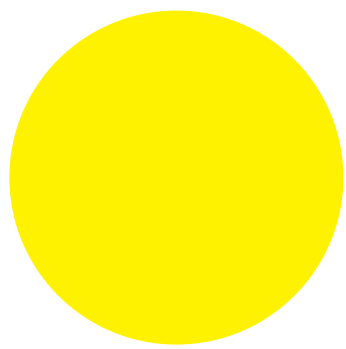


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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian unveils a commemorative stamp marking the 50th anniversary of pre-hospital emergency medicine in Iran during a ceremony in Tehran on September 16, 2025.
● president.ir

Snapback not to bring about exceptional circumstances

Sanctions-plagued Iran knows circumventory routes

By **Mohammad Rostami**
Member of parliament's
presiding board

**OPINION
EXCLUSIVE**

In recent years, despite relentless attempts by its adversaries to block the path of the Islamic Republic's progress and growing influence, Iran has managed to consolidate its regional standing by relying on military capabilities, national cohesion, and smart diplomacy. The determined resistance of Iran's Armed Forces in the face of a large-scale Israeli onslaught in June — backed by the United States and its Western allies — was a clear demonstration of Tehran's deterrent power and its ability to shape regional and international

equations. National unity was one of the most decisive factors behind the failure of Israel and America during their 12-day aggression against Iran.

Since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, the cohesion and social solidarity of the Iranian people have been the key to overcoming hostile plots, particularly the steady stream of sanctions imposed over the decades. Alongside this, active diplomacy and efforts to expand regional and international economic cooperation have played a vital role in taking the sting out of sanctions and neutralizing hostile designs.

From the outset of the Revolution, the Islamic Republic has lived under sanctions imposed by Western countries, especially the United States.

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The photo shows the second conference of Iran and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), attended by Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and (4th R) and ECO chief Asad Majeed Khan (4th L) in Tehran on September 16, 2025.
● mfa.ir

UN silence on Israeli crimes emboldens Tel Aviv regime: *Iran's top rights official*

International Desk

Iran's top human rights official on Monday denounced the silence of the United Nations on Israel's crimes as one of the reasons behind the regime's effrontery to violate the sovereignty of regional countries. Secretary of Iran's High Council for Human Rights Naser Seraj made the remarks in a meeting with the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Nada al-Nashif on the sidelines of 60th session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. Referring to the regime's indiscriminate attacks on residential areas, hospitals and media centers as well as mass killings, the Iranian official emphasized the necessity for the UN to stop the crimes of the Israeli regime and confront its repeated aggressions. Seraj underlined that the silence of the UN in the face of the Israeli crimes or the use of vague statements when referring to its crimes have emboldened the regime to breach human rights.

Iran and Qatar would not have been subjected to aggression by Israel if the United Nations had acted against the regime's crimes, he said. Addressing the 60th regular session of the Human Rights Council, the Iranian official called on the United Nations Human Rights Council to compel Israel and the United States to compensate the Islamic Republic for losses incurred during the illegal aggression of June against the country. "We expect the Human Rights Council to take effective measures to stop and prevent the Zionist regime's crimes and to use all its resources to make the aggressors (the Zionist regime and the United States) compensate for the material and moral damage inflicted on the Iranian people's rights." Seraj also expressed his gratitude to the UN special rapporteurs who explicitly condemned the Israeli-US aggression and defended the rights of the Iranian nation. The official called on the UN rapporteurs to hold the criminal regimes in Tel Aviv and



Secretary of Iran's High Council for Human Rights Naser Seraj (3rd L) talks with the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Nada al-Nashif (1st R) on the sidelines of 60th session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on September 15, 2025.

● IRNA

Washington accountable for their gross violation of the fundamental rights of the Iranian people. On June 13, Israel launched a blatant and unprovoked aggression against Iran, triggering a 12-day war that killed at least 1,064 people in the country, including military commanders, nuclear scientists, and ordinary civilians. The United States also entered the war by bombing three Iranian nuclear sites in a grave violation of international law. In response, the Iranian Armed Forces targeted strategic sites across the occupied territories as well as the Al-Udeid air base in Qatar, the largest American military base in West Asia. On June 24, Iran, through its successful retaliatory operations against both the Israeli



regime and the US, managed to impose a halt to the aggression. Seraj said Iranians expected urgent and immediate action from international institutions responsible for maintaining international peace and secu-

reity, particularly the UN Security Council, in the face of the Israeli-US aggression, but they only witnessed silence, inaction, and politicization. The Israeli regime also launched an attack on Qatar's capital on September 9, killing

six people including five members of Palestinian resistance movement Hamas. The regime targeted a meeting of Hamas leaders who had gathered in Doha to discuss a US cease-fire proposal in the Gaza Strip.

UN commission asserts Israel committed 'genocide' in Gaza, urges accountability

United Nations investigators on Tuesday accused Israel of committing genocide in Gaza in a bid to "destroy the Palestinians", accusing Israel's prime minister and other top officials of incitement.

The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI), which does not speak on behalf of the world body, found that "genocide is occurring in Gaza", commission chief Navi Pillay told AFP. The bombshell report, immediately slammed by Israel, marks the first time a UN-mandated investigative body has concluded the regime is committing genocide.

Israel has since the start of the war in Gaza faced genocide accusations from NGOs and independent UN experts. The UN itself has not labelled the situation in Gaza a genocide, but Pillay said she believed the facts presented by the commission should prompt "high-level leaders at the United Nations also to call this what it is, the genocide".

After the report was published,



UN rights chief Volker Turk said it was up to the courts to determine whether genocide was taking place, but warned: "We see the evidence mounting."

Israel "categorically" rejected Tuesday's report, with the foreign ministry describing it as "distorted and false" and calling "for the immediate abolition of this Commission of Inquiry".

The commission published its latest report nearly two years after the war erupted in Gaza following Hamas's October 7, 2023, attack inside the occupied territories, which resulted in the deaths of 1,219 people, accord-

ing to an AFP tally of official Israeli figures.

Israel's retaliatory campaign has displaced virtually the entire Gaza population and has killed nearly 65,000 people, according to figures from the health ministry in Gaza that the UN considers reliable.

The report came as Israel on Tuesday launched a ground assault on Gaza City, where the UN has declared a full-blown famine.

The COI concluded that Israeli authorities and forces had since October 2023 committed "four of the five genocidal acts" listed in the 1948 Genocide Convention.

Araghchi: Talks with US hinges on Washington's will, not mediators

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Tuesday that resumption of nuclear talks with the United States does not hinge on mediators but on Washington's will to reach a deal with Tehran.

Araghchi said that several regional countries including Qatar are interested in playing a positive role in the negotiations.

"But for the start of the negotiations, the question is not the mediator. The important point is the will of the other side; that they accept that, an agreement can be reached based on mutual interests and without threats, which also includes the interests of both sides," Araghchi told reporters at the opening of the second Iran-Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) conference in Tehran. Iran and the US began talks in April to resolve a decades-old dispute over nuclear program and held five rounds of talks mediated by Oman. But two days before the sixth round of negotiations scheduled for June 15, Israel launched an unprovoked aggression against Iran, which derailed the talks. The US later joined the onslaught on June



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi talks to reporters on the sidelines of the second edition of Iran-Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Conference in Tehran, Iran, on September 16, 2025.

● IRNA

22 and targeted Iran's three nuclear facilities in violation of the United Nations Charter and the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The US had been pressuring Iran to accept zero uranium enrichment. But Iran has repeatedly said that it will not abandon enrichment in its facilities but is ready to decrease the level of enrichment at the 3.75% purity, which has been allowed in the 2015 nuclear agreement from which the US unilaterally withdrew and left the future of the nuclear deal in limbo.

IAEA under pressure to drop Iran's resolution banning attack on nuclear sites: *Envoy*

International Desk

Iran's ambassador to United Nations organizations in the Austrian capital Vienna, Reza Najafi, said on Tuesday that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has come under political pressure not to support Tehran's proposed resolution prohibiting attacks on nuclear facilities.

The Iranian diplomat addressed the issue of Iran's draft resolution aimed at prohibiting armed attacks against nuclear facilities, outlining the process behind the resolution, its objectives, and the challenges it faces.

He said that similar resolutions have previously been approved at the UN security council, including a resolution against Israel's attack on Iraq's nuclear reactor, known as Tamuz 1 located near

Baghdad on June 7, 1981.

The ambassador also warned that attacks on nuclear facilities — especially those housing nuclear materials — could lead to catastrophic environmental damage and serious public health risks. He highlighted the urgent need for countries to back the resolution. Najafi said that the draft resolution is expected to be put to a vote either Thursday or Friday. He noted that while Iran has actively sought support through diplomatic outreach in various capitals and in Tehran, US pressure could sway the positions of certain countries, leaving the final outcome uncertain until the vote occurs. He emphasized the resolution's significance, highlighting that the prohibition against attacking nuclear facilities is a fundamental principle of international



Reza Najafi

law. This principle is enshrined in key documents, including the UN Charter, the IAEA Statute, and the NPT. Therefore, even if the resolution is not adopted, it still holds considerable importance, he added. Iran's move came after attacks by Israel and the US on Iran's nuclear facilities in June.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



ECO chief extols Iran's central role in advancing regional cooperation

FM casts multilateral relations among developing nations as 'necessity'

Economy Desk

The head of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Asad Majeed Khan, praised Iran on Tuesday for playing a "central role" in supporting ECO-affiliated institutions and hosting key organizations that have made "a significant contribution" to the body's activities.

He was addressing the second Iran-ECO conference in Tehran, where senior officials underlined the need for greater economic cooperation, digital integration and multilateral approaches, as the regional body works on a new long-term strategy beyond 2025, IRNA reported.

The conference opened earlier on Tuesday with Khan and Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in attendance. Three specialized panels were held on 'intra-regional connectivity and interactions,' 'ECO and new technologies,' and 'ECO's vision in 2035.' The main goal of the meeting was to examine aspects of economic, technological and communication cooperation among member states and provide expert recommendations for drafting the organization's new vision.

Khan said Iran's national digital projects, aimed at creating seamless coordination, seek to move cooperation "beyond the limitations of formal policy-



Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization Asad Majeed Khan addresses the second Iran-ECO conference in Tehran on September 16, 2025.
● IRNA

making processes, allowing all stakeholders to fully participate in advancing economic cooperation for the next decade."

He stressed that revising the 2025 vision – which has guided the ECO in achieving sustainable economic growth, enhanced connectivity and social services – is of particular importance. Lessons learned from the past would shape the organization's future strategy, he added.

"The first lesson is the need for a holistic, multi-actor approach to cooperation," Khan said, citing the necessity of integrated, cross-sector strategies, for example in trade and regional transport. He cautioned that no transport policy, however well-designed, would succeed without addressing digitalization, innovation and inclusive growth.

The ECO chief noted that these three pillars were reflected in Tuesday's panel discussions on connectivity, technology and resilience. "The experience shared this morning will not only inspire the development of ECO's strategic economic goals, but



also enrich our collective thinking beyond the 2035 vision," he said.

Also, Iran's foreign minister told the meeting that cooperation among developing countries in multilateral frameworks "is not a choice but a necessity."

Araghchi said Iran has been "one of the victims of the US' cruel unilateralism and the dangerous adventurism of the Zionist regime," and continues to face their consequences. "Nevertheless, Iran has never neglected its duties and responsibilities as an active, serious and influential player in multilateral and region-

al economic and development relations," he said, adding that Tuesday's conference was proof of that commitment.

He said the ECO is in the process of drafting its 10-year vision, setting strategic goals and identifying paths to achieve them. This process, he noted, offers an opportunity for collective action. "To realize these goals, we must have a precise understanding of existing opportunities and challenges, and avoid falling into unrealistic ambitions," he said.

The foreign minister stressed that success requires the views and assessments of all stake-

holders across member states and the region, including governments, the private sector, academia, women and youth. He described the ECO conference as "a valuable initiative in this direction."

Meanwhile, Deputy Foreign Minister Saeed Khatibzadeh, who heads the ministry's Institute for Political and International Studies, said he hoped the event would provide "an opportunity for constructive dialogue and practical policy frameworks toward a brighter future for this important and dynamic regional organization."

Iran-Iraq Chamber forecasts \$20b export growth to Iraq in H2



Economy Desk

Iran expects its exports to Iraq to reach \$20 billion in the second half of the current Persian Calendar year (started on March 21) despite a slight decline in the first five months, the head of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce said on Tuesday. Speaking at a meeting of business leaders involved in Iraq trade, Yahya Al-e-Es'haq pointed to the slight decrease over the first five months, noting that the largest drop pertained to gas exports. "In the second half of the year, the numbers will change, and we hope our exports will reach \$20 billion," he said, ISNA reported.

The meeting, held on Tuesday, gathered representatives from the Trade Promotion Organization, Iran Customs Administration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the headquarters for developing Iran-Iraq economic relations, and Iraqi businesspeople to review trade conditions, assess risks and obstacles, and form a special measures management committee at the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce.

Meanwhile, Abdolamir Rabihi, director-general of the West Asia Office at the TPO, presented the latest trade data for the first five months of the year, saying that 53% of exported goods to Iraq were raw materials.

Rabihi noted that Iran's exports to Iraq have been declining since April, although part of the decrease has been offset, and the decline currently stands at 18%. He said the drop in exports of gas and rebar was primarily responsible for the fall.

"Iran's gas exports to Iraq in the first five months of last year totaled \$1.6 billion, whereas this year, the figure has decreased by \$650 million to \$950 million," he said.

He added that rebar exports to Iraq have also seen a significant drop, decreasing by \$174 million in the first five months of this year, compared to the corresponding period last year.

Overall, Iran's exports have declined by around \$1 billion compared to the first five months of last year, according to Rabihi.

"In the same period last year, we exported around \$4.6 billion to Iraq, whereas in the first five months of this year, due to prevailing domestic conditions, exports amounted to \$3.749 billion," he said.

Minister: Hi-tech gas turbine exported to Russia despite sanctions



Economy Desk

Iran's energy minister said the country had exported an advanced gas turbine to Russia for the first time, calling it a major achievement for the domestic power industry despite international sanctions.

"We were able, for the first time, to export an advanced gas turbine as a sophisticated Iranian-made equipment in the power industry to Russia," Minister Abbas Aliabadi said at the national event of exporters of technical and engineering services, goods, and knowledge-based enterprises in the water and power industry on Tuesday, IRNA reported.

He added that Tehran had also sold generators and other electrical equipment to Moscow and had successfully repaired aircraft

engines.

Aliabadi said exports were only valuable when combined with knowledge-based production that created added value. "For years we exported minerals and raw materials, but exports are honorable only when they are value-creating and generate added value," he noted.

Power plants in Iraq, Syria

The minister also highlighted Iran's track record in overseas energy initiatives, citing the construction of multiple power plants in Iraq and Syria, as well as the deployment of Iranian experts to conduct critical repair operations in Syria. The electricity sector had even managed to provide financing for some overseas projects, according to Aliabadi. For Iran's power industry to

succeed in global markets, he noted, the entire export chain must work together.

"Today, exports are not an option but a national strategy, and in this regard, the Ministry of Energy emphasizes facilitating the export of technical and engineering services and water and electricity industry goods," he said.

He urged stronger cooperation among Iranian companies to gain a more powerful entry into international markets. But he also lamented that in one case, political interference had blocked an Iranian bid for a project abroad, despite what he said were better quality and lower prices.

The Minister stressed the need for using international funding by the banking system with the aim of providing financial support to Iranian companies exporting technical and engineering services.

Aliabadi also said the global industrial landscape was changing rapidly. "The Fourth Industrial Revolution is ending and the world will soon reach the Fifth Industrial Revolution. Therefore, we should not remain in the past but move smartly toward the future and pursue intelligent policymaking and simplified export regulations," he said.

Government aims to position Iran as regional tech hub:

Deputy president



A view of Pardis Technology Park in Tehran Province

Economy Desk

Iran's deputy president for science and technology said on Tuesday that the government, by redefining its role as a facilitator rather than a controller, seeks to eliminate barriers and build the necessary infrastructure to position Iran as a leading hub for advanced technologies in West Asia.

Addressing the 27th Pardis Technology Park Summit, Hossein Afshin highlighted the role of innovation ecosystems in transforming knowledge into wealth, stressing the need to empower startups and leverage innovation diplomacy to attract investment and boost the export of knowledge-based products, ILNA reported.

He described the transformation of Pardis Technology Park into an international innovation zone as a milestone in the development of the country's innovation ecosystem.

Afshin said the new zone was once only a technology park but had become Iran's international

innovation hub through the continuous efforts of scientists, engineers and entrepreneurs.

"This transformation is not just a change of nameplate but the result of day-and-night work by those who rose from failures and built an innovative climate," he said.

The official said the zone has become a place where "knowledge turns into products, ideas into industries, and motivation into wealth and capital," with companies in the ecosystem serving as symbols of self-reliance at both national and international levels. Afshin added that smart innovation diplomacy is part of the government's plan, ranging from building bridges with regional countries and attracting foreign investment to exporting knowledge-based products.

He said the ultimate goal is to turn Iran into a hub for advanced technologies in West Asia, focusing on fields such as artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, biotechnology, clean energy and modern financial technologies.

Cairo agreement Tehran's positive tact: Former official

Resuming cooperation with IAEA 'aligns with our national interests'

INTERVIEW

On Tuesday, September 9, 2025, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi signed off on a new document in Cairo, Egypt, detailing a fresh framework for Tehran's technical cooperation with this international nuclear body. The Tehran-IAEA deal, known as the "Cairo agreement," essentially sets up a practical mechanism for collaboration that reflects the exceptional conditions resulting from attacks by Israel and the US on Iran's nuclear facilities, as well as ongoing threats to resume such strikes. An interview was conducted with Mohammad Hossein Adeli, an Iranian politician, economist, and diplomat who has served as ambassador to Canada, Japan, and the UK and once headed the Central Bank of Iran. The discussion focused on the political significance of the Cairo agreement, the outlook for its implementation, and domestic requirements to make the most of this deal. The full text follows.



Mohammad Hossein Adeli

What factors and motivations do you think pushed through the agreement between Iran and the IAEA in Cairo?

ADELI: The Cairo agreement came at the right time and place. Why we should have reached an agreement with the agency is a question that must be measured against the national interests, like any foreign policy move. Since we are still committed to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), cooperation with the IAEA is something we simply had to follow through on. Failing to do so, especially given the smear campaigns and toxic propaganda against Iran's nuclear program, would have been detrimental. Cooperation with the agency is not a choice but rather a prudent and well-thought-out plan that aligns with national interests. At the same time, the foreign minister has made it clear that collaboration is fundamentally based on decisions by the country's Supreme National Security Council. Therefore, I believe the Foreign Ministry has played its part responsibly in this matter. Carrying out this agreement in Cairo was an innovative and positive step by the Foreign Ministry, especially considering the regional situation, as it managed to forge ahead and elevate relations with one of the most influential Middle Eastern countries to the point where this agreement could be signed there.

Given the remaining time until the potential activation of the "snapback mechanism," in what areas do you find this agreement most important, and how much do you think it can help push back the renewal of Resolution 2231?

Reaching an agreement with the IAEA to resume cooperation was something that had to be done sooner or later. It



Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty (front-R) accompanies his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi (front-C) upon his arrival at Tahrir Palace in Cairo, Egypt, on September 9, 2025.

● KHALED ELFIQ/AP



Carrying out this agreement in Cairo was an innovative and positive step by the Foreign Ministry, especially considering the regional situation, as it managed to forge ahead and elevate relations with one of the most influential Middle Eastern countries to the point where this agreement could be signed there.



Representatives of the UN Security Council vote on a resolution to impose sanctions against Iran at UN headquarters in 2006.

● FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

might have been done later, for example, when the snapback was actually activated. But in my view, the timing was handled carefully so that while it is intrinsically a positive step aiding Iran's nuclear dossier, it can also help keep at bay or prolong the snapback deadline. Without this deal, if snapback had occurred, people would have pointed fingers at the Foreign Ministry for either inaction or acting too late. Now, the ball is in the Europeans' court, and they have to weigh up their decisions. I do fully agree with the foreign minister that the Europeans, because they violated their JCPOA commitments, have no real right to do this, yet the reality is that such rights sometimes cannot prevent negative decisions against our country.

Given the atmosphere of distrust, especially after the recent tensions between Iran and the IAEA, how challeng-

ing will it be to implement this agreement, and what hurdles do both sides face in putting it into practice?

From what we understand, this agreement outlines a new approach for cooperation between the parties because previous terms have been completely changed by recent unlawful aggressions. Therefore, it must roll out under a new procedure. It seems that in this new framework, the Iranian Supreme National Security Council will have the final say on inspections. Given the distrust Iran now has, security considerations will become the foremost criterion for any visits, which makes perfect sense. This will create more challenges for the other side as their actions must now agree with Iran's security concerns.

Considering that some inside Iran opposed resuming cooperation with the IAEA, how do you think this agreement will

be received domestically? What would a wise, national interest-based approach look like?

Enemies of Iran are always looking to set up emotional and irrational responses from Iran, so they can pin down their arguments against us on the international stage. Therefore, under these circumstances, we must consistently steer clear of any emotional outbursts, sensationalism, and slogans, and instead keep our national interests in mind so we can bring other countries — including neighbors and international balancing powers — on board with us.

For example, refusing to cooperate with the IAEA would only be feasible if Iran walked out of the agency entirely. Do you honestly think that leaving the NPT would be met with solidarity from the international community, including friendly countries like neighbors, Russia, and China? The

answer is definitely no.

Exiting the NPT would not only mobilize neighboring countries but also China and Russia against us. If we step out of the NPT, the Security Council might table a resolution that the five veto powers — including China and Russia — would all back, demanding our cooperation with the IAEA.

Have we forgotten that during the adoption of six resolutions between 2006 and 2010, all these countries took a united, tough stance against Iran's enrichment? Can't those six resolutions teach us a lesson?

Therefore, I believe Iranian decision-makers will mull over the national interest critically at this juncture and make rational choices away from emotionalism and hysteria. The public does not back fiery slogans and emotional foreign policies — they have bad memories of them.

The interview first appeared in Persian on IRNA.



Cairo defining opportunity to move toward lasting agreement: *Expert*

INTERVIEW

On September 9, a major accord between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency was hammered out with Egypt acting as mediator. Under this deal, the two sides settled on a new framework and modality for cooperation regarding Iran's nuclear activities. This breakthrough could mark a turning point in Tehran-IAEA relations and pave the way for smoother talks and inspections in the future. The significance of this accord lies not only in winning back mutual trust but also in the role of a regional player like Egypt in stepping in to smooth the path of negotiations. The deal could both help dial down nuclear tensions and elevate once again on the weight of multilateral diplomacy in handling Iran's case. To examine the dimensions of this matter and its impact on diplomacy between Tehran and the three European parties to the JCPOA, a conversation was held with Abolghassem Delfi, former Iranian ambassador to France and an international affairs analyst. The full translated text is presented below.



Abolghassem Delfi

Following many ups and downs between Iran and the IAEA in the wake of the bombing of Iran's nuclear facilities, a new cooperation modality was agreed upon. What is your overall assessment of this deal, given that its details are still murky?

DELFI: The details of the Iran-IAEA agreement have not yet been made public. As for the general framework, as you noted, the very act of inking the deal points to satisfaction on both sides. The pact lays out the framework of fresh cooperation between Iran and the IAEA under safeguard commitments. What Mr. Grossi said afterward was that the agency's oversight would continue within the scope of safeguards. In principle, this track doesn't differ much from previous arrangements, though practical matters like timeline and implementation might still cause friction. The key point is that Mr. Araghchi, representing Iran, and Mr. Grossi, after discussing the matter in Cairo, signed off on this deal and also drafted a letter defining the framework for joint cooperation so that the process that had earlier been put on hold by Iran's Parliament has now been brought back to life. In this way, both sides came to terms on the next steps. How those next steps play out depends on IAEA rules, regulations, and safeguards. Araghchi's remarks highlight different aspects of the cooperation, sometimes focusing inward, sometimes outward. Either way, this signature can be seen as a step forward. The resumption of Iran's cooperation with the agency was one of the long-standing demands of the E3 to avoid triggering the dispute settlement mechanism ("the snapback mechanism"), which has now been addressed. By extension, this also means agency inspectors will have to head over to Iran.

As for when this process will actually get underway, Grossi said it won't be dragged out for long. Before flying to Cairo, he had warned that "time is running out" and cooperation must start sooner rather than later. This indicates that by late September, the situation had to be clarified — something that has now come through. Naturally, on the inspection agenda will be the issue of 400 kilograms of uranium enriched to 60 percent, a second major demand of the Europeans to stave off snapback. A sizeable portion of Europe's requests are therefore being met. That is why in the European states' statement at the IAEA Board of Governors, there were signs of cautious approval. While certain phrases still carried a threatening tone, overall, the move showed that Grossi's



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (L) meets with his Egyptian counterpart, Badr Abdelatty (C), and Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency Rafael Grossi in Cairo, Egypt, on September 9, 2025. ● AHMED HASAN/AFP

initiative and his post-Cairo report had gone some way toward convincing the Europeans, the broader West, and even the Americans that cooperation is back on track. This renewed cooperation could hold the key to unlocking the snapback deadlock. Whether it will be extended into late October, however, hangs on the outcome of Iran-US talks since the third major demand from Europe concerns how those talks unfold. The Americans have not yet taken negotiations seriously, even though they've at times stressed the need for them. Iran, too, has publicly said it has no objection in principle to direct talks, but for various reasons, such talks haven't yet materialized, which has itself become part of the problem. Clearly, this issue needs to be sorted out in the coming weeks. All in all, the Europeans' stance in the IAEA statement and their decision not to push

ahead with punitive resolutions show a positive step. But this step requires closer follow-up, firmer cooperation with the agency, and at the same time, continuation of talks with the US. Of course, this does not mean Tehran will just give in to every IAEA demand; Everything must remain within the framework of Iran's conditions and the broader international setting. The agency, playing the role of referee here, holds major sway, and Grossi's reports and inspectors' notes in Tehran will be decisive in shaping outcomes.

There is now growing discussion that the latest deal could set the stage for extending Resolution 2231. In this context, a provisional six-month agreement to continue talks is also possible. If such an opportunity arises, the question is — what will Tehran's next move be? Some argue that even with a

six-month extension, nothing will really change, and we'll just end up with another snapback cycle. But the reality is that such a brief window could provide a chance to change the narrative on snapback. That is why Iran's cooperation with the IAEA in the coming weeks, right up to October 17-18 (the end of the JCPOA deadline), will be crucial. This period gives Iran room to convince Europe and the West that the JCPOA has effectively run its course and that a new solution must be crafted. Achieving that goal, however, hinges on settling several key points within the JCPOA, chiefly through serious cooperation with the agency. If Iran's answers to the IAEA's questions are consistent with safeguards and past obligations, then there is room for a favorable deal. Otherwise, extensions of snapback and Resolution 2231 will only turn into levers for added European and Western

pressure. Considering global dynamics and the multiple strains Washington is under — from Gaza and Ukraine to its standoff with Russia and rivalries with China — Iran could make the most of this moment to strike a deal at a lower cost. Political realism and talks grounded in national interests could finally bring the JCPOA and Resolution 2231 over the finish line on schedule. Ultimately, if Iran manages to persuade Europe and the United States while at the same time living up to safeguard-related commitments under its obligations, then it stands a chance to break out of the current deadlock and prevent pressures from dragging on. The road ahead may not be easy, but it has created a historic opening to lift the shadow of snapback and move toward a durable agreement.

The interview first appeared in Persian on IRNA.



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Rafael Mariano Grossi, IAEA director general, briefs members of the international press and media on the Islamic Republic of Iran at the 1777th Board of Governors meeting held at the agency headquarters in Vienna, Austria, on September 8, 2025. ● FLICKR

FIVB Men's Volleyball World Championship: Iran remains in contention for knockout spot after comeback win against Tunisia



Sports Desk

Iran came from behind to beat Tunisia 3-1 (23-25, 25-20, 25-23, 25-16) in Pool A and celebrate its first victory at 2025 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship in the Philippines. Iranian outside-hitter Pouria Hosseinkhanzadeh chipped in a game-high 21 points, with three teammates, Morteza Sharifi (18pts), Ali Hajipour (14) and Mohammad Valizadeh (12) also finishing in double figures, as Iran bounced back from a shock 3-1 defeat against Egypt on Sunday. Outside-hitter Oussama Ben Romdhane and opposite-spiker Ali Bongui were the joint-top scorers for Tunisia – which had beaten the host country in straight sets in the tournament's curtain riser – with 14 points, while middle-blocker Ahmed Kadhi scored 10.

Outside-hitter and captain Sharifi, who had a quiet day against Egypt with eight points, delivered five of the team's 10 aces in the match. In comparison, Tunisia scored only two. The Asian side also outdid its opponent in attack by 55-46 in spike kills. Sharifi also showed high quality in offense, swinging at a 56% success rate, and on the block, with three stuffs to his name. Another three aces came from the serves of his cross-court teammate, Hosseinkhanzadeh. Hajipour also put up three kill blocks, one of them for the match winner in set four. "First, I would like to thank all the guys who helped me to show a good level. Second, I want to thank the Iranian fans, who support us and gave us a good feeling to have more power on the court," Sharifi told

VBTV. Tunisia managed to match Iran in blocking with nine stuffs and did slightly better in avoiding unforced errors – 24 against 27. Tunisia and Iran occupy second and third place, respectively, in the group on a 1-1 win-loss record and three points each, with the African side edging ahead on set ratios. However, Iran will still hope to progress to the round of 16 as one of the top two in the pool standings with a likely victory over the Philippines on Thursday.



Iranian outside-hitter Pouria Hosseinkhanzadeh (9) hits a spike during a 3-1 victory over Tunisia at the FIVB Men's Volleyball World Championship in Pasay City, Philippines, on September 16, 2025.
● FIVB

FIFA Futsal Women's World Cup: Iranian girls handed Brazil, Italy tests in group stage

Sports Desk

Iran was handed a tough draw at the inaugural FIFA Futsal Women's World Cup, pitted against Brazil, Italy, and Panama in Group D of the competition, which will start November 21 in the Philippines. The draw for the flagship international event in women's futsal took place in the Filipino city of Taguig on Monday, where 16 teams were divided into four groups. Iranian girls will get their campaign underway against eight-time Copa America champion Brazil – the top team in the latest FIFA World Ranking – on November 23, before taking on Panama three days later. Shahrzad Mozaffar's side will hope to be in contention for a top-two finish in the group and a place in

the round of 16, when squaring off against world No. 7 Italy on the final day of the group stage on November 29. Brazil vs. Italy (Nov. 26) is arguably the most intriguing fixture of the group phase. Multiple Azzurre players were born in Brazil, including Renata Adamatti, who is widely regarded as one of the best players on the planet, while several Seleção stars have played in Italy. The sport's poster girl, eight-time Best Women's Player Amandinha, will use her otherworldly skills to aid Brazil's title tilt. Camila, Debora Vanin and Emily are also part of Wilson Saboia's star-stacked squad. Two-time Asian champion Iran secured a place in the finals after finishing third in May's Asian Cup in China.

Meanwhile, host Philippines was drawn against Poland, Morocco, and Argentina in Group A. The race for a top-two finish in the group will be wide open. Luciana Natta, Becha Nunez and Argentina will be the favorites, but they know it won't be easy. Dionesa Tolentin and Philippines will begin their quest to reach the knockout phase against thrill machine Agata Bala and Poland, while the Jasmine Demraoui-inspired Morocco have made huge strides. Spain, Thailand, Colombia and Canada will complete in an engrossing Group B. Spain, Thailand and Colombia are ranked second, fourth and eighth in the world. Spanish selector Claudia Pons has magnificent players like the Cordoba twins, Peque and Irene Samper at her disposal, while Thai coach Thanatorn Santanaprasit counts of the great Nattamon Artkla. Twenty-year-old phenomenon Nicole Mancilla will be central to the Colombians' challenge, with Canadian hopes resting on Esther Brossard's genius. Portugal, Tanzania, Japan, and New Zealand are in Group C. Portugal and Japan are the firm favorites to progress. Luis Conceicao can count on elite performers Ana Catarina Pereira, Fifo and Janice Silva, while Takehiro Suga has the brilliant Ryo Egawa at his disposal. New Zealand and Tanzania will look to upset the odds.



● FFIRI

AFC Champions League Two: Esteghlal to visit Al Wasl in Group A opener

Sports Desk

Persian Gulf Pro League club Esteghlal will play away to Emirati outfit Al Wasl in their opening game in Group A of the new AFC Champions League Two season today at Dubai's Zabeel Stadium. Esteghlal secured a place in the Asian second-tier club competition after lifting a record eighth Irani-

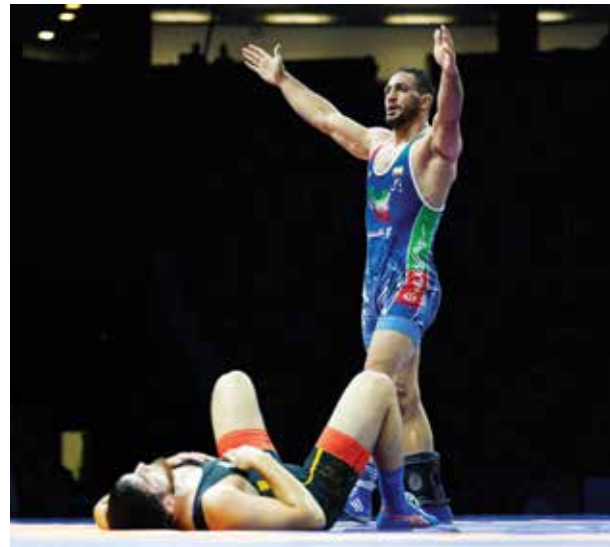
an Hazfi Cup trophy in May, while eight-time Emirati top-flight champion Al Wasl qualified thanks to a fourth-place finish in the UAE Pro League last term. Both sides are eighth in their respective domestic league tables with four points from three games. The Tehran Blues will head into the game on the back of a shock

1-0 loss to Esteghlal Khuzestan in Ahvaz on Friday, while Al Wasl shared the spoils with Al Ain in a 1-1 draw at home last time out in the Emirati league on Saturday. Bahraini domestic double champion Al Muharraq and Jordanian FA Cup winner Al Wehdat are the other two teams in the group, squaring off at the Al Muharraq Stadium in Arad later today.

Wrestling World Championships: Iranians bag double bronzes, Azarpira stuns Tazhudinov

Sports Desk

Iran's Mohammad Nokhodi and Amirhossein Firouzpour finished with consolation bronzes at the Wrestling World Championships, taking the country's freestyle medal count to five by the end of the Day 3 of the competition in Zagreb Croatia. However, the pinnacle of Monday's action for Iran came in the 97kg semifinals, where Amirali Azarpira out-muscled reigning world and Olympic champion Akhmed Tazhudinov, 5-2, ending the Russian-born Bahraini wrestler's two-year unbeaten streak. Tazhudinov burst on to the wrestling scene with stunning victories over Kyle Snyder and Abdulrashid Sadulaev to grab the world gold in 2023, and followed that up with the ultimate prize at the Paris Olympics last summer. During this two-year reign, Azarpira was the only wrestler who came close to beating Tazhudinov. The two squared off in Paris, with the Iranian giving up a three-point lead in the second period to lose 4-3. There was no such comeback in the second period on Monday. Azarpira took a 2-0 lead with two stepouts but Tazhudinov took criteria lead with a takedown, before Azarpira kept his calm and scored a stepout to make it 3-2. Tazhudinov tried reaching for Azarpira's legs with his long reach but the Iranian seemed in no trouble at all defending his advantage. After one of Tazhudinov's attack, he scored a go-behind and won the bout 5-2. Meanwhile, Rahman Amouzad – a silver medalist at the Paris Games – stayed on



Iran's Amirali Azarpira (blue) celebrates his last-four victory over Olympic champion Akhmed Tazhudinov in the freestyle 97kg class at the Wrestling World Championships in Zagreb, Croatia, on September 15, 2025.
● IAWF

course for a second world gold after defeating Iranian-born Canadian wrestler Peyman Biabani 5-0 in the 65kg last four, setting up a final date with Japanese Kotaro Kiyooka in a repeat of last year's gold medal bout at the Olympics. Monday's results were enough to secure Iran's first freestyle team title in 12 years with one day of action to spare – regardless of the final outcomes for Azarpira and Amouzad in their respective final bouts. Later on Monday, Nokhodi recovered from a last-four setback (8-3) against Greece's Georgios Kougioumtsidis on the preceding night to beat Azerbaijan's Dzhabrail Gadzhiev 4-2 and win a joint-bronze in the 79kg event – Iranian's fifth medal in as many years at the Wrestling Worlds. Firouzpour – a five-time world champion across different age groups – managed to finish with something to cheer about on his debut at

the Senior World Championships. Having suffered a 11-6 loss to Russian Amanula Gadzhimagomedov, competing as a neutral athlete, in the 92kg semifinals, the 23-year-old Iranian bounced back to make quick work of Kazakhstan's Kamil Kurugliyev, securing a fall victory in less than two minutes in the bronze-medal contest. The double bronzes came after Amirhossein Zare' had beaten Giorgi Meshvildishvili of Azerbaijan 5-0 in defend his 125kg world title on Sunday, walking away with his third gold medal in four editions of the Wrestling Worlds. Ahmad Mohammadnejad Javan finished with an impressive silver medal on his debut at the World Championships following a superiority loss to Russian Zaur Uguev in the 61kg final, while Kamran Qasempour eased to a 10-0 win against Indian Mukul Dahiya to win a bronze in the 86kg division.

Grand Mosque of Isfahan showing twelve centuries of Iranian-Islamic heritage

Iranica Desk

The Grand (Jaame) Mosque of Isfahan is a monumental building that alone narrates over twelve centuries of Iranian-Islamic architectural, cultural, and identity history. This mosque is not only a place of worship but also a living document of Iran's political, social, and artistic evolutions, bearing marks from various periods including the Abbasid, Buyid, Seljuk, Ilkhanid, Timurid, and Safavid eras up to the present day. Its inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2012 confirms its international significance, and today it stands as one of the most important cultural heritage attractions in the country, demanding increased attention and preservation.

To understand the significance of the Grand Mosque of Isfahan, one must consider its multilayered history. No other building in Iran contains such diverse architectural layers and successive restorations. Its original construction dates back to the early Islamic centuries, and over subsequent centuries, each ruling dynasty contributed additions or restorations to the structure. As a result, the mosque serves today as a living architectural album in which traces of the Seljuks can be clearly seen in the four ivans, the influence of the Ilkhanids is evident in the tile work, and the Safavids' presence is visible in the intricate decorations.

This continuous layering and evolution make the mosque a masterpiece that exemplifies the rich history and architectural ingenuity of the region. Mohammadreza Sadeqi, a professor of Islamic architectural history, emphasized in an interview with Mehr News Agency that the Grand Mosque of Isfahan is a rare example of continuity in Islamic architecture. He explained that if architecture is considered a language for narrating history, then the Grand Mosque of Isfahan speaks the story of 12 centuries of transformation with its own language.

He said, "The initial parts of the mosque were constructed in the second century AH, and during the Seljuk period, it was rebuilt according to the four-ivan architectural model. This change marked a turning point in the history of Iranian Islamic architecture and became a pattern



that was later repeated in major mosques across the country, such as the Grand Mosque of Zavarreh and the Grand Mosque of Ardestan."

He emphasized, "In the following centuries, each dynasty added its own distinctive features to the mosque. The Ilkhanids contributed exquisite tile work, the Timurids added plaster decorations and calligraphy, and the Safavids played a role in restoration and reconstruction of parts of the building. For this reason, the Grand Mosque of Isfahan can be considered an architectural library, where each page corresponds to a different historical period.

Sadeghi added that one of the important features of this mosque is the continuation of its function as a place of worship alongside its historical role. While many historical buildings have lost their primary function, it still serves as a venue for congregational prayers and religious ceremonies. This coexistence of

past and present greatly enhances its heritage value.

Another notable feature of the Grand Mosque of Isfahan is its transformation into the world's first four-ivan architectural model. This pattern, which initially originated in palace and non-religious buildings, entered the religious space in the mosque and became a lasting template.

Leila Moradi, an archaeologist, stated, "Protecting the Grand Mosque of Isfahan is one of the most challenging tasks of cultural heritage, because we are facing a structure that has survived not just from one era but from several centuries."

She explained that restoring this mosque is like putting together the pieces of a complex puzzle. If in one section we want to restore Seljuk bricks, we must be careful that Ilkhanid decorations or Timurid inscriptions are not damaged. This co-existence of layers has turned the work of restorers into a scientific and delicate endeavor.



archilearn.net

Moradi emphasized that the most pressing threat today to the Grand Mosque is land subsidence in Isfahan. Scientific reports have shown that parts of Isfahan's historic fabric are at risk of subsidence due to the drop in groundwater levels. This phenomenon can gradually put pressure on the mosque's foundations and walls.

She added that periodic restorations, if conducted without scientific backing and thorough study, can, instead of protecting, damage the structure. That is why collaboration among restorers, archaeologists, and structural engineers for the protection of the mosque is an undeniable necessity.

In the Grand Mosque of Isfahan, inscriptions are not merely decorations; they form a part of the building's cultural and religious identity. The early Kufic scripts through Thuluth and Naskh of later periods are all visible in this mosque.

Fatemeh Rastegar, professor of

Islamic Art, said, "The Grand Mosque of Isfahan is also a living museum of calligraphy; as well as Kufic brick inscriptions in the initial sections, you can find in-laid Safavid-era scripts and other inscribed forms in this mosque, each conveying the message of its own era."

She added, "In the Seljuk period, calligraphy was mostly done in Kufic script and Qur'anic verses were decorated with brickwork. In the Ilkhanid period, mosaic tilework entered the mosque and Thuluth script gained a new look with blue and turquoise colors. In the Timurid and Safavid periods, calligraphy reached its peak and artists such as Ali Reza Abbasi produced brilliant works."

Rastegar emphasized that inscriptions are not merely decorative; they also express the religious and political identity of their era. Many inscriptions, in addition to Holy Qur'anic verses, include the names of kings, founders, and the dates of con-

struction or restoration of different parts of the mosque.

He added that preserving these inscriptions requires special expertise because the passage of time, humidity, pollution, and even tourists' touch can gradually damage them. Digital recording and photographic documentation of the inscriptions can be an important step in protecting these valuable works.

The registration of the Grand Mosque of Isfahan on UNESCO's World Heritage List has brought new opportunities and responsibilities for managing this site. Seyyed Alireza Mousavi, a cultural heritage expert, said, "The global registration of Isfahan's Grand Mosque is not only a national honor but also a global responsibility placed on Iran."

He emphasized that UNESCO expects member countries to adhere to standards of conservation, restoration, and tourism management for such sites.

He explained that one of the major challenges at the mosque is tourism management. On one hand, the presence of domestic and foreign tourists helps introduce the mosque and boosts the economy, but on the other hand, excessive pressure on the structure and ignoring its physical capacity can be threatening.

Mousavi added that interaction among the local community, religious custodians, and the Cultural Heritage Organization is essential for managing this site. The Grand Mosque of Isfahan still serves as a place for prayer and religious ceremonies, and its worship function should not be affected by tourism. Striking a balance between these two functions is the art of heritage management.

Discussions with experts revealed that this monument is a combination of history, art, architecture, calligraphy, and cultural management, and its preservation requires interdisciplinary cooperation as well as national and international attention.

Revisiting the importance of the Grand Mosque can be an opportunity to remind that mosques are not only places of worship but also symbols of our identity, culture, and history. As the mother of mosques in Iran, Grand Mosque is a brilliant example of the union of religion, art, and architecture, and preserving it means preserving our national and Islamic identity.



fararu.com

Hamedan's Sardashi Kebab brings tradition to life

Iranica Desk

Hamedan Province, known as a historical and cultural capital of Iran, boasts a diverse culinary heritage in the western region of Iran. Among its many traditional dishes, Hamedan's Sardashi Kebab stands out as a popular and cherished specialty enjoyed not only locally but throughout Iran. This ancient kebab, distinguished by its enticing aroma, reflects the deep-rooted culture and lifestyle of the people in Hamedan.

Sardashi is traditionally prepared and served at ceremonies, high-

lighting its cultural significance. The kebab consists of a flavorful mix of lamb, onion, potato, green pepper, salt, spices, and tomato. Due to the absence of modern grilling equipment in older times, locals relied on Sangak bakeries to cook Sardashi over their wood-fired ovens, imparting a unique taste. Typically, Sardashi is accompanied by bread or rice (Polo), and served with fresh onions, lemon, vegetables, and Doogh, a refreshing Iranian yogurt-based drink.

This dish exemplifies the communal and celebratory spirit of Hamedan's cuisine, where food serves

as a bridge to tradition and social gatherings. The preservation of Sardashi's authentic preparation methods continues to revive interest among younger generations, ensuring that this culinary heritage remains a vibrant part of Iran's diverse food culture.

Furthermore, Sardashi Kebab reflects the use of locally sourced ingredients that support regional agriculture, emphasizing sustainability. Its preparation and sharing strengthen community bonds and celebrate Hamedan's identity, making the dish a symbol of both heritage and hospitality.



Pezeshkian praises emergency medics, vows broader healthcare access

Social Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Tuesday hailed emergency workers as the “frontline” of the nation’s health system and promised to expand access for low-income and elderly citizens, as the country marked 50 years of pre-hospital emergency care. Speaking at a ceremony in Tehran, Pezeshkian praised the “round-the-clock” efforts of medics and said their service without regard to race, belief or status embodied a deeply human approach, president.ir reported. “When you rush to the side of a patient, you do not ask who they are,” he said. “You simply try to ease their pain.” He called on institutions to adopt the same outlook, arguing that such an approach could ease divisions and strengthen national unity. Emergency personnel, he added, showed what it meant to put “the best service in the

shortest time” before citizens. Pezeshkian stressed that the government’s “justice-based” health policy placed the most vulnerable at the top of the agenda. He warned that poverty, aging and lack of knowledge left many unable to protect themselves and required targeted programs. “We are obliged to give priority to those who face the greatest risks,” he said. The president also turned to the wider health network, urging hospitals to improve productivity and reduce costs for patients. Later in the day, he inaugurated a new 550-bed wing of Fayaz Bakhsh Hospital in southern Tehran, operated by the state-run Social Security Organization. Built over 12 years, the facility has 21 operating rooms and one of the largest emergency departments in the country. “These hospitals are built with public insurance contributions,” Pezeshkian



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks at a ceremony marking the 50th anniversary of Iran’s pre-hospital emergency care in Tehran, September 16, 2025.
● president.ir

said. “They must deliver the highest efficiency.” He pointed to unused space that could house outpatient clinics and suggested installing solar panels to cut energy bills. The president also urged managers to address chronic congestion in crowded neighborhoods where major hospitals are located. He recommended working with private investors to build parking structures to ease traffic and improve access for patients. At both events, Pezeshkian returned to the theme of equity. He said citizens in every province should be able to count on timely, quality treatment regardless of geography or income. Raising effi-



ciency in public hospitals, he argued, would help contain costs and ensure

that pensioners and the poor received proper care.

VP urges expatriate artists to return, pledges revival of cinema



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran’s First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref on Tuesday urged expatriate artists to return home and told the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance to ease their way back, as the government seeks to revive the country’s struggling film industry. Speaking at a meeting of the Supreme Council of Iranian Cinema, Aref said filmmakers should act as “narrators” of national power, IRNA reported. He voiced concern over reports of Iranian performers living in hardship



Iran’s First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref (2nd R) attends the meeting of the Supreme Council of Iranian Cinema on September 16, 2025.
● fvpresident.ir

abroad, including one in Los Angeles who had been forced into minor roles to make ends meet. “Some reports about the living conditions of Iranians abroad are concerning,” he said. “Disputes should remain with brothers at home, not in a foreign land.” Aref instructed the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance to prioritize policies that encourage expatriate artists to return. He said the initiative is part of a broader government strategy to bring Iranians back from overseas. During the session, two memorandums of understanding were signed – one on housing for cinema professionals and another on expanding their insurance coverage. Aref said Iranian cinema has been on a “downward trajectory” despite the

country’s cultural heritage. He urged the culture minister to quickly draft a plan to raise cinema’s standing and warned that filmmakers must address social issues without resorting to pessimism. He contrasted the unity shown during a recent 12-day war with the 50 percent turnout in last year’s presidential election, saying cinema could help strengthen national cohesion. The council agreed to fund documentaries, short films and animations about the conflict. The vice president also called for deeper cultural cooperation with regional neighbors and international artists drawn to Iran’s civilization. He outlined a 10-year development plan that includes new movie theaters in cities with more than 100,000 residents and simplified tax procedures for filmmakers.

Iran picks ‘Cause of Death: Unknown’ as official Oscar entry for 2026

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran selected ‘Cause of Death: Unknown’ as its official submission for the 2026 Academy Award for Best International Feature Film, the Farabi Cinema Foundation announced Tuesday following a unanimous vote by a nine-member selection committee. The decision came from a shortlist of five films, including ‘The Old Bachelor,’ ‘Woman and Child,’ ‘Raha,’ and ‘Call Me Ziba.’ The committee, which reviewed 84 eligible entries, determined that Ali Zarnegar’s ‘Cause of Death: Unknown’ best represents contemporary Iranian cinema on the global stage. The film follows seven passengers traveling from Shahdad to Kerman in Iran’s Lut Desert before sunrise. When one passenger dies unexpectedly, the group discovers a hidden sum of money on the body. With no doctor available to issue a death cer-

tificate, emergency services refuse to intervene. Facing a moral dilemma, the passengers decide to take the matter to the local police, grappling with ethical choices amid extraordinary circumstances. The selection highlights the depth and diversity of Iranian filmmaking. “The film captures raw human emotion under pressure,” said one member of the committee, which includes prominent figures such as filmmaker Abolhassan Davoodi, actress Pantea Panahiha, cinematographer Hooman Behmanesh, and Oscar Academy member Mohammad Reza Delpak. ‘Cause of Death: Unknown’ has earned acclaim on the festival circuit. At the 2023 Shanghai International Film Festival, it received nominations for Best Film, Best Director, and Best Actor, while Davood Malek Hosseini won Best Cinematography. The ensemble cast features Banipal Shoosmoon, Alireza Sanifar, Neda Jebraeili, Ali Mohammad Radmanesh,



and Zakiyeh Behbahani, among others. Produced by Majid Barzegar, the film has been praised for its tension-driven storytelling and striking visuals. The Farabi Cinema Foundation, which oversees Iran’s submissions to international awards, emphasized that the choice reflects the country’s commitment to promoting its cinematic achievements abroad. The foundation said the film “stands out for its narrative originality and artistic execution,” continuing Iran’s tradition of presenting compelling stories to the global film community.

Snapback not to ...

Over time, the country has become hardened and experienced under such pressure, having learned and mastered ways to circumvent the restrictions.

One of the most recent measures against Iran has been the “snapback” mechanism of the 2015 nuclear deal which was triggered by the France, Germany and the UK to return all UN sanctions on Tehran. The mechanism was wielded by the West as a fresh tool of pressure and intimidation. Yet, given that Iran has already endured the toughest sanctions imposed by Washington since its withdrawal from the nuclear deal in 2018, snapback is unlikely to prove decisive. There is hardly a type of sanction the nation has not faced. Even in sectors that, by Washington’s own admission, should not fall under sanctions — such as food and medicine — the Iranian people have been subjected to severe restrictions. In practice, patients with special medical conditions have often been left in life-threatening circumstances due to these constraints. It was only thanks to the ingenuity of Iranian researchers and

domestic producers that the situation was kept under control.

For this reason, snapback does not amount to an extraordinary threat. What will determine the country’s ability to navigate the current pressures is disciplined, well-planned management at home. Today’s leaders must act in a resolute, almost campaign-like spirit to tackle economic bottlenecks and other challenges head-on. At the same time, exaggerating the impact of the mechanism or other sanctions — thereby playing into the enemy’s hands — would only bolster hostile psychological warfare. While snapback, like any other sanction, may bring negative consequences, its fallout can be managed through unity and national solidarity, just as before. Active diplomacy remains a critical pillar of this strategy. Iran must strengthen ties not only with neighboring states but with the broader Islamic world and friendly nations across the globe. The more dynamic and assertive Tehran’s regional and international diplomacy becomes, the lighter the weight of sanctions will be on the national economy.