

Gov't ready to use all capacities to strengthen Armed Forces: *President*



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (r) meets with Army Chief Commander Major General Amir Hatami (c) in Tehran on May 21, 2026.
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National Desk
Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said that his administration will use "all available capacities" to strengthen the

country's Armed Forces amid threats of a renewed war on Iran by the United States and the Israeli regime. Pezeshkian praised the bravery, sacrifice, and powerful perfor-

mance of Iran's Armed Forces — particularly the "proud Army" — in confronting the unprovoked war of aggression waged by a US-Israeli military coalition against the Islamic

Republic on February 28. He made the remarks in a meeting with Commander-in-Chief of the Iranian Army Major General Amir Hatami on Thursday. Emphasizing the importance of national unity and military readiness amid regional tensions, Pezeshkian also commended the Armed Forces for their "decisive, intelligent, and deterrent responses" to hostile actions by enemies. "The Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, especially the faithful, popular, and revolutionary Army, demonstrated the country's defensive authority during the recent developments and threats through high operational readiness, intelligence

superiority, command cohesion, and effective combat capability, and did not allow the enemies to achieve their sinister objectives against the Iranian nation," he said.

Pezeshkian also described the role of the Army in ensuring national security, safeguarding the country's territorial integrity, and boosting defensive deterrence as "decisive and strategic."

The president stressed the necessity of continuously strengthening the country's defense capabilities and improving the combat readiness of the Armed Forces.

The government, he said, "stands alongside the Armed Forces with all its capacities and will support strategic programs aimed at enhancing defense power, logistical backing, modernization of equipment, strengthening operational infrastructure, and increasing the

country's deterrence capability." Pezeshkian further underscored the importance of coordination between executive bodies and the Armed Forces under the region's sensitive conditions.

"Today, national cohesion, defensive preparedness, and preserving the authority of the armed forces are the most important pillars supporting the country's security, stability, and calm in the face of enemy threats and hybrid warfare."

In the beginning of the meeting, General Hatami presented a report on the latest operational situation, defense measures, and missions of the Army in confronting enemy aggression and hostile movements.

Hatami also explained parts of the operations and responses carried out against aggressors during the recent war, emphasizing the full preparedness of various Army units across different fields.

Pakistan's army chief in Tehran to mediate Iran-US talks Qatari negotiating team reportedly visits Iran

International Desk
Diplomatic efforts to narrow the gap between Tehran and Washington in a bid to end the US-Israeli war on Iran gained momentum on Friday as Pakistani and Qatari officials reportedly arrived in Iran to help the conclusion of a peace deal between the two countries. According to AFP, Pakistan Field Marshal Asim Munir departed Friday for an official visit to Tehran where he will have meetings with Iranian officials. Meanwhile, a Qatari negotiating team arrived in Tehran on Friday in coordination with the US to try to help secure a deal to end the war with Iran and resolve outstanding issues, a source with knowledge of the matter told Reuters on Friday. Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also held another round of talks with Pakistan's Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi who has been in Tehran since several days ago to discuss proposals exchanged between Tehran and Washington two days after Iran received the latest US message.

'Good signs' in talks
US Secretary of State Marco Rubio told reporters on Thursday there had been "some good signs" in the talks, but there could be no solution if Tehran enforced a tolling system in the Strait of Hormuz, which it effectively closed to most shipping after the war began on February 28. "There's some good signs," Rubio said.

"I don't want to be overly optimistic ... So, let's see what happens over the next few days." The war has wreaked havoc on the global economy, with the surge in oil prices stoking fears of rampant inflation. About a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas shipments travelled through the Strait of Hormuz before the war. Also on Thursday, US President Donald Trump claimed the US would eventually recover Iran's stockpile of highly enriched uranium. "We will get it. We don't need it, we don't want it. We'll probably destroy it after we get it, but we're not going to let them have it," Trump told reporters at the White House on Thursday. The US president also railed against Tehran's intentions to charge fees on ships using the strait. "We want it open, we want it free. We don't want tolls," he said. "It's an international waterway."

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei said the US could not force Iran into surrender through its threats, arguing that Washington's approach had made negotiations increasingly difficult.

'Unconditional surrender of Iran'
Speaking in an interview with VICE published on YouTube on Thursday night, Baqaei said America's "deep-rooted arrogance" and insistence on the "unconditional surrender

of Iran" had complicated talks. "The Americans suffer from a kind of inherent arrogance. If you are afflicted with such deep-rooted arrogance, you will not regard your negotiating counterpart as an equal partner deserving dialogue," he said.

"You cannot expect Iran to make concessions under pressure while its legitimate rights are ignored. You cannot force Iran into surrender," Baqaei added. A shaky ceasefire is in place in the war that began with US-Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28, but there has been no major breakthrough, with a US blockade of Iranian ports and Tehran's effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz complicating negotiations. Since the ceasefire took hold on April 8, Tehran and Washington have held a single round of talks which failed to culminate in a deal. However, the two sides have been exchanging proposals to resolve disagreements and end the war in the region.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi said on Tuesday that Tehran's latest peace proposal to the US involves ending hostilities on all fronts including Lebanon, the exit of US forces from areas close to Iran, and reparations for destruction caused by the US-Israeli war. Gharibabadi added that Tehran also sought the lifting of sanctions, the release of frozen funds and an end to the US marine blockade on the country.

'Unjustified': Tehran raps US sanctions on envoy, Lebanese officials

International Desk
Iran's Foreign Ministry in a statement on Friday strongly condemned the United States for imposing sanctions on Lebanese citizens and officials, as well as the Iranian envoy to Beirut, calling them an "illegal and unjustified" act aimed at inciting sedition in Lebanon. The statement came a day after the US Treasury Department designated nine individuals in Lebanon, including Iran's Ambassador Mohammad Reza Sheibani, claiming that they were enabling the resistance movement Hezbollah to "undermine Lebanon's sovereignty." The ministry denounced the sanctions against Sheibani as "another example of the US ruling administration's rebellion and disregard for the indisputable principles of international law and the UN Charter, especially the fundamental principle of respecting the national sovereignty of states." It also strongly condemned the US sanctions on a number of Hezbollah representatives at the Lebanese parliament, officials from the Amal movement, and several Lebanese military and security officials. "These despicable actions are aimed at weakening Lebanon's national sovereignty and inciting sedition in the Lebanese society. They are a sign of the continued complicity of the US ruling administration with the aggressor and occupying Zionist regime in continuing military aggression and committing heinous crimes against Lebanon," it added. The ministry said that various Lebanese groups will defend their country's sovereignty



and territorial integrity by maintaining national unity and solidarity. The Lebanese, it noted, will also prevent Israel from achieving its sinister goals by ending the Zionist regime's occupation and aggression. Meanwhile, the ministry expressed Iran's determination to strengthen its friendly and historical relations with Lebanon in various fields in line with the interests of both nations. Despite a ceasefire announced on April 17 and extended until May 17, the Israeli military continues daily airstrikes in Lebanon and widespread demolition of homes in dozens of villages, echoing its years-long atrocities against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Since March 2, Israeli attacks on Lebanon have killed more than 3,000 people and wounded about 9,400, according to the latest official figures. Israel also occupies areas in southern Lebanon, including some it has held for decades and others since the 2023-2024 war, and has advanced about 10 kilometers inside the southern border during the current conflict.

FM spox berates German reframe of US-Israeli aggression on Iran

International Desk
Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei no Friday rebuked German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier for downplaying a recent aggression by the United States and Israel against Iran as merely an "unnecessary war," saying it was a "blatant" aggression against a sovereign state. Baqaei made the remarks in a post on X after the German president described the illegal joint military aggression by the US and Israel on Iran as a "truly avoidable, unnecessary war." "The American-Israeli attack on Iran cannot be downplayed or reframed as merely an 'unnecessary war'. It was a flagrant violation of Article 2(4) of the UN Charter — a blatant act of aggression against a sovereign State," Baqaei said. He added that the US-Israeli imposed war on Iran "could and should have been



avoided." "The UN Charter does not recognize any notion of a 'necessary war' that would grant States the right to use force against another sovereign nation based on the arbitrary & whimsical decisions of aggressors," he emphasized. He urged any nation that values the rule of law and the UN Charter to "unequivocally" condemn the US-Israeli act of aggression and to call for accountability. The Iranian spokesperson also confirmed the German president's remarks regard-

ing the current escalation and instability in the West Asian region following the unilateral destruction by the Trump administration of the 2015 nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). "It is true that the current crisis confronting our region and the world stems directly from the United States' unlawful and capricious withdrawal from the JCPOA in May 2018," Baqaei wrote. Steinmeier directly addressed the JCPOA, stating it would have been better if that agreement had been preserved, and emphasized, "If the 2015 agreement with Iran had been preserved, it would have been possible to prevent the consequences we are currently witnessing." Steinmeier, who was personally involved in negotiating the JCPOA as foreign minister, bluntly called the war "a politically disastrous mistake" and a "politically fatal error."

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