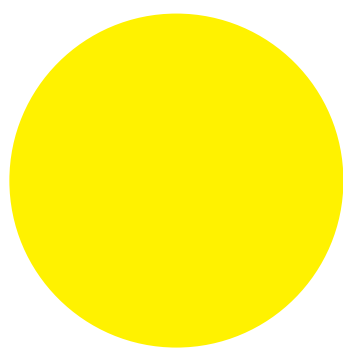


Pezeshkian: Iran has never sought to build nukes

Putin supports Tehran's right to enrich uranium; calls it key issue

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Will legal and ethical setback to 'snapback' set E3 back?



By Mehdi Ebrahim
Staff writer

OPINION

As the febrile atmosphere of discord-shrouded stalled talks between Iran and the European signatories to the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), notches record high with the explicit caveats of Germany, France and the United Kingdom to invoke the snapback mechanism by the end of August, the questions pops up as to what extent the E3 maintains legitimacy to leverage the anti-Tehran provision enshrined in Article 11 of UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorsed the JCPOA.

Referenced in technical parlance as the Dispute Settlement Mechanism, the snapback procedure allows the reimposition of hefty UN sanctions on Iran on the pretext of the Islamic Republic's "significant non-compliance" with the landmark deal.

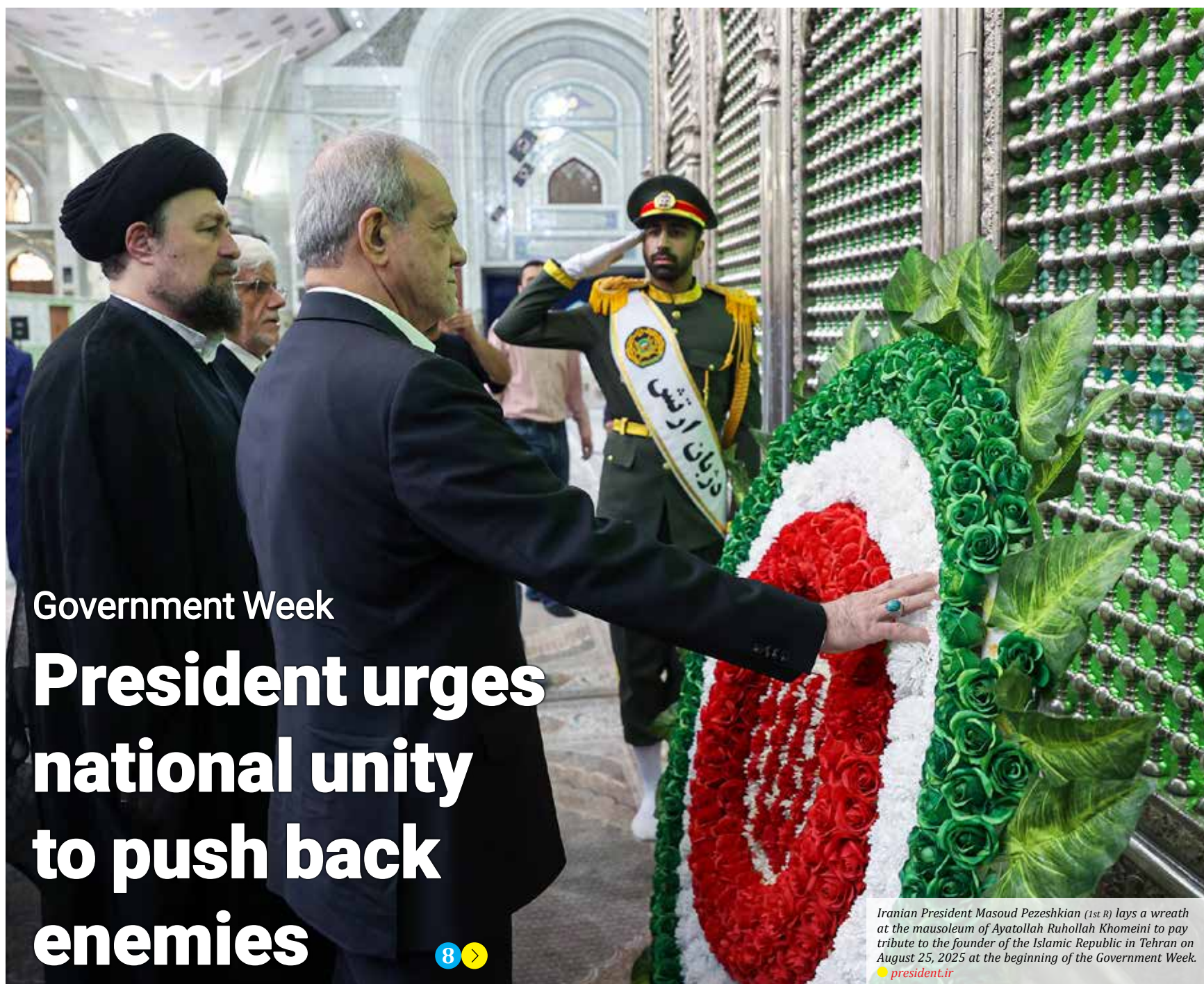
It stands out a mile that the European troika faces legal and moral hurdles in attempting to trigger the snapback against Iran, and the implications of doing so without clear justification would be colossal.

The cornerstone of the legal challenge lies in the fact that Washington, under the first term of US President Donald Trump's administration, unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA in 2018 and subsequently asserted its right to trigger snapback, but the decision was widely maligned by the international community, including the E3, who argued that the US, having pulled out, not by a long chalk had the legal standing to invoke the clause.

The E3's legal basis for invoking snapback is similarly tenuous as Iran's gradual scaling back of its commitments since 2019, which is labelled as "non-compliance" with the JCPOA, was largely a response to the US withdrawal and the subsequent reimposition of crippling sanctions.

Tehran also at that time consistently maintained that its nuclear-related actions are reversible if the other parties fully uphold their obligations by the lifting of sanctions and providing economic relief.

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Government Week

President urges national unity to push back enemies

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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (1st R) lays a wreath at the mausoleum of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to pay tribute to the founder of the Islamic Republic in Tehran on August 25, 2025 at the beginning of the Government Week.
● president.ir



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Pezeshkian: Iran has never sought to build nukes

Putin supports Tehran's right to enrich uranium; calls it key issue

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Monday thanked Russia for its supportive position on Iran's right to uranium enrichment – the main issue of differences between Tehran and the West over Iran's nuclear program – reiterating that the Islamic Republic has never sought to build nuclear weapons. "Based on its religious principles and defensive doctrine, Iran has never sought, is not seeking, and will never seek to build nuclear weapons," President Pezeshkian said in a phone conversation with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin. Putin underlined that Moscow sees Iran's right to enrich uranium

as a key issue and expressed hope that future negotiations on Iran's nuclear program would come to a satisfactory conclusion. Iran insists on its right to peaceful use of nuclear energy, including enrichment, and has underlined that it will never give up its uranium enrichment program under any agreement. The talks between Pezeshkian and Putin came ahead of Tuesday's nuclear negotiations in Geneva between Iran and three European powers which have threatened to trigger the so-called "snapback mechanism" by the end of August. The move would reimpose UN sanctions lifted under the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement unless Iran makes a deal on its nuclear pro-

gram. The United States unilaterally withdrew from the agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in 2018 and reinstated sanctions against Iran. Iran has ever since criticized Europe over failing to meet its commitments under the deal, disputing the legality of invoking the treaty's snapback clause by France, Britain and Germany which are parties to the JCPOA. Russia's Kommersant business paper reported on Monday that Moscow opposed the idea of "snapback" of sanctions. "The threats by Britain, Germany and France to activate the mechanism for reintroducing previously suspended UN sanctions against Iran are a serious

destabilizing factor," the paper cited the foreign ministry as saying in a statement. The meeting in Geneva will be the second since Israel's 12-day aggression against Iran in mid-June, during which the United States also carried out strikes against three Iranian nuclear facilities. The previous round of talks was held in Istanbul on July 25. The EU's foreign policy chief, Kaja Kallas, in a statement on Friday said, "With the deadline for the snapback mechanism fast approaching, Iran's readiness to engage with the US is crucial. Iran must also fully cooperate" with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Iran suspended cooperation with the IAEA in July in the



Vladimir Putin

Masoud Pezeshkian

wake of US-Israel's aggression which targeted Iran's nuclear facilities, military sites and residential areas in June. The aggression claimed the lives of

nearly 1,100 Iranians. Israel's act of aggression also derailed nuclear negotiations between Tehran and Washington.

Araghchi calls on countries to stand on right side of history over Gaza



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (c) attends an extraordinary meeting of the Organization of Islamic Countries in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on August 25, 2025.
● IRNA

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi called for concrete global action to end Israel's ongoing genocide in the Gaza Strip, saying that all countries in the world should stand on the right side of history. The Iranian foreign minister made the remarks on Monday while addressing an extraordinary session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on Gaza in the Saudi city of Jeddah. "Let us remember that the tragedy of Gaza does not concern Muslims alone. It is a test of the global conscience. Therefore, we call on all nations, re-

gardless of religion or geography, to stand on the side of humanity, justice, and dignity – in other words, on the right side of history," the Iranian foreign minister said. "History will not forgive any delay. Gaza cannot wait. The time for action is now," he added. He said what is happening before our eyes in the Gaza Strip is an organized destruction of besieged Palestinians by an apartheid regime. "The people of Gaza are being massacred systematically, residential areas have been completely destroyed; hospitals have been turned into graveyards; and children are trapped in extreme famine and starvation, in blatant violation of every human standard. This is not a conventional war. It is collective punishment, a policy of domination, and an assault that bears all the hallmarks of genocide," Araghchi said. Iran's top diplomat denounced the Israeli regime's plans for total military control over Gaza under the pretext of establishment of "security", calling it "ethnic cleansing". On the sidelines of the conference, the Iranian foreign minister held separate

talks with his Saudi, Egyptian and Bahraini counterparts to discuss the situation in Gaza. Israel has launched a genocidal war on Gaza since October 7, 2023, after Palestinian resistance fighters carried out the surprise Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against the Zionist entity in response to the regime's decades-long campaign of death and destruction against Palestinians. Israel's bloody onslaught on Gaza has so far killed more than 62,680 Palestinians, mostly women and children. The OIC meeting came as Israel launched an offensive to occupy Gaza City, the largest city in the besieged strip, sparking fears that it would worsen the already catastrophic situation in Gaza. The regime is also carrying out a deliberate campaign of starvation in the occupied Gaza Strip, systematically destroying the health, well-being and social fabric of Palestinian life. More than 250 people have also lost their lives due to starvation in Gaza, which is caused by months of Israel's restrictions on the entry of humanitarian aid into the besieged territory.

China says will continue to uphold 'objective, fair position' on Iran's nuclear issue



Ma Zhaoxu

International Desk

China said on Sunday it will continue to uphold an "objective and fair position" on Iran's nuclear issue and will play a constructive role in this regard. China's Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu in a phone conversation with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi emphasized that the Iranian nuclear issue is once again at a critical crossroads. He said China hopes that relevant parties will remain committed to resolving the Iranian nuclear issue through political and diplomatic means, and actively create conditions for the early resumption of dialogue and negotiations. The Iranian official appreciated China's



Kazem Gharibabadi

important contributions to promoting the political and diplomatic resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue, saying that Iran is willing to continue strengthening coordination with China. "Today, we spoke by phone with the Executive Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of China and discussed next week's summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization leaders, the latest developments related to the nuclear issue and the negotiations and Resolution 2231, and the formulation of joint positions between Iran, China, and Russia on it," Gharibabadi said after his conversation with the Chinese official. China, which is party to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, has always supported Iran's right to use peaceful nuclear technology.

Yemen vows response to Israel's deadly aggression on Sana'a

International Desk

Yemen's Ansarullah resistance movement vowed to respond to a recent Israeli strike on the capital Sana'a, which claimed the lives of at least six people on Sunday. Citing the Yemeni Health Ministry, the state-run Saba Net news agency reported that six people were killed and 86 wounded in the Israeli raid, with more than 20 in critical condition. A security source said the strikes had targeted a building in central Sana'a. The country's Al-Masirah TV reported they had also hit an oil company facility and a power station south of Sana'a, which was already struck last Sunday. The Israeli occupation army claimed it had hit a military compound where the presidential palace is located, along with two power stations and a fuel depot. It said the strikes were in response to repeated attacks by the Ansarullah resistance movement against Israel. Late Friday, Yemen's Armed Forces fired a missile that Israeli authorities said had "most likely fragmented in mid-air." Israeli media outlets the Times of Israel and Ynet, citing the regime's military, re-



ported the missile had carried a cluster warhead, the first of its kind known to have been fired from Yemen. The Israeli ministry of military affairs released a photo on Sunday showing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, minister Israel Katz and military chief Eyal Zamir following the strikes in Yemen from a command bunker. Netanyahu claimed that the air force had

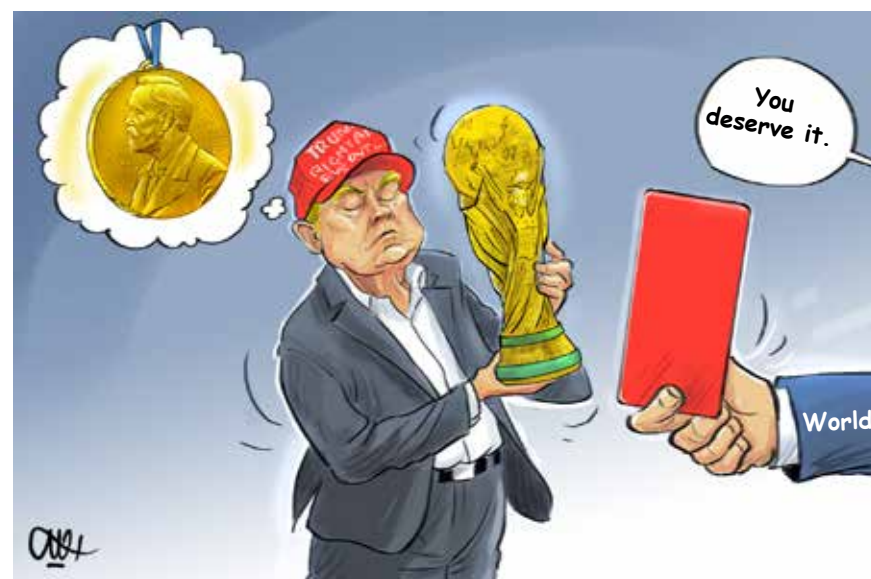


A fireball is seen in Yemen's capital Sana'a after an Israeli attack on August 24, 2025.
● REUTERS

struck "the presidential palace in the heart of the capital Sana'a, the city's power plant and the fuel tanks that supply it," according to a statement released by his office. Ansarullah's political bureau vowed in a statement to respond, saying they would "not deviate from the fight" against Israel and its ally the United States "until the aggression stops and the (Israeli) blockade on Gaza is lifted." Iran's Foreign Ministry as well as the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah and the Gaza-based resistance movements of Hamas and Islamic Jihad condemned the Israeli strikes on Yemen. Since the October 2023 start of Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip, the Ansarullah movement has repeatedly fired missiles and drones at Israel in support of Palestinians in Gaza. Beyond attacks on the occupied territories, Yemen's Armed Forces have also targeted ships linked to Israel in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iranian oil output hit record high since 2018: *NIOC* chief

Economy Desk

The head of the National Iranian Oil Company announced a new record in the country's oil production, saying crude output on August 23 reached its highest level in seven and a half years. Without providing figures due to the sensitivity of the Iranian oil sector under sanctions, Hamid Bovard said that the ups and downs of the production sector have made Iran's oil industry more resilient than before, adding that this achievement will be recorded as one of the "proud memories" of the industry and could mark a bright beginning for the future horizon of the current Iranian government's accomplishments, SHANA reported. He said that under the government's broad policies, the NIOC focused this Iranian year (starting March 20, 2025) on structural priorities, planning to maximize oil

and gas extraction and expand exports.

This, he said, was aimed at increasing efficiency and boosting the economy, while also ensuring the realization of the country's development outlook. According to the deputy oil minister, most of this year's increase in production capacity has been achieved in the oil-rich regions of the South, West Karoun, and the Arvand Oil and Gas Producing Company. Additional capacity was also brought onstream through the implementation of projects and the commissioning of new wells and desalting units by the Central Iranian Oil Fields Company. Last week, the International Energy Agency (IEA) reported an increase of around 200,000 barrels per day in Iran's crude oil production in July. The IEA's latest Short-Term Energy Outlook shows that Iran's oil output reached 3.27 million



barrels per day in July, compared with 3.08 million barrels per day in June, marking a 190,000-barrel increase. Meanwhile, according to data

published in the 60th edition of OPEC's Statistical Bulletin, Iran recorded the world's highest growth in crude oil production in 2024, with a 13 percent in-

crease. Daily crude oil output rose by 374,000 barrels, climbing from 2.884 million barrels in 2023 to 3.257 million barrels in 2024.

Tehran moves to streamline foreign investment with new measures



Economy Desk

The acting head of the Organization for Investment, Economic and Technical Assistance of Iran announced on Monday the approval of foreign investment projects worth more than \$20 billion over the past year, saying measures such as "nameless licenses" and the "consolidation of permits" will further facilitate foreign investment.

Mehdi Heidari said the country's economic growth and overcoming current challenges require large-scale investment, adding that the current shortages in areas such as energy and water are the result of underinvestment in recent years, which has led to the depreciation of national physical resources, making their replacement essential, ISNA reported.

Heidari stressed that domestic resources alone are not sufficient, and like many countries worldwide, attracting foreign investment with proper returns can benefit both the investor and the country.

Highlighting recent developments in the Economy Ministry and the minister's emphasis on the importance of attracting foreign capital, Heidari said 66 projects worth more than \$625 million were approved last week alone, bringing the total approved foreign investment projects over the past year to more than \$20 billion. The official also outlined new plans to facilitate investment, saying that consolidating permits in a single portal and issuing "nameless licenses" for investment projects are among the measures under consideration. According to Heidari, such initiatives will allow foreign investors to begin operations with minimal bureaucracy and in the shortest possible time.

Exports to Africa more than double in four months:

TPO

Economy Desk

A senior official of the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran announced Monday a 2.2-fold increase in exports to Africa during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year which began on March 21. Mohammadreza Safari, head of the TPO's Africa Office, said the number of Iran's target export markets in Africa rose from 29 to 34 countries. He attributed part of the export growth to the Iran-Africa Economic Cooperation Summit which was held from late April to early May. "With the implementation of the resolutions of the Africa Office, this trend could accelerate further," Safari added.

Iran to begin receiving Russian gas via Azerbaijan



MOJ

Economy Desk

Iran is expecting to begin receiving Russian gas transferred through Azerbaijan, Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali told the Russian state-run media outlet TASS. Jalali expressed hope this will happen "in the near term," saying, "We are currently negotiating with Gazprom, and almost all issues have been resolved." According to the envoy, the two countries must first reach an agreement on price and "once that's finalized, the entire operation can proceed." The forthcoming deliveries stem from a deal inked in April 2025 between Iran and Russia, which

in turn followed a memorandum of understanding signed between the Russian state-run energy giant Gazprom and its Iranian counterpart, The National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC). The route was then discussed by Russian Energy Minister Sergei Tsivilev earlier this year, who said that up to 1.8 billion cubic meters per year would begin flowing to Iran via existing infrastructure in Azerbaijan.

"We planned to resume the transit over the old legacy pipeline. And also to build a new gas pipeline as a branch," the ambassador had said in April. The Iranian side has already prepared all the required infrastructure for Russian

gas transit, Jalali noted at the time.

Saeid Tovakoli, CEO of the National Iranian Gas Company, announced last week that negotiations with Russia had advanced by 95 to 99 percent. He noted, however, that the nature of such talks carries inherent uncertainty, influenced by regional, political, and energy-related dynamics.

"Unlike oil, where pricing frameworks are well-established, natural gas negotiations are far more complex," Tovakoli explained. "Fortunately, our discussions have been constructive. The latest round of talks was held last week, and we are hopeful about reaching a final agreement."

The deputy oil minister added that the implementation process may proceed in phases. "In the first stage, infrastructure assessments must be completed. Other outstanding issues still require deeper negotiations, but these talks remain a top priority for NIGC."

He said the imported gas is intended to be allocated to productive sectors.

ICT minister launches dozens of tech projects worth \$5.5m in Yazd

Economy Desk

Iranian Minister of Information and Communications Technology Sattar Hashemi on Monday inaugurated 73 ICT projects worth \$5.5 million in Yazd Province during a ceremony attended by provincial officials and members of parliament, marking the Government Week.

As part of his provincial trip to Yazd on Monday, a session was held to review the latest status of communications in the province and to launch new ICT projects, ict.gov.ir reported.

During the meeting, 73 projects were inaugurated and made operational via videoconference with a number of cities and villages in the central province, under the directive of the communications minister.

The Rural Communications Development Plan (USO) has provided six villages with access to high-speed mobile internet. A telecommunication infrastructure company also commissioned two major projects: the expansion of the Yazd National IP Center with a capacity of 200 Gbps, and the enhancement of network transmission resilience in multiple provincial centers with a capacity of 300 Gbps, both implemented using domestic capabilities. Mobile Telecommunication Company of Iran launched three new 2G/3G/4G sites and rolled out 5G technology in one project. In addition, high-speed TD-LTE services were deployed at five sites, while fiber optic coverage was extended to seven sites. Two new urban sites were also con-



structed, and 12 others were upgraded to 5G technology. With the implementation of the FTTX project in the cities of Ardakan and Shahedieh, coverage levels surpassed 94 percent.

Post Bank of Iran provided financing for the construction of a solar power plant in Taft and equipped two rural banking outlets in Behabad and Yazd. Yazd Telecommunication Company carried out projects to expand the fixed network in four cities, installed power and diesel equipment at seven centers, and upgraded data switches at eight centers.

In the field of industry and cybersecurity, two key projects were launched: the expansion of telecommunication cable production lines and the establishment of a Security Operations Center (SOC) to monitor and counter cyber threats to executive bodies.

The operation of these extensive communication projects is seen as an important step toward realizing e-government, promoting digital equity, and strengthening the vital infrastructure needed for Yazd Province's development.

Will legal and ...

Political pundits are of the opinion that the JCPOA's dispute resolution mechanism, which **Page 1** outlines a specific process for addressing concerns about non-compliance, is intended as a last resort after such measures as consultations within the JCPOA Joint Commission, referral to a ministerial-level meeting, and potentially referral to an advisory board have been exhausted, and any attempts to haphazardly activate snapback without fully exploring these diplomatic avenues would be frowned upon under the agreement.

Beyond the legal complexities, the E3 faces significant moral considerations as the imposition of snapback would likely have devastating consequences for the Iranian people already suffering under the burden of illegal economic sanctions, the root cause of which is in the actions of the Trump administration. Invoking snapback would likely be counterproductive as it would effectively kill the JCPOA and authorize the Islamic Republic to not only suspend its cooperation with UN nuclear watchdog but also probably prompt Tehran to walk out of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation

Treaty (NPT). Moreover, the moral authority of the E3 would be tarnished by the activation of snapback as they day in and day out feigned espousing multilateralism and commitment to dialogue but stood on the fence and witnessed the bombing of Iran's nuclear sites by the American B2 stealth fighters and the "total obliteration" — as Trump boasted — of the Islamic Republic's peaceful nuclear program.

In a detailed letter to the UN Security Council earlier in the month, Iran laid out its position and asserted that Britain, France, and Germany were no

longer legitimate JCPOA participants with the authority to reinstate sanctions through snapback. The stance was championed by China and Russia, whose backing plays a critical role as both are permanent members of the 15-state body and have veto power over resolutions, including those related to Iran's peaceful nuclear program.

In a nutshell, as the invocation of snapback is fraught with legal and moral challenges, any attempts by the European troika, which may have US-induced concerns about Iran's nuclear program, to reinstate draconian

sanctions on Tehran would further diminish their credibility on the world stage and divest them of mediation roles in future international disputes.

The whole world can in no way gloss over the E3's non-fulfillment of JCPOA obligations and backstage complicity with the so-called US maximum pressure campaign against Iran after its illegal withdrawal from the 2015 deal, non-activation of the European INSTEX mechanism to support Iran with rejuvenating its sanction-battered economy, and their failure to condemn Israeli and US attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities covered by the JCPOA.

Head of Khuzestan Province Red Crescent Society: ‘Iranians pay price’ for Hur al-Azim’s wildfire in Iraq



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

The fire in the Iraqi section of the wetland poses a serious threat not only to the survival of the local wildlife and vegetation but also kicks up heavy smoke that severely pollutes the air of cities in western Khuzestan and surrounding areas.

The unpleasant smoke and odor caused by burning vegetation have taken their toll on the residents, leading to eye irritation, shortness of breath, and nausea. This smoke has even drifted into the sky over Ahvaz, aggravating the city’s air pollution levels.

To get to the bottom of the root causes and factors behind the fire in Hur al-Azim and how firefighting and relief efforts are carried out for local residents, Iran Daily conducted an exclusive interview with Hassan Aboudi Mazraei, head of the Khuzestan Red Crescent Society. The full interview follows:



Hassan Aboudi Mazraei



IRAN DAILY: First off, could you lay out the location and conditions of Hur al-Azim and explain why this wetland is so prone to wildfires?

ABOUDI MAZRAEI: Hur al-Azim (or Hur al-Hawizeh), located near the Iranian cities of Hawizeh (Hoveyze) and Dasht-e Azadegan in Khuzestan Province, is in fact the largest border wetland in Iran and one of the biggest inland wetlands in the country, with parts in both Iran and Iraq.

If you are familiar with the ecosystem of a Hur (wetland), you’ll know that a Hur is a combination of deep and semi-deep water basins that generally pop up as small and medium-sized islands covered with greenery. The dominant plant species found in Hur al-Azim is the reed, locally and in Arabic called “Bardi”. Therefore, the wetland’s vegetation is mostly made up of reed beds.

Basically, when these reed beds face water scarcity and receive little moisture, they dry out and become nothing more than tinder ready to go up in flames. Under such conditions, the reeds become extremely vulnerable, and even the smallest spark can set off a wildfire. Sometimes, intense sun rays, given the extreme heat in the area — often exceeding 50 degrees Celsius — can spark off fires, or even sunlight reflecting off a piece of glass can touch off a widespread blaze. If the fire coincides with drought in the wetland, it can spread out and lead to a large-scale wildfire.

Over the past years, most fires have occurred on the Iraqi side of the wetland, but thanks to the persistence and vigilance of Khuzestan province officials and crisis management teams, fires have been nipped in the bud on the Iranian side.

What about the Iranian side of the wetland?

On the Iranian side, water supply is usually sufficient. Drought tends to hit the wetland in Iraq. The Hur al-Azim basin is fed by several rivers, with the Karkheh River being the primary water source. It flows from northern



Wildfire rages on the Hur al-Azim wetland, roughly two-thirds of which lies in Iraq.
● AZAD LASHKARI/REUTERS



On the Iranian side, water supply is usually sufficient. Drought tends to hit the wetland in Iraq. The Hur al-Azim basin is fed by several rivers, with the Karkheh River being the primary water source. It flows from northern branches in Iranian territory into the wetland. According to past agreements, Iraq is supposed to pay for water rights for the water flowing to its side, but this right is often left hanging unpaid. Still, Iran has continued water delivery efforts to preserve the wetland’s ecosystem.



A view of the Hur al-Azim wetland in the southeastern Khuzestan Province, Iran, taken in October 2017
● MEHRAN HAMRAHI/THOMSON REUTERS

branches in Iranian territory into the wetland. According to past agreements, Iraq is supposed to pay for water rights for the water flowing to its side, but this right is often left hanging unpaid. Still, Iran has continued water delivery efforts to preserve the wetland’s ecosystem.

Still, Iraqis need to step up and take charge of wetland conservation and fire prevention in their territories. Iranian crisis management has put in place all kinds of fire prevention protocols and mobilization plans, so their rescue teams spring into action at the first sign of fire and quickly put out any outbreaks. But if a blaze breaks out in Iraq, we run into trouble.

In my view, if the same level of willingness and cooperation that Iranian officials tap into to control fires existed on the Iraqi side, many fires could be prevented. There is strong back-and-forth coordination among Iranian agencies — from the governorate to crisis man-

agement, fire departments, and the Red Crescent — which has kept fire incidents on the Iranian side under control. In fact, Iranian rescue teams have even gone out of their way to help Iraqi neighbors extinguish fires during specific incidents. We have not only fulfilled our responsibilities but lent a hand to our Iraqi brothers when needed to protect the wetland’s ecosystem.

So, the occasional news about wildfires in Hur al-Azim and the public concern refer mainly to the Iraqi side?

Yes, to safeguard our side, we have to halt the fire from creeping in and even assist those across the border to extinguish the blaze at its source, so the fire doesn’t spill over into our lands. As I mentioned, most fires happen on the Iraqi side, and we rarely witness fires on the Iranian side. Especially this year, with special government support,

a water-bomber aircraft has been put at our disposal to help fight fires in emergencies. So far, it has participated in multiple operations to hold back flames.

Usually, the smoke from fires in the Iraqi wetland gets swept towards Iran by the wind, causing environmental pollution for residents of Hur al-Azim and neighboring areas. In such events, the least the Red Crescent Society does is distribute masks and offer safety advice. For instance, this year, following one wildfire in Iraq, when the smoke rolled in on the Iranian side, we handed out over 50,000 masks to locals, so they could at least step outside safely if required. Our main advice to residents during these times is to stay indoors as much as possible. The smoke bothers not only inhabitants of islands within the wetland but also rural and urban residents in Susangerd, Dasht-e Azadegan, and Hawizeh.



Does that mean recent reports about wildfires in Hur al-Azim pertain to the Iranian side?

No, they do not involve the Iranian part but still cause headaches for Iranian residents around Hur al-Azim. As I said, the wetland is very susceptible to fire because it's essentially an archipelago covered with reed beds. Local inhabitants live on these islands, relying on the wetland for their livelihood through

animal husbandry. Buffalo farming is the most common economic activity here, and buffalo feed primarily on these reeds, making the vegetation a valuable resource. But lack of water in the reeds puts the area at risk of wildfires.

What's the current water situation?
For now, there's no cause for concern. Thanks to the Iranian government and Khuzestan Governorate measures, the

wetland has been stocked up with water, and authorities have taken steps to prevent any fires. As I mentioned, the main water feeders are on the Iranian side, and officials do their utmost to keep the wetland from drying out. Still, the situation partly boils down to seasonal rainfall. The more rain we get and the wetter the wetland remains, the less chance we have to face off against devastating fires.

What preparations has the Khuzestan Red Crescent Society put together to help people in the event of wildfires?

This year, compared to previous years, incidents have died down significantly, and fires have mostly been snuffed out before they got out of hand. Nevertheless, if a fire does flare up, the province's crisis management now has a firefighting plane

on hand to jump in when needed. Moreover, the Red Crescent has helicopters designed for firefighting and rescue missions that can rush to the scene. Finally, if the smoke blows in towards Iran, we have plans to support citizens by distributing safety gear such as masks, guiding people to safer areas, and issuing timely warnings to help residents weather the storm.

INTERVIEW Iran's very first natural site inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list is still lacking a solid management structure and a clear executive system, even after around nine years have passed since its registration. Without proper funding, oversight, and inter-agency cooperation, the damage continues to pile up, sparking serious questions about what the future holds for this global treasure.

As reported by ISNA, the Lut Desert — the first natural heritage site from Iran, which was added to the UNESCO World Heritage list on July 17, 2016 — not only stands out as one of the world's most astounding natural landscapes, but also poses a tough and intricate challenge for management, a task that calls for a cross-sectional, structured, and forward-thinking approach.

To shed light on the issue, an interview was conducted with Mehran Maqsoudi, former head of the Lut Desert World Heritage Base and the main player behind Lut's UNESCO registration.



Mehran Maqsoudi

Threats to Lut abound, budget virtually none



Given that everyone says there's no well-defined organizational structure for managing the Lut Desert, the burning question is: How is the Lut Desert World Heritage Base actually run? Has any clear framework been set up, including designated staff and a set budget?

MAQSOU DI: We never had any clear organizational structure to speak of. But at the time of filing the registration — when the UNESCO representative came to Iran — some structures were laid out. We set up three local bases: one in South Khorasan, one in Kerman, and one in Sistan and Baluchestan. We also set up a national base in Tehran. These locations were all established and stayed up and running for several years. In terms of management, we tried to get things organized, like regulating off-road driving, putting up interpretation signs, content development, and holding festivals and seminars. We also tried to back research activities. On the infrastructure side, we set up an entrance gate in the Shahdad-Shafabad area. Basically, we put up an office for the site in a nearby village, which worked as both the general office and archive. In Sistan and Baluchestan, the construction of the local base had kicked off and was almost at the finishing line. We managed to push things forward to a certain extent. To the best of our ability, we got some initiatives off the ground, but when it comes to managing such a sprawling territory, much greater attention is needed. The Lut isn't like a caravanserai or a small archaeological site covering just a few square kilometers. This desert spans 23,000km² for the core zone and 17,000km² for the buffer; Together, that adds up to a whopping 40,000km², which is bigger than many countries like Slovenia or other small European states. Consider this: The Lut's 40,000km² versus a site like Takht-e Soleyman with just 860km². We can't even hope to fence it off and keep an eye on everything, so what we need is a special management system, a tailor-made plan. Back then, we tried to accomplish things in tourism — say, identifying various stakeholders around the Lut, developing visitor content ranging from signage to films and photos, to organizing photo exhibitions, art events, and storytelling sessions. True, several activities were carried out, but the kind of attention that was required both from the provinces and on a national scale just wasn't there. We're talking about a world-class site that many countries dream of getting

their hands on. Lots of nations don't have anything like this, so what are we doing with ours? All we're doing is damaging and destroying it: routing power pylons right through it, pushing ahead with urban and rural expansion, letting major companies wade in, and allowing off-road drivers to tear through without a care in the world. We don't even have proper desert tourism. The real shortcoming is poor management. If we buckle down and manage it, the number of tourists currently visiting Lut isn't over the top. The real issue is management. At the moment, we're in the dark about when tourists will show up; Sometimes, 10 groups might turn up at once. Luckily, the heat in summer keeps everyone at bay, but when tourists do roll in, there's barely any oversight.

How is tourist entry monitored in these areas? Is there any system or mechanism in place for issuing permits?

Worldwide, in places like the national parks in Europe, China, or the US — think the Grand Canyon or Poland's National Parks — people have to book their slot ahead of time. You can only get in through specific entry points, and there's no slipping in from just anywhere. But in the Lut Desert, you can stroll in from wherever you please — unless, by chance, someone happens to stop you. Otherwise, it's wide open. At times, you'll see convoys of 20 to 30 cars rolling in, which only leads to more destruction. Some parts of the Lut Desert have even been turned into highways. In the desert, you find all kinds of activity, from smugglers moving through to military exercises. So, the threats are many, and the destruction is real. Then there's also the issue of development: mining expansion in what's a global heritage zone, or tourists entering with no permits. On top of all that, there are natural threats that we just can't do anything about. Like the lake that formed after the rains in 2019 — some suggested registering it as a wetland, but history tells us that these lakes form and dry up again. Sure, the lake boosted the Lut's values for a while. Or take the micro-earthquakes in the Kerman Province that caused some of the kaluts to crumble; That's nature doing its thing: sometimes creating, sometimes destroying. Our job is to get a handle on the human threats. When we kicked off at the Lut Heritage Base, we laid down the law: Everyone entering Lut had to be identified. We asked them to hook up GPS trackers, and either transmit their

data by satellite internet or upload it when they got back. The system we set up required anyone wanting access to call in, state how many people were coming, which day they planned to enter the Lut, which direction they'd be coming from, how many nights they'd stay, and how many vehicles they'd have. These steps were a game-changer.

A significant chunk of the area has officially been declared "off-limits"; Tourists are not allowed in. But this isn't due to any ban from the Ministry of Cultural Heritage — it's security-related. Nevertheless, monitoring is nowhere to be seen in these areas. If access is supposed to be forbidden, then why are some people able to get in? If access is allowed, then why is there no designated and safe route for them? And why don't non-ministry agencies set up official paths?

We sketched out the tourist routes for Lut ages ago — routes one, two, three, four, and so on — so if anyone wanted to head in, they'd take these routes and send in their GPS logs. This way, tourists stay safe, security personnel can rest easy, and we can breathe easier about protecting Lut's natural environment.

Globally, management is a team effort — governments can't handle such vast regions alone. They can't even lock down the borders, let alone keep track of a whole country's interior. In some places, management is entirely in the hands of locals; In others, it's a joint venture between local people, government, and other organizations. In Australia, for example, the Great Barrier Reef is managed by Indigenous communities.

In countries where there are deserts similar to Lut, over 80% of the park is off-limits to all activities except research. The remaining 20% is mostly dedicated to tightly controlled tourism, with all the facilities but minimal



Off-road vehicles cross the Lut Desert in central Iran.
● itto.org



We sketched out the tourist routes for Lut ages ago — routes one, two, three, four, and so on — so if anyone wanted to head in, they'd take these routes and send in their GPS logs. This way, tourists stay safe, security personnel can rest easy, and we can breathe easier about protecting Lut's natural environment.



The photo shows the vehicle of an Iranian rock-climbing coach that was blown up by mines buried years ago to deter smugglers from crossing the Lut Desert, central Iran.
● ISNA



damage — say, 5% or at most 15% for temporary camps. But who's enforcing this here? A lot of folks see themselves as the rightful owners of the land around here, claiming, "We've been coming to Lut for years and no one's going to stop us now."

How much do organizations and stakeholders involved with the Lut Desert cooperate with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage? Has any framework been created for this sort of multi-sector management?

That mechanism to bring everyone to the table still hasn't been worked out. We want local people, local leaders, agencies, and major corporations like Mahan Airlines or car manufacturers to get on board. Sure, Mahan Airlines came and set up a big, swanky camp in Lut, but for an ordinary person like you or me to stay there, it'll set you back \$500. It's a luxury tourism niche. There are various activities on offer: motorbiking, off-roading, stargazing. But it'd be better if they pitched in more in education, research, tourism infrastructure, and promotion, too. Right from day one, we were saying we need a visitor center — just like celebrated sites around the world — and other services, like a visitor app, museum, and information displays, but that's still nowhere to be seen. Only in Shahdad, through a partnership with agencies and a hotel, did an information center materialize — a move in the right direction.

What's the Lut World Heritage Base's budget situation like?

As for the budget, support from the Cultural Heritage Ministry was next to nothing. The last year, it basically dried up altogether.

The full interview first appeared in Persian on ISNA.

U20 Wrestling World Championships:

Solace in Samokov as Iran crowned Greco-Roman champion

Sports Desk

Iranian wrestling ultimately found relief by winning a fourth consecutive Greco-Roman title at the U20 World Championships, having endured an under-par freestyle campaign by its own standards in Samokov, Bulgaria.

Iran claimed a single gold medal across 10 weight classes but still managed to finish atop the team table with 117 points, with Armenia (98pts) and Azerbaijan (90pts) in the following spots.

Ahoura Bouveiri was the only Iranian finalist on the final day of the competitions, but had to settle for silver after a decisive 10-1 loss to Georgian Anri Putkaradze in the 77kg showdown. Abolfazl Fat'hi won the fourth Greco-Roman medal for Iran later on Sunday by bagging a consolation bronze in the 130kg event.

The Iranian superheavyweight bounced back from a last-four setback (5-4) against Russian Ali Iliasov, who competed as a neutral athlete, to hammer Belarusian Viachaslau Fedaryna 9-1 and share the third podium with Ivan Yankovskiy of Ukraine, while Iliasov went on to make a quick work of Turkey's Cemal Yusuf Bakır (9-0) in the final.

Sunday's results came after Iran had won a gold and a silver on the preceding night in Samokov. Iranian Payam Ahmadi defeated Azerbaijan's Turan Dashdamirov 5-3 to walk away with the ultimate prize in the 55kg class. In a thrilling showdown – featuring two 2023 world under-17



Iranian Greco-Roman wrestler Payam Ahmadi (blue) is seen in action during a victory over Azerbaijan's Turan Dashdamirov in the 55kg final at the U20 World Championships in Samokov, Bulgaria, on August 23, 2025.
● KADIR CALISKAN/UWW

champions – Ahmadi needed an acrobatic summersault to avoid conceding points in the final minute and hold on for the victory. Ahmadi escaped a par terre position with ease in the first period and then scored a take-down and turned the Azerbai-

jani wrestler using a high gut-wrench for a 4-1 lead. The second period saw Ahmadi on the aggressive and he tried a bodylock but Dashdamirov blocked it with an overarm and flipped Ahmadi for two points. Ahmadi now led 4-3 and Dash-

damirov needed two points for a win with 2:40 remaining. Dashdamirov failed to find an opening until the last 15 seconds when he did a fireman carry but Ahmadi landed on his feet. Dashdamirov was awarded two points but Iran challenged

and the points were removed as there was no danger position. Two-time Asian U20 champion Mohammad-Hadi Seydi, meanwhile, suffered a 5-3 defeat against Ukrainian Yehor Yakushenko to finish with a silver in the 97kg contests.

Yakushenko had the first par terre position and lifted Seydi and then completed a correct throw for two points to lead 3-0. Seydi managed to close out the first period with a stepout and cut the deficit to 3-1.

The Iranian had his chance to score in the second period from par terre but Yakushenko was solid in his defense and did not give up any points. Seydi tried a few attacks in the final seconds but Yakushenko got two more points for a go-behind in the final second to win a second world junior title in a row.

Earlier in Samokov, Iran had to settle for a third-place finish in the freestyle competitions – a lowest spot for the country, which had lifted three team trophies over the previous four editions, since 2019. Mahdi Yousefi was the sole Iranian freestyle gold medalist, thanks to a thrilling 8-6 win against American William Henckel in the 79kg final, while Ahoura Khateri (61kg) and Abolfazl Mohammadnejad (125kg) added a couple of silvers to the country's medal haul. Ebrahim Elahi (70kg) and Abolfazl Rahmani (86kg) bagged a consolation bronze in their respective events, as Iran collected 111 points. The United States tallied 185 points to secure back-to-back freestyle titles, dominating with seven medals, including a remarkable five golds, with Kazakhstan scooping one gold, one silver, and double bronzes to beat Iran to the runner-up spot by a single point.

FIVB Men's U21 World Championship:

Iran routs Canada to extend perfect run

Sports Desk

Iranian boys came out victorious against Canada in straight sets (25-20, 25-14, 25-22) on Monday to maintain their perfect start at the FIVB Men's U21 World Championship in Jiangmen, China.

Outside-hitter Ariyan Mahmoudinejad chipped in a game-high 14 points, with middle-blocker Shayan Mehrabi contributing 11 as Iran celebrated a fourth successive win in Pool B.

"Canadian players were physically strong and very tall, which makes them a strong defensive team. That could have been a problem for us if we didn't have

a proper offensive gameplan, but our players did a great job today," said Iran head coach Gholamreza Mo'menimoqaddam after the game.

"The players targeted the specific areas we had identified through our analysis. They were also exceptional in both defending and serving," added Mo'menimoqaddam.

The top spot of the group table will be at stake when Iran and Poland go head-to-head at the Jiangmen Sports Center today. Poland also claimed a fourth win in a row by beating Kazakhstan 3-0 (25-21, 25-21, 25-22) later on Monday.

"Poland is a very tactical side. Their players have had a full year of playing together in the Polish league, so it won't be an easy game against them at all. We'll still go out there to fight for victory and progress to the last 16 as the group winner," said the Iranian, who is on a remarkable 24-game unbeaten run at the helm, during which the country claimed back-to-back Asian under-20 titles either side of the world U21 crown in 2023 in Manama.

Iran began its title defense in Jiangmen with a 3-1 win against Kazakhstan and then eased past Puerto Rico in straight sets, be-

fore edging out South Korea in a five-set thriller on Saturday – in a repeat of last year's Asian under-20 final, which Iran had won in straight sets.

Mo'menimoqaddam, however, is wary of the different caliber of tests awaiting his boys in Jiangmen.

"All the teams here are strong. I'd say at least six teams are fighting for a place on the podium, and that makes things difficult for everyone," said the Iranian.

"Italy, France, Poland, Ukraine, and Japan have all been exceptional and will fancy their chances of reaching the semifinals.



Iranian outside-hitter Ariyan Mahmoudinejad (8) hits a spike during a straight-set victory over Canada at the FIVB Men's U21 World Championship in Jiangmen, China, on August 25, 2025.
● FIVB

"From this point on, the matches will only get tougher and more tactical and the team that proves

to be physically, tactically, and technically better will ultimately come out on top."



● taekwondo.ir

Iran names taekwondo rosters for global showdowns

Sports Desk

Iranian Taekwondo Federation named the men's and women's squads for the upcoming two major events.

Six Iranian girls will represent the country at the WT World Championships – starting October 24 in Wuxi, China – with six others vying for glory at the sixth edition of the Islamic Solidarity Games, when the multi-sport event kicks

off in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on November 7.

Nahid Kiani, who won a historic Olympic silver in Paris last summer, and Mobina Nematzadeh – a bronze winner in the Games – will headline the Iranian women's roster in Wuxi.

Iranian duo will be joined by Saiedeh Nasiri, Mahla Momenzadeh, Kowsar Asaseh, and Nastaran Valizadeh.

Saina Karimi, Rozhan Goudarzi,

Hasti Mohammadi, Yalda Valinejad, Fatemeh Eskandarnia, and two-time Asian silver winner Melika Mirhosseini will compete across different weight classes in Riyadh.

Meanwhile, Arian Salimi will make a first international appearance since grabbing the Olympic gold last year at the World Championships, and will be joined by Mehran Barkhordari, who will be looking to build on last year's

silver-winning campaign in Paris. Mahdi Razmian, Abolfazl Zandi, Mahdi Hajmousaei, Mohammad-Sadeq Dehqani, Amir-Sina Bakhtiari, and Mohammad-Hosseini Yazdani complete the Iranian men's squad for the visit to Wuxi. Amir Nasir-Ahmadi, Ali-Asghar Ali Moradian, Hamed Asghari, Ali Khoshravesh, Amirreza Sadeqian, and Ali Najafi will be the six Iranian male practitioners at the Islamic Solidarity Games.

Boshruyeh’s Salt Bath reviving Iran’s tradition of wellness



IRNA

Iranica Desk

South Khorasan Province is one of the largest provinces of Iran, featuring diverse climates ranging from hot and dry deserts to cold mountainous areas. This geographical diversity has endowed the province with numerous natural and historical tourist attractions. There are over a thousand nationally registered historical sites and 10 UNESCO World Heritage sites in this province, drawing the attention of both domestic and international tourists. Among this diversity, natural salt reserves in the province’s deserts, especially in Boshruyeh, hold a special place. The salt ponds and springs in this re-

gion, regarded as shining white treasures, have been used for years by local people and enthusiasts of natural remedies, chtn. ir wrote. Boshruyeh, with more than 20 natural salt ponds, is known as the “heart of Iran’s desert salt.” This salt, a mixture of sodium chloride and valuable minerals such as magnesium, calcium, and potassium, possesses profound healing properties. In Iranian traditional medicine, this salt is recognized as a natural disinfectant and a treatment for skin diseases such as eczema and skin inflammations, as well as respiratory conditions including asthma and sinusitis. The Boshruyeh Salt Bath has been restored within the historic

and traditional fabric of the city, at the site where an ancient endowment bathhouse once stood. This complex is designed in such a way that its walls are covered with natural salt crystals, creating clean, humid air rich in mineral ions. The bathhouse’s architecture, featuring low domes, salt ponds, and a traditional atmosphere, evokes the feeling of stepping back into the heart of history for visitors. Visiting this bath is designed not only for body cleansing but also for revitalizing energy and calming the mind. The desert salt of Boshruyeh, with its unique mineral composition, possesses disinfectant and anti-inflammatory proper-

ties that help treat skin problems. In addition, inhaling the salty air, or halotherapy, performed in this bathhouse, is an effective method for improving respiratory diseases. The mineral ions in the air help reduce inflammation of the respiratory tract, improve lung function, and alleviate symptoms of asthma and sinusitis. Besides relieving joint and muscle pains, the absorption of minerals through the skin in this environment increases blood circulation, reduces stress, and induces deep relaxation of the body. Director General of South Khorasan Province’s Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization Seyyed Ahmad

Barabadi has identified the development of health tourism as one of the province’s priorities. He emphasized that the Boshruyeh Salt Bath can help distribute travel throughout the year and transform the province into one of the main health tourism destinations in the country. Referring to the diverse capacities of the province in desert, historical, and mountainous areas, he added that salt ponds and salt baths can hold a special place as natural and therapeutic attractions, leading to the attraction of more tourists. Barabadi noted that this year, a promotional video has been produced to introduce the Salt Bath, and plans have been made

to participate in tourism exhibitions in Tehran and Mashhad to promote the complex on a wider scale. Additionally, through collaboration with the private sector and the use of banking facilities, the foundation for project development has been established. The Boshruyeh Salt Bath is not only a place for physical and mental healing and relaxation but also a bridge between historical traditions and modern medical knowledge amidst the desert nature of Iran. By leveraging valuable natural resources, modern facilities, and professional management, this complex can become an attractive and unique point on Iran’s health tourism map.

Escape to nature by visiting Arbakaleh village of Ramsar

Iranica Desk

Arbakaleh is a lush village in Ramsar with a dreamy view of the sea and forest, which, with its delightful climate and unique tranquility, is a popular destination for nature lovers.

Overview

Arbakaleh, a peaceful and pleasant summer village overlooking Ramsar in Mazandaran Province, seems like a piece of paradise in the heart of the green forests of northern Iran. This village, with its stunning scenery, pleasant weather, and indescribable calmness, is an excellent refuge to escape the hustle and

heat, especially in summer. Since it is possible to rent cottages and villas in this area, you can easily plan a few-day trip to Arbakaleh. To get to know more about where Arbakaleh Ramsar is and its features, stay with us.

Location and accessibility

Arbakaleh is one of the scenic villages of Mazandaran Province, located in a mountainous and pleasant climate region near the city of Ramsar. The distance from Arbakaleh to the cities of Kalam and Sadatshahr is only five kilometers, which makes access very easy for tourists and nature enthusiasts.

Etymology and natural features

The village is one of Mazandaran Province’s summer resorts situated atop a green mountain. The name of this village has roots in the local language; “Arba” means persimmon and “Kaleh” means mountain or height, which altogether refers to a “mountain covered with persimmon trees.” The reason for this name is the existence of many wild persimmon trees growing in this area.

Development

In recent years, the stunning beauty of Arbakaleh’s nature, the enchanting views of forest, mountain, and sea, and its proximity to Ramsar have made it a

destination for investment in building villa towns and residential complexes, and with this trend, soon there will be no trace left of its forest nature.

Activities

Hiking and mountaineering: Numerous hiking and mountaineering trails around the village offer an excellent opportunity to enjoy nature. **Camping:** Spending the night in nature under the starry sky gives you a chance to experience life in the heart of nature. **Photography:** The beautiful scenery and pristine nature of Arbakaleh provide unique subjects for photography. **Handicrafts shopping:** Buying

local souvenirs such as basket weaving, kilim weaving, and pottery can be a part of your trip.

Best time to travel

Spring and summer are recognized as the best times to travel to Arbakaleh. During this period, the weather is cool and pleasant, and many tourists include visiting it in their plans. If you seek a calm and different experience, early autumn with its colorful nature can be a suitable time to travel. It should be noted that during this season, the weather gradually turns colder and rainfall chances increase. Winter, due to snowfall and cold weather, is not a suitable time to visit Arbakaleh.

Camping tips

Given the forest nature of the Arbakaleh area, you can camp in some forested areas around the village by observing safety tips and respecting the environment. ● It is better to have complete camping equipment with you. ● Use mosquito nets and insect repellents to prevent insect bites. ● Carry a power bank to charge your phone. ● Bring warm and rainproof clothes considering the weather. ● Do not leave leftover food around your tents. ● Respect nature and always carry trash bags to collect your waste.



Kojaro.com



Government Week

President urges national unity to push back enemies

Social Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Monday urged unity at home and solidarity with Muslim neighbors, warning that divisions would play into the hands of adversaries, including Israel and the United States. Speaking at the mausoleum of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in Tehran at the start of Government Week (August 24-30), Pezeshkian invoked the teachings of Imam Ali, saying disputes were born out of “self-interest” and could be overcome by fairness and restraint. “If we are united, they will not dare to confront Muslims or harbor ill intentions,” he said, president.ir wrote. The president, who took office in July, called for equal treatment of Iran’s diverse ethnic groups, from Kurds and Azeris to Baluch and Arabs. He reminded officials that “people are either our equals in faith or our

equals in creation,” and urged compassion, forgiveness and service to citizens. Mistreating the public, he cautioned, amounted to “standing against God.”

Pezeshkian praised the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, for his guidance and support, saying it strengthened the administration’s resolve to carry forward the goals of the Islamic Revolution and the path set by Imam Khomeini.

He pledged to “work tirelessly” to ease economic hardship and deepen social cohesion, stressing that rhetoric undermining unity at home or ties with neighbors was a betrayal.

The president warned that Washington and Israel sought to drive wedges between Iranians and to turn Muslim nations against one another. “These borders were imposed by imperialists,” he said, adding that neighbors



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian addresses a ceremony at Imam Khomeini’s Mausoleum in southern Tehran on August 25, 2025 marking the beginning of the Government Week.
● president.ir

should be treated as “brothers” despite political frontiers.

He called on state officials and political figures to set aside rivalries and personal ambition in favor of collective responsibility. “We must not seek power for its own sake,” Pezeshkian said. “Our mission is to serve the people and resolve their problems, not to widen divisions.”

He urged cooperation across the political spectrum and promised to draw on the expertise of all capable figures, saying progress was possible only “hand in hand, with prudence, knowledge and solidarity.”



Tar virtuoso birthday

Alizadeh turns every note into a new chapter of Iran’s musical story



Hossein Alizadeh
● ABOLFAZL.NESAIE

By Neda Sijani
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Hossein Alizadeh, one of Iran’s most celebrated musicians, composers, and virtuoso of Tar (A traditional Persian stringed instrument, similar to a lute) players, marks his birthday on August 24. Renowned

for his mastery of traditional Persian music, Alizadeh’s performances take listeners on a journey from the deep roots of Iranian musical heritage to innovative new horizons.

Alizadeh’s extensive body of work spans albums such as ‘Savaran-e Dasht-e Omid,’ ‘Hesar,’ ‘Neynava,’ and ‘Soroud-e Mehr,’ as well as film scores for ‘Delshodegan,’ ‘Gabbah,’ ‘Zesht va Ziba’ (The Ugly and the Beautiful), ‘Avaz-e Gonjeshkha’ (The Song of Sparrows), and ‘Zire Tigh’ (Under the Blade).

His compositions showcase not only a profound command of the traditional Persian Radif—the classical system of melodic modes—but also pioneering techniques in tar performance. Beyond his artistry, Alizadeh’s humanistic outlook and devotion to Iranian culture have earned him a revered place in the nation’s music scene.

Farhad Fakhreddini, a composer, conductor, and one of Iran’s musical luminaries who taught Alizadeh at the Tehran Conservatory, praised his former student, “Hossein Alizadeh is

not just a musician. He is a passionate, committed, and deeply humane artist. His works are moving, enduring, and memorable.” Fakhreddini noted Alizadeh’s lifelong respect for his mentors and his unwavering dedication to his craft.

Recalling their early years, Fakhreddini said, “I first met Hossein in 1963. He was an intelligent and eager student, absorbing everything, from tar performance and music theory to harmony and the integration of poetry and music, with great enthusiasm. His wit and personal charm forged a friendship and collaboration that continues to this day.”

He described Alizadeh’s compositions as equally captivating, “Each work he has created is precious. I cannot single out a favorite, just as a parent does not favor one child over another.”

Fakhreddini emphasized that Alizadeh is more than a performer or composer; he is a holistic artist, combining technical skill, social awareness,

and love for music with impeccable character. “A true artist must pair talent with knowledge, ethics, and good conduct. Hossein embodies all of these virtues,” he said.

Hooshang Kamkar, composer and leader of the Kamkars Ensemble, echoed these sentiments, highlighting Alizadeh’s technical innovations, “Hossein introduced new techniques to tar playing. His works, particularly the collection ‘Dastgahs of Iranian Music,’ are invaluable for future generations.”

Kamkar, a longtime friend, praised both Alizadeh’s artistry and integrity, “He is unique, creative, and technically brilliant. He has never compromised his art for material gain, always creating with love and respect for Iranian culture and people.”

Reflecting on their collaborations, Kamkar cited pieces like ‘Neynava’ and the ‘Tar Concerto with Orchestra’ as exemplars of Alizadeh’s innovation. “Hossein breathes new life into Iranian musical traditions. Listening to his

works is a delight, they are never dry or tiresome,” he said. Kamkar also noted Alizadeh’s commitment to mentoring young musicians, emphasizing the enduring impact of his teaching. Mohammad Reza Honarmand, director of the TV series ‘Under the Blade,’ for which Alizadeh composed the score, described him as “a brilliant star in Iran’s musical sky; his strings illuminate the path of the country’s artistic legacy.” Honarmand added that Alizadeh’s music not only brings visual media to life but also preserves the memory and history of the Iranian people.

Through his mastery of traditional modes, creative innovations, professional ethics, and deep love for culture, Hossein Alizadeh has left an invaluable legacy in Iranian music. The words of masters like Fakhreddini and Kamkar underscore that he is not only an extraordinary artist but also an inspiring human being whose passion continues to shape the music and future generations of Iran.

Fajr festivals to focus on Iran as main theme

Art & Culture Desk

Iran’s Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance has announced that the Fajr festivals will focus on the theme of “Iran,” aiming to strengthen national identity and social cohesion through the arts.

Deputy Minister for Artistic Affairs, Nadereh Rezaei, revealed the initiative during a meeting with senior officials from the Interior Ministry of Interior. She highlighted the potential of the arts to foster “social vitality” and proposed collaboration with the Ministry of Interior to enhance public engagement. Seyed Mohammad Bat’haei, Head of the

Social Affairs Organization, concurred, noting that the arts could serve as a “valuable asset” for the Islamic Republic, especially in addressing societal challenges.

He emphasized the importance of leveraging artistic expressions to promote unity and resilience across the nation.

The discussions also touched upon the role of theater, particularly “applied theater,” in addressing social issues.

Saeed As’adi, Senior Advisor to the Deputy Minister for Artistic Affairs, highlighted the significance of theater in community engagement and its potential to serve as a “bridge” between

cultural institutions and the public. Reza Dabirinejad, Director of the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, called for increased attention to local art festivals and the establishment of museums in underserved regions. He argued that such initiatives could contribute to “cultural justice” and ensure equitable access to artistic experiences nationwide.

The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance is set to collaborate with the Ministry of Interior to implement these initiatives, with plans to launch joint projects aimed at enhancing the cultural landscape and addressing social challenges through the arts.

