani highlighted the growing trend in economic relations between the two countries, stating the growth reflects significant opportunities to boost Iranian exports to Qatar and use the country as a gateway to regional markets.

The commercial attaché emphasized that Iranian provinces have strong potential in exporting foodstuffs, agricultural products, construction materials, and minerals.

He noted that Qatar, in its National Development Program, known as Qatar National Vision 2030, seeks to play a central role in re-exporting goods to the region, which creates a valuable opportunity to supply high-quality, competitive Iranian products to markets such as Saudi Arabia via Qatar.

Abdolkhani also highlighted maritime transport infrastructure, stating that the shipping route be-



tween Iran's Bandar Deyr and Qatar's Al Ruwais port is active, with an average of 60 containers of Iranian goods entering the Qatari market daily. He noted that the capacity can be increased with proper planning.

Abdolkhani identified one of the main missions of commercial attachés as introducing target markets and outlining strategies for successful entry by Iranian traders. He expressed hope that such events would pave the way for a stronger and more effective presence of capable Iranian companies in the Qatari market and elevate economic relations between the two countries to a higher level.

Taking into account Iran's conditions over past year

Pezeshkian gov't track record generally positive

INTERVIEW

Mr. Jalaeipour, as a reformist political activist, how would you size up the Pezeshkian government's performance over the past year, considering all events — from the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh a day after inauguration to the imposed 12-day war?

JALAEIPOUR: When we look back on the Iranian government's performance over the past year, it's crucial to first keep in mind the circumstances under which the administration began its work. It's only fair to call out both the positives and negatives given these conditions. When the government took office, in foreign policy, the Resistance Axis in the region was under the gun from brutal Israeli attacks. Israel assassinated Ismail Haniyeh, the political head of Hamas, in Tehran just a day after Pezeshkian's inauguration. Before that, Israel attacked the Iranian embassy in Syria and assassinated the IRGC commander there. Recently, while Iran was engaged in its sixth round of talks with the US, Israel threw down the gauntlet by attacking Iran, imposing a 12-day war. In other words, Israel, a nuclear power backed by the US and NATO, went head-to-head with Iran. This was a major event in contemporary Iranian history. Although the enemy dealt blows to Iran, it failed to get its way and had to call off the war temporarily.

Given this backdrop, I rate the government's record in the first year as positive. From the get-go, the government not only worked on strengthening ties with neighboring countries but also stood by a foreign policy rooted in peace, cooperation, and dialogue. The incumbent government held five rounds of negotiations with the US. At home, the Pezeshkian administration refused to impose strict dress codes on Iranian women and didn't crack down on the public. These factors helped set the stage for the general population, upon the outbreak of war, to condemn the aggressor and spur on a spontaneous "patriotic defense" movement.

This patriotic defense came about at a time when the assaulting Israeli side expected that killing our military commanders would spark off public uprisings against the government. On the contrary, people banded together to defend the country. Had the government not pursued negotiations and agreements in foreign policy, many might have branded it as warmongering. Likewise, if the government had acted coercively on women's dress codes, public dissatisfaction could have ballooned, and the grand patriotic defense by Iranians would not have taken off as it did.

In my view, three factors played a part in Israel's failure in the



12-day war: Iran's decisive missile and military response; second, the people's patriotic defense; and third, the government's delivery of public services throughout the conflict (providing flour, fuel, electricity, water, medicine, healthcare, and banking services). Therefore, during this second imposed war (after the Iraqi-imposed war of the 1980s) and this major historical event, the Pezeshkian government's record stands on solid ground.

How do you weigh in on the government's performance in other areas?

Economically, the indicators show, unfortunately, not much of a positive turn. When the government took office, inflation was around 30%; Now it's about 40%. The stock market has gone through severe fluctuations. The liquidity surge (meaning worsening inflation and price hikes) continues to pile up. Nevertheless, the government, even amid wartime conditions, settled farmers' claims and

nurses' arrears. When it comes to reaching fundamental economic improvements, like getting past wartime constraints, lifting sanctions, and bolstering foreign policy to serve development, the government still has a tough road ahead.

What's your take on the government's performance in social and cultural fields?

In these two areas, the government's record was better than in economics. The most important step was easing up on security-heavy atmospheres in universities, bringing back dismissed professors, and appointing rational, moderate managers as university presidents. The cultural climate — across music, film, and theater — has picked up, though publication restrictions persist. Concerts are held calmly nationwide.

But the most pressing expected move by the government has yet to get off the ground — managing cyberspace. The

small step forward, like lifting bans on WhatsApp and Google Play, was welcomed but minor. We all know that for 50% of the population, having internet access is more vital than electricity. Lifting bans, improving internet speed and bandwidth for people's livelihoods, and fostering growth in the knowledge-based economy and artificial intelligence are absolutely critical. Unfortunately, contrary to expectations, the Ministry of Communications has come up short in this regard.

How much do you think the incumbent Iranian government's narrative of "unity" has helped stitch together national cohesion?

From a discursive standpoint, the government's work was productive, and we saw its fruits in the patriotic defense during the 12-day war. Before the Pezeshkian government came into power, and still now, there were two main political narratives and models for the



Hamid Reza Jalaeipour

country and political changes. One was a confrontational discourse based on "conflict," especially conflict with the government — mobilizing people to give the government hell. This narrative has held sway in modern Iranian history. Even now, amid wartime conditions, purists stir up their supporters to go after the government's foreign policy decisions, without hesitation. Or structural change advocates like to ride the wave of popular discontent against the government, even during wartime.

The second discourse is based on activism rooted in "consensus-building," not conflict — striving for change through issue-based agreements. This discourse has less history and reach in the public sphere than the first. The importance of the Pezeshkian government's work lay in defending and championing this second discourse of consensual politics. Put plainly, it said, "We have no quarrel with any individual, group, or country." This message caught on widely and was significant.

How successful do you think the Pezeshkian government has been in delivering on promises and commitments, in honesty and transparency, avoiding pomp and empty shows during provincial visits, focusing on problem-solving, and listening to the people?

Here, I'd point out one weakness and two strengths of the government. The weakness is linked ironically to Pezeshkian's key slogan about meritocracy and respect for expertise. From ministers down to governors (especially appointments of local governors), the government has made headway in merit-based



Iranian presidential candidate Masoud Pezeshkian (C) waves to his supporters on the campaign trail at Shush Street, Tehran, Iran, on July 2, 2024.

● BORNA



This patriotic defense came about at a time when the assaulting Israeli side expected that killing our military commanders would spark off public uprisings against the government. On the contrary, people banded together to defend the country. Had the Pezeshkian government not pursued negotiations and agreements in foreign policy, many might have branded it as warmongering. Likewise, if the government had acted coercively on women's dress codes, public dissatisfaction could have ballooned, and the grand patriotic defense by Iranians would not have taken off as it did.



Iranian president-elect Masoud Pezeshkian (front-L) shakes hands with an elite member of his Strategic Council for Transition Period, tasked with suggesting a shortlist of cabinet members, on July 20, 2024.

● president.ir



selection but still has a long way to go. Even within the Pasteur complex, the government has yet to roll out an administration organized and adapted to current conditions. But two features of the government in terms of public engagement are its plus points: First, Pezeshkian does not exploit the “distressed masses” as a political tool. You remember that during the two terms of president Ahmadinejad, thousands of desperate people rushed after the president’s motorcade, desperately trying to get their petitions in and collect 50,000 toman! Pezeshkian is not into these crowd-pleasing tactics but still visits cities and actively pursues resolving people’s problems. Second, Pezeshkian gets straight with the people and acts accordingly. For example, when his deputy praises him in a meeting, Pezeshkian says, “Jafar, cut it out.” Or if the government messes up by submitting a flawed cybersecurity bill, they own up and withdraw it. My impression is that people take to this straightforwardness. Also, despite the many problems people face, the public’s everyday relationship with the Pezeshkian government is not hostile.

What score would you give Pezeshkian and his government concerning actual compliance — not just rhetoric or show — with the Leader’s directives? That consensual approach — the one that posits “we have no quarrels” — really showed its worth in the relationship between the Leader’s office and the government. The government’s success in the 12-day war would not have been possible without this cooperation between the government and the Leader’s office. The Leader of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei himself repeatedly stressed the importance of this collaboration.

The interview first appeared in Persian on IRNA.

Charting new paths in governance

By Mohammad Javad Kolivand
Governor general of Semnan

OPINION

The first year of the Pezeshkian government kicked off under tough and challenging conditions, marked by economic pressures, social and political issues, and international constraints. In this context, the government, taking a realistic approach and steering clear of unrealistic promises, sought to win back public trust through honesty in words and deeds, and by tuning into the voice of society, aimed to break new ground in managing the country. One of the standout features of the incumbent Iranian government over the past year has been its effort to tie together justice with development. Alongside pushing ahead for economic growth and improving macroeconomic indicators, the government has aimed to put forward justice as the main criterion for policymaking, ensuring that the fruits of progress are fairly distributed across the country and to all social classes. In line with this, important steps were carried out to decentralize the governance system and pass on some authority to governors, so that decision-making and implementation at the provincial level could be handled with greater agility and efficiency. “Educational justice” also received special attention as a key pillar of social justice. That same year, the country went through a trying but inspiring experience.

Successful test of imposed 12-day war
The Israeli-imposed war, which lasted 12 days, was resolved without giving up national positions, thanks to the exemplary resistance of the people and smart management by the government and ruling authorities, while maintaining internal cohesion. This experience not only put to the test the country’s defensive and managerial capacities but also brought about increased social solidarity and strengthened the sense of national belonging; a solidarity that today acts as a driving force to keep up government activities and underpins the advancement of future programs.

Strengthening ‘national unity’
Another significant achievement over this one-year period has been the strengthening of “national unity,” that is, setting up an atmosphere for dialogue and convergence among vari-



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (c) shakes hands with a lawmaker after his proposed cabinet members were all approved by the Parliament in Tehran, Iran, on August 21, 2024.
● IRNA

ous political currents and social groups, aiming to bridge political and social divides. This course, based on overcoming fabricated political lines and leaning on national commonalities, has become a valuable asset for facing future challenges. While the one-year experience has brought to light signs of progress in parts of domestic and foreign policy, it has also sent out a clear message: Successfully navigating the complexities of today calls for a rethink of governance and mapping out a fresh path for the country’s future. The future ahead of the government and nation demands attention to several key essentials that could form the main pillars of governance in the coming years:

1. People-centered and society-driven governance: The country’s management in the next decade cannot simply rest on centralized and state structures. Opening up real opportunities for participation and contribution by the youth, social groups, and experts in the decision-making and implementation process is not a political slogan but a prerequisite for effective governance. This approach, rather than recycling artificial political boundaries, relies on meritocracy and harnessing all the country’s human capacities.

2. Domestic economic diplomacy: Sustainable development will come about when each province and region can play a part in national growth based on their relative advantages. Building up effective connections between the private sector and local institutions, enhancing the role of councils and chambers of commerce, and channeling investment toward local projects can balance out the national economy and

close down regional disparities.

3. Institutional agility and flexibility: One of the chronic flaws in the governance system is slowness in decision-making and execution. Delegating authority to local bodies, streamlining government structures, cutting down unnecessary bureaucratic steps, and making use of technology to speed up processes are vital necessities to snap into action quickly during crises and seize opportunities. A forward-looking government is one that can roll with unforeseen changes and events and jump into immediate action.

4. Political rationality in decision-making: Today’s politics, more than ever, needs to steer clear of fleeting emotions and pointless polarization. Replacing rash decisions with dialogue, consensus-building, and leveraging expert opinions can set up a collaborative and stable environment for advancing national programs.

5. Proactive regional diplomacy: The first year’s experience

has shown that constructive relationships with neighbors are more than a political necessity; They are an effective economic and security tool. Continuing this path, along with innovative approaches to hammer out new ways for economic, transit, and energy cooperation, can boost Iran’s standing in regional equations and lay down a strong foundation for internal growth.

6. Strengthening social capital and public trust: No structural reform or development plan can take root without enduring public support. Maintaining transparency, accountability, and honesty in performance, combined with involving people in decision-making, can build up public trust and revive social capital.

7. Justice-centrism alongside developmentalism: The government’s ongoing path must make sure that economic development goes hand in hand with social justice. This

means paying special attention to less privileged areas, supporting vulnerable groups, and preventing the build-up of inequalities. Only then can economic growth translate into public welfare and social cohesion. The one-year experience of the Pezeshkian government has clearly shown that combining these essentials — from people-centered, justice-driven governance to domestic economic diplomacy, institutional agility, and political rationality — can chart a course toward a stable and development-oriented future for the country. Overcoming today’s challenges doesn’t just boil down to government willpower but requires a synergy between the government, society, and elites; a synergy that can pull together the country’s scattered capacities into a unified national direction and turn hope for the future into a tangible reality.

The article first appeared in Persian on IRNA.



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (L) meets with his Egyptian and Omani counterparts, Badr Abdelatty (C) and Badr Al-Busaidi, respectively, on the sidelines of the Oslo Forum in the Norwegian capital on June 11, 2025.
● EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY

Iran to play in five friendlies before FIVB World Championship



● FIVB

Sports Desk

The Iranian national volleyball team will play five warmup games in preparation for the FIVB Men's World Championship, which will begin in the Philippines on September 12. Iran will visit Doha on August 26 to face Egypt and Qatar, twice, before leaving for Manila, where Roberto Piazza's men are scheduled to play Slovenia and Germany on Sept. 9-10, the national governing body of the sport confirmed.

Iran was scheduled to participate in a four-team tournament in Russia before heading to Manila, but the preparation plan was changed after the Cuba and Belarus withdrew from the event.

Iran will make an eighth appearance at the flagship international volleyball event, starting with a game against Egypt in Pool A on September 14.

The Asian powerhouse will face another African test in Tunisia two days later, followed by a final group game against the host at the SM Mall of Asia Are-

na in Pasey on September 18. The top two in each of the eight groups will progress to the round of 16.

The World Championship will be a second major tournament for Iran under Italian Piazza, who will be looking to build on a decent run of results by his team at the preliminary round of the Volleyball Nations League last month.

Despite failing to secure a first VNL last-eight spot since 2022, Piazza's team definitely did enough to win over Iranian fans again with some brilliant performances and results in the preliminary phase – following a dire run of results over the past couple of years that saw Team Melli finish in the bottom three of the VNL table on two occasions and miss out on a berth for Paris Olympics last summer.

In fact, an eighth-place finish, courtesy of six wins in 12 outings, would have been enough for Iran to progress, had China – second from bottom in the preliminary table – not automatically qualified as the host of the VNL Finals.

Chengdu 2025 World Games:

Iran's Lesani settles for roller-skating bronze

Sports Desk

The roller-skating event of the Chengdu 2025 World Games was hardly a memorable one for Iran after the country managed to win only a single bronze medal across the men's and women's competitions.

Reza Lesani, who won a bronze at the Asian Roller Skating Championship in July, came out on top in successive races against Mohammad Savari in an all-Iranian third-place contest to finish behind gold winner Zhang Hao and his fellow-Chinese Fu Yu in the men's inline freestyle speed slalom.

Iranian girls Romina Salek and Taraneh Ahmadi, meanwhile, finished their campaign empty-handed on in the women's speed slalom event.

Former world-record holder Salek, who bagged a precious

gold medal at June's Hero Battle Cup in Milan, missed out on the podium after a 2-1 loss to Wen Jingjing of China.

Asian silver medalist Ahmadi had to settle for a joint-fifth spot after she suffered an early exit against Salek in the quarterfinals.

Liu Chiao-hsi of the Chinese Taipei, who beat Ahmadi to the gold at the Asian Championship last month, repeated her success by defeating China's Zhu Siyi in the final.

Lesani's bronze added a seventh medal to Iran's haul at The World Games.

Iranian karateka Sara Bahmanyar grabbed the women's kumite -50kg gold, while Shahin Banitalebi (men's nanquan-nangun) and Yasaman Baqerzadeh (women's 70kg) walked away with the ultimate prize in their respective events at the wushu competitions.

A sole silver medal for the country also came in wushu as Mohammadreza Rigi fell to a final defeat against Egyptian Alhussein Wahdan in the men's sanda 85kg showdown.

Soheila Mansourian (women's sanda 60kg) and Saleh Abazari (men's kumite +84kg) were the other Iranian bronze medalists in Chengdu.

Featuring 34 sports and 60 disciplines that are not contested at the Olympic Games, the 12th edition of The World Games will conclude with closing ceremony today.



Reza Lesani celebrates with the Iranian flag after winning the men's bronze medal at the inline freestyle speed slalom event of The World Games in Chengdu, China, on Aug. 16, 2025.

● XIE JIANFEI/XINHUA



Qolizadeh to be sidelined for three months with groin injury



● PAWEŁ JASKOLKA/PRESSFOCUS

Sports Desk

Lech Poznan's Iranian winger Ali Qolizadeh is expected to be out of action for three months following surgery on his torn groin muscle on Friday.

The Iranian international suffered the injury during a training session with his club last week.

The news came as a shock for the Polish top-flight champion, which has already had to cope with the absence of several key players – including Swedish winger Patrik Walemark and Polish fullback Robert Gumny – in the early stages of the new season.

Having joined Lech Poznan from Royal Charleroi S.C. for a then-club record fee in July 2023, the 29-year-old Iranian enjoyed a prolific campaign last season, bagging eight goals – while providing teammates with six assists – in 34 games in all competitions, as the Polish club lifted a ninth Ekstraklasa league trophy in May.

WTT Youth Contender Amman 2025:

Iranians collect double trophies in U17 boys' event

Sports Desk

Young Iranian table tennis players Faraz Shakiba and Mobin Amiri claimed a couple of trophies at the latest WTT Youth Contender event in Amman, Jordan. Representing the country in the U17 boys singles contests, Shakiba came from behind to beat India's Abhi-

nandh Pradhivadhi 3-2 (8-11, 7-11, 11-7, 12-10, 16-14) in a thrilling last-four clash at the Orthodox Club Hall, but eventually settled for a runner-up finish after a 3-1 (11-8, 5-11, 12-10, 11-8) loss to Li Ki Ho of Hong Kong in the final showpiece. Amiri, meanwhile, finished joint third alongside Pradhivadhi, following a straight-game setback (11-9, 11-9, 11-9) against the Hong Kong player.

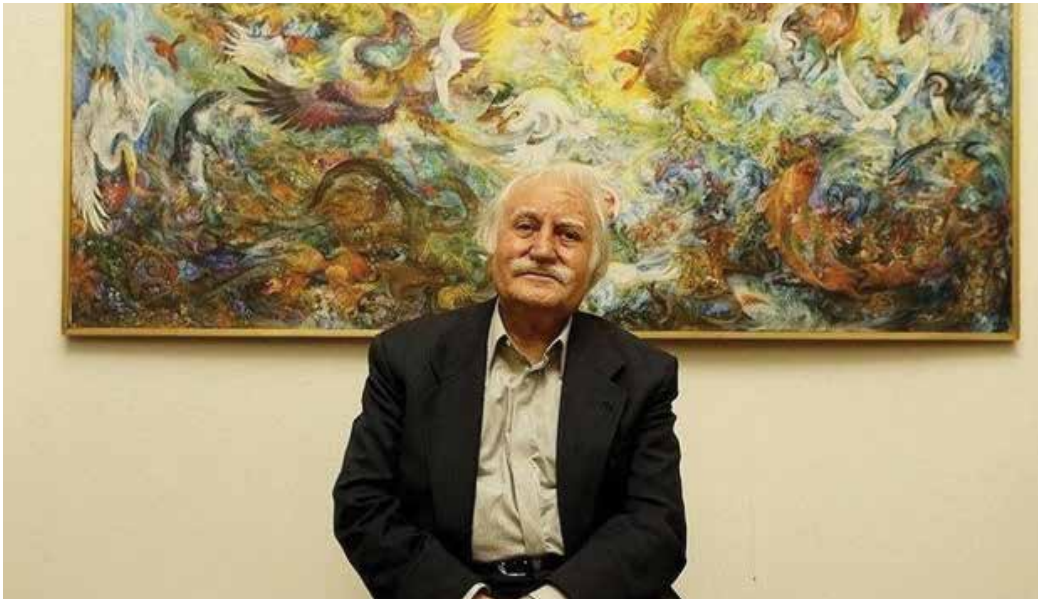


Iran's Faraz Shakiba won a runner-up trophy in the U17 boys singles contests at the WTT Youth Contender event in Amman, Jordan.

● WTT



Saeb Tabrizi's tomb to become cultural beacon with Farshchian's burial



● Mahmoud Farshchian



● Saeb Tabrizi's tomb

Iranica Desk

Saeb Tabrizi's tomb, belonging to the renowned poet of the 17th century, stands as one of the most distinguished examples of Iranian garden tombs. Restored in the 1950s, it has since become recognized as a major literary and cultural hub in Isfahan. This site is not only a valuable legacy of Iranian and Isfahani traditions through its unique design and architecture but has also evolved into a gathering place for lovers of poetry, literature, and art.

Farshchian burial decision

According to the decision made by the family of Mahmoud Farshchian, a master of Persian miniature painting who passed away on August 9, and in accordance with his will, the artist's body is to be buried on Monday, August 19, in the western part of the tomb, beneath the stairs of Saeb's mausoleum. This choice of location has once again drawn public attention to the artistic and architectural features of the tomb, placing it at the forefront of cultural interest.

In this context, three eminent experts in architecture, art, and culture participated in an interview with Mehr News Agency to explore various dimensions of Saeb's tomb, offering a clear depiction of its hidden values for audiences who may be less familiar with this monument.

Architectural reinterpretation

Hamid Reza Soroush, a Ph.D. holder in architecture and a university lecturer, considers Saeb's tomb a contemporary reinterpretation of ancient Iranian architectural traditions. He believes the site is inspired by classical garden tombs such as Delgosha Garden, establishing a profound connection between nature and the poet's eternal resting place. According to him, the presence of the garden and ancient trees surrounding the structure not only enhances the environmental beauty but also creates a mystical and poetic tranquility in the minds of visitors.

He emphasized that the form of the ivan and the niches in the tomb are designed with simplicity and precise proportions. The choice of white stone for the main facade, combined with limited turquoise tilework, beautifully expresses the Isfahani identity of the building. This blend of colors and materials not only reflects the aesthetic taste



● IMNA/SHEKOUFEH VAHID

of the architects involved in the 1950s restoration but also clearly reveals its roots in Safavid architecture. Soroush further noted that, unlike tombs such as those of Hafez or Sa'di, which are characterized by greater grandeur and magnificence, Saeb's tomb possesses an allure rooted in its simplicity. This deliberate choice harmonizes with the themes of asceticism, mysticism, and spirituality found in Saeb's poetry. In essence, the tomb's design is founded on a philosophy that seeks beauty in tranquility and balance rather than in ostentation.

He also emphasized that the burial of Farshchian at this location will forge a new connection between two precious heritages, namely Iranian poetry and art. The selection of the western section of the tomb for the bur-

ial is especially thoughtful, as it maintains a visual link to the main structure while providing an independent space to honor the artist.

Traditional arts

Farzaneh Shariati, a researcher of traditional arts, regards Saeb's tomb not only as an architectural monument but also as a permanent exhibition of traditional Iranian arts. She believes the most important artistic aspect of the tomb resides in the inscriptions and poems engraved in Nastaliq script on the gravestone and parts of the ivan. These calligraphies not only exhibit visual beauty but also transmit the poet's mystical and literary message to future generations. She explained that the combination of turquoise tilework with black and white Nastaliq strokes

creates an artistic environment where visitors subconsciously experience being in an open gallery. These elements sustain Iranian identity and demonstrate how authentic traditions can be successfully revitalized even in contemporary architecture. Shariati also highlighted the garden surrounding the tomb, stating, "The presence of paved paths and tall trees recalls traditional Iranian garden layouts. Among these features, the design of the stairs and the ivan evokes the sensation of transitioning from the earthly realm into a spiritual one. This spatial arrangement, beyond its practical function, carries profound symbolic and spiritual meanings." She added, "The burial of Farshchian beside Saeb presents an opportunity to reaffirm the connection between poetry, calligra-

phy, and miniature painting. Just as Saeb crafted poetic imagery with words, Farshchian created mystical and visual images with his brush. This proximity has the potential to transform Saeb's tomb into a new destination for aficionados of Iranian arts."

Cultural symbolism

Naser Kiani, a researcher of Iranian culture and civilization, introduced Saeb's tomb as one of the most significant cultural symbols of Isfahan. He stated that this monument is more than just a burial site; over time, it has become part of the collective memory of the people of Isfahan and even Iran. In his view, Saeb, as a poet of the Safavid era, represents an essential part of Iran's literary and mystical identity, and his tomb symbolizes the preservation of

this identity.

He believes that the choice of Saeb's tomb for the burial of Farshchian carries deep symbolic significance. This decision creates a historical coexistence between two prominent figures: one, a great poet of the 17th century CE, and the other, a renowned painter of the 20th century CE. Both, in their unique ways, created worlds filled with meaning and beauty and left enduring legacies for Iranian culture.

Kiani also highlighted the social dimension of this choice, saying, "Saeb's tomb, due to its urban location, has always drawn public attention. The burial of Farshchian here will further enhance focus on the site and could boost cultural tourism in Isfahan. This is not only a tribute to the memory of the artist but also a reinforcement of the city's cultural stature."

He added, "Saeb's tomb will now become an even more valued place — a site where not only poetry and mysticism but also miniature painting and Iran's visual arts are vividly expressed. This coexistence sends a clear message to future generations: Iranian culture is a living, interconnected network of poetry, art, and spirituality."

Considering that Saeb's tomb is situated in District 1 of the Isfahan Municipality, Ali Razizadeh, the mayor of this district, told Mehr News Agency, "Certainly, the presence of such an esteemed and illustrious figure as Farshchian can elevate Isfahan's artistic profile. This site will become a destination for art enthusiasts. With his burial here, programs to honor and commemorate this great artist are planned for the coming days."

He continued, "We aim to transform Saeb's tomb into the Saebiyeh of Isfahan, creating an eminent cultural and artistic center akin to Hafezieh in Shiraz. This location will hold special significance for Farshchian and will become a venue for specialized gatherings of artists in the future. Innovative and distinctive plans have been developed for this space, and we invite all organizations and artists to collaborate with us on this initiative."

He stated, "The precise burial site of Farshchian is located beneath the stairs of Saeb's tomb, within the green space of the complex. Farshchian himself had previously visited this site and selected it as his eternal resting place. Even the symbolic design of the burial site was created by him."



Minister denies Pasargadae buffer change, expands Cyrus restoration crew

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Reza Salehi Amiri said Saturday the UNESCO World Heritage site's protective boundaries will remain unchanged amid growing concerns over development limits near the ancient Achaemenid capital. The minister, who has served in his current role since August 2024, told ILNA following his recent visit to Pasargadae and nearby Persepolis in Fars Province. His comments addressed widespread speculation that Iran might relax construction restrictions around the 6th century BC site containing Cyrus the Great's tomb. Salehi Amiri dismissed reports suggesting the government had given a "green light" to modify Pasargadae's buffer zones. The controversy stems from a recent advisory report recommending construction up to 7.5 me-

ters high outside the site's three-tier protection zones. "The issue concerns building permits outside Pasargadae's buffer zones, not changes to the boundaries themselves," the minister said. He emphasized that any construction decisions must first pass through Fars Province's technical council before reaching the national cultural heritage technical council in Tehran. The minister announced six new restoration specialists will soon join the two-person team currently working at Cyrus's mausoleum, quadrupling the site's restoration capacity. He also ordered the clarification of employment status for contract workers at both Pasargadae and Persepolis. Salehi Amiri stressed that well-drilling and agricultural expansion remain strictly forbidden within Cyrus's tomb buffer zone. "During my Pasargadae visit, modifying the tomb's

protective boundaries was never discussed," he said. The minister insisted that Pasargadae's local parliamentary representative will participate in all technical council meetings reviewing the 7.5-meter construction proposal. Results from both provincial and national technical assessments will be announced within 24 hours of completion. Pasargadae, located about 90 kilometers northeast of Shiraz, served as the Achaemenid Empire's first capital under Cyrus the Great. The site gained UNESCO World Heritage status for its palaces, gardens and royal tomb. During his Fars Province trip, Salehi Amiri addressed longstanding budget shortfalls, staffing issues and security concerns plaguing both Pasargadae and Persepolis. He promised visible improvements at both heritage sites in coming weeks.



● IRNA

Tehran Symphony Orchestra rehearses for 'Namira' Oratorio performances



● IRNA

Arts & Culture Desk

The Tehran Symphony Orchestra held a rehearsal Saturday morning at Vahdat Hall in Tehran as the ensemble prepares for its upcoming performances of composer Behzad Abdi's oratorio 'Namira' on August 19-20. The rehearsal was conducted by Nasir Heydarian, who was recently reappointed as the or-

chestra's permanent conductor after previously holding the position from 2022 to 2023. The performances will mark the orchestra's return to the stage after a months-long hiatus, IRNA reported. Abdi, born in Tehran in 1973, is known for his opera and film compositions, including the opera 'Rumi' released on the Naxos label. The oratorio 'Namira' was specially orches-

trated for large orchestra, choir and soloists, and tells the story of Ashura with themes of freedom and immortality. The production brings together prominent Iranian vocalists including Vahid Taj, Hossein Alishapour, Mojtaba Asgari, Hadi Feyzabadi, Mahmoud Salehi, Behnaz Naderi, Hossein Mirzaiyan and Mohsen Zarabadipour. Heydarian, who studied at the University of Music Graz in Austria, has worked with various European orchestras including the Graz City Opera and Basel Symphony Orchestra. He took over from Manouchehr Sahbaei, who led the orchestra from October 2023 to March 2025. The Tehran Symphony Orchestra, founded in 1933 by Gholamhossein Minbashian, is Iran's oldest and largest symphony orchestra. The ensemble last performed in May 2024 under Sahbaei's direction with a program titled "From the New World" at Vahdat Hall before going on hiatus during the traditional break for Muharram and Safar months.

'Companion' picked for New Orleans Film Festival

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Alireza Memariani's short film 'Companion' has been selected for the 36th New Orleans Film Festival, scheduled for October 23-29, 2025, in the United States, the New Orleans Film Society announced. The festival, launched in 1989 and recognized by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in three short-film categories, has grown into a major platform for independent cinema worldwide. Its endorsement

allows films screened in New Orleans to qualify for Oscar consideration, ILNA reported. 'Companion' portrays a single sequence from the life of Ali Zahedi, a fisherman from Hormuz Island in southern Iran, and his bond with a pigeon named Ghanbar. The bird, raised by Zahedi three years ago, flies alongside him every evening as he rides his motorcycle through the island's roads. Organizers said the film captures an "extraordinary companionship" that has become a beloved attraction for visitors to Hormuz.



● ILNA

The New Orleans Film Festival, which draws international filmmakers each year, will present selections across narrative, documentary and animation shorts, along with features.

'Black Shawl' lands nomination at HollyShorts Festival in LA

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Alireza Shahhosseini's short film 'Black Shawl' scored a nomination at the 20th annual HollyShorts Film Festival, which wrapped up Saturday at the TCL Chinese Theatre in Hollywood. The Oscar-qualifying festival, which ran from August 8-18, selected the Iranian drama as one of 10 finalists from among 1,500 submissions, according to the filmmaker's media advisor. Winners from HollyShorts automatically qualify for Academy Awards consideration. 'Black Shawl' has been making waves on the international festival circuit. The film snagged a special jury prize at Spain's Diversimagen

Festival and claimed best film honors at the 22nd San Sebastian International Film Festival.

The psychological drama has screened at festivals across Europe, including Milan, Turin, Porto Femme in Portugal, and France's Cinema Towards Freedom Festival. Shah Hossein Film, an international production company, produced the project.

The film's cryptic plot centers around a disturbing question: "Do you know anything about spiders? They eat their mates." Cast members include Pasha Rostami, Tara Majidzadeh, Lotfollah Seifi, Mohanna Seyedi, and the late Hatam Mashmoli, alongside Javad Falahtkar, Hasti Gharib, Iraj Abe-



di, Nasser Marefat, Ebrahim Naji, and Arshia Cheraghi. HollyShorts awards over 25 categories including Best Short, Best Live Action, Best Director, and Best Animation – all of which carry Academy qualifying status. The festival has become a launching pad for emerging filmmakers seeking Oscar recognition.

Decades of easy access mask Iran's water scarcity

Social Desk

A prominent water resources expert shattered Iran's longstanding perception of water abundance, warning Saturday that decades of easy access have created a dangerous "illusion" masking the nation's true arid climate.

Banafsheh Zahraei, director of the Water Institute at the University of Tehran, told IRNA that Iran's recent technological advances have allowed citizens to forget their country's historical water scarcity. The nation now faces mounting pressure to adapt to climate change while managing severely strained resources. "The easy availability of water in recent years has created the false impression that Iran is a water-rich country," Zahraei said. "This perception is completely wrong." Iran sits in an arid and semi-arid region where precipitation falls well below one-third of the global average. Throughout history, Iranians adapted to these harsh conditions. But modern infrastructure masked the underlying scarcity. "When we turn on taps in cities, water flows," Zahraei explained. "This creates the illusion of an unlimited source." The country now grapples with its



● ASIRAN

fifth consecutive year of drought in Tehran province. Nationwide precipitation has dropped below long-term averages, signaling widespread drought conditions. Climate change has intensified Iran's predicament beyond its natural geographic constraints. Both rainfall patterns and volumes have shifted dramatically, Zahraei noted. The frequency and intensity of droughts over the past two decades suggests Iran will face even more severe water shortages ahead. Industrial and economic expansion has compounded the crisis, particularly as massive cities sprouted in naturally water-poor regions. Tehran exemplifies this challenge. The capital, home to over 10 million people, ranks as Iran's poorest province in renewable water resources per capita. Dam construction and inter-basin water transfers now pump water from neighboring provinces including Alborz, Qazvin and Mazandaran.

Multiple water transfer projects remain under construction to sustain Tehran's population. But these schemes essentially shift water scarcity from destination to source regions, Zahraei warned.

"When we build cities where natural water sources can't support them, drinking water supply becomes the priority," she said. "This means water needs get transferred from other provinces and regions." Tehran already exports its water shortage to Mazandaran province through the second phase of the Lar water transfer line. Additional transfers from Karaj and Taleghan dams push scarcity onto Alborz and Qazvin provinces. The agriculture sector, while consuming the largest share of Iran's water, cannot shoulder blame alone for conservation efforts, Zahraei argued. Multiple provinces now bear Tehran's water burden. "Every glass of water Tehran residents save – whether for drinking or other uses – reduces pressure on people in other provinces," she said. Iran must overhaul urban lifestyles to align with water realities. Cities need consumption management systems ensuring minimum water use for health and sanitation without imposing excessive pressure on neighboring regions.