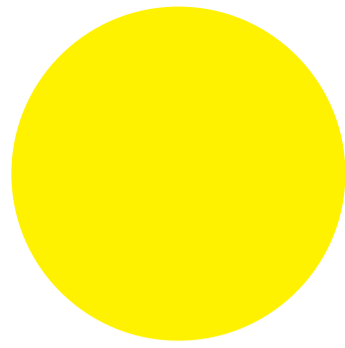


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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (center) greets a participant during a meeting at the Ministry of Science Research and Technology in Tehran on April 19, 2026. [president.ir](#)



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Trump's failure to deliver war gains fuels Iran-US narrative divide

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

During the brief ceasefire that took hold, Iran and the United States set out to bring the war to an end through negotiations. As time passed, however, deep gaps opened up in the narratives put forward by the two sides, leaving observers confused. In an interview with Omid Khazani, an international affairs expert, Iran Daily examines the roots of this divide. He believes the gap is largely due to the US president's attempt to construct a storyline through media hype, but his inability to sell victory narratives.

IRAN DAILY: What explains the deep gap between Iranian and American narratives regarding the course of the negotiations?

KHAZANI: Part of this divergence comes down to [US President Donald] Trump's distinctive personality, which is built around constructing narratives through media hype. He relies on several specific tactics—one being the "madman" approach and another "brinkmanship". Over four to five decades as a businessman, he achieved successes using these

methods. Now, he carries them forward largely through narrative-building, often driven by a handful of tweets.

Any conflict—whether short-term or prolonged—requires an exit plan. This is typically achieved through narrative construction and what can be described as achievement-selling or victory-selling.

In the case of Iran, the United States, and Israel, selling success and constructing achievements is particularly important for Trump, but has become more complex and difficult to sustain, which explains the unusually erratic accounts emerging from Trump regarding Iran. While part of this is deliberate, another part reflects his unhinged state, as he is unable to easily sell these achievements. Trump represents a deep state that, for years, had been able to enter countries militarily and, within a short time, destroy their armies through conventional, symmetrical warfare. However, this marks the first time that a country like the United States has entered a military conflict and failed to defeat the official army of its adversary. As a result, the narrative has become highly disordered. On the Iranian side, narratives are also at times contradictory and unsettled due to the diversity of audience. Selling a comprehensive and broadly accepted notion of success to Iranian society is not an easy task, although it is easier than it is for the US and Israeli officials,

since none of the initial objectives pursued by the US-Israeli axis in entering the war against Iran have been achieved.

Why did the announcement of the re-opening of the Strait of Hormuz trigger mixed reactions within Iran?

The Strait of Hormuz has gained importance for Iranians across all social strata for several reasons, both short-term and long-term.

In the short term, it relates to national pride. For ordinary citizens, the core power base, and the elite alike, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz—following the destruction caused by US and Israeli bombardments—provided a sense of relief and psychological comfort for wounded national pride. Iran closed the strait decisively, and for the first time, the hardships Iranians had endured for decades under sanctions were felt in the farthest corners of the globe.

At the same time, it led many to argue that even if Iran cannot secure compensation from hostile governments at the end of the war, it could offset those losses through tolls collected from the Strait of Hormuz.

In the long term, the issue takes on a strategic dimension. For years, the Strait of Hormuz had been considered as a long-term strategic deterrent—at least on paper—and formed part of Iran's defense doctrine, though it had never been implemented. This time, however, when

it was put into action, both the elite and senior political and security officials recognized it as a powerful deterrent—potentially even a game changer alongside conventional military deterrence. As a result, sensitivity surrounding news related to the Strait of Hormuz increased significantly. This is why narratives—whether from Trump or Iranian officials—are only partially accepted by society, leading to confusion.

What are the most serious structural and political obstacles currently preventing a sustainable agreement between Iran and the United States?

This is a highly complex question, but in brief, the most significant issue between Iran and the United States—regardless of which president takes office—is the powerful Israeli AIPAC lobby in the United States. This lobby is highly capable and influential, employing various methods such as exerting influence over Congress and the Senate, which makes the situation considerably more difficult. Another factor is the presence of Arab lobbies, whose long-term interests are not aligned with Iran. While not as powerful as AIPAC, they still play a role. A further issue is the absence of soft deterrence on Iran's part—meaning the failure to tie US interests, shaped by various lobbies, to Iran's internal economy. For instance, if major American automotive, technology, and energy companies

were to invest in Iran, this could create a form of soft deterrence and help smooth over many political challenges later on. Another challenge is identity-related, particularly the entrenched anti-American sentiment within Iran. Additionally, the US deep state consistently requires an opposing power to advance its interests, enabling it to sustain its hegemony through arms sales and energy exports globally.

Does Islamabad currently possess the capacity and influence necessary to align the positions of the two sides?

Islamabad differs from other mediators in several ways. It maintains good relations with Iran, while there exists a degree of public sympathy toward Iran as a significant portion of the global Shiite population resides in Pakistan. At the same time, individuals in positions of power in Pakistan have good personal relations with Trump. But what makes Pakistan particularly unique is its strong relationship with China, which also plays an important role in this crisis. A country like Pakistan, which maintains good personal ties with Trump, strong relations with China, and solid connections with Iran, can act as a mediator in ways that Turkey—despite being a NATO member—cannot, or Oman cannot due to its limited leverage and lack of necessarily strong ties with Trump personally.

Pezeshkian warns continuation of conflicts serves no one's interest

'Trump in no place to oppose Iran's inalienable nuclear rights'

International Desk

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Sunday that the continuation of conflicts is in no one's interest, stressing that the solution to problems lies in rationality, dialogue, and avoiding further destruction.

Pezeshkian underlined that Iran is not seeking to expand the war in the region, adding that some powers are trying to drag regional countries in conflicts in order to exploit their resources, while the nations of the region must stand against such approaches through unity and solidarity, and strengthen the path of cooperation and cohesion.

The Iranian president made the remarks during a visit to the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology in Tehran.

The aggression against Iran began on February 28, when the United States and Israel launched attacks on the country, assassinating Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

The aggression also included strikes

on military installations, nuclear facilities, schools, hospitals and civilian infrastructure.

Iran's Armed Forces responded with 100 waves of retaliatory strikes under Operation True Promise 4, launching hundreds of ballistic and hypersonic missiles, as well as drones, against American military bases across West Asia and Israeli positions throughout the occupied territories.

Meanwhile, the Iranian president during a visit to the Ministry of Sport and Youth hit out at his American counterpart Donald Trump over his threats, saying he is not in a position to deprive the Iranian nation of its inalienable right to a peaceful nuclear program.

Trump has threatened that the US would secure Iran's enriched uranium "in a much more unfriendly form" if no deal is reached.

"The US president declares that Iran should not use its nuclear rights, but he does not say for what crime? Basically, what position does he have in the world to deprive a nation of its legal rights?" Pezeshkian

asked.

"From the perspective of human principles, every free person, regardless of his religion, faith, race, or ethnicity, should enjoy his inalienable rights," he added.

Pezeshkian slams UN silence

The Iranian chief executive also slammed self-proclaimed human rights organizations and the United Nations for remaining silent on criminal US-Israeli strikes on Iran that assassinated scientists and targeted civilians and residential areas. He further denounced the adversaries' war crimes as a sign of their desperation and failure.

Highlighting Iran's principled approach to regional peace, stability, and security, he stressed that the Islamic Republic is not seeking to spread war and it has not been and will never be the initiator of any conflict.

"We are pacifists and what we are doing is legitimate self-defense," he asserted.

Meanwhile, Pezeshkian appreciated the Iranian Armed Forces for



Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian (R) speaks during a visit to the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology in Tehran on April 19, 2026.

president.ir

remaining steadfast in the face of the illegal US-Israeli aggression and delivering a decisive response to the enemies.

The performance of the Armed Forces in defiance of pressure and

threats has stunned many analysts, he said.

"Despite problems, the country was capable of standing against the great powers that enjoy extensive support. On the contrary, having

failed to achieve their goals, the enemies attacked civilian infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, universities, and public places, in flagrant violation of international law."

Iran watchful of 'enemy's mistake' amid diplomatic efforts: Qalibaf

International Desk

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said Iran's Armed Forces are ready to respond to any mistake by the enemy even while diplomatic efforts are underway to end the aggression against Iran by the US and Israel.

The top lawmaker, who is leading Iranian delegation in negotiations with the US in Pakistan, stressed that Tehran has no trust in its adversaries, warning that Iran's response will be swift to any act of aggression.

In a televised address to the nation on Saturday, he dismissed any suggestion that ongoing negotiations might lead to complacency regarding the national defense.

"It is not the case that we think just because we are negotiating, the Armed Forces are not ready," he said. "Rather, just as the people are in the streets, our armed forces are also ready."

He also said Iran successfully pushed back the enemy despite its superior financial and material resources by applying the asymmetric warfare strategy.

"The enemy had money and resources, but they did not act correctly in terms of design," Qalibaf stated. "They make strategic errors. They miscalculate regarding our people, just as they miscalculate in their own military design."

Strait of Hormuz
Qalibaf also referred



Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf

to the Strait of Hormuz which has been closed by Iran in response to the US-Israeli aggression, saying that he personally warned a US delegation in Pakistan against escalation in the strategic waterway.

Qalibaf said he warned the US delegation that Iranian forces would open fire at US minesweepers if they moved "an inch" from their position in the Strait.

The top Iranian lawmaker also laid out a detailed account of the confrontation between the Iranian naval forces and the US military in the Strait of Hormuz, asserting that the Islamic Republic has full control over the vital waterway and has already pushed the US into a retreat.

He also dismissed the Trump administration's recent move of a "naval blockade" imposed on Iran's ports as "a clumsy decision born of ignorance."

"If the US does not abandon the blockade, traffic in the Strait of Hormuz will certainly be restricted," he said.

Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) said on Saturday that Iran will prevent the conditional and limited opening of the Strait of Hormuz if the US tries to disrupt shipping or impose measures such as the naval blockade.

"Should the enemy attempt to disrupt shipping or impose measures such as a naval blockade, the Islamic Republic of Iran will consider that a violation of the ceasefire and will prevent the conditional and limited opening of the Strait of Hormuz," the SNSC said in a statement on Saturday.

The statement was issued regarding the state of play in negotiations with the US, mediated by Pakistan, to end the ongoing war, which has temporarily been halted after a ceasefire was announced on April 8.

A first round of talks in Islamabad failed to produce an agreement, with Iranian officials blaming the US side for putting forward excessive demands and shifting its position at the negotiating table.

Iran replenishing missile stockpiles faster than before war: IRGC commander

International Desk

A top Iranian military commander said Sunday the country's capacity to replenish missile and drone stockpiles during the two-week ceasefire had outpaced pre-war levels.

The commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Force, General Majid Mousavi, shared a video on social media platform UpScrolled, showing the replacement of the missile and drone stockpiles, Press TV reported.

Accompanying the footage was a message from Mousavi, stating that Iran's "speed in updating and re-loading missile and drone launchers have surpassed even its pre-war pace."

Mousavi said, "We are aware that the enemy is incapable of creating such conditions for themselves during the ceasefire."

Since the ceasefire began on April 11, he said, the United States has had to "to bring in ammunition from the other side of the world in a trickle."

"They have lost this phase of the war as well. They have lost the Strait, they have lost Lebanon, and they have lost the entire region," said the commander.

Mousavi's remarks come as many reports contradict claims that weeks of joint US-Israeli military aggression against Iran has significantly weakened the country's strategic capabilities.

Citing US intelligence assessments, the Wall Street Journal reported last week that Tehran's ability to sustain its missile capability relies on a vast network of reinforced underground storage areas, which have largely shielded mobile launchers from weeks of



FARS

bombing.

The report said Iran still possesses "thousands of medium- and short-range ballistic missiles that could be pulled out of hiding or retrieved from underground sites."

General Mousavi also mentioned the Strait of Hormuz, which the IRGC declared closed again on Saturday due to US violations of a ceasefire. The IRGC reiterated that a continued naval blockade on Iranian ports amounts to piracy.

In a separate post on the social media platform,

Mousavi hailed the military strategy devised by the martyred leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, which has he said paved the way for Iran's triumph over the two-nuclear armed enemies.

The commander said it has been the late Ayatollah Khamenei's "asymmetric warfare strategy, indigenous missile technology, and reliance on young scientists and warriors that have allowed us to stand tall against the world's most powerful devils."

The Iranian army said early this week that if the security of Iran's "ports in the waters of the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea is threatened, no port in the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea will be safe."

Meanwhile, Iran's Armed Forces, which have already shown enormous resilience in the face of 40 days of aggression, vowed to remain vigilant and ready, with fingers on the trigger, to crush any threat with an iron will. Days after the US and Israel launched their military aggression against Iran on February 28, Tehran restricted the Strait of Hormuz to adversaries and their allies as a strategic maneuver.

The biggest-ever disruption at the Persian Gulf waterway, which is a major transit point for about 20 percent of global oil and liquefied natural gas shipments, has fueled inflation and slowed the global economy, with an impact expected to last for months.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Some war-stricken petchem units restart production, official says

Market seen stabilizing as imports rise, exports halt

Economy Desk

Some petrochemical units damaged during the recent US-Israeli war on Iran have returned to production, an Iranian polymer industry official told IRNA on Sunday, adding that emergency measures are expected to stabilize the polymer market.

Saeed Torkaman, chairman of the board of the National Polymer Industries Association of Iran, said several industrial units across the petrochemical value chain — from feedstock to finished products — were hit in the conflict that began in late February.

"Several industrial units had gone out of production, but industry engineers shortened the reconstruction period at an unbelievable pace, and fortunately some lines have returned to operation," he said, IRNA reported.

While no official statistics have yet been released on the extent of damage to industrial facilities, attacks on the pet-



SHANA

rochemical and steel sectors ranked among the most prominent targets of the campaign. "A number of production units are still halted, and this issue

has been raised in specialized meetings," he said. "The government has made several important decisions to manage the situation, including

organizing the import of raw materials." "In this regard, traders — including the trading arms of petrochemical companies —

have been invited to carry out imports to meet short-term market needs so that these products can be offered with reasonable profit margins on the commodity exchange," he said, adding that, "The trading companies of petrochemical complexes have also been required to seriously participate in the import process."

"We need 500,000 tons of imports," Torkaman said.

He also reported a temporary ban on petrochemical exports and heightened oversight of warehouses. "Equivalent to several weeks of supply is available in warehouses for offering on the commodity exchange, and the offering of polymer materials will resume starting this week," he said.

According to Torkaman, industry sources indicate that strict monitoring by the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade on warehouses has closed the path of intermediation and speculation for hoarders, and conditions are moving toward stability.

Gov't plans to ease forex rules for exporters via essential imports



Economy Desk

Iran will offer incentives to traders to import essential goods and allow exporters to settle their foreign currency obligations through barter, government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani said on Sunday, as officials reported resilient freight activity during wartime conditions.

"Bartering export goods with essential goods is considered as fulfilling foreign exchange commitments," IRNA quoted Mohajerani as saying.

Under Iran's rules, exporters are typically required to repatriate foreign currency earnings and register them in the official system. She said exporters can now settle those obligations by importing essential goods instead of returning cash currency.

Essential goods refer to non-cyclical necessities such as food items, hygiene products, medicines and fuel. Bandar Imam Khomeini, one of the country's main entry points for such goods in southern Iran, is currently seeing very limited ship arrivals.

Mohajerani also said the government would intervene in "market management" to prevent "overpricing," despite rising prices "stemming from macroeconomic factors and the consequences of war," aiming to shield citizens from excessive price hikes.

Wartime freight tops 60m tons

Separately on Sunday, a senior transport official said Iran moved 60.2 million tons of goods across its road network over a 48-day period under wartime conditions, maintaining uninterrupted freight operations despite regional tensions.

Mehrdad Hamdollahi, head of the Cargo Transportation Office at Iran's Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization, said the volume was recorded between Feb. 28 — the date of a US-Israeli attack on Iran — and April 18, according to Mehr News Agency.

"The transportation of this volume of goods was achieved by issuing 3.855 million waybills and carrying out trips by the public transportation fleet on the country's transport routes," Hamdollahi said.

"In this period and with the aim of supplying basic goods needed by our compatriots, 3,589 million tons of basic goods and livestock inputs were transported from the country's ports," he added.

"The operation of transporting basic goods was carried out by issuing 153,452 waybills and the continued activity of the country's cargo transportation fleet, which shows a 22% increase compared to the same period last year," he said.

Mashhad resumes international flights as air restrictions lapse



TASNIM

Economy Desk

Iran's Civil Aviation Organization is set to authorize international passenger flights at Mashhad airport in the northeast as of today, as the country continues a phased reopening of its airspace and airports following a closure imposed in late February. The organization said in its third public notice that, following coordination with relevant bodies, travelers can now purchase tickets for international routes to

and from Mashhad airport via reputable websites, IRNA reported.

"Citizens can refer to reputable websites to purchase tickets for international routes to/ from Mashhad airport," the organization said.

The statement also noted that the Civil Aviation Organization has not yet issued any permits for the sale of domestic flight tickets.

Iran on Saturday reopened parts of its airspace and six airports following a security and safety review, after a

closure imposed during the Israeli-American aggression that began on February 28.

The Civil Aviation Organization said in a statement on Saturday that, with approval from relevant authorities and after security and safety assessments by its national civil-military coordination committee (CMC), parts of the country's airspace and several airports were reopened as of 7 a.m. on Saturday in line with a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM).

According to the statement, air routes in the eastern section of Iran's airspace have been reopened for international overflights.

Separately, Maqsood Asadi Samani, secretary of the Association of Iranian Airlines, said six airports — Imam Khomeini, Mehrabad, Mashhad, Birjand, Gorgan and Zahedan — have resumed operations.

Turkish minister: Ankara seeks extension of gas contract with Iran



Alparslan Bayraktar
AFP

Economy Desk

Turkey's Energy Minister Alparslan Bayraktar said that the country wants to extend its natural gas supply contract with Iran, which is set to expire in the coming months. However, he noted that negotiations on the matter have not yet begun due to the ongoing conflict between Iran and the US, which is currently under a 15-day ceasefire ending on Tuesday.

The United States and Israel launched their aggression against Iran on February 28.

The gas agreement, due to expire in July, provides for delivery of 9.6 billion cubic meters of gas a year, but actual flows have often fallen short. Turkey imported 7.6 bcm from Iran

last year, accounting for 13% of total gas imports. Regulator data show the pipeline last hit the contracted volume in 2022, Reuters reported.

"According to our forecast, we might need this gas pipeline or the gas flow from Iran for the security of supply of Turkey. There is no negotiation right now ongoing. I think they are busy with so many other things. But we might sit and discuss a potential extension," Alparslan Bayraktar told reporters on the sidelines of a diplomacy forum in the southern Turkish province of Antalya.

"But we haven't started a negotiation during the current circumstances in the region," Bayraktar said, referring to the Iran war.

Mobarakeh Steel moves to restore pre-war output, meet automaker needs

Economy Desk

Iran's Mobarakeh Steel Company (MSC) is working to restore stable production after parts of its production lines were damaged during the recent war, and most domestic automaker demand can be met with existing capacity, according to discussions between its sales managers and executives from major carmakers.

In specialized meetings held after attacks on parts of Mobarakeh Steel's production lines, sales managers from the company and senior executives

from Iran Khodro and SAIPA reviewed the short-term impact of production disruptions, outlined compensatory plans and discussed practical solutions to ensure continued supply of steel sheets needed by the automotive industry, ILNA reported.

Participants stressed that Mobarakeh Steel, relying on backup capacity, alternative production lines and the operational capabilities of its technical teams, is actively working to return output to stable conditions.

Additional plans have been put in place to manage orders, monitor

supply conditions in real time and respond quickly to urgent needs of downstream industries, aiming to minimize disruptions for customers across the steel value chain.

Expert assessments during the meetings found that most automakers' needs can be met given existing capacity, with no need for imports. However, it was agreed that, if necessary, potential shortages of steel sheets could be covered through imports in cooperation with Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Automotive Sheet Company.

Separately, a spokesperson for Iran's House of Industry, Mining and Trade said in early April that production, including steel output, would continue despite damage to major industrial facilities in American-Zionist attacks, citing the proper distribution of production capacity across the country and the localization of industries.

Mobarakeh Steel in the central province of Isfahan and Khuzestan Steel Company in the southwestern Khuzestan Province were hit multiple times during the war that began on February 28.



AIDA AMER/AXIOS

Cease-fire talks, how war could end

INTERVIEW After the first round of cease-fire negotiations in Pakistan collapsed, the following interview was conducted with two former nuclear negotiators about prospects for ending the ongoing US-Israeli war on Iran, including what another nuclear deal might look like. Robert Malley, a US negotiator for the 2015 nuclear deal (which President Trump withdrew from in his first term), says Trump's "mercurial" behavior makes it difficult to predict his objectives and the course of any future talks. "Iran was in full compliance with the JCPOA" and was blindsided by the US's decision to pull out of the deal, says Hossein Mousavian, who served as spokesperson for Iran's nuclear negotiation team from 2003 to 2005. Now, its leaders "don't know whether the US is really for diplomacy or not."

Why don't we start off with your assessment of what's taken place? It can be right through to this week, the failed negotiations, and before that, the US-Israeli attack on Iran. Why don't we begin with you, Rob Malley?



Robert Malley

MALLEY: Well, first, we can't ignore the fact that this war was unlawful, unjustified, unnecessary. And I think even if we're now going to talk about negotiations, even if the negotiations are to succeed, none of that could let us forget or excuse how we got here. So, I do want to insist on that because, you know, if negotiations succeed, it's going to be too quick for the administration to say, "You see? We were right." But I think the real question now is whether the US and Iran are engaging in these negotiations, trying to find a solution that will meet both their sides' core needs, or whether, in this case, the US takes the attitude that "we won the war because we're stronger, and if you're not accepting the war, then we're going to inflict more pain." That won't work. And it won't work because Iran believes, and with some justification, that it has inflicted pain on the US and that every day that goes by, it's going to inflict more. So, they're not in a position right now where Iran is sort of begging for a deal because it wants to avoid an escalation. They believe, again, rightly or wrongly, that they could sustain the pain longer than the US can.

Let's go to the Iranian ambassador, Hossein Mousavian. Your assessment of what has taken place? Now it seems to be coming down to the nuclear negotiations, around, well, Iran saying they'll do a moratorium for five years and the United States demanding 20. But, overall, the picture?



Hossein Mousavian

MOUSAVIAN: I think Iranians now they're coming to negotiation table with mistrust more

than ever because once the deal was agreed in 2015, Iran was in full compliance, and the US withdrew. The second, there was a nuclear negotiation between Iran and the US in 2025. Negotiation, as the foreign minister of Oman said, had significant progress. Deal was within reach. The US withdrew and attacked Iran. We had negotiation in 2026. Again, as Oman foreign minister said, negotiations had significant progress, deal was within reach. Again, the US attacked. Then we had the latest in Islamabad. They had just one-day negotiation. It was the highest level after the Revolution, after 48 years. And the US side said there was progress. Iranian foreign minister also said we were very close to a final deal. And then immediately the US imposed a sea blockade there. That's why they really don't know whether the US is really for diplomacy or not. If you're talking now about nuclear, first of all, every assessment of all US intelligence establishments since 2007, every year, they have insisted no evidence of weaponization and no evidence of decision of Iranians, even in '25, even in '26 — this is the US security assessment — no decision to go to nuclear and no evidence of weaponization. Every IAEA report since 2003 says there is no evidence of weaponization. Therefore, there was no imminent threat. And I believe it was really illegal war, no doubt. Overwhelming majority of international community, they

have insisted the war was illegal. Now, we are coming to the negotiations. The biggest issue you have heard during the last two years is about Iran 450 kilogram of enriched uranium, 60%. They say Iran can make 10 nuclear bombs if they decide to do. And even you hear from every American officials, they are insisting on this stockpile. But I don't know whether the people know that in 2025 negotiation, Iran said we are ready to dilute all 60% to below 5%. In negotiation during 2026, Iran officially told Americans we are ready to dilute. This was said by the Omani foreign minister in his interview with the Face the Nation officially, that Iran was and is ready to dilute all stockpile to below 5%. Iran accepted to suspend enrichment for some years. Iran accepted to have zero stockpile. Therefore, there is no worry, and there was no worry, about the high-level enriched uranium stockpile. I mean, I really don't understand whether the issue is nuclear or not because we heard from American officials officially, publicly, that the aim was controlling Iranian oil reserve. They said the aim was regime change. If the aim is controlling Iranian oil reserve like Venezuela, if the aim is regime change, using nuclear as pretext, we are not going to have any deal. We need to understand, respecting the rights of Iran, like other members of NPT, for peaceful



to have a distinction between these two.

The negotiators for the Trump administration in the latest round have continued to include Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, two people who would have, some would say, virtually no knowledge of the complexity of negotiations over nuclear enrichment and the development of nuclear bombs. Your assessment of their role in all of this, and also why, in all of this talk about Iran coming under some kind of international control, there is no mention of the fact that there's one power that does have nuclear weapons in the Middle East — Israel — and it is not a party to the NPT?

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“I don't know whether the people know that in 2025 negotiation, Iran said we are ready to dilute all 60% to below 5%. In negotiation during 2026, Iran officially told Americans we are ready to dilute. This was said by the Omani foreign minister in his interview with the Face the Nation officially. Iran accepted to suspend enrichment for some years. Iran accepted to have zero stockpile. Therefore, there is no worry, and there was no worry.” — Hossein Mousavian



Director of US National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard (R) testifies at a House Intelligence Committee hearing on March 26, 2025, that the intelligence community "continues to assess that Iran is not building a nuclear weapon."

LEAH MILLIS/REUTERS

nuclear technology is one issue. Confidence-building measures by Iran to go for transparency measures, suspending enrichment, zero stockpile, just as a confidence-building measures, is another issue. I think we need

MALLEY: No, Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff are not nuclear experts — by the way, nor am I. That's not the issue. The issue is whether they're surrounded by nuclear experts. And everything — all the reports that I've

Omani foreign minister Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi (L), a key mediator in the US-Iran nuclear talks, tells "Face the Nation" moderator on February 27, 2026 — a day before US-Israeli aggression against Iran started — that "a deal actually can be agreed tomorrow."

CBS NEWS

received is that when they negotiated with the Iranians in the past — I don't know what happened in Islamabad, but in the past, they didn't have nuclear experts. And so, there was — and I think this has been well documented, that they misunderstood Iranian positions. They couldn't appreciate what they were actually trying to convey.

And part of it, I think, is because of the oddity of this administration, where so many of the decisions seem to rely and reside in one person, not the most reliable of all people. It's the president of the United States. And he is very mercurial, and he's very unpredictable, and he changes his mind, and he changes his objectives. We don't really know what his objectives are in this conflict. And so, I think what Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner did is they relayed what they heard from the Iranians. They didn't really fully understand them. And then, depending on the president's mood, he varied on whether he was in the mood to accept a negotiated deal or was more eager for confrontation. And my assessment is that, in this case, a bit emboldened by Venezuela, he felt he could not fail at a military endeavor. He was going to win. He was going to bring Iran to knees and then be able to dictate the terms of a settlement. That's not what happened.

When the US attacked and Israel attacked Iran, I thought it was very interesting that the Omani foreign minister, who



was mediating, actually took a plane to Washington because he didn't feel that Kushner and Witkoff were conveying what Iran was agreeing to. And he went on all the US media he could, so that he could get President Trump's attention, particularly on Fox. But I want to go to what he said on Face the Nation. This is Badr bin Hamad Albusaidi. He said Iran had agreed to abandon its nuclear enrichment and stockpiling program. He actually kept repeating in all these interviews — he had a phrase — “This is better than Obama.” You know, someone had trained — it's like they had said to him, “This is what Trump needs to hear,” because that's Trump's main motivating factor, “better than Obama.” You are, Rob Malley, one of the lead negotiators for the JCPOA, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. If you can explain why you — if you think this was better than what you achieved, and why, anyway, President Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu attacked the very next day? And what happened that very next day, the Iranian girls' school in Minab was taken out, it looks like with a US missile, and 175 people, about, died, overwhelmingly primary school girls.

MALLEY: So, I mean, I said it at the same time, either before or after the Omani foreign minister, because based on the reports, and Hossein just said that, Iran was agreeing to suspend enrichment for a period of years. That is beyond anything that either President Obama achieved or President Biden was — could have achieved. I mean, at that time, Iran was not talking about suspending; it was accepting limits. I think those limits were sufficient to contain Iran's nuclear program. But if what President Trump wanted was to be able to say at the end of these negotiations, “I beat President Obama,” I would have granted him that, if it could have spared us a war because it was — you know, it was a truism. Suspension is better than the limited enrichment that Iran had.

Now, again, I want to emphasize that marginal gain between suspension of enrichment or very low enrichment does not justify in any way, does not excuse, an illegal war that has caused the deaths that you mentioned, far more than that, destruction and now disruptions of the world economy, that then hurt the poorest nations



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (3rd-L) shakes hands with the United States Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff while Jared Kushner (3rd-R), another member of the American 2025 negotiating team with Iran, looks on.



first and foremost. And that's, of course, also because of Iran's reaction, but the trigger was the war that was launched by the United States and Israel.

But I think it goes back to the point that I was making earlier. I think the war was launched by President Trump because he felt he could and he felt that he was on a roll after Venezuela, after the attack on Iran a year ago, that he could be the president who finally deals with this issue. He's changed, in his view, the regime in Venezuela. He thought he could change the regime in Iran, and then, next, Cuba, and that he would go down in history as this person. The details didn't matter. And I think he really felt unstoppable. And he felt that the experts who were warning him didn't know what they were talking about; he knew better.

In his gut.

MALLEY: In his gut, whatever gut he has, yes.

Where do we go from here? Especially now that — after Trump announced this blockade of Iranian ports, and yet he's getting no support from the European Union on this. And, of course, China has made it very clear that they are going to continue to expect to be able to get through, have their ships go through the Strait of Hormuz and to trade with Iran. What are the options for the United States? And also, can Iran survive a long-term blockade, economic blockade, by the United States?

MOUSAVIAN: The naval blockade, based on United Nation Resolution 1974, is act of war, is aggression. Therefore, internationally, legally, what the US is doing is a clear aggression or act of war because suffering a 90 million nation, and the fear of famine, hunger against a nation. This is not about just state.

Nevertheless, about Strait of Hormuz, the reality is that this strait was open, free for navigation for 48 years, 47 years. Never there was any problem. Even after the first US-Israeli war on Iran, 2025, Iran did not put any limit on navigation. But when the US and Israel, they attacked for the second

time, in 2026, Iranians, they really felt this is an existential threat. This was really the difference. That's why they tried to use all cards they have. One of them was Strait of Hormuz. Nevertheless, they did not close the strait. They put some limits. There is international regulations that during war, a country which is attacked by another country can put some calculated limits on navigation, not broad.

For the future, if the US is looking for a nuclear deal as what we have been already discussed, and Rob said they already got what they wanted, more than Obama period, more than JCPOA, but even they can have one big more achievement on the nuclear issue because President Trump can offer Iran to go for a multilateral enrichment mechanism in the Persian Gulf.

I and the nuclear scientists at Princeton University, we published multiple articles. The last one was 10 days before 2025 war. We said, rather than national enrichment — because Saudi Arabia also is looking for enrichment. If Saudi gets, Egyptians, they will get. If Egypt get, Turkish will get it. Therefore, we will have many countries with enrichment. Rather than this trend risking nonproliferation in the region, a multilateral enrichment nuclear arrangement in this region would be the best way out, where it would be fully under the control of International Atomic Energy Agency. And even the US, Russia, China, the world powers, they can participate. This would be international, like Urenco enrich-



“All the reports that I've received is that when they negotiated with the Iranians in the past — I don't know what happened in Islamabad, but in the past, they didn't have nuclear experts. And so, there was — and I think this has been well documented, that they misunderstood Iranian positions. They couldn't appreciate what they were actually trying to convey.” — Robbert Malley

ment in Europe, where Germany, Spain, UK, Netherlands, they have multilateral enrichment. Therefore, beyond of what already the nuclear negotiators during President Trump have achieved already, which is more than JCPOA during President Obama, they can have one more big deal on nuclear, which is regional, which will free the whole Persian Gulf from nuclear weapon.

And on the Strait of Hormuz, Iranians, they have not closed it. They say, if there is a deal, if the US will accept not to attack Iran or to end the war, they will open it. Therefore, the US can say, “OK, we will continue negotiations, but we are committed not to attack Iran for the fourth time maybe.” I mean because once the US indirectly cooperated with Saddam attacking Iran, providing material technology for Saddam to use chemical weapons in 1980s. The second war was in 2025. The third war was in 2026. And now the blockade is act of war again in 2026. If the US is really serious for diplomacy, they can achieve diplomacy, but they should promise Iran not to attack Iran again. Then, Iran will open the Hormuz issue. I mean, that would be a good solution.

Israel has been attacking Iran but is not part of the current negotiations. What do you feel has happened between Israel and the Trump administration? Is there a divergence occurring between the two?

MALLEY: So, I think they have different objectives. I mean, first of all, we don't know what President Trump's objectives are, so it's hard to say how they're different or they're similar to Israel's. But I think Israel has been consistent in its actions. What it wants is to weaken its neighbors, whoever they are. I mean, it's happened in Gaza, which they destroyed. The West Bank, we just saw what they're doing there. Lebanon, they've devastated the country. A million people fled the south. They've killed hundreds of people even since the recent cease-fire. And they would like to weaken, fragment Iran as much as possible because they have this view that this is their opportunity to extinguish any threat, real or pretextual, imminent or into the future.

That's not really, I think, President Trump's view. Again, it's hard to define it. But what that means is, Israel would prefer to prolong this war as long as possible. I don't think that that's President Trump's ambition. And I think the day President Trump says it's it, Prime Minister Netanyahu will

not be able to do anything but acquiesce. So, we have to wait for that moment to happen, for the president to tell the Israelis it's over, it's over both in Iran and in Lebanon. I don't think Prime Minister Netanyahu could afford to stand in his way.

We've talked to so many Iranian professors, dissidents. I wanted to ask you about the — my surprise at how many of those, even people who have been on death row in the Evin Prison, have condemned the US-Israeli attack on Iran. They say that this does not accomplish their ends. I'm wondering your thoughts on all of these people who are coming out now and saying they want to be in charge of their own country; they don't want these outside forces because they're destroying Iran.

MOUSAVIAN: I think what Americans, they need to understand is to have a clear distinction between Iranian dissatisfaction with the current governing system in Iran. They have problem with economic inflation, poverty, corruption, I mean, mismanagement, dysfunctionality of the system, no doubt about it. I'm sure majority of Iranians, they want major reforms. They want — their main issue is about economic issue and corruption and mismanagement and dysfunctionality of the system.

Having said that, when they are attacked by the US, or specifically Israel more, the whole nation, they will be united to defend their integrity, independence, identity, especially when they are — they have been said, I mean, by the US president, that he will eradicate the civilization of Iran, when the US is saying Iranians are animal, when they said “bastard,” Iranian “bastards,” I mean such a wording, humiliation, threats, bullying, attacking. I mean, Iranians, we have had about 30,000 Iranians either killed or injured during the two wars, hundreds of millions of damages. Over 100,000 buildings, nonmilitary buildings, have been destroyed. And then it's normal the nation would be united to defend its country.

The full article first appeared on Democracy Now!



A first responder assists an injured boy following a strike that hit a residential building amid the US-Israeli military campaign in Tehran, Iran, on March 28, 2026.

● SAJAD SAFARI/AP



Iranian top-flight to resume action after World Cup, League Organization confirms



● VARZESH3

Sports Desk

Iran's Persian Gulf Pro League will resume after the FIFA World Cup – which will be co-hosted by the United States, Mexico, and Canada from June 11 – the League Organization of the country's Football Federation announced on Saturday. The news brings an end to weeks of speculation over the future of the Iranian league, which has been postponed since February 28, when the United States and Israel initiated a war campaign against Iran. "Taking into account all circumstances regarding the country and clubs, the health and safety of players, as well as the need to prevent potential injuries from a congested schedule, it was decided to suspend the remaining Pro League matches until the conclusion of the national team's games at the FIFA World Cup," the League Organization

said in a statement.

Iran will kick off its World Cup campaign against New Zealand at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California, on June 15, before facing European heavyweight Belgium at the same venue six days later.

The team will then travel to Seattle, Washington, to face Egypt in its final game in Group G at Lumen Field on June 26.

With eight third-placed teams across the 12 groups advancing to the round of 32, Iran will fancy its chances of securing its first-ever knockout spot at the seventh attempt.

Questions still remain as to which Iranian teams will represent the country at next season's continental club competitions, as the national governing body of the sport will have only until May 31 to announce the country's representatives to the Asian Football Confederation. The league champion will be

given a direct berth at the West zone's 12-team table of the AFC Champions League Elite, with the runner-up given the chance to secure the spot through the playoffs, while the domestic Hazfi Cup champion will qualify for the AFC Champions League Two.

Esteghlal leads the Iranian top-flight table with 41 points – two clear of Tractor and Sepahan with eight games remaining. Golgozar Sirjan is fourth with 36 points from 23 matches, while Chadormalou (35) and Persepolis (34) occupy the following spots with a game in hand.

The suspension of the Iranian league will also be a blow to Iran's World Cup preparation, and head coach Amir Qalenei will have to hold several training camps to ensure his domestic players remain in proper condition for the global showpiece.

Khateri wins gold as Iranians bag four medals in int'l wrestling event

Sports Desk

Ahoura Khateri headlined Iran's medal hunt on the second day of action at the Champions international wrestling tournament in Antalya, Türkiye, by grabbing gold in the freestyle event.

A former world and Asian cadet champion and silver medalist in last year's U20 Worlds, Khateri walked away with the top prize in the 61kg weight class thanks to a victory over Ali-Asghar Soltani in an all-Iranian showdown on Saturday.

Elsewhere, Mohammad-Mahdi Mamivand, who had finished emp-

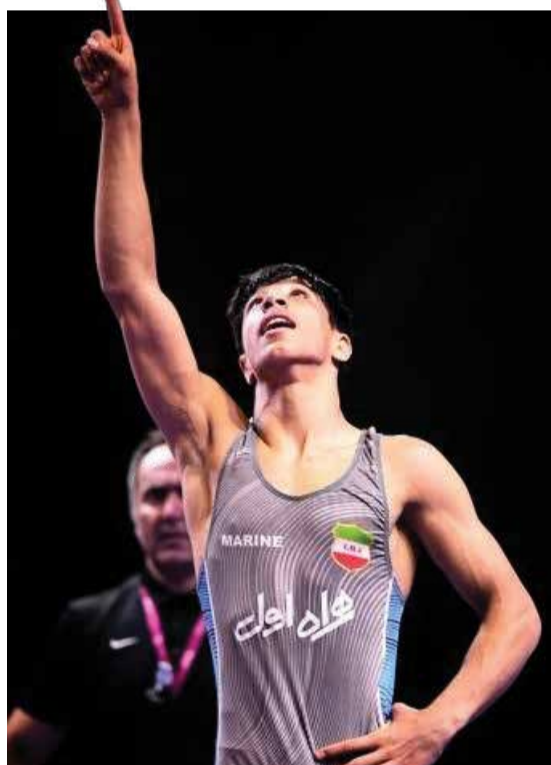
ty-handed in the 79kg class the previous day, settled for silver in the 79kg category, while Amirhossein Khatkhatk finished with a consolation bronze in the 92kg class to take Iran's freestyle tally to five medals, following Danial Tavakkoli's 97kg bronze on Friday.

Unlike the first day of the Greco-Roman contests, Iranians missed out on the podium in their respective events, as Amirreza Naqibi (60kg) as well as 72kg contestants Mohammad Kazemi and Ahmadreza Mohammadian crashed out in the early stages, while Mohammad-Mahdi Derakhshan suffered defeat in the

third-place bout of the 87kg division.

Reigning world cadet champion Amir Sam Mohammadi had claimed the Greco-Roman 97kg gold on Friday, while Mohammadreza Gholami took the silver in the 67kg class, with Alireza Amiri (55kg) and former world under-17 gold medalist Amir-Mahdi Saeidi-Nava (77kg) adding a pair of bronze medals.

The three-day tournament featured under-20 wrestlers from global powerhouses of the sport, including Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Türkiye, Kyrgyzstan, and Georgia.



Ahoura Khateri won the freestyle 61kg gold medal at the Champions international wrestling tournament in Antalya, Türkiye. ● UWW

AFC Champions League Elite: Ezzatollahi on target to help Shabab Al Ahli into last four

Sports Desk

AFC Champions League Elite: Ezzatollahi on target to help Shabab Al Ahli into last four Iranian midfielder Saeid Ezzatollahi was on the scoresheet to help Emirati club Shabab Al Ahli defeat Thai champion Buriram United 3-2 in the AFC Champions League Elite quarterfinals in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on Saturday. The Iranian international headed home from close range to double his team's lead four minutes into the second half, after Peter Zulj's 13th-minute own goal had put Shabab Al Ahli in front at the Prince Abdullah al-Faisal Stadium.

the ensuing spot-kick past Hamad Al Meqbali.

Austrian midfielder Zulj found redemption when he waltzed his way to the edge of the box before placing the ball in the bottom corner for the Buriram equalizer.

Shabab Al Ahli, however, had the last laugh as Brazilian defender Renan Victor scored the winner in the third minute of extra time to set up a last-four date against Japanese club Machida Zelvia on Tuesday.

Australian striker Tete Yengi was on target on the half-hour mark to lead the J1 League outfit to a 1-0 win over Saudi Pro League champion Al Ittihad

Basketball league set to be 'declared null and void'

Sports Desk

The Iranian Basketball Super League is likely to be "declared null and void without a champion" due to the regional situation and national team commitments, the head of the federation's League Organization has announced. Speaking to IRNA on Monday, Meysam Alipour said that the sport's national governing body held a meeting with representatives of the top-flight clubs, deciding "to cancel the remainder of the league season until the regional situation returns to normal."

All league games have been called off since the outbreak of a military conflict between Iran and a U.S.-Israeli coalition on February 28.

Reigning champion Shahr-dari tops the 11-team

table of the regular season after 19 rounds of matches – level on 35 points and 16 wins with Esteghlal and Kaleh.

"If this decision is finalized, we will not have a

champion, and the league will be declared null and void under the current circumstances," Alipour said. "We do not have the time to give teams an opportunity to get back into

match shape."

The official added that Iran must soon announce its representatives for the West Asia Super League, making a swift resolution necessary.

Asked about the possibility that top teams in the table might demand the league continue to determine Iran's representatives for West Asian competition, Alipour said those clubs would need adequate time to train and prepare.

"With the national team camps for the World Cup Asian qualifiers and the Asian Games looming, we do not have the time to allocate both training periods and league matches," he explained. "Ending the league seems to be the best decision."

Sitting second to Jordan in Group C, Iran is set to play in the third window of World Cup qualifiers in July, with a postponed game against Syria from the previous window likely to be rescheduled for May or June.



● ALI SHARIFZADEH/IRNA



This was Ezzatollahi's second goal in as many games in the knockout stage of the Asian elite clubs' competition this season, following his second-half strike in a 3-0 victory over Iranian top-flight champion Tractor in the round of 16 last Tuesday.

Buriram United showed fighting spirit to restore parity within six minutes.

Ezzatollahi gave Buriram a lifeline in the 64th minute when the midfielder used his hand to block a Supachai Chaided header, with Guilherme Bissoli easily placing

on Friday. The other semifinal contest will see Japan's Vissel Kobe and defending champion Al Ahli Saudi go head-to-head on Sunday in Jeddah. The final showpiece will be staged at the King Abdullah Sports City Stadium on Saturday.

22,750 valuable historical sites identified across Isfahan



Mesr village
farsnews.ir



Chehel Sotoun Palace
ISNA

Iranica Desk

The Director General of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization of Isfahan Province announced that 22,750 valuable historical sites have been identified across the province, with many of these structures needing to be registered on both national and global heritage lists.

Amir Karamzadeh added that numerous artifacts and monuments should be included on Iran's National Heritage List, while several others possess outstanding universal value worthy of UNESCO World Heritage status. "All these files are being pursued, and the process of document preparation continues," he stated, IRNA wrote. Karamzadeh also reported on efforts to pursue world heritage registration for Mesr village, the be-

ginning of restoration projects for repurposed historical buildings, and the hosting of the country's first special session on tourism and handicrafts in Isfahan.

"According to the indicators outlined for us in the Seventh Development Plan, we have made significant progress in registering historical monuments," he said. "A considerable number of heritage structures requiring repurposing for restoration have been revived by the private sector and municipalities, with the Isfahan Cultural Heritage Department playing a strong supporting role in this process."

The official cited an old mill in Najafabad and traditional oil-extraction buildings as examples of sites with potential for World Heritage listing.

Karamzadeh identified the world heritage registration of Mesr vil-

lage as one of the department's most important priorities. "It is one of the most prominent tourist villages in the province," he explained.

"Its dossier has been submitted for the Best Tourism Villages of the world, and thanks to substantial funding secured by the governor, village council, local governor's office, and community resources, we are finalizing its world heritage dossier."

Referring to recent challenges affecting the tourism sector, Karamzadeh noted that despite difficulties arising from wartime conditions and reduced travel, a dedicated meeting was held with the provincial governor to address tourism and handicraft issues. "Obstacles were reviewed, and decisions were made to rectify them," he said.

He emphasized the interconnect-

ed nature of cultural heritage, handicrafts, and tourism.

"These three sectors complement each other. When tourists arrive, historical monuments are restored and preserved, and handicrafts thrive. They exist within a single production and service chain and derive meaning together," he stated.

Karamzadeh also disclosed that a UNESCO regional conference for the Eastern Middle East was scheduled to take place in Isfahan. "Although the proposal for this event was submitted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, it was postponed due to wartime conditions and the crisis imposed upon us," he said.

The official highlighted Isfahan's pivotal role in global events, stating, "This conference is a valuable opportunity to showcase

the province's cultural heritage capabilities and unparalleled historical assets."

He confirmed that from technical coordination and dossier preparation to logistical assessments and urban arrangements, all sectors are ready, with every stage completed in cooperation with responsible agencies.

Stressing that Isfahan has always been at the forefront of cultural diplomacy and hosting international events, Karamzadeh asserted, "This conference can be a turning point in introducing the province's heritage, handicrafts, and tourism potential, and we have dedicated all our resources to ensuring its success."

During attacks and bombings on March 8, 2025, in Pasdaran Street near Naqsh-e Jahan Square, tiles on the northern and western ivans of the Abbasi Jaame (Grand)

Mosque were dislodged in several areas. The mosque is part of the UNESCO-listed Naqsh-e Jahan Square complex, which sustained damage from the blast waves of enemy attacks.

Subsequent bombings near the Isfahan General Governorate Office — located within the Safavid Dolatkhaneh, which is part of Isfahan's historical-cultural axis and listed on the National Heritage List — caused extensive damage to these memorials in the museum city of Isfahan. The attacks affected the buffer zone (Grade 2) of Naqsh-e Jahan Square and the immediate buffer zone (Grade 1) of the Chehel Sotoun Palace.

According to Isfahan's Cultural Heritage Department officials, 28 historical monuments in the region were damaged during the bombings by the American-Israeli coalition.

Echoes of faith in bricks, tiles of mosques in Yazd

Iranica Desk

The old mosques of Yazd Province are among the most fascinating heritage sites left behind by past generations. In addition to their religious and devotional significance, they showcase the distinctive culture and unique architecture of the tasteful and art-loving people of Yazd.

In this region, there are numerous mosques that are historically, artistically, and architecturally important. These places are divided into two types: neighborhood mosques and grand mosques (Jaame). The first type is simple and unadorned, consisting of a dome chamber, a courtyard, a winter hall (Shabestan), and a heated room (Garmkhaneh) for the cold months.

The number of local neighborhood mosques is large, the most important of which include Koushk-e No, Tall, Posht-e Bagh, Sabat, Rig, Bayagh Khan, Zavieh, and Sheikh Dad, according to IRNA.

The Amir Chakhmaq Mosque in Yazd is another structure located within a historical complex of the same name. It was built in 1437 CE. This mosque was constructed by Amir Jalal al-Din Chakhmaq, one of the commanders of Shah Rukh of the Timurid dynasty and the governor of Yazd, in collaboration with his wife, Fatemeh Khatun.

In the mosque's Kriyas (a semi-open, vaulted space that opens onto the square), a stone has been installed on which the text of a Vaqf (endowment) document is inscribed in the Naskh



Amir Chakhmaq Mosque
wikipedia.org

script. The presence of delicate meshwork made of mosaic tiles in the windows on both sides, the northern corridor, and part of the ivan's façade has given the building a special and remarkable beauty.

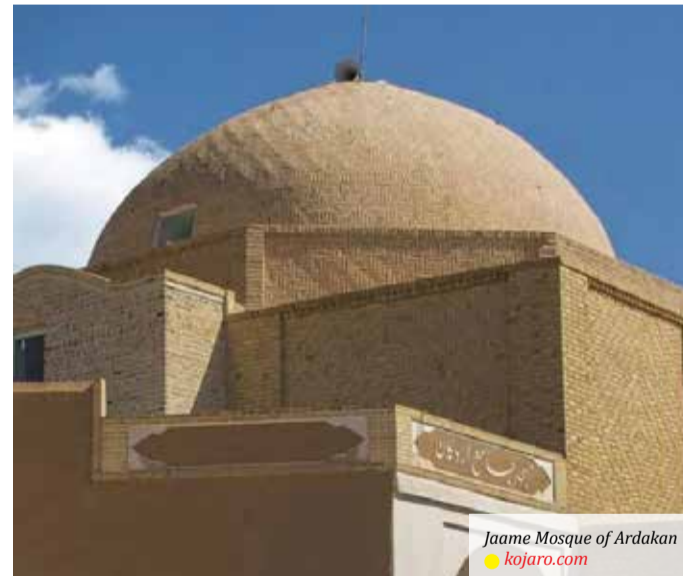
The outer surface of the dome and the inscription band surrounding it are decorated in the Kufic script. The mihrab (prayer niche) of the main ivan is also adorned with mosaic tiles and a muqarnas (stalactite vault) archway. In the center of this mihrab, a very finely carved white marble stone measuring 3.38 by 1.15 meters has been installed.

In terms of rank and beauty, this mosque is second only to the Jaame Mosque of Yazd. It has also been called the "New Jaame Mosque" (Jaame-e No).

Another old and famous mosque of Yazd that features distinctively Islamic architecture is the Molla Esmail Mosque, where the Friday prayers of the city of Yazd are held.

This structure was built by Molla Esmail Aqda'i, a renowned scholar of the 19th century CE (13th century AH). It consists of a vast ivan with a span of 15.75 meters, a Shabestan (prayer hall) with 31 columns, an excellent dome with brickwork patterns and inscriptions on the doorways, all integrated with tiles and inscribed stone. On its entrance portal, there are inscriptions in the Nasta'liq script and various stone tablets. Ayatollah Sadoughi, the third martyr of the prayer niche (mihrab), was martyred in this place. Every year, mourning rituals for Imam Hussein (PBUH) are held here with great solemnity and splendor.

The Jaame Mosque of Abarkuh is another old mosque in Yazd Province, located in the city of Abarkuh, 120 kilometers from the provincial capital, on the Yazd-Shiraz road. This structure consists of four ivans arranged directly around its courtyard, along with a number of corridors, a Shabestan, and rooms.



Jaame Mosque of Ardakan
kojaro.com

This mosque dates back to the Mongol era, but its older parts — especially the domed Shabestan built between the southern and eastern ivans — and part of its main structure, date back to before this period. During the late reign of Sultan Abu Sa'id, many efforts were made to beautify it. Another large and old mosque in the city of Yazd is the Hazireh. The previous structure on this site was a shrine (resting place) for the worship and lodging of the poor. It was built in 1440 CE with the funding of Haj Shams al-Din Meybodi.

The Rig Mosque of Yazd is also a relic from the Mongol and Timurid eras. It was built by Amir Mo'in al-Din Ashraf in the 14th century CE (8th century AH). He purchased this structure, which

was nothing but ruins, and built a porch (Soffeh), a dome, and a congregational hall (Jama'at Khaneh). He also ran a stream of water through it and endowed shops adjacent to it.

This structure, whose entrance and dome were later repaired and restored by Khajeh Tavakol Qazvini, features a brick façade, platforms on the sides, a high dome, a short clay minaret, and a white marble stone inside the mihrab. Above the mihrab, there was a windcatcher (Badgir), which has now been destroyed. Its light wells are generally octagonal in shape.

The Shah Tahmasb Mosque was built in the 16th century CE (10th century AH) by Begum, the daughter of Shah Tahmasb of the Safavid dynasty, and her husband Noor

al-Din Mir Miran. Two white marble stones on the columns of its mihrab are among the most prominent remaining features of this mosque.

The Jaame Mosque of Ardakan, also from the 16th century CE, has eight metal pieces engraved with the names "Allah" and "Muhammad" in the Kufic script on the left side of its entrance portal. The Zilou (traditional Persian woven rugs) inside it date back to 1629 CE (1038 AH).

The Jaame Mosque of Bafq is another old mosque in the province, featuring a relatively large courtyard and ivan. An interesting point about its architectural style is that its original construction belongs to the Safavid era, while its decorations date from the Qajar period. Four-hundred-year-old trees stand tall in its courtyard. In front of the mosque, there is also a school where students of religious sciences study. The Shah Vali Mosque in the city of Taft, built in the 14th century CE (8th century AH), has a winter hall (Garmkhaneh) and a summer section. Its interesting features include a marble mihrab stone measuring 125 by 64cm, on which a lantern design, floral and bush carvings, and sacred phrases in the Naskh script are engraved.

The Jaame mosques of Firuzabad, Mehriz, and Rik-e Ashkezar are also among the old mosques of Yazd Province. Each of these possesses a distinct architectural style from past eras, reflecting the rich historical and cultural depth of the region.

Iran looks to rural tourism to unlock jobs, revive village culture

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri on Sunday called on the banking sector to step up financing for rural tourism, framing the segment as a high-yield engine for jobs, foreign exchange earnings and local revival. Addressing senior bank executives in Tehran, Salehi-Amiri set out a strategy to channel travel flows towards villages, arguing that demand has tilted decisively towards authentic, community-based experiences that Iran's rural areas can supply at scale, IRNA reported. He said targeted redirection of visitors would catalyze a structural shift in village economies,

underpin income diversification, and help stabilize populations through reverse migration. The minister pointed to a discernible increase in young travelers opting for eco-lodges, describing it as a deeper attitudinal shift towards nature, cultural roots and "real-life" living. That trend, he said, opens a window to reposition villages as competitive tourism hubs, while reviving local identities and ecosystems. He characterized tourism as a capital-efficient industry with strong multiplier effects, noting it generates hard-currency inflows without merchandise exports as inbound visitors spend across a broad services chain. The sector, he added, can ac-



Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri (1st L) attends a meeting with senior bank executives in Tehran on April 19, 2026, to discuss stepping up financing for rural tourism.

● dolat.ir

tivate dozens of linked occupations, from handicrafts and transport to agriculture, reinforcing a durable value chain. Salehi-Amiri urged lenders to deploy innovative instruments and set up specialized working groups to de-risk projects and crowd in private capital. Stronger inter-agency coordination is required, he said, to remove bottlenecks and accelerate project pipelines, with banks playing a



pivotal role in credit allocation and investment facilitation. Salehi-Amiri said disciplined

planning and national synergy could elevate tourism into a pillar of Iran's non-oil economy,

arguing the sector is not optional but essential to balanced, sustainable growth.

Minab schoolgirls remembered at theatrical performances

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian cultural institutions and theater groups staged a nationwide program of street performances on Sunday April 19, coinciding with National Girls' Day, in a coordinated tribute to schoolgirls from Minab.

The event, titled 'To Which Sin' and presented under the banner 'In Memory of the Angels' Festival,' was organized by the Soureh Omid institute in cooperation with the Soreh Performing Arts Centre and related cultural offices, bringing together more than 200 female performers across the country, IRNA reported. In Iran, the birth anniversary of Lady Fatima Masoumah, the sister of Imam Reza (PBUH), the eighth Shia Imam, marks the National Girls' Day (April 19).

The productions were simultaneously performed in public urban spaces, with student participants appearing in traditional prayer attire as part of a symbolic artistic staging. Works including "Minab Angels", "Minab Girls" and the central piece "To Which Sin"



were presented in different provinces, showing a unified national program of youth theater and remembrance. The performances formed part of the wider 'Empathetic Iran' campaign, launched on April 3 across 21 provinces to commemorate schoolgirls killed in Minab. Over a ten-day period, more than 25 theater productions were staged by selected groups in cities nationwide, aligning cultural activity with public mourning and solidarity initiatives. Separately, Japanese-Danish poet Erika Hesketh drew international attention after

publishing a poem following the bombing of the Shajareh Tayebbeh school in Minab. The work, circulated online, depicts scenes of collective grief through the lens of ordinary professions confronted with loss, and has been widely shared across social media platforms. Iran's Embassy in Germany also marked the day in Iran, posting a commemorative message and image on social media in remembrance of the Minab schoolgirls, marking the diplomatic outreach surrounding the cultural observance.

War damage spreads across Iran heritage sites with 149 affected

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's cultural heritage authorities said on Saturday that recent strikes by the United States and Israel have damaged 149 historical sites across 18 provinces, with emergency restoration already under way. Alireza Izadi, head of the historical registration office at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, said the figure remains provisional and could rise as detailed field assessments continue, IRNA reported. He noted that the full extent of damage often emerges only af-

ter conservation teams remove compromised layers, particularly in intricate elements such as mirrorwork, plaster ornamentation and concealed structural components. Officials said 59 museums and seven nationally registered historical districts were among those affected, with several prominent complexes sustaining structural damage. The Golestan Palace, a UNESCO-listed landmark in the capital, was among the sites drawing heightened public attention due to its symbolic status. Izadi said the ministry was pursuing a uniform preservation policy, placing all registered sites

on an equal footing despite the visibility of flagship monuments. He added that the minister had instructed teams to press ahead with emergency stabilization and restoration without waiting for full budget allocations, deploying in-house specialists and technical capacity to expedite works. He stressed the complexity of restoring heritage assets, saying each site requires tailored expertise spanning traditional artisanship and structural engineering. Authorities are seeking additional funding from the national planning body to accelerate the recovery process as the scale of damage becomes clearer.

Iran proposes Geneva Conventions update to regulate AI in warfare

Social Desk

Iran's Red Crescent chief -Hossein Kolivand said in Tehran that the organization has formally proposed an annex to the Geneva Conventions to regulate the use of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies in modern and hybrid warfare, during talks with a senior International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies official. Kolivand made the remarks in a meeting with IFRC Deputy Secretary General Xavier Castellanos and his delegation, hosted in Tehran, where he outlined Iran's initiative to update international humanitarian law to address au-

tonomous targeting systems, cyber warfare and algorithm-driven military decision-making, IRNA reported. He said the proposed addendum seeks to establish binding legal and ethical safeguards as existing frameworks are no longer sufficient to manage rapidly evolving battlefield technologies. Unregulated use of AI, he warned, could intensify civilian harm and produce unprecedented humanitarian consequences. Kolivand said Castellanos welcomed the proposal as timely and forward-looking, adding that it would be formally reviewed within the federation's institutional channels and considered for future

agenda setting. The Iranian official also highlighted what he described as the growing policy-making role of the national society beyond operational relief, positioning it as an actor in shaping global humanitarian norms. He stressed that the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement must reinforce its core principles of neutrality, independence and humanity, while taking a clearer stance on violations of international humanitarian law. Kolivand said Iran stands ready to contribute to both field operations and the redesign of global humanitarian frameworks amid increasingly complex conflict environments.

Notice of tender for export sale No. Z/1405/02
Golgohar Mining and Industrial Company

Hereby Golgohar Mining & Industrial Co. announces selling and export 70,000 metric tons of Pellet (%Fe:65.50) on basis of F.O.B at Barco Jetty Bandar Abbas - Iran. Interested bidders should find tender documents at Golgohar website: www.geg.ir. All bids on conformity to tender instructions must be submitted no later than 09:00 A.M. on 28. Apr.2026 to Golgohar complex in Sirjan (50 km in shiraz road). Bidders are invited to the transactions commission department of the seller with an introduction letter of interested buyer and personal identification of the representative. Tender results shall be announced at 09:00 A.M. on 28. Apr.2026 at the office of the Seller.

Analysis %		
%Fe	65.50	Min
%FeO	1.0	Ave
%P	0.04	Max
%S	0.01	Max
%SiO2	3.5	Max
%Al2O3	0.7	Max
%CaO	0.9	Max
%MgO	2.5	Max
CCS (kg/p)	Ave 250	
8-16 mm%	Min 90	
-6 mm%	Ave 5	
A.I%	Max 3.5	
T.I%	Min 95	
Prosity%	19-24	
Reducibility%	Min 90	

GOLGOHAR MINING & INDUSTRIAL CO.

Notice of tender for export sale No. Z/1405/01
Golgohar Mining and Industrial Company

Hereby Golgohar Mining & Industrial Co. announces selling and export 70,000 metric tons of Iron Ore Concentrate (%Fe:66.5 ave) on basis of F.O.B at Rajaei Jetty Bandar Abbas - Iran. Interested bidders should find tender documents at Golgohar website: www.geg.ir. All bids on conformity to tender instructions must be submitted no later than 09:00 A.M. on 28. Apr.2026 to Golgohar complex in sirjan (50 km in shiraz road). Bidders are invited to the transactions commission department of the seller with an introduction letter of interested buyer and personal identification of the representative. Tender results shall be announced at 09:00 A.M. on 28. Apr.2026 at the office of the Seller.

Analysis %		
%Fe Ave	66.5	
%FeO	Min 24	Max 28
%P Max	0.04	
%S Ave	1.0	
%SiO2 Max	3.0	
%Al2O3 Max	0.7	
%CaO Max	0.9	
%MgO Max	2.5	
%Moisture Max	5.0	
Size ave	80%<0.48 mm	

GOLGOHAR MINING & INDUSTRIAL CO.