



Araghchi vows international push over deadly Minab school strike

‘Do not let my friends be forgotten,’ surviving pupil demands



Social Desk

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi pledged to pursue legal and international action over a US strike on a primary school in southern Iran that killed 168 people, most of them children, after receiving a letter from a pupil who survived the attack. Araghchi said the letter from Fatemeh-Zahra Sheikhabadi, a survivor of the Shajareh Tayyebah School in Minab, had reinforced



Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi opens a letter written by a girl who survived a US missile attack on an elementary school in Minab, southern Iran, in late February, as he attends a conference in Tehran on October 11, 2026.

● IRNA

the Foreign Ministry’s responsibility to document the incident and hold those responsible to account. The school was struck by Tomahawk missiles on the first day of the US-Israeli war against Iran. The attack killed 168 people, most of them girls and boys attending the school. In an Instagram post on Sunday, Araghchi said he had received the letter on the sidelines of an international conference titled “Ecocide: The Silent Crime”. “I consider it my duty to take Fatemeh-Zahra’s voice and the story of Minab’s children to international forums and not allow the passage of time to push the truth of this tragedy and the need for accountability into the background,” he said.

In her letter, Fatemeh-Zahra remembers classmates Niyayesh, Sonaz, Zeinab and Baran, who were killed in the strike. “I survived, but they are no longer here,” she writes, adding that she is still asking why she remains alive while her friends are gone. The pupil also questions why the United Nations has not acted over the incident or done more to protect children’s rights. Referring to children’s right to education and play, she asks: “Why did this have to happen to us? Why can’t we be together anymore?” Araghchi said the letter represented more than a call for sympathy for the families of the children killed. “Our real responsibility is to document the truth, pursue legal and international action, and

hold those who carried out and ordered this crime accountable,” he wrote. The top diplomat also said the names of children killed in Minab and Lamerd, in southern Iran, should endure “not only in people’s memories, but also in the pursuit of justice”. In the letter, Fatemeh-Zahra describes returning to her school desk and looking at the empty seat beside her. Before the attack, she writes, she and her friends studied, laughed, played and made bracelets from palm leaves. “Please do not let my friends be forgotten,” she ends with an appeal. Araghchi said he would work to ensure their stories reached the international community.

Tehran launches metro-based city tourism scheme

Social Desk

Tehran has launched a metro-based tourism program to help residents and visitors explore the Iranian capital’s historical and cultural attractions, with tourism maps installed at 24 stations in the first phase, a municipal official said Monday. Amir Ghasemi, head of Tehran Municipality’s tourism headquarters said the project began two years ago with specialized research and has now moved

into implementation with the unveiling of tourism maps at stations, IRNA reported. Forty stations across the network have been identified as having tourism potential, and another 16 are expected to receive maps by March 20, he added. The maps cover historical, cultural and heritage sites, as well as public services and restaurants within 500 meters of each station. Visitors can scan QR codes on the maps

to save digital copies to their smartphones. Ghasemi said the program was designed to help Tehran residents take advantage of currently free public transportation to explore the city. He described the metro as a key tourism resource that had previously received insufficient attention. “Tour guides will be based at tourist attractions and lead specialized tours for groups and visitors who use the maps to travel between destinations,”

Ghasemi said. He added that the initiative had received positive feedback from the metro network and tourism centers. It aims to strengthen residents’ bonds to their urban environment and help establish Tehran as an international tourism destination. “The program’s reach will depend on how effectively the maps connect metro journeys with visits to the city’s cultural and historical sites,” he pointed out.



● HAMSHAHHI

China backs region-led ...

During President Xi Jinping’s recent meeting with Donald Trump, the two sides discussed the Iranian nuclear issue and the importance of keeping international waterways open for navigation. How do you see these discussions affecting China’s position toward Iran and the future of Iran-US negotiations? The consensus between the Chinese and US presidents on Iran’s nuclear issue is actually consistent with Tehran’s stated position: Iran does not seek nuclear weapons. Keeping the Strait of Hormuz open also serves Iran’s interests better than closing it. In my view, these discussions have not harmed Iran’s national interests. Beijing’s position was already the same before this meeting between the two presidents. For negotiations to succeed, both Iran and the United States will need to make some compromises.

China has close and growing

relations with both Iran and the Arab states of the Persian Gulf. Has the current crisis made this balancing policy more difficult, or could it give Beijing a stronger position to build a new regional framework for cooperation between Iran and its Arab neighbors? In early 2016, President Xi Jinping visited Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Iran in succession. Ten years later, measured by growth in trade and investment, Iran’s cooperation with China has lagged far behind that of Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Beijing has indeed pursued a balanced diplomatic approach in the Middle East for many years. In economic cooperation, however, China is clearly more likely to choose countries that offer favorable conditions for cooperation. China’s good relations with countries along the Persian Gulf help Beijing engage with all parties on building a new regional framework, but its success ultimately depends on the countries of the region themselves.

Iranian festival takes music performances into villages

Arts & Culture Desk

The 18th Iran’s Regional Music Festival will send artists in campervans to villages and nomadic areas for the first time, bringing traditional music to local communities beyond concert halls, festival secretary Pirouz Arjmand said on Monday. The festival will run from November 30 to December 5, 2026, in Kerman, southeastern Iran, and artists will travel across Kerman province and perform with local musicians, linking regional music with tourism, Arjmand said. Programs scheduled in seven cities across the province. Organizers aim to extend activities beyond the provincial capital to other cities and areas with rich cultural histories, helping residents feel part of the event, IRNA reported. “The festival will focus on preserving the authenticity of regional music, reviving local rituals, supporting younger generations and documenting the works of master musicians,”



Arjmand said. Plans also include instrument-making workshops and programs to revive local traditions. Organizers will record performances and artists’

accounts to build a lasting archive of this cultural heritage. The festival will open with a parade of artists and musical performances along the route from Arg Square to Ganjali Khan

Square in Kerman. Kerman’s Culture and Arts Hall will be the main performance venue, while the historic Ganjali Khan Caravanserai will host some events. Artists from countries along the historic Silk Road, including India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Armenia and Iraq, have been invited to the international section. The move could widen access to cultural programs in rural communities, but its lasting impact will depend on continued activities after the festival and sustained support for local musicians. At the conference, Mahdi Shafiei, deputy culture minister for artistic affairs talked about the importance of regional music and described the festival a way to boost historical memory, cultural identity and the voices of communities across Iran. He said the country’s cultural unity lay in bringing together different languages, traditions and stories rather than making them uniform.