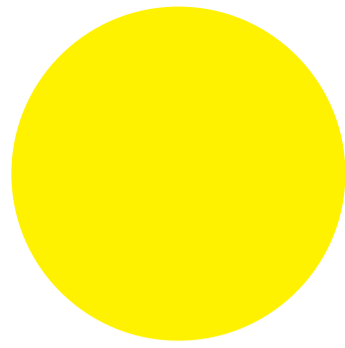


Iranian films win top int'l honors; animation heads to Polish festival



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The screengrabs from a partially blurred video released by Fars News Agency on June 8, 2026 show missiles being launched from an undisclosed location in Iran toward Israel.

FM spox Baqaei tells Iran Daily:

US does not want Iran to compete at World Cup without pressure

By Sina Hosseini
Staff writer

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

As major international football tournaments draw closer, public and media attention increasingly turns to the way these events are managed and administered. Beyond their sporting and technical dimensions, such competitions involve highly sensitive legal, administrative and even diplomatic considerations. Issues such as visa issuance for national team delegations, coordination among relevant authorities, and the host country's treatment of participating teams become central topics of discussion.



Esmail Baqaei

The significance of these issues is heightened by the fact that any disruption or lack of coordination in these processes can call into question the principle of fair and non-discriminatory competition—a principle that international governing bodies, particularly FIFA, have consistently emphasized.

Against this backdrop, and following developments surrounding Iran's participation in the upcoming FIFA World Cup hosted by the United States, Mexico and

Canada, several questions and concerns have emerged regarding compliance with international regulations and the role of responsible institutions in safeguarding the rights of participating teams.

To examine these issues in greater depth, Iran Daily spoke with Esmail Baqaei, spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, about the challenges facing Iran's national team and the measures needed to ensure the tournament is conducted in a fair, orderly and professional manner.

IRAN DAILY: What is your assessment of the US failure to issue visas for several members of Iran's delegation?

BAQAEI: Concerns about obstruction by the host country have prompted different reactions at various stages. The refusal to issue visas to fifteen members of Iran's delegation travelling to the United States may indicate challenges in meeting certain standards and procedures that are expected at the international level. Within this framework, some observers view the situation as an example of insufficient adherence to international principles and regulations.

Under FIFA regulations, the host government is required to issue entry visas to all teams that qualify for the World Cup, including players, coaches, administrative personnel and members of the management

team. Accordingly, there is no legitimate basis for preventing the entry of a team or any part of its delegation on political, ethnic or other non-sporting grounds.

This principle is a binding global obligation under rules approved by the FIFA Congress and applies to all countries that host major international tournaments, including the World Cup. Any government that accepts the responsibility of hosting such competitions is therefore required to fully uphold these commitments. Political disagreements or foreign-policy considerations cannot be used as grounds for denying visas to members of another country's delegation or preventing their lawful participation in the tournament.

In this case, the United States, as host nation, has not issued entry visas to approximately fifteen members of Iran's delegation. These individuals each hold official and legitimate responsibilities within the structure of Iranian football, and their presence alongside the team is considered necessary under FIFA regulations.

The media team accompanying the Iranian football squad has also been denied entry into the United States, despite the fact that FIFA's professional and operational framework regards media personnel as an important component of a team's delegation.

The absence of the media team could disrupt the flow of informa-

tion and the team's official media coverage, limiting public access to news and developments involving the national side.

For these reasons, the situation is viewed as a departure from the standard procedures governing the organization of World Cup competitions and is regarded as an example of non-compliance with FIFA's principles and regulations. Such circumstances risk undermining the professional support structure that is essential for a team competing in a major international tournament.

What is your overall assessment of the potential consequences of this situation?

Any restriction that prevents the full participation of official members of sports delegations—particularly in media and administrative capacities—can affect both the quality of tournament organization and the principle of equal opportunity. For that reason, all host countries are expected to fully comply with the obligations and requirements set out in international regulations, especially those established by FIFA.

What is your take on the delayed issuance of multiple-entry visas and the media campaign directed against Iran's national team?

The delayed issuance of multiple-entry visas to national team players and members of the coaching staff, coupled with extensive



Football fans cheer as Iran's players leave the Tijuana International Airport on a bus in Tijuana, Mexico on June 7, 2026, ahead of the FIFA 2026 World Cup football tournament. AFP

media coverage in certain American outlets suggesting that the team could face restrictions on its movements within the United States, is viewed as discriminatory conduct that runs counter to internationally accepted principles and regulations. Such actions are regarded as provocative and unacceptable.

It should also be noted that, even before the tournament began, the possibility of denying visas to certain members of Iran's delegation had already been raised in official statements, including remarks made by a senior US diplomatic official.

Statements of this nature, when made at an official level, can create the impression that full adherence to international rules and principles is open to question. At the same time, restrictions have reportedly been imposed on the entry of Iranian fans, journalists, media representatives, and even

some members of the team's technical and operational staff. Such an approach may be seen as introducing political considerations into the realm of sport.

International sporting institutions have consistently emphasized the principle that sport should remain separate from politics. In this case, however, that principle does not appear to have been fully respected, and there seems to be a degree of overlap between political considerations and the sporting environment.

Concerns have also been raised regarding the visa process for players and coaching staff. Various reports point to administrative difficulties, delays in processing applications, the failure to issue visas for certain technical and executive personnel, and restrictions affecting groups such as media representatives and supporters.

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IRGC gives 'harsh response' to Israel's attacks on Lebanon

Iran won't retreat against any threat: **Pezeshkian**

International Desk

Iran announced the cessation of military operations against Israel on Monday, saying that a "painful response" was delivered to the regime in response to its recent aggression against Lebanon.

The command center of Iran's Armed Forces, Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, said in a statement that the halt came after Iran's Armed Forces delivered a response to the "atrocities and mischief" of the "savage Zionist regime" in southern Lebanon and the Dahiyeh district, which were carried out with the support of "criminal America". The headquarters emphasized that while operations have been halted, "much more intense and crushing measures than before" will be taken if aggression and mischief, including in southern Lebanon, continue.

On Sunday, Israel's Ramat David Air Base in northern occupied territories was targeted by the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) after the regime's attacks on southern Lebanon earlier on the day. The IRGC said the air base had served as the origin of aggressions against Lebanon.

The IRGC also struck Israel's strategic Nevatim and Tel Nof airbases in northern occupied territories with missiles after the regime launched attacks on several Iranian cities in response to the

IRGC's retaliatory attacks.

Israel's attacks on Iran

According to IRNA, Israel targeted several military and industrial sites in the cities of Tehran, Isfahan, and Khuzestan. The spokesman for Iran's Red Crescent Society Mojtaba Khaledi said on Monday that the attacks targeted 12 points across the country.

In the southern city of Khuzestan, the attacks damaged part of Karoon Petrochemical Company's plant in Mahshahr, where 14 people were injured.

In the capital Tehran, at least two explosions were heard early morning. Authorities rejected claims that Tehran's Mehrabad Airport was targeted by the Israeli military.

The Israeli military claimed it struck Iranian defense systems deployed across several areas in the country.

US President Donald Trump in a social media post earlier on Monday said that both Iran and key ally Israel should stop fighting.

The strikes came at a critical moment with diplomatic efforts to end the conflict between Iran and the United States on a knife-edge.

Iran had earlier warned that it would suspend peace talks with the United States if Israel attacks Beirut. Tehran has insisted that any deal to end the wider war – paused by a separate April ceasefire – must also halt the fighting



in Lebanon.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei warned at a press conference in Tehran that diplomacy was continuing but risked being "affected" by the escalation.

No retreat

President Masoud Pezeshkian in a post on X on Monday reaffirmed Iran's unwavering stance in the face of any threat, saying Tehran will neither retreat nor hesitate in defending its na-

tional security and peace.

Pezeshkian said Iran's top priority remains safeguarding national security and ensuring the Iranian nation's tranquility.

"We will defend the rights of the nation with authority and will not retreat by any threat."

He said "diplomacy and defense" constitute the two essential components of national power, noting that Iran has neither abandoned the battlefield nor the negotiating table.



The grab shows the sentence "You will regret", which has been written on a missile fired by the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps at Israeli positions in the occupied territories on June 7, 2026.

The European Union's top diplomat Kaja Kallas also reacted to the developments, calling on both sides to "sit down to a negotiation table and agree", adding that "the region does not need an escalation."

Iran calls idea of using its assets to pay damages to US allies 'ridiculous'

International Desk

Iran on Monday described as "ridiculous" reports that the US could use Iran's frozen assets to compensate regional allies for war-related damages, saying that such claims are part of "media war" to pressure Iran.

Reuters reported on Saturday, citing a source familiar with the matter, that the United States would make Iranian assets available to Persian Gulf Arab allies to support rebuilding and repairs for future damage caused by Iran.

The US would also consider using those assets to support repairs for past damages, the source said, adding that US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent had directed a team to

assess the cost of damage already inflicted on the Persian Gulf allies by Iran.

"This claim is ridiculous; because we strongly hold claims against all regional countries that have in any way played a role in the aggression and crimes of the Zionist regime and the United States against Iran, and we will certainly pursue these claims by any means", Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said in his weekly press conference.

Such reports are part of a media war and pressure campaign being pursued by Iran's enemies, part of which originates from Israel, Baqaei said. The Iranian official said that the release of Iran's frozen assets in other countries is

one of the main issues of any possible agreement between Iran and the US, stressing that Tehran will never show any leniency in this regard.

Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi also reacted to the report, saying that the governments that placed their territory and facilities at the service of aggression against Iran are not in a position to demand reparations.

"Iran's assets are neither war spoils for Washington nor a payment fund for its allies," he said, warning, "Any seizure, transfer, or allocation of Iran's property without the consent of the Iranian government is itself a new internationally wrongful act," Gharibabadi pointed out.

He described the decision as a new brazen act on the part of the US.

"If Washington, as the primary aggressor in the military aggression against Iran, is truly seeking to compensate for damages, it should not get the address wrong: it should start with America itself and with the regime that is the main source of arson, aggression, and instability in the region," he said.

Gharibabadi added that Iran will not stop to demand accountability from aggressors and will seek and receive damages caused by 40 days of the US-Israeli war, adding, "Iran will seriously pursue this."

For decades, the United States has held billions of dollars of legitimate Iranian wealth: oil



Esmail Baqaei
IRNA

revenues, central bank reserves, and commercial assets, seized through illegitimate executive orders and maintained through political pressure. Iran has been asking for its

seized funds to be released by the US under a framework that the two countries are negotiating to end the US-Israeli aggression against Iran, which began in February.

Iran warns IAEA 'confrontation' undermines prospects of diplomatic solution

International Desk

Iran's Permanent Mission to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Vienna warned against any anti-Iran move at the UN nuclear agency, saying that "coercion and confrontation" undermine prospects of a diplomatic solution.

The warning came as the United States is lobbying other countries on the UN nuclear watchdog's Board of Governors to back a draft resolution demanding Iran to provide "precise" information on its enriched uranium stockpile and give the UN nuclear agency access to its nuclear sites "without delay".

The US-drafted text was seen by media on Sunday and circulated ahead of this week's quarterly meeting of the 35-nation board.

The draft resolution is expected to be submitted for a vote this week to the board of governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that started meeting on Monday.

Last week, the IAEA in a confidential report reiterated that the lack of access to nuclear sites in Iran constituted a "proliferation concern".

The draft resolution affirms that it is "essential and urgent" that Iran "without delay" provides the agency with "precise information on nuclear material accountability and safeguarded nuclear facilities in Iran".

"The board should be cautious on the path forward. Coercion and confrontation do not lead to cooperation, it undermines prospects of a diplomatic solution," the Iranian mission said in a message posted on its X account on Monday.

The message described the US-Israeli bombings of Iranian facilities as the main reason behind differences between Iran and the IAEA, saying, "The present circumstances with regard to Iran nuclear cooperation with the #IAEA are a direct consequence of 17 waves of illegal armed attacks by the US-Israeli regime against Iranian safeguarded peaceful nuclear facilities as well as ongoing grave threats".

Calling the IAEA's stance on the aggression against Iranian facilities "unprecedented in IAEA history," the mission argued that "responsibility for an internationally wrongful act rests with the perpetrator and cannot be transferred to the victim."

"The Board must not be instrumentalized to relieve those who carried out these attacks of their responsibility," it added.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Bushehr nuclear plant ranks among world's top 10 facilities for third straight year: *AEOI*

Economy Desk

Iran's only nuclear power plant has been ranked among the world's top 10 facilities for the third consecutive year, receiving a perfect score of 100 out of 100 for safety and efficiency, according to the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, Mohammad Eslami.

The assessment was conducted by inspectors and specialists from the World Association of Nuclear Operators (WANO) following visits to various nuclear plants around the world, Eslami said, according to Press TV on Monday.

He said the ranking was not self-declared but was based on an on-site evaluation of the plant's processes, environment, personnel and operations.

The Bushehr nuclear power plant plays a key role in supplying the country's electricity. The facility has a net generating capacity of 915 megawatts and produces approximately six to seven terawatt-hours of electricity annually, according to official figures.

The plant's first unit was built with Russian cooperation and was designed to generate

1,000 megawatts of electricity. So far, it has produced a cumulative 80 million megawatt-hours of nuclear-generated electricity that has been injected into Iran's national power grid.

According to Tasnim news agency, the Bushehr nuclear power plant has a capacity of 1,020 megawatts and accounts for 1% of Iran's total electricity generation capacity. In total, thermal power plants — including combined-cycle, simple-cycle gas and steam facilities — with an installed capacity of 78,617 megawatts account for 78.4% of the country's installed electricity generation capacity. Their share of Iran's actual electricity production is around 90%. Hydropower plants, with an installed capacity of 12,131 megawatts, account for 12.1% of the country's electricity generation capacity. Distributed generation facilities, with a capacity of 2,923 megawatts, represent 2.9%; small hydropower plants, with 113.8 megawatts, account for 0.1%; renewable energy plants, with an installed capacity of 5,101 megawatts, make up 5.1%; and diesel power plants, with a capacity of 408 megawatts, account for 0.4% of the country's electricity generation capacity.



ISOICO dry-docks 13 vessels for repair, refurbishment since March

Economy Desk

The Iran Shipbuilding and Offshore Industries Complex (ISOICO) has placed 13 small and medium-sized vessels into dry dock for repair, refurbishment and operational readiness since the start of the Iranian year on March 21, the state news agency IRNA reported on Monday.

Vahid Sedaqat, head of ISOICO's small vessels group and acting head of its medium vessels group, said six vessels remain in dry dock, while seven have been launched back into the water after undergoing repair and refurbishment.

The vessels include four tugboats, four barges, three fuel supply ves-

sels, one landing craft and one supply boat, all of which have been prepared and made operational under the complex's production and repair programs, according to Sedaqat. He added that based on the planned schedule, next week two more small and medium-sized vessels will enter dry dock, while three vessels will be re-floated.

"This trend demonstrates the continuation of the complex's operational activities in the field of vessel repair and maintenance," he said, highlighting ISOICO's strive to provide the repair services required by the country's maritime industry in the shortest possible time by utilizing the expertise of its technical work-

force and its industrial infrastructure.

Sedaqat said results-oriented performance was the primary benchmark in production and technical activities, adding that the delivery of repaired vessels in accordance with technical standards ensured the continued flow of production and operations in the country's maritime industry.

ISOICO, Iran's largest and most advanced maritime industrial complex, operates in the design, construction and repair of various vessels and offshore structures and has the capability to refurbish and repair ocean-going vessels, commercial ships, tankers, service vessels, drilling platforms and offshore facilities.

FM spox Baqaei ...

Such circumstances are not entirely consistent with the spirit that underpins international sporting competitions and may ultimately affect the quality of participation by the teams involved. They also have the potential to create non-sporting pressures on Iran's national team and contribute to unequal conditions in the lead-up to the tournament.

Could these circumstances create psychological pressure and lead to an uneven playing field?

The cumulative effect of these alleged measures and restrictions could influence the team's state of mind and overall preparedness. From this perspective, such conditions may increase psychological pressure and create a degree of inequality compared with other participating teams. If the situation continues, there is a risk that it will be perceived as creating an uneven competitive environment—an issue that warrants attention and management by the relevant authorities.

Through these actions, the United States is seeking to ensure that our national team enters the World Cup under pressure. At the same time, our players remain highly motivated to achieve success and to bring joy to the people of Iran.

What is your broader view of the national team's situation under these circumstances?

Despite all the challenges and restrictions that have been raised, the importance of national support for sports teams becomes even more evident.

The players and coaching staff of the national team will enter the tournament under particularly sensitive circumstances. Nevertheless, they are expected to remain focused on their technical capabilities and deliver a performance that reflects their abilities.

Participation in a competition of this magnitude is not merely a sporting matter. It also carries symbolic significance and can serve as a reflection of determination, unity and collective effort.

How important is national support under these conditions?

Under circumstances such as these, national support plays a crucial role in strengthening morale and enhancing players' motivation.

Regardless of the challenges and potential restrictions involved, emphasizing solidarity, encouragement and support for the national team can make a meaningful contribution to improving its performance in the competitions ahead.

How do you see the role of Iran's Embassy during the national team's stay in Mexico, and what challenges do you anticipate going forward?

During the national team's trip to Mexico, the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran provided the necessary support under his diplomatic responsibilities, helping the team overcome a number of operational obstacles and administrative challenges so that it could carry out its activities in more stable and less stressful conditions.

At the same time, there are concerns

that the scope of potential obstruction may not be limited to these instances alone. As the process continues, we may witness additional challenges, including actions by tournament officials or even institutions responsible for immigration matters.

What measures can be taken to address such circumstances?

Any potential actions by the other side are considered foreseeable. There is a view that American policymakers and decision-makers may seek to use all available means to create distractions or impose non-sporting pressures to affect Iran's national team as it prepares for the competition.

Such developments could be seen as an attempt to introduce non-sporting considerations into the competitive environment, making the start of the tournament more difficult for the Iranian team.

If such conditions emerge, the responsibility of national institutions and the broader public to strengthen unity and support the team will become even more important.

Under those circumstances, members of the coaching staff and the players themselves will be expected to remain fully aware of the situation while maintaining their focus on preparation and technical performance. They should enter the competition with even greater motivation. Pursuing sporting objectives in such an environment may present additional challenges. Ultimately, however, the decisive factors will be the team's resolve and the players' technical abilities.

IFO releases 800,000 juvenile sturgeon into natural habitats under stock restoration program

Economy Desk

Iran's Fisheries Organization has released 800,000 juvenile sturgeon into natural habitats since the start of the current Iranian year starting on March 21 as part of its national stock restoration program, a senior official at the organization said. Mahmoud Qobadi, director general of the organization's Office for the Restoration and Protection of Aquatic Genetic Resources, said, "The release program will continue through the end of the breeding season."

According to IRNA, stock restoration programs along the southern coast of the Caspian Sea are carried out with the participation of specialized centers in the three northern provinces of Gilan, Mazandaran and Golestan, where millions of juvenile sturgeon produced through artificial breeding are released into natural habitats each year.

Qobadi said restoring sturgeon stocks has become one of the country's most important national strategies for protecting biodiversity, preserving genetic resources and reviving the natural populations of these valuable species in the Caspian Sea. Stressing that stock restoration extends far beyond the production and release of juvenile fish, he said broodstock management, the preservation of genetic diversity, the prevention of genetic deterioration in fish populations, the monitoring of release

outcomes, and the protection of natural habitats were all integral components of effective stock restoration programs.

He said that last year a total of 1,943,692 juvenile sturgeon were released into rivers and natural habitats connected to the Caspian Sea.

Of that total, 961,792 juvenile fish were released in Gilan Province, 433,400 in Mazandaran Province and 548,500 in Golestan Province, he said.

Qobadi explained that the country's stock restoration programs aim to strengthen natural populations, increase the likelihood that broodstock will return to their spawning rivers, and preserve the genetic resources of these valuable species.

Discussing the global significance of sturgeon, he said, "Sturgeon, as one of the most valuable aquatic genetic resources in Iran and the world, have experienced a significant decline in their natural populations in recent decades due to factors such as habitat destruction, environmental pollution, illegal fishing and climate change." "Therefore, their protection and stock restoration are among the priorities of the Iran Fisheries Organization," he added.

Following the agreement among the Caspian littoral states to halt commercial sturgeon fishing in order to restore natural stocks, stock restoration and artificial breeding programs have become the

most important tools for protecting these valuable species. Within this framework, Iran has continuously pursued genetic conservation, breeding and the release of juvenile sturgeon, he added.

Qobadi said the expansion of sturgeon farming in recent years has helped meet part of market demand and reduce pressure on wild populations. He added that linking stock restoration with the development of sustainable aquaculture is one of the most effective long-term approaches to conserving these valuable species.

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

Ali-Akbar Khodaei, in an interview with Iran Daily last month, said that Iran's caviar export revenues increased from \$3.188 million in 2023 to around \$6 million in 2024. He added that official figures for 2025 had not yet been released, but estimates indicated exports reached between \$7.8 million and \$8 million by March 2026.

Khodaei also said export volumes increased, with shipments rising to 7,130 kilograms during the 10-month period from March 20, 2025, to Jan. 19, 2026, compared with 6,200 kilograms in the corresponding period a year earlier, representing a 14% increase.

Conflict, security of nuclear facilities in Middle East



By Tomisha Bino
Research Fellow for
Energy Geopolitics

ANALYSIS

Nuclear power has always come with a high-risk tag. The attacks by Israel and the United States against the Iranian nuclear programme in 2025 and 2026 and the Russian capture of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant (NPP) in Ukraine since 2022 have brought this risk into hyperfocus. Nuclear-security risks are very real, and the laws and norms meant to prevent them are under severe strain. For potential nuclear newcomers in the Persian Gulf, these risks might prove high enough to make them rethink their nuclear plans.

The case of the 2025–26 US/Israel–Iran conflicts is both familiar and novel. Both Israel and the US carried out “preventive” attacks against nuclear and “weapons-of-mass-destruction” facilities they regarded as potential proliferation risks in Iraq in 1981 and 1991 and in Syria in 2007. Yet the scale of the attacks on Iran’s nuclear programme since 2025, coupled with the attacks on energy infrastructure in this recent conflict, may compound the perceived risk to NPPs, which run the highest risk of radiological emergencies.

Norms do not exist in a vacuum and nuclear facilities are not sacred. The norm against attacking them exists to prevent the catastrophic consequences of such an attack. While greatly strained, the norm against attacking NPPs specifically has held. Persian Gulf states’ nuclear-energy ambitions — which have materialised in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and are in the planning stages in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain — are not merely prestige projects. They are intended to address real needs that underpin their economic and energy strategies. Persian Gulf states have shown keen interest in acquiring traditional reactors and small modular reactors



(SMRs), both of which have vulnerabilities. Therefore, this situation warrants a sober assessment of the risks and possible mitigation measures associated with pursuing nuclear power in a conflict-prone environment.

Low probability, high consequence

Although the ongoing Russia–Ukraine and US/Israel–Iran wars have shed light on the security risks associated with NPPs, the objective of an attack on a nuclear facility and the nature of that facility are important considerations when attempting to identify the risks and possible mitigation measures. Typically, attacks against NPPs by states have been aimed at counter-proliferation, and those by non-state armed groups (NSAGs) at terrorising the population for political ends. Recent attacks on energy infrastructure may lead to a perception that NPPs can be legitimate targets.

By and large, Israeli and US attacks (in the past cyber, and more recently kinetic) against the Iranian nuclear programme have not targeted facilities at risk of a large-scale

radiological release. This counter-proliferation logic of the US and Israel explains the facilities they have targeted, such as facilities for uranium enrichment and fuel fabrication.

Iran’s only operational NPP, Bushehr, has been spared in 2025 and 2026, further suggesting that environmental concerns may have been a consideration. Despite reports of three attacks in the vicinity of Bushehr, neither the US nor Israel has said that they targeted the plant, and impacts near Bushehr may have been fragments from attacks on nearby military targets. Prior Israeli attacks on nuclear reactors — Osiraq in Iraq, al-Kibar in Syria and Arak in Iran — all occurred while the reactors were non-operational with no nuclear material on site. Compared to nuclear reactors used for electricity generation like Bushehr, these reactors were relatively small, with power outputs between one-twentieth and one-fiftieth of a modern commercial power reactor. Iraq had attacked Bushehr multiple times while under construction in the 1980s, however. It was then a safeguarded, light-water reactor to be fuelled with 3%–enriched uranium, but Iraq nevertheless considered it a proliferation risk.

Currently, there are no serious proliferation concerns associated with the Bushehr NPP. This is because of the reactors’ configuration, which uses low-enriched uranium and is not optimised for plutonium production. Russia supplies the fuel for the plant and takes it back when spent, while providing much of the technical support to enable the functioning of the site, including hundreds of personnel. The site also remains under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

Even if the probability of the Bushehr NPP being attacked is low, the consequences would be catastrophic for the Persian Gulf states, so the risk perception will always be acute. To address public concern, the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)’s Emergency Management Centre was activated in 2025 to monitor radiation levels.

Iran’s single attack affecting the Shimon Peres Negev Nuclear Research Center in March 2026, a site associated with Israel’s



The illustration shows bullet holes on a hazard symbol for radiation or radioactivity.

INSAGO/SHUTTERSTOCK

nuclear-weapons programme, struck the two adjacent towns of Dimona and Arad. The heavily protected reactor was unharmed, and the attack served at best as a response to the attack on the Natanz uranium-enrichment facility. The proliferation of NSAGs in the region also poses a threat to NPPs. A terror attack could be far more dangerous than one by a state actor, as a large-scale radiological release would likely be the main objective. In 2017, the Yemeni group Ansarullah (Houthi) claimed they had fired a cruise missile at the UAE’s Barakah NPP while it was still under construction. However, Ansarullah provided no evidence for their claim; the UAE denied reports of an attack and no damage was reported at the facility.

More recently, a drone strike on May 17, 2026, caused a fire at a generator supplying electricity to the plant. The incident did not cause a radiological release and



Persian Gulf states’ nuclear-energy ambitions — which have materialised in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and are in the planning stages in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain — are not merely prestige projects. They are intended to address real needs that underpin their economic and energy strategies. Persian Gulf states have shown keen interest in acquiring traditional reactors and small modular reactors (SMRs), both of which have vulnerabilities. Therefore, this situation warrants a sober assessment of the risks and possible mitigation measures associated with pursuing nuclear power in a conflict-prone environment.

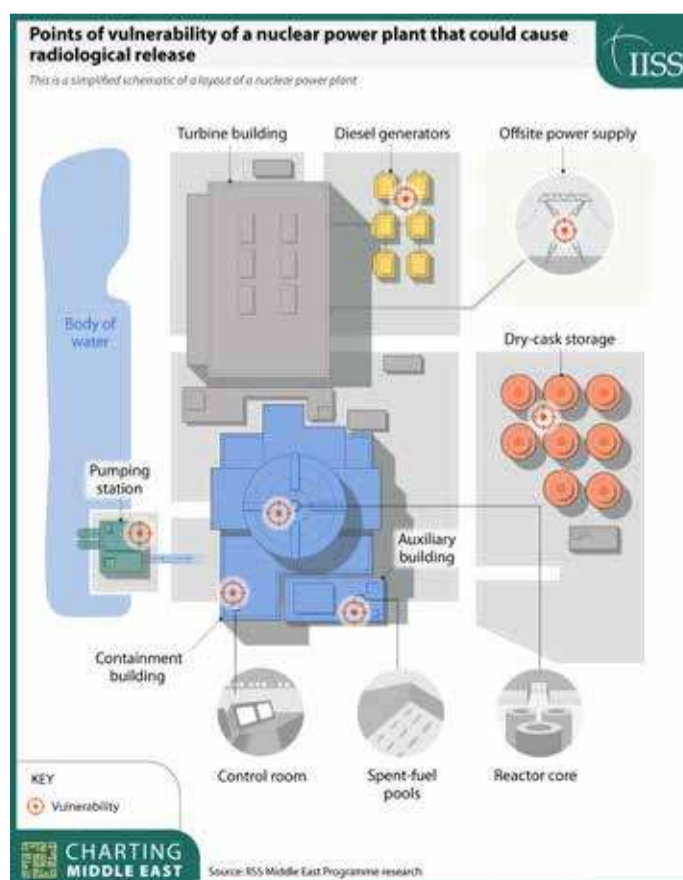
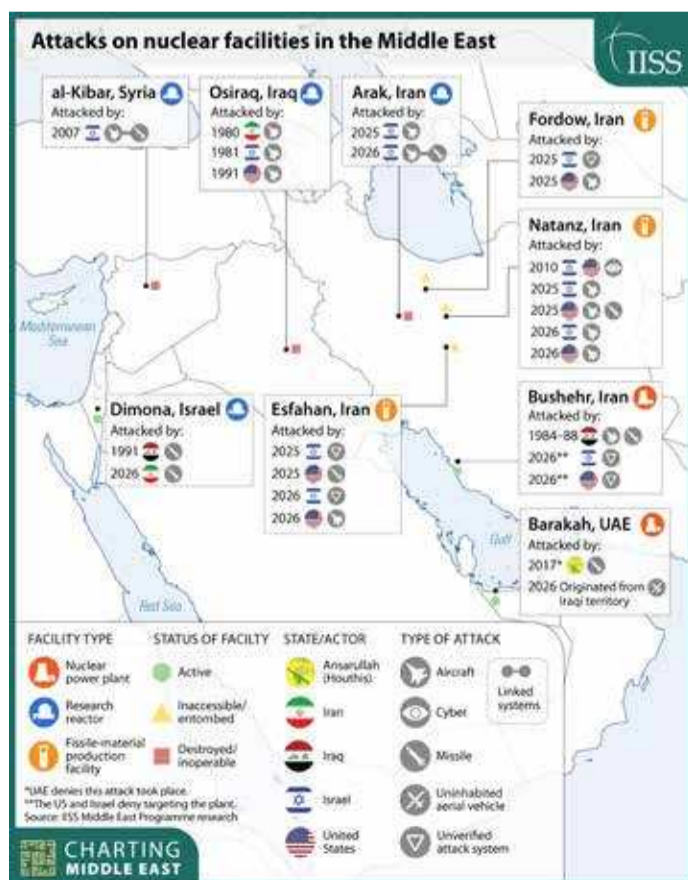
onsite emergency diesel generators were deployed to make up for the loss of power. Given the precision of UAV targeting, it can be assumed that the generator was the intended target. Such an attack could also impact the energy that the plant supplies to the grid without risking a radiological release. At the time of writing, no state or group has yet claimed the attack. The UAE has said that the drone originated from Iraqi territory, leading to speculation that the Iraqi Popular Mobilisation Units may be responsible. If the attack was indeed carried out by Iran or its backed groups, it is a dangerous escalation and demonstrates the extent of retaliation it is willing to carry out if further provoked. Any further attacks on either the Barakah or Bushehr power plants increase the risk of targeting errors that could have devastating consequences.

While attacks by NSAGs on nuclear facilities have been planned and carried out, to date none have resulted in a nuclear accident. Plans for further such attacks and sabotage by NSAGs (e.g., al-Qaeda) have been documented, but these were likely abandoned in favour of targets that were less heavily guarded or did not require technical knowledge of the operation of a NPP to be carried out. Yet with NSAGs in the region acquiring more sophisticated missiles and uncrewed aerial systems, the complexity of carrying out such an attack is significantly lowered, and the potential for achieving objectives increased. Even if a direct attack using a ballistic missile did not breach the containment structure, spent-fuel pools outside the containment would be at significant risk. A loss of cooling or draining the water inside the pool could ignite the spent fuel and cause large amounts of radiological material to disperse into the atmosphere. Such an accident at the Barakah NPP could necessitate evacuating major cities, such as Dammam, Doha and Manama.

Mounting attacks on energy infrastructure in recent conflicts arguably compound the perceived risks to NPPs. While such attacks violate the law of armed conflict, assessing the objectives of such attacks can help determine whether this trend poses new risks to NPPs per se.

The stated objective of the American and Israeli attacks was to inflict economic damage by cutting off the stream of revenue to the Islamic Revolution’s Guard Corps. Iran’s retaliatory attacks against Persian Gulf states aimed to disrupt the energy market in hopes of pressuring the US to end its campaign. Attacking NPPs would not advance either goal.

However, attacks aimed at punishing or pressuring civilian populations may have more concerning implications for the safety and security of NPPs. Examples of attacks and threats of attack, which to date have targeted non-nuclear infrastructure, include Russian attacks on Ukrainian power substations and US President Donald Trump’s threat against Iran’s energy infrastructure. An attack on a NPP would not just cause the lights to



go out; it would terrorise a population.

Mitigating the risks to nuclear security

In general, civilian NPPs are not a proliferation concern. But with seemingly endless conflict and deep mistrust in the region, the slightest perception of nuclear hedging can quickly be viewed as a proliferation risk. To mitigate the risk of a counter-proliferation attack, nuclear newcomers can both design and operate NPPs in a proliferation-resistant manner. For example, they can choose a reactor type, such as a light-water reactor using low-enriched uranium, less suitable for producing material for nuclear weapons. Plant operators can also opt for single-use fuel, including third-party fuel supply and take-back provisions. As relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia deteriorate, Riyadh

runs a greater risk of incurring an Israeli counter-proliferation attack if it pursues its nuclear-energy ambitions. Proliferation concerns around Saudi Arabia's nuclear programme have been heightened since Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman Al Saud said that his country would acquire nuclear weapons if Iran were to do so first. Furthermore, the kingdom's stated intention to develop fuel-enrichment and reprocessing capability — with peaceful nuclear activity enshrined as an "inalienable right" under Article IV of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty — has complicated Saudi-American negotiations on the terms of a civil nuclear agreement. Nevertheless, negotiations over a civil nuclear agreement have moved forward under the second Trump administration. While the details remain unclear, the US-Saudi Joint Declaration on

the Completion of Negotiations on Civil Nuclear Cooperation, announced in November 2025, "ensures that all cooperation will be conducted in a manner consistent with strong nonproliferation standards". It is unlikely that nuclear technology supplied and safeguarded by the US would be a target for an Israeli preventive attack. With the increased volatility and impunity in the region following the war on Iran, it is not inconceivable that more countries adopt such preventive attacks in their military doctrines.

Persian Gulf nuclear newcomers could also take measures to mitigate the impact of a hypothetical strike on an NPP. Persian Gulf states all adhere to the highest available international nuclear-safety standards and are all parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety. In the case of the only operational nuclear power

plant in the GCC, the Barakah NPP, the UAE has consistently taken steps to strengthen the plant's operational security following periodic IAEA review missions.

Modern nuclear reactors have enhanced safety features which nuclear newcomers are likely to incorporate into new reactor designs. Containment structures housing the reactor core are now hardened to withstand a build-up of pressure inside the reactor in case of an accident, which also provides some protection against a high-kinetic impact on its exterior. The power supply to the reactor is also designed with redundancies such as diesel generators and batteries to ensure a continuous supply to its critical control and cooling systems in case the plant's internal power supply fails. While spent-fuel pools are usually housed outside the containment structures,

some newer designs of NPPs also integrate spent-fuel pools within the containment structure.

By virtue of their smaller size compared to large conventional NPPs, it can be argued that SMRs are safer than conventional reactors. However, the smaller scale sacrifices containment, making them more vulnerable to kinetic attack. Building SMRs underground can help shield them from attack, but would make them harder to reach in an emergency.

Conclusion

Even when pursuing nuclear power for peaceful purposes, doctrinal realities and the fragile regional-security landscape require nuclear newcomers in the region to consider the risks of attacks against civilian nuclear facilities and potential mitigation measures.

The US/Israel-Iran war and the subsequent Iranian retaliato-

ry attacks against Persian Gulf states have greatly strained the norms against attacking nuclear facilities and against attacking energy infrastructure. Yet neither risk need jeopardise plans to acquire NPPs by interested Persian Gulf states. Modern designs of NPPs come with extensive and diverse safety measures to ensure that, even if an incident occurs, radioactive releases can be contained.

While the Pandora's box on attacks against energy infrastructure has been flung open, the conduct of previous attacks against NPPs suggests that the proliferation-sensitive nature of a facility and environmental concerns continue to be an important consideration in target selection.

The full article was first published by the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

Global cooperation on nuclear disarmament looks even further away



By Georgia Cole
Research associate at
Chatham House

OPINION

The 2026 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conference concluded on May 22 without a consensus outcome document. It is the third time in a row that states parties have failed to agree on a review of the treaty's implementation and progress, or to set out a plan to support and strengthen the treaty's implementation. However, this failure was different from the last.

In 2022, it was Russia alone that blocked agreement

following its invasion of Ukraine. This year, multiple countries were prepared to hinder progress. The fractures ran across the 'P5' — the UN Security Council permanent members, all of whom are classed as 'nuclear-weapon' states and are the only countries permitted to possess nuclear weapons under the treaty. (Other nuclear armed countries are not parties to the treaty).

But what happened in New York was not a targeted disruption. It was the latest sign of a non-proliferation system under strain in an increasingly dysfunctional environment.

What broke down and why

The primary cause of failure was the Iran conflict. Countries could not agree on adding a paragraph addressing Iran's non-compliance with its NPT obligations and stating that Iran could never acquire nuclear weapons. That remained bracketed in the final draft outcome document, meaning consensus had not been reached.

Conference President Đỗ Hùng Việt, whose management of an extraordinarily difficult process deserves credit, chose not to force states into a public confrontation on the issue. When he asked the conference to adopt at least a procedural consensus on strengthening the review process, Russia, China, and Iran



France's Foreign Affairs Minister Jean-Noel Barrot looks defeated at the 11th NPT Review Conference at UN Headquarters on April 27, 2026.
ANGELA WEISS/AFP

blocked that too.

Even if Iran had not been the breaking point, something else might have been. Other fault lines were close to the surface: Russia pushed for the deletion of text on North Korea's weapons programme, prompting South Korean objections. Disputes over language on Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, still under Russian seizure, remained unresolved.

A pattern is emerging, where review conferences become a forum for airing regional and bilateral grievances. That reflects a broader shift in how the major nuclear powers approach multilateral institutions.

When powerful states believe that their security interests are better served by bilateral leverage than by collective frameworks, consensus-based multilateral processes become difficult to sustain.

The disarmament deficit

The failure to agree a final document obscured another serious problem. Even the draft that was on the table represented a significant weakening of prior commitments.

New START, a US-Russia nuclear arms control agreement, expired in February with nothing to replace it. That leaves the world's two largest nuclear arsenals without any agreed limits for the first time in over 50 years.

China's nuclear build-up is accelerating. The US has threatened to resume nuclear testing and has accused both Russia and China of conducting tests. France has announced an expansion of its nuclear programme.

In this environment, the five recognized nuclear weapon states arrived in New York and set about forcing the removal of language calling on them to begin negotiations on disarmament — or even to pursue discussions urgently.

Nuclear weapons states removed even more mild requests from the outcome document — for more transparency and accountability on their part. The final draft vaguely called for constructive dialogue that might facilitate future progress. Many non-nuclear weapons states will interpret this as a signal — that beyond ensuring other countries do not acquire nuclear weapons, the P5 are no longer committed to the wider NPT regime.

The grand bargain at the heart of the NPT — that non-nuclear states forgo nuclear weapons in exchange for progress on disarmament by the P5 — is under severe strain, and the cracks are

showing.

There were still meaningful signals from the wider membership. Countries pushed back against weakened disarmament language. There was strong opposition to any resumption of nuclear testing, with many states defending the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. The fact that so many non-nuclear states remained engaged and vocal matters. But collective engagement can only do so much if the P5 are not listening.

What comes next

The next NPT Review Conference is in 2031. The risk is that the underlying conditions deteriorate further during the intervening five years, proliferation pressures mount, and the case for investing political capital in the NPT becomes progressively harder to make.

Avoiding that outcome requires a practical assessment of what went wrong and what can be done differently.

An important lesson is that review conferences cannot be the primary forum for adjudicating active crises. When countries demand that a consensus-based multilateral process takes sides on contentious regional issues like the wars in Iran or Ukraine, deadlock is almost guaranteed.

An alternative is possible. In the leadup to the 1985 Review Conference, nuclear arsenals were almost at their Cold War height, Israel had destroyed a safeguarded nuclear reactor in Iraq, and there were serious non-proliferation concerns relating to several non-parties (such as South Africa and Brazil).

In this insecure environment, the United States and Soviet Union famously set their differences aside and focused on strengthening the system by cooperating to reach consensus, rather than weaponizing it. That was a long time ago, but it is a reminder that cooperative behaviour during times of high geopolitical tension is possible.

The P5 need to strengthen engagement with one another on nuclear risk reduction through

the ongoing "P5 process" — a diplomatic forum between the countries. Dialogue has stalled in recent years. But this is a crucial route for progress on even modest confidence-building measures on doctrine, on new technologies, and on crisis communication.

The P5 demonstrating a willingness to engage in good faith, and treating the NPT as worth preserving, would itself send a signal. Seriously engaging with transparency and accountability initiatives put forward during the review conference would be a good start and is relatively low pressure and low-hanging fruit in terms of compliance.

Non-nuclear weapon states committed to the treaty also need to coordinate more effectively and sustain pressure on the P5 beyond the NPT conference. Diplomatic pressure from a coherent, persistent bloc raises the political cost of obstruction. It will not transform P5 behaviour on its own, but it could shift the calculus.

A crucial time ahead

The NPT's record on actual non-proliferation remains, by historical standards, impressive. The world has far fewer nuclear-armed states than analysts feared possible in the 1960s. The treaty continues to provide the legal and normative foundation for a global safeguards system that constrains proliferation and facilitates peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

But a treaty that cannot sustain its own institutional credibility will find it harder to underwrite the stability it was designed to protect. Three consecutive failed review conferences, against a backdrop of an accelerating arms race, expiring treaties, and mounting proliferation pressures, is not a temporary rough patch. The window for course correction is narrowing. States have five years to demonstrate they understand what is at stake.

The article was first published by Chatham House.



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'We are upset': Iran players hit out at US visa delay after World Cup arrival

Sports Desk

Iran's World Cup 2026 squad landed in Mexico on Sunday amid a bitter diplomatic row, after the United States refused to issue visas for some team support staff. The Iran coach, Amir Qalenoee, complained on arrival at Tijuana airport that "we should have been here last week because a 12-hour time difference needs two weeks of adjusting. Usually in these tournaments, before technical matters, ethical and human considerations must be respected - which I think for us it was not the case." After departing from their training camp in Turkey a day earlier, the Iran team landed around 5am on Sunday in the Mexican border city of Tijuana. Qalenoee's side will be based in Tijuana throughout the tournament, despite playing all three of their group-stage games in the US.

Iran's players and coaching staff left their plane amid tight security which included a contingent of Mexican national guard troops. The dispute has erupted just days before Thursday's kick-off of the 2026 World Cup, which is being jointly hosted by the United States, Mexico and Canada. Qalenoee thanked world football's governing body, FIFA, for its efforts to help secure entry, but added: "We are upset about this behavior. It has certainly never happened before."

"First of all, we're very happy that the team has finally arrived, and we're delighted about that," Hajsafi said. "Thank God, the team's condition is very good. "With everything that happened, visas were eventually issued.



Iran captain Ehsan Hajsafi (l) arrives with his teammates in Tijuana, Mexico, on June 7, 2026.
● GREGORY BULL/AP

ing games, two days prior to each match," Alavi said. FIFA rules for World Cups stipulate that a team's coach must give a news conference on the eve of the match at the venue where the game will be played. Iran's Football Federation - whose chief, Mahdi Taj, was reportedly among those denied a visa - has described the decision as "political interference in sport in its worst form."

Unfair play

The Iranian team was greeted by a small group of supporters waving Iranian flags, eager to give them a warm start to the global showpiece.

"I'm very excited to see them," said Sadeq Galavi as he watched the players' bus leave the airport in Tijuana.

"My national team is coming to my city, and being here is a small thing I can do just to welcome them," the man in his thirties told AFP, proudly wearing the white jersey with green and red trim of the Iranian side, known as "Team Melli."

"It makes no sense to me," Galavi complained about the visa controversy. "Sport is supposed to be a symbol of peace, so when you mix politics and sports, it doesn't work."

With all these off-field developments, can the Iranians play their best football at the World Cup and

Personally, however, I do have a complaint about FIFA. Why did it take so long? As far as I understand, visas were issued only to the players and a few members of the coaching staff."

Some members of Iran's entourage are still without US visas before games in Los Angeles and Seattle. Those include the Iranian Football Federation's secretary-general, Hedayat Mombeini, and its vice president, Mahdi Mohammad Nabi.

"Unfortunately, several key members of our coaching staff, whose roles are very important within the team, were not granted visas," Hajsafi said. "That includes the team manager, the executive director and the media director, all of whom play very important roles."

"From here, I would like to ask FIFA to address this issue so that, God willing, the situation can be resolved in the coming days."

"In the last year, we experienced two imposed wars in our country," Hajsafi added "the team is 100% ready" and insisted "we can advance" from the group stage.

Iran's Group G games will be held in Los Angeles (against New Zealand on June 15 and Belgium on June 21) and in Seattle (against Egypt on June 26). This will be the first men's football World Cup to see a host nation receive the team of a country it is at war with.

The squad spent nearly three weeks at the training camp in Turkey, using their time there to apply for visas to travel to Mexico, Canada and the United States. On the eve of their departure, the players finally received their US visas, according to Washington's envoy to Turkey, Tom Barrack.

Iran's embassy in Turkey said support staff had been denied visas, however. Fifteen administrative and management staff are

concerned, an Iranian diplomat and state TV said.

The embassy slammed what it called "deliberate and discriminatory treatment against Iran's national football team" and called for FIFA "to hold the US accountable for violations of its rules."

Adding to the tensions, Iran's ambassador to Mexico said on Saturday the squad had been notified that, under their visa conditions, the team must enter and leave US soil on the same day as their matches.

"We can enter in the morning and we must leave the same day," Iran's envoy, Abolfazl Pasandideh, told reporters. That appeared to contradict what the team's spokesman, Amir Mahdi Alavi, told Iranian state television earlier.

"The visas issued for the national team are multiple-entry visas, and the national team will arrive at the match venue one day before the first game and, for the follow-

finally advance from the group stage - a feat they have never achieved?

Sina Moqaddam has no doubts, and displays unwavering faith in his team.

"Iran's history goes back thousands of years. Things like this only make us stronger; they won't destabilize the team," boasted the Iranian-American, who had traveled from San Diego, just across the border in California.

Waving an enormous Iranian flag, the retired self-described "patriot" said he was hoping for a match between Iran and the United States in the knockout stage - a blockbuster encounter that would become the political spectacle of the tournament.

"I hope they're going to kick the US team's a**," he laughed as the players' bus disappeared from view.

The security presence offered some reassurance to Hossein Nikyar, who had driven overnight from Los Angeles with his son to herald the team's arrival.

"It's safer for them to be here than in Los Angeles anyway, because many Iranians in LA are royalists who want to take down the government," said the engineer in his forties.

Nikyar already has tickets to see Iran play in Los Angeles. But even before the tournament begins, he cannot hide his bitterness.

"FIFA claims that there's no politics in the World Cup, and it's all about the football fair play," he sighed.

"But in fact, we see that it's not true."

AFP and The Associated Press contributed to this report.

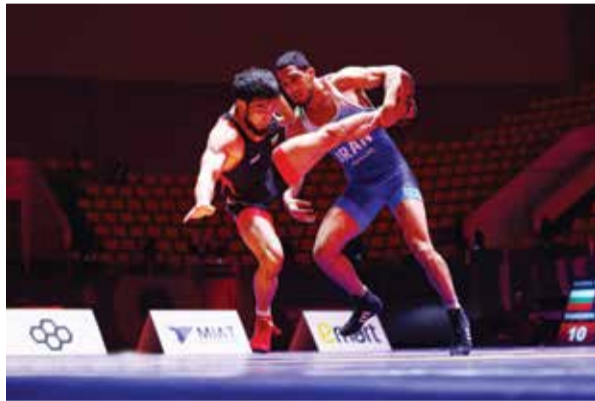
Ulaanbaatar Open Ranking Series: Amouzad pulls off sensational fightback as Iran bags five FS medals

Sports Desk

Reigning world champion Rahman Amouzad staged a stunning comeback to win the 65kg gold medal as Iran's five-man freestyle squad completed a clean sweep of medals at the Ulaanbaatar Open on Sunday.

Trailing 8-1 at the break and 10-3 with 1:22 remaining against Bulgaria's Shamil Mamedov, the 23-year-old Iranian returned to his "Ruthless" best in the closing stages to secure a 17-10 victory, avenging his defeat to the Russian-born wrestler in their bronze-medal bout at the 2023 World Championships.

Mamedov hoisted Amouzad onto his shoulders just 1:20 into the contest and brought him down for four points. He never allowed the Iranian to settle defensively on the mat, rolling him twice with a gut wrench to build an 8-0 lead - the first time Amouzad had trailed in 17 bouts since losing the Paris 2024 Olympic final to Japan's Kotaro Kiyooka. Amouzad successfully defended a third consecutive turn - which would have ended the final - before scoring on a step-out ahead of the break.



Iran's Rahman Amouzad (blue) attempts a single-leg takedown against Bulgaria's Shamil Mamedov during the freestyle 65kg final at the Ulaanbaatar Open in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on June 7, 2026.
● LAWFIK

The defining moment came with 50 seconds remaining. Amouzad quickly attacked Mamedov's left leg, and the Bulgarian was slow to react as the Iranian trapped the other leg and leapt, bringing Mamedov down in a danger position for four points. Amouzad then added a two-point exposure and a complete turn to move ahead 15-10.

Mamedov appeared to run out of gas, while Amouzad found renewed energy,

adding another takedown before the final whistle to complete a remarkable comeback after scoring 14 unanswered points in just 82 seconds.

The result means the Iranian, who also won a world title in 2022, has lost only two of his last 30 international matches.

Elsewhere on the final day of the Ranking Series event, Mahdi Yousefi had to settle for silver in the 79kg class after suffering a 10-0 superiority defeat to Russia's Ismail Khaniev.

Young prodigy Ahoura Khatari - last year's world U20 silver medalist - finished his 61kg campaign with a bronze medal. After a 4-2 quarterfinal defeat to Kazakhstan's Assyl Aitakyn,

he recovered to beat Mongolia's Batnasan Gankhuleg 7-0 in the third-place bout. Sunday's results came after Mohammad Nokhodi and Abolfazl Rahmani had won gold and bronze, respectively, the previous day in the Mongolian capital.

A five-time world medalist at 79kg, including three silver medals, Nokhodi looked comfortable in his new 86kg division, outscoring his opponents 30-5 across three bouts on his way to the final. He was then awarded the gold medal after Bulgaria's reigning Olympic champion Magomed Ramazanov - best known to Iranian fans for defeating Hassan Yazdani in the Paris 2024 final - withdrew from the championship bout because of injury.

Rahmani claimed bronze in the 92kg division in only his second international appearance at the weight. The former Asian champion at 86kg lost his opening bout to two-time world bronze medalist Azamat Dauletbekov of Kazakhstan on criteria following a 4-4 tie. He bounced back by defeating Dauletbekov's compatriot Bekzat Amangali 8-6 in the repechage before beating India's Kumar Punit 4-0 in the bronze-medal match.

AVC Women's Nations Cup: Iran's semifinal hopes dented by Kazakhstan defeat



Iranian players are seen in action during a 3-1 loss to Kazakhstan at the AVC Women's Nations Cup in Candon, Philippines, on June 8, 2026.
● VOLLEYBALL WORLD

Sports Desk

Iran's hopes of reaching the AVC Women's Nations Cup semifinals were all but shattered after a 3-1 defeat to Kazakhstan in a Pool B match in Candon, Philippines, on Monday.

Having beaten the Central Asian side twice at last week's CAVA Championship - including a 3-1 victory in the final - the Iranian women made a strong start, comfortably taking the opening set 25-13.

However, Kazakhstan, which fielded a different squad from the one that competed at the CAVA tournament, responded by claiming the second set 25-20 to level the match.

Inspired by prolific outside hitter Kristina Belova, who finished with a match-high 23 points - alongside Iran's Fatemeh Khalili - Kazakhstan raced into an early five-point lead in

the third set and never looked back, cruising to a 25-14 win before sealing the contest with a 25-20 victory in the fourth.

The defeat was the second in as many matches for South Korean head coach Lee Do-hee's side, which had opened its campaign with a 3-1 loss to Indonesia (25-15, 21-25, 25-21, 25-22) on Saturday. The result, coupled with Hong Kong's straight-sets victory over Lebanon later in the day, saw Iran slip to fifth place in the six-team Pool B standings, while Kazakhstan moved to the top of table with its third consecutive victory. The top two from each of the two pools will advance to the semifinals. Iran will return to action against Lebanon at Candon City Arena on Wednesday before taking on defending champion Vietnam on Thursday and Hong Kong in its final group-stage match on Friday.

Fars moves to revive endangered handicrafts

Iranica Desk

With more than 120 traditional arts and crafts, two globally recognized cities, and four cities and villages nationally registered for their handicraft heritage, Fars Province remains one of Iran's leading regions in this field. The cultural heritage of its people is deeply intertwined with artistic traditions that have been passed down through generations and woven into the fabric of everyday life.

Over time, however, changing lifestyles and the rapid growth of industrial production have transformed the role of many traditional crafts. A number of functional handicrafts have gradually been replaced by factory-made products that are produced in large quantities and distributed widely in markets.

As a result, the production of many traditional crafts has declined under changing economic and social conditions. Some crafts have moved toward extinction, while others, due to their higher value compared with mass-produced goods, have become luxury items rather than commonly used products.

Today, the revival and restoration of handicrafts are among the priorities of the Handicrafts Department of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization of Fars Province. Special attention is being given to crafts that have disappeared, or are at risk of being forgotten.

Speaking to IRNA, the deputy head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization of Fars said that restoring these traditional crafts is among the important responsibilities of cultural heritage authorities. "Over the past years, we have

gained successful experiences in reviving and restoring several handicraft traditions," said Majid Salimi.

He explained that specialized training courses have been organized with the participation of veteran master artisans to transfer their skills, techniques, and knowledge to younger generations and ensure the continuation of these artistic traditions.



● yjc.ir

According to Salimi, training alone is not sufficient, and the next important step is to make handmade products more practical and compatible with modern lifestyles. Updating traditional designs and adapting crafts to contemporary needs can help these products return to the daily lives and purchasing habits of a wider range of consumers.

Salimi pointed to the revival of traditional woven crafts as successful examples of endangered handicrafts that have regained their place after facing the threat of decline.

He said that teaching these crafts, creating new combined products — such as bags produced through a combination of traditional textiles and leather — and developing smaller-sized items

have contributed to increased production and stronger markets for these handmade products.

According to him, these handicrafts, which were once close to disappearing, have now experienced significant growth and have created employment opportunities for many weavers in Kazerun, Firuzabad, and Qir and Karzin. At the same time, some handicrafts, despite remaining active or

He identified Gereh-Chini (trellis-work), pottery and ceramics, and Shiraz seven-color tilework as examples of crafts where some traditional stages of production have gradually been replaced by mechanized methods and factory-made materials.

Salimi added that, in order to protect Fars' intangible cultural heritage, traditional production methods are being document-



● IRNA

traditional know-how of several crafts, including seven-color tilework, pottery and ceramics, wood carving have already been documented. Further measures have also been planned and implemented to safeguard these traditions for future generations. Another approach to preserving and reviving authentic handicrafts in Fars is incorporating them into the restoration of historical mon-

uments and heritage sites, including traditional houses. It has been approved and emphasized that, in order to maintain authenticity and support master artisans, restoration projects for historical houses in Shiraz should rely on original traditional methods and techniques. Salimi explained that, as part of efforts to revive Gereh-Chini, Fars cultural heritage authorities are determined to use traditional methods in restoring doors and windows of historical houses. This approach aims to protect all aspects of Shiraz's Gereh-Chini heritage and prevent them from fading into oblivion. The identification, study, and revival of extinct or endangered handicrafts in Fars will continue. According to him, a technical

committee will also be formed in the coming week to evaluate different crafts, select suitable candidates for revival this year, and develop plans for their restoration and renewed production. Beyond their artistic and cultural significance, handicrafts can play a major role in expanding tourism opportunities and strengthening the local economy of Fars Province. Traditional crafts provide visitors with a deeper understanding of the region's history, lifestyle, and cultural identity, turning handicraft markets and workshops into important attractions alongside historical and natural sites.

The integration of handicrafts into tourism programs can create new sources of income for artisans and local communities. Cultural tours, craft workshops, and traditional markets allow visitors to directly purchase handmade products and learn about the skills behind their production. Such experiences not only increase the value of handicrafts but also encourage longer stays and greater spending by tourists. Fars' handicrafts also have the potential to support small businesses and create employment, particularly in rural areas where many traditional skills have survived. By improving access to markets, strengthening promotion, and connecting artisans with domestic and international visitors, these crafts can contribute to sustainable economic development.

The revival of endangered handicrafts therefore represents more than the protection of old techniques. It is also an opportunity to transform cultural heritage into a source of innovation, entrepreneurship, and income generation while preserving the unique identity of Fars for future generations.



● IRNA

being successfully revived, are no longer produced entirely through traditional methods. In some cases, parts of the production process have been replaced by modern techniques, machinery, and industrially produced materials.

ed through interviews with authentic veteran masters. These records are preserved in official archives to prevent valuable knowledge and techniques from being lost.

He said that the oral heritage and

Reading Room

Pieces; new collection bringing poetry to life

In an era when the relentless pace of life has left little room for reflection, the four-volume collection "Pieces", compiled by Atena Derakhshani seeks to restore a sense of pause and contemplation to the Iranian mind. Organized around four fundamental concepts — love, mourning, homeland, and hope — the collection serves as a bridge between forgotten verses buried in large poetry anthologies and the pulse of contemporary life.

According to IBNA, Mehdi Yazdani Khorram, in his introduction to the collection, opens a window into an old literary tradition, writing that "Pieces returns to the ancient tradition of selecting aphoristic passages in our literature." This tradition is rooted in the Iranian tendency toward measuring time and reflecting on experience. Iranians have long turned to poetry during times of turmoil, using contemplation of its themes to connect the past with the present.

Yazdani Khorram notes that although these selections have been extracted from larger bodies of work — the complete collections of poets — they possess a strong sense of independence. They speak

for themselves and continue to live in collective memory. In this sense, the collection attempts to connect timeless concepts with the mind of a reader seeking to give form to their own thoughts through classical poetry.

Love

The book "Love" is the first volume of the series. In classical Persian literature, love is considered one of the most important and frequently explored themes. In this volume, Atena Derakhshani examines one of the most complex human experiences.

The selected poets — including Sanai, Araqi, Sa'di, Hafez, Vahshi Bafqi, and Bidel — each represent a different

chapter in Iran's emotional and literary history. From Sanai's mystical and ascetic love to the refined language of Sa'di and Hafez, and finally to Vahshi's passionate expression and Bidel's complexities of the Indian style of Persian poetry, the volume presents a wide spectrum of interpretations.

A distinctive feature of this book is the brief explanations accompanying each poet, clarifying the reasons behind their selection and helping readers understand why certain verses continue to resonate centuries later.

Homeland

The volume "Homeland" explores a human being whose relationship with geography

and belonging has constantly evolved. The book presents Iran as a space for reflection and thought.

This volume features selected verses from the Constitutional Era and later periods, including works by Iraj Mirza, Malak al-Shoara Bahar, Aref Qazvini, Farrokhi Yazdi, Mirzadeh Esghhi, and Nasim Shomal. By raising fundamental questions such as "Can one sacrifice the body for the homeland?" the author challenges readers to reconsider the meaning of national identity.

In this collection, patriotism is presented as a concept that has endured despite competing ideological currents and debates over national belonging. These selections offer a

reminder for those who see the homeland not merely as territory, but as a part of their own identity.

Hope

The book "Hope", another volume in the collection, turns toward the brightest moments found within humanity's darkest experiences. Persian poetry's ability to reveal light is a central theme of this volume. Poets such as Khayyam, Sa'di, Hafez, Saeb Tabrizi, Malak al-Shoara Bahar, and Parvin E'tesami are brought together to show that hope can appear both in moments of expression and in silence. The volume carries a simple message: "It is still possible."

At a time when despair has become widespread, these selections revisit the persistence of life in Khayyam's poetry and the wisdom of Parvin's works, offering a renewed understanding of endurance.

Mourning

The final volume, "Mourning", explores humanity's ongoing relationship with loss and death. Covering poetry from the fourth to the seventh centuries (AH), the book demonstrates how Persian literature has expressed the psychologi-

cal dimensions of human suffering.

Ferdowsi's tragic vision, Masoud Sa'd's experience of imprisonment, Khaqani's intense elegies, and Rumi's transcendent view of death are among the voices featured in this volume. Readers encounter the diverse ways grief has been expressed in Persian poetry — not only as an experience of pain but also as a path toward deeper understanding of life and unexpected events. Publisher Khob has paid special attention to the visual and physical quality of the collection. All four books are designed in pocket size with hardcover bindings, making them suitable for carrying during daily routines and reading whenever an opportunity arises.

The "Pieces" collection, compiled by Atena Derakhshani, is ultimately a mental exercise. As emphasized in the introduction, these selected passages "continue themselves and remain in memory." The series is designed for the "modern Iranian individual" — someone navigating between tradition and modernity while searching for roots that keep them grounded in reality.



Iranian films win top int'l honors; animation heads to Polish festival

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian cinema productions earned international recognition this week, with the short film "These Voices Are Real" winning four awards at overseas festivals, the documentary "I Won't Remain Alone" receiving the top prize at an Italian film festival, and the animated feature "Dream City" securing a place in competition at a children's film festival in Poland. "These Voices Are Real" written and directed by first-time filmmaker Baran Nikrah and co-produced by Nikrah and actress Hoda Zeinolabedin, collected four awards during its early international festival run. The social drama, which focuses on the lived experiences of women and girls in contemporary society, received the Audience Special Award, the Raspin Spirit Award and an Honorable Mention from the international jury at the 38th Minimalen Short Film Festival in Trondheim,

Norway. The film later won a Best Director award at the Golden Grape Short Film Festival and was recently screened in competition at SXSW London. The film stars Zeinolabedin and Dorin Afsharian. Meanwhile, the documentary "I Won't Remain Alone", directed by Yaser Talebi and produced by Talebi and Fariba Arab, won the Francesco Pasinetti Award for Best Film at the 23rd Pasinetti Film Festival in Italy. The award, the festival's highest honor, was selected from more than 2,000 submissions from around the world. The documentary follows an elderly couple whose child suffers brain death and whose decision to donate the child's organs transforms the lives of recipients and their own understanding of loss. The film revisits the family five years later to examine the lasting impact of that decision. Festival jurors praised the film for its portrayal of grief, memory and

human resilience, citing its sensitive direction and cinematography. The Pasinetti Film Festival was held from May 28 to May 30 in Italy. Separately, Iranian animated feature "Dream City", directed by Mohsen Enayati and produced by Mostafa Hassanabadi, was selected for the main competition section of the 11th Kinolub International Film Festival for Children and Youth in Poland. The film, produced by the Soureh Animation Center, will compete alongside international entries at the festival, which runs from June 14 to June 27 across several cities in southern Poland. Festival organizers said winners would be announced on June 25 by both professional international juries and youth juries. The selection marks another international appearance for Iranian animation as filmmakers seek to expand their presence in European markets and festivals.



Public engagement key to tackling environmental challenges: DoE chief



Social Desk

Iran's Department of Environment (DoE) chief Shina Ansari said on Monday that education, public awareness and social participation are critical to addressing the country's mounting environmental challenges, warning that government agencies alone cannot resolve years of accumulated environmental problems. Speaking at the 9th session of the "National Uprising for Iran" campaign in Tehran, Ansari said Iran faces a range of environmental pressures, including water scarcity, groundwater depletion, land subsidence, air pollution, habitat destruction, forest fires and dust storms. "Resolving the country's accumulated environmental challenges is not possible without the cooperation of the public, government agencies and cultural institutions," Ansari said, according to a statement released by the DoE. The official said many of

the challenges stem from years of insufficient attention to environmental considerations and stressed that environmental protection is a collective responsibility under Article 50 of Iran's Constitution. "All institutions, organizations and members of society must play a role in this process," Ansari said, adding that the Department of Environment is not capable of addressing all environmental issues on its own. Ansari highlighted the link between environmental protection and broader social and cultural issues, saying that achieving environmental goals requires public engagement and social consensus-building. Education and cultural initiatives are among the most effective tools for promoting environmental stewardship, she added. The DoE chief also pointed to the government's focus on environmental education, arguing that awareness efforts should begin in schools. Embedding en-

vironmental values among students can help change behavior, improve lifestyles and strengthen social responsibility toward nature, she said. Ansari cited the implementation of the national "Mohit-Yar" (Environment Companion) program, launched in cooperation with the Ministry of Education to expand environmental education in schools. The initiative has received support from provinces across the country, particularly in less-developed regions, she said. She also announced the development of a national framework aimed at promoting environmental culture, prepared in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and other government bodies. According to Ansari, expanding environmental awareness requires greater coordination among cultural, educational and social institutions, as well as the use of cultural and artistic resources, modern technologies and religious teachings to encourage environmentally responsible behavior. Protecting Iran's natural resources and preserving the country's environmental heritage for future generations is a shared responsibility, Ansari said, calling on all sectors of society to contribute to reducing environmental problems and advancing sustainable development.

Award-winning filmmakers launch project on Minab school tragedy

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmakers Manouchehr Mohammadi and Babak Khajehpasha are developing a new feature film centered on martyred schoolchildren from the southern city of Minab in US-Israeli attack on February 28, following their previous collaboration on an award-winning film about children in Gaza, a producer said on Sunday. Mohammad Sasan, head of the Soureh Cinema Production Center, said the project, tentatively titled "168", is being produced by the Soureh Cinema Organization in partnership with veteran producer Mohammadi and director Khajehpasha. The film will focus on

children linked to a school tragedy in Minab, Sasan said, adding that the project is intended for international audiences and will be developed with a cross-border perspective similar to the filmmakers' previous work, "The Land of Angels". "We are currently conducting research and working with a creative team to finalize the screenplay," Sasan said. Further details will be announced at a later stage, he added. Mohammadi and Khajehpasha previously collaborated on "The Land of Angels", a film depicting the hardships faced by children in Gaza. The film received widespread attention at Iran's 44th Fajr International Film Festi-



val, where it won five Crystal Simorgh awards and eight honorary diplomas, making it the festival's most decorated entry. No production timetable or casting details for "168" were immediately announced. On the very first day of the unprovoked war of aggression by a US-Israeli military coalition on February 28, US Tomahawk missiles

struck Shajareh Tayyebeh Girls' Elementary School in Minab, in southern Iran, killing at least 175 people, most of them schoolgirls. Excavators and workmen dug close to 100 graves at a cemetery in Minab, Iran, before the funeral for children and teachers killed in a US-Israeli airstrike on a school on February 28, 2026. Iran's Foreign Media Department

Iranian documentary scoops Special Jury Prize in Chile

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Javad Gholamnejad Jaber has won a Special Jury Prize at an international environmental film festival in Chile for his short documentary "Khasak". The award was presented at the 4th International Sea Film Festival in Concepción, Chile, an event focused on films exploring marine ecosystems, environmental conservation and ocean-related issues. Mohammad Hossein Zandvian, director-general of Culture and Islamic Guidance in Iran's Bushehr Province, said "Khasak" was recognized by the jury for



its artistic portrayal of a marine species and its focus on the importance of protecting the Persian Gulf ecosystem. In a statement, festival judges praised the documentary's poetic storytelling, human-centered perspective and emotional impact on audiences, according to Zandvian. The film is among the latest works by Gholamnejad Jaber,

a filmmaker from the southern coastal province of Bushehr whose documentaries on marine and environmental themes have previously been screened and honored at international festivals. The Sea Film Festival is regarded as a specialized event dedicated to environmental and maritime cinema, bringing together filmmakers and conservation advocates from around the world. The award marks another international recognition for Iranian documentary filmmaking and highlights growing attention to environmental themes in the country's independent cinema sector.