

Private sector to build 1,200 MW of solar capacity in seven provinces

3 >



> [irandaily.ir](http://irandaily.ir)

| [newspaper.irandaily.ir](http://newspaper.irandaily.ir)

| IranDailyWeb

## New missiles will be deployed in case of fresh Israeli attacks: *Defense minister*

2 >

### Neither Iran nor Belarus stands alone



By Aliaksandr Filipau  
Middle East affairs expert

#### OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The official visit of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian to the Republic of Belarus and his meeting with the Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko is an important political event for both nations.

Belarus and Iran have a long history of close cooperation in various areas. The Belarusian government supports the right of Iran to independent development and condemns sanctions introduced against this country. The Iranian government follows the same policy towards Belarus. Thus, these close positions make mutual cooperation natural and beneficial in almost all areas — trade, technology exchange, investments, establishing joint ventures, cultural and academic cooperation, supporting each other on the international arena, etc.

During the visit, the Belarusian and Iranian leaders emphasized the idea that our countries have no off-limits topics for discussions and are ready to strengthen mutual cooperation in all possible aspects. The strategic character of the partnership between Iran and Belarus is unquestionable.

Thus, the current visit has not only bilateral significance but also a very strong international dimension. Both Iran and Belarus maintain close cooperation with Russia and China, promote the idea of independent development of any country, condemn foreign intervention into one's domestic politics, and support the concept of multi-vector foreign policy.

All these messages are particularly important in the context of the latest active negotiations between the USA and Russia, the recent telephone call from US President Donald Trump to President Lukashenko, and Iran's perseverance against foreign aggression.

Both countries demonstrate to the USA and Europe that neither they nor Russia is in any isolation, that they will continue to pursue the benefits of their nations, which should be taken into consideration in Europe and the USA, and that they are full-pledged participants of all international processes. Neither Iran nor Belarus stands alone. They have the same rights for development and independent politics as well as any other nation on the planet.



## Pezeshkian: Israel-US aggression part of West's plan to expand domination

### Iran, Belarus sign 12 cooperation documents

2 >

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (L) inspects a guard of honor as his Belarusian counterpart Alexander Lukashenko welcomes him during an official visit to Minsk, Belarus on August 20, 2025.  
● [president.ir](http://president.ir)



### U20 Wrestling World Championships: Yousefi ends Iran's gold drought in Samokov

6 >



### Innovation, survival lessons from Qasabeh Qanat in Gonabad

7 >



### Iran holding Muraqqa art exhibition in Tashkent

8 >

### Pezeshkian's Minsk visit complements Yerevan visit

## Bright horizons in Belarus-Iran relations



By Nino Kvernadze  
Senior expert at Middle East Research Center

#### OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The visit of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to Belarus, coming just one day after his extensive meeting with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in Yerevan, carries a clear message for Europe and the United States. Pezeshkian's trip to Armenia took place at a moment when the South Caucasus was overshadowed by the signing of a peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan, alongside discussions about the growing influence of the United States in the region and the weakening role of traditional actors. His visit signaled Iran's firm position that "any change to the geo-

political map of the South Caucasus is unacceptable." In this sense, his trip to Minsk can be seen as complementary to his visit to Yerevan.

The decision of President Pezeshkian to pay an official visit to Belarus represents the logical continuation of Iran's foreign policy — a policy that prioritizes multipolarity, the preservation of national sovereignty, independence, and resistance to coercion. It should be noted that this policy is fully shared and supported by Belarus. Although Pezeshkian's visit to Minsk had originally been scheduled for June 26–27, 2025 — during which he was expected to take part in events related to the Eurasian Economic Union — the trip was postponed due to the escalation of the conflict with Israel. Nevertheless, its eventual realization underlines the importance both countries attach to strengthening their bilateral ties.

Page 3 >



# Pezeshkian: Israel-US aggression part of West's plan to expand domination

## Iran, Belarus sign 12 cooperation documents



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (5th R) and his Belarusian counterpart Alexander Lukashenko (5th L) co-chair a high-level meeting between Iranian and Belarusian delegations in Minsk, Belarus on August 20, 2025.  
● [president.ir](#)

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Wednesday that a recent aggression by Israel and the United States against Iran is part of the West's efforts to expand its global

influence and domination. Addressing a meeting with Belarusian officials in the country's capital Minsk, the Iranian president warned that threats by the West will not be limited to Iran and will target the independence of other

countries as well.

Pezeshkian arrived in the Belarusian capital on Wednesday for a two-day visit, during which he held talks with his Belarusian counterpart Alexander Lukashenko and took part in a press conference, before attending a high-level meeting with Iranian and Belarusian delegations. Pezeshkian called the June aggression by the US and Israel against Iran "clear violation of international law and the United Nations Charter". He noted that the strikes took place amidst indirect nuclear negotiations between Iran and the US.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has never started a war or aggression, but in the event of any aggression by its enemies, it will give a decisive and deterrent response", the Iranian president said. In mid-June, Israel launched a bombing campaign against Iran, triggering a war in which Iran responded with missile and drone strikes. The Israeli offensive killed senior military commanders, nuclear scientists and hundreds of civilians, striking both military sites and residential areas. The United States briefly joined the war with strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities. A cease-fire between Iran and Israel has been in place since June 24.

Threats to global security

The Belarusian leader, for his part, stressed that the US-Israel aggression against Iran poses a serious threat to regional and international

stability and security.

"We stand behind Iran's legitimate right to develop peaceful nuclear energy. For a lasting peace, it is important to refrain from any action that could lead to renewed tension," Lukashenko said.

In a separate meeting with Belarusian president, Pezeshkian said the US and some of its Western allies are seeking to expand unilateralism across the globe and impose their dictates upon other nations, emphasizing that neither Iran nor Belarus will tolerate such an approach.

Tehran-Minsk relations

Pezeshkian then hailed the amicable bilateral relations between Iran and Belarus, stating that the two countries share identical stances on many regional and international subjects, and have constructive cooperation in international spheres. "Additionally, the Eurasian Econom-

ic Union, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and BRICS serve as frameworks and platforms for facilitation and expansion of constructive interactions between Iran and Belarus," he noted.

For his part, Lukashenko described Belarus as a friendly country and a reliable partner for Iran.

He stated that Minsk and Tehran, in an atmosphere of interaction and friendship, can expand cooperation and completely resolve possible problems facing some bilateral agreements.

The two presidents also oversaw the signing of 12 cooperation agreements and a joint statement on Wednesday.

High-ranking officials signed documents in the fields of politics, international law, tourism, arts, media, health, pharmaceuticals, industry, environment, free trade zones, as well as special industrial and economic zones and investment.

## New missiles will be deployed in case of fresh Israeli attacks: Defense minister

National Desk

Iranian military officials once again warned Israel against resuming strikes with the defense minister saying that the Armed Forces would use more powerful missiles in case of new aggression. Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh said on Wednesday the Armed Forces were prepared for any new Israeli attacks, announcing Iran had developed missiles with greater capabilities than those used during Israel's 12-day aggression.

"The missiles used in the 12-day war were manufactured... a few years ago," Nasirzadeh said. "Today, we have manufactured and possess missiles with far greater capabilities than previous missiles, and if the Zionist enemy embarks on the adventure again, we will undoubtedly use them." On June 13, Israel launched an air campaign targeting several civilian, military, and nuclear facilities in Iran, which led to the assassination of several military commanders and nuclear scientists as well as hundreds of ordinary people. On June 22, the US also joined the aggression and bombed three Iranian nuclear facilities. In retaliation, Iran unleashed waves of drones and missiles at the occupied territories, inflicting significant dam-



A drone view shows an impacted building following a missile attack from Iran in Be'er Sheva on the occupied territories on June 24, 2025.  
● [REUTERS](#)

age on both settlements and military installations. On June 23, Iranian forces retaliated US strike with over 30 drones and missiles against the American military base in Qatar. Finally, on June 24, Israeli was forced to agree to a cessation of hostilities brokered by the US. Iranian officials have since warned that another round of fighting could erupt at any moment, emphasizing that Tehran does not seek war but remains prepared for any confrontation. On Monday, First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref said Iran should be "prepared at every moment for confrontation." "We are not even in a cease-fire; we are

in a cessation of hostilities," he added. Also on Wednesday, the commander of Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Military Headquarters underlined the combat readiness of the country's Armed Forces in fighting off any potential acts of aggression. The announcement came as the Iranian Navy is scheduled to kick off the operational phase of its Eghtedar 1404 missile exercise today (Thursday). Navy spokesman Rear Admiral Abbas Hassani said the two-day missile exercise would take place in the Sea of Oman and the northern Indian Ocean, involving surface and subsurface vessels, aerial units, coast-to-sea missile sites, sea-based missile platforms, and electronic warfare units.

## FM says Iran 'cannot completely' break with IAEA

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Tehran "cannot completely cut cooperation" with the UN nuclear watchdog but the return of its inspectors is up to the country's security chiefs, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said. The remarks came nearly two months after Iran suspended cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) following Israel's 12-day aggression against Iran.

Tehran said the IAEA effectively paved the way for the Israel-US strikes with a report on May 31 that led the IAEA's 35-nation Board of Governors to declare Iran in breach of its non-proliferation obligations. Iran also denounced the IAEA's failure to condemn Israeli and US strikes on its nuclear facilities as a reason for its decision, which saw the watchdog's inspectors leave the country following the passing of new legislation by the Iranian Parliament.

"We cannot completely cut cooperation with the agency," Araghchi said, noting that new fuel rods need to be installed at Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant in the coming weeks which will require the presence of IAEA inspectors. "Under the law passed by Parliament, the return of (IAEA) inspectors will be possible through a decision of the Supreme National Security Council," he told IRNA news agency in an interview published Wednesday, referring to Iran's top secu-



Abbas Araghchi

urity body. On June 13, Israel launched an unprovoked assault on Iran, striking not only nuclear and military sites but also residential neighborhoods. The attacks that lasted for 12 days, took the lives of nearly 1,100 Iranians. Shortly afterward, the United States carried out its own strikes on Iran's Fordow, Isfahan, and Natanz nuclear facilities. The war derailed nuclear talks between Iran and the United States on a new nuclear deal to replace the one abandoned by President Donald Trump during his first term in 2018. Iran has since said cooperation with the agency will take "a new form" and earlier this month the agency's deputy head visited Tehran for talks. At the time, Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi said Iran and the agency had agreed to "continue consultations." Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei said on Monday Iran and the IAEA will probably have another round of negotiations in the coming days.

## Israel approves plan to occupy Gaza City, calls up 60,000 reservists

International Desk

Israel's military called up tens of thousands of reservists on Wednesday in preparation for an expected assault on Gaza City, which has drawn condemnations from many countries. Israel's Defense Minister Israel Katz approved the plan on Wednesday for the conquer of Gaza City and authorized the call-up of around 60,000 reservists. The call-up signals Israel is pressing ahead with its plan to take control of Gaza's biggest urban hub despite international criticism of an operation likely to force the displacement of many more Palestinians. But a military official briefing reporters said reserve soldiers would not report for duty until September, a move that gives mediators some time to bridge gaps between the Palestinian resistance group Hamas and Israel over cease-fire terms. Israel's security cabinet, chaired by

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, approved the plan this month to expand the campaign in Gaza, with the aim of seizing Gaza City, sparking fears it will worsen the already catastrophic humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Many of Israel's closest allies have urged it to reconsider but Netanyahu is under pressure from some far-right members of his coalition to reject a temporary cease-fire, continue the war and pursue the annexation of Gaza. Israel's onslaught on Gaza has claimed the lives of more than 62,000 Palestinians and caused widespread devastation across the Gaza Strip, which before the war was home to about 2.3 million Palestinians. Many buildings, including homes, schools and mosques have been destroyed. Most Gazans have been displaced multiple times and forced into densely packed areas along the Mediterranean coast, including in Gaza City. Netanyahu has come under growing pres-

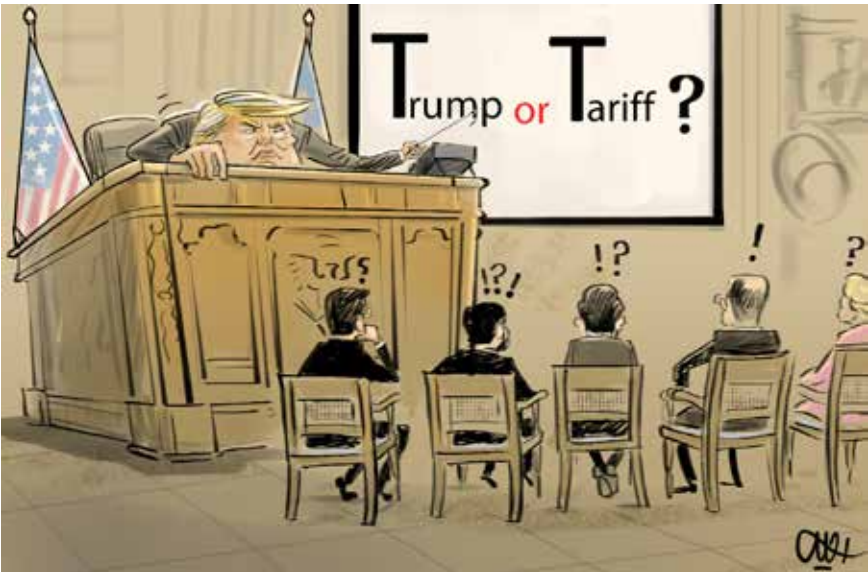


AFP

sure at home and abroad to end the war, with the German government saying on Wednesday that it "rejects the escalation" of Israel's campaign. French President Emmanuel Macron said Wednesday that Israel's "military offensive" to conquer Gaza City "can only lead to a complete disaster for both peoples". Israel's plan "will drag the region into a permanent war," the French president posted on social media, reiterating his call for an "international stabilization mission".



Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist





# Tehran, Islamabad ink deals on agriculture, plant protection

Economy Desk

Iran and Pakistan signed two memorandums of understanding on the establishment of the first joint agricultural committee of the two countries, as well as on cooperation in the field of plant protection and quarantine. The agreements capped a three-day visit by a Pakistani delegation to Tehran, during which the two sides held a series of joint meetings. Speaking at the ceremony, Iran's Agriculture Minister Gholamreza Nouri Qazeljeh said that the talks culminated in the signing of two key agreements, one on establishing the first Iran-Pakistan Joint Agricultural Committee, and another detailing collaborative efforts in plant protection and quarantine measures. He noted that Iran and Pakistan have the potential to complement each other in agricultural development, adding that in recent days both countries had actively followed up on discussions and agreements made during President Masoud Pezeshkian's recent visit to Pakistan, particularly in areas related to farming, crop protection, and agricultural trade, Mehr reported.

**\$3b-trade forecast**  
The minister projected



Iran's Agriculture Minister Gholamreza Nouri Qazeljeh (R) and his Pakistani counterpart Rana Tanveer Hussain sign a memorandum of understanding in Tehran on August 20, 2025. ● maj.ir

that bilateral trade in food and essential commodities between Iran and Pakistan could more than double, from the current \$1.3 billion to \$3 billion, within the next two years. During the three-day visit, the Pakistani delegation expressed its intention to source key agricultural and food products from Iran, leveraging Tehran's export capacity in these sectors. In turn, Iran pledged to import essential goods that align with Pakistan's export offerings, according to Qazeljeh. He further stressed that barter trade could accelerate the pace of these exchanges.

**Agreement on technical cooperation**  
Addressing the ceremony, Pakistan's Minister of National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, said the Iranian president's recent visit to Pakistan had opened a new

chapter in bilateral relations rooted in shared cultural and historical ties. He confirmed that discussions between the two agriculture ministries, complemented by technical-level meetings, resulted in two key agreements: one on establishing a framework for broad agricultural cooperation, and another focusing on technical collaboration within the sector. The Pakistani minister said his country was ready to cooperate in agriculture sector, including the trade and development of farm products, stressing that the two sides could meet their food and commodity needs by drawing on each other's capacities and production.

# Belarus to launch agricultural, mining machinery production line in Iran

Economy Desk

Belarus has expressed readiness to establish a production line for agricultural and mining machinery in Iran. Speaking on the sidelines of talks between Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko in Minsk on Wednesday, Belarusian Industry Minister Andrei Kuznetsov said, "Belarus attaches great importance to developing mutually beneficial cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran," adding, "In this regard, we are prepared to launch production and assembly lines for agricultural, cargo and mining machinery in Iran," IRNA reported. Kuznetsov, who also heads the Belarusian side of the Iran-Belarus Joint Economic Commission, welcomed the current level of engagement between the two countries and underscored the promising outlook for expanding bilateral relations, BelTA reported.

**Company to assemble agricultural machinery in Iran**  
The minister stressed that the Belarusian Ministry of Industry was ready to offer a wide range of opportunities to deepen its industrial partnership with Iranian counterparts. He added that plans to assemble Belarusian combine harvesters in Iran would help integrate advanced Belarusian agricultural machinery technologies into the country's economy. For this purpose, he said, a company will be established in Iran to produce high-quality agricultural machinery. Kuznetsov noted that work in this field had already begun, which would



Belarusian Industry Minister Andrei Kuznetsov ● BelTA

lower logistics costs and provide the local market with access to advanced technologies from Belarus's agricultural and industrial sectors. He added that cooperation in supplying various types of specialized machinery — agricultural, cargo, and mining — would open new prospects in bilateral ties and meet Iranian partners' demand for reliable multipurpose vehicles. The minister underlined that expanding industrial supply chains and bilateral cooperation would yield significant benefits for both countries and serve as a key catalyst for boosting trade and economic exchanges between Belarus and Iran. Kuznetsov said Belarus was currently focused on developing mutually beneficial industrial cooperation with Iran, which would not only strengthen both economies but also create jobs and improve citizens' welfare.

**Annual trade stands at \$140m**  
According to Iran's ambassador to Belarus, annual trade between the two countries currently stands at around \$140 million. Alireza Saneie told IRNA, "the figure

does not reflect the full potential of bilateral commerce, since part of Iran's exports to Belarus passes through third countries such as Russia and is not recorded in official statistics." The envoy highlighted the strong and complementary strengths of Iran and Belarus across multiple sectors. "For instance, Iran is a major producer of agricultural goods, while Belarus specializes in manufacturing agricultural machinery," Saneie said. He further noted that Iran supplies petrochemical products to Belarus, while Belarus ranks among the world's top exporters of potash fertilizer, a vital input for Iran's farming industry. He said Iran and Belarus could also complement each other in the pharmaceutical sector, with Iran supplying products and Belarus acting as a buyer. He also noted Iran's large mineral reserves and its demand for heavy mining equipment, including dump trucks—an area where Belarus has global expertise.

# Private sector to build 1,200 MW of solar capacity in seven provinces



Economy Desk

Iran's deputy energy minister announced the signing of a contract for the construction of 1,200 megawatts

of solar power plants between the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) and the private sector. Mohsen Tarzatab said at the signing

ceremony that efforts were underway to connect the plants to the grid before the start of next year's peak consumption season. He added that the projects would be implemented in seven provinces: Tehran, Qom, Semnan, Isfahan, Alborz, Markazi, and Qazvin, ISNA reported. The SATBA chief also announced the participation of the National Development Fund in financing solar projects, stressing that investors must provide part of the required capital in order to access the fund's facilities. He said easing access to financial resources was key to accelerating construction, noting that Loans from the National Development Fund will be allocated to the project and repaid by the project-executing entity through mechanisms established by the Fund. According to the deputy minister,

the project-executing company will be able to sell electricity generated by the solar plants through the Iran Energy Exchange or other designated markets. Calling on private investors to join the initiative, Tarzatab underlined that, in cooperation with the National Development Fund, 50 percent of the financing for major projects would be provided by SATBA and the remaining 50 percent by the private sector. The head of SATBA highlighted the continuous support of President Masoud Pezeshkian and the Energy Ministry for renewable energy expansion, expressing hope that with the signing of this contract and the completion of ongoing projects, the country's renewable power capacity would reach 7,000 megawatts by the end of the year.

According to official figures published on June 1, Iran's nominal electricity generation capacity reached 94,649 megawatts by the end of the first months of the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20, 2025), nearing the 95,000-megawatt threshold. An imbalance has emerged over the past decade in the county, with power production and consumption growing at unequal rates. According to Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi, "In the last 10 years, electricity production has increased 13-fold while consumption has risen 23-fold, leading to a grid imbalance." The government had granted all administrative departments a deadline - effective June 21 - to supply part of their required electricity from solar energy.

# Pezeshkian's Minsk visit ...

As Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko has said, one must go "where he is expected, where the doors are open to him." Perhaps this very idea is reflected in Pezeshkian's approach, convincing him to undertake the journey to Belarus despite the cancellation of his earlier visit. This trip, therefore, has the potential to open a new chapter in relations between the two nations. Belarusian-Iranian relations, over their slightly more than 30-year his-

tory, have experienced periods of both activity and decline (under the influence of internal and external factors). A new impetus to bilateral relations was given in 2023 with the signing of a roadmap for comprehensive cooperation for 2023-2026. At that time, President A. Lukashenko emphasised that there had been "a certain pause" in relations between Belarus and Iran, which have been successfully overcome. The roadmap mapped out their coop-

eration in the political, economic, consular, scientific, and technical spheres, as well as in the fields of education, culture, art, media, and tourism. As a result, the bilateral relations became truly multifaceted, extending far beyond mere traditional trade and economic cooperation. Given their ideological proximity and similar views on international events (in particular, in the Middle East), the two countries support each other at major international forums and organisa-

tions such as BRICS, the SCO, and the UN. Belarus and Iran share and consistently defend the view that pressure from other states seeking to limit their sovereignty and interfere in the internal affairs of independent countries is unacceptable. Particular importance is attached to military-technical cooperation. In July 2023, Belarusian Defence Minister Viktor Khrenin and his Iranian counterpart, Mohammad Reza Ashtiani, signed a memorandum on military co-

operation. In 2024, Belarusian military personnel took part in anti-terrorism exercises in Iran. And this year, an Iranian military attaché's office opened in Minsk for the first time. The parties are actively cooperating in the humanitarian sphere as well. On the agenda are student exchanges, joint research projects, and the organisation of direct air links between Belarus and Iran. Furthermore, the development of Iranian studies in Belarus is gaining momentum.



## Pezeshkian's first year in office

## Trial of multifaceted crises in battlefield, diplomacy



By Mohammad Hossein Amirhosseini

Professor at University of East London

## O P I N I O N

The first year of Masoud Pezeshkian's government cannot be judged by the typical yardsticks of an ordinary presidential term. In many countries, the inaugural year serves as a phase of setting up: the slow formation of the cabinet, working out coordination among departments, shaping executive policies, and carrying out efforts to fulfill campaign promises. Yet, for Pezeshkian, that year turned into a multilayered battleground of challenges in national security, regional diplomacy, domestic economy, and public opinion management.

Dr. Pezeshkian, who entered the electoral fray with a platform of national unity and shunning needless tensions in domestic and foreign politics, was immediately thrown into a chain of unforeseen events upon taking office. The severity and diversity of these incidents were such that each alone could have knocked out a government agenda for months or even years. This tight clash of crises left no room for trial-and-error or gradual policy shifts, forcing the government from the outset to step up with strategic and immediate decisions to secure its course. In those early months, the stark and unvarnished reality of regional and global politics sent a clear message to the administration: If Iran's standing in the geopolitical equation is to be maintained or raised, decisions must be weighed carefully, with long-term vision, and avoiding knee-jerk reactions. These conditions put to the test Pezeshkian's announced programs and, beyond that, the government's capacity to juggle multiple crises simultaneously, under the gaze of both domestic and international observers. In other words, the first year came across as a crisis trial where the government's survival and credibility hinged on smart and timely reactions.

## Assassination of Haniyeh: first security shock

Before the ink on Pezeshkian's presidential decree had dried, news of the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, the political bureau chief of Hamas, in Tehran launched into headlines across domestic and international media. This was not merely a security incident but a strategic shock that shook up the psychological order of regional power dynamics.

The assassination's dimensions were layered and complex. On the one hand, such a precisely coordinated operation in Iran's capital rang alarm bells at various governance levels, signaling that hostile entities, leveraging advanced intelligence networks and insider support, could pull off actions whose impact was not just physical but could also be felt in the minds and media outlets around the globe. The chosen location, timing, and execution method all pointed to a calculated design aimed not just at eliminating a political figure but at sending a message of infiltration, undermining stability, and demonstrating power on enemy turf. This event went beyond security to influence the perception of power — the realm where politics via assassination morphs into unofficial diplomacy. In short, assassination here was not mere violence but an alternative language of politics.

Iran's response was played out within a measured and staged deterrence doctrine. Contrary to the expectations of some quarters awaiting immediate retaliation, Tehran stuck to its known



strategy: holding back on emotional reactions and instead planning out its response in terms of timing, location, and scope based on strategic considerations. This approach aimed to keep the Sword of Damocles hanging, avoid falling into manufactured conflicts, and maintain psychological cohesion among the public. Simultaneously, the diplomatic apparatus of the country kept the channels open, not through formal talks but through crisis management and keeping at bay misunderstandings or miscalculations in the tense regional atmosphere. International analysts described this strategy as a double-edged message: Iran has the will and capability to respond but is unwilling to get caught up in an enemy's trap to drag the region into endless war.

## Assassination of Nasrallah: political-security tremor

Before Iran and the Arab world had fully shaken off the shock from the Tehran incident, news broke out of the assassination of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, secretary-general of Lebanon's Hezbollah. He had led one of the Middle East's most ef-

fective non-state actors for over three decades and represented, in the Resistance Axis, not only a military commander but a symbol of ideological link, charisma, and strategic coherence. His removal sent shockwaves through Lebanon and the region, severely impacting the power balance.

This event could drive home a strategic message to Iran: the urgency of strengthening crisis diplomacy alongside military support and pulling together political, social, and media backup in allied countries to shore up resilience against such shocks.

## Operation True Promise II

Against this backdrop, Iran rolled out Operation True Promise II about two months after Haniyeh's assassination and four days after Nasrallah's killing and that of some associates, including Iranian General Abbas Nilfroushan in Lebanon. The timing and target selection carried a multi-layered message. It wasn't just a reactive strike but part of an active deterrence strategy.

The clear message was that Iran could

keep up the initiative on the field without getting bogged down in an exhausting reaction cycle. Some regional political and military analysts noted this operation caught Tel Aviv's attention, demonstrating that Iran can hit back while keeping the diplomatic door open. It also put to the test coordination among military forces, the diplomatic apparatus, and domestic media — a coordination that would prove crucial in the months ahead, especially during the imposed 12-day war.

## Changes in Damascus: end of Assad chapter

In December 2024, Syria's political landscape shifted gears with Bashar al-Assad's departure. Iran's ties with Syria had been a linchpin in Tehran's regional policy for two decades, aligning with counter-Daesh (ISIS) efforts and bolstering deterrence by deepening strategic depth and empowering the Resistance Axis. Assad's departure meant redefining the equation.

Following Assad's fall, Iran's influence in Damascus and the Resistance Axis noticeably took a hit. Meanwhile, Turkey's



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (R) addresses the Parliament before a vote is taken on his proposed cabinet members in Tehran, Iran, on August 21, 2025.  
● ERFAN KOUCHARI/TASNIM



Dr. Pezeshkian, who entered the electoral fray with a platform of national unity and shunning needless tensions in domestic and foreign politics, was immediately thrown into a chain of unforeseen events upon taking office. The severity and diversity of these incidents were such that each alone could have knocked out a government agenda for months or even years. This tight clash of crises left no room for trial-and-error or gradual policy shifts, forcing the government from the outset to step up with strategic and immediate decisions to secure its course.



Image of Ismail Haniyeh, a Hamas leader who was assassinated in Iran on President Masoud Pezeshkian's inaugural day, is held by a woman at a square in Tehran, Iran.  
● ARASH KHAMOUSHI/  
THE NEW YORK TIMES



forces, Persian Gulf countries, and the Zionist regime stepped up as key players in Syria. These changes marked a major test for Iran’s foreign policy flexibility in facing structural shifts in regional power balances.

**Return of diplomacy amid crisis**  
Pezeshkian’s government came into power on a platform of national unity domestically and rationality in foreign diplomacy. Right from the start, the incumbent administration made moves to pull Iran out of foreign policy deadlocks from the previous administration.

A key element of Pezeshkian’s foreign policy was bolstering neighborly diplomacy — a stance that the administration sought to redefine with a more constructive and fresh outlook. Presidential visits to Iraq, Qatar, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Tajikistan underscore the prioritization of regional foreign policy.

At the same time, the nuclear negotiations file made a comeback as a primary foreign policy priority. Amid the security and regional crises, a quieter diplomatic layer was taking shape: the start of a new round of indirect talks between Iran and the United States. These discussions began in April 2025, after Donald Trump’s second presidential term in the US kicked off and Washington sought to revive dialogue channels with Tehran.

Earlier, in March 2025, Trump had sent a letter to the Leader of Iran’s Islamic Revolution as an initial signal for talks. Iran’s response was a green light for the indirect negotiations held on Omani soil and in Rome, mediated by Omanis and some European channels. Although these talks were happening against the backdrop of regional and field crises, their strategic significance was undeniable. Iran aimed to stick to its principles while avoiding being cornered diplomatically. Up until the imposed 12-day war, five rounds of these talks had taken place. However, with the onset of Israel’s military aggression, the sixth round was cancelled, putting talks on ice.

**Imposed 12-day war: multifront confrontation**

The peak of Pezeshkian’s government security challenges came about in June 2025 — just as the sixth round of nuclear talks with the US was looming — when Israel opened up a military front against Iran. Tel Aviv pursued multiple objectives in this aggression: dismantling Iran’s nuclear program and defensive missile capabilities and exploiting psychological warfare, internal rifts, and social discontent to shake up Iran’s political structure and governance. This military assault was accompanied by a targeted media war against Iran.

On one hand, the Zionist regime tried to pass off its aggression as self-defense in Western media and public opinion. On the other hand, it sought to steer internal Iranian public opinion through Persian-language anti-Iran media like Iran International. Moreover, fears of the conflict spilling over into a regional war ran high and were compounded by America’s direct involvement, turning up the stakes. Iran kicked off Operation True Promise III in response to the attacks by the Zionist regime, marking a new level of military capability compared to the previous two operations. This new wave stepped up in volume of strikes, accuracy of targeting, technical complexity, and number of operations.

By hitting military, security, and strategic targets of the Zionist regime, Iran demonstrated not only its capacity for firing back, but also its ability to consistently show off its tactical and strategic power. Unlike earlier conflict patterns, which typically wrapped up with a focused Iranian response, this time Iran turned up the heat by emphasizing the sustainability of its countermeasures and unveiling a new dimension of military strength and calculations.

Close coordination and tight cooperation between the government and military, security, and diplomatic institutions played a key role here. This institutional synergy helped the Pezeshkian government pull off quick and precise decisions to keep a lid on the critical domestic situation while aligning the message of Operation True Promise III internationally with

the political and diplomatic discourse of the government. This made the battlefield and diplomacy two complementary arms working within a common strategic framework. The proactive and targeted efforts by the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the war, along with combating the Zionist regime’s media narrative and cementing the notion on the international stage that Israel’s attacks were clear aggression rather than legitimate self-defense, filled in the blanks of the synergy between battlefield actions and diplomacy.

**Cease-fire, post-war atmosphere**

After 12 days of clashes and with the direct involvement of the United States, relentless diplomatic efforts brought about a cease-fire mediated by Qatar. The importance of this cease-fire lay in the fact that Iran was not the proposer, and Israel, for the first time, came around to accept a cease-fire without preconditions. International observers regarded this as unprecedented in the history of Israeli military conflicts, signaling the failure of Israel to fully carry out its objectives in the war, especially given that the final, highly destructive and costly attack came from Iran.

From the government’s viewpoint, this outcome was a dual achievement: On one hand, it headed off a protracted war and rising human and economic costs, and on the other, it painted Iran as a wise and calculating actor that, even amid battle, did not lose sight of diplomacy while fiercely defending itself against external aggression.

However, experience demonstrated that post-war moments can be tougher than the war itself as a fresh field of political, media, and economic competition sets in, equally sensitive. In the post-war atmosphere, the national unity forged during the crisis stands as the Pezeshkian government’s greatest political asset. Increased public trust in the government and armed forces, alongside a temporary easing of factional tensions, opened up a space that could serve as fertile ground for launching structural reforms.

Yet, as Iran’s modern history and experiences elsewhere show, such capital quickly evaporates unless it converts into tangible economic and social achievements in the short term. Pezeshkian’s government now faces a strategic crossroads: Either build on this national solidarity as a springboard for economic and political reforms or let it fizzle out, allowing political rifts and mistrust to creep back in. Meanwhile, resolving the nuclear crisis and continuing negotiations in the post-war environment are considerably more complicated than before, especially with Europe turning up the pressure by threatening to activate the snapback mechanism, which means reinstating UN Security Council sanctions, potentially dealing a heavy blow to Iran’s economy. In the post-war setting, part of the Iranian society sees any negotiation as a sign of retreat, while another segment blames the lack of talks for worsening economic woes and political isolation. Overall, domestic public opinion has turned more skeptical about any agreement. Internal political fissures have also thrown a wrench into coordination efforts. Iran’s diplomatic apparatus is thus forced to both uphold the country’s nuclear red lines and keep diplomacy doors from slamming shut.

**National unity: from slogan to mechanism**

Pezeshkian has sought to move beyond the slogan of national unity he championed during his campaign to the realm of designing operational mechanisms. This goal was pursued through various means, including holding a national dialogue conference attended by leading theorists and representatives from diverse political factions. The cabinet also became more diverse than before, although there remains a need for stronger representation of women and minorities.

To realize national unity, the current government has not only focused on fostering political dialogue but also paid special attention to the integrative role of media and narrative management in crisis times. The experience of the imposed 12-day war and its surrounding incidents proved



that internal cohesion cannot be complete without synchronization in the media arena. Moreover, regional and global public opinion is shaped not by military and diplomatic decisions but through the media. Active media diplomacy and initiatives such as Pezeshkian’s interview with Tucker Carlson reflected the government’s growing sensitivity to the media’s role in foreign policy and leveraging regional and international media capacities.

**Political sincerity: return to realism in governance**

A closer look at Iran’s past governments and governance trends in recent years reveals that the main problem was not sincerity but secrecy, exaggeration, delusion, and unreal narratives — approaches that not only failed to improve the country’s situation but also widened the gap between the government and the public and eroded the foundations of social capital. It seems Pezeshkian, fully aware of the costs, has deliberately taken a different road. He has repeatedly emphasized that the people are the genuine owners of the country and deserve to hear the truth — however bitter — from officials rather than from foreign media or enemy leaders. Although this governing style might open him up to political attacks in the short term, within the legitimacy-building theories of governance, it is precisely at the point where social capital reconstruction takes off — between bitter reality and responsible honesty. Pezeshkian believes authority doesn’t come from hiding the country’s problems and crises but from stepping up with courage to accept those crises and a transparent will to face them.

Within international relations theory, the approach of the incumbent government toward candidly stating facts and avoiding exaggerated narratives can be analyzed as legitimacy-building through transparency and soft power. According to Constructivism and Liberal Institutionalism perspectives, transparency and sincere dialogue with the domestic society not only strengthen social capital but send a clear signal to external actors: The government has genuine popular backing and acts based on data and realities. Furthermore, transparency can crack down on rivals’ psychological warfare and curb foreign propaganda effectiveness, making it harder for hostile narratives to take root.

However, Realism theorists caution that exposing too many limitations might be seen by competitors as a weakness. In international political economy, emphasizing domestic problems could negatively impact investors’ and trade partners’ risk assessments, pushing up the costs of attracting foreign capital — which, given sanctions and hurdles, may be less relevant currently.

Therefore, this strategy works best when honesty is paired with smart message management — so alongside highlighting problems, practical solutions and tangible signs of overcoming challenges are also presented. This combination can

turn sincerity into soft capital and a tool to advance Iran’s foreign policy aims in a competitive, multipolar environment.

**Crisis-experienced gov’t with forward-looking face**

The first year of Masoud Pezeshkian’s government painted a clear picture of a crisis-tested administration that weathered serious multi-layered challenges in its early months. A standout feature of this period was the conscious effort to strike a balance between field and diplomacy. While previously one area often overshadowed the other, Pezeshkian aimed to prove that it is possible to be firm on the ground and active in diplomacy simultaneously.

Entering the second year is a more sensitive and decisive phase. Widening rifts between the United States and Europe over handling Middle East crises, especially the Gaza war, have opened up a fresh opportunity to redefine and energize balanced diplomacy with the European continent. Meanwhile, leaving Persian Gulf countries to take the lead in mediating Iran-US talks and turning these into mostly bilateral talks has pushed Europe to the sidelines and heightened feelings of neglect in European capitals. These concerns, paired with nuclear issues, have contributed to Europe seriously ramping up talk of activating the snapback mechanism.

Conversely, Iran’s simultaneous engagement with Eastern cooperation frameworks like BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the possibility of linking these memberships to China’s Belt and Road Initiative, and expanding ties with neighbors have set a new stage for leaps in trade, transit, and technology. The possible return of regional investors if diplomatic tensions somewhat ease could fuel economic infrastructure improvements. Channeling some of this capital into innovation, especially AI development and application, could raise Iran’s share in the growing regional economy. Achieving AI roadmap goals will impact not only the economy but also culture, education, media, healthcare, security, and politics, helping redefine national power and Iran’s place in the international system.

Still, in its second year, the incumbent government faces looming threats of harsher sanctions, worsening economic troubles, energy and water crises, and shifting geopolitical balances. Smartly seizing existing opportunities and timely spotting new ones while maintaining active diplomacy will be key to navigating through these challenges successfully. Given that snapback activation and UN sanctions return could choke off a significant portion of these opportunities, foreign policy and diplomacy will play an even more critical role in this second year. If the government sticks to this approach rightly, there is hope Iran will gradually weather its current crises and sustainably boost its standing in the international arena.

*The full article first appeared in Persian on IRNA.*



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (C) hands flowers to female journalists during his visit to the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) on the National Journalist Day in Tehran, Iran, on August 9, 2025.  
● [president.ir](http://president.ir)



After 12 days of clashes and with the direct involvement of the United States, relentless diplomatic efforts brought about a cease-fire mediated by Qatar. The importance of this cease-fire lay in the fact that Iran was not the proposer, and Israel, for the first time, came around to accept a cease-fire without preconditions. International observers regarded this as unprecedented in the history of Israeli military conflicts, signaling the failure of Israel to fully carry out its objectives in the war, especially given that the final, highly destructive and costly attack came from Iran.



# U20 Wrestling World Championships: Yousefi ends Iran's gold drought in Samokov

## Sports Desk

Mahdi Yousefi gave Iran something to cheer about amid another dire freestyle campaign at the U20 Wrestling World Championships by securing the country's first gold medal in Samokov, Bulgaria.

However, there was further misery for Iran – winner of three freestyle team trophies over the past four editions – on Tuesday as Arshia Haddadi, Aliasghar Tat, and Tohid Nouri all finished empty-handed in their respective weight classes. Yousefi defeated American William Henckel 8-6 to walk away with the ultimate prize in the 79kg contests – a second medal for the Iranian at the U20 Worlds following last year's bronze in

Pontevedra, Spain. The Iranian built a commanding 8-2 lead in the second period and then held off a late surge by Henckel to round off a prolific 10 month in his career, which began with the world under-23 title in Tirana last October.

Yousefi had an impressive breakthrough in senior wrestling earlier this year by collecting a Ranking Series silver and bronze, either side of a gold-winning performance at the Asian Championships in March, though he ultimately missed out on a place in the Iranian squad for September's World Championships in Zagreb.

The Iranian prodigy began his campaign in Samokov with emphatic

victories over Moldovan Ion Laurențiu Marcu (10-0) and Armenia's Narek Nikoghosyan (8-0, technical fall) and then beat Turkmenistan's Alp Arslan Begenjow 6-4 for a place in the semifinals.

A thrilling last-four clash saw the Iranian outmuscle Russian Said Saidulov, who participated as a neutral athlete, 15-7 to set a final date with Henckel.

Meanwhile, Haddadi recovered from a first-round setback (6-1) against Russian Magomed Ozdamirov to rout Bulgaria's Esad Bozali by technical superiority in the 57kg repechage but was undone by Kyrgyzstan's Baiaman Kerimbekov (5-4) and failed to reach the third-place bout.

Elsewhere, a 10-9 defeat

against Russian wrestler Amal Dzhandubaev ended Tat's 65kg campaign in the round of 16.

Nouri was forced to retire from the quarterfinal clash with Gadzhimurad Gadzhibatyrov due to a rib injury, while trailing the Russian 3-1.

Tuesday's results came after Iran had managed to win a silver and bronze across four weight classes the previous night.

Abolfazl Mohammadnejad had to settle for a silver medal in the 125kg contests following a 4-1 loss to Kazakhstan's Yedige Kassimbek, while Ebrahim finished with a consolation bronze in the 70kg category.

Elahi bounced back from a last-four criteria defeat (2-2) against American Peter John Duke to beat France's Abdoullah Na-

kaev 6-4 and share the third podium with Nurlan Aghazada of Azerbaijan.

Erfan Alizadeh – an Asian U20 champion in July – crashed out in the round of 16 following a 7-5 loss to Nikolaos Karavanos of Greece in the 97kg class, with Mohammad-Mahdi Mamivand also missing out on the podium in the 74kg event – courtesy of a 9-8 setback against Italian Raul Caso in the last 16.

The freestyle competition will be followed by the women's wrestling event in Samokov, before the Iranian Greco-Roman squad begins its bid for a fourth successive team title at the U20 Worlds on Friday.



● IAWFIR

## Persian Gulf Pro League:

# Esteghlal stuns Tractor; Malavan, Sepahan share the spoils

## Sports Desk

Esteghlal made a strong statement on the opening day of the new Persian Gulf Pro League season by claiming a massive 1-0 away victory over defending champion Tractor in Tabriz on Tuesday.

Mohammad-Hossien Eslami played a delicate one-two with summer signing Saied Saharkhizan before lobbing young Tractor goalkeeper Adib Zarei midway through the second half at an empty Bonyan Diesel Stadium. The victory ended the Tehran Blues' three-game losing streak against the northwest Iranian club – including last week's 2-1 setback in the Iranian Super Cup.

With Portuguese head coach Ricardo Sa Pinto back on the bench after two years and the addition of some marquee signings

in recent weeks, Esteghlal faithful will hope the Blues build on the victory to mount a serious title charge, having endured a dreadful league campaign last term by finishing ninth in the table.

Meanwhile, the opening-day setback, coupled with a drab performance throughout the 90 minutes, served as a wakeup call for Tractor and Croatian head coach Dragan Skocic ahead of a hectic season in the domestic competitions as well as the AFC Champions League Elite.

Next for Tractor is an away game against Mes Rafsanjan and former head coach Rasoul Khatibi on Tuesday, while Esteghlal will host Zob Ahan at the Shahr-e Qods Stadium.

Elsewhere, Sepahan shared the points with Malavan, courtesy of a 1-1 stalemate at the Sirous Qayeqran Sta-

dium on Tuesday.

Aria Yousefi gave Sepahan a 12th-minute lead with a tame effort from the edge of the box, only to see his strike canceled out by Hossein Sadeqi in the 65th minute.

Sepahan will hope to extend its five-game winning run against Persepolis, which was held to a 1-1 home draw by newly-promoted Fajr Sepasi on Monday, when the two heavyweights go head-to-head in the 'Iranian Clasico' next week.

Malavan, meanwhile, will travel to Ahvaz to play Foolad Khuzestan on Tuesday.

Having finished fourth in the table last season, Yahya Golmohammadi's Foolad got off to a losing start in the new campaign, suffering a 1-0 defeat against Chadormalou.

Foolad went down to 10

men after Mohammadreza Soleimani received his marching orders in the 44th minute, before Ali Khodadi found the net from the spot in the 90th minute.

Chadormalou – the surprise package in the Iranian top flight last season – will play away to Shams Azar next.

Shams Azar played to a 1-1 draw against Esteghlal Khuzestan on Tuesday. Hojjat Ahmadi put the home side in front in the 26th minute, before Mahdi Mohammadi drew Shams Azar level with 18 minutes left on the clock.

Esteghlal Khuzestan will visit Paykan next Tuesday.



Esteghlal players celebrate their 1-0 victory over Tractor at the Persian Gulf Pro League in Tabriz, Iran, on August 19, 2025.

● FFIRI

## Asian Shooting Championships:

# Rostamian, Golkhandan team up for mixed bronze in air pistol contests

## Sports Desk

Iran's Hanieh Rostamian and Vahid Golkhandan teamed up to win a bronze medal in the 10m air pistol mixed event at the Asian Shooting Championships in Shymkent, Kazakhstan.



The Iranian duo defeated Vietnam's Thuy Trang Nguyen and Cong Minh Lai 16-8 on Wednesday to share the third podium with India, while China defeated South Korea 16-12 to walk away with the ultimate prize.

The bronze took Iran's haul to seven medals across different age classes in Shymkent.

Iranian boys Mohammadreza Ahmadi, Amirhossein Gohari, and Mohammad-Mahdi Choobin scored 1721 points to beat India (1716pts) and South Korea (1699) to the men's youth 10m air pistol gold on Monday, while Ahmadi went on to win the individual bronze in the same category.

Meanwhile, Iranian girls Parimah Amiri, Donya Arshadnia, and Tara Abaszadeh won a youth silver medal on Tuesday, scoring 1676 points for a runner-up finish behind India (1701) in the women's 10m air pistol event.

Amiri also claimed the in-

dividual bronze of the category with 214.1 points.

Iran also collected a couple of bronzes in the men's 10m air pistol team event. Golkhandan, Amir Joharikhou, and former Olympic champion Javad Forouqi scored 1733 points for a third-place finish in the team table, while Joharikhou bagged a bronze in the individual competitions.

The 16th edition of the Asian Championships will continue at the Shymkent Shooting Plaza until August 30.



Hanieh Rostamian (l) and Vahid Golkhandan won the 10m air pistol mixed team bronze at the Asian Shooting Championships in Shymkent, Kazakhstan.

● IRISSF

## Iran U21 beats Brazil in last outing before FIVB World Championship

## Sports Desk

Iranian boys defeated Brazil in straight sets (25-23, 26-24, 25-15) on Tuesday in a final warmup friendly before the FIVB Volleyball U21 World Championship, which will get underway today in Jiangmen, China.

Mohammad Mo'menimogaddam's team had come out victorious in four sets against France in the Chinese city on Sunday. "Results don't really matter in friendly games, but I'm still grateful that the two victories will boost our confidence for the World Championship," said the Iranian head coach, who will be looking to build on a 20-game unbeaten run in competitive matches, during which Iran claimed back-to-back

Asian under-20 titles either side of the world U21 crown in 2023 – thanks to a 3-2 victory over Italy in the final showdown in Manama. Two-time champion over the past three editions, Iran will begin its title defense against Kazakhstan in Pool B today.

A second outing for Iran will come against Puerto Rico on Friday, followed by games against South Korea – in a repeat of last year's Asian under-20 final, which Iran won in straight sets – Canada, and Poland. The top four in each of the four six-team groups will progress to the round of 16.



● AMIRHOSSEIN KHEIRKHAH/volleyball.ir



# Innovation, survival lessons from Qasabeh Qanat in Gonabad

Iranica Desk

The Qasabeh Qanat of Gonabad, Khorasan Razavi Province, has been less affected by drought due to its access to deep underground water sources, and recent dredging has increased its water flow from 130 to 151 liters per second, said the head of the Qasabeh Qanat World Heritage Site. Referring to the qanat's 2,500-year history and the mother well with a depth of more than 330 meters, Hamid Reza Mahmoudi described this qanat as one of the most astonishing water structures in the world — a legacy that has sustained over 2,500 years of life and prosperity in the heart of the desert. This qanat is not only a masterpiece of traditional Iranian engineering but also continues to play a vital role in supplying water and supporting urban and rural life in the region, ISNA wrote. He added that the qanat is recognized as the leading case for the registration of Iran's qanats on the World Heritage List, with the registration process beginning in 2014. "That same year, we created two entrances to the qanat. These entrances were originally paths made by the Agricultural Jihad Organization in the 1990s to clear blockages in the qanat using mechanical equipment. In 2014 and 2015, we converted this ramp into stairs in two sections so that UNESCO evaluators could enter the qanat through the same path. This was the site's first construction activity at the time." He further explained that subsequently, the site covered the stairs and reinforced a 400-meter underground path between the first and second entrances. This previously abandoned section was prepared for UNESCO evaluators' visits. Other measures included installing road signs on routes leading to Gonabad, placing a restroom cabin onsite, creating temporary parking, and providing electrical infrastructure. Mahmoudi stated that given the vastness of the site, its buffer zone covers 310 square kilometers, and the area designated for tourism services is about 200 hectares. The Qasabeh Qanat consists of two



● alibaba.ir



main branches with a total length of 33 kilometers. He continued that within this area, temporary parking, electrical infrastructure, and cabins have been installed, and restoration work has been carried out on structures related to the qanat along the path leading to the tailwater and passing through orchard alleys. Archaeological excavations have been conducted in areas such as the mills along the route, and some elements related to the qanat, such as water distribution cups, have been registered as part of the country's intangible heritage. Referring to the implementation of the qanat tourism route plan, he said that in recent years, the site has prepared a 2.7-kilometer-long tourism route plan that is expected to be operational in the future. This route will include significant points such as the Qasabeh Grand Mosque, mills, tailwaters, the qanat spring, and gardens. Mahmoudi noted that one of the most important recent actions has been the acquisition of 12.7 hectares of land within the tour-

ism project area. He added that a contract has been signed with the University of Tehran to prepare a management plan and a comprehensive tourism plan. Currently, the fourth phase of the tourism route is underway, and the main parking lot will be operational this year. The installation of illuminated signs and completion of electrical infrastructure are also ongoing. He said, "Other qanats in Gonabad that have been nationally registered are under our direct supervision. We maintain close cooperation with the city's water department. However, many qanats in the county have dried up. There are about 20 permanent qanats in Gonabad, and fortunately, since the 1980s, drilling wells within the Qasabeh Qanat area has been prohibited, which has been a crucial factor in preventing the qanat's drying up." Regarding the budget, Mahmoudi explained that funding related to tourism is provided by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, while matters related to the qanat structures fall under the Agricultural Jihad Or-

ganization. They have proposed allocating an annual national fund for the 11 Iranian qanats registered as World Heritage sites to ensure their structural protection, but this proposal has not yet been approved. Commenting on the role of qanats in drought crisis management, he said: "The Qasabeh Qanat, with its 2,500-year history, is a successful example of traditional water management. The main causes of qanat drying include urban development, changes in agricultural land use, and drilling deep wells within the qanat's area. Preventing these actions can ensure the qanats' longevity." Mahmoudi also emphasized that the biggest threats to qanats are well drilling within their boundaries, unauthorized construction, and changes in agricultural and orchard land uses connected to the qanats. He added that if the Agricultural Jihad Organization and the Water Affairs Department seriously address these issues, long-term protection of the country's qanats will be possible.



## Traditional beauty preserved in craft of Charoq

Among the many traditional shoes and footwear of Iran, each region holds unique styles with distinctive names. One of these is Charoq, a traditional handicraft of Quchan in North Khorasan Province. This type of footwear has long been used by villagers and shepherds. Characterized by long laces and straps wrapped around the ankles, Charoq is both practical and beautifully crafted. Researchers trace the origins of Charoq back to the Sassanid era, noting its flourishing during the Safavid dynasty. Its cultural significance is reflected not only in craftsmanship but also in Iranian literature. For instance, in Rumi's poem



"The Shepherd and the Muses", the shepherd humbly prays to God, saying he would sew His Charoq and comb His hair — a testament to the deep-rooted presence of this art form

throughout history. The tools used in making Charoq are similar to those of shoemaking, including the Derafsh (stitching awl), needles, scalp, knife, engraving pen



● visitiran.ir

tool, cutter, shoehorns, and wooden molds. The main materials consist of tanned cow leather, silk, Golabatoon (metallic threads), and cotton yarn, visitiran.ir wrote.

The process involves several steps: forming the body, sewing elaborate embroideries, adding decorations, attaching strap fasteners, and more. The opening is stitched with blan-

ket stitches, while other parts are sewn with colorful yarn on black leather. The back is reinforced with parallel stitches in white cotton thread. Six-petal flower motifs in pink and golden thread embellish the back, while the front is often adorned with vibrant pom-poms. In the final stage, a leather buckle is crafted and attached to both sides. For durability, the sole is made of buffalo leather. Unlike other regional variations, Charoq of North Khorasan Province is made from a single piece of leather. Interestingly, there is no distinction between left or right foot in a pair, and men's and women's versions are identical in design — differing only in size.





# Iran holding Muraqqa art exhibition in Tashkent

## Arts & Culture Desk

The cultural attaché of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Uzbekistan is holding an exhibition of "Muraqqa" artworks at the Kamaluddin Behzad Museum in the Uzbek capital of Tashkent.

Muraqqa, literally translated from Arabic as 'a collection of fragments', is a term applied to Islamic art denoting an eclectic album comprised of various samples of paintings and miniatures, calligraphic work, and a range of sketches and drawings.

The exhibition was welcomed by Uzbekistan's artistic community and enthusiasts of calligraphy, penmanship, and painting.

At the opening ceremony on Tuesday,

Mohammad Ali Eskandari, the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Uzbekistan, delivered a speech and thanked the organizers of the art exhibition.

Pointing to an Uzbek proverb that says "we have drunk from the same stream," Eskandari stated, "Iran and Uzbekistan share many historical and civilizational commonalities, and these cultural ties can pave the way for further expansion of relations between the two countries."

Hassan Mohammadi, the head of the 'Ketab Araei' Art Institute in Tehran, which initiated such artworks, also delivered a speech and thanked the exhibition organizers, emphasizing the importance of historical and cultural commonalities between the two countries.



Mohammad Ali Eskandari (4th L), the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Uzbekistan, inaugurates an exhibition of "Muraqqa" artworks at the Kamaluddin Behzad Museum in the Uzbek capital of Tashkent on August 19, 2025.

● IRNA



of the renowned artist.

At the end of the meeting, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Kamaluddin Behzad Min-

ature Museum and the Ketab Araei Institute in Tehran.

The exhibition of Muraqqa art pieces will be open to visitors for two days.

## Restoration of oldest mosque in Iran's northwest kicks off with \$330k fund



### Arts & Culture Desk

The Deputy of Cultural Heritage of Ardabil Province announced the realization of the long-held wish of the organization for the restoration of Ardabil's Jome Mosque (Friday Mosque), saying the renovation

is going to be launched after years of waiting with a budget of 30 billion Tomans (approximately 330,000 dollars).

The historical mosque was last restored during the Ilkhanid period.

As reported by ILNA, Ardabil's Jome Mosque is considered

one of the oldest historical buildings in Ardabil Province. A building that, according to cultural heritage experts, is considered one of the most important historical buildings in northwest Iran due to its various historical layers and its architecture and art from the Seljuk, Ilkhanid, and Safavid periods.

After several centuries since its restoration and reconstruction, the Deputy of Cultural Heritage of Ardabil emphasized the necessity of restoring the valuable historical building.

Alireza Dabbagh Abdollahi said one of the best restorations we had wished for over many years was Ardabil's Jome Mosque, and its restoration has now begun with the efforts of the Ardabil Cultural Heritage Department.

"Last year, with the estab-

lishment of the Ardabil Jome Mosque base, this mosque was added to the list of National Bases, and this year, with a contract worth 30 billion Tomans, we began the restoration activities of this very valuable historical building."

Dabbagh Abdollahi said the 30 billion Toman contract is separate from landscaping and has been allocated for the revival of the iwan-khaneh (portico) of the mosque, which is a very unique work.

"For many years, we had been trying to undertake restoration and protection measures of this scale and level in Ardabil's Jome Mosque, and fortunately, this contract has now been concluded, and experts are currently restoring and reviving the historical building," he said.

Located in the northeast of Ar-

dabil, between the neighborhoods of Pirshamseddin and Abdollah Shah, the valuable historical building is one of the oldest mosques in northwest Iran, which was last restored during the Ilkhanid period. The original structure of the current mosque was built during the Seljuk period, on the remains of an older structure that was destroyed as a result of the Mongol invasion in 620 AH and was rebuilt around 650 AH.

Experts and cultural heritage activists believe that since Ardabil's Jome Mosque has various historical layers, its restoration must be carried out with high sensitivity.

The main building of the mosque has beautiful prismatic compositions with a string course adorned with mosaic tiles, and the vaulting under

the dome is also designed such that in each corner of this square, three squinches with large pendentives were built, each having two rectangular openings for lighting and illumination of the mihrab area. Ardabil's Jome Mosque consists of three parts. The first part of the building relates to the base of a minaret that is visible at a short distance from the mosque and has two parts: an octagonal base and a cylindrical body with a diameter of five meters. The second part of the building relates to the wooden-roofed mosque, which is supported by nine wooden columns. Finally, the third part of the building relates to the old mosque, which is a combination of four arches and a dome, decorated with some tiles, and many of these facades have now been lost.

## 224-year-old copy of 'Bayaz-e Ad'iyeh' donated to National Library

### Arts & Culture Desk

The manuscript of "Bayaz-e Ad'iyeh (Book of Prayers)" written in Mu'arrab Naskh and Shekasteh Nasta'liq calligraphy, with golden decorations and a Termeh cover, was donated to the National Library and Archives of Iran by a woman from Hamedan Province. IRNA reported the Public Relations of the National Archives and Library of Iran as saying that Gita Shokri, a culture-loving resident of Hamedan, donated the precious manuscript, dating back 224 years, to the Management of Archives and National Library in the western province.

Atefeh Zarei, the director of the center, announced the news and said, "This manuscript, dated 1224 AH, is in Bayaz format and includes selected surahs (chapters) from the Holy Quran, prayers, and pilgrimage texts. The Arabic text is written in Mu'arrab Naskh calligraphy, and the translation and titles are written in fine Shekasteh Nasta'liq."

Zarei added that, "The manuscript has an illuminated and jeweled headpiece with Islamic and floral motifs, gold-leafing, and golden ruling. It consists of 121 leaves on



chickpea-colored Isfahani paper with a cover made of Termeh fabric and a dark brown Timaaj spine. Although the colophon date of the manuscript is recorded as 28 Muharram 1224 AH, given the difference in script and ink, it is probable that the original is older." While appreciating the cultural act, Zarei emphasized, "Donating such works plays an important role in preserving the written heritage, and the National Archives and Library of Iran invites all owners of historical works to participate in the preservation and scientific utilization of these treasures by donating valuable resources."

## Foreign soloists invited to attend Fajr Music Festival

### Art & Culture Desk

Nasir Heidarian, conductor of the Tehran Symphony Orchestra and a member of the policymaking council of the 41st Fajr International Music Festival, said the music event's executive team has invited prominent international artists to participate in the upcoming edition of the festival.

According to Mehr News Agency, Heidarian pointed to one of the approaches of this edition of the festival and said, "In this edition, foreign soloists will be invited to not only perform concerts but also hold masterclasses for conservatories and young artists."

Praising the move as a valuable opportunity for transferring experience and increasing the skills of the new generation, he added, "The goal of this approach is for musicians not just to perform, but to share their knowledge and experience with young artists."

This year's festival, Heidarian stat-

ed, in addition to focusing on quality and youth empowerment, will have a more prominent international dimension and the presence of foreign musicians is an opportunity for exchanging experiences, enhancing the musical knowledge of young people, and creating direct communication between Iranian and international artists.

"The Fajr Music Festival is a celebration for all Iranian people, and anyone can participate in it," he added. "The main goal of this festival will be the joy and satisfaction of the audience. Even if we can make just one person happy for an hour, it will be a great success for the festival."

The conductor of the Tehran Symphony Orchestra emphasized, "In the 41st edition of the Fajr Music Festival, the policymaking council's focus is on improving the quality of programs and youth empowerment. Good activities have been carried out in this regard and have yielded positive results. In this edi-



tion, efforts are being made for the festival to have significant progress in terms of quality compared to previous years and editions. Creating opportunities for the entry and participation of the young generation is an important part of the approach of this edition of the policymaking council. We are trying to create conditions for young people to have a more prominent presence in this year's festival."

Heidarian concluded, "I hope that art-loving artists and those who love people will play a role in holding a real celebration for all Iranian people through their presence and cooperation."