



AI can help solve Iran's woes with faith, skills: *Pezeshkian*



Social Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Monday artificial intelligence alone could not solve the country's problems, calling for technology to be combined with "faith, belief and practical skills" to deliver meaningful change. Speaking at the "Digital Iran" event in Tehran, a program targeting four million students aimed at expanding digital education and equal access to technology, Pezeshkian compared AI to "a physical body" and said scientific knowledge and technology needed practical skills to be used effectively, IRNA reported.



President Masoud Pezeshkian addresses the "Digital Iran" event in Tehran, Iran, on August 17, 2026.
● president.ir

"Artificial intelligence is like a body; in order to make proper use of it, we naturally need the skills and knowledge to implement it," he said.

The president noted that technology and knowledge only gained meaning when used "based on faith and skill on the path of rebuilding and advancing the country."

He urged students to "wake up, look carefully and learn deeply" and serve the society in which they live.

Calling students the country's "reserves" and "future-builders," Pezeshkian said their talents and creativity could help break through the country's problems if properly developed. "If you students have belief and faith, you can overcome all obstacles and lead Iran towards dignity and progress," he said.

The president called for greater educational equality, saying all

ministers and government officials had a duty to pursue it.

He said the "educational justice movement" was not simply about building schools, but about creating conditions for students across Iran, particularly in disadvantaged areas, to develop and flourish.

Pezeshkian also called for greater use of private-sector capacity and said talented people and experts in provinces and towns should be identified and supported.

"Iran belongs to all the people of Iran and does not belong to any particular group or faction," he said, urging students to "work and strive for the homeland" for as long as they were able.

The event, attended by the communications minister, education officials, teachers and selected students, focused on expanding digital education and equal access to digital tools across Iran.

Drug imports almost triple despite US blockades

Social Desk

Iran's imports and final customs clearance of medicines almost tripled in the first five months of the current Persian calendar year, data from the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) showed.

According to a new IRICA report published by IRNA on August 17, medicine imports hit \$960 million between March 21 and August 11, up 183% from the same period last year. The IRICA said pharmaceutical products and other essential healthcare goods had been cleared "without a hitch" during the period and that the number of medicines held at customs "had fallen to zero."

"Cross-government coordination between customs and the Health Ministry has helped speed up the clearance process, while emergency customs facilities approved by the government have allowed essential and pharmaceutical goods to keep moving through the country's customs points," the IRICA added.

The increase came as Iran faced a war with the United States and disruption to imports following two US naval blockades on Iranian ports and vessels.

The US imposed its first blockade in the Gulf of Oman and Indian Ocean in



mid-April. It ended after more than two months following a temporary peace memorandum, but a second blockade, which is ongoing, was enforced in mid-July after the deal collapsed.

The customs office said close cooperation with Iran's Food and Drug Administration, particularly in recent weeks, had helped ease and speed up the clearance of medicines and other essential healthcare products.

It said swift action by the IRICA had been particularly important when medicines, pharmaceutical raw materials, medical equipment and infant formula needed to be supplied quickly, helping prevent bottlenecks in the healthcare supply chain.

"Field inspections of pharmaceutical clearance operations showed a notable example of successful coordination among government agencies under difficult and challenging conditions," IRICA said.

Iran has 58 cultural heritage sites awaiting UNESCO review

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran has 58 more cultural heritage dossiers on UNESCO's tentative list and awaiting review, the deputy minister of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts said on Monday. Ali Darabi said at a meeting on the "strategic heritage of Alamut Castle" that Iran would have sites ready for global registration for "more than half a century" if it registered just one each year, IRNA reported.

Darabi pointed to the recent global registration of Alamut, saying it was the result of more than five years of work by 110 people that made it "Iran's 30th site on the UNESCO list."

Darabi said some of Iran's heritage dossiers, particularly in Sistan and Baluchestan, South Khorasan and Razavi Khorasan provinces, reflect historical Iranian knowledge of adapting to difficult climatic conditions.

Alamut Castle, in the Alborz mountains of Qazvin province, is part of a seven-fortification network UNESCO registered in 2026 as "Alamut Castle and Associated Fortifications".

The site was inscribed in July at UNESCO's 48th World Heritage



Committee session in Busan, South Korea, bringing Iran's number of tangible world heritage sites to 30. According to UNESCO documents, Alamut Castle was built in the ninth century AD.

Darabi stressed that global registration was not the end of the process, saying: "It is only the beginning of our work."

He said protecting, maintaining and introducing such sites to younger generations was a shared respon-



The photo shows an aerial view of Iran's Alamut Castle that UNESCO registered as a world heritage site in July, 2026.
● ISNA

sibility for the present and future, urging efforts to help young people understand Iran's historical and cultural heritage, take pride in it and feel responsible for preserving and passing it on to future generations.

60-day deadline carries ...

Based on the experience of the past three wars, the continued operation of US bases means creating a security predicament for Iran, the consequences of which spill over into the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf and, consequently, into regional countries.

This situation will end only when the cost of the US and Israel returning to war against Iran exceeds the benefits. But this balance is inherently fragile,

because any incident can alter the calculations.

Can the end of the ceasefire and the escalation of tensions between Lebanon and Israel be linked, or are these two separate developments? Could these tensions be seen as a US tool for putting pressure on Iran without engaging in military confrontation on Iranian territory?
Israel's aggressive actions toward

Lebanon should be analyzed on two levels. One is the historical level, as well as the opportunities and threats arising from geography, while the other concerns the ongoing regional war and the war between the US-Zionist-Arab axis and the Resistance Axis.

On the one hand, the intensification of attacks and Israel's continued efforts to occupy southern Lebanon are part of Israel's seven-decade effort to expand its geographical reach in the

region.

On the other hand, they are aimed at disrupting the synergy among the Resistance Axis in the ongoing war against Iran.

For this reason, the expiration of the 60-day ceasefire period could provide Israel with another pretext to step up operations in southern Lebanon.

Therefore, from a logical standpoint, developments in Lebanon cannot be viewed merely as a bilateral crisis between Israel and Hezbollah.

If Israel intensifies its attacks in Lebanon, we will probably see another round of escalation on the Iranian front.

As a result, one entirely plausible scenario is that Israel will use the opportunity created by the deadlock in Iran-US negotiations to increase pressure on Lebanon. But not only Iran; the other components of the Resistance Axis should also not remain indifferent to the continuation of aggression against Lebanon.