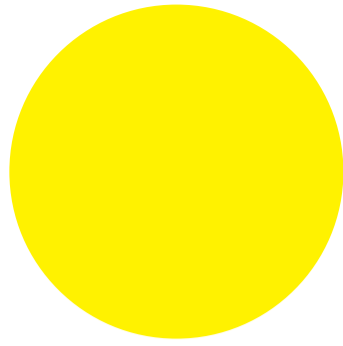


Mexican war prints go on show at TMOCA



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President Masoud Pezeshkian (Front Left) embraces Pakistan's Army Chief Asim Munir in Tehran on May 23, 2026.

Islamabad aims to preserve mediator role by deterring war

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

Over the past week, Pakistan has stepped up its diplomatic mediatory activity between Iran and the United States, with senior officials traveling to Tehran on several occasions. At the same time, reports pointed to a Qatari delegation visiting the Iranian capital. These developments can be read both as signs of progress toward a potential understanding between Tehran and Washington and as an effort to head off the risk of an increasingly likely renewed military confrontation. Amin Rezaeinejad, an expert on Pakistan affairs, told Iran Daily that Islamabad is seeking to preserve its role as a mediator by securing at least a minimal outcome—namely, preventing a return to war.



IRAN DAILY: Do you see Pakistan's recent diplomatic moves primarily as part of progress toward negotiations and a preliminary understanding, or simply as an attempt to de-escalate tensions and prevent a return to military conflict?

REZAEINEJAD: Pakistan's effort is mainly aimed at preserving its image as a mediator in the negotiations. Otherwise, the signals coming from both sides—whether from statements that Trump has released in the form of tweets or from the conditions put forward by Iranian officials—have not lined up in recent days. There remains a significant gap between the positions and viewpoints of the two sides. Pakistan's push is largely about avoiding a repeat of Oman's failed mediation and trying to steer the talks toward at least a minimal outcome, or at the very least, to prevent another war. In that sense, stabilizing the current "no war, no peace" situation appears to be a desirable endpoint for Islamabad.

At the same time, a Qatari delegation has traveled to Tehran. Is this visit part of a mediation effort, or is Qatar pursuing consultations over its own direct interests, particularly in the Strait of Hormuz?

Qatar faces a key concern: if hostilities between Iran and the US were to resume, its territory—or at least the bases hosting US forces—would likely come under attack. That is clearly not a favorable scenario for Doha. As a result, and having observed Pakistan's limited mediation capacity, Qatar appears to be opening up a parallel channel alongside Islamabad in order to actively pursue mediation through a separate track, with the aim of preventing the outbreak of war. Much like Pakistan, Qatar's objective is to ensure that the current "no war, no peace" situation is maintained for as long as possible.

At the same time, the visit may also relate to coordination with Iran over the transit of Qatari vessels through the Strait of Hormuz.

The number of countries recognizing Iran's sovereignty over the strait has been steadily increasing, as evidenced by the passage of more than 30 ships in recent days.

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Securing national interests sole goal of talks with US: *Pezeshkian*

Qalibaf vows 'crushing' response if war resumes



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (R) talks with Pakistan's Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir in Tehran on May 23, 2026.
● president.ir

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Saturday that Iran's main goal in negotiations with the United States is merely to secure the nation's interests through "appropriate solutions." President Pezeshkian made the remarks during a meeting with visiting Pakistan's Army Chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir, whose

country is mediating negotiations between Tehran and Washington to end a recent US-Israeli aggression against Iran. Referring to Iran's distrust of the US due to repeated breaches of promise, strikes during negotiations, and the assassination of Iranian officials, Pezeshkian said that under such circumstances, Iran has entered the path of negotiations relying on "brotherly

relations with friendly countries, including Pakistan," but he said the main goal is solely to secure the interests of the Iranian nation through appropriate and suitable solutions. "The United States will not emerge victorious in this conflict, and it will be the countries of the region and the world that suffer serious losses. The Zionist regime is the only party seeking to secure its own interests in the region through war", Pezeshkian told Munir. The Pakistani official, for his part, said that Israel seeks its interests in conflict and discord among Muslims, and it is seriously hostile to anyone who tries to resolve conflicts.

Munir also pointed to the negotiations between Iran and the US, saying that "fortunately, the negotiation process is progressing well", expressing hope that the talks will reach a favorable outcome for Iran and all countries in the region as soon as possible.

Iran-US MoU

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said on Saturday that Tehran was in the final stages of drafting a framework for a deal with the US. "Within a reasonable period of 30 to 60 days, the details of these points will be discussed and a final agreement will ultimately be concluded. We are currently in the process of finalizing these memoranda of understanding," he told state broadcaster IRIB. "Our intention is first to draft a memorandum of understanding, a kind of framework agreement composed of 14 clauses," Baqaei said. He noted "a trend towards rap-

prochement" with Washington but said "it does not necessarily mean that we and the United States will reach an agreement on the important issues." "The issue of the Strait of Hormuz is among the subjects addressed in this 14-point memorandum of understanding but more importantly, ending the piracy carried out by the United States against international navigation," said Baqaei.

He was referring to Iran's closure of the strait following the aggression and a blockade that the US has imposed on Iranian ports.

No nuclear talks

The Iranian official added that the nuclear issue is not part of an initial framework Iran is drafting. "At this stage, we will not discuss the details of the nuclear issue... we have decided to prioritize an urgent issue for all of us: ending the war on all fronts including Lebanon," the Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

He added that the nuclear file will be "subject to separate discussions" at a later stage. The Pakistani official also held a separate meeting with Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf who warned on Saturday of a "crushing" response if Washington resumes hostilities.

'Crushing' response

"Our armed forces have rebuilt themselves during the ceasefire period in such a way that if (US President Donald) Trump commits another act of folly and restarts the war, it will certainly be more crushing and bitter for the United States than on the first day of the war," Qalibaf posted on social media. Qalibaf made the warning after meeting with Pakistan's army chief, a leading figure in international efforts to negotiate an end to the war, which broke out after the US and Israel attacked the Islamic Republic on February 28.

Tehran seeks UNSC action over Arab support for US-Israeli aggression

International Desk

Iran called on the UN Security Council to hold several Arab states accountable for their involvement in the US-Israeli aggression against Iran after American officials acknowledged the countries aided Washington during the war on Iran.

Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations Amir Saeid Iravani in a letter submitted to the UN Secretary-General and the Security Council on Friday said that several Persian Gulf Arab states and Jordan are obligated to provide "full compensation" for both material and moral damages inflicted on Iran.

"Despite the Security Council's failure to hold the states along the southern shores of the Persian Gulf and Jordan accountable for their internationally unlawful acts against Iran, they are under an obligation as responsible states to make full reparation to the Islamic Republic of Iran, including compensation for all material and moral damage caused by their internationally wrongful acts," he said.



Amir Saeid Iravani
● AFP

In the letter, Iravani pointed to recent correspondence sent by Kuwait and Bahrain to the Security Council and their "baseless claims" against Iran, noting that the real issue was the participation of regional states in military operations against Iranian territory. "These letters once again fail to acknowledge the crucial and decisive fact that the United States and the Israeli regime have committed acts of aggression and conducted unprovoked and unlawful attacks against Iran," he said. The Iranian envoy further pointed to recent public statements by senior American officials, including the US president and commanders from US Central Command (CENTCOM), which he

said openly acknowledged that several countries on the southern shores of the Persian Gulf had aided Washington during the war on Iran.

According to the letter, the cooperation included granting access to military bases and facilities, logistical and operational support, intelligence sharing, air defense coordination, and access to airspace used during military operations against Iran.

Iran specifically named Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Jordan as states that facilitated or supported the attacks, stressing that these actions amounted to violations of international law and constituted participation in acts of aggression under UN General Assembly Resolution 3314.

The letter further noted that claims by those governments that their actions fell under the right of self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter were legally invalid, asserting that it was Tehran itself, as the "victim of aggression," that possessed the legitimate right to self-defense under international law.

Qatar says supports comprehensive Iran-US deal to break deadlock

International Desk

The Qatari foreign minister reaffirmed his country's "unwavering support" for efforts aimed at reaching a comprehensive agreement to end the crisis in the region which has been caused by a recent aggression by the United States and Israel against Iran.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani made the remarks in a phone call with his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi on Friday night, during which they discussed ongoing efforts to achieve peace and reinforce regional security and stability.

Qatar's top diplomat stressed the need for all parties to engage constructively in order to secure sustainable peace and enduring stability in the region as mediation efforts by Pakistan are underway to narrow the gap between Tehran and Washington in



Mohammed bin Abdulrahman



Abbas Araghchi

a bid to end the US-Israeli war on Iran.

On Saturday, Pakistani and Qatari officials met Iranian officials in Tehran to help the conclusion of a peace deal between Iran and the United States.

Qatar's top diplomat also underlined that freedom of navigation remains a fundamental principle that cannot be compromised, saying that any closure of the Strait of Hormuz or attempts to use it as a means of pressure would further deepen the crisis and threaten the vital interests of countries across the region.

Iran shut down the chokepoint to enemies and their allies following the launch on February 28 of the United States' and the Israeli regime's latest bout of unprovoked aggression targeting the Islamic Republic.

The Islamic Republic began exercising far stricter controls after the US government announced a blockade of Iranian vessels and ports in continuation of the aggression and in violation of the terms of a ceasefire agreement reached between the two countries following peace negotiations in Pakistan.

Islamabad aims to ...

It seems likely that Qatar has also entered into talks from this angle, and it is even possible that Doha has proposed compensation to Iran in order to safeguard its investments. In practice, a significant portion of Qatari investments has been put on hold due to the disruption of shipping routes through the Strait of Hormuz—both outbound from and inbound to Qatar—following its complicity in an act of aggression against Iranian territory. As a result, Qatar may even move ahead of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council framework and offer compensation independently; such a step would not be unlikely.

Pakistan's prime minister has also traveled to China, with regional issues reportedly on the agenda. How do you assess China's role at this juncture? Can Beijing shift the balance by exerting pressure on one side?

In reality, Sharif's visit to China ap-

pears to be aimed at leveraging the "China card" to place pressure on Iran to show flexibility in the negotiations. However, it should not be overlooked that Pakistan-China relations have entered a fully strategic phase, and part of this visit is undoubtedly tied to broader developments in bilateral ties, which may have nothing to do with the negotiations. Still, the possibility that Pakistan has asked China to exert pressure on Iran in this context cannot be ruled out.

Given the current diplomatic efforts, how do you foresee the trajectory of these initiatives? Is there a chance of reaching a temporary understanding before resolving the core disputes?

There is no bright prospect of the negotiations reaching a successful outcome through mediation by Qatar and Pakistan alone. Perhaps if major powers such as Russia and China were to step in as guarantors of the process, there might be grounds

for cautious optimism. At present, however, it does not appear that these talks will ultimately lead to a meaningful understanding between Iran and the United States. One side will have to back down from its demands. The conditions set by the United States are highly maximalist, while Iran's demands are realistic and grounded in battlefield realities. It therefore seems that Washington is the side that will need to come to terms with those realities and scale back its position.

As the World Cup approaches, the issue takes on added significance. The tournament could act as a double-edged card: on one hand, it may box in the United States, pushing it to ease tensions in order to manage fuel prices and sustain tourism flows during the event; on the other, much like past World Cups or even Olympic Games that have coincided with conflicts, it could also become a flashpoint for renewed confrontation between Iran and the United States.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Ministry says 3,000 industrial units damaged in 40-day war

Economy Desk

About 3,000 small, medium and large industrial units in Iran were damaged during the 40-day US-Israeli war, which began in late February, though the final scale of losses has yet to be determined as assessments and self-reporting by companies continue, Industry Ministry spokesperson Ezzatollah Zarei said. "A fund under the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade has been designated as a war damage compensation fund to accelerate support and compensation payments to affected units," Zarei said, according to Tasnim news agency. He said a headquarters for the reconstruction of major industries had been established, with companies including Mobarakeh Steel and Khuzestan Steel prioritized for a rapid return to production because of their broad

impact on the market. The two industrial complexes were hit several times in April during the enemy strikes. "The ministry's main priority is preserving production and employment," Zarei said, adding that the ministry was working to prevent production stoppages by securing raw materials, facilitating imports and supporting supply chains. He said the war had negatively affected supply chains and made imports of raw materials more difficult than before. "A total of 2,570 goods needed for production have been prioritized for import so industrial units can secure the raw materials they need," he said.

Tehran telecom losses estimated at \$11.4b

In a separate report carried by ISNA, Tehran Telecommunications Director General Alireza

Lotfi said serious damage had been inflicted on equipment at two telecommunications centers in Tehran Province during the war, with losses to the province's telecommunications infrastructure estimated at 2 trillion tomans, equivalent to about \$11.4 million. Speaking at a press conference on Saturday marking World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, Lotfi said the level of damage in Tehran Province caused major problems at two centers and severely damaged telecommunications equipment. He said fiber-optic-connected sections had been quickly replaced, but around 7,000 failures remained at damaged centers and broader repairs were still needed. Authorities were working to restore local services affecting 30,000 subscribers as quickly as possible. The "Montazeri" telecommuni-



cations center in Rey city and the "Mohsenian" center in Tehran's Shadabad district, serving more than 70,000 subscribers, suffered the heaviest damage during the war, he said.

Lotfi said the Montazeri center had been completely destroyed and required a full overhaul, adding that 18,000 failures had been registered, of which 7,000 had so far been repaired.



CAO reopens Ahvaz, Mahshahr airports after postwar safety checks

Economy Desk

Flights at Ahvaz and Mahshahr airports in Iran's southwestern Khuzestan Province have resumed after approval from the Civil Aviation Organization (CAO), with flight numbers set to gradually increase in the coming days, Khuzestan Airports Director General Mehdi Razaz said on Saturday, according to ISNA.

"With the approval of the Civil Aviation Organization, flights at Ahvaz and Mahshahr airports resumed operations with four flights, and based on the plans made, the number of flights will gradually increase," Razaz said.

He said the first Tehran-Ahvaz flight had successfully landed earlier on Saturday at Ahvaz international airport, and that a flight from Mashhad was also scheduled to arrive later in the day.

"Necessary permits for other flights and the arrangement of their traffic conditions will gradually be issued and announced by the Civil Aviation Organization," he added.

"In line with the organization's broader plans to revive and develop the country's aviation industry after the war, and given changing conditions and improvements in infrastructure, Ahvaz and Mahshahr airports have reopened after security and safety evaluations and in full coordination with relevant authorities," IRNA quoted the CAO as saying.

The reopening marks a significant step toward restoring air links and facilitating passenger travel in the region. A number of airports in central, western and eastern parts of the country have already returned to operation, while many domestic and international flights operated by Iranian airlines are currently underway.

Seven Iranian airports were targeted during the 40-day US-Israeli war, with attacks focusing more on tourism, passenger and cargo infrastructure than on military facilities.

Iran Air, the national carrier of the Islamic Republic of Iran, resumed domestic flights on April 25 after a 55-day suspension, with its first service operating between Tehran and Mashhad.

International flights also resumed in late April, beginning with an Iran Air Hajj flight to Medina, with services to three destinations on the first day.

Iranian authorities said additional airports across the country would gradually return to operation following further security and safety assessments.

Caviar exports near \$8m in 42 global markets despite challenges

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Iran's caviar exports have risen steadily, reaching nearly \$8 million annually and expanding to 42 countries worldwide, the secretary-general of Iran's Union of Aquatic Production and Trade told Iran Daily.

Ali-Akbar Khodaei said Iran's caviar export revenues climbed from \$3.188 million in

2023 to around \$6 million in 2024, adding that official figures for 2025 had not yet been released but estimates suggested exports reached between \$7.8 million and \$8 million by March 2026.

Khodaei said caviar export volumes also increased, with shipments rising to 7,130 kilograms in the 10-month period from March 20, 2025 to January 19, 2026, from 6,200 kilograms in the same period a year earlier, marking a 14% increase.

He said exports dropped to zero after February this year because flight suspensions after disrupted shipments, most of which are transported by air.

Khodaei said exporters quickly shifted to alternative routes, sending cargo overland to neighboring countries before forwarding shipments to global destinations through other flights. He added that flights had now largely resumed and the problem had been mostly resolved. International flights departing from Iran, which



were halted after the start of the US-Israeli aggression against Iran in late February.

He said Europe accounted for the largest share of Iran's export markets, alongside neighboring Arab countries, other Asian states and African markets.

Khodaei said prolonged wartime conditions posed a threat to exports, but added that Iranian exporters would seek to turn the challenge into an opportunity by expanding marketing efforts, accessing new markets and developing alternative export routes. He said exporters hoped to rapidly offset any losses in neighboring Arab markets, particularly the United Arab Emirates, while expanding sales in new destinations.

Khodaei said Iran was seeking to direct more exports toward Russia, Turkey, African countries and Southeast Asia to create new markets.

On the quality and reputation of Iranian caviar, Khodaei said the beluga sturgeon was the world's largest and most valuable sturgeon species and the source of beluga caviar, regarded as the world's finest caviar. He said the species' main habitat was the Caspian Sea and that

Iran had long been recognized as a producer of the world's best caviar.

He added that almost all caviar currently available on the market was sourced from farmed sturgeon, and said Iran continued to supply premium-quality caviar globally through the farming of Caspian sturgeon species.

Khodaei said global demand for Iranian caviar remained strong and that more countries were joining the list of buyers each year.

He also said that, in addition to official customs and border exports, several tons of caviar leave Iran annually through passenger transport.

Khodaei said caviar production and exports were expected to continue growing due to heavy investment in sturgeon farming over recent years. He said sturgeon require around 10 years to mature before producing roe, adding that earlier investments were now beginning to yield results as more fish stocks reached production age.

Khodaei said the number of sturgeon herds at Iranian farms was increasing annually, leading to exponential growth in both production and exports.

Another 25 ships transit Hormuz under IRGC oversight

Economy Desk

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said on Saturday that 25 vessels, including oil tankers, container ships and other commercial vessels, passed through the Strait of Hormuz over the past 24 hours after obtaining permission and under the security coordination of the force.

In a statement carried by IRNA, the IRGC Navy said its "smart control" of the Strait of Hormuz remained firmly in place despite insecurity created by US aggression in the strategic waterway.

US President Donald Trump imposed the so-called naval blockade on Iran's ports in mid-April, aiming to pressure Tehran into a peace agreement after a 40-day conflict that began in late February. Despite a partial decline in oil exports, the embargo has failed to halt Iranian oil flows, with the Islamic Republic continuing to export crude, according to data cited in the International Energy Agency's (IEA) monthly oil market report and tanker tracking data.

The 25 tankers were among a small number of supertankers that exited the Persian Gulf this month through a transit route designated by Iran.

The IRGC said on Friday that it had also coordinated the transit of another 35 ships through



the Strait of Hormuz during the previous 24 hours.

Iran has administered transit through the Strait of Hormuz since the early days of the unprovoked US-Israeli aggression on the country that began on February 28.

According to a recent Reuters report, the IRGC plays a central role in a new multi-layered transit system that gives preference to ships linked to allies such as China and Russia, while other vessels may require government-to-government arrangements or payments to pass.

The Reuters report said the IRGC reviews affiliation documents supplied by ship owners or operators and may physically inspect vessels during the process.

"The affiliation check is to identify if the vessel has any connection to the US or Israel," a European shipping source told Reuters.

According to documents sent to shipping industry sources by Iran's Persian Gulf Strait Authority, the IRGC requires ship owners to disclose details including cargo value, flag, origin and destination, registered owner and

manager, and the nationalities of crew members.

Other countries have adopted different arrangements. India, which imports about 90% of its oil needs and around half of its gas consumption, much of it passing through Hormuz, uses its embassy in Tehran to coordinate with Iranian authorities, including the IRGC and the Iranian navy, according to an Indian shipping ministry official cited by Reuters.

Shipping data from LSEG and Kpler showed on Wednesday that the South Korean-flagged VLCC Universal Winner, carrying 2 million barrels of Kuwaiti crude, exited the strait after two Chinese tankers departed, with the vessel heading to Ulsan in South Korea, according to Kpler and Reuters.

A South Korean Foreign Ministry official told reporters the transit was coordinated with Iran and other countries to ensure the vessel's safety, adding that Tehran had informed Seoul's embassy that one South Korean vessel would be allowed to pass through the strategic waterway.

Iran's leadership stability, military power altering US strategy

INTERVIEW

While the Trump administration confronts the most severe crises of credibility and efficaciousness within foreign policy, its 12-Day and Ramadan wars with Iran have fundamentally changed the security and economic equations of the United States. In an interview with Farid Marjai, an Iranian foreign policy and international relations expert based in America, an examination of Washington's strategic discombobulation vis-à-vis Iran has been undertaken.

In this interview, Marjai, referencing that Donald Trump has deviated from his professed foreign policy doctrines — the paramount one of which was the avoidance of initiating troublesome conflicts — emphatically asserts that the White House, in this dossier, finds itself ensnared within an impasse; a condition wherein the exhibition of Iran's asymmetrical proficiencies, the perpetuation of war management, and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz have reconfigured Washington's strategic calculations. A translation of this interview's transcript follows below.

Farid Marjai



The United States has, within less than one and a half years, experienced two wars (the 12-day and the Ramadan war) with Iran. Given that American society is generally fatigued by the unending entanglements of the Middle East, how does the public opinion in America perceive their nation's entry into this war?

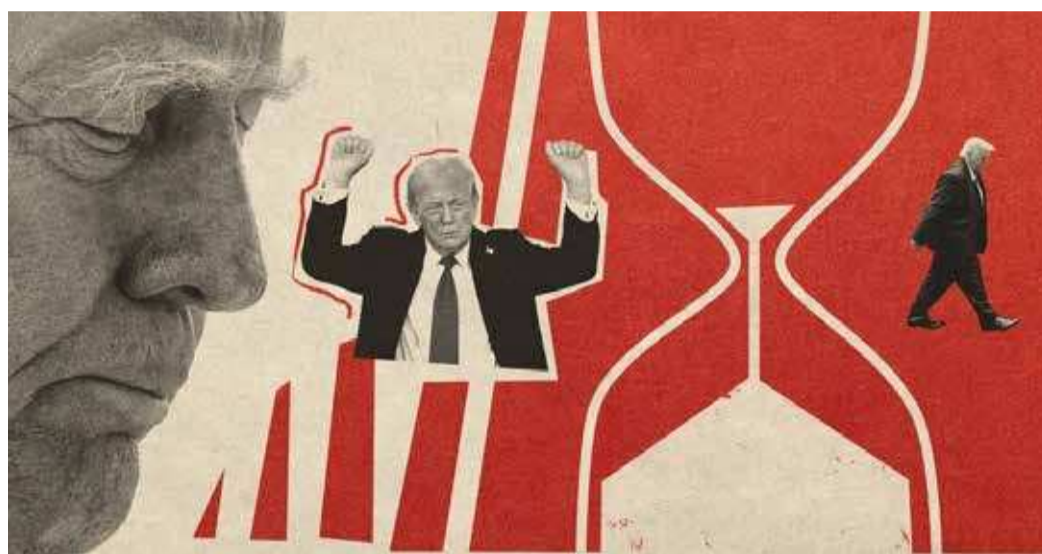
MARJAI: Indeed, the public opinion is a very important matter. The reality is that the American public has become weary of war; particularly the Iraq, Libya, and Afghanistan conflicts, none of which yielded successful outcomes for this country. A segment of the populace perceives that these wars have imposed heavy financial costs; expenditures that could have been allocated toward development, medical treatment, and welfare matters, yet this issue is not that well-documented or well-articulated.

Nevertheless, one must consider that this fatigue is not one of perpetual and everlasting war and will endure only for a limited duration. We observed this same pattern during the Vietnam War era; subsequent to the defeat and extensive bloodshed in Vietnam, American culture remained under the influence of that event for a period, but later, the power system endeavored to extricate itself from this condition, calling it the "Vietnam Syndrome".

Therefore, one can sum up that the American public is discontented with this war because, during the past one or two decades, it has been directly engaged with it. However, in actuality, one must consider another dimension; American public opinion does not materialize within a vacuum and is profoundly oriented toward the mainstream media, which are powerful and fabricate public opinion. Noam Chomsky, in his numerous writings, elucidates that the media construct paradigms and serve that power bloc and the ruling system; whether that power belongs to bankers and capitalists, or the influence of the Israeli lobby. In reality, the Neo-Conservatives have, for the past 30 to 40 years, pursued a project according to which America must always be prepared for war. This "America, prepared for war," can support Israel.

Thus, if this has been their objective, they have attempted to establish an associated political culture. And one must consider that the majority of the American or British populace lack access to alternative media, news, or narratives, and only the monopolistic narration of the dominant media prevails. In comparison, for example, you witness in Iran, West Asia, or Latin America alternative media that present divergent narratives relative to the established media.

Notwithstanding these factors, the majority of American media outlets, civil institutions, analysts, and think tanks do not endorse war with Iran. Within American society, the populace and analysts presently do not perceive this war as a conflict between America and Iran or



US President Donald Trump is running out of time and has to change course in his war of aggression against Iran.

● JULIA WYTRAZEK/GETTY IMAGES

as a patriotic war, but rather assess it as an aggressive war launched by Donald Trump against Iran. The crucial point is that Trump has experienced a precipitous decline in opinion polls, reaching 34 percent. In the past, whenever the US engaged in military confrontation and war, one would observe American flags in various locations; in public spaces, residential areas, and municipalities, but now, absolutely no flags are visible.

During these two wars, toward which aspect has public criticism predominantly been directed? Do American critics primarily censure the war decision itself, or the war management and the failure to achieve a decisive victory?

The Trump administration did not at all prearrange a period for preparing public opinion to accept the war; meaning that there existed no opportunity, prior to military action, to justify the war in the public sphere. Suddenly, in the midst of negotiations, an attack occurred, proposed and supported by Benjamin Netanyahu.

If one recalls, during the Bush-Cheney administration's assault on Iraq, they spent 9 months on propaganda, brainwashing, and preparing public opinion, but presently, no rationale for this war was presented to society in the public sphere. Even after the war commenced, Trump incessantly altered his justifications for the populace. Moreover, during this military aggression, the Trump administration could not define a strategic exit for the war; that is, it was not clarified how the war was supposed to conclude, or how victory therein would be defined. In actuality, American society is afflicted with absolute perplexity and confusion regarding this war.

One must consider that the Trump administration is a really weak administration. If one examines its personnel, all appear amateurish and inexperienced; the secretary of

state (Rubio), the secretary of defense (Hegseth), the vice president (Vance), and particularly the chief of staff of the Army (Dan Caine). Caine did not ascend the military ranks as a capable general, but rather was initially an Air Force pilot, then became a general, and later was promoted to this position by Trump.

Throughout this process, Trump could neither assemble nor summon allies within a unified political structure. Consequently, relative to all three axes you mentioned, this administration is subject to criticism: the war decision lacked justification; the managerial approach was also weak because they presumed that the Venezuelan model could be implemented upon Iran, despite their vast differences; and finally, they possessed no conception of victory nor a definition thereof.

But the significant point is that an exceptionally important article was published on April 8 in the New York Times, which generated substantial commotion. This article addressed two secret meetings of the Trump circle and explained in detail what topics were discussed therein. When one studies this article, one realizes how inexperienced these individuals are and that they possess no cognizance of warfare. The chief of staff's remarks exhibited a tactical understanding from a military perspective, but no strategic understanding was articulated therein. The quantity of military

equipment they possess and how that equipment should be replaced were not well-defined.

Donald Trump, in his electoral campaigns, consistently emphasized the slogans "ending endless wars" and "America First". But we know that he entered these two wars with Iran through the encouragement and accompaniment of Israel. What impact has this manifest contradiction had upon Trump's traditional and loyal base?

Indeed, particularly during the 2016 electoral campaign of the first Trump administration, the discourse of "endless wars" was raised and constituted a significant portion of Trump's platform. The overarching message was that the wars initiated by Republican and Democratic globalists imposed a high financial cost upon American society; while these capitals could have been expended on America's own development. In effect, the populace's livelihood and economic condition were of concern.

Now, concerning the demographic you referenced, a fissure appears to have emerged within Trump's traditional base, which is simulta-



US Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer speaks during the Senate Democrat policy luncheon news conference at the Capitol on May 19, 2026, in Washington, the US.

● ROD LAMKEY, JR./AP



Within American society, the populace and analysts presently do not perceive this war as a conflict between America and Iran or as a patriotic war, but rather assess it as an aggressive war launched by Donald Trump against Iran. The crucial point is that Trump has experienced a precipitous decline in opinion polls, reaching 34 percent. In the past, whenever the US engaged in military confrontation and war, one would observe American flags in various locations; in public spaces, residential areas, and municipalities, but now, absolutely no flags are visible.

neously right-wing and anti-foreign military intervention. Prominent figures from the "MAGA" movement, for the first time in America, have explicitly articulated positions regarding Israel's influence and its role in this war. This is not necessarily because aggressive wars are morally and politically unacceptable to them, but rather the central point is that they oppose them due to the harm these wars inflict upon the economic conditions and livelihood of the populace.

Simultaneously, one must note that although this public dissatisfaction is tangible and considerable, it lacks a conduit, institution, and media apparatus capable of exerting influence within power relations. On the other hand, matters pertaining to the cultural right have not yet caused conservatives to distance themselves from Trump, nor have Republicans in Congress openly opposed him. In reality, in the Congressional midterm elections of November of the current year, we shall witness the outcome of this process; whether this dissatisfaction will prevent this spectrum from voting for Trump.

Many analysts believe that the current cease-fire is more a "diplomatic capitulation" to extricate the US from a military impasse. Within America's domestic arena, have the Democrats and liberal media managed to consolidate this cease-fire and the potential exit without a tangible victory as an "absolute failure for Trump" in the electoral arena — whether for the midterms or for public opinion?

Generally speaking, the globalists believe in American hegemony in the Middle East region and vis-à-vis China, but they contend that Trump's methodology, performance, and management have, in actuality, damaged America's strategic position. Trump is inexperienced and possesses personality disorders; meaning that if he were experienced, as a robust politician, he should pursue only one front, but he incessantly opens new fronts.

He instigates altercations with Europe and European Union members, and creates dissatisfaction over the Greenland occupation issue. He also insults European leaders, imposes tariffs against his own allies, and generates friction with the Pope and hurls insults at him. Within the NATO military pact, he fans the flames of discord and internal disputes, and launches an indiscriminate war with Iran from which he cannot easily extricate himself. For this reason, an atmosphere has emerged in America; an atmosphere wherein the globalists are discontented and perceive weakness.

Of course, the cease-fire is supported by everyone because it distances one from military actions, warfare, destruction, and the ensuing crisis. But the fact that Trump has not achieved a decisive military victory has damaged his image and

prestige. Many analysts even feel that, strategically, Iran has gained a slight upper hand in this war. Therefore, as you indicated, the Democrats, liberals, and even those situated in the (political) center perceive weakness and anxiety within the Trump administration, and, of course, the reflection of this matter influences public opinion. Nevertheless, in the elections, the most profound crisis that the war has engendered for America, namely the economic crisis and the cost of living for the populace, will be raised, and the Democrats shall concentrate upon it.

A few days ago, one of the prominent figures of the Neo-Conservative current; Mr. Robert Kagan (spouse of Mrs. Victoria Nuland), wrote an article in *The Atlantic* that generated substantial commotion and was staggering. He characterized the war and Trump's action as a defeat and weakness for America, and believes that post-war conditions can no longer return to the pre-war state. The adoption of such a position by a Neo-Conservative and supporter of Israel was truly astonishing.

In your estimation, will the Democratic Party seek to exploit the critical atmosphere against Trump engendered by this war in the midterm elections?

Without any doubt, in the forthcoming elections, the Democratic Party will exploit the chaos and lack of planning in Trump's foreign policy. This disarray is not only manifest in strategic disorder in relations with Europe, but also includes a lack of direction in initiating an aimless war with Iran in the region, a war that has thus far produced no result.

A number of Senators, including a Democratic Senator from Connecticut and Senator Bernie Sanders, have declared that the cost of the war for America will be far greater than the Trump administration's estimates. The Democrats emphasize that at a time when the populace requires health insurance, employment, and infrastructural reconstruction, these capitals should have been expended domestically, rather than being squandered on adventurism in a war that has held no meaning for the people. But the more important point is that, due to inflation and price increases, the Democrats will concentrate their primary focus upon the war's impact on the nation's economy and the populace's livelihood; a factor that constitutes the most significant indicator in elections.

Israel provoked, encouraged, and accompanied America in both wars. Has this matter created a fissure within American public opinion, which previously perceived Israel as a strategic ally?

The vast majority of American society is unaware of the reality that Israel provoked and encouraged America toward war. The populace was induced to believe that the war's objective was to prevent Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons or to halt Tehran's support for terrorism in the region; the same stereotypical narratives repeated for years.

Perhaps the societal body is unaware that a successful agreement named the JCPOA existed, and that Trump, through his withdrawal from that deal, engendered the crisis; a matter about which American public awareness is exceedingly minuscule. Israel's role in the war decision is primarily raised in news agencies outside the United States. Of course, a political minority within society is cognizant of Israel's scheme, but, due to power relations, they have acquiesced to it

and have not reached a new stage of confrontation regarding Israel.

Given the role of Netanyahu and Israeli lobbies in instigating this war, can one assert that the traditional narrative in Washington (that "Israel is the executive arm of American interests in the Middle East") has been shattered, and that Washington has now effectively become the executive arm of the interests of Israeli radicals?

The main body of American society possesses little awareness of the existence of Israeli lobbies, and, therefore, in the absence of such awareness, no particular sensitivity toward this matter develops. Most people cannot even articulate the names of these institutions nor are they informed of their existence. For example, in Iran, we recognize AIPAC or the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, but the American populace does not possess such recognition. Of course, the powerful political class and academics have complete awareness of the Israeli lobby, and some intellectuals and university professors speak about it.

But individuals who themselves belong to the powerful political class, whether in the media or in Congress, perceive their professional position as contingent upon comprehensive support for Israel. Whether America is an instrument of Israel or Israel is an instrument of America is a matter that is not widely raised in the public sphere. The social and political conditions in America have evolved such that this country displays complete and total support for Israel, even if this support contravenes American national interests; of course, this matter is consistently justified. Perhaps one could say that a degree of cynicism toward the person of Benjamin Netanyahu has now developed within the political class, but this cynicism has not reached a level that would affect the overall American-Israeli relationship. One must consider that many billionaires possess particular orientations and do not maintain a neutral stance; they vigorously support Israel; among them, Sheldon Adelson, who owned casinos, and Larry Ellison, who is part of the new digital architecture and has now created a media empire.

As another example, Marco Rubio, who is now secretary of state, was propped up in his youth in Florida by two Zionist billionaires named Norman Braman and Larry Ellison and was elevated to the position of Florida Senator. Such is the manner in which power relations are constituted.

Among the Democratic elites and even segments of the Republicans (such as the old conservative movement), has a voice been raised calling for a reexamination of the unconditional relationship with Israel due to the repercussions of this war and, prior to it, Israel's conduct in Gaza?

One could say that, although voices from civil society, a few activists, artists, and student protesters have been raised in criticism of Israel, opposition to Israel does not occur within the Democratic and traditional conservative mainstream because the power relations in the United States have been constituted in this manner. Criticisms are directed more at Trump and his administration since criticizing Trump is safer for any individual within the system.

It should be recalled that President Obama could not secure Congressional ratification of the JCPOA, but the more important point is that many of the Democrats themselves in Congress did not support Obama's JCPOA. Only a few individ-



People protesting the US war of choice against Iran gather at Springfield City Hall, the US, on March 28, 2026, for the third "No Kings" rally.
● ISAAC WASSERMAN/RFA

uals such as Bernie Sanders, Zohran Mamdani, Ms. Rashida Tlaib, and Ms. Ilhan Omar have now raised serious discussions about the Iran war, but this matter did not become a social issue within the entire system.

It is recalled that during the two years of the historical catastrophe in Gaza, the Democrats and those same old conservatives remained silent in the face of that historical catastrophe and genocide. An example of this condition is the New York City mayoral election a few months ago; after Israel's genocide in Gaza, during the electoral debates, the five candidates were asked what the first thing they would do as mayor would be. Four candidates answered: travel to Israel. Only Zohran Mamdani said that he would remain in New York and will not go to Israel. In conclusion, a sociological point must be recalled: one cannot view the developments in America through the lens of Iran's historical experience and awareness, or that of the Global South. Rather, one must regard the developments of this country based upon the power relations within American society.

The Pentagon and American security institutions (the Deep State) are generally opposed to endless wars, and recent reports also indicate that the military establishment opposed the recent war. Did what transpired lead to the weakening of the position of security institutions in America, or, conversely, could the result of this adventurism serve their interests?



This matter depends on the case. The senior military officials of the Pentagon did not concur with the war against Iran, and this opposition was reflected because they did not perceive a correct strategy in that war. Concurrently, Trump's Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, who is a neophyte, amateur, and boastful individual, has retired a number of army commanders. But another process also exists; some of the individuals who retire from the Pentagon subsequently go to work for the arms lobby, securing highly profitable positions there. The arms lobby, or the "military-industrial complex," is exceedingly powerful in the country and in Congress. They sometimes support war because their weaponry is utilized in war. In the present conflict with Iran, a portion of the arsenals has been depleted, and, consequently, weapons manufacturing corporations receive additional contracts. Some weapons manufacturing corporations are listed on the stock exchange, and when people purchase shares in these corporations, they unconsciously benefit from this condition.

The general public's attention is more directed toward the White House and Congress than toward the Pentagon or the Deep State because the Pentagon is expected merely to be subordinate to the administration's orders and decisions.

One of Iran's momentous achievements in these two wars has been the demonstration of proficiency in a "medium-dura-

Democratic hopeful Janelle Stelson holds a campaign event in front of a gas station on April 6, 2026, to emphasize the rising gas prices and challenge incumbent Rep. Scott Perry, R-Pa., a longtime Trump ally.
● MICHELLE GUSTAFSON/
THE WASHINGTON POST



It should be recalled that President Obama could not secure Congressional ratification of the JCPOA, but the more important point is that many of the Democrats themselves in Congress did not support Obama's JCPOA. Only a few individuals such as Bernie Sanders, Zohran Mamdani, Ms. Rashida Tlaib, and Ms. Ilhan Omar have now raised serious discussions about the Iran war, but this matter did not become a social issue within the entire system.

tion asymmetrical war" against the American-Israeli coalition. Have the American political and military elites concluded that Iran's deterrent model is no longer defeatable through military force, and, if so, in which direction will they proceed in confronting Iran?

In my opinion, even before the war commenced, the political elites and powerholders perceived conflict with Iran as crisis-ridden and futile. Now that the war has occurred and Iran's proficiency in this asymmetrical war has been demonstrated, this conclusion opposing war has certainly been consolidated and fortified.

In this asymmetrical war, Iran's military capability was deployed really fast, merely hours subsequent to the surprise attacks in the 12-day and Ramadan wars. The missile and drone forces did not cease operations until the cease-fire was declared. Although the army's leadership and military commanders were eliminated on the first day of the Ramadan war, war management nevertheless continued. All these factors have led to this conclusion. Therefore, American political elites in the future shall certainly not select the military force option. They shall either arrive at an agreement with Iran that constitutes a win-win accord, or they shall revert once again to the pressure of comprehensive sanctions as a coercive instrument, employing it to engender pressure within Iran.

War exacts a cost. Given the disruptions created in the energy supply chain and the direct military expenditures, what has been the impact of these two wars upon America's domestic economy?

Unexpectedly, the war transformed from a geographical domain into an arena within the energy and economic spheres. Before the war (the military aggression), no one considered the strategic importance of the Strait of Hormuz to such an extent. The International Energy Agency (IEA) has reported the largest supply shock in the history of the oil and energy industry.

It has once again been proven the degree to which various sectors of the global economy are interconnected. The increase in the prices of oil, gasoline, and fertilizer has had a profound impact upon the global economy. Initially, the Trump administration claimed that America is self-sufficient in oil and would not be influenced by the global oil market, but the experience of this war demonstrated very rapidly that an increase in the global price of oil leads to an increase in the price of gasoline in America as well. Since the price of gasoline and fuel affects the transportation of goods, consequently, the prices of consumer goods have also increased in the American market.

The price increases in America have perpetuated inflation, a matter that has directly overshadowed the populace's livelihood. If citizens' incomes and salaries do not increase commensurately with inflation, there's the real threat of economic recession.

In this regard, Donald Trump has selected an individual named Kevin Warsh for the chairmanship of America's central bank (the Federal Reserve). Trump had previously also always pressured the former central bank chairman to reduce interest rates. Now, Warsh finds himself in a singular position and must choose between acceding to Trump's partisan directives and pursuing what he deems salutary for the nation's economy.

The interview first appeared in Persian on IRNA.

Asian Taekwondo Championships: Hajimousaei grabs gold as Iran closes in on men's title

Sports Desk

Mahdi Hajimousaei secured Iran's fourth gold medal at the Asian Taekwondo Championships on Saturday as Iran closed in on defending its men's kyo-rugi team title in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

A world silver medalist last October, Hajimousaei defeated former Olympic bronze medalist and 2019 world champion Jang Jun of South Korea in straight rounds to add the -63kg gold to his -58kg glory from the 2024 edition.

Reigning Olympic champion Arian Salimi had opened Iran's gold account in the Mongolian

capital with a dramatic victory in Thursday's +87kg showdown, before world champion Abolfazl Zandi (-58kg) and Amir-Sina Bakhtiari (-74kg) claimed the top prize in their respective divisions on Friday.

Yasin Valizadeh, meanwhile, marked his senior debut at the Asian Championships with an impressive silver medal in the -54kg division.

Mohammad-Hossein Yazdani and Ali Ahmadi were the other two Iranians in action in the men's event on Saturday, finishing empty-handed in the -87kg class.

Meanwhile, Iran endured another dreadful day in the women's

competition on Saturday after all three Iranian girls crashed out in the early stages of their respective events.

Olympic bronze medalist and world U21 champion Mobina Nematzadeh entered the -53kg contest with high hopes of ending Iran's women's drought in Ulaanbaatar, but her campaign finished after a third-round setback against her South Korean opponent. Fereshteh Fat'hi and Saghar Moradi were both knocked out by China's Jiani Xing in the -67kg category.

Masoumeh Ranjbar (-46kg), Fatemeh Ahmadi (+73kg), Baran Nemati (-73kg), and Mahla Momenzadeh (-49kg) had already missed

out on a podium finish earlier in the women's contests.

Iran will still hope to have something to cheer about in the women's event when Olympic silver medalist and former world champion Nahid Kiani (-57kg) — who has recently recovered from knee surgery — and Yalda Valinejad (-62kg), a silver medalist at last year's Islamic Solidarity Games, get their campaigns underway at the M Bank Arena today.

The final day's action will also see Amir-Abbas Rahanama and Mohammad-Hassan Palangafkan vie for glory in the -68kg contest, with Amirreza Sadeqian part of the -80kg draw.



Iran's Mahdi Hajimousaei won the men's -63kg gold at the Asian Taekwondo Championships in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. ● IRNA

Dabir hints at petition to move 2027 Wrestling Worlds from Las Vegas

Sports Desk

Alireza Dabir, the chairman of the Iranian Wrestling Federation, has said he might launch a petition to strip the United States of hosting the 2027 Senior World Championships should Iranian wrestlers be denied entry visas for the upcoming U23 Worlds — starting October 12 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Las Vegas has also been named the host city of next year's Senior World Championships, which will serve as part of the qualification pathway for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games.

Iranian sport has struggled with entry visa complications in recent years, especially since a military conflict between Iran and a U.S.-Israeli coalition began on February 28.

With the FIFA World Cup, co-hosted by the United States,



● IAWFIR

Mexico, and Canada, less than three weeks away, questions remain as to whether all members of the Iranian squad will be able to take part in Team Mell's Group G campaign in Los Angeles and Seattle.

Meanwhile, the Iranian weightlifting squad had to make a late arrival in Ismailia, Egypt, for the

World Junior Championships earlier in May after a visa delay threatened to derail their men's title defense, while the country's fencing team was ruled out of Friday's Saber World Cup in Cairo for the same reason.

"I told the United World Wrestling president that Iran, the United States, and Russia are ti-

tle rivals. If they want to deplete our squad to make us lose to them, it's not acceptable," Dabir said this week, recounting his recent conversation with Serbian Nenad Lalović, the head of the sport's international governing body, regarding Iran's participation in October's U23 event.

"In football, if two players are missing the team might suffer, but two others could still step in and replace them. In wrestling, however, if a 10-man team is reduced to eight, it means losing 50 points in the title race, and there's no way Iran can finish first," added the former world and Olympic champion.

Iran won the Greco-Roman team trophy while finishing runner-up to the U.S. in freestyle at last year's U23 Worlds in Novi Sad, Serbia, having missed the 2024 edition in Tirana due to visa denials by Albania.

"Let me give you an example. Sajjad Gholami fell ill at the U23 World Championships in 2022, and based on the team doctor's recommendation, he received an injection. The president of the American federation protested, and Gholami was disqualified. That single decision cost our team the freestyle title, and we finished second. That's just how strict they were on the issue, so why should we go easy on visas?" Dabir added.

"That's what I told Mr. Lalović: If they don't want to grant us visas this year, they will do the same again to Iranian and Russian wrestlers for the 2027 Senior Worlds, leaving the Americans with an easy path to secure Olympic berths while we chase quotas in other tournaments. "I'm concerned they are planning to do the same to us for the Olympics. We have been in these circumstanc-

es for three years now, and I know exactly how they operate.

"I said, if that's the case, we should submit a petition to change the 2027 host, just like the 2026 event was moved from Bahrain. We are seriously pursuing this. If our U23 team doesn't receive full visas, I will be among those speaking with other federations to collect signatures to move the 2027 Worlds to another country. That event has Olympic quotas, and we cannot afford to jeopardize our young athletes' careers." The UWW confirmed on Friday that Astana, Kazakhstan, will host the 2026 Senior World Championships — originally scheduled to take place in Manama — from October 24 to November 1, citing the "current geopolitical situation, particularly the ongoing uncertainty and impact on international travel" in the region.

Para Powerlifting African Open Championships:

Jafari, Bakhtiar sweep men's -72kg golds in Oran

Sports Desk

Iranian para powerlifters Amir Jafari and Mohsen Bakhtiar stole the show in the men's -72kg contests at the African Open Championships, grabbing two golds and a silver medal in Oran, Algeria, on Friday.

A Paralympic silver medalist in Tokyo 2020, Jafari began his campaign with a 196kg lift but failed with his 205kg effort on his second attempt, before bouncing back to overcome the weight with his final lift to pip Bakhtiar, who also posted a best lift of 205kg, for the top prize. The closely contested race saw Iraq's Ahmed Al-Karkhi settle for bronze, trailing the top two Iranians by one kilogram.

Reigning Paralympic bronze medalist Bakhtiar, meanwhile, went on



Iranian para powerlifters Amir Jafari (2nd R) and Mohsen Bakhtiar (L) pose with their men's -72kg medals at the African Open Championships in Oran, Algeria, on May 22, 2026. ● IPC

to clinch the total gold with an impressive tally of 605kg. High-profile Algerian Hocine Bettir — a winner of five world medals and back-to-back Paralympic bronzes — posted 581kg for the silver, with Uganda's Ismail Issa Ssebagala finishing on 506kg to take

the bronze. Jafari finished sixth in the total standings with 401kg. Friday's results came after Iran's Alireza Izadi and Mahdiyeh Mohammadian had collected four medals between them on the first day of the competition.

Competing in the men's -59kg weight class, Izadi posted three successful efforts to bag the bronze on 183kg before winning the total gold with a 542kg tally.

In the women's -55kg competition, Mohammadian also registered three successful lifts (95-102-105) to finish with bronze and the total silver.

Featuring more than 150 contestants from 20 countries, the event, which marks the third regional championships in this year's four-event series, will conclude today.

With the regional championships forming a mandatory part of the LA28 Paralympic qualification pathway, athletes aim to secure valuable ranking points and set new continental benchmarks ahead of other major events in 2026.

AVC Girls' U18 Championship: Iran pitted against Japan, Philippines, Indonesia in pool phase

Sports Desk

Iran has been drawn against Japan, the Philippines, and Indonesia in Pool C of the upcoming AVC Girls' U18 Volleyball Championship, which will begin on July 1 in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand.

The draw for the 16th edition of the tournament was held on Saturday, with 16 teams split into four groups.

Iran will make its ninth successive appearance at the continental showpiece, with its best result coming in the previous edition in 2024, when the Iranian girls progressed to the main-round group stage before settling for sixth place in Thailand.

The Iranian side faced both the Philippines and Japan in the 2024 preliminary group stage, defeating the Filipinos in straight sets but falling to Japan — the most decorated team in the competition with nine titles — by the same scoreline.



● AVC

Elsewhere in Saturday's draw, host Thailand was handed tests against Uzbekistan, Australia, and Mongolia in Pool A, while five-time champion China — which beat Japan in the 2024 final — will begin its title defense against Kazakhstan, Hong Kong, and

Kyrgyzstan in Pool B. Chinese Taipei, the bronze medalist in 2024, is joined by South Korea, India, and Vietnam in Pool D. The four semifinalists in Nakhon Ratchasima will qualify for the 2027 FIVB Girls' U19 World Championship.

Isfahan launches major restoration drive for damaged monuments

Iranica Desk

The head of the Isfahan Municipality's Renovation and Rehabilitation Organization has announced that 80 percent of restoration and reconstruction work on historical buildings damaged in recent attacks US and Israel has been completed, adding that most structural damage will be fully repaired within the next two weeks.

Speaking to IRNA, Mohammadali Izadkhasti outlined the municipality's crisis management and reconstruction measures aimed at restoring Isfahan's damaged historical fabric following the recent attacks. He said that immediately after the incidents, and under the guidance of the provincial governor-general, Isfahan Municipality and the provincial Cultural Heritage Organization launched emergency operations. Initial efforts included extensive social and media campaigns, such as forming human chains around historical monuments to draw international attention to what he described as a cultural tragedy.

Izadkhasti added that detailed technical and legal dossiers documenting the scale and extent of damage to Isfahan's historical buildings were also prepared jointly by the municipality and cultural heritage au-



imna.ir

thorities. According to him, the reports have been submitted to Iran's National Commission for UNESCO and other relevant international bodies.

He said explosions in southern areas of Isfahan caused damage to several Takyehs (traditional religious structures) and valuable buildings within the historic Takht-e Foulad Complex, prompting municipal authorities to immediately begin rescue, stabilization, and restoration operations.

"The Kazerouni Takyeh, whose restoration had only recently been completed, unfortunately suffered serious damage in the attacks," he said, adding that reconstruction work has already begun. He noted that structural stabilization and reinforcement

measures are also underway at Madar-e Shahzadeh Takyeh to ensure the building's safety and long-term durability.

Izadkhasti further stated that Mirzaei Takyeh, located near the explosion sites, was exposed to severe damage, and that restoration and preservation work on the structure is being pursued intensively and with urgency.

He also referred to damage in the Safavid Dowlatkhaneh Complex caused by strikes near the governorate building. Among the affected structures was the Rakib Khaneh Mansion, which houses the Isfahan Museum of Contemporary Art and sustained extensive damage.

"Our colleagues quickly entered



fararu.com

the operational phase of restoration work on the building," he said.

Izadkhasti emphasized that approximately 80 percent of war-related restoration work in these areas has been completed so far and is expected to conclude within the next two weeks, at which point the structural damage will have been fully resolved.

Commenting on the condition of the Timurid Hall Mansion, he said experts are currently conducting detailed assessments and preliminary studies due to the building's complex architectural and structural characteristics.

"The restoration process for this valuable monument will begin soon and will be carried out

with great precision," he added. Cultural heritage experts and local officials have repeatedly warned that damage to Isfahan's historic sites could have long-term consequences for the city's cultural identity and tourism industry. Isfahan, home to numerous Safavid-era monuments and registered historical sites, is considered one of Iran's most important cultural centers and a major destination for domestic and international tourism.

In recent weeks, heritage figures and civil society groups have organized symbolic gatherings and public campaigns in support of preserving the city's historical fabric. Human chains formed around several monuments drew widespread

attention on social media and were described by organizers as an effort to highlight the importance of protecting cultural heritage during times of crisis.

Officials from Iran's cultural heritage sector have also stressed the need for increased international cooperation in documenting and restoring damaged sites. According to local authorities, technical assessments are continuing in several affected areas to determine the full extent of structural and artistic damage to historical buildings.

The Takht-e Foulad Complex, one of the sites affected by the recent explosions, is among Isfahan's most historically significant cemeteries and contains numerous Takyehs, mausoleums, and religious structures dating back several centuries. The Safavid Dowlatkhaneh Complex, another damaged area, is closely associated with Isfahan's role as the capital of the Safavid Empire and includes several important administrative and ceremonial buildings. Cultural heritage officials have emphasized that restoration operations are being carried out under the supervision of conservation specialists in order to preserve the architectural authenticity of the monuments while ensuring structural safety.

Shirgah tourist train highlights revival of rail tourism

Iranica Desk

The first Shirgah (a city in Mazandaran Province) tourist train following third imposed war departed at full capacity in May 2026.

According to the head of Tamin International Travel and Tourism Company Mehrshad Kazemi, the journey symbolized the resilience of Iran's tourism industry and revive social vitality through rail tourism.

the iconic Veresk Bridge, and the renowned engineering landmark known as the "Three Golden Lines (Se Khat Tala)."

In an interview with chn.ir, Kazemi emphasized the importance of relaunching the tourism route.

"At a time when the tourism industry needs stronger resilience and fresh experiences to return to its peak days, the launch of tourism trains has become a central priority for Social Security Tour-

ism Holding (HEGTA), aimed at maximizing the capacities of the rail transportation sector to promote travel equity and achieve a more balanced distribution of tourists across different regions of the country.

He added that the initiative marks the beginning of broader and more coordinated programs designed to strengthen the tourism value chain within the holding company. The Shirgah railway route, known for its con-

temporary architectural value and ecotourism attractions, has long been considered one of Iran's most popular rail corridors. Officials say the route has once again become a focal point for tourists under HEGTA's new strategy of sustaining tourism activities under all conditions.



fadaktrains.com

The rail tour takes passengers through some of the country's notable engineering and natural heritage sites.

During the trip, travelers enjoyed the scenic Tehran-Shirgah railway route and visited attractions including the historic Bon-e Kuh railway station, the local market of Shurab,

ism Holding (HEGTA), he said. "This initiative is not merely an operational step, but also a message of renewed hope and dynamism for the country's travel network."

Kazemi described rail tourism as a narrative linking history and nature, adding that HEGTA is pursuing a strategic approach

temporary architectural value and ecotourism attractions, has long been considered one of Iran's most popular rail corridors. Officials say the route has once again become a focal point for tourists under HEGTA's new strategy of sustaining tourism activities under all conditions.

Iranian cultural heritage is key to national identity



ical.ir

Iranica Desk

The director of the Iranian Association for Cooperation with UNESCO has stressed the need to transform traditional endowments into modern forms in order to safeguard Iran's national identity.

Speaking at a gathering of the South Khorasan Province's Association of Cultural Heritage Benefactors attended by intellectuals and cultural figures, Mohammadreza Majidi, a faculty member at the University of Tehran, highlighted the strategic importance of Iran's civilizational heritage in the contemporary world, according to chn.ir.

Rejecting what he described as a "museum-only" view of ancient artifacts, Majidi said cultural heritage should not be regarded merely as relics for display. "These works constitute the cultural backbone and a primary source of security and identity for Iranians, especially younger generations," he said. "We live in a world where

identities are increasingly fragile, and our heritage serves as a national anchor."

Referring to the importance of manuscripts in preserving Iran's civilizational continuity, he noted that handwritten documents kept in private homes and libraries are "the veins of our history," demonstrating the nation's long-standing tradition of knowledge and intellectual achievement.

Majidi also expressed concern over the widening gap between generations, particularly between older generations and Generations Z and Alpha, who have grown up in digital environments. He stressed that Iranian identity extends beyond official documents and is deeply rooted in the country's written and cultural heritage. According to him, strengthening this awareness would help future generations face the future with greater confidence.

He further described attacks on Iran's cultural sites

and identity-related documents as part of a broader "civilizational war" aimed at weakening the historical memory of the Iranian nation. Majidi argued that preserving cultural heritage should therefore be viewed as a strategic component of cultural passive defense.

Turning to the economic potential of heritage, Majidi called for a transition from an oil-dependent economy toward a heritage-based economy. He said that if cultural heritage were integrated into everyday economic and social life rather than confined to museums, tourism alone could account for up to half of Iran's oil revenues.

"The distinguishing feature of Iranian tourism compared to emerging destinations is its authenticity and historical depth," he said, adding that proper management could bring cultural heritage to the center of local livelihoods and community development. Majidi also called for a reassessment of the traditional concept of waqf (endowment)

within Iranian-Islamic culture. He urged religious scholars and experts to redirect charitable endowments toward modern needs such as the restoration of historical monuments, preservation of manuscripts, and heritage education.

He also referred to the successful digitization of 27,000 manuscripts at the Library, Museum and Documentation Center of Iran Parliament and proposed the establishment of secure archival and digitization centers in South Khorasan Province in cooperation with the National Library to protect historical documents from destruction and natural deterioration. Majidi described families as playing an irreplaceable role in preserving national identity. "Our true heritage is inside our homes," he said, emphasizing that every household should serve as a stronghold for protecting historical objects and passing on cultural authenticity to future generations.

Mexican war prints go on show at TMOCA

Arts & Culture Desk

The Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMOCA) opened an exhibition of works by Mexican printmakers on May 23, as the latest instalment of its 'Art & War' series turns to Latin America's visual narratives of conflict and nationhood.

The exhibition, titled 'Eleven Artworks by Mexican Printmakers,' features 11 pieces drawn from the museum's collection and will run until May 30 in the museum's main hall in the Iranian capital, Mehr News Agency reported.

At the heart of the showcase are two rare prints dating back to the 1920s by acclaimed Mexican artists David Alfaro Siqueiros and José Clemente Orozco, whose politically charged works chronicled the struggles and upheav-



als of the Mexican people during a turbulent period in the country's history. The exhibition also brings together nine contemporary Mexican prints exploring themes of independence, collective memory and social iden-

ity, extending the museum's broader curatorial focus on the cultural imprint of war and resistance.

The program marks the third chapter of TMOCA's ongoing 'Art & War' initiative, which previously

spotlighted American pop art from April 22 to May 10 and Spanish art from May 11 to 19, drawing attention to how artists across continents have grappled with conflict through visual expression.

Tehran Virtual Book Fair extended as reader demand surges across Iran

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance has extended the seventh Tehran Virtual Book Fair by two days until May 25 after a wave of nationwide demand and mounting publisher requests, Deputy Culture Minister Mohsen Javadi said in Tehran on Saturday.

The online fair, which opened on May 16 and had initially been due to close on May 23, drew strong participation from readers across the country, triggering a sharp rise in book orders and prompting organizers to keep the digital marketplace running longer.

Javadi, who also heads the Tehran International Book Fair, said cultural institutions, publishers and readers had pressed for the extension as trans-



actions accelerated in the closing days of the event. He described the virtual fair as a significant step towards broadening public access to books, saying the data generated during this edition would help shape future planning for both digital and physical publishing platforms. The extension offers readers more time to browse titles with greater care,

Javadi added, while urging buyers not to leave purchases until the final hours in order to avoid heavy traffic on the platform as payment gateways close.

The annual online fair has increasingly evolved into a nationwide cultural showcase, widening access to publishers beyond Iran's major urban centers.

Iran seeks permanent home for guardians of its civilization



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri on Saturday called for the establishment of a "museum of luminaries of Iran's cultural heritage and civilization" in Tehran, urging authorities to preserve the statues, biographies and oral histories of the country's leading cultural custodians as part of a broader drive to reinforce national identity and safeguard war-damaged historical sites.

Speaking at a conference on the restoration and reconstruction of buildings damaged during the recent conflict, Salehi-Amiri described veteran heritage scholars and conservators as Iran's "repositories of civilizational gold", arguing that the nation's true wealth lay not in oil, gas or trade, but in generations who had devoted their lives to protecting Iranian culture and identity, CHTN reported. He said the proposed muse-

um would help younger generations grasp the scale of Iran's historical legacy and reconnect with their cultural roots at a time of widening social and generational fractures.

"Iran's identity card is embedded in its cultural heritage," Salehi-Amiri said, citing Persepolis, Alamut, Jiroft and Susa among the pillars of the country's civilizational memory. He warned against what he called the "strategic error" of equating development solely with industry and natural resources, saying sustainable progress depended on culturally grounded and educated societies.

The minister portrayed Iran as a land "layered with mysteries and civilizational codes", pointing to millions of historical artifacts, tens of thousands of nationally registered monuments and 29 UNESCO-listed sites.

He said the endurance of the Persian language, Nowruz and centuries-old national traditions reflected the resil-

ience of Iranian civilization despite repeated invasions throughout history. Referring to damage inflicted on some historical sites during the recent war, Salehi-Amiri said attacks on heritage structures had deepened public attachment to the nation and strengthened national cohesion.

"Iran returned to the embrace of its people," he said, describing the national flag as an enduring symbol of unity during the crisis. He also instructed the ministry's cultural heritage deputy to convene a national conference on restoring damaged historical monuments, with participation from conservation experts, veteran restorers and academics.

Salehi-Amiri said the initiative should produce actionable restoration policies while drawing on international institutions, expatriate Iranians, private-sector financing and corporate social responsibility programs. The minister further called for the expansion of apprenticeship-based restoration schools across the provinces, arguing that conservation skills must be transmitted through hands-on mentorship rather than purely academic training.

UN agencies urge stronger global cooperation to safeguard Iran's biodiversity

Social Desk

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) representative Ayshanie Medagangoda-Labé on Saturday hailed Iran's scientific and ecological capacities in biodiversity protection and called for broader international cooperation and stronger community engagement during an International Day for Biological Diversity gathering in the northern city of Sari, Mazandaran Province.

Speaking at the event attended by environmental researchers, academics, civil society groups and government officials, the UNDP envoy highlighted the ecological significance of the ancient Hyrcanian forests stretching across northern Iran and said the region's natural heritage required sustained protection after enduring centuries of environmental pressure.

She noted that Iran was among the founding members of the Convention on Biological Diversity and had accumulated valuable experience in preserving internationally recognized ecosystems, including UNESCO-listed reserves. Labe also pointed to ongoing joint programs between UNDP, Iranian institutions and local partners aimed at tackling environmental stress and dust storms in several provinces.



United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) representative Ayshanie Medagangoda-Labé speaks during an event marking the International Day for Biological Diversity in the northern city of Sari, Mazandaran Province on May 23, 2026. [doe.ir](#)

Biodiversity tied to national security

Shina Ansari, head of Iran's Department of Environment (DoE), described biodiversity as a pillar of the country's biological, economic and cultural security, saying environmental protection must remain central to sustainable development policies. Addressing the conference beside the lush Hyrcanian woodlands, Ansari said more than 19 million hectares of protected land were currently managed by the Department of Environment. She added that upgrading conservation infrastructure, improving ranger training and expanding modern monitoring systems ranked among the administration's priorities. Ansari also said more than 1.34 million hectares of wetland territory had recently received official state ownership documentation under the DoE, calling the

move a major step towards stronger wetland preservation.

She warned that habitat degradation, unsustainable land conversion and forest destruction remained among the gravest threats facing Iran's ecosystems. DoE chief added that environmental authorities were also documenting damage inflicted on coastal and wetland ecosystems during recent regional conflicts for possible international follow-up.

UNESCO stresses education, awareness

Hojjatollah Fartousi, secretary-general of Iran's National Commission for UNESCO, said the accelerating biodiversity crisis had become a defining global challenge threatening food security, public health, economies and even international peace. He argued that protecting nature required

more than physical conservation measures and depended equally on public awareness, environmental education and social participation. Fartousi described biosphere reserves as "living laboratories of sustainable development" where conservation, scientific research and responsible tourism could coexist.

He also pointed to the registration of the Dalkou biosphere reserve as a significant step towards linking environmental stewardship with national and regional development strategies.

Civil society, FAO warn of mounting pressures

Mohammad Alamouti, secretary of Iran's network of environmental NGOs, warned that northern Iran faced mounting ecological strain from excessive consumption of natural resources and unchecked land-use changes.

Meanwhile, FAO representative Farrukh Toirov called Mazandaran Province a globally significant ecological zone and urged deeper collaboration between local specialists and international institutions to prevent irreversible environmental degradation and preserve biodiversity for future generations.