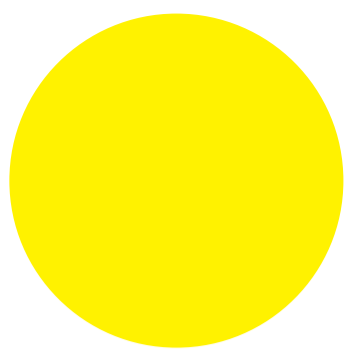


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Ceasefire signals start of new phase for Iran's foreign policy

By Kourosh Ahmadi
International relations analyst

OPINION

Donald Trump's team has, in recent weeks, begun to show clear signs of recalibration. Earlier assumptions appear to have been reassessed. Positions once shaped by over-confidence now seem to be giving way to a search for an exit. In such circumstances, Iran needed to pause and test whether these shifts would translate into tangible changes in US policy.

Tehran's decision to accept a temporary halt to the war is therefore not only timely but courageous. It is also, by any reasonable measure, a politically and militarily confident move. Credit belongs both to the country's leadership and to a public that has absorbed the costs of the conflict.

The clearest account of what has transpired has come from Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. His statement sets out the framework with notable precision. Its subsequent repost by the US president effectively underscores that Washington has, at least in broad terms, accepted Iran's framing. Araghchi referred explicitly to "the US request for negotiations on its 15-point proposal" and to the American president's declaration of "acceptance in principle of Iran's 10-point proposal." These two drafts, he noted, will form the basis of talks expected to take place in Pakistan. Speaking "on behalf of the National Security Council," he further stated that "1. if attacks against the Islamic Republic of Iran cease, our powerful armed forces will also halt their defensive operations;" and "2. for a period of two weeks, safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz will be possible in coordination with Iran's armed forces and with due regard to existing technical constraints."

This matters. The ceasefire deal is not an ad hoc decision. It reflects a consensus reached at the highest level of Iran's political and military structure. At this stage, what will matter most is whether that decision is backed across the domestic political spectrum. Such support could prove decisive in shaping the outcome of the negotiations that follow.

The rationale behind Iran's move is rooted in the logic of war itself. Conflicts evolve. As they do, both sides reassess their positions. At certain points, maximalist demands give way to a degree of realism. Over the past two weeks, the Trump administration has signaled precisely such a shift. Iran's decision to hold back and test the durability of these changes reflects a calculated approach. The negotiations ahead will reveal whether battlefield realities have stripped away what Tehran sees as earlier illusions, shaped in part by headline Israeli influence.

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Iranian officials have consistently argued that any halt.

Pezeshkian hails truce as fruit of martyred Leader's blood, nation's sacrifices

SNSC: War objectives largely achieved; US talks due in Islamabad



Asian Wrestling Ch'ships:

Mirzazadeh wins gold as Iran secures Greco-Roman title

Amin Mirzazadeh headlined Iran's medal hunt on Day 2 of the Asian Wrestling Championships on Tuesday by winning the super-heavyweight gold in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Iranians bagged another four medals, including three silvers, on Tuesday to help the country secure the Greco-Roman team title regardless of the outcome in the other five weight categories.

Reigning world champion Mirzazadeh was in a league of his own in the 130kg class, completing a clean sweep of three superiority victories without conceding a point.

Elsewhere, Gholamreza Farrokhi, a world senior and under-23 gold medalist last year, was stunned by the host's wrestler 11-4 in the 87kg final.

Erfan Jarkani and Ali Oskou also suffered final defeats against Kyrgyz opponents to settle for silver in the 63kg and 77kg divisions, respectively.



Iran's Amin Mirzazadeh is pictured during a Greco-Roman 130kg bout at the Asian Wrestling Championships in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on April 6, 2026. IAWFIR

Mohammad Hosseinvand Panahi was the only Iranian to beat a wrestler from the host country on Tuesday, claiming a 7-1 win in the bronze-medal bout of the 55kg category. The Greco-Roman competition will be followed by the freestyle event in the Kyrgyz capital, where the Iranian squad will look to retain the crown and complete a team title double for the country.

World champion Amirhossein Zare' will be the wrestler to beat in the 125kg class, while Amir-Ali Azarpira will be one of the two favorites, alongside Olympic champion Akhmed Tazhudinov of Bahrain, in the 97kg division.

Kamran Qassempour, meanwhile, will be eager for a fresh start in 86kg, following a below-par run, by his standards, at the World Championships and the Islamic Solidarity Games last year, which saw him settle for two bronze medals.

Milad Valizadeh (57kg), Ahmad Mohammadnejad Javan (61kg), Peyman Ne'mati (65kg), Sina Khalili (70kg), Amir-Mohammad Yazdani (74kg), Mahdi Yousefi (79kg), and Mohammad-Mobin Azimi (92kg) complete the Iranian 10-man roster in the freestyle contests.



Pezeschkian hails truce as fruit of martyred Leader's blood, nation's sacrifices

SNSC: War objectives largely achieved; US talks due in Islamabad

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeschkian announced on Wednesday that a two-week ceasefire agreement between Tehran and Washington was reached based on the acceptance of the Islamic Republic's general principles and the sacrifices of the Iranian nation.

In a post on his X account, Pezeschkian said the achieved two-week truce was the result of the sacrifices made by our great martyred Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, and the presence of all the people on the scene.

"From today onward, we will remain united. Whether in diplomacy, defense, on the

streets, or in service provision," he added.

Following 40 days of joint US-Israeli war against Iran, the two sides finally agreed early Wednesday Tehran time to a two-week ceasefire mediated by Pakistan.

US President Donald Trump announced Washington's decision to step back from the war late Tuesday local time in a statement posted on the Truth Social platform.

Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) has announced in a statement that almost all of the country's war objectives have been achieved, while announcing that negotiations with the United States are expected to take place in Islamabad to

finalize the political outcome of the conflict.

Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) announced in a statement that almost all of the country's war objectives have been achieved, while announcing that negotiations with the United States are expected to take place in Islamabad on Friday to finalize the political outcome of the conflict. The SNSC said early on Wednesday that Iran had continued the war for more than 40 days despite repeated requests by its adversaries to halt hostilities. According to the statement, Iranian authorities rejected several deadlines issued by Trump, emphasizing that Tehran

would not accept any timetable imposed by its enemies. According to the council, the decision to continue the conflict had the full backing of the Iranian people and would persist as long as necessary to secure major strategic gains and new regional security arrangements.

However, the statement added that, following guidance from Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei and approval by the Supreme National Security Council, the Islamic Republic has agreed to negotiations aimed at finalizing the details of a potential settlement.

According to the statement, Iran had rejected proposals



Masoud Pezeschkian

from the United States and instead submitted a 10-point plan to the US through Pakistan. The proposal reportedly includes conditions such as the withdrawal of US combat

forces from regional bases, the lifting of primary and secondary sanctions on Iran, the release of frozen Iranian assets abroad, and compensation for damages caused

by the conflict. The plan also calls for a security protocol governing passage through the Strait of Hormuz under coordination with Iranian armed forces, as well as an end to hostilities involving resistance groups in the region. In a post on his X account on Wednesday, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, on behalf of the SNSC, wrote, "If attacks against Iran are halted, our Powerful Armed Forces will cease their defensive operations."

Araghchi added, "For a period of two weeks, safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz will be possible via coordination with Iran's Armed Forces and with due consideration of technical limitations."

Iran: UN draft resolution on Strait of Hormuz distorts realities

Russia, China veto UN resolution

International Desk

Iran's ambassador to the United Nations described a draft resolution prepared by Bahrain over the closure of the Strait of Hormuz as "entirely one-sided and biased", saying that it distorts the realities on the ground by falsely attributing responsibility to Iran.

Addressing a meeting of the UN Security Council on Tuesday to vote on the draft resolution, Amir Saeid Iravani called the resolution flawed and biased, arguing that it misrepresents Iran's lawful actions in the face of the US-Israel aggression and seeks to legitimize unlawful conduct by the aggressors and their allies under the pretext of safeguarding freedom of navigation and maritime safety in the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf. Iravani said the "politically motivated" resolution is an "attempt to unjustly attribute blame to Iran" while deliberately ignoring the root causes of the current crisis which

caused by an unprovoked aggression by the US and Israel against Iran.

Russia and China vetoed the resolution which received 11 votes in favor, two against and two abstentions. Bahrain's Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani said Persian Gulf Arab states "regret" the outcome.

Iravani said Iran's measures in the Strait of Hormuz have been taken in the exercise of its inherent right of self-defense in accordance with the UN Charter.

Iran has imposed an effective blockade on the critical waterway, which normally carries a fifth of the world's oil, since the US and Israel launched the war on February 28, sending ripple effects throughout the global economy.

US reaction

"Today's result does not restrict the United States to continue to act in its own self-defense and in the collective defense of our allies and partners," US ambassador Mike



Amir Saeid Iravani
IRNA

Waltz said after the Security Council vote.

Al Zayani, speaking on behalf of the oil-exporting Persian Gulf countries, claimed the failure to pass the resolution "sends the wrong signal to the world." "This signal that the threat to international waterways can pass without any decisive action by the international organization responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security," he said.

Iran's UN ambassador said the text was designed

"to punish the victim for defending its sovereignty and vital national interest in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz."

"Had this draft been adopted, it could have opened the door to dangerously broad and abusive interpretation that could be used to justify further use of force and unlawful actions in clear violation of the UN Charter," said Iravani.

He also said Russia and China stood firmly on the right side of history by vetoing the resolution.

World leaders welcome two-week ceasefire, hope for lasting peace

International Desk

Global reactions poured in on Wednesday after Iran and the United States agreed to a two-week ceasefire in a joint war launched by Washington and Tel Aviv against Tehran on February 28.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres welcomed the ceasefire mediated by Pakistan but urged all parties to work toward long-term peace in the Middle East.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the two-week ceasefire would bring much-needed de-escalation and called for an enduring solution.

European Council President Costa urged "all parties to uphold its terms in order to achieve sustainable peace in the region."

Kaja Kallas, the European Union's top diplomat, said the ceasefire deal was "a step back from the brink after weeks of escalation".

Pope Leo on Wednesday praised the ceasefire, hours after calling US President Donald Trump's threat against the population of Iran "unacceptable." The pope, who has emerged as an outspoken critic of the war in recent weeks, said he welcomed the announcement of

the ceasefire with satisfaction and urged continued negotiation to bring a full end to the regional conflict.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that the United States, Iran and their allies had agreed to a ceasefire "everywhere", including Lebanon. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia received the news of a truce with satisfaction.

"We welcome the decision not to proceed further down the path of armed escalation."

French President Emmanuel Macron welcomed the ceasefire and said about 15 countries were planning to facilitate the resumption of traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil supply usually flows.

Japan said that "concrete steps" were needed to de-escalate the crisis, including ensuring the safe passage of vessels through the Strait of Hormuz.

"We hope the final agreement will be reached through diplomacy at an early date," Japanese government spokesman Minoru Kihara said.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry hoped the ceasefire would bring about the safe passage of all vessels, including its own, through the Hormuz Strait.

Australia cautioned that the

longer the war draws on "the more significant the impact on the global economy will be, and the greater the human cost".

"Australia wants to see the ceasefire upheld and a resolution to the conflict," Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's office said.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese welcomed the ceasefire, while criticising the rhetoric of Trump who had threatened that "a whole civilization will die tonight" if his demands were not met.

"I don't think it's appropriate to use language such as that from the president of the United States, and I think it will cause some concern," Albanese said. While supporting US attacks on Iran in the early days of the war, Albanese has expressed unease about the conflict in recent weeks.

New Zealand welcomed the ceasefire but warned that there remains "significant work" to be done to secure peace.

"New Zealand will stand in support of all efforts to bring about a lasting, durable end to this conflict," Foreign Minister Winston Peters' spokesperson said.

Iraq's Foreign Ministry called for "serious and sustainable dialogue" between the US and Iran.

Ceasefire signals start ...

Iranian officials have consistently argued that any halt must be tied to assurances against renewed aggression. While such thinking reflects a desire to avoid a return to hostilities or a prolonged "no war, no peace" situation, history offers a more cautious lesson. The 1994 assurances given to Ukraine, signed by Russia, the United States and Britain, ultimately failed to prevent conflict.

Deterrence, by contrast, rests on capability. During

the current conflict, Iran imposed restrictions on movement through the Strait of Hormuz in response to the unlawful aggression. The result was instructive. It demonstrated that reopening the waterway by force would not be straightforward. Iran's asymmetric capabilities altered the equation. That experience may now serve as a more credible form of guarantee than any written commitment.

The costs of the past forty days have been substantial. Iran has absorbed both material damage and

psychological strain from the US-Israeli war. The prospect of escalation, particularly into attacks on infrastructure, would have significantly raised those costs. Under continued sanctions and financial pressure, recovery would have been difficult to sustain in the short term.

There is also a regional dimension that cannot be ignored. Given the largely air-based nature of the conflict and the geographic distance separating Iran from its adversaries, retaliation would likely have

focused on assets in neighboring countries. Such a path would have risked entangling regional actors more deeply and complicating efforts to rebuild relations with them.

It is expected that, following a positive turn of events after a difficult period, Iran's foreign policy will enter a new phase. This would pave the way for rebuilding what has been damaged and advancing the country's development and people's well-being, particularly given the upcoming diplomatic changes.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Pattern of violations against Iranian children from Minab to history



By Mohammad Mehdi Seyed Nasseri

Researcher & Int'l Law Lecturer at Shahid Beheshti University

PERSPECTIVE EXCLUSIVE

Long before the frail and lifeless bodies of 168 Iranian children were pulled from beneath the rubble caused by the aerial bombardment of the Shajareh Tayyebeh school in the city of Minab, Hormozgan Province, Iranian children had already experienced, and continue to experience, the physical, psychological, and emotional consequences of the violent policies imposed by aggressors against Iranian territory. The Minab tragedy rapidly became a global headline in the earliest days of the aggressive war initiated by the United States and Israel against Iran's sovereignty and territorial integrity, provoking widespread condemnation. Yet the harsh reality remains that condemnation, however necessary, cannot restore life to the victims. These reactions merely add another page to a growing record of manifest vio-



Damage is seen at an elementary school in Minab, southern Iran, after a February 28, 2026, airstrike, part of a wave of US-Israeli attacks across Iran. **GETTY IMAGES**



People take part in a memorial event held to mourn the students of an elementary school who were killed in a US-Israeli missile strike in southern Iran, in Tehran, Iran, April 7, 2026. **IRNA**

lations of international humanitarian law and the blatant disregard of fundamental norms protecting civilians, particularly children.

History of suffering

From a historical perspective, Iranian children have consistently suffered from war and foreign aggression. During both World Wars, Iran's territory was subjected to occupation and external incursions. In the First World War, unrest, famine, poverty, hunger, and disease imposed severe and lasting burdens on Iranian children. It was in this very period that, in 1924, the League of Nations adopted the first Declaration of the Rights of the Child, proposed by the non-governmental organization Save the Children, an instrument grounded in the necessity of protecting children in times of war. During the Second World War, beyond general hardship and food shortages, the bombing of cities such as Tehran, Rasht, and Isfahan resulted in the deaths and injuries of numerous children. In other words, long before being labeled a "vulnerable group" in modern legal discourse, Iranian children had already been inscribed in the historical memory of the nation as evident victims of war and abandonment. This reality was reiterated more starkly during the eight-year war of aggression by Iraq against Iran. According to documented accounts, in the early months of the conflict, the majority of schoolchildren in the city of Behbahan were killed when an Iraqi missile struck.

In another attack, a school for deaf children in Borujerd was targeted; several children who could not hear the air-raid sirens were trapped under rubble and either perished or sustained severe injuries. Schools in Mianeh were also repeatedly attacked. In total, 162 schools were targeted during the war; approximately 800 students were killed, and many more were injured. These figures are not mere statistics; each number conceals a name, a dream, a schoolbag, an unfinished notebook, and a grieving family.

Yet the suffering of children in war extends far beyond death in bombings. Injury, disability, deprivation of education, displacement, loss of loved ones, persistent fear, long-term psychological trauma, and the erosion of emotional security are all manifestations of the harm inflicted by war. The legacy of chemical weapons and landmines in western Iran, devices that continue to claim children's lives even today, constitutes another dimension of this enduring tragedy. War does not end with explosions; it persists in the amputated limb of a child, in recurring nightmares, in schools never rebuilt, and in communities that never return to normal life.

Sanctions and modern hardships Prior to Iran's acceptance of United Nations Security Council Resolution 598, the world witnessed one of the most egregious violations of civilian protection. In July 1988, a United States naval vessel shot down an Iran Air civilian aircraft over the Persian

Gulf en route from Bandar Abbas to Dubai. Among the 290 victims were 66 children, three of whom were under the age of two.

In subsequent years, Iranian children have either been direct victims of terrorist attacks or have lived with the consequences of loss and insecurity as survivors. Moreover, decades of international economic sanctions, particularly unilateral coercive measures imposed by the United States, have significantly affected children's access to healthcare, education, and general welfare. This reality has been documented in the reports of Alena Douhan, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures.

During the twelve-day conflict in June-July 2025, in which Israel, supported by the United States—launched attacks against Iran, children were among the casualties from the very first hours. In one strike on the Tajrish area in northern Tehran, 35 women and children were reported among the dead. Educational institutions, including the Ranginkaman kindergarten and several schools, also sustained damage.

According to official statistics released by Iran's Ministry of Health on March 22, 2026, 201 children have been killed and 1,801 injured, with numbers continuing to rise. These figures alone demonstrate the scale of the catastrophe; yet what makes them even more devastating is that they represent a vital segment of the nation's human capital, children who should have embodied Iran's future, not the scars of war.

Legal protections ignored

From a legal standpoint, there is little ambiguity. Over the past century, the international community has developed a relatively comprehensive framework of norms aimed at protecting children in armed conflict, although in practice these norms have often proven weak against political realities.

The foundation was laid with the 1924 Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child. In 1946, UNICEF was established as an emergency fund to assist war-affected children in Europe. The 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child further expanded these protections. The four Geneva Conventions of 1949, particularly the Fourth Convention on the protection of civilians, and



Textbooks are pictured at a memorial event in Tehran on April 7, 2026, to honor students killed in a missile strike on a Minab elementary school. **IRNA**

the 1977 Additional Protocols (notably Article 77 of Protocol I and Article 4 of Protocol II) provide special safeguards for children in both international and non-international armed conflicts.

Article 38 of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasizes respect for humanitarian law in relation to children, while the 2000 Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict establishes eighteen as the minimum age for direct participation in hostilities.

In the 1990s, the United Nations appointed a Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. The landmark report by Graça Machel, 'The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children' (1996), provided a strong foundation for subsequent initiatives. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1261 (1999) inaugurated a series of thematic resolutions, followed by Resolutions 1314 (2000), 1379 (2001), 1460 (2003), 1539 (2004), and 1612 (2005), which institutionalized monitoring and reporting mechanisms. The document 'A World Fit for Children' (2002), adopted at a Special Session of the General Assembly, further advanced this agenda.

At the level of international criminal law, the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, particularly Articles 7 and 8, explicitly defines attacks against civilians, educational institutions, hospitals, and humanitarian personnel, acts reflected in the Minab incident, as war crimes and crimes against humanity. Thus, speaking of the children killed at Minab is not merely recounting a human

tragedy; it is invoking the violation of a clearly established normative structure in international law, a structure built over a century, yet shattered in a single attack by powerful actors acting with apparent impunity.

Erosion of international norms

The post-World War II international system was built upon two pillars: The United Nations Charter as the legal framework prohibiting the use of force, and a multilateral system for maintaining international peace and security. Within this framework, the "humanization of international law" was viewed as a progressive trajectory. However, this evolution rested on an implicit assumption that major powers, particularly permanent members of the Security Council, would at least outwardly adhere to these norms.

What we are witnessing today is the gradual erosion of that assumption. The international order is shifting from a rule-based multilateral system toward a power-driven, transactional, and selective arrangement. In this emerging order, the enforcement of international law is less determined

by truth and justice than by power balances, political expediency, and selective application. Diplomacy itself has, in many instances, devolved from a principle-based institution into an arena of coercion, bargaining, and pressure.

Evidence of this transformation is particularly visible in the context of children in armed conflict. The United States remains the only UN member state that has not ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In 2025, it imposed sanctions on officials of the International Criminal Court, later expanded to deter investigations that conflicted with its interests. At the same time, the global humanitarian funding crisis has reached unprecedented levels; in August 2025, the United Nations reported that less than 17 percent of required funding for humanitarian programs, most of whose beneficiaries are women and children, had been secured.

Lessons for future

Throughout the history of international law, many norms now considered fundamental, from the prohibition of slavery to the ban on chemical weapons, from the definition of crimes against humanity to the establishment of international criminal tribunals, were once regarded as distant aspirations. What ultimately advanced these developments was not solely the will of states, but the pressure of public opinion, the persistence of civil society, and the unwavering voice of global conscience.

Chinese refineries seek immediate Iranian oil cargoes after price drop

Economy Desk

Three trade sources said some Chinese independent refineries that have received new import quotas from Beijing have been seeking immediate crude oil cargoes from Iran following a price drop on Wednesday.

Following Iran and the United States agreeing to a two-week ceasefire, Brent crude oil fell below \$100 per barrel on Wednesday, standing at its lowest level since March 11.

Chinese independent refineries, known as "teapots," had been largely sidelined since the US-Israeli aggression against Iran began on February 28, driving up global oil prices, while Washington temporarily lifted sanctions on Russian and Iranian crude at sea, eliminating discounts for these cargoes.

Tensions had been heightened following the joint US-Israeli aggression on Iran. While major shipping companies suspended operations in the region, tankers linked to Iran continued to transit the strategic waterway.

The country is now selling nearly twice – between 2.4 and 2.8 million barrels of oil per day – as much oil as



before February 28. With the Strait of Hormuz largely closed, last week, the Economist wrote that 15 percent of world oil cannot reach its customers. All Persian Gulf countries reduced their production and were seeing a decline in export revenues, but Iran was an exception. One trader close to Iranian oil trade said on Wednesday, "This morning, with Brent falling to \$90, inquiries have been made." Another trader said although inquiries have been made, few contracts have been signed yet because prices are still significantly higher than pre-war levels.

According to traders, Iranian light oil offers, which before the war were discounted by about \$10 per barrel compared to ICE Brent, are now

at parity or slightly above the benchmark. Also, Bloomberg last week reported that Iranian oil was trading at a price higher than Brent, the global benchmark, for the first time since May 2022. Brent crude traded at \$109 per barrel in last Friday's trading.

Russian oil, thanks to strong demand from Indian refineries, is also about \$8 per barrel higher than previous discounts.

Rising crude costs, coupled with still weak domestic fuel demand, have led independent refineries to plan production cuts for April. However, China's state planning agency last week asked them not to cut refining rates below the two-year average, aiming to maintain domestic fuel supply while state refin-

eries reduce output. Trade sources said maintaining higher rates at current profit margins would lead to significant losses for teapot companies. According to a note published by local consultancy SCI on March 31, the average refining loss for Shandong teapot refineries from March 1 to 27 was 143 yuan (\$20.94) per metric ton. According to Reuters, trade sources and analysts said China issued a new batch of crude oil import quotas of about 55 million metric tons (401.5 million barrels) for independent refineries on Friday to encourage increased refining activity. However, refinery sources said details regarding each refinery's volume and how the quotas would be utilized remain unclear.

Iran, Russia to expand agricultural trade cooperation

Economy Desk

Iran's Minister of Agriculture Gholamreza Noori Qezeljeh said the path of agricultural trade and exchanges between Iran and Russia, as well as the joint cooperation of economic actors, merchants, and the banking and financial sectors of the two countries, will expand.

In a phone conversation with his Russian counterpart Oksana Lut on Wednesday, while reviewing economic developments and agricultural trade caused by the regional war, they discussed strengthening bilateral cooperation and ensuring food security in the region, IRNA reported.

Noori Qezeljeh described the US and Israeli aggression against Iran as a clear violation of international law, adding that Iran, with the support of domestic production of essential goods and development of foreign trade with its northern neighbors, has protected the food security of its citizens.

Iran and the US agreed on Wednesday morning, after 40 days since the US-Israeli military aggression against Iran began on February 28, to stop the fighting for two weeks and start negotiations to end the war.

The Iranian minister of agriculture emphasized the need to strengthen trade and develop the transit of agricultural and livestock products between Iran and Russia during wartime, adding that veterinary and phytosanitary stations have been established between Iran and Russia to remove possible barriers to trade between the two countries. Referring to the development of relations



Gholamreza Noori Qezeljeh
● IRNA

under the comprehensive strategic agreement between Iran and Russia signed in January 2025 at the Kremlin by the presidents of the two countries, he said the process of importing mineral fertilizer from Russia to Iran has been facilitated for use by farmers and producers.

Russia, Iran's committed neighbor

Russian agriculture minister said in this telephone conversation, "Russia, as a committed neighbor and trading partner on this path, will provide whatever assistance is necessary and will stand alongside the Islamic Republic of Iran in ensuring food security."

Lut added that suitable cooperation has been formed between the private sector and merchants of the two countries, and with the support of their government, this process will develop further.

Arts, culture have carried Iran's 'message of innocence'

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's culture minister said artistic outreach has conveyed to the international community the innocence and suffering of the Iranian people in the brutal US-Israeli war on the country.

Abbas Salehi spoke of the ministry's efforts to ensure the voice of Iranians reaches people around the world.

"Our cultural attachés in 60 to 70 countries have been in contact with various institutions and are working toward that goal," he added.

Salehi pointed out that in the past 40 days, people in cities around the world have shown their heartfelt support. "We are seeing that the voice of the Iranian people is being heard through these cultural consultations," he said.

In recent days, several well-known Iranian singers and musicians have voluntarily stood alongside ordinary people at sites that the United States and Israel had announced as potential future targets, aiming to draw global attention to the criminal nature of those threats, some of which were later carried out.

Ali Zand Vakili, a star of Iranian pop-traditional fusion music, performed a piece about "the homeland" on railway tracks in response to the threats. The performance came just hours after reports emerged that some bridges and railway routes, including major national lines, had been damaged following attacks by the United States and Israel.



Ali Ghamsari, a virtuoso Iranian tar player, poses for a photo before performing near the Damavand power plant to voluntarily place himself as a human shield for the essential infrastructure on April 7, 2026. US and Israel had earlier threatened attacking Iran's power plants.
● IRNA

He also wrote: "Threatening our civilization, culture, and sites that are thousands of years old is no longer about belief, taste, viewpoint, religion, or personal choice. This threat is about the destruction of Iran and the Iranian people..." After the threat by US President Donald Trump to bomb Iran's infrastructure in violation of international law, several other singers also responded by symbolically appearing on bridges and at power plant sites across the country.

Ali Ghamsari, an internationally known composer and virtuoso tar player, went to the Damavand power plant, Tehran's main power supplier, with his instrument and voluntarily placed himself as a human shield for the facility.

Later, addressing the Iranian people, Ghamsari wrote: "The God of

Damavand is with you. I am well. I have done something I believe in." Iranian pop star Benyamin Bahadori also recited poetry by Hafez on the Tabiat Bridge.

The attacks have prompted numerous reactions from Iranian artists. Many shared statements and images expressing condemnation of the enemy, sympathy with their fellow citizens, and declarations of patriotism.

Some artists also produced works defending the homeland and addressing the global community, while cultural institutions and centers organized programs aimed at promoting national solidarity.

The attacks, in addition to damaging several cultural and artistic centers, have also damaged or destroyed the homes of some artists.

AI education to expand for students, teachers

Social Desk

Iran's deputy minister of education announced the implementation of a plan designed to teach students in the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth grades basic training in artificial intelligence (AI), while teachers will also become familiar with the applications of AI in education.

Ahmad Mahmoudzadeh made the remarks during an online meeting with principals and founders of non-governmental schools, according to IRNA. Referring to the division of the country into five hubs for implementing the plan, he said training courses have already begun for both public and non-governmental schools in some hubs, including Tehran and Razavi Khorasan, and will later be held in other provinces.

The head of the Organization of Non-Governmental Schools and Centers also announced the training of specialized instructors in this field, noting that around 100 teachers have been trained in each hub.

"After returning to their provinces, they will pass on the specialized training to other teachers and students," Mahmoudzadeh said.

He called on principals and founders of non-governmental schools to facilitate the participation of all students in these



● IRNA

courses and related science competitions, adding that a festival will be held at the end of the process to introduce and honor outstanding students and teachers.

Mahmoudzadeh stressed the need for strict oversight of educational quality in non-governmental schools, saying that academic performance — particularly in grades with final examinations — will be continuously evaluated. "If average scores are low, the issue will be reviewed and decisions will be made by the supervisory council."

The deputy minister expressed hope that with the cooperation of principals, teachers, and founders of non-governmental schools, conditions will be created to improve educational quality and expand modern skills among students.

Referring to the obligations set out in the Seventh Development Plan, he said one of the most important missions

of the education system is to train a skills-oriented workforce aligned with the needs of the labor market and the country's future economy.

Furthermore, since artificial intelligence education for students and teachers has also been identified as one of the key priorities in the Seventh Development Plan, the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the Ministry of Communications and several educational institutions, has placed the implementation of this initiative on its agenda.

He added that the martyred Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei had, in recent years, emphasized expanding skills-based education for the younger generation. "Human capital, he said, is the country's most important asset, and the economic development depends on the scientific and practical capabilities of this human capital," Mahmoudzadeh concluded.