

Pezeshkian in Yerevan

President: Tehran's concerns over new route should be addressed

Armenia reassures Iran about border control



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (5th L), flanked by members of his entourage, holds talks with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan (5th R) during a visit to Yerevan, Armenia on August 19, 2025.

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exclave will be under Armenian control. Pezeshkian, who was on a two-day visit to Armenia, in a post on X said Iran believes that Armenia's sovereignty and territorial integrity should be preserved and emphasized the continuation of sincere relations between the two countries. A planned corridor linking Azerbaijan with its exclave Nakhchivan, which is part a recent peace deal signed earlier this month in Washington between Armenia and Azerbaijan, has

caused security concerns for Iran as the United States has been granted exclusive rights to develop the corridor, which is known as the Zangezur corridor. Iran has long opposed the idea, saying it would change the geopolitical order of the Southern Caucasus and would restrict Iran's ability to use transport networks in the region. In a joint press conference with Pashinyan, Pezeshkian said Iran believes that problems of the Caucasus region should be resolved by the regional states, stressing that resorting to trans-regional forces complicates the situation in the region. "Roads passing through Armenia will be under the exclusive jurisdiction of Armenia, and security will be provided by Armenia, not by any third coun-

try," Pashinyan added at the meeting with Pezeshkian. He underlined that the corridor would open new economic perspectives between the two countries and may offer a railway path from Iran to the Black Sea coast through Armenia. Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who is accompanying Pezeshkian in his regional tour that will also take him to Belarus, said that the Armenian side has assured that it will not allow Iran be threatened from its territory. During the visit, the two countries also signed 10 memoranda of understanding on cooperation aimed at enhancing the countries' relations. The documents were signed by high-ranking officials of the two countries following the private

meeting between Pezeshkian and Pashinyan. The MoUs address diplomacy, economy, mines and industries, road and urban development, healthcare, environment, education, culture, social interaction, and tourism. Pezeshkian told Pashinyan that Iran is ready to expedite the finalization of a long-term strategic cooperation program between the two nations. The president also stated that the relations and cooperation between Iran and Armenia are developing in all areas, emphasizing the necessity of increasing interactions and consultations between the officials of the two countries to remove obstacles and problems in achieving the goals and implementing the mutual agreements.

International Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Tuesday that Iran's concerns about the presence of transregional forces near the

common border with Armenia should be "completely" addressed after Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan reassured him that a planned corridor linking Azerbaijan with its

Putin, Zelensky ready for face-to-face peace talks

International Desk

Russian and Ukrainian presidents have agreed to hold face-to-face peace summit after leaders of the United States, Ukraine and several European countries held a meeting in Washington to put an end to more than three years of war between the two neighboring countries. According to three sources familiar with the issue, Russian President Vladimir Putin has proposed holding the peace summit with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky in Moscow during a phone call with his American counterpart Donald Trump. The discussion between and Putin came during high-stakes talks between Trump, Zelensky and several European leaders. "Putin mentioned Moscow" during their call on Monday, one of the sources told AFP, adding that Zelensky had said "no" in response. A diplomatic source close to the discussions said that European leaders had told Trump that Putin's proposal "did not seem like a good idea." After the summit in the White House on Monday that included the Ger-

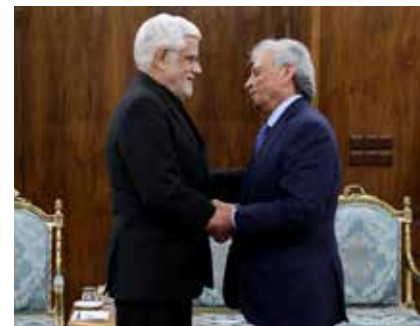
man, French, Finnish, Italian and UK leaders, Trump said a next step to stopping the fighting now its fourth year would be a face-to-face meeting between Putin and Zelensky. The Ukrainian leader has said repeatedly in recent weeks that he is prepared to sit down with Putin to end the war, which has cost tens of thousands of lives and displaced millions. "I confirmed - and all European leaders supported me - that we are ready for a bilateral meeting with Putin," Zelensky said Monday. Putin also told Trump during the call that he was open to the "idea" of direct talks with Ukraine, Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov said. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Tuesday that any meeting between the Russian and Ukrainian presidents would have to be prepared "very thoroughly." Switzerland, meanwhile, had said earlier that it would grant Putin immunity if he came to the country for talks on peace in Ukraine, despite the International Criminal Court's arrest warrant. Trump met with Putin last week in the northern US state of Alaska, end-

ing a years-long Western policy of isolating Putin. Zelensky has come under increasing pressure to cede territory to end the grinding war, as Russia makes a series of advances. Ahead of the White House meeting, Trump had pushed Ukraine to give up Crimea and abandon its goal of joining NATO - both key demands made by Putin. But Zelensky stressed he had been able to present a clearer picture of the battlelines to Trump, who he met in a one-on-one in the Oval Office. "This was the best of our meetings," Zelensky said, according to a statement put out by his office. "I was able to show many things, even on the map, to all American colleagues regarding the situation on the battlefield." Rather than concessions from Ukraine, the summit focused on arranging security guarantees in the event of a peace deal, French President Emmanuel Macron told reporters afterwards. Trump said the guarantees "would be provided by the various European Countries (in) coordination with the United States of America."

Veep calls for Muslim unity to fight off Israel

National Desk

Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref on Tuesday emphasized the necessity of unity among Islamic countries to confront Israel's crimes against Palestinians. Aref made the remarks in a meeting with Pakistan's Minister of National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain in Tehran. The Iranian official said that the Israeli regime is committing brutal crimes against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the Islamic Republic seeks unity and cohesion among influential Muslim countries to confront the regime. "We must not allow the oppressed people of Gaza to face such brutality from the usurping Zionist regime in their own land," Aref said. Israel's strikes on the Gaza Strip have claimed the lives of more than 62,000 Palestinians since October 2023. The first vice president also underlined that the strategy of Iran is based on strengthening bilateral relations with major neighboring and regional countries and is fully prepared to expand and deepen interactions in all fields and to utilize each other's capacities. Aref also welcomed the formation of the joint agricultural committee between Iran and Pakistan.



Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref (L) shakes hands with Pakistan's Minister of National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain in a meeting in Tehran on August 19, 2025.

● [IRNA](#)

On Monday, Iran and Pakistan agreed to more than double the value of their annual agricultural trade amid efforts by the two neighbors to bolster their political and economic cooperation. "We are ready to cooperate bilaterally and regionally in advanced technologies, especially artificial intelligence and other advanced technologies. The joint commission for economic cooperation should also become more active than before, and the agreed strategies should be implemented so that we witness a major development in relations," Aref said.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

Iran's strategic position ...

Iran's main strategy for managing disputes and promoting regional stability has been to adopt a "balanced policy." Given the current landscape, this approach is not without logic, since strategic alliances in the South Caucasus are themselves riddled with weaknesses and contradictions. Even when Iran has sought closer ties with Armenia, the internal divisions within Yerevan have limited results, with today's dynamics being part of those very contradictions. It is in this context that projects such as the Zangezur Corridor and the so-called Trump Route have come to the fore. In such ventures, geographical proximity often outweighs both investment volumes and the might of outside sponsors. That is why the

Zangezur Corridor is seen as costlier than the Trump Route, though the two can be complementary rather than mutually exclusive. For Iran, the bigger concern lies not in the routes themselves, but in their potential military and security repercussions for the region. Yet Iran holds a strategic position that can overshadow even the Zangezur Corridor or the Trump Route. Neighboring four geostrategic zones, enjoying access to open waters, and lying on the natural East-West and North-South axes, Tehran has diverse opportunities within reach. Moreover, rival roads are still a long way from becoming fully operational, given the need for stable financing, security guarantees, and resolu-

tion of border issues. Their success depends heavily on risk management and political continuity. This time gap could open the door for Iran to push forward its own routes and projects, involving both Armenia and Azerbaijan—initiatives that are not only feasible but also actionable. In the end, one key point must be underscored: Iran has already experienced "neighboring the United States" through Washington's military presence in Afghanistan and Iraq. So, while America's growing footprint in the South Caucasus is undoubtedly a serious challenge, it is by no means an unfamiliar one. This prior experience could give Tehran added depth and direction in shaping its future policy in the region.

