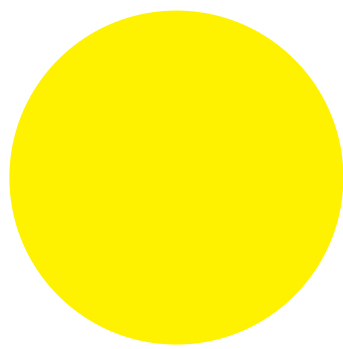


Strait of Hormuz will reopen when US honors Islamabad memo: **IRGC**

2 >



Iran Daily

Vol. 8190 • Tuesday, August 18, 2026 • Mordad 27, 1405 • Rabi' al-Awwal 05, 1448 • 100,000 rials • 8 pages



> irandaily.ir

| newspaper.irandaily.ir

| IranDailyWeb

Iran says 60-day peace period no longer relevant due to US violations

2 >



CBI chief urges Iraq banking deal to unlock funds, boost ties

3 >



Opinion
Ceuta border crisis heaps pressure on Spain's Sánchez gov't, EU untiy

4 >



U20 Wrestling World Championships: Dire Day 1 as all Iranians miss out on Greco-Roman finals

6 >

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

8 >



President Masoud Pezeshkian (6th R) poses for a family photo at the "Digital Iran" event in Tehran, Iran, on August 17, 2026.
● president.ir

60-day deadline carries no weight as Islamabad MoU loses function

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

The 60-day period agreed by Iran and the United States for negotiations and an end to the war has expired, while differences between the two sides are deeper than ever. The negotiations that were supposed to take place did not happen at all, and even a degree of military confrontation occurred during this period. At the same time, reports have emerged about an extension of the deadline, although this has not been officially confirmed. The question now is what significance the expiration or possible extension of the period carries, given that none of the plans set for this timeframe were implemented. Afifeh Abedi, an international affairs expert,



Afifeh Abedi

told Iran Daily that since the Islamabad accord has effectively lost its function due to violations of commitments and the suspension of negotiations, the expiration of the 60-day deadline has no particular political or legal significance. Therefore, the most important issue for Iran at this stage is not the timeframe, but to maintain military deterrence while leaving room for political initiatives.

IRAN DAILY: What practical and political significance does the end of the 60-day period, or its possible extension, have, and how will it affect the calculations of the two sides?

ABEDI: From a logical standpoint, the US violation of all the provisions of the Islamabad MoU and repeated exchanges of fire in southern Iran essentially meant that the understanding had failed. Therefore, the end of the 60-day period set for the ceasefire between the two sides should not be viewed as a serious calendar deadline either. In

practice, no ceasefire was observed that could now come to an end.

From the perspective of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the current "minimal stability" does not constitute an end to the war either. Rather, the war is continuing in other forms.

It should also be noted that the 60-day framework was essentially designed to buy time to reach a final agreement, but the negotiating process stalled over disagreements about compliance with the initial provisions of the MoU.

In fact, when the Islamabad understanding itself has effectively lost its function due to violations of commitments and the suspension of negotiations, the expiration of the 60-day deadline carries no particular political or legal significance.

The US has also repeatedly kicked off surprise wars at the height of negotiations, and if it has temporarily halted direct military action, this is due to operational constraints rather than legal commitments.

Therefore, the ongoing Iran-Oman talks, as well as the behind-the-scenes and indirect negotiations between Iran and the US, should be viewed merely as "buying time" for the start of another round of war.

The experience of several recent rounds of negotiations with the US has also reinforced the message for Iran that negotiations, and even an agreement, without an implementation mechanism and effective guarantees cannot provide a sufficient basis for lowering its level of defensive preparedness.

Therefore, Iran's calculation regarding the end of the 60-day period is not simply a matter of whether the "ceasefire" will be extended. The most important issue for Iran at this stage is to maintain military deterrence while leaving room for political initiatives.

How long can the current situation, which has affected countries across the Middle East, continue, and what are the possible scenarios ahead?

The presence of US military bases in regional countries and their permission for Washington to launch military action against Iran from those bases was the reason the entire region became involved in Iran's retaliatory attacks during the aggressive US-Israeli war.

Likewise, the continued US presence in regional countries has created an unstable balance between deterrence and escalation.

Iran certainly has an interest in preventing the war from turning into a prolonged conflict, but the security predicament created by the US in the region does not allow this. Therefore, to prevent another war, Iran has no choice but to maintain an environment of escalation and deterrence.

On the other hand, the US is facing the economic and military costs of the war, the fallout in energy markets, and international pressure stemming from the sharp decline in shipping through the Strait of Hormuz and heightened sensitivity in oil markets. Yet it is effectively

showing that Washington's calculations remain the same mistaken calculations that led to the war — namely, taking advantage of an opportunity to strike Iran. Therefore, unless the US demonstrates a change in its calculations in practice, this grey zone will continue.

In any case, for Iran, which has been subjected to aggression, a state of no war, no peace is part of the broader war environment.

But the main losers from these circumstances are certainly the Persian Gulf states, which are caught in a climate of instability. This situation, however, is favorable to Israel, which is geographically farther from the epicenter of the war. Israel is probably the key actor most interested in maintaining the "no war, no peace" situation so that it can push it back toward escalation at the first opportunity.

In fact, the reason Iran insists on the withdrawal of the US from the region is to put an end to this state of chaos.

Page 8 >

Iran says 60-day peace period no longer relevant due to US violations

International Desk

Iran said on Monday that the 60-day deadline envisaged in the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding is no longer relevant due to the violation of the memorandum by the United States just a few weeks after it was signed.

"There is no provision in the Memorandum of Understanding referring to a '60-day deadline', and that Iran never formulates its policies under pressure, ultimatums or time limits. We make decisions based on our national interests and assessments," Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said during his weekly press conference.

Baqaei said the memorandum had envisaged a 60-day period for talks on two issues – "the lifting of sanctions" and "the nuclear issue", adding that the period could have been extended if no agreement was reached. "Due to the gross and widespread violation of the memorandum by the United States

just a few weeks after it was signed, no talks were initiated," he said.

"As a result, the issue of a 60-day period is basically no longer relevant," Baqaei added.

Islamabad MoU

Iran and the US signed the 14-point memorandum of understanding in June to end the cycle arising from the latest bout of unprovoked American-Israeli aggression against Iran, which had begun on February 28.

They set a 60-day period to discuss further issues including sanctions imposed on Iran as well as the country's nuclear program in order to reach a comprehensive agreement between the two countries.

However, the United States' violation of the agreement from its very first days has effectively rendered the deal invalid.

The two sides have stopped negotiations with the Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi saying on Saturday that Tehran is still undecided about re-



Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei speaks during his weekly press conference in Tehran on August 17, 2026.

● IRNA

suming talks with the US amid disagreements about ceasefire violations and the future of the Strait of Hormuz.

Araghchi said on August 10 that Iran will not engage in new negotiations with the US as long as it keeps violating the MoU. The 60-day period expired on Monday with no word of an extension.

Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf on Saturday described the understanding as a "document of honor and victory" aimed at consolidating Iran's success on the diplomatic front, saying the US and Israel failed to achieve any of their objectives in the war. Iran's top parliamentarian said Iran "truly" won the war "militarily and politically".

Iran's Foreign Ministry Director



General for Legal Affairs Abbas Baqerpour said a breach of the memorandum did not mean the agreement had ended or was dead, leaving open the pos-

sibility of its revival if the United States takes the necessary steps.

"The violation of the memorandum, as an agreement, does

not mean that the memorandum has ended or is dead. This memorandum can be revived, but this depends on the United States," Baqerpour said.

Strait of Hormuz will reopen when US honors Islamabad memo: **IRGC**

International Desk

The Strait of Hormuz will reopen only after the United States fulfils its commitments under the Islamabad memorandum, Yadollah Javani, the political deputy of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, said, adding that the war should end in line with the agreement.

"The war should end based on the Islamabad memorandum, and the Strait of Hormuz will be opened when the Americans fulfil their commitments under this memorandum," Javani said in a televised interview on Monday.

Javani said the Strait of Hormuz and the arrangements governing it "will never return to before the war".

He also said the US, Israel and their allies had for months been trying to wrest control of the strategic waterway from Iran but had failed. "The United States, Israel and their allies have been trying for months to take control of the Strait of Hormuz away from Iran, but they have not succeeded," he said.

The US began attacking Iran in July after Washington violated the terms of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, which was meant to permanently end the war that the US and Israeli regime unleashed against Iran in late February.

The understanding had recognized



Ships are anchored in the Strait of Hormuz on August 10, 2026 off the coast of Bandar Abbas, Iran.

● ALI SAEEDI/GETTY IMAGES

Iran's rights and sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz, and said Iran was responsible for removing restrictions that it has imposed over the Strait of Hormuz for vessels affiliated with aggressors and their supporters since the start of the aggression on February 28. However, the US attempted to undermine Iran's sovereignty by establishing an unsafe corridor near the Omani shores. The unlawful US measure prompted Iran's firm response to re-impose restrictions on the Strait of Hormuz. Tehran says any movement in the strategic chokepoint must be conducted under Iranian arrangements, as per the understanding. Yadollah Javani also said that Iran's defensive posture is poised to shift to an offensive one under a new "maximum deterrence" policy.

Ready for offensive operations

He warned that while Iran's military actions have remained strictly defen-

sive since the outbreak of hostilities, the Armed Forces are fully prepared to adopt an offensive posture if necessary, cautioning adversaries to expect "strategic surprises."

"The enemy should know that it cannot catch us off guard," General Javani stated. "Instead, it is the enemy that must anticipate strategic surprises."

He pointed directly to the recent appointment decrees of top IRGC commanders, specifically highlighting the mandate given to the new Commander-in-Chief, Major General Ahmad Vahidi. General Javani noted that the new command decrees are not merely administrative changes but a clear signal to adversaries that Iran's military doctrine is evolving to meet and exceed the challenges of modern warfare.

According to General Javani, General Vahidi's decree emphasizes "maximum deterrence" and introduces a new operational approach: from now on, any defensive action taken by the Armed Forces will inherently take on an offensive shape to proactively neutralize threats.

Deputy FM voices outrage after Israeli minister promotes 'nightly assassination quota' for Gaza

A senior Iranian diplomat voiced outrage after an extremist Israeli minister advised that the Tel Aviv regime should claim the lives of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip on the basis of a "nightly assassination quota." "These admissions must be documented and preserved for the day these criminals are going to be tried," Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi wrote in a post on X on Monday.

The comments came after the minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, advocated killing "30 to 40" people in Gaza per night. "I think targeted assassinations should be carried out in Gaza, taking down 30 to 40 every night," he had also said in comments that surfaced on Sunday. "Not just those who pose an immediate threat — there are



Kazem Gharibabadi

● IRNA

people there who are not worthy of life. They shouldn't live. They're not even people."

Gharibabadi also lambasted the Israeli official for advocating expulsion of Palestinians from Gaza and establishment of illegal settlements in the coastal sliver, referring to the minister claiming that "I

see all of Gaza as ours."

The Israeli minister has earned considerable notoriety for making similar incendiary remarks on numerous occasions in the past.

Many of the statements have been presented to the International Criminal Court (ICC) as evidence of genocidal intent.

Prior to leaving office amid widely reported Israeli pressure, former ICC prosecutor general Karim Khan was reportedly preparing draft arrest warrants for Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich, another controversial Israeli official, for their involvement in building illegal settlements.

Earlier this year, Israeli paper Ha'aretz reported that the Office of the Prosecutor had secretly requested arrest warrants for Ben-Gvir and others.

Memorial to be held today for martyred Leader 40 days after burial

National Desk

The Iranian capital of Tehran, as well as the holy cities of Qom and Mashhad, are set to observe mourning ceremonies today in commemoration of the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, on the 40th day after his funeral and burial.

Memorial ceremonies are going to be held between 17 p.m. local time (1330 GMT) and 19 p.m. on August 18 at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Mosalla. A significant number of individuals are expected to gather and pay their respects and offer prayers for the martyred Leader.

Ceremonies will also take place at the holy shrine of Hazrat Fatima Masoumeh in Qom on August 19, and at the shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in Mashhad the following day.

The body of the martyred Leader was laid to rest next to the holy shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad on July 10, after days of massive farewell and funeral ceremonies in Tehran, Qom, as well as the Iraqi holy shrine cities of Najaf and Karbala.

The body was received by a massive crowd from across Iran and dozens of countries when it arrived in Mashhad. Millions of mourners brought several



The photo released by the Leader's official website on July 10, 2026, shows the resting place of the martyred Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and his family members at the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in Mashhad, Iran.

● khamenei.ir

days of nationwide mourning to their climax in Mashhad, as the final farewell ceremony for the martyred Leader concluded at the holy mausoleum of Imam Reza.

Ayatollah Khamenei was assassinated in a joint US-Israeli strike on Tehran on February 28, 2026, at the outset of a 40-day unprovoked war of aggression against Iran.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



CBI chief urges Iraq banking deal to unlock funds, boost ties

Economy Desk

Head of Central Bank of Iran Abdolnaser Hemmati called for faster implementation of banking mechanisms to allow Iran to use its funds held in Iraq's banking system and discussed ways to expand technical and economic cooperation with Iraqi officials on Monday, IRNA reported. On the second day of his visit to Iraq, Hemmati met Iraqi Finance Minister Faleh Sari Abdashi to discuss Iran's financial claims and technical and economic cooperation, the report added. The two sides reviewed specific technical proposals submitted by Iran's central bank to the Iraqi government aimed at speeding up the process of pursuing Iran's claims. They also stressed strengthening economic ties and making greater use of Iranian contractors' technical capabilities in Iraqi infrastructure projects. Hemmati also met Iraqi Central Bank Governor Nizar Nasser Hussein and stressed the need

to remove banking obstacles and implement mechanisms for Iran to use its foreign-currency resources held in Iraq's banking system. Hemmati called for Iran's claims against the Iraqi government to be resolved, particularly through establishing mechanisms to allow the Central Bank of Iran to use its funds held in the Iraqi banking system, IRNA reported. Hemmati did not give a figure for Iran's outstanding claims during Monday's meetings. He said in July that the Central Bank of Iran had about \$7 billion in Iraq, while the Iranian Oil Ministry was owed more than \$3 billion, putting Iran's total claims against the Iraqi government and banks at about \$10 billion to \$11 billion. Hemmati also called for banking procedures to be eased for Iranian private-sector businesses and for obstacles to the transfer of funds and use of shared monetary capacities to be removed. Hussein welcomed the expansion of economic relations between



Head of the Central Bank of Iran Abdolnaser Hemmati (L) meets Iraqi Central Bank Governor Nizar Nasser Hussein in Baghdad, Iraq, on August 17, 2026.

● IRNA

the two countries and pointed to their abundant natural resources and skilled workforce. "We believe we must make the best use of these capacities to enhance technical and engineering cooperation and improve financial relations between the two countries," Hussein said, according to IRNA. Hemmati invited Hussein to make an official visit to Tehran to continue consultations and finalize banking agreements. The two officials also reviewed problems facing Iranian traders and exporters in Iraq. At a separate meeting with Iranian traders, exporters and contractors at Iran's Embassy in Baghdad, Hemmati said he would pursue their concerns, including



obstacles to repatriating export earnings, tariff-related problems, claims by contractors and the need for performance guar-

antees, ISNA reported. Hemmati said the issues would be pursued seriously and that the Central Bank of Iran would

make every effort to facilitate the activities of Iranian economic operators in the Iraqi market.

Iran ready to expand agricultural cooperation with EAEU members



Economy Desk

Iran's deputy agriculture minister Akbar Fathi said Iran was ready to use its existing capacities to expand bilateral and multilateral agricultural cooperation with members of the Eurasian Economic Union, IRNA reported. Speaking at the seventh meeting of the Eurasian Economic Union's Agro-Industrial Policy Council in Almaty on Sunday, Fathi said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to use existing capacities to develop bilateral and multilateral cooperation in agriculture and cooperate with member states of the Eurasian Economic Union to increase trade and investment, transfer technology and develop agricultural value chains." Fathi highlighted Iran's capacities in agriculture, food processing, greenhouse production, agricultural machinery and halal food, saying agricultural cooperation could increase trade, joint investment and create new markets for agricultural products. He said there was scope for expanded agricultural trade and joint investment among EAEU

members, including through extraterritorial farming and the use of the bloc's natural resources, farmland and production capacity. The EAEU comprises Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia. He also called for identifying market opportunities, removing trade barriers and strengthening ties between the private sectors of member states to facilitate agricultural exports and imports. "Joint production and agricultural projects in countries with capacity can help ensure a stable supply of needed products and inputs, while creating opportunities for greater private-sector participation and expanding economic cooperation among countries in the region," he said.

Iran, Kazakhstan expand farm ties

On the sidelines of the meeting, an Iranian Agriculture Ministry delegation met with officials from Kazakhstan's Agriculture Ministry to discuss expanding agricultural and trade ties, increasing agricultural product exchanges, strengthening pri-

vate-sector cooperation and joint investment. The two sides also emphasized extraterritorial farming in Kazakhstan, given its suitable farmland and rainfall, with a focus on producing grains, oilseeds and corn. Exports of fruit, dried fruit and greenhouse products to Kazakhstan were also discussed.

Iran, Armenia discuss livestock

Fathi separately met Armenian Economy Minister Gevorg Papoyan to discuss expanding agricultural and livestock cooperation, including imports of small livestock from Armenia, joint investment, greenhouse development and the use of Armenian pastureland. The two sides reviewed ways to facilitate livestock trade while observing health and veterinary requirements. They also discussed joint investment opportunities in border areas and the development of greenhouse facilities. The use of Armenian pastureland for livestock production was also discussed, with the two sides calling for further expert assessments and mechanisms for sustainable economic use.

Iran, Belarus discuss fertilizers

Fathi also met Belarusian Agriculture and Food Minister Yuri Gorlov to discuss cooperation on agricultural fertilizers, machinery, joint investment and agricultural and food trade. The talks focused on expanding cooperation in the supply and trade of potash and phosphate fertilizers, as well as possible joint investment in the production and supply of agricultural inputs. The two sides also discussed cooperation on agricultural machinery and equipment and ways to increase trade in chicken, dairy products and fruit.

Iranian gas giant seeks 12 bcm rise in output

Economy Desk

Iran's Central Oil Fields Company achieved more than 103% of its gas production target and came close to its crude oil target in the last Iranian calendar year, which began on March 21, 2025, a company official said. Gas output surpassed the target after mandated cuts, while crude production reached nearly 100% of its goal, production manager Ali Rezaei told Shana, the oil ministry's news agency. The company also set a new record by storing 3.1 billion cubic metres of gas at the strategic Shourijeh and Sarajeh Qom reservoirs during the period, Rezaei said. Production is set to rise by about 12 billion cubic metres in the current Iranian year, which started on March 21, 2026, he added. "Our main goal this year is to



● SHANA

maintain this trend and fully meet production commitments," Rezaei said, citing major overhauls, well maintenance, smart monitoring systems, continuous facility checks and long-term upkeep plans to ensure stable supply during the cold season. He said the company was shifting from reactive maintenance to predictive, preventive planning to boost

facility reliability and avoid unplanned outages. Rezaei also highlighted the use of smart systems and new technologies, gas pressure-boosting stations, and flare-gas collection projects to improve efficiency, support stable production, and curb environmental damage. The country holds the world's second-largest natural gas reserves.

Second weekly Karachi-Mashhad flight begins, promoting Iran's religious tourism hub

Economy Desk

A new weekly direct flight between Pakistan's commercial hub Karachi and Iran's religious tourism center Mashhad began operating on Monday, increasing direct air links between the two countries, Iran's state news agency IRNA reported. A Kish Air MD-80 carrying 140 passengers from Mashhad arrived at Karachi's Jinnah International Airport on Monday morning and returned to Mashhad with the same number of passengers later in the day. The service will operate every Monday between Mashhad and Karachi, bringing the number of weekly direct passenger flights between the two cities to two.



● IRNA

Mashhad, home to the shrine of Imam Reza (PBUH), is a major destination for religious tourism in Iran and attracts visitors from Pakistan and other countries. Iranian airline Taban has also operated a weekly passenger service between Tehran and Karachi in recent years. A ceremony marking the launch of the new service was held at Jinnah International Airport in the presence of Pakistani aviation officials and a representative of Iran's

consulate general in Karachi. Karachi, the most populous city in Pakistan and the capital of Sindh province, is a major commercial center and has longstanding trade, cultural and people-to-people ties with Iran. The new service comes after direct air links between Iran and Pakistan expanded last year. Iranian airlines Mahan Air and Iran Airtour formally launched direct flights between Tehran and Islamabad. During Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's first official visit to Pakistan in August last year, the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding aimed at expanding transport cooperation, including direct air links between the two countries.

Ceuta border crisis heaps pressure on Spain's Sánchez gov't, EU unity



By Nic Lawley

Special advisor to the
director of Chatham House

OPINION

On July 30, the border between Morocco and the North African Spanish enclave of Ceuta effectively collapsed. Spanish officials put the number crossing within 24 hours in the tens of thousands, perhaps as many as 69,500. Ceuta's population is around 85,000.

At least 83 people are reported to have died in what has also become a humanitarian crisis. Spain has deployed the armed forces to support the Guardia Civil, and Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez has travelled to the city. Dramatic images have flooded the media. Some European governments have suggested suspending the Schengen agreement or for Spain to be removed from it. On Friday, Italy unilaterally ordered the closure of its sea and air borders with Spain.

Many in Spain blame the Moroccan government for the crisis. Morocco has never publicly acknowledged using migration as an instrument of pressure against Spain. In this case, Moroccan government sources have blamed "criminal organizations". Indeed, publicly Sánchez has used similar language.

But those who accuse Rabat say surges of migrants into Ceuta and Melilla (Spain's other enclave on the African continent) have a habit of arriving when Rabat wants Madrid to understand the importance of maintaining good relations — and then of subsiding again once that point has landed.

Whatever the truth, the situation has created a diplomatic crisis — and could see immigration become a leading issue in Spain's general election next year.

A source of contention

Ceuta and Melilla are Spanish enclaves on the North African coast, forming the EU's only land border with Africa. Morocco does not recognize Spanish sovereignty over the territories and has long demanded their return. They have been a source of contention in Spain-Morocco relations for decades.

In May 2021, roughly 8,000 people entered Ceuta over two days. At the time, Rabat was furious that Madrid had admitted Brahim Ghali, leader of the Polisario Front, (a Western Sahara nationalist group) for medical treatment — Rabat considers the Front to be a terrorist organization.

Within months, Spain had abandoned its historic position on Western Sahara — supporting an independence referendum — and instead endorsed Morocco's autonomy plan for the territory. The lesson for Rabat, perhaps, was that pressure on Spain's enclaves works.

This latest incursion occurred within days of a considerable thaw in Spanish-Algerian relations. Sánchez was in Algiers on July 20, continuing the patient repair of a relationship that Algeria severed in 2022 because of Spain's adoption of Rabat's position on Western Sahara. There were promises of another Spain-Algeria summit in the autumn. Sánchez also discussed increasing gas supply through the Medgaz pipeline, which circumvents Morocco and runs directly from Algeria to Spain.

Election arithmetic

It is noticeable too that this latest incursion arrives as the countdown begins to the Spanish general election, which must be held by August 2027.

Sánchez is under severe political pressure. The parliamentary arithmetic



Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez (c) observes the work of the Civil Guard in Spain's North African enclave of Ceuta on July 31, 2026.

● LA MONCLOA



In May 2021, roughly 8,000 people entered Ceuta over two days. At the time, Rabat was furious that Madrid had admitted Brahim Ghali, leader of the Polisario Front, (a Western Sahara nationalist group) for medical treatment — Rabat considers the Front to be a terrorist organization. Within months, Spain had abandoned its historic position on Western Sahara — supporting an independence referendum — and instead endorsed Morocco's autonomy plan for the territory. The lesson for Rabat, perhaps, was that pressure on Spain's enclaves works.



People try to cross from Morocco into the Spanish enclave of Ceuta on July 30, 2026.

● ANTONIO SEMPERE/AP

was already looking precarious. There are suggestions that Catalan support for his government may be collapsing. The right-wing Catalan separatist party Junts has been overtaken in Catalan polling by Aliança Catalana. Sílvia Orriols's hard-right party, which barely registered two years ago and has now surged in the polls. Junts still holds the votes that Sánchez needs to avoid losing a vote of no confidence and triggering an election. Might the anti-immigration Junts seize the opportunity to plant a flag? Might it even go so far as to bring the government down?

That raises the most consequential question: what issues will define the next election? Sánchez has a strong economic story to tell, with growth outpacing most of the eurozone.

But in June, the prime minister launched a controversial regularization scheme, which seeks to grant legal status to several hundred thousand undocumented migrants. The dramatic images seen in Ceuta have shocked many in Spain and could see immigration eclipse the economy as the leading issue for voters.

Alberto Núñez Feijóo, leader of the centre-right Partido Popular opposition

party, has already called Ceuta a national security crisis. Santiago Abascal, leader of the hard-right Vox party, has laid the crisis at the prime minister's door, blaming his regularization scheme directly.

The international right has moved quickly too, highlighting the wider risk to European cohesion. Besides closing Italy's sea and air borders with Spain, Giorgia Meloni has suggested suspending Spain from the Schengen free travel zone.

Finland's interior minister has endorsed the Italian position on Schengen and called on other member states to follow, arguing that a country failing to protect the external border cannot remain in Schengen. Neither country shares a land border with Spain, let alone with Ceuta. The situation is a challenge to the free-movement settlement of a kind not seen since the 2015 crisis, whose reverberations included the UK's Brexit referendum the following year.

Washington has, of course, joined in. The Department of Homeland Security tweeted: "If Spain had their own President Trump, this wouldn't be an issue. Citizens of Spain should take that into consideration." Elon Musk has further fanned the flames, tweeting multiple

times, sharing clips of the 2013 Hollywood blockbuster World War Z, a film about a zombie apocalypse.

The response

Europe answered the 2021 Ceuta crisis clearly, quickly and with solidarity. The Commission's position was that Ceuta's frontier is a European border and the incident was a breach of Spain's — and Europe's — sovereign territory. That was the correct answer then, and it is the correct answer now.

Whatever the reason for the crisis, it will remain a collective problem for the EU. Treating it as a Spanish failure, and reaching for the suspension of Schengen, only assists those who would welcome more strain on the European project.

The crisis could seriously undermine Sánchez's position. He now needs to persuade the Spanish people and European allies that this crisis was not related to his wider immigration policy, and convince them that a unified front is required. Above all, he must try to ensure others do not follow Italy's lead.

The article was first published by Chatham House.



When Europe’s reaction does the damage

By Nicolás Ezequiel Salvoni
Professor at Universidad
Argentina de la Empresa

OPINION

On July 30, 2026, Spanish authorities estimated that more than 50,000 people had crossed irregularly from Morocco into Ceuta. By August 3, Spain said that about 69,500 had returned and 3,000 to 5,000 remained. Together those figures imply between 72,500 and 74,500 arrivals excluding deaths, although no reconciled total had been published. The toll was also unsettled: Reuters reported 72 deaths on the Spanish side and 11 on the Moroccan side; La Nación reported 88 bodies in Ceuta’s improvised morgue, plus the eleven recovered by Morocco. In May 2021, close to 8,000 entered over two days. July was on another scale. The sharpest response came from Rome, as European governments quarrelled before the origin of the shock or the risk of onward movement was clear.

The causes remain disputed. Reuters traced the mobilisation to online videos, misleading readings of a court ruling, economic hardship and calm seas; specialists asked whether Moroccan authorities had looked the other way. A Moroccan parliamentary figure denied political motive, while Madrid called bilateral relations excellent. On August 3, an El País and Cadena SER account relayed by Reuters said Spanish intelligence believed Morocco had not planned the crossing but had allowed it and benefited politically. The account relied on unidentified officials. A separate report said intelligence had flagged a possible mass entry around Throne Day. Grande-Marlaska said he received no CNI warning; Defence would not discuss classified reports. Morocco’s Interior Ministry blamed misinformation, trafficking and misreadings of the ruling, without addressing deliberate non-prevention. Prevention remains open. The public record does not show that Morocco engineered the flow to coerce Spain. September 2024 offers a limited comparison. Faced with similar calls, Moroccan police blocked hundreds of people, arrested 60 and reported preventing over 11,300 attempts the previous month. In July 2026, tens of thousands reached the border. Riot police used batons and tear gas, and water cannon trucks were deployed, but the frontier was overwhelmed. Monthly prevention and containing tens of thousands in one night are different tasks. The comparison asks why prevention failed; it does not answer it.

The online claims distorted judgment 814/2026 of June 29. It held that summary rejection at the Ceuta and Melilla borders does not reach people intercepted at sea, who overcome no physical barrier, although it could apply if containment elements were installed in the water. Ordinary return remains available after an individual procedure with guarantees. Online, this became a supposed route to staying in Spain. Spain has since installed a 500-metre floating barrier at El Tarajal. The conceptual threshold matters. Kelly Greenhill describes coercive engineered migration as the deliberate creation or manipulation of cross-border movements to induce concessions. Fiona Adamson and Gerasimos Tsourapas place the management of mobility within interstate bargaining. Both require purposeful conduct. The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights adds a specific threshold: an actor must encourage or facilitate movement with the aim of destabilising the Union or a member state in a manner liable to put essential state functions at risk.

If the El País account is accurate, deliberate non-prevention could be read as facilitation, or bring the case close to that threshold. Purpose remains missing. Nothing in the public record establishes that the border was relaxed to destabilise Spain or the Union. Instrumentalisa-



caliber.az

tion therefore remains one hypothesis among several. The damage examined here came out of the European quarrel: temporary internal checks, a diplomatic rupture, and the idea of excluding a Schengen partner entering ordinary political debate.

On July 30, Giorgia Meloni said she was weighing extraordinary measures, Spain’s suspension among them. The next day Italy reintroduced controls at its air and sea borders with Spain for one month, a step the Code permits in principle, and described it as suspending the Schengen agreement with Spain, which the Code does not provide for. Rome said the measure meant targeted checks on non-EU nationals arriving by air or sea. EU citizens were unaffected. Madrid summoned the Italian ambassador.

The operational link between Ceuta and that measure was thin. Ceuta and Melilla have a special regime within Schengen: entry gives no unchecked access to mainland Spain, and exit controls remained in force, as the European Commission confirmed. No onward movement had been reported. The local burden was real: between 3,000 and 5,000 people remained, both reception centres had collapsed and the city was processing 862 migrant minors. Reuters reported that Meloni’s coalition faced pressure from Roberto Vannacci’s far-right party; opponents saw the checks as meant for home consumption. Motive remains unproven, though research on Austria, Germany and Switzerland found that radical-right parties drove mainstream attention to immigration during the 2015 crisis.

The Schengen Borders Code allows urgent temporary internal controls under Article 25a, subject to notification, necessity, proportionality and last resort. Under Article 29, the Council may recommend controls where persistent external-border deficiencies put the whole area at risk. Neither provision suspends or removes a member state. Public reporting did not show whether Italy had met the relevant conditions, and the announced suspension of Spain had no basis in either. The danger to Schengen lies in accumulated exceptions. Stefan Salomon and Jorrit Rijpma argue that abolishing internal controls created a shared spatial experience of European citizenship. Two months before Ceuta, the Commission urged nine Schengen states to phase out controls that had run beyond 12 months. The Code anticipates reintroduced controls. Late July went further: governments said that excluding a partner was on the table. On August 1, 22 heads of state

and government signed an Italian-Danish letter calling for an emergency meeting, stronger external-border coordination and action against pull factors, including regularisation. It supported Spain while criticising its policy; exclusion was absent. The signatories split over suspension. A country-by-country review records six governments treating it as legitimate, while Germany, Belgium and Slovakia rejected that logic. France and Portugal declined to sign and ruled it out, though both reinforced their borders with Spain. Austria’s Christian Stocker framed suspension as an instrument available at his country’s own borders. The precedent mattered beyond Spain.

No public concession from Madrid can be identified. Most of those who crossed returned to Morocco, many voluntarily, citing hunger, exhaustion, hostility and no route towards the mainland. Things changed in Spain even so. A physical barrier now stands where the court found none, and 22 governments have placed Spanish regularisation policy on the European agenda. The episode also produced a dispute between member states and brought temporary exclusion of a Schengen partner into mainstream debate. Migrants and border communities paid the immediate price. More Frontex staff, surveillance and barriers will not address that vulnerability alone. The Commission’s 2026 State of Schengen Report records a 26 per

cent fall in irregular crossings in 2025 and the launch of the Entry/Exit System. Border management had already intensified. On August 3, von der Leyen’s response to Sánchez captured the ambiguity. She praised Spain and Morocco for preventing onward movement, urged surveillance and barriers, and proposed early-warning arrangements, support for Morocco and Frontex reinforcements. She also rejected the use of migration as pressure against a member state, without identifying an actor. The Commission invoked instrumentalisation while leaving attribution open.

At the time of writing, the emergency video conference of interior ministers scheduled for August 4 offered an immediate test. Von der Leyen proposed cooperation with partners, stronger borders, early-warning systems, action against smugglers and more effective returns. None addresses member-state conduct before attribution and onward risk are established. A protocol for shocks of uncertain origin should pair immediate support with a rapid Commission-led assessment and a presumption against punitive internal controls where no onward risk is shown. Once sponsorship is established, measures should fall on whoever is responsible. The Agency for Fundamental Rights lists sanctions, visa restrictions and action against state-sponsored smuggling, while insisting that fundamental rights continue to apply.

The evidence does not show that Morocco engineered the July crossings, and the lesson turns on that. Established authorship gives the response an external target. After Belarus organised migrant transit towards Lithuania, Latvia and Poland in 2021, the Council widened its sanctions over instrumentalisation. In Ceuta, unresolved attribution redirected the quarrel inwards. Whether or not the crossing was an operation, uncertainty magnified its effects: governments imposed costs on one another while the origin remained contested. That is the strategic vulnerability. To damage Europe, there is no need to defeat its border. It may be enough to touch it, leave no signature, and let the Europeans do the rest.

The article first appeared on E-International Relations.



A protocol for shocks of uncertain origin should pair immediate support with a rapid Commission-led assessment and a presumption against punitive internal controls where no onward risk is shown. Once sponsorship is established, measures should fall on whoever is responsible. The Agency for Fundamental Rights lists sanctions, visa restrictions and action against state-sponsored smuggling, while insisting that fundamental rights continue to apply.



A member of Moroccan security forces gestures to a man carrying a child near Fnideq, on the Morocco-Spain border, on July 31, 2026. Hundreds of unaccompanied minors slept outdoors in a disused industrial park in Ceuta after swimming to the Spanish territory from Morocco.

AFP



U20 Wrestling World Championships: Dire Day 1 as all Iranians miss out on Greco-Roman finals

Sports Desk

Iran's bid for a fifth successive Greco-Roman team title at the U20 Wrestling World Championships got off to a dreadful start on Sunday as all four of its representatives failed to reach the final in their respective weight classes on the opening day of the competition in Bratislava, Slovakia.

An U20 Asian gold medalist in June, Ali Gharibi began his 63kg campaign with emphatic victories over Moldova's Vlad Duminica (9-0) and Egyptian Ahmed Youssef Ahmed (12-3), before defeating Armenia's Aleks Margaryan by technical superiority (12-4) to progress to the semifinals.

However, a 4-1 setback against Russia's Salim Kazmakhov sent the Iranian into the third-place contest. Kazmakhov scored a turn from par terre in the second period to lead 3-1 before being awarded a point after Iran's



challenge was unsuccessful. Gharibi's compatriot Amir-mahdi Saeidi-Nava will also have to fight for a consolation bronze after suffering a

7-1 loss to Azerbaijan's Javidan Nahmatov in the 77kg semifinals. Nahmatov needed a counter four-point action to claim

victory after the Iranian had tied the bout at 1-1 on criteria. Saeidi was looking for a duck-under to control Nahmatov, but the Azerbaijani

wrestler stepped over and threw the Iranian for four points. Saeidi was docked two points for a caution late in



L-R: Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers Ali Gharibi, Amir-mahdi Saeidi-Nava, Amirhossein Nematzadeh, and Amirhossein Abdevali failed to reach the final bout in their respective categories at the U20 Wrestling World Championships.

● IAWFIR

the bout, securing the victory for Nahmatov. Saeidi made quick work of Sweden's Ruben Straakeved (9-0) in the first round before defeating Russia's Nazar Berkovskii (9-4) and Ukraine's Nestor Baran (8-0) to reach the last four. Amirhossein Nematzadeh, having beaten Kazakhstan's Alikhan Tagayev by technical superiority (8-0) in the first round, fell short against lurik Petrosian in the quarterfinals, losing 5-1, but was given a second chance for a podium finish in the repechage after the Armenian wrestler advanced to the 87kg final. In 130kg, a traditional stronghold for Iran across all

age groups in recent years, Amirhossein Abdevali, who also entered the tournament as the reigning U20 Asian champion, outmuscled American Trayvn Boger 9-1 in his first bout but crashed out in the quarterfinals after a shock 6-5 loss to Egypt's Essam Anwar Hussein, who went on to lose in the semifinals. The U20 African champion stunned Abdevali with a four-pointer to take a 5-5 criteria lead. Iran lost the challenge as well, and Hussein pulled off an upset against the U20 Asian gold medalist, meaning Iran missed out on the super-heavyweight podium for the first time in a decade. The Greco-Roman event will be followed by the women's competition before the freestyle contests get underway on Friday, where Iran will chase a first team title in three years after finishing third behind the USA and Kazakhstan in the 2025 edition.

FIBA 3x3 Youth Nations League - Asia Central/East:

Iran finishes runner-up in men's, third in women's events



Iran's Mohammad Ghaffari goes up for a layup against Mongolia at the FIBA 3x3 Youth Nations League - Asia Central/East in Cangzhou, China, on Aug. 16, 2026.

● IAWFIR

Sports Desk

Iran secured the men's runner-up spot in the Asia Central/East division of the FIBA 3x3 Youth Nations League, while finishing third in the women's competition at the six-day event in Cangzhou, China. Having won the fourth and fifth stops, Iran settled for third place in the men's Stop 6 on Sunday to finish second in the overall standings with 470 points, trailing South Korea by 40 points. Comprising Mohammad-Mahdi Rahimi, Seyyed Mohammad Ghaffari, Mohammad-Basir Mo'meni, Sarem Jafari and Argen Minasians, the Iranian team suffered a 21-20 overtime defeat to Mongolia in Pool A, but bounced back to defeat Japan 21-14 and pip China and pip China to the third spot by three points. Iran began the campaign with a runner-up finish in Stop 1, before

finishing third and fifth, respectively, in the following two stops. In the women's competition, Iran got off to an impressive start in Pool A, beating China 18-15, followed by a comfortable 21-9 win against Mongolia to advance to the Stop 6 final. A 17-10 setback against Japan, however, saw the Iranian women's team – featuring Mahla Abedi, Mahsa Karani, Farnaz Khodamardi and Shamim Nouri – finish conclude the event with 440 points. Japan finished atop the women's standings with 520 points, with China second on 510. Iran women missed out on the final in the first four stops, finishing third twice either side of back-to-back fourth-place finishes, but delivered an emphatic performance to win Stop 5, beating Japan 16-14 in overtime and Kazakhstan 21-12 before defeating the host team 20-13 in the final.

Iran to send 171 athletes to Asian Para Games

Sports Desk

The Iranian delegation will be represented by 171 athletes at the upcoming Aichi-Nagoya Asian Para Games, Ghafour Kargari, chairman of the National Paralympic Committee of Iran, announced. The fifth edition of the multi-sport event will open on October 18 at Paloma Mizuho Stadium in Nagoya, Japan. Iranian athletes will compete in 15 sports, with nine featuring both male and female participants, Kargari added. Iranians will vie for men's and women's glory in shooting, archery, athletics, powerlifting, taekwondo, table tennis, sitting volleyball, wheelchair basketball and boccia. The swimming, judo, cycling, blind football,



● EUROPA PRESS

goalball and wheelchair fencing events, meanwhile, will also see Iranian men in action. Japan, the host nation, has meanwhile made the competition more challenging for participating countries, including

Iran, by dropping several sports, including chess and canoeing, in which Iranian athletes won a total of six gold medals at the previous Asian Para Games in Hangzhou in 2022. Having finished fourth in the

first two editions – Guangzhou 2010 and Incheon 2014 – before finishing third in Jakarta 2018, Iran achieved its best-ever finish in the history of the Games in Hangzhou in 2022, collecting 44 golds, 46 silvers and 41 bronzes to finish runner-up in the medal table behind China. The country's most successful campaign in terms of medals, however, came in Jakarta in 2018, where Iran bagged 51 golds, 43 silvers and 42 bronzes, but ultimately settled for third place behind China and South Korea. Athletics has been Iran's most productive sport across the five editions, yielding 238 medals, including 83 golds, while swimming, archery and powerlifting have each contributed 13 gold medals.

FIBA U18 Asia Cup:

Iran to face China for group top spot

Sports Desk

The top spot in Group C and direct qualification for the quarterfinals at the FIBA U18 Asia Cup will be at stake when Iran and record 11-time champion China go head-to-head in Ahmedabad, India, today. Both teams will enter the court at Veer Savarkar Indoor Stadium on the back of successive victories in their first two outings, with China holding a slight advantage at the top of the standings on point difference. Three-time gold medalist Iran began its bid for a first title in a decade with a 94-69 victory over Qatar, with Mohammad Shamsi leading the scoring with 19 points. Amirreza Azari (16), Mohammad Kamal Khaledi (14) and Mohammad Safa Behnia (13) also reached

double figures for Ali Hassanpour's team. Iran then routed Sri Lanka 110-42 in its second game on Sunday. Kamal Khaledi contributed a game-high 23 points, while Soheil Soleimannejad and Alireza Rashidi added 15 apiece. Shamsi also enjoyed a prolific outing, recording a double-double with 12 points and 15 assists to post an efficiency rating of 29. China, meanwhile, hammered Sri Lanka 103-55 in its opener, thanks to a game-high 23 points from Yixuan Yang, before claiming a comprehensive 118-66 victory over Qatar on Sunday. The four group winners will secure automatic qualification for the quarterfinals, while the second- and third-placed teams in each group will have to go through a



Iranian shooting guard Alireza Rashidi (1) goes for a basket against Sri Lanka at the FIBA U18 Asia Cup in Ahmedabad, India, on Aug. 16, 2026.

● FIBA

playoff round for a place in the last eight. The tournament also serves as the Asian qualifier for the 2027 FIBA U19 Basketball

World Cup, with the four semifinalists punching their tickets to the showpiece event in Pardubice, Czech Republic, in June next year.

North Khorasan's Kormanj nomads preserve tradition of Jajim weaving

Iranica Desk

Among the colorful and richly patterned handwoven textiles of the Kormanj nomads of North Khorasan Province, one familiar and enduring name stands out: Jajim. A thick, striped textile related to kilim and pallas, Jajim is known locally in the Kormanji Kurdish dialect as "Jajam." It is a legacy of generations who combined wool, color and patience to create a warm and durable floor covering while weaving some of their beliefs and aspirations into its patterns. Jajim weaving is listed as part of Iran's intangible cultural heritage and is now recognized as one of the traditional indigenous crafts of the province. Unlike many other woven textiles, Jajim is made by joining narrow woven strips. Its warp consists of fine, colorful wool threads that are more numerous than those used in a kilim's foundation, while a single-colored wool weft passes through them. After beating and pressing, the threads form a strong and durable textile, according to chn.ir. The use of natural cotton and wool fibers gives Jajim strength and resistance to wear, making it a long-standing companion of



chn.ir

nomadic life. It was used to make saddle bags, grain and fodder bags, floor coverings, rugs, carpets and bedding wraps, as well as warm outer garments during migration. Jajim was therefore not merely a household textile but a practical item designed for a life of movement and migration. Its form also made it easy to load onto horses and camels. The patterns found in North Khorasan Jajims emerged from this way of life. The region's Kormanj communities, who traditionally lived among rolling hills and were known for their peaceful and conservative way of life, favored diagonal lines and deep, muted colors. Their highly distinctive abstract designs

were created largely by women who may have had no formal knowledge of aesthetics but produced remarkable patterns through creativity, skill and patience. Small checkered flowers, geometric motifs and designs inspired by plants and animals each tell a story about the beliefs, ideas and traditions of the community. These motifs have been passed down from one generation to another, often within families. The exact origins of Jajim weaving remain unclear, partly because textiles are not durable archaeological materials and rarely survive over long periods. However, based on old

Jajims preserved by local residents and interviews with community members, the tradition can be traced back at least five generations. In the past, Jajim weaving was one of the most important crafts practiced by Kormanj women and girls. Families would order Jajims and prayer rugs

every year, whether for household use, as souvenirs or as gifts for newlyweds and items for their dowries. Jajims were used as coverings for traditional Korsi heaters during winter nights, as covers for mattresses and quilts in affluent households, and as partitions between women's and men's gathering spaces. They were an essential part of Kurdish households. The weavers were mainly housewives and girls who used their free time alongside their daily activities to produce Jajims from pure wool, using colorful handspun yarn and carefully arranged patterns. Production in nomadic

and rural communities was largely seasonal and part-time. Most of the textiles were made for household use, although some were exchanged or sold in local markets, contributing to family income. The self-sufficiency of nomadic communities was reflected in these textiles as well. Despite this long tradition, Jajim weaving has experienced ups and downs over the past two or three decades. As the traditional use of Jajim, particularly as a quilt and bedding cover, declined, weaving temporarily lost popularity. Renewed public interest and the development of new applications, however, have helped revive the craft. Today, Jajim is used to make wall hangings, bed-

spreads, saddles, bags, furniture covers, car-seat covers, floor coverings, bread cloths, prayer rugs, cushions, slippers, prayer mats, socks, bedding wraps, tablecloths and a variety of garments. These new uses have helped revive the craft and create new demand for Jajim products. Nevertheless, the craft continues to face challenges. A number of dedicated workshops are working to preserve traditional Jajim weaving, but the craft still suffers from limited demand. When there is no market for a handmade product, production naturally declines, while relatively few institutions or individuals provide sustained support. At a time when almost any pattern can be reproduced quickly by machines, there is increasingly little room for traditional handmade crafts. The survival of this valuable heritage may ultimately depend on renewed public appreciation for the work of artisans and the stories embedded in these textiles. By purchasing and using Jajim in its new forms, consumers can help keep this traditional craft alive and prevent it from disappearing into the fabric of forgotten traditions.

Reading Room

Jalaluddin Homaei; a man who wrote Isfahan

Iranica Desk

To understand the spirit of Isfahan, it is not enough to admire the intricate tilework of Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque or listen to the rushing waters of the Zayandeh Rud River. One must also read the words of a man who devoted much of his life to documenting the city. Jalaluddin Homaei was not merely a literary scholar, historian or jurist. With deep affection for his birthplace, he explored Isfahan's neighborhoods, architecture and cultural heritage and sought to preserve the city's character through his writing. In Iran's cultural and literary history, Jalal al-Din Homaei is remembered not only as a scholar, jurist, historian and poet, but also as one of the prominent chroniclers of Isfahan. Born and raised in the city, he developed a deep intellectual and emotional attachment to it that remained with him throughout his life. Homaei, who wrote poetry under the pen name "Sana," was born in the land of the Zayandeh



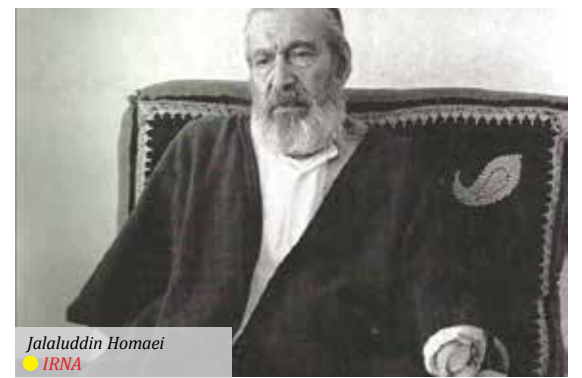
Takht-e Foulad Cemetery
Isfahan

Rud and grew up amid the city's historic neighborhoods and distinctive architecture. For him, Isfahan was more than a birthplace or a geographical location; it was central to his worldview and intellectual development. He walked through the city's old neighborhoods, studied at its historic religious schools and lived in an intellectual environment shaped by centuries of scholarship. Isfahan had been home to such prominent figures as Sheikh Baha'i, Mir Damad and Mulla Sadra, whose intellectual legacy continued to influence the city. Asghar Montazerolqaem, a professor and researcher

of history, told IRNA that Homaei was born in 1899 in Isfahan's Paqaleh neighborhood, in a family home where art, mirror work, calligraphy and religious poetry were deeply rooted. Although Homaei's family had roots in Shiraz, a city renowned for its literary tradition, he developed his intellectual and scholarly identity in Isfahan. Through his major work "History of Isfahan," he sought to document the city that had long been a center of scholarship and the arts. Homaei died in Tehran in the summer of 1980, after spending many years in the capital, where he taught students who later became prominent fig-

ures in Iranian culture. "Jalal al-Din Homaei's story and that of Isfahan is a story of deep attachment," Montazerolqaem said. After his death, Homaei's body was returned to his birthplace and, with great respect, buried in Takht-e Foulad, allowing him to rest in the city about which he had written so extensively. If Isfahan's architecture represents the harmony of geometry, light and color in the material world, Homaei's scholarship reflected a similar harmony in the realm of ideas and words. His writings brought together history, literature, religion and philosophy, much as the city's architecture brings together diverse artistic and intellectual traditions. Homaei studied at the Ni-mavard School in Isfahan, one of the city's historic religious schools and a surviving example of its rich architectural heritage. There, he studied Islamic jurisprudence and philosophy and developed the scholarly foundation that would shape his later career. Living and studying in Isfahan's historic envi-

ronment also deepened his understanding of the relationship between form and meaning. This perspective was later reflected in his scholarly editions and studies of classical mystical texts, including works by al-Ghazali and Rumi. Isfahan taught Homaei that beauty lies not only in appearance but also in the relationship between different elements. His intellectual interests similarly ranged across a broad spectrum, from jurisprudence and philosophy to poetry, music and astronomy, while his devotion to the revered Imams remained a central part of his worldview. Hossein Masjedi, an associate professor of Persian literature at Payam-e Noor University in Isfahan, said that Homaei, who used "Sana" as his poetic pen name, was an important representative of the literary return movement in Isfahan. His poetry and chronograms reflected both the literary traditions of the city and his personal attachment to it. Masjedi said Homaei completed his portrayal of Isfahan through both prose and poetry. His prose was not limited to academ-



Jalaluddin Homaei
IRNA

ic historical writing; he combined historical information with narrative and personal experience, making his accounts more vivid and accessible. Homaei's scholarly interests extended from jurisprudence and philosophy to mathematics, astronomy and calligraphy. Yet one of the strongest connections he maintained throughout his life was with Isfahan and, in particular, Takht-e Foulad, where he was eventually buried. Takht-e Foulad was more than a cemetery to Homaei. He regarded it as a repository of the city's history, art, mysticism and calligraphic tradition. He frequently walked among its graves and studied the lives of the scholars, mystics and prominent figures buried there.

Homaei understood that Isfahan's cultural significance lay not only in its palaces, mosques and bridges but also in the generations of scholars and artists associated with the city. He documented the lives of many prominent figures buried at Takht-e Foulad, helping preserve a record of Isfahan's intellectual and cultural history. His attachment to the cemetery and to Isfahan reflected a broader commitment to preserving the city's cultural memory. Through his prose and poetry, Homaei passed that memory on to later generations and helped ensure that the intellectual and spiritual heritage of Isfahan would remain part of Iran's cultural record.



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



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

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-

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.