

Government incentives spur new wave of tourism investment in Iran



Pezeshkian reaffirms support for production, urges national unity

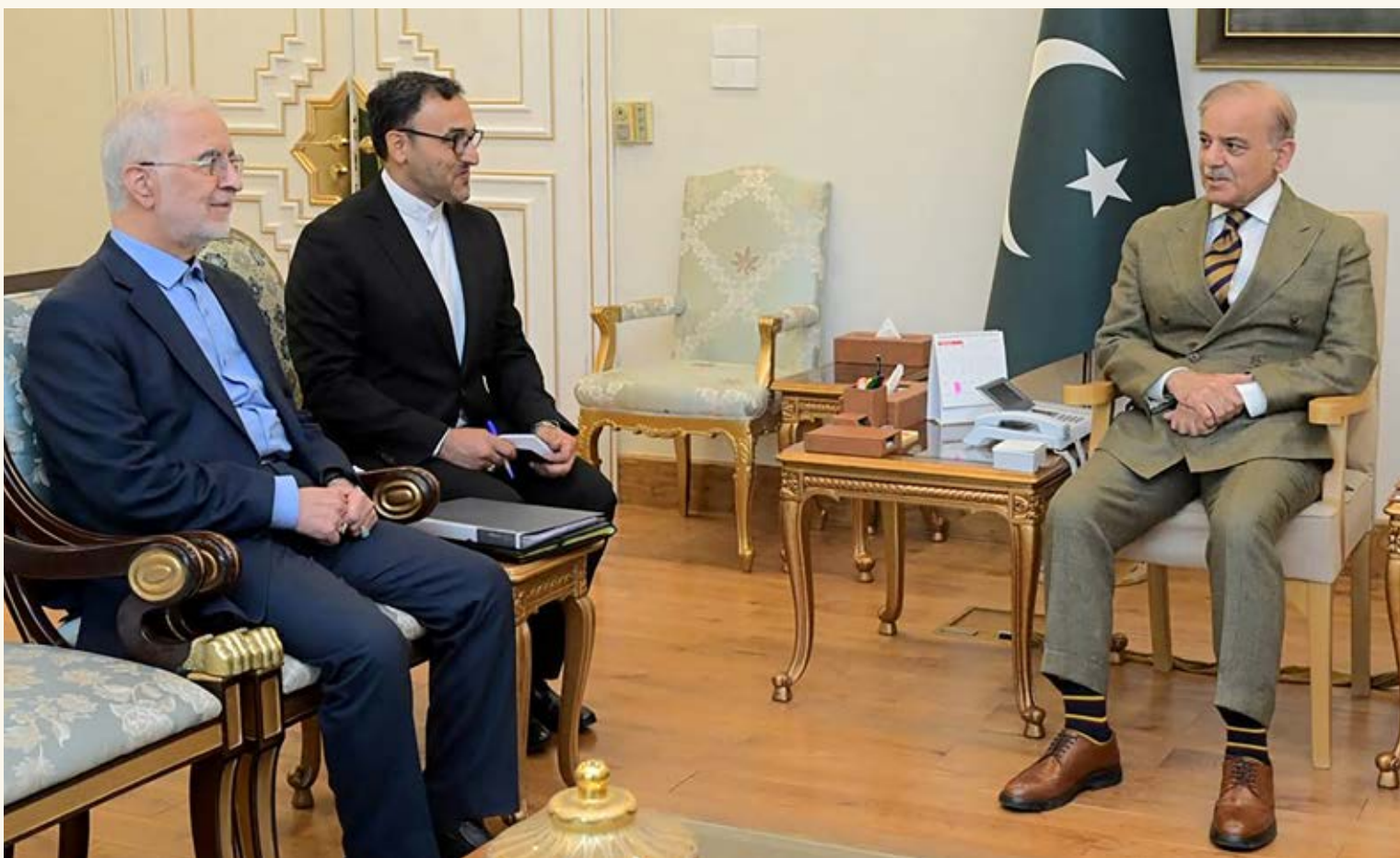
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Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (R) meets Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni (L) at the Prime Minister House in Islamabad on July 21, 2026. AFP



Iran to establish legal deterrence on global stage

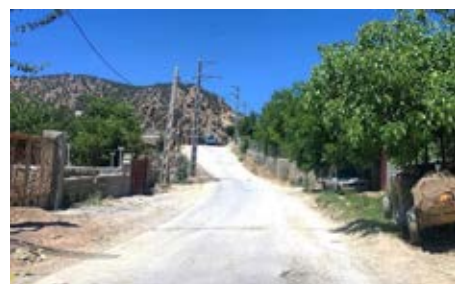
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Iran-US ceasefire deal to need Persian Gulf coalition guarantees

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

After more than 10 days of fighting between the United States and Iran, Qatar is said to have reportedly put forward a proposal for a 10-day ceasefire. However, at a time when the United States is simultaneously building up its military presence in the region, Iran's willingness to accept such a proposal remains in doubt. In an interview with Iran Daily, international affairs analyst Omid Khazani said that reaching a temporary agreement between Iran and the United States would be highly optimistic unless the deal were backed by a coalition of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council countries, with one or all its members guaranteeing its implementation.



Omid Khazani

IRAN DAILY: Can Tehran be expected to agree under the current circumstances to Qatar's proposal for a temporary

ceasefire and the temporary reopening of the Strait of Hormuz? What conditions could persuade Tehran to accept such a proposal?

KHAZANI: Considering that US military forces are constantly being reinforced in the region, with refueling tankers and fighter jets being deployed, and that tensions are escalating — at least on paper — while events in southern Iran are unfolding on a daily basis, it would be highly optimistic to assume that Iran could reach a temporary agreement with the United States. From the Iranian side, anyone who wanted to put their signature on such a temporary agreement would be taking an extremely high risk.

But as for the preconditions Iran is seeking, the issue of the Strait of Hormuz is vital because Iran sees it as a security guarantee for itself. It would allow Iran both to generate revenue from the waterway and make up for the losses inflicted by the war, while also maintaining a degree of control over the Strait of Hormuz, the world's energy artery, as a deterrent lever. If Iran can get others to accept that it has sovereign rights there, that could serve as a trump card for it. Therefore, as long as the issue of the Strait of Hormuz is not resolved through a temporary, medium-term or long-term agreement, we will

not see stability in the region, because no Iranian official can sign such a deal without these conditions being met. Accordingly, the conditions that the United States would have to put on the table — and that Iran would have to accept — could be far more complicated, unless all the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council member states come in and sign the agreement. For example, Saudi Arabia could guarantee its implementation, or all six regional countries could do so. The agreement brokered by Pakistan did not last very long, precisely because of the US president's unique personality and the exceptional circumstances in the region.

Could a 10-day ceasefire pave the way for a sustained reduction in tensions between Iran and the United States, or, given previous experience with the US honoring its commitments, would it merely constitute a temporary pause in the fighting to allow the US to regroup?

A 10-day agreement, or even one lasting a month or two, cannot by itself offer much of a prospect for peace in the region unless Iran has a good opportunity and there is a domestic consensus in Iran to pursue a policy of soft deterrence alongside hard deterrence — meaning both the

nuclear issue and the Strait of Hormuz. That would involve tying Western interests and the interests of major US companies to the oil and gas sectors in the Persian Gulf. Such a process requires more time and a sustainable outlook to materialize.

Therefore, any short-term agreement could be extremely fragile unless it is accompanied by an element of soft deterrence. In other words, tenders would have to be launched immediately and major multinational companies brought into Iran's energy sector at a rapid pace. At that point, alongside hard deterrence, soft deterrence could also emerge and strengthen the prospects for lasting peace and security in the region.

Otherwise, given that one side of the equation is the Trump administration and the US president himself, Iran cannot rely on a temporary agreement with such a person unless it has the endorsement of the Senate and Congress, which is also highly unlikely.

Therefore, any short-term agreement or short-term peace between Iran and the United States has the potential to be an opportunity to strengthen military capabilities and improve the regional conditions for broader military operations. On the other hand, if the US midterm

elections end with a Republican victory, there would be a possibility that the United States could increase its military presence in the region to more than 500,000 personnel and deploy ground forces there. If the midterm elections end in a Republican defeat — which I personally consider more likely than the alternative — the likelihood of expanding US forces and military engagements in the region would decline.

But in the absence of soft deterrence, and relying solely on hard deterrence, the prospect of sporadic tensions would remain.

What is the necessary precondition for such a process to succeed, and what steps should the two sides take in this direction?

Iran has no choice but to reach an agreement with a coalition, or at least with the US government alongside a regional coalition. You cannot rely on President Trump's signature. He is someone who could change his mind at any moment. Therefore, one condition Iran could rely on is for the GCC countries to be signatories to — and at a minimum, guarantors of — such a temporary agreement, rather than the US president alone.

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IRGC: Reprisal strikes on US base in Jordan kill several troops

Iran targets US military radar, communications facilities in West Asia

International Desk

Iran's Armed Forces conducted new retaliatory attacks on US military bases in region, with the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) saying that several US forces were killed after it targeted a military compound in Jordan.

The IRGC said on Tuesday its Aerospace Force struck a compound housing US forces in the al-Rukban region in Jordan, killing a number of them.

The statement added that the US defense secretary reported a casualty figure that was far below the actual number.

The Pentagon said on Monday that nearly 100 US service members have been wounded since war resumed on July 7, most with minor concussion.

However, the New York Times reported that the Pentagon has withheld information about dozens of injuries suffered by American troops after Iran launched a barrage of ballistic missile strikes on US military bases in Jordan and other sites across the region last week.

"Those attacks injured dozens of US service members and damaged several helicopters," the report said, citing US officials who spoke on condition of anonymity.

It added that Iran carried out three additional strikes



Satellite images released on July 21, 2026 show a before-and-after view of a military facility housing US troops in Jordan's King Faisal Air Base following an Iranian attack. ● [defapress.ir](#)

against US forces in Jordan during the same week. However, the Pentagon did not disclose these earlier attacks or the resulting casualties and damage.

A US military official claimed that US Central Command (CENTCOM) is not required to publicly release information about injured service members. Another official argued that doing so could allow Iran to more accurately target US forces in the region with ballistic missiles and drones.

According to US officials, at least 17 US forces have been killed in Iran's attacks.

The IRGC also said it has destroyed multiple US military radar and communications facilities in the region, while the Iranian Army reported drone strikes on three US bases in Kuwait.

Attacks on US radar systems

The IRGC said its forces targeted infrastructure supporting US military air de-

fense operations in Kuwait. The elite force said the latest phase was staged "to clear the way by eliminating obstacles to large-scale air and missile operations" against American targets in the region.

According to the statement, missiles and drones struck and destroyed a long-range radar site, a communications center, satellite reception systems, and a missile defense radar belonging to the US military stationed in Kuwait. The IRGC also said an MQ-9 drone hangar at Ali al-Salem Airbase was hit in the country, adding that several drones were either destroyed or severely damaged as a result.

It also carried out another strike against US air defense assets at Ahmad al-Jaber Airbase in Kuwait. The statement said an early warning radar, a missile defense radar system, an FPS-117 radar, a Patriot air defense system, and a satellite communications system supporting air

defense operations were destroyed.

"Following this radar suppression operation, the enemy should prepare for more decisive and heavier waves of drone and missile attacks." Later, the IRGC announced another strike that "destroyed a missile-defense radar system at a US base in Jordan and destroyed an F-15 fighter aircraft inside its shelter."

Separately, the Army said it targeted three US military bases in Kuwait, using loitering attack drones.

According to the statement, the operation targeted the administrative buildings and direction-finding antennas at Camp Arifjan, the helicopter parking area at Al-Udairi Camp, and the troop accommodation building at Ahmad al-Jaber Airbase.

Two "non-compliant oil tankers" attempting to transit the Strait of Hormuz were also stopped by Iranian armed forces. The waterway has been closed by Iran to avenge the US-Israeli aggression that began on February 28.

Pakistan PM calls for restraint from warring sides in region

Momeni: Tehran focused on expanding cross-border trade with Islamabad



Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni (2nd R), leading a delegation, holds talks with his Pakistani counterpart Mohsin Raza Naqvi (2nd L) in Pakistan, Islamabad on July 21, 2026. ● [IRNA](#)

International Desk

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called for restraint from all warring sides during a meeting with Iran's Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni on Tuesday as the United States' violations of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding by attacking Iran has further complicated the situation in the region.

Sharif "urged all sides to exercise restraint and refrain from actions that could further destabilize the region," a statement from the premier's office said, adding that he told Iran's Eskandar Momeni that Pakistan would continue to act as a mediator.

The latest hostilities have placed an interim US-Iran ceasefire agreement brokered by Islamabad under severe strain, threatening commercial shipping through the Strait of Hormuz and reviving fears of a prolonged conflict with consequences for global energy supplies and regional economies.

The 14-point Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, signed by Iran and the United States on June 18, called for an immediate end to military operations, the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz to commercial traffic and negotiations on a final settlement covering sanctions, Iran's nuclear program and other disputes. It committed the two sides to seeking a final deal within a maximum of 60 days.

"While emphasizing that Pakistan would continue to play its role as an honest and sincere mediator and facilitator, the Prime Minister reiterated Pakistan's strong commitment to regional peace and stability," the statement said.

The US violations of the agreement and its new strikes on Iran have led to new war between the two countries, which has also dragged regional countries into the conflict.

Visiting Iranian minister also held separate talks with his Pakistani counterpart Mohsin Naqvi and Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir.

During a meeting of the two countries' high-level delegations, chaired by Momeni and Naqvi, the Pakistani official praised Iran's constructive approach toward the welfare and development of both nations, saying Pakistan and Iran are working side by side to promote

prosperity for their people and peace across the region.

Economic ties

Momeni outlined three priorities during the talks; facilitating the movement of commercial trucks between Iran and different parts of Pakistan, increasing bilateral trade to \$10 billion, and encouraging Pakistan to modernize its railway infrastructure along the shared border to support expanding commercial activity.

He also said Tehran was particularly focused on increasing trade through border crossings, especially the Rimdan-Gabd crossing, and called on Pakistan to take the necessary measures to expand cross-border commercial activity there.

Naqvi said both governments remained determined to tackle terrorism and would not allow terrorists or their supporters to achieve their objectives by undermining peace and stability along the shared border.

He also highlighted human trafficking as a shared challenge and stressed the need for closer bilateral cooperation, including efforts to prevent maritime routes from being used for trafficking networks. Iranian officials attending the meeting called for the establishment of banking links to facilitate bilateral trade and proposed expanding cooperation in agriculture and regional transport connectivity, including through the North-South Corridor.

The Iranian delegation said Tehran and Islamabad shared the political will to sign a free trade agreement, adding that Iran was ready to work closely with Pakistan if revisions to the draft text were required to move the process forward. Naqvi also said Pakistan was determined to operationalize the maritime route linking Iran's Chabahar port with Pakistan's Gwadar port, describing the initiative as another step toward expanding bilateral trade.

On Afghanistan, Naqvi referred to Islamabad's concerns over terrorism originating from Afghanistan territory and called for greater coordination with Iran to address the challenge.

"Our position on Afghanistan is clear, and we are also ready for negotiations," he said.

Tehran raps US attack on nuclear plant as 'flagrant violation of int'l law'

Eslami: Iran could fulfill own goals even after 1,000 bombings

International Desk

Iran condemned a recent missile strike by the United States on the Darkhovin Nuclear Power Plant as a "flagrant violation of international law" and called on the United Nations Security Council to unequivocally condemn the attack. In an official letter addressed to the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General on Monday, Iran's permanent representative to the UN, Amir Saeid Iravani, denounced the assault as a "flagrant violation of international law" and urged the Security Council to take immediate action.

The attack occurred at approximately 3:39 a.m. local time on Sunday, when the United States launched several missiles against the Darkhovin Nuclear Power Plant site.

The facility, which is still under construction, has been under the full scope of IAEA safeguards pursuant to Iran's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the agency.

Iravani emphasized that all activities at



The photo shows the under-construction Darkhovin Nuclear Power Plant site along the Karun River in southwestern Iran. ● [IRNA](#)

the site are "exclusively peaceful, fully transparent, and entirely consistent with Iran's rights and obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)."

The letter, which also referenced previous US attacks on Iran's civil infrastructure, argued that the deliberate targeting of a safeguarded nuclear facility "constitutes a flagrant violation of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, relevant resolutions of the Security Council, the Statute of the IAEA, and General Conference resolutions of the IAEA."

Iravani further noted that this is the 18th such attack on Iran's peaceful nu-

clear sites since June 2025, when the US and Israel jointly launched aggression against the country.

"Such an attack ... gravely endangers nuclear safety and security, and seriously undermines the integrity, credibility, and effectiveness of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime," the letter stated.

Iranian nuclear chief Mohammad Eslami said on Tuesday that Iran could achieve its nuclear objectives even if it were bombed 1,000 times.

"Even if they bomb us a thousand times, we can achieve our objectives. We have fulfilled what we promised, and we will certainly fulfill our promises more forcefully," he said, calling the country's nuclear program a legacy of martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

Iran-US ceasefire deal ...

This multilateralism could help. At the very least, it would give Iran greater room for maneuver in future developments in the region.

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If the proposal fails, how far could the fighting continue, and how likely is it to turn into an all-out war?

It is impossible to say with certainty. The United States has a window of opportunity until November to secure certain gains, whether military or political, and close the file. Given that the prospects for a Republican victory in the midterm elections are considerably weaker than those of the Democrats, this several-month window will be valuable to them if they

have a broader military plan they want to carry out.

If they want to try to deploy boots on the ground or seize Iranian islands, they will certainly do so before November. If they can achieve a victory, they will have an upper hand in the midterm elections. If they fail to secure any impressive gains, however, then following a possible defeat in the November elections, they will no longer be able to do much, because Congress and the Senate will be controlled by the Democrats, and a vote to limit the president's authority to wage wars would likely pass with a substantial majority. Iran needs to play its trump cards. If it can manage Bab al-Mandab or secure concessions through a sharp increase in oil prices

and other means, it should do so.

Otherwise, if the situation moves toward the period from September to late October, it will be very dangerous for Iran. The weakening of Iran's air defenses in the south, the erosion of its missile strike capabilities because of the current limited clashes, and the region becoming more favorable for a ground invasion from September to late October are threats that Iran must take seriously.

But could the United States risk the deaths of thousands of marines to take over Iran's southern islands? Yes. A one-term president and the US deep state might be willing to take such a risk to prevent damage to the country's hegemonic power.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Pezeshkian reaffirms support for production, urges national unity

‘Iran’s diplomacy will never compromise on nation’s rights’



President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks at a National Industry and Mining Day ceremony in Tehran on July 21, 2026.
● [president.ir](#)

Economy Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Tuesday his government would continue supporting production by removing obstacles for manufacturers and ensuring stable energy supplies

for industry, adding that national unity, support for production and constructive engagement were the country's strongest assets in overcoming difficult conditions. Speaking at a National Industry and Mining Day ceremony, Pezeshkian

praised manufacturers for maintaining supplies during the war, saying they had prevented shortages despite attacks on infrastructure. The country has remained on a war footing since a US-Israeli coalition launched attacks in late February,

particularly targeting civilians and infrastructure during a 40-day conflict. After a pause of several weeks, the United States resumed strikes on Iran's infrastructure on July 11. Iran maintained supplies of essential goods at the height of the conflict despite a US naval blockade of the country's southern ports and attacks on its energy and industrial infrastructure, according to Iranian authorities. "You were the ones who fought the enemy on the economic front and did not allow the country to face shortages or famine during that critical period," Pezeshkian told manufacturers. "The enemy imposed an all-out war on the Iranian nation with the aim of creating domestic pressure and social collapse, but you brave producers and industrialists stood firm against every challenge with extraordinary resilience," he said. "You prevented the major powers from achieving their malicious objectives, to the point that they were forced to turn to engagement and dialogue instead of war." Iran and the United States signed a 14-point memorandum of understanding on June 18 aimed at ending the war and opening talks on Iran's nuclear

program, but the United States later violated the agreement by resuming the naval blockade and reinstating temporary sanctions waivers, after three vessels were targeted in the Strait of Hormuz. Pezeshkian said enemy attacks on energy infrastructure had disrupted electricity and energy supplies and placed additional pressure on industry, but the government had managed to control electricity consumption through public cooperation and coordination among state institutions. In another part of his remarks, Pezeshkian praised the guidance of Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei in shaping the country's strategic direction, particularly regarding ending the "no war, no peace" situation. He said the Leader had stressed in private meetings the need to end that situation, adding that negotiations had therefore begun based on "dignity, expediency, wisdom and the country's honor," and that Iran's diplomatic team would never compromise on the nation's rights. Pezeshkian also criticized what he described as uninformed and unprofessional comments about the negotiations, saying such remarks downplayed the achievements of the talks. Referring to wartime damage to the country's infrastructure, Pezeshkian stressed that the government would manage conditions to minimize pressure on production units and take the necessary measures to remove obstacles facing industry.

UK-Iran trade hits eight-year high as Turkish imports surge



Economy Desk

Trade between Britain and Iran rose to its highest level in eight years in 2025, while Turkey's imports from Iran climbed sharply in the first five months of 2026, according to official data released by the two countries. According to Eghtesad-e Moaser website, Britain's Department for Business and Trade said total bilateral trade with Iran increased 8% year-on-year to 438 million pounds (about \$586 million) the highest level since 2017. Separately, Turkey's statistical authority said the country's imports from Iran rose 24% to \$1.28 billion in January-May 2026. British exports to Iran totaled 288 million pounds in 2025, while imports from Iran reached 150 million pounds, leaving Britain with a trade surplus of 138 million pounds. Both British exports to Iran and imports from Iran increased 8% from the previous year. Iran ranked as Britain's 112th-largest trading partner in 2025, according to the British data. Of Britain's total exports to Iran, 66 million pounds consisted of goods and 222 million pounds of services. Goods

exports rose 1.5% from a year earlier, while services exports increased 9.9%. Britain imported 24 million pounds of goods and 126 million pounds of services from Iran in 2025. Commodity imports from Iran jumped 50% year-on-year, while services imports rose 2.4%. Medical and pharmaceutical products were Britain's largest goods export to Iran in 2025, while general industrial machinery was the country's largest import category from Iran.

Turkish imports rose 24%

Separately, data released by the Turkish Statistical Institute showed bilateral trade between Iran and Turkey reached \$2.38 billion in the first five months of 2026, up 5% from \$2.26 billion in the same period a year earlier. Turkey's exports to Iran fell 10% to \$1.1 billion in January-May 2026 from \$1.23 billion in the corresponding period of 2025. Turkey's imports from Iran, however, rose 24% to \$1.28 billion from \$1.03 billion a year earlier, leaving Iran with a trade surplus of \$180 million in bilateral trade over the five-month period.

Energy deputy: Restored equipment, higher output to secure power in south

Economy Desk

Deputy Energy Minister Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi said on Tuesday that uninterrupted electricity is expected to be provided to households in the country's southern regions through the end of the week after restoring damaged equipment and increasing power generation capacity. Rajabi Mashhadi, as quoted by state broadcaster IRIB News, said a significant number of generating units and power grid facilities that had been taken offline had returned to operation, increasing the country's electricity supply capacity. He said the improved conditions were expected to last through Friday and depended on the continued stability of power plants, weather conditions, the reliability of the transmission and distribution network, and continued public cooperation in managing electricity consumption. "There remains a risk of equipment failures or emergency shut-downs at power plants and grid facilities, as well as a renewed rise in temperatures and electricity demand," he said. "Therefore, if any of these conditions change, the power industry will have no choice but to resume load management programs and impose restrictions on household power consumption in order to maintain grid stability." Rajabi Mashhadi said electricity sector personnel were using the full capacity of the country's generation, transmission and distribution systems to ensure stable electricity supplies for residents



in southern Iran, but added that maintaining stable power supplies would not be possible without public cooperation. "All our colleagues across the power industry are working at maximum capacity and using every available generation, transmission and distribution resource to provide stable electricity to people in the country's southern regions. However, maintaining stable power supplies will not be possible without public participation." After a pause of several weeks, the United States resumed strikes on Iran's infrastructure on July 11 after three vessels in the Strait of Hormuz were targeted. The country has remained under wartime conditions since a US-Israeli coalition launched attacks in late February, particularly targeting civilians and infrastructure during a 40-day conflict. Detailing the restoration of the power grid, Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi said on Sunday

that four 400-kilovolt and two 230-kilovolt transmission lines damaged during the US strikes had been fully repaired, returning the regional network to normal operating conditions. Iran was already facing electricity shortages before the attacks, a situation worsened by the conflict and peak summer demand. The government has set a target of installing 30,000 megawatts of renewable energy capacity within the next two years to help reduce daily power shortages and improve the long-term stability of electricity supplies. Installed renewable power generation capacity has exceeded 5,400 megawatts, according to the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA). The agency's deputy investment director, Jafar Mohammadnezhad Sigaroudi, said on Monday that the government's target of reaching 7,000 MW by the end of the summer remained unchanged despite constraints on imported equipment.

Iran to establish legal deterrence on global stage

Gov't designated front man for legal prosecution of US-Israeli war crimes

CONFERENCE

A specialized assembly convened on July 18, under the chairmanship of the Iranian president and with the participation of Ayatollah Seyyed Mostafa Mohaghegh Damad, the minister of Justice, a cohort of deputies from the executive branch, and preeminent scholars within the legal and judicial spheres, to examine the legal and judicial dimensions of the 12-Day War and the Ramadan War. This assembly was instituted with the objective of formulating a comprehensive strategy for domestic, foreign, and international prosecutions of offenses perpetrated against the Islamic Republic of Iran. The orators elucidated the prerequisites and mechanisms for confronting the legal challenges arising from the criminal acts of the United States and the Zionist regime.

During this assembly, President Pezeshkian, while underscoring the scientific and strategic validity of this initiative, asserted: "A systematic approach to the legal and judicial dimensions of recent wars is not merely an irrefutable necessity for fostering societal awareness and vigilance, but also establishes the foundation for the formation of Iran's power of influence and legal deterrence within global assemblies. The application of contemporary knowledge and the opinions of elites in this field must occur within a framework of precise and transparent pub-

lic information dissemination."

The president, while undertaking a pathology of prior performance in this domain, remarked: "Regrettably, we have thus far failed to exploit the full scientific capacity of jurists and experts, and, at times, through unprofessional statements, not only has public benefit diminished, but erroneous legal expectations have also been cultivated within society. Henceforth, we must exercise vigilance to ensure that our actions possess scientific coherence and evidentiary admissibility."

Pezeshkian, while expressing gratitude for the endeavors undertaken in the preparation of the "Comprehensive Atlas of Legal-Judicial Action Research," proceeded to delineate the managerial priorities of this project, adding: "First, the continuation of the path based upon transparency and veracity; second, the documentation of findings in a manner rendering them admissible in domestic, regional, and international tribunals; and third, the utilization of the capacities of all Iranian intellectuals resident abroad and Muslim jurists worldwide for the further enrichment of this process."

The incumbent Iranian president, while emphasizing the avoidance of redundancy and the necessity of forming specialized working groups, affirmed that for the realization of this objective, he is personally prepared to convene continuous



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (c) addresses a specialized meeting attended by Minister of Justice Amin Hossein Rahimi (R), Ayatollah Mohaghegh Damad (2nd-L), and a group of officials and prominent legal experts on July 18, 2026.

FARS

and daily meetings with experts in this field until the final result is achieved. Furthermore, he considers inter-sectoral interaction and synergy among the three branches of government and scientific institutions an operational imperative, and, should material support be required, "no effort shall be spared."

In another segment of his address, Pezeshkian, alluding to the unprecedented coordination among the heads of the branches of government, observed, "Throughout the history of the Islamic Revolution, such cohesion among the executive, judicial, and legislative

branches for the prosecution of a right of the Iranian nation is without precedent." He noted that the Head of the Judiciary Gholam Hossein Mohseni-Ejei and Speaker of the Parliament Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf are accompanying him in this path with their full capacity, and that "this commendable solidarity, which at times even encounters unfair criticisms, merits appreciation and support."

Key responsibility vested in Ayatollah Mohaghegh Damad

During this assembly, with due regard for his distinguished

scientific and expert record, the executive responsibility for legal-judicial research pertaining to the aggression and war crimes of the United States and Israel was delegated to Ayatollah Mohaghegh Damad, so that, through meticulous division of topics and the establishment of cross-sectoral mechanisms, the process of initiating claims in international courts may be pursued with augmented efficacy and mastery.

Ayatollah Mohaghegh Damad, in his own remarks, while emphasizing the entirely voluntary and sincere nature of the working groups responsible for

compiling this atlas, stated: "Divine motivation and service to the people constitute our sole capital in this endeavor. The history of our country demonstrates that whenever we have neglected the knowledge and experience of jurists, we have sustained substantial losses. The scientific community of the nation supports the government in this undertaking and shall, with full dedication and vigilance, stand alongside the president."

Subsequently, specialized topics, including protocols for the documentation of governmental, public, and private damages; the rectification of deficiencies in existing judicial processes; methodologies for public education and information dissemination; the accurate representation of legal and judicial facts on the ground; the configuration of a legal posture commensurate with international standards; and strategies for overcoming obstacles to the initiation of claims; were subjected to profound and expert scrutiny.

The Comprehensive Atlas of Legal-Judicial Action Research concerning the Aggression and War Crimes of the United States and the Zionist Regime, representing the fruit of extensive academic and specialist endeavor, has been compiled in over 700 headings and comprises 6 chapters, each of which has been precisely arranged and disaggregated into 27 separate sections.

Commencement of national, int'l legal campaign



By Mahmoud Kalhori
Head of the office for
the Deputy of Legal
Affairs of the President

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The specialized assembly to examine the legal and judicial dimensions of the 12-Day War and the Ramadan War, convened under the chairmanship of President Pezeshkian and with the attendance of a number of the most eminent jurists, university professors, and judicial and executive officials of the country, was not merely an expert meeting; rather, it constituted a step toward the formation of a national strategy for the protection of the rights of the Iranian nation and the pursuit of the legal accountability of the perpetrators of aggression and the damages inflicted upon the country. International experience has demonstrated that, alongside political and military arenas, the legal arena also represents one of the most critical fields for the de-



A government handout photograph shows weapon remnants displayed on a table near the ruins of the Shajarah Tayyebbeh elementary school, where a US precision strike reportedly killed 175 people, mostly children, on February 28, 2026. The remnants have been identified by The Times as components of a modern, US-made Tomahawk missile.

IRIB

fense of national interests. The more precise the documentation, the more coherent the coordination among institutions, and the more extensive the utilization of the capacity of legal elites, the greater the likelihood of success in legal and judicial prosecutions.

During this assembly, a report was presented on the actions undertaken in the domain of damage documentation, evidence collection, coordination among responsible institutions, and legal measures already implemented; simultaneously, existing obstacles,

challenges, and gaps were examined. The objective of these deliberations was not merely a review of past actions, but rather the design of a roadmap for continuing this path and reinforcing the country's preparedness in the arena of international law. The president's

emphasis on the utilization of all scientific, academic, and specialized capacities of the country conveys an important message to Iran's legal community: the defense of the rights of the nation is not a mission confined to a single institution or body; rather, it necessitates the extensive participation of university professors, researchers, attorneys, judges, jurists, and all those who are solicitous and who can assist the country along this path by offering scientific and legal solutions.

It is self-evident that the adjudication of war crimes and the claim for damages constitute a process that is not short-term. This path requires professional documentation, the drafting of robust legal briefs, the utilization of the capacities of international law, collaboration among domestic institutions, and the exploitation of the successful experiences of other countries in pursuing international claims. The institution of the Deputy for Legal Affairs of the President, within this framework and through coordination with other relevant institutions, is diligently pursuing the path of documentation, the consol-

idation of legal measures, coordination among responsible authorities, and the utilization of national and international capacities, in order to provide the necessary groundwork for an effective defense of the rights of the Iranian nation before international legal and judicial bodies.

What is of importance today is the continuation of this synergy, the avoidance of fragmented actions, and the transformation of the country's scientific capacity into a cohesive legal campaign; a campaign whose objective is not merely the registration of events, but rather the reasoned, documented, and effective defense of the rights of the Iranian nation and the claim for the legal accountability of the perpetrators of aggression and the damages inflicted.

This assembly should be regarded as the commencement of a significant phase along this path; a phase in which legal knowledge, executive experience, and national will converge so that the voice of the right of the Iranian nation in the arena of international law may be heard with enhanced argumentation, documentation, and scientific support.

End of fragmented action, beginning of cohesive campaign



By **Mohammad Darvishzadeh**
President of the
Iranian Law and Legal
Research Institute

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

A specialized assembly to examine the legal and judicial dimensions of the two recent imposed wars convened on Saturday, under the chairmanship of Masoud Pezeshkian. This assembly, more than anything else, emphasized the necessity of formulating a cohesive strategy for the legal and judicial prosecution of war crimes and of ending the fragmentation of actions undertaken by various institutions. Mohammad Darvishzadeh, President of the Iranian Law and Legal Research Institute, announced during this assembly the compilation of the "Comprehensive Atlas of Legal-Judicial Action Research Concerning Aggression and War Crimes," with the identification of over 700 legal issues. This document is intended to serve as the basis for the coordination of 35 institutions and for Iran's cohesive entry into domestic and international legal prosecutions.

Darvishzadeh, speaking to the Iran Newspaper correspondent at yesterday's assembly, stated: "What was introduced at the president's meeting with jurists as the most significant achievement was the compilation of the 'Comprehensive Atlas of Legal-Judicial Action Research Concerning Aggression and War Crimes.' This document, which was prepared by the private Iranian Law and Legal Research Institute at the behest of the Strategic Deputy of the Presi-

dency, endeavors to systematically identify, categorize, and translate into legal action all legal dimensions arising from aggression and war crimes." He also explained, regarding the choice of title for this atlas, that special legal precision was exercised in its nomenclature. For this reason, terms such as "12-Day War" or "America's War" were not employed; rather, relying upon the definition of aggression in international instruments, including the definition of aggression resolution and the provisions of the International Criminal Court, the title "Aggression and War Crimes" was selected. Because, from the perspective of international law, the actions undertaken constitute instances of aggression and, in numerous instances, also constitute clear instances of war crimes. According to him, even the selection of terminology in legal documents carries significant legal implications, and for this reason, in the compilation of this atlas, efforts were made to formulate all concepts on the basis of the accepted terminology of international law. Darvishzadeh also alluded to certain manifest examples of these crimes, such as the attack on the Shajareh Tayyebah elementary school in Minab, as well as the targeting of civilian areas and installations. "These constitute clear instances of war crimes that are susceptible to legal prosecution," he added. The president of the Iranian Law and Legal Research Institute, stating that "law is not merely a theoretical discipline," further remarked that "in such circumstances, law functions as a strategic instrument and even a weapon." According to him,



Members of the Civil Commission of the Iranian Parliament inspect the extent of the destruction at the Shajarah Tayyebah elementary school in Minab, where a US missile strike reportedly killed 175 people, mostly children, on February 28, 2026.
● ICANA

many military achievements, after the conclusion of conflict, are consolidated in the form of documents and judicial opinions, and what transpires on the battlefield will ultimately be preserved in legal and judicial dossiers. Hence, precise documentation and legal planning, simultaneous with field developments, acquire decisive importance. He also spoke of the extensive scope of this atlas and explained that the implementation of this roadmap is contingent upon more than 35 ministries, organizations, and related institutions. According to him, even institutions that at first glance do not have a direct connection to wartime issues, such as the National Library, will have

specific missions in the areas of documentation, preservation of documents, and registration of records. Consequently, one can imagine the vast volume of responsibilities and legal matters that have been defined for institutions such as the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Justice, the Deputy for Legal Affairs of the Presidency, and the Judiciary. "In addition to determining the role of institutions, the groundworks for initiating claims have also been identified. Accordingly, approximately 15 domestic, foreign, and international assemblies and platforms for the prosecution of cases, as well as nearly 18 policy-making areas related to these cases, have been enumerated so that it may

be clear through which channel each matter should be pursued and which institution shall bear responsibility for each part." According to Darvishzadeh, the most important product of this project is the provision of a "roadmap" for the coordination of the country's legal actions. A roadmap that specifies what duty each organization has, how it must coordinate with other institutions, and what process must be followed for documentation, consensus-building, prosecution, and execution of cases. The President of the Iranian Law and Legal Research Institute, regarding the discussions held at Saturday's assembly, also stated that the examinations revealed that many in-

stitutions had independently undertaken valuable actions, including the preparation of documentation protocols, the collection of documents, and the drafting of specialized reports; however, the principal problem had been the absence of communication and coordination among these actions. According to him, the President's emphasis was likewise on this very issue: that fragmented activities must be interconnected within a unified structure. On this basis, it was decided that a working group, comprising the Ministry of Justice, the Deputy for Legal Affairs of the Presidency, the Strategic Deputy, and other relevant institutions, should be formed under the supervision of Ayatollah Mohaghegh Damad, so that all of the country's legal capacities may be mobilized along a single common path.

The former judge of the Supreme Court affirmed: "One should not offer definitive predictions regarding the final outcomes of this legal campaign because success in such cases is contingent upon the degree of preparedness, cohesion, planning, documentation, and coordination, and not merely upon the initiation of claims." He also alluded to certain gaps within the domestic legal system and remarked that it is necessary to design mechanisms whereby, simultaneously with compensating the victims for their damages, the authority for legal prosecution and the initiation of claims against the aggressor may also be obtained from them, so that the prosecution of cases before international assemblies and even the courts of other countries may be facilitated.

Iran should increase cost of indifference for other countries



By **Sohrab Rostami Kia**
Policy researcher

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

During the 40-Day Imposed War, Iran's infrastructure was subjected to attack. The military assault on vital infrastructure, including energy, water, and electricity installations, as well as scientific and academic centers, from the perspective of international law, is a clear instance of war crime and a flagrant violation of the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law. This piece endeavors, with a national perspective, to condemn the matter from humanitarian and legal dimensions and, from the standpoint of public interest, to address the duty of the various segments of Iranian society in relation to this approach. Legally, pursuant to the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, the targeting of civilian infrastructure, particularly in the absence of direct military justification, is prohibited and shall place international responsibility on the aggressor state. Although our adversary, in its new approach, does not respect international law even in appearance and exerts pressure on international institutions,

nevertheless, given the absence of substantiated justifications for the aggression against Iran, the legal prosecution of the aforementioned matter through international authorities and all relevant institutions, by the government and even by Iranian actors within and outside the borders, is not devoid of merit. Another matter pertains to the historical test of nationalism for commentators, elites, members of the academic and artistic communities, and actors in various political, social, and civil arenas under these circumstances. From the perspective of domestic law and national sovereignty, infrastructure represents a symbol of development, independence, and national dignity. Its destruction entails not only economic and social harm, but also constitutes an overt attempt to undermine national will and disrupt public order. In such circumstances, nationalism in its genuine sense manifests itself not in slogans but in action: in the defense of territorial integrity, in the preservation of developmental achievements, and in the maintenance of national cohesion in the face of foreign aggression. These voices of protest and the unity of the nation are best represented by the elites of that society, which can express themselves through cohesive



Iran's Minister of Transport and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadegh Malvajerdi (R) visits residential areas damaged in the American-Israeli war in the capital on June 22, 2026.
● IRNA

media and academic statements, in poetry, literature, and art, and across the extensive social sphere so pervasively that the world becomes aware, on the one hand, of the depth of the enemy's crimes and, on the other, of the resolve, unity, and solidarity of Iranians in difficult circumstances. Of course, the official reactions of domestic institutions, the condemnations by a portion of the educated, and the declarations of senior state officials demonstrate efforts against this type of

violence. However, in domestic and foreign condemnations by ordinary Iranian people, the capacity for national convergence has been and remains greater; nevertheless, it is essential that the media and diplomatic capacities, as well as activist Iranians within and outside the country, undertake measures such that the international community also responds practically and decisively to this flagrant violation of international law and that the cost of indifference toward it is elevated.

Silence in the face of this crime is not merely moral indifference, but shall also pave the way for its recurrence on a larger scale. Certain incorrect positions and behaviors on the part of some domestic movements should not cause numerous concerned critics, intellectuals, and commentators of society to neglect their national and human duty at the most critical juncture of contemporary history. One of the important deterrent factors against the continuation of the enemy's

aggression against the country or the success of their nefarious objectives is comprehensive national unity and solidarity in difficult circumstances of threat and assault. If understood, this renders inaction in the present situation meaningless. Of course, alongside these matters, the military and field domain of the country also requires the comprehensive support of the nation and all segments of society for defense, the preservation of national reserves, and the establishment of equilibrium on the battlefield; and, of course, the country's media management, on the basis of this sensitivity, requires transformation in the utilization of all popular and human capacities for resilience and the construction of national convergence. In the domain of economic management, diversification measures concerning infrastructure, scenario-based planning, the creation of alternative routes and networks, the engagement of the government, the private sector, and civil society for convergence in supplying the country's essential needs, the protection of the current production capacity of goods and services, and the reconstruction of damages are also essential.

The article first appeared in the Persian-language newspaper Iran.

2026 Chuncheon Korea Open:

Zarrinkamar strikes gold, leads Iran women's medal haul

Sports Desk

Iran's women's taekwondo team collected five medals, including one gold, at the 2026 Chuncheon Korea Open, as the country concluded the two-day event with 12 medals across the men's and women's competitions.

Reigning two-time world junior champion Hana Zarrinkamar headlined Iran's medal haul by claiming gold in the +73kg category on Tuesday. After receiving a first-round bye, the Iranian prodigy defeated Chinese Taipei's Chen Nai-Cih in straight rounds to reach the semifinals before comfortably overcoming South Korea's Song Da-bin.

Zarrinkamar then rallied from one round down to beat China's Gyu Li in the final, winning the next two rounds to secure the title.

Fatemeh Ahmadi, Iran's other entrant in the division, defeated an opponent from Uzbekistan before losing to South Korea's Song.

Olympic silver medalist Nahid Kiani earned silver in the -57kg category. Kiani defeated opponents from India, Australia, Uzbekistan and China before suffering a 2-0 defeat to Morocco's U21 world champion Amina Dehhaoui in the final.

Hasti Mohammadi also competed

in the -57kg category, defeating athletes from the United States and China before losing to Dehhaoui.

Teenage sensation Saina Karimi, who won gold at last year's Islamic Solidarity Games, secured bronze in the -46kg division. She opened with a victory over Britain's Lauren Dunsmore before defeating opponents from Russia and China to reach the semifinals, where she lost in straight rounds to another Chinese competitor.

Rozhan Goudarzi exited in the -53kg category after defeating Australia's Christoffel Tamzin in her opening bout before losing to another Australian, Bianca Motta. Farzaneh Fathi was eliminated in the -67kg division after defeating Australia's Paige Cover before falling to China's Xing Jiani.

Iran's other representative in the weight class, Saghar Moradi, claimed bronze after losing to a South Korean opponent in the semifinals.

Baran Nemati added another bronze in the -73kg category. She defeated opponents from Chinese Taipei and China before losing in straight rounds to China's Song Jie in the last four.

Men's dominance

The women's medal tally followed

a successful outing by Iran's men's team, which won five gold medals and two bronzes on the opening day.

Asian silver medalist Yasin Valizadeh opened Iran's gold-medal haul in the -54kg division. After defeating a South Korean opponent to reach the semifinals, he overcame an Uzbek rival to book his place in the final. Valizadeh then defeated another South Korean in straight rounds, 7-1 and 3-2, to secure the title.

Reigning world and Asian champion Abolfazl Zandi continued his impressive run of form by claiming gold in the -58kg category. One of Iran's standout performers over the past year, Zandi advanced confidently to the final before defeating his opponent in two rounds, 10-8 and 12-11.

Asian champion Mahdi Haji Mousaei added another gold for Iran in the -63kg event, producing an assured display to beat a South Korean opponent in the final.

Iran also celebrated victory in the -87kg division through Mohammad Hossein Yazdani. After defeating a South Korean athlete in the semifinals, Yazdani overcame Thailand's representative in straight rounds in the final to capture the title.

Olympic champion Arian Salimi

completed Iran's golden campaign in the +87kg category. Salimi advanced to the final after his scheduled semifinal against fellow Iranian Ali Najafi was cancelled because of Najafi's injury. He then defeated a South Korean opponent 2-1 in the final to claim the gold medal, while Najafi was awarded bronze.

In the -74kg division, Amir Sina Bakhtiari settled for bronze after losing to a South Korean competitor in the semifinals. Bakhtiari, who recently secured a place in Iran's squad for the 2026 Asian Games, had defeated two South Korean opponents as well as a Russian athlete en route to the last four.

Iran, however, failed to reach the podium in the -80kg category after both team captain Mehran Barkhordari and Amirreza Sadeqian suffered early exits.

The five gold medals and two bronzes underlined Iran's strength as the team continued its preparations for the Asian Games later this year.

The two-day event marked another impressive showing for Iranian taekwondo in Chuncheon after the country won the mixed team title and women's bronze at the WT World Cup Team Championships there last week.



Iran's Hana Zarrinkamar (blue) won the gold medal in the women's +73kg division at the Chuncheon Korea Open.
● WORLD TAEKWONDO



● IRIHF

Asian Men's Junior Handball Championship:
Iran crushes India
to seal quarterfinal berth

Sports Desk

Iran secured its place in the quarterfinals of the Asian Men's Junior Handball Championship with a commanding 63-14 victory over India in Chuzhou, China, on Tuesday.

Iran dominated from the opening whistle, racing to a remarkable 32-6 half-time lead before maintaining its relentless pace after the break to claim its third victory in six Group B matches.

Mohammad Babaladi was

named the match's Most Valuable Player after starring in the one-sided contest.

The victory lifted Iran to seven points, guaranteeing a top-four finish in the group regardless of the results of Wednesday's final round of group-stage matches.

Iran emerged from one of the tournament's toughest groups, which also featured two-time defending champion Japan, 2024 runner-up South Korea, five-time champions Kuwait

and Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. Several of Iran's rivals fielded naturalized players, making the qualification all the more impressive.

Iran got off to a flying start by defeating Kuwait 29-27 before suffering a narrow 29-28 defeat to South Korea and sharing the spoils with the United Arab Emirates in a 25-25 draw.

Iran then returned to winning ways with a 26-25 victory over Qatar on Sunday but suffered a heart-

breaking 28-27 defeat to Japan the following day at the Chuzhou International Handball Hall.

The Iranian side will return to action in the quarterfinals on Friday, with its opponent to be determined after the remaining group-stage matches conclude on Wednesday.

Iran finished fifth in the 2024 edition, while its best-ever result came in 2008, when it claimed the silver medal after losing to Kuwait in the final.

The championship also serves as Asia's qualifier for the 2027 IHF Men's Junior (U21) World Championship in North Macedonia, with the four semifinalists securing places at the global showpiece.

Asian U18 Hockey5s Championship:

Iran off to flying start
with successive wins on Day 1

Sports Desk

Iran's under-18 Hockey5s team got off to a flying start at the Asian Hockey5s Championship, securing back-to-back victories over Iraq and Saudi Arabia on the opening day of the competition in Muscat, Oman. Competing in its first international tournament, Iran opened its Men's Challenger campaign with a 5-0 victory over Iraq before delivering the biggest win of the day with a commanding 9-0 triumph over Saudi Arabia, underlining its title ambitions.

Mohammad Pouya starred against the Saudis with a hat-trick, while Kamyar Mohammadnejad and Parsa Rajabi each scored twice. Mohammad Taha Abbasi and Ashkan Zolfaqarkhanian added one goal apiece to complete the rout. Abbasi was named Player of the Match after an impressive all-round performance.

In the Men's Elite event, Pakistan defeated host Oman 5-0 victory before maintaining its winning momentum with a 5-2 defeat of Bangladesh, making it two wins from two matches.

India also enjoyed a successful start, overcoming Bangladesh 7-3 in an entertaining contest featuring free-flowing attacking hockey and spectacular goals.

The tournament serves as a qualification pathway for the FIH Hockey5s World Cup.



● AHF

Iranian keeper Khalifeh joins Esteghlal

Sports Desk

Iranian international goalkeeper Mohammad Khalifeh has signed for Persian Gulf Pro League powerhouse Esteghlal. Khalifeh, 21, joins from Iralco after keeping 19 clean sheets in 56 appearances across all competitions over two seasons for the Iranian top-flight club. The young goalkeeper is expected to replace Spanish veteran Antonio Adán at the Tehran-based side. He was included in Iran's provisional squad for the 2026 FIFA World Cup but did not make the final roster.

Khalifeh has also earned

10 caps for Iran's under-23 team, keeping two clean sheets in three group-stage matches at January's AFC U23 Asian Cup in Saudi Arabia, where Iran failed to reach the knockout stage. Esteghlal was top of the Persian Gulf Pro League

when the season was declared null and void because of wartime conditions in the country in March. The Tehran Blues, along with Tractor SC, will represent Iran in the upcoming AFC Champions League Elite.



● FFIRI

Kowkhdan's untapped tourism potential calls for coordinated action



• chn.ir

Iranica Desk

Just five kilometers north of Sisakht, the capital of Dena in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, lies a village that seems as though nature took its time crafting it with care. Kowkhdan sits amid the elevations of the southern Zagros Mountains, on slopes that lead to oak forests on one side and lush summer pastures on the other—landscapes that never tire the eye. Kowkhdan's summer air is cool and refreshing, the kind of climate that prompts weary city dwellers to spend hours on the road in search of relief from the heat. Spring arrives with wild blossoms and flowing streams. Autumn paints the landscape in shades of gold and orange, a spectacle rarely found elsewhere in the province. Winter brings snow and a deep tranquility that many urban visitors consider a luxury, according to chn.ir.

With its rich vegetation, abundant natural water resources, four-season scenery, and traditional mountain architecture, the village possesses all the characteristics of a genuine ecotourism destination. It is neither artificial nor developed solely for tourists; rather, it remains authentic and largely untouched.

Tourism stakeholders in the region said that Kowkhdan and the surrounding villages form a natural tourism corridor that could be developed into a multi-day itinerary for nature enthusiasts. Mountain hiking routes around Kowkhdan still require proper mapping and signage. Natural springs scattered across the slopes, suitable mountain camping areas, and access to climbing routes leading into the Dena highlands represent significant assets. If properly promoted through cooperation between cultural heritage authorities and related agencies, these attrac-

tions could establish the area as one of the province's leading ecotourism destinations. A local ecotourism guide said, "Whenever I bring groups here from other parts of the province or from outside the province, they all ask the same question: Why isn't this place better known? Why does nobody talk about it?" The answer, he said, is simple: "The infrastructure is incomplete, and there has been no coordinated effort to promote it." Kowkhdan has begun to gain a modest but genuine presence on social media. Photos shared by nature travelers have attracted positive reactions and sparked curiosity among potential visitors. Yet that growing interest highlights the need for improved access and infrastructure. Operators of eco-lodges in Sisakht said that many visitors who planned to explore Kowkhdan either changed their plans or left with a less-than-satisfactory experience because of the

condition of the access road. This indicates that tourists are willing to come, but the infrastructure is not yet fully prepared to receive them. The current condition of the road is largely the result of utility projects, including rural gas, water, and wastewater infrastructure works. While these projects have improved residents' quality of life and represent a positive development, the excavation work requires restoration and coordination to facilitate easier travel for both local residents and visitors. Residents emphasized that what is needed is not a new project, but the completion of work already underway. Cooperation among utility providers, municipal authorities, local government officials, and road maintenance agencies could transform the route into an all-season road. Another key project is the bridge serving Kowkhdan and neighboring villages, which has

been undergoing widening and rehabilitation for more than a year. Completing the bridge improvements would benefit not only tourists but also local residents, students, and patients who rely on it for daily travel. With effective coordination among contractors, local authorities, and oversight bodies, completion of the bridge project could significantly improve safety and facilitate year-round access to the village. What Kowkhdan needs extends beyond road repairs. The village requires a coordinated development strategy involving cultural heritage authorities, municipal officials, local administrators, and service agencies so that infrastructure improvements and destination promotion can advance simultaneously. Rural tourism development experts stressed that many lesser-known areas of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province do not require major investments; rather, they need effective inter-

agency coordination. A reliable road, tourism information signs, support for eco-lodge development, and promotion through tourism platforms may be all that is required to transform Kowkhdan from a little-known village into a recognized destination. The provincial Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department also has an important role to play in this process — from mapping nature tourism routes and promoting the area through national events and platforms to supporting the establishment of eco-lodges. Such efforts are most effective when accompanied by the completion of essential infrastructure. The development of rural tourism is not the responsibility of a single institution. It is a shared responsibility. Kowkhdan presents an opportunity to demonstrate what can be achieved when government agencies and local stakeholders work together toward a common goal.

Zanjan recognized as global hub of filigree

Iranica Desk

The history of filigree metalwork (Malileh-Kari) dates back to 550-330 BCE, during the Achaemenid Empire, when goldsmiths and silversmiths devoted considerable attention to crafting finely decorated vessels and ornaments. Zanjan's filigree tradition is internationally recognized for its exceptional delicacy, craftsmanship, and historical authenticity. The city's designation as a "World City of Filigree" reflects its role as the primary center for the production and development of this art form, where quality standards in the craft are defined. Metalworking in Zanjan flourished during the Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sassanid periods. However, the documented history of filigree in the region becomes clearer from the 10th century CE onward, according to chn.ir. Because Zanjan's filigree products are made from precious metals such as gold and silver, many historical works were melted down over time for reuse of the raw material. As a result, relatively few examples from earlier periods — particularly before the Qajar era — have survived.



From the Qajar period, several filigree items remain, including hookah heads, trays, glass holders in various sizes, and jewelry such as necklaces, pendants, and earrings. Some of these works are preserved in domestic and international museums, while others remain in private collections. Historically, artisans created intricate and valuable works under difficult conditions, and modern filigree in Zanjan is indebted to these craftsmen, some of whom reportedly lost their eyesight due to the precision required in the work. Filigree in Zanjan consists of shaping extremely thin gold or silver wires into floral, geometric, and arabesque patterns, pro-



ducing lace-like metal structures of high artistic value. Zanjan has long been an important hub in Iran's cultural, eco-



• chn.ir

nomie, and craft history, serving as one of the country's key centers for traditional industries. While the art has ancient roots,

it reached maturity in Zanjan due to access to raw materials and the support of master craftsmen. Unlike conventional jewelry-making, filigree involves transforming metal into fine threads that are meticulously woven into decorative forms. Today, Zanjan hosts a wide network of active filigree workshops producing a wide range of products, from small items such as rings and earrings to larger works including ceremonial vessels and religious artworks. The master-apprentice system remains active, ensuring the transfer of knowledge to younger generations and preserving the craft's continuity. To promote the art form, symbolic initiatives have also been

implemented. A large decorative vase featuring filigree motifs has been installed in Zanjan's Sabzeh Meydan square, serving as a public representation of the city's heritage. Authorities also plan to donate valuable filigree works to museums in the near future, creating a comprehensive collection documenting the history and evolution of the craft for researchers and visitors. Due to rising gold prices, demand has shifted significantly toward silver filigree, leading to increased activity in silver-based production and a renewed focus on fine detailing. Current production is concentrated in two main categories: jewelry — including rings, earrings, and necklaces in both modern and traditional styles — and decorative vessels such as trays, vases, and ornamental objects that serve both aesthetic and investment purposes. With the expansion of global markets, Iranian filigree has gained international attention. Exhibitions and global craft festivals have provided artisans with opportunities to showcase their work and promote Iranian cultural heritage worldwide, contributing significantly to the preservation and global recognition of this traditional art.



Government incentives spur new wave of tourism investment in Iran

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri announced Tuesday that a new wave of private investment is gathering pace in the country's tourism sector, saying government incentives, tax relief and easier hotel equipment imports are accelerating hospitality projects. Speaking during a visit to a hotel project in central Tehran that is about 80% complete, Salehi-Amiri said the government had rolled out a package of incentives to remove barriers for investors and expand tourism infrastructure, CHTN reported. "A fresh wave of investment has

taken shape in the tourism industry," he said, adding that authorities have opened dedicated case files for investors to resolve project-specific obstacles across government agencies. The minister said Tehran needs more internationally rated hotels to match its role as Iran's political, economic and cultural hub. Of the capital's 144 operating hotels, only a limited number are five-star properties, a capacity he said falls short of growing demand from business travelers, international visitors, exhibitions and major conferences. He said the government has approved five key incentives to encourage private-sector investment, including allowing



Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri chairs a meeting with officials and staff of the Tehran provincial office of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts in Tehran, Iran, July 21, 2026. ● CHTN

mixed-use tourism complexes, granting exemptions of up to 80% on certain municipal construction fees, deferring remaining charges for five years after projects begin operating,

and permitting duty-free imports of 200 categories of hotel equipment. "The development of accommodation infrastructure is a prerequisite for strengthening

Iran's international tourism standing," Salehi-Amiri said, inviting investors to capitalize on the new support measures. Highlighting the private sector's expanding role, he said more than 3,000 tourism projects are currently under development across the country, all financed by private investors. He described the trend as evidence of growing confidence in the industry's long-term potential.

Salehi-Amiri also called Tehran "the gateway" for many domestic and international travelers, saying visitors often form their first impression of Iran in the capital. Improving hotels, tourism services and visitor facilities, he said, will help showcase the country's historical and cultural attractions more effectively. The minister added that the hotel under construction, expected to open before the end of the current Iranian year (March 20), incorporates architectural and artistic elements inspired by different parts of the Islamic world, creating what he described as "a distinctive cultural identity" for domestic and international guests.

Tabriz opens door to Kazakh tourism partnership

Arts & Culture Desk

Tabriz is ready to host specialized tourism delegations from Kazakhstan as the two countries seek to deepen cultural cooperation, Ahmad Hamzehzadeh, director general of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts for East Azerbaijan Province, said on Tuesday. He made the remarks during a meeting with Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Iran, Ontalap Onalbayev, according to Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts. Highlighting Tabriz's historic role as one of Iran's leading commercial and cultural hubs, Hamzehzadeh said the city is well positioned to open a new chapter in cultural relations between the two countries. "The historical and cultural bonds between Iran and Kazakhstan provide a solid foundation for defining joint tourism projects," he said. He announced the province's readiness to receive Kazakh tourism officials, travel agency representatives, and tour guides for on-site visits aimed at designing joint travel packages and increasing two-way tourist exchanges. Hamzehzadeh also proposed establishing a sister-city partnership between Tabriz and a Kazakh city, saying such a link could strengthen long-term cooperation in culture, tourism, and economic affairs. Underscoring East Azarbaijan's rich heritage, he said the province is home to more than 4,800 identified historical sites, including over 2,200 nationally registered monuments and six UNESCO World Heritage sites, making it one of Iran's foremost tourism destinations. The provincial official also called for closer museum collaboration. He said the Azarbaijan Museum in Tabriz, Iran's second-largest archaeological museum, is prepared to host joint exhibitions featuring Kazakh artifacts and participate in cultural exchange programs, particularly those reflecting the two nations' shared Timurid heritage. Turning to traditional arts, Hamzehzadeh pointed to similarities between Kazakh handwoven crafts and Tabriz carpets. As a UNESCO-recognized World City of Carpet Weaving, Tabriz is well equipped to stage joint exhibitions, exchange expertise, and broaden professional cooperation in the handicrafts sector, he said. "The best use of these shared cultural assets can boost people-to-people exchanges, expand tourism flows, and reinforce lasting cultural cooperation between East Azarbaijan and Kazakhstan," Hamzehzadeh said.

Women's motorcycle licenses set for August rollout in Iran



Social Desk

Iran's Vice President for Women and Family Affairs Zahra Behrouz-Azar said on Tuesday that women are expected to receive motorcycle licenses in August after legal procedures are finalized, as part of a government effort to improve road safety, insurance coverage and access to formal rider training.

Behrouz-Azar said the government pursued the measure to ensure women who already use motorcycles are not left without legal licenses, certified training or insurance protection, IRNA reported. "Women should have motorcycle licenses so they are not exposed to additional harm because they lack a license and insurance coverage," she told reporters. She said consultations with lawmakers and religious scholars concluded that there are no legal or religious barriers to issuing motorcycle licenses for women. "Motorcycles are a means of transportation used by everyone," she said, noting that Iranian women already work as pilots and heavy-vehicle drivers. According to Behrouz-Azar, preparations have largely been completed, although the rollout was delayed by the recent conflict, which diverted the attention of relevant authorities.

She said the planned unveiling of the first licenses had been postponed but expressed confidence that issuance would begin in August. Rejecting suggestions that parliamentary amendments are required, Behrouz-Azar said the existing legal framework already allows implementation. "There is no legal gap. The issue can be resolved through the existing regulations and executive procedures," she said. The vice president added that women who have won national and international motorcycle sports medals will be invited to become the first certified instructors, helping train new applicants through formal licensing programs. Separately, Behrouz-Azar called for stronger digital literacy following a recent cyber extortion case involving girls in Iran's western Lorestan Province. She said a criminal network used ma-

nipulated personal images to blackmail victims before being identified and arrested through coordinated action by intelligence, judicial and law enforcement authorities. "The issue is no longer limited to extortion or unauthorized access to personal information," she said. "Artificial intelligence has many positive applications, but it can also be misused through deepfake technologies." Meanwhile, Brigadier General Teymour Hosseini, head of Iran's Traffic Police, said the licensing plan remains on its legal track and that the force will issue licenses only after all legal procedures are completed and formal authorization is received. He added that any future motorcycle license issued to women will follow the same national design and technical standards as licenses issued to men.

Uzbek artist brings hidden world to Iran virtual exhibition

Arts & Culture Desk

Uzbek artist Akmal Nuriddinov is inviting Iranian audiences beyond the visible through a virtual exhibition of 27 paintings hosted by Iran's Academy of Arts until July 28, where the internationally acclaimed painter explores the intersection of physical reality, memory and the inner spiritual world. The online exhibition, launched on July 20, reflects growing cultural cooperation between Iran and Uzbekistan, countries linked by centuries of shared civilizational heritage. Hosted on the Academy of Arts' website, the program seeks to broaden scholarly collaboration, introduce contemporary Uzbek art to Iranian audiences, and deepen cultural engagement across Central Asia, IRNA reported. Nuriddinov said his artistic language emerges "between the visible and the hidden," where the physical presence of the human body converg-



es with its inner and spiritual reality. "What occupies me more than depicting the external world is revealing states that exist beyond outward form, such as silence, longing, love, solitude, memory and the human yearning for the absolute," he said. The Uzbek artist said his paintings are rooted in the philosophical and cultural traditions of the East, particularly the Sufi understanding of love as a path to self-knowledge. Recurring symbols including apples, pomegranates, birds, trees, gardens and the female figure are revisited not as historical motifs but as living forms that continue to speak to contemporary audiences. "The human figure in my paintings often exists be-

yond a specific time and place," Nuriddinov said. "It is no longer merely the portrait of an individual, but the embodiment of an inner condition." He added that color functions as a bearer of meaning rather than decoration. Red evokes life, passion, sacrifice and memory, while white suggests silence, purification and unattainable wholeness. Gold, he said, points to a light beyond the material world. "I do not offer definitive interpretations," Nuriddinov said. "I want a painting not to explain, but to awaken, restoring our ability to pause, to look, and to listen to what usually remains unspoken." A leading figure in Uzbekistan's contemporary art scene, Nuriddinov's works are housed in major collections, including the State Museum of Arts of Uzbekistan, the Samarkand State Museum of History and Architecture, Seattle's Davidson Gallery and the Credit Suisse art collection.

International lullaby festival to commemorate 168 Minab schoolchildren

Social Desk

Iran's organizers announced that the first Minab International Festival of Awakening Lullabies will be held with the participation of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO), inviting mothers and artists from around the world to submit works in tribute to children killed in Minab during the opening day of the US-Israeli war of aggression. The festival commemorates the 168 schoolchildren who were killed on February 28, the first day of the US-Israeli war of aggression, when their school in the southern city of Minab came under attack. Organizers said the event aims to preserve the memory of the children through art, presenting lullabies as a universal expression of maternal love that transcends borders, languages, and cultures. Festival Secretary Maziar Rezakhani said the inaugural edition will feature both domestic and international sections, reflecting what he described as the shared emotional bond between mothers worldwide. "A lullaby for children is the common language of all mothers," he said, calling on women and artists



across the globe to contribute original works. Rezakhani said the festival's official call for submissions will be released soon, outlining participation rules and artistic categories. He added that preparations have been underway for two months in coordination with ICRO and that the festival secretariat will be formally established shortly. Describing the event as a cultural response to the tragedy, Rezakhani said the festival seeks to keep alive the memory of the Minab schoolchildren through music, poetry, film, theater, and other artistic expressions. "The true narrative of the Minab tragedy must endure," he said, adding that the initiative offers artists around the world an opportunity to honor the victims through creative works.