

Leader:  
Tehran-  
Riyadh  
relationship  
beneficial for  
both nations



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Soldiers march past the podium where Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian stands with military commanders during a parade to mark the National Army Day in Tehran, Iran on April 18, 2025. [president.ir](http://president.ir)

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### Strategic importance of nuclear energy for Iran



By Ashkan Pirzadeh  
Strategic affairs expert

OPINION  
EXCLUSIVE

For decades, the "nuclear dossier" has remained a thorn in the side of Iran's foreign policy and national security landscape. Western powers, egged on by the Zionist regime, have spearheaded a long-running campaign to paint a distorted picture of Iran's peaceful nuclear program, hurling unfounded, politically motivated accusations. By latching onto Iran's nuclear activities, they have sought to push forward their "Iranophobia" agenda and heighten the pressure to box in the Islamic Republic on the global stage. This comes despite Iran's nuclear policy being entirely transparent and kept in check under the eye of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), with full compliance to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Even US intelligence agencies have come out and confirmed the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program. The strategic value of nuclear energy for Iran, therefore, cannot be overlooked. [Page 8 >](#)



# Iran: Nuclear deal 'possible' if Washington is realistic

## International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Friday that reaching a nuclear agreement with the United States is possible if Washington does not make unrealistic demands. "Although we have serious doubts about the intentions and motivations of the American side, in any case we will participate in tomorrow's negotiations with seriousness," Araghchi said during a press conference in Moscow with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov. "If the other side also demonstrates seriousness of intent (like Iran) and does not make unrealistic demands, reaching agreements is possible," the Iranian foreign minister said. Araghchi said Tehran will assess and decide on the path ahead of negotiations based on the approach of the US in the second stage of talks.

## Peaceful solution

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio also said on Friday that the US administration is looking for a peaceful solution with Iran but will never tolerate the Islamic Republic developing

a nuclear weapon.

Araghchi and the US special envoy in the Middle East, Steve Witkoff, are set to hold the second round of negotiations in Rome today a week after they held the highest-level talks in Oman since US President Donald Trump abandoned a landmark nuclear deal in 2018.

Both sides described the first round of talks as "positive and constructive", which are aimed at reaching a diplomatic agreement surrounding the Iranian nuclear program. But on Tuesday, Witkoff said Iran must "stop and eliminate" its enrichment of uranium as part of any nuclear deal. He had previously demanded only that Iran return to the 3.67 percent enrichment ceiling set by the 2015 accord between Iran and major powers that Trump withdrew from. In response, Araghchi said on Wednesday that Iran's enrichment of uranium is "non-negotiable."

## Trump's threats

The US president, who has repeatedly threatened strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities if no deal is reached, said on Thursday that he was in no



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (L) and his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov attend a joint press conference following their talks in Moscow on April 18, 2025.

● TATYANA MAKEYEVA/AFP

hurry to launch an attack on Iran after a New York Times report that said he had waved off an Israeli attack.

"I wouldn't say waved off. I am not in a rush to do it because I think Iran has a chance to have a great country." Speaking to reporters in the Oval Office alongside Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, Trump said, "Iran has a chance to have a great country, and to live happily without death, and I'd like to see that. That's my first option."

"If there's a second option," he went on, "I think it would be very bad for Iran, and I think Iran is wanting to talk. I hope they're wanting to talk. It's going to be very good for them if they do. Iran can't have a nuclear weapon. It's pretty simple."

## Leader's letter for Putin

Iran's foreign minister, who had trav-



eled to Moscow at the head of a diplomatic delegation for consultations with high-ranking Russian officials, submitted a written message of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The minister presented the Leader's message to the president of Russia and explained the views and positions of the Islamic Republic regarding issues on the agenda of bilateral relations, as well as regional and international developments.

## President lauds Armed Forces' prowess on Iran's Army Day

### National Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Friday praised the country's Armed Forces for their strength and self-sufficiency in defense capabilities as the country marked the National Army Day.

Addressing a military parade in Tehran on the occasion of the National Army Day, Pezeshkian hailed the role played by the country's Army in achieving peace and security across the country and the entire region.

"The security and peace of the society are possible with the presence of a strong and prepared army, and if this blessed power didn't exist in the society, security would have disappeared from our society," he said.

"The existence of a strong and prepared Army has enabled Iran to powerfully implement its discourse of establishing communication, peace and tranquility in the region," Pezeshkian added.

The president reaffirmed that Iran has become an "undisputed power in the



region" thanks to the country's army troops and security forces.

Pezeshkian also noted that the Army has managed to achieve self-sufficiency in producing all needed military equipment.

"Today, we are proud that our powerful Army has achieved progress with strength in the production of all military and defense tools needed by the country in the air, on land and at sea, as well as in the production of all precision equipment."

The National Army Day was marked with military parades that were held by various army units in Tehran and other provinces across the country. Some of the army's achieve-



An Iranian drone is displayed during a military parade held on the occasion of the National Army Day in Tehran on April 18, 2025.

● president.ir

ments and domestically-made military equipment, including drones and missiles, were also displayed on this occasion.

Meanwhile, a naval parade was held in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, with a number of the navy's vessels, including destroyers and indigenous submarines, participating.

Army Day is celebrated annually on the 29th of the Persian calendar month of Farvardin (which falls on April 18, this year).

## Leader: Tehran-Riyadh relationship beneficial for both nations

### International Desk

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said the relationship between Iran and Saudi Arabia would be beneficial for both countries.

"We believe that the relationship between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia will be beneficial for both countries and the two countries can complement each other," the Leader said during a meeting with Saudi Arabia's visiting Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman. Ayatollah Khamenei also said enemies are against the expansion of relations between Tehran and Riyadh. "These hostile motives must be subdued, and we are ready for this," he said.

Khalid bin Salman, who is brother of Crown Prince and de facto ruler Mohammed bin Salman, traveled to Tehran to present the message of Saudi Arabia's King Salman to Ayatollah Khamenei. The Saudi defense minister said his visit was aimed at expanding relations with Iran and cooperation in all fields.

"And we hope that the constructive talks will provide for stronger relations between Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran than in the past," he added. The Saudi official also held a separate meeting with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian. During the meeting, Pezeshki-



an said Iran and Saudi Arabia can serve as a model for regional cooperation, stressing that the unity of Islamic countries is a prerequisite for achieving peace, security, and sustainable economic development in the region.

"We consider you our brothers, and since the beginning of this government's tenure, we have made efforts to strengthen fraternal ties among Islamic nations," Pezeshkian said, adding that if Islamic countries achieve a common language and genuine unity, the Israeli regime will no longer cause human tragedies like those unfolding in the besieged Gaza Strip nowadays. He also touched on the importance of setting aside differences and boosting regional cooperation.

He also hailed the idea of establishing joint working groups in various political, economic, and security areas between Iran and



Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei (R) meets with Saudi Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman (C) in Tehran on April 17, 2025.

● khamenei.ir

Saudi Arabia.

"Iran and Saudi Arabia, by relying on their shared capacities and without foreign interference, can resolve many of the region's problems. We hope the goodwill that has emerged between the two countries will strengthen the interests of the Islamic world and discourage enemies from interference and sowing discord," Pezeshkian emphasized.

Prince Khalid bin Salman also said Iran and Saudi Arabia's strong relations between the two countries can serve as an effective model for convergence and synergy in the Islamic world.

## 'Crucial stage': Grossi says visit to Tehran aims to facilitate Iran-US deal



UN nuclear watchdog chief Rafael Grossi said Thursday that Iran and the United States were running out of time to secure a deal as they prepare to hold fresh nuclear talks to resolve a dispute over Iran's nuclear program.

"We are in a very crucial stage of these



Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency Rafael Grossi speaks to reporters during a visit to Tehran on April 17, 2025.

● AEOI

important negotiations. We know we don't have much time. This is why I am here... to facilitate this process," Grossi said on a visit to Tehran, AFP reported. "We are working hard and we want to succeed," he told a joint news conference with Iran's atomic energy agency chief Mohammad Eslami, acknowledging that the effort to secure a deal was "not an easy process."

On Wednesday, Grossi met with Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who led the first round of talks with US Special Envoy

Steve Witkoff on Saturday.

"The IAEA can play a crucial role in peaceful settlement of the Iranian nuclear file in the coming months," Araghchi said.

Araghchi called on the IAEA chief to "keep the agency away from politics" in the face of those seeking to "derail current negotiations". He did not elaborate. Before heading to Iran, Grossi told French newspaper Le Monde that Tehran was "not far" from possessing a nuclear bomb.

Western governments have long accused Iran of seeking to acquire nuclear weapons capability, an ambition Tehran has consistently denied.

A year after the US pulled out of the 2015 nuclear deal in 2018, Iran began rolling back its own commitments under the agreement, which gave it relief from sanctions in return for IAEA-monitored restrictions on its nuclear activities.

In its latest report, the IAEA said Iran had an estimated 274.8 kilograms (605 pounds) of uranium enriched to up to 60 percent.



# Oil posts weekly gain on trade deal hopes amid sanctions on Chinese 'teapot'

## Economy Desk

Oil prices settled more than 3% higher on Thursday, supported by hopes for a trade deal between the United States and the European Union and new US sanctions on Chinese importers of Iranian oil to curb Iranian oil exports, which continued to elevate supply concerns.

The United States has imposed sanctions on Chinese importers of Iranian oil despite being involved in talks with the Islamic Republic to sort out differences over its nuclear program.

Brent crude futures settled \$2.11, or 3.2%, higher to \$67.96 a barrel, and US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude gained \$2.21, or 3.54%, at \$64.68 a barrel, Reuters reported.

For the week, both Brent and WTI gained about 5%, their first weekly gain in three weeks. Thursday is the last settlement day of the week ahead of the Easter holidays and trade volumes were thin.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni met in

Washington and expressed optimism about resolving trade tensions that have strained US-European relations.

"We're going to have very little problem making a deal with Europe or anybody else, because we have something that everybody wants," Trump said.

Reaching a trade deal with the EU could potentially limit oil demand destruction from Trump's tariffs, said Bob Yawger, director of energy futures at Mizuho.

Sanctions issued by Trump's administration on Wednesday, including against a China-based "teapot" oil refinery, ramp up pressure on Tehran amid talks on the country's nuclear program. "Teapot" is an industry term for small, independent and simple oil refiners.

"These are far-ranging sanctions, focusing on the Chinese teapot refineries," said John Kilduff, partner with Again Capital. "It's a potential supply loss to the market."

Washington also issued additional sanctions on several companies and vessels it said



A pump jack operates near a crude oil reserve in the Permian Basin oil field near Midland, Texas, US, February 18, 2025.

● ELI HARTMAN/REUTERS

were responsible for facilitating Iranian oil shipments to China. The sanctions targeted the China Oil and Petroleum Company Limited (COPC), an entity the US Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) claimed has been functioning as a front company for Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps to collect oil export revenues from China, including payments made by Shandong Shengxing. "The US continues to aggressively sanction Iran and impose sanctions against buyers of Iranian oil. OPEC+ has also provided updates and reassurance to the market, stating that they remain in control with flexibility to cut production if needed," analysts at energy consulting firm Gelber and Associates said in a note.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries



(OPEC) said on Wednesday it had received updated plans for Iraq, Kazakhstan and other countries to make further output cuts to compensate for pumping above

quotas.

However, OPEC, the International Energy Agency and several banks, including Goldman Sachs and JPMorgan, cut fore-

casts on oil prices and demand growth this week as US tariffs and retaliation from other countries threw global trade into disarray.

## Deputy minister: Iran's trade with Eurasian countries on rise

### Economy Desk

An official of the Iranian Ministry of Industry, Mine, and Trade expressed cautious optimism about the country's trade surge with Eurasian Union members, noting a 120% rise over the past two to three years while emphasizing the need for further strategic reinforcement to solidify economic gains.

Mohammad Ali Dehqan Dehnavi, the deputy minister of Industry, Mine, and Trade, said, "Iran's trade volume with Eurasian Union member states has seen significant growth, increasing by 120% compared to two to three years ago. However, this amount is still not substantial and requires further strengthening," IRNA reported.

Speaking to reporters on Thursday, Dehqan Dehnavi added, "Currently, Iran's trade volume with Eurasian Union members is less than \$5 billion, but political relations between the two sides are improving, and there is strong mutual interest in expanding economic ties."

Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) member states — comprising Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Belarus, and Armenia — are about to launch a landmark zero-tariff free trade agreement on May 15, marking a historic leap in regional economic integration after seven years of negotiations.

The head of the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) said, "The agreement represents a long-term effort to sustain economic growth between the parties. Undoubtedly, the Eurasian Union is among Iran's top five trading partners."

"Numerous meetings with relevant executive bodies have been held to advance economic relations with Eurasian countries. Committees involving entities such as the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) and the Iran National Standards Organization have also been formed to address issues like phytosanitary regulations and logistical support. These steps aim to prevent challenges during the agreement's implementation and



● IRNA

ensure optimal use of this opportunity."

"In this context, an educational conference on the agreement has begun as part of a provincial tour. The first session is being held today [Thursday] at the Khorasan Razavi Chamber of Commerce to familiarize economic actors with the agreement's provisions, clarify implementation methods, and address stakeholders' questions," Dehqan Dehnavi added.

"We aim to hold this conference in major provinces across the country before May 15 and invite private sector representatives to leverage the opportunities under the Eurasian trade agreement," he said. Dehqan Dehnavi emphasized that, "Khorasan Razavi, due to its proximity to Russia and Central Asian countries, holds strong geopolitical potential. The province's industrial capacities can be utilized for exports to Eurasia."

## Moscow-Tehran agreement on visa-free travel in 'final stage':

### Lavrov

The draft agreement on visa-free travel for tourist groups of Russian and Iranian citizens is in its final stage, according to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Moscow and Tehran are working to make travel between Russia and Iran for their citizens as smooth and convenient as possible, Russian foreign minister said at a press conference following talks with his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi, TASS reported.

"Prior to the [Russian-Iranian Comprehensive Strategic Partnership] treaty, a number of steps were taken to simplify the visa regime for certain categories of citizens. In addition, Iran is among the many countries that use the electronic visa system introduced last year, and it is as simple as possible," the Russian foreign minister said, responding to a question about the possibility of abolishing visas between the two states.

"Now we are taking additional steps on a number of documents, including to fully exempt embassy staff, both diplomats and holders of service passports, from visa obligations. A draft agreement on visa-free travel for tourist groups of Russian and Iranian citizens is in its final stage," Lavrov added.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist



## Oil Ministry launches electric vehicle infrastructure development

### Economy Desk

Iran's Oil Ministry initiated plans for the development of electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure in line with a recent resolution by the government's Economic Council.

The CEO of the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) has mandated — in line with diversifying the fuel portfolio and managing consumption — that the establishment of new fuel stations nationwide must be contingent on the construction of "at least one single-nozzle EV charging station," citing a recent resolution by the Economic

Council.

Mohammad Sadeq Azimi-far directed the NIORDC to mandate that all new fuel stations in the country include "at least one single-nozzle electric charging station" as a prerequisite for construction.

Accordingly, new fuel stations are required to establish electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and the development of electric infrastructure at operating stations across the country will also take place after feasibility studies in collaboration with the station owners.

In addition to expanding charging infrastructure, the NIORDC is leveraging



● IRNA

fuel-saving bonds to implement programs for modernizing and replacing aging vehicle fleets with electric alternatives. These initiatives are set to be unveiled soon.

Iran has been importing limited amounts of gasoline to respond to a rising demand for fuel, a problem which has been exacerbated in recent years because

of heavily subsidized prices that have encouraged smuggling across the borders.

According to NIOPDC announcing in mid-January, gasoline production in Iran had increased by nearly 10% in the three months before that, adding that total gasoline output from the country's refineries had reached 107 million liters per day.



# Israel, demonization of Iran in war of narratives

## ANALYSIS

Understanding securitization as an established and recognized entry in contemporary political science literature requires a genealogical investigation. Since World War I, the world saw the birth of a new dynamism in the competitive relations among states, which, over time, has taken on diverse and novel forms. After World War II and particularly following the Cold War, securitization emerged as an updated method prioritized by actors who did not find their interests reflected in conventional political priorities — and thus found it necessary to introduce an existential threat for themselves. In this context, one of the most significant examples of securitization has been the behavior of the Israeli regime post-World War II, which has consistently involved framing its adversary as a security threat. This approach has allowed Israel to alter the “normal politics” priorities in its surroundings. Although the adversary has changed over time due to various factors, the regime’s strategy has remained consistent. Addressing this issue, former Iranian foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his associate Sasan Karimi explore the genealogy of this concept and its manifestations in their research paper, titled “The Duality of Security and Securitization in International Relations (Example: Securitization of the Islamic Republic of Iran)”. There, they examined the strategy of securitizing Iran over the past three decades, along with other cases, and explained the cognitive challenge that could potentially lead to falling into this trap. Below are key excerpts from the article:

### Security or securitization?

One of the most significant manifestations of perceptual and cognitive frameworks can be found in the concept of security and its associated meanings in the international arena. A meaningful and substantive example before us is Iran’s security versus the project of securitizing Iran over the past few decades. Security, as a core element of national and international interests, is desired by all states and their agents. However, what may have been overlooked is the evolution of this concept in response to shifting international contexts — and its conflation with a closely related term: securitization.

In the literature of international relations and political science (with the Copenhagen School as a key influence), securitization does not refer to security itself but rather to prioritizing issues based on various ideological inclinations, which are then framed in security terms to elevate them beyond ordinary political processes. This prioritization can apply to both domestic and foreign policy, either affirmatively (to strengthen an issue) or negatively (to restrict it).

Explaining the conceptual duality of security and securitization in policymaking has significant practical implications for a country’s foreign policy. What is referred to as security, if one is aware of the securitization trap, leads to efforts toward regional and international alignment. Conversely, an approach that overlooks securitization results in an aggressive, miscalculated strategy with unpredictable consequences.

### How did Israel securitize Iran?

The securitization of Iran — portraying it as a danger and exaggerating its threat, not just to Israel but to peace, the region, and the world — creates a security umbrella for the Israeli regime. Under this umbrella, the international community’s tolerance for Israel’s anti-Palestinian, anti-human rights, and anti-peace actions increases.

While Israel’s securitization of Iran may superficially appear as fear of Iran, the reality is that tracing the roots of such rhetoric reveals a policy designed to amplify the perception of Iran as a military-security threat to the world. Beyond the pressures that this strategy imposes on Iran through threats and sanctions, it ultimately securitizes Iran, raising the costs of engagement with the country across various domains — particularly in areas now framed as matters of competition and incidentally, matters of security, such as economy, industry, investment, and trade. For instance, Israel’s initial efforts to replace the Palestinian issue with the “Iranian threat” date back to the Madrid Conference, where Israel sought to position Iran — rather than Arab



states — as its primary security threat. While Iran’s nuclear issue is commonly believed to have begun in August 2002, Israel’s securitization of Iran through its nuclear program traces back to earlier statements by senior Israeli officials regarding Iran’s nuclear activities, which were extremely limited at the time and for years afterward.

### Why does securitizing Iran benefit Israel?

Based on the above discussion, Israel’s securitization of Iran — which began in the early 1990s and peaked in 2002 with relentless emphasis on the nuclear issue — benefits the regime in three key ways:

- **Portraying victimhood:** Through this securitization strategy,

Israel presents itself as a “victim facing existential threats” to the world and especially to the West, securing its desired substantial material, political, and legal support from them.

- **Diverting attention:** By framing Iran as a threat to itself and to regional and international peace, Israel shifts focus away from its occupation and its consequences — the central issue in the Middle East and the world for the past seventy years.

- **Regional power balancing:** Beyond ideological concerns, Israel’s existence hinges on weakening major regional powers. Historically, this applied to Arab states; today, due to international dynamics, Iran is the primary target. A comparative look at territory, population, and material

capabilities shows Israel must continuously work to undermine Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia — the region’s key powers.

The reality is that today’s world, particularly in politics, is more discourse-dependent than ever. In foreign policy — central to this study — speech acts like framing, consensus-building, and alliance-making have become pivotal compared to the past.

The current international order — now confidently termed “post-polar” — intensifies this reality. Unlike the Cold War’s bipolar system, where alignment with a bloc was primarily a military-security game, today no actor can easily behave as a hegemon or even a pole. Instead, discursive strategies — especial-

ly securitization — define the playing field. What Iran has directly experienced due to efforts that made the environment hostile against it and increased political costs for its roleplaying may not be the only case of securitization, but it is certainly one of the most prominent and enduring. Recognizing this — and not conflating securitization with genuine security — is the first step in rethinking solutions.

For this research, what mattered was that misinterpreting this dynamic and responding with security-driven reactions (rather than counterplays to the securitization playbook) has backfired at times, reinforcing the securitizing actor’s goals. Historical and geographical examples show that awareness — or lack thereof — of the core issue, along with appropriately designed responses, leads to vastly different outcomes.

The article first appeared in Persian on IRNA.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu shows an illustration describing Iran’s ability to allegedly create a nuclear weapon as he addresses the UN General Assembly in September 2012.



# Door opens

## OPINION

After years of hostility, the recent resumption of talks between the United States and Iran marks a fragile but noteworthy moment in international diplomacy. Led by US envoy Steve Witkoff and Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, the two delegations met in Oman for what both sides described as a "constructive" exchange. While the meeting was mostly mediated and brief, the tone and outcome offer cautious optimism in an otherwise tense geopolitical landscape. What makes this moment unique is not just the high-level engagement — the first of its kind since 2018 — but the departure from the confrontational rhetoric that has often dominated US-Iran relations. The fact that both sides agreed to a second round of talks suggests a mutual recognition that dialogue, even if limited and indirect, is preferable to escalation. For once, the language of diplomacy prevailed over threats, and that itself is progress. However, realism must temper optimism. The geopolitical and domestic stakes for both countries are higher than ever. Iran's nuclear programme has advanced significantly since the American withdrawal from the 2015 agreement. According to international observers, Iran has stockpiled uranium enriched up

to 60 per cent purity — dangerously close to weapons-grade — far exceeding the limits of the original deal. On the American side, political pressure to appear tough on Iran is immense, particularly with military options constantly looming in the background. This backdrop complicates negotiations. Iran seeks sanctions relief and a fair deal that respects its

sovereignty while preserving elements of its nuclear capability for peaceful purposes. The United States, meanwhile, is adamant that Iran must never obtain nuclear weapons — a stance reinforced by regional allies and the memory of failed past agreements. Finding common ground between these two positions will be extraordinarily difficult. Still, the decision to engage — even indirectly — demonstrates a willingness to explore alternatives to confrontation. The involvement of Oman as a me-

diator reflects a smart use of regional diplomacy, and even the brief in-person interaction between Mr. Witkoff and Mr. Araghchi can be seen as a symbolic thaw in relations. While small, such gestures are often the building blocks of larger breakthroughs. But expectations should remain measured. This is only the beginning of what could be a long, winding road. The success of these talks will depend not just on what is said at the negotiating table, but on whether both sides are willing to make difficult compromises

under intense political scrutiny. In a world increasingly dominated by zero-sum thinking, the return to dialogue is a welcome shift. It's a reminder that diplomacy — however imperfect or indirect — still holds the potential to defuse tensions and avert disaster. Whether this opportunity evolves into a lasting agreement remains uncertain. But the door has been opened, and that, for now, is something to build on.

*The article first appeared on The Statesman.*



The fact that both sides agreed to a second round of talks suggests a mutual recognition that dialogue, even if limited and indirect, is preferable to escalation. For once, the language of diplomacy prevailed over threats, and that itself is progress. However, realism must temper optimism. The geopolitical and domestic stakes for both countries are higher than ever.



## Standing at edge of Iran war cliff



By Ron Paul  
Former Republican congressman

### OPINION

Millions of people around the world were at the edge of their seats over the weekend, waiting to hear whether Trump special envoy Steve Witkoff's indirect talks with the Iranian foreign minister would ratchet down tensions or would break down and bring on a major Middle East war. If it seems bizarre that the outcome of a meeting between a US president's designated negotiator and a foreign government minister could determine whether we plunge into possibly our biggest war since World War II, that's because it is bizarre. In fact, this is an excellent example

of why the Founders of the United States were so determined to keep war-making authority out of the Executive Branch of government. No one person — much less his aide — should have the power to take this country to war. That is why the Constitution places the authority to go to war firmly and exclusively in the hands of the representatives of the people: the US Congress. After all, it is the US people who will be expected to fight the wars and to pay for the wars and to bear the burden of the outcome of the wars. When that incredible power is placed in the hands of one individual — even if that individual is elected — the temptation to use it is far too great. The Founders recognized this weakness in

the system they were rebelling against — the British monarchy — so they wisely corrected it when they drafted the US Constitution. Unless the US is under direct attack or is facing imminent direct attack, the Constitution requires Congress to deliberate, discuss, and decide whether a conflict or potential conflict is worth bringing the weight of the US military to bear. They wanted it harder, not easier, to take us to war. When wars can be started by presidents with no authority granted by Congress, the results can be the kinds of endless military engagements with ever-shifting, unachievable objectives such as we've seen in Afghanistan and Iraq. We are currently seeing another

such endless conflict brewing with President Trump's decision to start bombing Yemen last month. The stated objectives — to end Houthi interference with Israeli Red Sea shipping — are not being achieved so, as usually happens, the bombing expands and creates more death and destruction for the civilian population. In the last week or so, US bombs have struck the water supply facilities for 50,000 civilians and have apparently blown up a civilian tribal gathering. Starting a war with Iran was the furthest thing from the minds of American voters last November, and certainly, those who voted for Donald Trump were at least partly motivated by his promise to end current wars and start no

new wars. However, there is a strange logic that to fulfill the promise of no new wars, the US must saber rattle around the world to intimidate others from crossing the White House. This is what the recycled phrase "peace through strength" seems to have come to mean. But the real strength that it takes to make and keep peace is the strength to just walk away. It is the strength to stop meddling in conflicts that have nothing to do with the United States. That is where Congress comes in. Except they are not coming in. They are nowhere to be found. And that is not a good thing.

*The article first appeared on The Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity.*



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US Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff (C) talks to Ron Dermer (R) and other Israeli officials in this undated photo. RESPONSIBLE STATECRAFT



## FIBA Women's Asia Cup Div. B qualifiers: Iran beats Jordan to progress

### Sports Desk

Iranian women's basketball team defeated Jordan 88-70 to make a clean sweep of double victories in Group A of the FIBA Women's Asia Cup Div. B – WABA Qualification Tournament in Amman and progress to the second tier of the competition.

Four Iranian girls finished in double figures on Thursday, with 20-year-old center Mahla Abedi registering a double-double for Greek coach Eleni Kapogianni's side with 20 points and 15 rebounds.

Negin Rasoulipour and Roxy Barahman chipped in 19 points apiece – including four 3-pointers between them – while Farnaz Khodamoradi dropped 16 points

in 31 minutes on the court. Jordanian guard Aisha Sheppard scored a game-high 24 points, with Janset Yaltchen adding 13 for the host, which had beaten Syria 86-75 on the preceding night. Iran dominated the first quarter for a 10-point lead (23-13) and went on to establish a 43-32 advantage at halftime. Kapogianni's girls had opened their campaign with 65-55 win against Syria on Tuesday. Barahman, who plays for French club Tarbes Gespe Bigorre, was the star of the show for Iran in the first-day victory, chipping in a game-high 25 points – including five 3-pointers – and seven rebounds, with Delaram Vakili dropping 14 points, 12 of which came from behind the arc.



IRNA



iranathletics.ir

## Asian U18 Athletics Championships: Iran's Shahpari shatters national record to win 3000m bronze

### Sports Desk

The third day of the Asian U18 Athletics Championships saw Iranian girl Samia Shahpari bag a second bronze medal for the country in Dammam, Saudi Arabia.

Representing the country in the women's 3000m final on Thursday, Shahpari clocked 10:09.07 minutes, breaking the national junior and cadet records, to finish behind Uzbekistan's Anastasiya

Silchenkova and Suolang Zhuoma of China.

Silchenkova also registered a personal-best record with 9:45.17 minutes, while Zhuoma crossed the finish line in 10:00.44 minutes.

Amirreza Ahanin-Maram had bagged a first medal for Iran in the Saudi coastal city, when he grabbed a bronze in the boys' hammer throw event on Day 1 of the competitions.

The Iranian began the final showpiece with a 67.74m

effort, and then went on to register 69.88m, before his final attempt of 70.83m saw Ahanin-Maram finish on the third podium. The host's Mohammed Siraj Alzayer walked away with the gold medal thanks to a 79.11m attempt, with Chinese Wang Ankang settling for the silver with 74.81m. Elsewhere on Thursday, Kirash Kaboli missed out on the men's shot put podium, finishing fourth with a best attempt of 18.26m, with his

compatriot Arman Amini settling for the sixth place in the category with 17.8m.

China's Han Qigeng walked away with the men's shot put gold – thanks to a new Asian U18 record of 20.23m with his fifth throw – followed by Indian Nishchay (19.59m) and Singapore's Anson Loh (18.59m).

Meanwhile, Iranian sprinter failed to progress to the men's 200m final after clocking 22.67 seconds in the semifinals.

## Central Asian Youth Table Tennis Championships: Iranian girls edge out Kazakhstan in opener

### Sports Desk

Iranian under-19 women's team got off to a flying start at the Central Asian Table Tennis Youth Championships in Almaty, Kazakhstan, beating the host 3-2 in the Group 1 opener on Friday.

Setayesh Iloukhani suffered a 3-2 loss to Kazakhstan's Viktoriya Mochalkina, before Vania Yavari leveled the

scoreline at 1-1, thanks to a 3-1 win against Albina Zhaxylkova.

Noila Khaniyazova came out victorious (3-1) against Fatemeh Yazdanpanah to restore the lead for the host, but Iran bounced back again through Iloukhani, who beat Zhaxylkova in straight games.

Yavari rose up to the occasion in the decisive contest, defeating Viktoriya Mochalkina 3-0

to seal a first win for Iran in the group – also featuring Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

The Iranian girls will take on Uzbekistan today and then finish their campaign against Kyrgyzstan on Sunday.

The competition also serves as the qualification event for the 29th Asian Youth Table Tennis Championships – starting June 26 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.



MARTIN RICKETT/PA

## Amorim uses treble as 'inspiration' for crazy Lyon comeback

**THE GUARDIAN** – After Manchester United scored three times in the last seven minutes of extra time to knock Lyon out and progress to a Europa League semi-final versus Athletic Bilbao, Ruben Amorim stated he had drawn on the 1999 Champions League final triumph over Bayern Munich. Losing 1-0 going into added time goals from Teddy Sheringham and Ole Gunnar Solskjær claimed European glory for United 26 years ago.

Amorim said: "I was watching the 1999 [Treble] documentary to have some inspiration for these moments. It was a great night, the team were tired, 4-2 with one more player, we think it's over, but here it's never over. Here everything is possible, you feel the environment. At 4-3, after the Bruno Fernandes penalty, we felt we could change the game."

Harry Maguire scored the winner 34 seconds into the 121st minute after Kobbie Mainoo had made it

4-4 on the night, 6-6 on aggregate. At the break United were 2-0 up in the leg after goals from Manuel Ugarte and Diogo Dalot and cruising through 4-2 on aggregate before strikes from Corentin Tolisso and Nicolás Tagliafico in regulation time took the tie into the added 30 minutes. Rayan Cherki (on 104 minutes) and Alexandre Lacazette's penalty (109) put Lyon two ahead. Maguire, like Mainoo, was pressed into service as an auxiliary No 9 as United sought salvation. "We tried

to put Harry Maguire up front because he is the only one who can score a goal with a header. Kobbie Mainoo has a lack of pace in this moment because of injury, but he's really good in short spaces," said Amorim.

"The sound of the two last goals were amazing. It is something we can keep for the future. But in the end you go to the semi-finals but you need to win it. We just need to focus on the next stage and try and win the competition."



# Registration efforts for Khalu Hossein Kuhaken Cave

## Iranica Desk

The head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department of Paveh, located in Kermanshah Province, has announced ongoing efforts to register the Khalu Hossein Kouhaken Cave in the tourist area of Meygoreh of Paveh on Iran's National Heritage List.

In an interview with ISNA, Aziz Mostafaei described the Khalu Hossein Kuhaken stone cave as a unique and significant structure. He highlighted the importance of this site and noted that efforts have been made over the past few years to have it registered as part of Iran's national heritage.

Mostafaei explained that a dossier for the site was previously prepared and submitted to the Ministry of Cultural Heritage as a historical site. However, since Khalu Hossein cave is less than fifty years old, it did not qualify for registration as a historical site, and the file was not approved. He emphasized that, following a directive from the deputy minister of cultural heritage, it has been determined that the Khalu Hossein cave must be registered nationally.

Mostafaei further stated that compiling a new dossier for national registration is now back on the



agenda, with plans to pursue registration as an intangible cultural heritage. He also announced that efforts are underway to

transform the Khalu Hossein neighborhood into a tourist site in Paveh. He explained that Khalu Hossein Kuhaken had endowed

this site to the municipality before his death, and the municipality has made significant infrastructure improvements over the

past few years. Actions taken for the site include building access roads, developing the area, and setting up a ticket

booth. However, electricity has yet to be implemented, which they hope to realize soon.

Mostafaei mentioned that

one of Khalu Hossein Kuhaken's descendants currently serves as a guide for tourists, sharing the story of Khalu Hossein and the history of the rock-cut cave. He recounts that Khalu Hossein, a resident of Banehvreh, became disabled due to an accident as a young man and faced many tragic events in his life. Out of sorrow, loneliness, and pain, he sought refuge in the mountainous Meygoreh area, where he began to carve out a cave to live in.

Mostafaei recalled that Khalu Hossein started building this cave in 1978, dedicating twenty years of his life to its creation. The cave consists of four separate houses with nine rooms. Khalu Hossein Kouhaken, also known as Farhad the Second, passed away in 2016.

Paveh is located in the Ormanat Mountainous region in the extreme northwest of Kermanshah Province, bordering Iraq to the west. This small mountainous city experiences cold winters and temperate summers, situated 636km from Tehran. The surrounding mountains are typically filled with fresh spring water from March to June. The town is also encircled by large fruit gardens, creating a beautiful landscape during the summer months.

IRIB

## Formation, features of Chahkuh Gorge in Qeshm

Chahkuh Gorge is located in the northwest of Qeshm Island, near the village of Chahu Sharghi. This geosite is a prominent and unique example of running water erosion, which has formed a characteristic canyon valley. The primary factor shaping this gorge is the rapid and powerful water current resulting from rare, torrential rains. Water erosion, particularly along a major fracture, also plays a significant role in its formation.

The area surrounding the gorge is part of the Salakh anticline ridge, where the salt dome is exposed. An anticline is a dome-like fold with a convex-up structure formed by internal and lateral earth pressures. These pressures cause joints, fractures, and faults to form at the edges of the anticline. In Chahkuh Gorge, these weak-

nesses are significantly affected by erosive processes, leading to the gradual development of the gorge, persioplanet.com wrote. The vertical section of the main gorge features another gorge with a prominent linear crevice observable along the fracture. A key characteristic of Chahkuh Gorge's geological formation is its water impermeability, causing water to flow through and fill fissures and cracks, which gradually erode them. Generally, anticlines and their surrounding areas are turbulent and unstable, leading to further formation of faults and cracks. Due to the mechanical action of water, various erosive shapes — such as linear, elliptical, and spherical concave forms — have developed in the gorge's walls. Additionally, the movement and rotation of rock fragments within the flowing water have

created holes, bowl-like shapes, potholes, and other erosive features. Locals have capitalized on this opportunity by digging holes at the bottom of the gorge to collect and store rainwater, which has proven valuable during periods of drought.

### Tectonic structures

A notable feature within Chahkuh Gorge is the presence of east-west faults, formed perpendicular to the main valley. These parallel faults possess nearly vertical fault mirrors with left-slip surfaces and a

normal component. Tafoni, a form of dissolution erosion, occurs in the sandstone layers; here, winds carrying saltwater droplets lead to evaporation and crystallization of salt, separating the sandstone into sheets and grains. The flat surfaces of the ridges and arches indicate that they have also been shaped by various erosive processes, including rapid water and wind erosion.

Qeshm Island is a dry area with low annual rainfall. The presence of traditional wells on the island has been crucial for maximizing the utilization of this limited rainfall. These wells were actively used until a few years ago, prior to the construction of the desalination plant on Qeshm Island.

Chahkuh Gorge is quite long, but only a short section is accessible to ordinary visitors.

The remainder of the gorge can only be explored by adventurous individuals equipped with the proper gear, due to challenging access roads and water conditions.

Visitors can explore Chahkuh Strait during all seasons; however, it is advisable to avoid the gorge during rain or high water flow, as the presence of several wells along the strait can create additional risks.

Given the remoteness of Chahkuh from Qeshm, various amenities have been established in the surrounding area, including in Chahkuh village. Nearby attractions include Statue Valley, the Mangrove Forests, and Cheshmeh Strait.

Currently, there are numerous signs available to assist visitors in navigating the area effectively.



respina24.ir





# Pezeshkian urges assured, equitable healthcare for all

## Social Desk

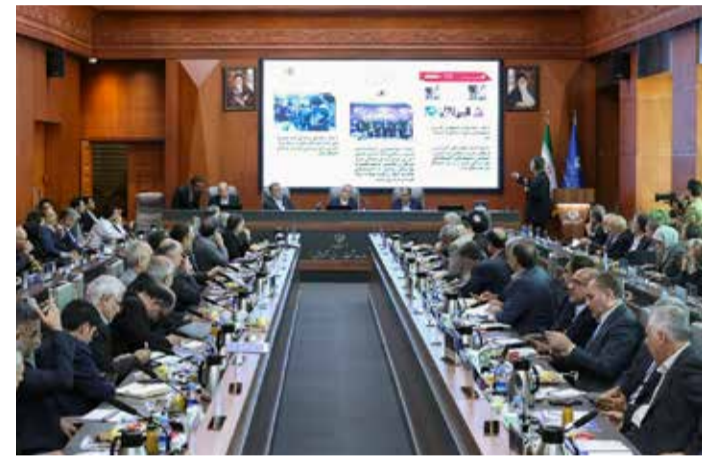
Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian urged the country's health system to ensure that all citizens, particularly those facing financial hardship, feel "assured" their health concerns will be addressed, emphasizing the need for improved and equitable access to medical care. Speaking at a meeting with the heads of medical science universities on Friday, Pezeshkian said the public must sense that healthcare authorities are "concerned about addressing their needs." He warned that neglecting the health of the most vulnerable could "lead to problems," adding that both the government

and society "expect better health services" from hospitals and clinics. Pezeshkian outlined plans to expand public participation and foster "intersectoral cooperation" to guarantee fair distribution of healthcare. "If we encourage public participation and cooperation, all problems can be solved," he said, highlighting the administration's intention to involve citizens in shaping health policy. The president noted the growing role of health centers across the country, stressing that these facilities must serve as "main hubs for healthcare services." He also called for the creation of hospital referral centers and the adoption of modern approach-

es, including virtual care, to enhance both the quality and reach of medical services. Pezeshkian stressed that improving the "quantity and quality" of health professionals is essential to meet rising demands. He further linked advances in healthcare to broader government initiatives, stating, "If we gain public support and participation, we can advance our programs in housing, employment, healthcare, livelihood, and education." Addressing the broader determinants of health, Pezeshkian said, "Health is not limited to medicine and treatment alone," pointing to the impact of social factors, economic challenges, and mental health on overall

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian addresses the audience in a meeting with the heads of medical science universities on April 18, 2025. [president.ir](#)

well-being. "We are responsible for the health of the people, and that means every factor disrupting people's lives must be managed and rebuilt by us," he said. Calling for unity and collective effort, Pezeshkian urged officials and society to "seize this opportunity to serve the people." He added, "All disputes stem from our own egos. We must set aside these egos and join hands for the comfort of the people and to solve the country's problems."



The president concluded by emphasizing that if the objective is clear, "nothing can stop you." He called on all stakeholders

to "strive wholeheartedly" to achieve the shared goal of preserving both the health and dignity of the nation.



## Portrait of injured Gazan boy named World Press Photo of the Year

A haunting image of a young Gazan boy recovering from war injuries has been named World Press Photo of the Year for 2025. The portrait, taken by Palestinian photographer Samar Abu Elouf for the New York Times, shows nine-year-old Mahmoud Ajjour, who lost both arms in an Israeli airstrike in Gaza City in March 2024, BBC reported. Abu Elouf, who was evacuated from Gaza

in late 2023, lives in the same apartment complex as Mahmoud in Doha, Qatar. She has documented the lives of several wounded Gazans who made it out for treatment. "This is a quiet photo that speaks loudly," said World Press Photo executive director Joumana El Zein Khoury. "It tells the story of one boy, but also of a wider war that will have an impact for generations."

Abu Elouf had already won the prestigious Polk Award in 2023 for - among others in a collection - what has become one of the most recognizable and defining images of Israel's war on Gaza, in which children sheltering at a school in Gaza look up in fear at the sky, hearing the bombs fall around them. In 2024, Abu Elouf was the recipient of the Anja Niedringhaus Courage in Photojournalism Award from the International

Women's Media Foundation for a series of 12 images commissioned by her primary employer, The New York Times, documenting the impact of war on Gaza's women and children. This year's winners represent the best of the 59,320 photographs by 3,778 photographers from 141 countries. The three categories were singles (solo photographs), stories (series of 4-10 photos) and long-term projects (24-30 photos on a single theme).

## Iran's 'Black Scarf' wins top prize in Spain

### Arts & Culture Desk

The Iranian short film 'Black Scarf' has been awarded the Grand Prix for Best Short Film at the 22nd San Sebastián Human Rights Film Festival, organizers announced. Written and directed by Alireza Shahhosseini, the 15-minute drama stood out among international entries for its poignant exploration of human rights themes, ILNA reported. Produced by the Shah Hossein Film Company, 'Black Scarf' competed in the festival's main competition, which is recognized for spotlighting films addressing urgent social issues such as freedom of speech, women's rights, and the plight of marginalized groups. The festival, held annually in San Sebastián, Spain, is renowned for its commitment to "attract international attention to the infringement of human rights around the world through artistic means," with juries including representatives



from Amnesty International. The film's synopsis offers a glimpse into its somber narrative: "Do you know anything about spiders? ... They eat their own mates." This chilling metaphor underscores the film's exploration of sacrifice and survival within oppressive circumstances. According to IMDb, 'Black Scarf' unfolds on the last working day of a teacher in a remote village, where a simple request from his students alters the course of events.

## Sa'adi's 'Bustan' named Best Translated Work at Sarajevo Int'l Book Fair

### Arts & Culture Desk

Persian poet Sa'adi's 'Bustan' has been awarded Best Translated Work in World Literature into Bosnian at the 36th Sarajevo International Book Fair, which concluded this week in the Bosnian capital. The announcement coincided with events marking Sa'adi's literary legacy on the fair's closing day. The Sarajevo International Book Fair, one of the region's largest cultural gatherings, annually attracts more than 50,000 visitors and features over 200 exhibitors from Bosnia and Herzegovina and beyond, Mehr News Agency re-

ported. The fair's awards recognize outstanding achievements in various literary categories, including translations between Bosnian, Serbian, Croatian, and other languages. This year, the Bosnian edition of 'Bustan'—translated by Muammer Kudrich—received the top honor for translated works. The translation was produced through a collaboration between Iran's Cultural Center in Bosnia and Herzegovina and local publisher Dubrovkinja, with support from the Center for Organizing the Translation and Publication of Islamic Knowledge and Humanities, part of Iran's Cul-

tural and Relations Organization. The project is part of the "Translation of Persia (TOP)" initiative, which aims to promote Persian literature in new languages. Kudrich's translation is the first complete Bosnian rendition of 'Bustan', based on the critical edition by Mohammad Ali Foroughi. The translator sought to preserve the poem's original structure and style as faithfully as possible. In his introduction, Kudrich highlights Sa'adi's enduring influence across the Islamic world, noting that 'Bustan' and 'Golestan' are among the most celebrated and widely published works of classical Persian literature.

## Strategic importance of...

In a world where fossil fuels such as oil, gas, and coal are running out, energy [Page 1 >](#) has increasingly become the driving force behind global power shifts. According to experts, any nation that continues to lean on fossil fuel consumption and sales over the next forty years is bound to hit the skids economically. That's why getting a handle on nuclear know-how and industry has become an inevitable necessity for fuel-dependent nations. Iran's investment in nuclear technology is not just about power—it carries weight across scientific, economic, political, and security spheres, underscoring its strategic value.

Nuclear science sits at the cutting edge of modern technology. By diving into this field, Iran has staked out its position as a scientifically independent nation. Despite being slapped with unilateral and unlawful sanctions, the country has pressed ahead with its nuclear development—a badge of honor that reflects its technological resilience. Beyond energy, nuclear tech spills over into critical sectors like healthcare, farming, and industry. Even with its vast oil and gas reserves, Iran has been doubling down on clean, renewable energy to shore up its energy portfolio. As population growth and electricity demand pick up speed, nuclear power steps in as a vital and sustain-

able energy source for the long haul. With fossil fuels tapering off, nuclear energy is coming into its own as a safe and solid fallback. Uranium resources worldwide could supply energy for up to five million years, cutting back on Iran's dependence on fossil fuels and setting aside national reserves for future generations. Moreover, the domestication of nuclear technology also acts as a deterrent against potential threats, reinforcing its geopolitical standing in global affairs. This technological allows the Islamic Republic of Iran to establish itself as a scientific and technological power with considerable influence in regional and international dynamics.

Given its wide-ranging peaceful applications, nuclear energy has long been high on the agenda for advanced nations. Iran, too, has stayed the course with a focus on peaceful nuclear research and development, particularly in medicine, agriculture, and industry. Each year in April, the country shows off its progress on National Nuclear Technology Day. Mastery in this field not only paves the way for sustainable growth, but also helps raise the bar for living standards. It is worth noting that a single 12-millimeter uranium fuel pellet—when slotted into a reactor—packs the punch of three barrels of oil or 486 cubic meters of natural gas. For a nation like Iran, where fossil fuel consumption and

exports still hold sway, a shift toward nuclear power can ease the burden of costly imports and open new doors for economic expansion via nuclear-related exports, pushing forward technological and economic growth. Iran's peaceful nuclear program holds strategic significance across scientific, economic, political, security, and geopolitical dimensions. Attaining nuclear technology not only strengthens Iran's scientific and technological independence, but also ensures energy sustainability, elevates its international standing, fortifies national security, and fosters sustainable development—ultimately enhancing the welfare and quality of life for its people.