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Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad (L) shakes hands with Russian Energy Minister Sergei Tsivilev (R) after signing an agreement in the wake of an Iranian-Russo economic cooperation commission meeting in Moscow, Russia on April 25, 2025.  
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Crafting national security strategy

### A present necessity, future imperative for Iran

By Navid Kamali  
Strategic affairs analyst

#### OPINION EXCLUSIVE

At the dawn of the new century, amid profound transformations in the international order, the world grapples with increasing uncertainty and unprecedented complexities. New alignments among great powers, such as those witnessed between Europe and the United States during the Trump era, the emergence of complex and ambiguous technologies like artificial intelligence, the intensification of geopolitical and geo-economic rivalries, and multifaceted environmental and health crises have created conditions where navigating the future without a precise roadmap and strategic compass is both perilous and costly.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a major and influential actor in the West Asia region and embarking on the "Second Phase of the Islamic Revolution" – which outlines a long-term vision for the country's progress and excellence – requires, more than ever, the formulation and declaration of an operational and integrating document to enhance the convergence of national capacities towards securing national interests. This crucial need can be met through a codified, comprehensive, and forward-looking National Security Strategy (NSS) document. Such a document would not only clarify the country's course in the turbulent sea of regional and international relations but also act as a national covenant, consolidating domestic capabilities and conveying a clear message to the world.

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# Iran, US set to hold technical talks in Oman

Trump says negotiations 'going very well'



Abbas Araghchi  
● AFP

## International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, heading a diplomatic and technical-expert delegation, arrived in the Omani capital of Muscat on Friday, ahead of a third round of talks with the United States, including their first expert-level negotiations, scheduled for April 26. Esmail Baghaei, the spokesperson for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, made the announcement on Friday evening and said Tehran and Washington had agreed to hold technical and expert-level sessions concurrent with the presence of senior negotiators from both sides.

"According to arrangements made by the Omani host and agreed upon by Iran and the US, technical meetings and indirect negotiations between the Iranian foreign minister and the US president's special envoy [Steve Witkoff] will take place on Saturday," Baghaei noted. Stressing that progress in the Iran-US talks depends on the other side's goodwill, seriousness, and realism, Baghaei said the Islamic Republic will draw on its experience, adjust its steps according to the behavior of the other party, and spare any efforts to uphold the legitimate rights and interests of the Iranian nation. Araghchi and Witkoff led two rounds of

indirect talks on Iran's nuclear program and the termination of US sanctions in Muscat and the Italian capital, Rome, on April 12 and 19.

The talks were mediated by Omani Foreign Minister Badr bin Hamad al-Busaidi. Expert-level discussions on the technical details of a potential replacement to the 2015 nuclear deal were originally scheduled for April 23. However they were postponed to April 26, the date set for the third round of the indirect negotiations.

Iran's deputy foreign ministers Majid Takht-Ravanchi and Kazem Gharibabadi are said to be heading the Iranian technical delegation in Saturday's indirect expert-level talks with the US.

In 2015, Iran proved the peaceful nature of its nuclear program to the world by signing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with six world powers, including the European troika. However, the US's unilateral withdrawal in 2018 during the first term of American President Donald Trump and its subsequent re-imposition of sanctions against Tehran left the future of the deal in limbo. In 2019, Iran started to roll back the limits it had accepted under the JCPOA after the other parties, including the trio, failed to live up to their commitments.

The Islamic Republic has repeatedly stressed that it has never functioned as the side to leave negotiations, while declaring it would respond positively to any potential positive steps by the counterparty.

## 'Ready to visit Paris, Berlin, London for diplomacy'

In a post on his X account on Thursday, Araghchi said he is "once again" proposing dialogue and a diplomatic path to France, Germany, and Britain on Iran's nuclear program and other shared interests.

He described the status quo of bilateral relations with each of the European troika a "lose-lose" situation, regretting that despite his call for diplomacy the trio has selected the "hard way."

"Iran's relations with the E3 (France, Germany, and Britain) have experienced ups and downs in recent history. Like it or not, they are currently down. Why? Each side has its own narrative. To me, placing blame is a futile exercise. What matters is that the status quo is lose-lose," Araghchi said.

Araghchi noted that during a meeting with the foreign ministers of the E3 and other European counterparts in New York last September, he offered dialogue and cooperation instead of confrontation. He told them that his proposal extended beyond the nuclear issue to include all areas of mutual interest and concern, but the Europeans have chosen the harder path, the minister recounted.

"I once again propose diplomacy. After my recent consultations in Moscow & Beijing, I am ready to take the first step with visits to Paris, Berlin & London. I was ready to do it before Iran commenced its indirect dialogue with the U.S., but the E3 opted out," Araghchi stressed.

"The ball is now in the E3's court. They have an opportunity to do away with the grip of Special Interest groups and forge a different path. How we act at this critical juncton is likely to define the foreseeable future," he added.

## Trump hails positive talks with Iran

Speaking separately to reporters at the White House on Friday, the Republican US president reiterated his positive prognosis on the Tehran-Washington talks, saying, "Iran, I think, is going very well. We'll see what happens."

Trump also said he is open to meeting Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei or President Masoud Pezeshkian and that he thinks the two countries will strike a new deal on Tehran's nuclear program.

Asked in the interview if he was concerned Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu might drag the United States into a war with Iran, Trump said, "No." However, when asked if the US would join a war against Iran should Israel take action, he responded, "I may go in very willingly if we can't get a deal. If we don't make a deal, I'll be leading the pack."

In March, Iran responded to a letter from Trump in which he had urged to negotiate a new deal with Tehran. The Islamic Republic reportedly stated that it would not engage in direct talks under Washington's so-called maximum pressure and military threats but was open to indirect negotiations, as in the past.

## Beijing defends Tehran's peaceful nuclear rights

Araghchi hails China, Russia as Iran's strategic partners

## International Desk

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi expressed Beijing's support for indirect talks between Iran and the United States, recognizing the Islamic Republic's right to use peaceful nuclear program ahead of its third round of high-stakes negotiations with Washington.

Wang said during a meeting with his visiting Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi in Beijing that his country opposes the use of force and "illegal" sanctions to try to resolve Iran's nuclear issue. "The Chinese side commends Iran's promise not to develop nuclear weapons and respects Iran's right to utilize nuclear energy peacefully," he added.

The top diplomat also noted that China is willing to deepen coordination and cooperation with Iran on international and regional affairs. Araghchi, for his part, hailed China as a friendly country, saying it played a very important and positive role in previous nuclear negotiations. Both countries believe in resistance against the US hegemony and bullying in the global arena, he pointed out. Touching on the indirect talks with the US, Araghchi said Iran is "cautiously optimistic" due to contradictory messages coming from the opposite side in the news and media.

"There are many differences. We will enter into negotia-

tions seriously on Saturday, and if the other side is also serious, there is room for progress," he emphasized. "I have repeatedly said that if the Americans' only demand is that Iran should not have nuclear weapons, this is achievable ..., but if they have other demands or impractical and illogical requests, then we will naturally run into problems." Later in a post on X, the Iranian foreign minister stressed that the country will continue to regard China as a "reliable partner worthy of trust" no matter how the international situation changes.

In the last two weeks, representatives from Iran and the US have engaged in two rounds of negotiations in Oman and Italy. The two sides are set to conduct expert-level technical negotiations on April 26.

## China, Russia as Iran's strategic partners

The Iranian foreign minister hailed China and Russia as the country's two strategic partners and close friends, as he arrived in Beijing on Wednesday for consultations with top Chinese officials prior to the third round of indirect talks with the United States, which are mediated by Omani Foreign Minister Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi.

"China and Russia are two strategic partners and close friends who have stood by us in times of hardship. It is

natural that we have continuous and constant consultations with them in various areas, especially now that discussions with the United States are held indirectly," Abbas Araghchi told Iran's state media in the Chinese capital.

"It is necessary that we keep our friends in China fully informed about ongoing matters and consult with them." Stressing that he had a similar meeting with senior Russian officials in Moscow last week, Araghchi expressed hope for good discussions in Beijing as he is to convey Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's message to Chinese authorities.

"China has played an important and constructive role in Iran's nuclear issue in the past, and certainly this role needs to continue. We will keep our consultations with China as a member of the Security Council, a member of the [IAEA's] Board of Governors, as well as a partner of the Islamic Republic of Iran and a country with a pedigree in nuclear matters," the top Iranian diplomat said.

"China has always held constructive positions on the nuclear issue of Iran, and we appreciate China's constructive and positive stance. Currently, China's position upholds the ongoing negotiations, and they have also expressed readiness to assist and cooperate, the details of which we will discuss today," he added.

## UN envoys of Iran, Russia, China confer with Grossi in Vienna

## International Desk

The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the UN in Vienna said senior diplomats from Iran, Russia, and China had met with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s director general in the Austrian capital, emphasizing the need for sustained cooperation and dialogue to boost diplomatic efforts. Iran's ambassador to United Nations organizations in Vienna, Reza Najafi, together with his Russian and Chinese counterparts, Mikhail Ulyanov and Li Song, met the head of the UN nuclear watchdog Director General Rafael Grossi on Thursday, the mission said on X.

"Amb. Najafi together with Amb. Li and Amb. Ulyanov jointly met IAEA DG, emphasizing the continuation of cooperation and dialogue to support the ongoing dip-

lomatic efforts and also highlight the opportunity for the IAEA to play a professional and constructive role in this regard," the mission said.

During the meeting, the senior diplomats said mutual respect and diplomatic engagement remain the only viable and practical path for resolving the nuclear issue.

The three countries said the IAEA and its chief possess the necessary potential and expertise to contribute constructively to this process, with the goal of supporting diplomatic efforts and addressing the issue in a positive and practical manner.

The meeting comes following the conclusion of the second round of Iran's indirect negotiations with United States in the Italian capital of Rome on April 19.

In an interview with the Italian newspaper La Repubblica on April 20, Grossi, for his part, had



expressed optimism about the ongoing indirect nuclear talks between Iran and the US, describing it as "a positive day for peace." The third round of Iran-US indirect talks - expert-level technical negotiations - is scheduled to be held on Saturday - April 26 - in Muscat, the capital of Oman, where the first round was held. The Islamic Republic has repeatedly stressed that it has never functioned as the side to leave negotiations, while declaring it would respond positively to any potential positive steps by the counterparty.

## Iran says Hezbollah disarmament Lebanon's internal affair, Tehran not to meddle

## International Desk

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Lebanon Mojtaba Amani said the disarmament of the Hezbollah resistance movement is an internal issue of the Arab country and that Tehran will not meddle in such affairs.

"The Lebanese government is obligated to consult with various parties regarding factions, the resistance and its weapons, and related issues. These issues are internal affairs of Lebanon, in which we do not interfere," Amani said.

"There is a legitimate party with decades of experience and weapons," he added, referring to the Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement.

"These issues are for the Lebanese government and its institutions to discuss and agree on any matter." Iran's ambassador to Beirut had earlier dismissed media stories that he had been summoned by the Ministry

of Foreign Affairs of Lebanon over his comments regarding the new Lebanese government's push to disarm Hezbollah.

"Our relations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lebanon continue normally and there has been no talk of summoning," he said.

The ambassador said the "incorrect and deviated" reports about sour relations between Iran and Lebanon are part of a propaganda aimed at displaying the Israeli regime as a winner.

He underlined that Iran would respect any agreement among the Lebanese institutions, resistance and parties, saying, "The Islamic Republic of Iran is bound to support the oppressed, regardless of their faith or sect."

Rejecting the "illusion" that the resistance in Lebanon has been weakened, Amani said it has been the Zionist regime that has suffered defeats after failing to reach its ob-

jectives and has been forced to make a deal with Lebanon and Hamas.

Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri said on Friday that the Hezbollah resistance movement will not hand over its weapons before Israel fulfills its ceasefire agreement obligations.

"We will not hand over the weapons now before the implementation of the terms requested from the enemy" as per the ceasefire agreement, Berri said in an interview.

"Our weapons are our cards which we will not give up without an actual implementation of the ceasefire agreement and consequently heading to a dialogue over their fate."

The remarks come amid the regime's daily violations of the ceasefire agreement that was clinched late last year with the aim of ending Tel Aviv's deadly escalation against Lebanon that had claimed the lives of around 4,000 people throughout more than a year.



# Iran, Russia agree on major gas transfer deal, funding for new nuclear plant

Economy Desk

Iran and Russia have hammered out a deal for the annual supply of 55 billion cubic meters of Russian gas to the Islamic Republic, though the two sides have yet to nail down the price, IRNA reported on Friday, citing officials.

As part of the growing energy alliance, Russia also pledged to finance the construction of a new nuclear power plant in Iran through a state credit line.

The announcement came as Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad visited Moscow this week for high-level talks. On Friday, Paknejad met Russian Energy Minister Sergei Tsivilev during the 18th Joint Economic Cooperation Commission between the two nations.

Paknejad said that the gas agreement, equivalent to more than 150 million cubic metres per day, would involve a land route through Azerbaijan.

“Gas will be delivered to Iran in the Astara region. All the necessary coordination is underway between Russia and Azerbaijan,” he said, adding the project would have a “second phase” set to be finalized in the future.

Tsivilev, speaking alongside Paknejad, noted that Russia could supply up to 1.8 billion cubic meters of gas to Iran this year at a price yet to be agreed.

Paknejad went on to say that a new nuclear power plant in Iran would be constructed with financing from Moscow’s credit line.

Moscow had previously helped bring online the Bushehr reactor, Iran’s first.

The Iranian minister also said that four oil contracts with Russian companies were underway, covering development at seven oil fields with a total investment of around \$4 billion.

“From our perspective, the figure can and must go up,” he stressed.

Paknejad further underlined Tehran and Moscow’s agreement to step up cooperation in upstream oil development and said the two countries were eager to speed up the implementation of a memoranda of understanding with Russia’s energy giant Gazprom.

Back in June, Gazprom signed a 30-year deal with the National Iranian Gas Co. (NIGC) to transport Russian gas to Iran.

According to Paknejad, part of the long-term plan involves setting up a regional gas hub in Iran, potentially with the participation of Qatar and Turkmenistan.

Iran, which holds the world’s second-largest gas reserves after Russia, is aiming to play a pivotal role by receiving Russian gas and passing it on to neighboring countries, cementing its position as a regional energy hub.

At the close of the commission, Paknejad and Tsivilev inked a final document of bilateral agreements, though the specifics remain under wraps.

Core issues discussed included the Iranian gas hub, facilitating Russian gas exports to Iran, joint nuclear energy projects,



The photo shows a meeting of the Iranian-Russo economic cooperation commission in Moscow, Russia on April 25, 2025.  
● SHANA

expansion of the North-South transport corridor, and easing financial, trade, and agricultural exchanges.

Commenting on the current trade volume, Paknejad noted that Iran and Russia conducted around \$5 billion in trade annually, but he argued that “the potential for economic interaction is far beyond the current figure,

and a serious leap is required.”

Tsivilev described Iran as “a reliable partner” and noted that bilateral trade volume had risen 16.2% in 2024, hitting \$4.8 billion.

Both Iran and Russia remain under US sanctions targeting their oil and gas sectors.

In January, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and his

Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin signed a “Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty” covering political, security, trade, transport and energy cooperation.

Russia’s two legislative chambers have already ratified the agreement, with Putin issuing the decree for implementation.

However, Iran has yet to push

the bill through its own legislature.

Paknejad said the process was “in motion” and expressed confidence that the treaty would soon come into force.

He added that the ratification of the document by the Duma and Federation Council was “a clear sign of Russia’s determination to implement it.”

## Crafting national security ...

But what exactly is a National Security Strategy, and why is its formulation an undeniable necessity for Iran, particularly in the current climate? Generally, an NSS is a high-level document prepared and published by the highest levels of a country’s governance. It articulates vital national interests, the nation’s perception of its surrounding and global security environment, forthcoming threats and opportunities, overarching national goals in the short, medium, and long term, and finally, the strategies and instruments required to achieve those goals and counter threats. This document is not merely a political statement or a collection of aspirations; it is an effort to create a coherent intellectual framework capable of aligning and synergizing the actions of various state sectors – from diplomacy and economy to defense and culture – towards shared objectives. Its significance lies in fostering a common understanding of priorities, ensuring the optimal allocation of limited national resources, increasing predictability in policymaking, and strengthening national cohesion in the face of challenges.

Many countries worldwide, especially major powers and regional actors, recognize the importance of such a document and undertake its regular drafting and publication, albeit with varying degrees of transparency and detail. The United States serves as a prominent example. Since the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1986, the US executive branch has been mandated to submit an NSS to Congress annually, although publication

has occurred at different intervals in practice. Examining the evolution of US NSS documents from the Cold War era reveals how global transformations have shaped America’s strategic outlook: from Reagan’s focus on containing the Soviet Union, to Clinton’s strategy of “Engagement and Enlargement” of democracy, Bush Jr.’s prioritization of the “War on Terror” post-9/11, Obama’s “Rebalance” towards Asia, and finally, the explicit return to great power competition, particularly with China and Russia, under Trump and Biden.

Beyond the tactical and rhetorical differences of each administration, these documents serve multiple functions: articulating goals and priorities for Congress, the domestic public, and foreign allies; fostering alignment and coordination within the vast security and defense bureaucracy; and sending strategic signals to rivals and adversaries. The publication of an unclassified version, while not revealing all operational details or covert strategies, acts as a powerful communication tool, demonstrating an effort towards (albeit controlled) transparency and accountability within the political system.

This brings us to a critical question: Why does Iran, despite the valuable experiences of the past four decades and its position in one of the world’s most complex regions, still lack a codified and published National Security Strategy document? Studies conducted by this author and other domestic researchers, such as an article by Dr. Amir Mohammad Haji Yousefi and Ali Bagheri reviewing the state of

research on drafting an NSS for Iran, clearly indicate that despite scattered studies and a shared sense of need among academic and some political elites, our country remains without an official, comprehensive document in this domain. This research identifies key obstacles: the absence of a specific, designated institution responsible for drafting the NSS; the persistent gap between theory and practice (academia and policymaking); the prevalence of short-term focus and a lack of long-term vision among policymakers; and the complexities arising from discursive plurality within the country’s political sphere. The consequence is often the adoption of reactive approaches instead of proactive engagement, an imbalance in resource allocation, and difficulty in building a sustainable national consensus on overarching security and national priorities – evidenced, for instance, by the political tensions coinciding with the recent round of nuclear negotiations with the US in Muscat.

Iran’s entry into the “Second Phase of the Revolution” and its confrontation with new domestic, regional, and international environments make overcoming this situation and drafting a strategic document doubly necessary.

- Domestically, the need for greater institutional coherence, a focus on developmental priorities aligned with security requirements, and responsiveness to the demands of a new generation necessitates the definition of a shared and transparent security vision – one that all political actors, regardless of common political

factionalism, feel bound to adhere to as a national covenant.

- Regionally, rapid developments in neighboring countries, increasing rivalries, and the emergence of new threats (such as Takfiri terrorism, environmental crises, and proxy wars) demand a coherent strategy to manage threats and leverage opportunities.
- Internationally, the shifting focus of great powers, the redefinition of alliances, and the growing importance of new competitive domains (like cyberspace and artificial intelligence) compel Iran to clearly define its position and role in the emerging order and adopt commensurate strategies.

An NSS document can be an effective tool for achieving these goals. By precisely defining national interests (ranging from survival and territorial integrity to economic prosperity and the export of revolutionary values), identifying and prioritizing threats (military, economic, cultural, social, environmental), and setting achievable objectives, it acts like an unwritten “social contract” between the state and the nation, charting the country’s course for years to come.

Of course, drafting such a document is not without challenges. The dynamic nature of threats, the need to maintain confidentiality at certain levels, and the difficulty of building consensus among diverse domestic political viewpoints are significant hurdles. However, these challenges should not impede progress towards this strategic goal. A specific and inclusive mechanism can be established, potentially centered around a high-level decision-making body like the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), utiliz-

ing the expert capacities of research centers, think tanks, universities, and executive and military institutions to initiate the drafting process. The public release of an unclassified version of this document could significantly contribute to increasing public awareness, strengthening the sense of national participation, and sending clear messages to foreign actors.

As the experience of other countries demonstrates, grand strategies are not necessarily hidden in intricate details but lie in the clarity of vision, internal coherence, and the national will to achieve them.

It is also crucial to acknowledge the criticisms regarding the completeness or “realism” of published NSS documents from countries like the US – that they might not reveal all behind-the-scenes realities. However, such concerns do not negate the fundamental necessity and benefit of drafting and publishing such a document for Iran. Instead, acknowledging these limitations, we should strive to draft a document that is simultaneously realistic, inspiring, and instrumental in maximally securing our national interests.

Considering the points discussed, drafting a National Security Strategy document for Iran today is not merely an option but a strategic imperative. Far beyond being an administrative task or a political gesture, it is a vital tool for successfully navigating the challenging path ahead, achieving the lofty goals of the Second Phase of the Revolution, and ensuring the security, progress, and dignity of Islamic Iran in the new century.



## Three proposals to attract oil giants

# Reform, revision, diplomacy



By Seyyed Mehdi Hosseini  
Former deputy of Iran's oil minister

### OPINION

Domestic resources alone cannot meet the developmental needs of Iran's oil industry. Reforming the decision-making structure, revising contractual models, and returning intelligently to diplomatic engagement could pave the way for major global oil companies to enter Iran's oil industry.

Iran's current oil recovery rate stands at around 25%, while oil-rich countries like Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Norway, relying on technology and sustained investment, have pushed their recovery rates to 45–50%. Meanwhile, more than two-thirds of Iran's oil remains underground. Iran's economy remains oil-dependent, and without developing the oil industry, economic transformation cannot be expected. Increasing the recovery rate is not a choice but a strategic necessity for generating national wealth and maintaining Iran's position in the global energy market.

### Investment missing link in oil development

The lack of capital is the most critical challenge for the oil industry. For each barrel of oil produced, targeted investment is needed depending on the field type (exploratory or developed). Developed fields like Ahvaz, Marun, and Aghajari, which require modernization and advanced technology, should be prioritized for investment, and it seems these fields need stronger financial and contractual incentives. This is despite the fact that exploratory or semi-developed (Greenfield) projects better attract investor companies due to their higher appeal and lower investment requirements.

Due to sanctions, Iran now depends on domestic capital, but these resources are limited and must be properly managed. I propose three solutions to overcome the challenge of limited domestic resources: involving petrochemical companies, mobilizing public capital, and supporting non-oil domestic investors. Petrochemical companies need gas for a stable feedstock supply. The government can encourage them

to invest in upstream projects by guaranteeing stable gas supply from funded projects.

### Supporting non-oil domestic investors

Given the declining public trust in the stock market, issuing highly liquid oil-backed bonds with fixed returns could be a suitable solution. However, public participation will not be possible without addressing concerns over returns and capital security. Supporting non-oil domestic investors would be another way to attract resources. These investors can enter the oil market through tax and legal incentives, provided contractual models offer adequate returns and risk coverage. Domestic resources alone cannot meet the oil industry's developmental needs. I call to return to international financing tools, including bank financing. Foreign banks finance downstream sectors like refineries and petrochemicals, but more attractive conditions must be set up for upstream projects.

### Oil giants in line for investment

We have to be cautiously opti-

mistic about ongoing negotiations. Even during sanctions, Iran succeeded in attracting tens of billions of dollars in investment. During the JCPOA era, US companies stepped forward to invest in Iran's oil sector because production costs in the US (shale, Alaska, and the Gulf of Mexico) were high, making Iran a highly economical option for them.

At a London conference, ExxonMobil's CEO reacted to my speech on the Soroush and Nowruz contracts by stating, "Any deal Iran signs is another nail in the coffin of sanctions." Major companies like Shell, Total, INPEX, and other international oil firms are interested in Iran's oil industry. Americans possess cutting-edge technology and are keen to invest in Iran's oil.

### Need for transparency in showcasing opportunities

The slow decision-making in institutions like the Economic Council and the Planning and Budget Organization are key factors in reducing Iran's appeal to investors. Oil projects must be transparently and measurably introduced to the market so investors know the

scale of investment. For example, in the past, we defined 22 exploratory projects with a daily production capacity of 1.6 million barrels of oil and 1.8 billion cubic feet of gas; Announcing the required investment helped officials and the public better grasp the scale of economic transformation needed.

The simultaneous holding of the Strategic Transformation in Iran's Upstream Oil and Gas Sector event with the resumption of international negotiations is a strategic opportunity. A cross-sectoral team comprising experts from the oil, foreign affairs, and defense ministries as well as the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) must join the foreign ministry in negotiations to safeguard national interests through effective economic agreements. Even under sanctions, countries like Japan signed billion-dollar deals with Iran. Thus, if the right diplomatic environment is set up, major international companies will come back to Iran's oil market.

The article first appeared in Persian on SHANA.



Even during sanctions, Iran succeeded in attracting tens of billions of dollars in investment. During the JCPOA era, US companies stepped forward to invest in Iran's oil sector because production costs in the US (shale, Alaska, and the Gulf of Mexico) were high, making Iran a highly economical option for them. At a London conference, ExxonMobil's CEO reacted to my speech on the Soroush and Nowruz contracts by stating, "Any deal Iran signs is another nail in the coffin of sanctions."





# \$30–40B investment can raise oil output to 5.3mb/d

  
**By Hamid Hosseini**  
Energy expert  
**OPINION**

You won't find any industry in Iran's economy that generates as much added value as oil sector investments. This very fact puts greater responsibility on the Oil Ministry as it must draw up and carry out attractive contracts to speed up and facilitate domestic and foreign investment, even from institutions and organizations. Sometimes, very high figures are mentioned for required investments in this sector. For instance, some officials talk about the need for \$200–300 billion in investment, while our current oil and gas industry lacks the absorption capacity for such sums — unless there's a breakthrough in Iran's foreign relations, allowing capital, technology, and technical know-how to flow in, and major oil companies step in to operate in Iran.

If we want to ramp up oil production capacity to 5.3 million barrels per day, for every additional barrel in onshore fields, at least \$10,000–15,000 is needed, while offshore fields require \$25,000–35,000 per barrel.

Iran's current oil production capacity stands at around 3.6 million barrels per day. If we aim to push up production by about 1.5 million barrels, we'll need roughly \$30–40 billion in investment. Attracting around \$10 billion annually in sanctions-hit conditions would be a major achievement — whereas, in recent years, oil sector investments have been drying up. In past years, apart from



● MEED

the National Iranian Oil Company's 14.5% share of oil revenues, a few IPC contracts, and minimal bank investments, no other funding has come into the oil and gas sector. We have to engage with the global economy. The JCPOA brought 16% economic growth, while Trump's withdrawal cut back growth by 14%. While upstream investments are highly valuable, Iran has poured most resources into downstream projects to curb crude sales. For example, under Mr. Zanganeh, the former Oil Minister, we focused on gas refineries — yet due to low domestic gas prices, added value in this sector remains limited.

Unfortunately, oil bonds were not allowed to go through. Some feared that selling these bonds would spin off part of the NIOC. This excuse snuffed out even the faint hope of private sector involvement. By issuing oil bonds, we could have easily brought in public funds, channeled them into oil investments, and paid back investors in dollars. This would not only have secured funding but also kept liquidity away from unproductive markets, curbing inflation. If we want the private sector to step into oil and gas investments, we must bring about major policy shifts. With outdated, government-dominated approaches, no real

progress will happen.

How much can oil production grow? Increasing output to 4.3 million barrels is essentially bringing back lost capacity. But pushing it further to 5.3 million is far tougher. My question is: If we struggle to secure funds just to restore production, how will we come up with resources for expansion? If we invest \$15,000 per additional barrel and sell oil at \$60, the investment pays for itself in 250 days. Can you find any other industry with a sub-one-year return? Saudi Arabia reached its status by boosting production from

4 to 10 million barrels. Russia grew powerful by scaling up from 3.5 to over 10 million barrels. The US cut its reliance on the Persian Gulf by ramping up output from 4 to 14 million barrels — even with costly shale oil, which still paved the way for economic growth.

*The article first appeared in Persian on Tahlil Bazaar.*



● ECONOMIST

## Future of Iran's oil industry hinges on Oman talks



● SERGEYCO/SHUTTERSTOCK

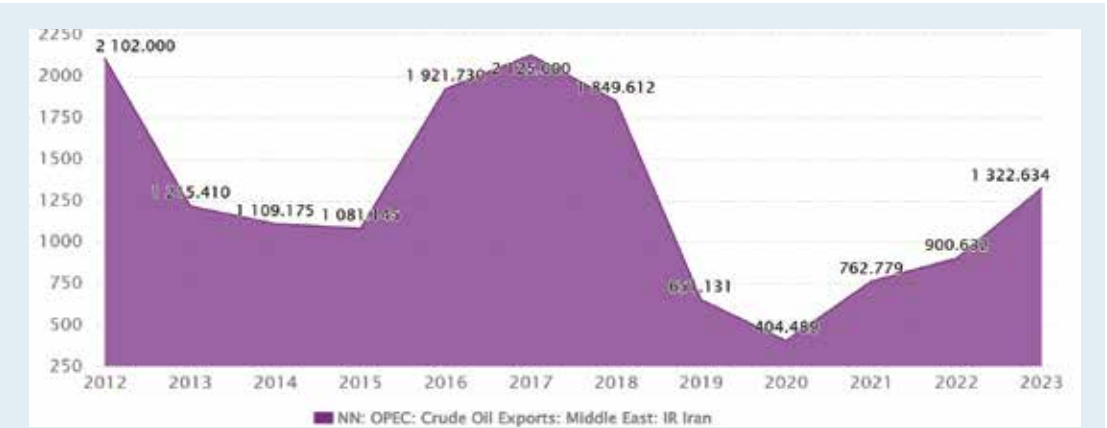
  
**By Mirghasem Momeni**  
Energy expert  
**OPINION**

Sanctions pose a serious obstacle to oil and gas exports and production. Currently, to optimize our oil wells, we need foreign technology and investment — which we lack access to. We are forced to procure goods and parts by circumventing sanctions or through countries that don't meet quality standards. The structure of our oil wells is highly complex because American and European companies previously invested in and developed them. Naturally, this has created a degree of dependency on their advanced technology. If other companies step in, the entire foundation must be

overhauled, requiring significant time and cost. Thus, our situation has become extremely difficult. Following Donald Trump's recent plan to zero out Iran's oil exports, it appears even small Chinese refineries are proceeding more cautiously — or may end up halting — oil imports from Iran. Some ports may also be pressured to reconsider accepting sanctioned tankers. Under these sanctions and given Trump's policies to tighten restrictions, our export challenges have doubled. The push to eliminate our oil exports extends to technology and oil industries as well. If we can't export oil, foreign currency earnings will suffer. Since oil exports are tied to the national budget, livelihoods, and governance, Trump is leveraging this as a bargaining chip to extract concessions from Iran.

The question now is how much progress will be made in negotiations regarding Trump's preconditions and the Islamic Republic's demands. We must see how seriously both sides are about reaching an agreement. Regardless, continued sanctions do not benefit us — our economy has already been weakened by decades of sanctions. If we can't export oil, securing essential imports will become difficult, and non-oil industries will also face instability and crisis. Due to FATF and SWIFT issues, we're also struggling to access blocked funds. So, as long as sanctions persist, even the minimal oil exports achieved by circumventing restrictions won't resolve our problems.

*The article first appeared in Persian on ILNA.*



The chart shows Iran's yearly crude oil exports between 2012 and 2023.  
● CEICDATA.COM



# Iranians collect 13 medals at WT President's Cup

## Sports Desk

The 7th World Taekwondo President's Cup in the Asian Region saw Iranians bag 13 medals – including four golds – in Tai'an, China.

Mohammad-Hossein Yazdani, and Amir-Sina Bakhtiari walked away with the ultimate prize of their respective classes in the men's event.

In the women's draw, Saeideh Nasiri grabbed the -46kg gold, while Olympic bronze medalist Mobina Ne'matzadeh came out on top against South Korean Seo Yeo-won in the final showpiece of the -53kg event. Ne'matzadeh's biggest victory perhaps came in the quarterfinals, where she defeated fellow-Iranian Nahid Kiani – a silver medalist at the Paris Olympics – in straight rounds. This was a second victory for Ne'matzadeh over her compatriot – following last December's showdown in the Iranian Premier League – in what will likely be a domestic rivalry for a place at the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics. Elsewhere in Tai'an, Yazdani came out victorious against

Uzbekistan's Shujrat Salaev 2-0 in the men's -87kg event. Mehran Barkhordari – also a Paris Olympic silver winner – was the other Iranian representative in the weight class, but his campaign came to an end after a first-round setback against Nurlan Myrzabayev of Kazakhstan. Bakhtiari, meanwhile, overcame Amirreza Sadeqian in an all-Iranian final to win the -74kg gold. Saghar Moradi (-67kg), and Mahla Mo'menzadeh (-49kg) were the Iranian bronze medalists in the women's competitions, with Ali Ahmadi (-87kg), Said Fat'hi (+87kg), Abolfazl Zandi (-58kg), and Mohammad-Hassan Palangafkan (-68kg), plus Mahdi Razmian and Barbod Jabbari in the -54kg event, also settling for third-place finishes across different men's categories.



Iran's Mobina Ne'matzadeh (blue), pictured in last year's Paris Olympics, won the women's -53kg gold medal at the World Taekwondo President's Cup – Asian Region in in Tai'an, China.

● WORLD TAEKWONDO



## Women's Team Melli set for new era under Ja'fari



● PAYAM SANI/IRNA

## Sports Desk

Iranian women's national football team will embark on a new era under Marziyeh Ja'fari, who was appointed as the Team Melli head coach on Wednesday.

Ja'fari took over from Maryam Azmoun after a dreadful run of results saw Iran fail to win a single game in 12 outings across different competitions – suffering eight defeats, while finding the back of the net only twice in the process.

Ja'fari will be looking to build on a decorated career in the Iranian club football to turn the national team's fortune around.

The 42-year-old is the most decorated coach in the Iranian Women's Pro League with a remarkable 11 titles

on Bam Khatoun's bench. She also led her team to an impressive last-eight spot at the inaugural AFC Women's Champions League in March, before Khatoun suffered a 1-0 loss to South Korea's Incheon Red Angels in March.

A first major test for Ja'fari will come in the AFC Women's Asian Cup qualifiers – starting June 23 in Amman, Jordan – where Iran is drawn in Group A, alongside the host, Lebanon, Singapore, and Bhutan.

Iran will begin its qualification campaign against Singapore on June 26, before taking on Bhutan, Lebanon, and Jordan, respectively, until July 5.

Only one team from the group will progress to the 2026 finals in Australia.

## Iranian Basketball Super League:

## Naft beats Tabiat 82-70 to stay in last-four mix

## Sports Desk

Palayesh Naft Abadan defeated Tabiat Eslamshahr 82-70 at home on Thursday in Game 3 of the Iranian Basketball Super League semifinals.

Hossein Makarian chipped in a game-high 22 points, plus four rebounds, and seven assists, while veteran center Hamed Haddadi contributed with seven points, 17 rebounds, and four assists – registering an efficiency of 21 – for the home side, as Naft cut the deficit to 2-1 in the best-of-

five series.

American point-guard Perry Petty top-scored for the visiting side with 16 points, with Arman Zanganeh finishing on 10 points and nine rebounds.

Tabiat had come out victorious by a 79-73 scoreline in Game 1 last Saturday, before winning Monday's encounter 80-78 in Tehran, and can still secure a place in the Finals when the two sides meet again in Abadan today.

Another win for Naft will force a decisive Game 5 in Tehran on Tuesday.



● IRNA

## French star Ngapeth joins Foolad ahead of Asian Champions League

## Sports Desk

French star Earvin Ngapeth joined Foolad Sirjan ahead of the Iranian champion's upcoming campaign at the AVC Men's Volleyball Champions League – starting May 11 in the Japanese cities of Hirakata and Kyoto.

Widely regarded as the best player in the sport in recent years, Ngapeth, 34, played an essential part in his country's Olympic gold-winning run on home soil last year, picking up the event's Most Valuable Player prize.

Ngapeth is Foolad's second marquee signing ahead of its bid for a third Asian title, after Shadab Yazd's Cuban middle-blocker signed for the club to fill in for injured Seyyed Mohammad Mousavi.

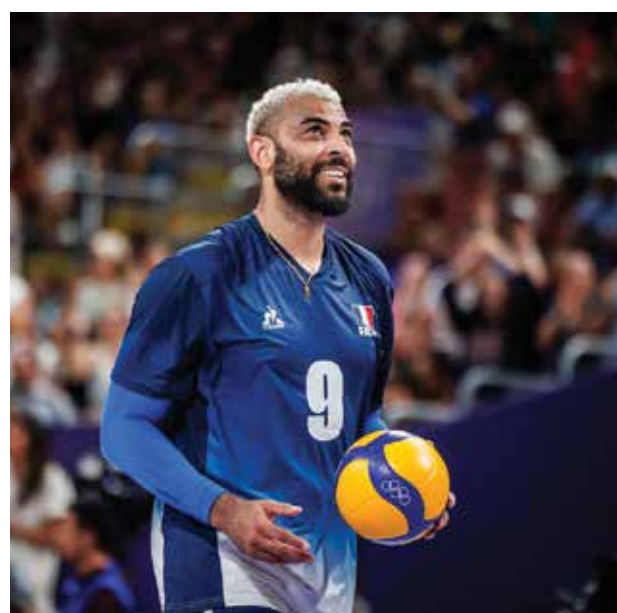
Frenchman Trévor Clévenot, who was named the joint best out-

side-hitter alongside Ngapeth at the Paris Olympics, is also set to sign for Foolad on a short-term contract in the coming days.

Fresh from a second successive crown at the Iranian Premier League, Foolad will fancy a comfortable run in Pool C of the Asian Champions League – also featuring Chinese Taipei's Taichung Bank and Nakhon Ratchasima QminC of Thailand.

Heading to Japan as the defending champion, Ataei's men will begin their campaign against the Thai club on the opening day of the competition, before taking on Taichung Bank two days later.

A top two finish in the pool will send Foolad into the quarterfinals, where a much tougher test against home-favorite Osaka Bluteon or Chinese club Shanghai Bright awaits the Iranian powerhouse.



● FIVB



# Explore enchanting fritillaries of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province

Iranica Desk

In the four seasons of nature in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, the fritillaries bloom stunningly on the mountain slopes, enchanting visitors amidst the beauty of the environment. As the warm areas of the province gradually take on a summery hue, spring in the foothills and the pristine natural beauty of the cold regions emerge, with the peak of this beauty particularly evident in the plains where fritillaries thrive, especially in the Kakan district of Boyer-Ahmad.

Strolling through the lush plains, surrounded by hundreds of fritillaries rising from the earth under an expanse of blue sky and delightful spring air, while nightingales joyfully sing, offers visitors a sweet experience. According to tourism experts in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, approximately 2,000 hectares serve as the habitat for these fritillaries in the province, chtn.ir wrote.

These flowers grow to a height of 100 to 120 centimeters and are bulbous, herbaceous plants belonging to the lily family. Globally, there are between 120 to 140 species of fritillaries, classified into eight subgenera, making them quite rare. In Iran, fourteen or fifteen species have been identified.

Fritillaries thrive in high altitudes and mountainous, rocky areas, leading to the belief that this flower symbolizes resilience and endurance in cold climates. Furthermore, in ancient Iran, images of this flower were often depicted alongside the Tree of Life and next to kings, suggesting that fritillaries served as symbols of immortality during that era.

The fritillary plain in Yasuj is among the most stunning tourist attractions in Kohgiluyeh



● sobhezagros.ir



and Boyer-Ahmad Province. This breathtaking plain, located in the Kakan district of Boyer-Ahmad, becomes vibrant with colorful wildflowers each spring. It is situated approximately 40 kilometers from Yasuj, the center of the province and the capital of Boyer-Ahmad County.

Another significant habitat for fritillaries in the province is the Raq Plain, located on the

border between Choram and Boyer-Ahmad. Covering over 100,000 hectares, this lush and dreamlike area not only supports various plants but is also considered one of the most breathtaking displays of fritillaries in the region.

An official from the Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province highlighted the color-

ful displays of fritillary plains across various regions and urged tourists to take care of these beautiful flowers.

Soleiman Mohammadi noted that while fritillaries in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province are not currently classified as endangered, they face threats due to the negligence of some tourists and certain nomadic herders, which could jeopardize the survival of this

valuable species.

He expressed concern about the excessive picking of wild fritillaries by tourists for planting in home gardens or keeping in pots, emphasizing that although these plants may remain green for a few days, they quickly wilt afterward. Mohammadi also pointed out that part of the valuable fritillary population is lost due to early migrations of nomadic herders to summer

pastures, as the passing livestock can severely damage the flowers. He urged residents of nomadic areas to ensure that their livestock do not harm the wildflowers.

Moreover, he stressed the importance of raising cultural awareness, particularly through radio and television, mass media, non-governmental organizations, and collaboration with other agencies, to combat the uprooting and sale of rangeland plants.

Currently, the plains filled with fritillary flowers have become a gem among the natural attractions of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province. However, as tourists enjoy this natural heritage, they must also strive to preserve it. Human interference and increasing destruction of natural areas have adversely affected fritillary growth across various regions, raising concerns about the potential classification of this beautiful and vibrant flower as endangered.

With the overharvesting of various medicinal and edible rangeland plants in the province leading to their designation as endangered, there is now fear that fritillaries may join this group. Thus, it is essential for tourists visiting the fritillary plains in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province to be mere observers of the beauty of nature and to refrain from picking the flowers.

Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province encompasses 512,000 hectares of non-forest rangeland, with over 300,000 hectares of national land covered by rangeland vegetation. Covering an area of approximately 16,000 square kilometers, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province is located between the provinces of Fars, Bushehr, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Isfahan, and Khuzestan.

## Dehloran's heritage revealing signs of ancient civilization

Iranica Desk

A faculty member of Islamic Azad University of Ilam stated that Dehloran, as one of the important regions in western Iran, has been inhabited since prehistoric times and holds signs of civilization within it.

Habibollah Mahmoudian, in an interview with ISNA, explained that the pre-civilization era of Elam is known as the Proto-Elamite period, which has left numerous artifacts

in Dehloran. Excavations conducted in this region indicate that humans lived in Dehloran about 8,000 BCE and domesticated animals such as sheep and goats to ensure a reliable food source.

He noted that during this period, Dehloran was recognized as one of the cultural and economic centers. This era coincided with the Ali Kosh Hill period, which is famously known as the pre-pottery phase. The ruins of the ancient Ali Kosh

Hill were inhabited before the invention of pottery (around 8000 BCE).

Mahmoudian elaborated that archaeological findings show humans managed to cultivate plant seeds such as barley, lentils, mung beans, flax, wheat, and barley in Dehloran from 5,500 to 7,500 BCE. They established the first village and settlement and engaged in livestock farming.

He stated that these developments are confirmed

based on evidence obtained from archaeological excavations, such as those conducted by Frank Hole and Kent Flannery in 1961 on the Ali Kosh Hill, Chogha Sefid Hill, and other ancient areas of this region.

He added that archaeological findings indicate that humans succeeded in creating the first village and settlement in Dehloran between 5,500 and 7,500 BCE. These villages reflect significant transforma-

tions in architecture and the social organization of people during that period.

Mahmoudian stated that Dehloran, as one of the key areas in prehistoric times, played an important role in the development of agriculture, livestock farming, and early architecture.

This region, with its rich archaeological sites, stands as evidence of ancient civilizations and human advancements in prehistoric times.

Dehloran, the largest city in Ilam Province, is situ-

ated in the southwestern part of the province and boasts a rich historical background.

This city shares the longest border between Ilam Province and Iraq, making it the most populated city after the provincial capital. The city's main population comprises Lurs and Kurds, with a smaller presence of Laks and Arabs. The primary languages spoken are Lori and Kurdish, and the dominant religion is Shia Islam.

Spanning more than one-third of the province's area, Dehloran is located 230 kilometers from Ilam, nestled between the cities of Mehran, Malekshahi, and Abadan, and borders Iraq to the south and west.

As one of the tropical cities in western Iran, Dehloran experiences very hot weather during the summer and late spring. However, in winter and late March, the climate becomes pleasant, attracting tourists and travelers.



Dehloran  
● nody.ir



Chogha Sefid Hill  
● salameno.com



Ali Kosh Hill  
● tamadonema.ir



## Asia Cultural Cooperation Forum

# Iran proposes 2026 as 'cultural year' with China amid deepening ties

Pakistan sees Persian as part of its cultural identity, says Iranian minister



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran proposed designating 2026 as the "Cultural Year of Iran and China" and emphasized the centrality of Persian in Pakistan's heritage during



separate meetings at the Asia Cultural Cooperation Forum, underscoring Tehran's push to expand cultural diplomacy with key Asian partners. In Hong Kong, Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi met with China's Vice Minister of Culture Gao Zheng, where he proposed designating 2026 as the "Cultural Year of Iran and China." The project, Salehi said, would be a "unique opportunity" to launch joint programs in arts, tourism,

and cultural heritage between the two countries, whose ties stretch back centuries, IRNA reported. "Iran and China are civilizations with deep roots," Salehi said, referencing the historical Silk Road and a 25-year comprehensive cooperation agreement signed during President Xi Jinping's 2016 visit to Tehran as milestones in their evolving relationship.

Gao welcomed the proposal, noting that 2026 will also mark 55 years of diplomatic relations. "We fully support expanding cultural and tourism exchanges," he said, calling for "effective, goal-oriented cooperation" and inviting Iran to participate in two major Chinese cultural events later this year — the Beijing Tourism Festival in July and the Global Travel Expo.

Both officials stressed the importance of shared traditions in painting, folklore, storytelling, and music, and agreed to form a joint committee of deputy ministers to begin preparations for the proposed cultural year.

Meanwhile in Islamabad, Salehi also met with Pakistan's Minister of Heritage and Culture, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi, where he emphasized the importance of Persian not only as a second language in

Pakistan but as "part of the cultural identity" of its people.

"Civilizational bonds between Iran and Pakistan offer rich ground for cultural cooperation," Salehi said, calling for joint artistic productions, shared exhibitions, and more Iranian participation in regional festivals.

While acknowledging the large number of Pakistani pilgrims visiting Iran, he pointed to the "low visibility" of Pakistan in Iranian travel culture, urging stronger efforts to promote its attractions. Khichi responded warmly, calling Iran a "brotherly nation" and proposing collaborative documentary projects to explore the two countries' deep historical and religious ties. "We have far more in common with Iran than with many of our neighbors," he said. "It's time to put those shared roots to work."

He also advocated for easing visa processes for Pakistani travelers and invited Iran to participate in Pakistan's cultural festivals.

The Asia Cultural Cooperation Forum, held April 21–22, brought together senior cultural officials from 18 countries to discuss regional identity, heritage cooperation, and creative exchange in Asia.

## Russian filmmaker hails Iranian cinema, extols Majidi's global stature

Arts & Culture Desk

Russian director Nikita Mikhalkov praised Iranian cinema, calling Majid Majidi "one of the best filmmakers in the world."

The veteran filmmaker said that the "one-sided structure" of Western media had long overshadowed talents like Majidi, IRNA reported.

Mikhalkov, head of the Moscow International Film Festival and a former winner at Iran's Fajr International Film Festival,

made the remarks during a meeting with Raed Faridzadeh, Iran's Deputy Minister of Culture and head of its Cinema Organization.

Speaking at the Russian Cultural Foundation, Mikhalkov said that one of the key goals of the newly launched Eurasia Academy of Cinematic Sciences is to embrace diverse cinematic voices—including Iran's.

He noted that while Iranian cinema operates on tighter budgets compared to Hollywood, it stands out for its "hu-

man depth" and "emotional clarity."

"Money isn't always the issue," he said, referring to Majidi's work. "He has shown that even with limited resources, one can create extraordinary films." Mikhalkov also praised Majidi's large-scale project 'Muhammad: The Messenger of God,' calling it "exceptionally executed."

Faridzadeh, in turn, welcomed Mikhalkov's initiative and highlighted Iran and Russia's long-standing cultural ties.

He expressed hope that the two countries would soon roll out joint film productions, describing Eurasia's film academy as "a step in the right direction."

During the meeting, Iran proposed strategies to enhance the academy's regional role—proposals Mikhalkov reportedly received warmly.

He also expressed interest in visiting Iran to explore collaborative opportunities first-hand. The Eurasia Academy, backed by Russia's Ministry of Culture, officially launched on April 21,



with delegates from 22 countries attending its opening ceremony in Moscow. It aims to

serve as a platform for regional cooperation and cinematic exchange across Eurasia.

## Farhadi's tenth film 'Parallel Tales' to begin shooting in Paris

Arts & Culture Desk

Two-time Oscar-winning director Asghar Farhadi will start filming his latest feature, 'Parallel Tales,' in Paris this September. The project, his tenth film, boasts a high-profile French cast and marks a return to international co-production for the Iranian filmmaker.

Starring Isabelle Huppert, Vincent Cassel, Virginie Efira, Pierre Niney, and Adam Bessa, the ensemble is also joined by screen icon Catherine Deneuve. The film is a joint production between companies in France, the US, Italy, and Belgium, ISNA reported.

With a budget of €12 million (\$12.8 million), production is scheduled to wrap by late November.

Farhadi will produce alongside Alexandre Mallet-Guy and David Levine. Mallet-Guy, of Memento Production,

has collaborated with Farhadi since 'The Past' and originally distributed the director's earlier films, including 'About Elly' and 'A Separation,' in France.

Memento leads production in France, while Italy's Lucky Red, Belgium's Panache Productions and La Compagnie Cinématographique, and U.S.-based Anonymous Content round out the co-producing partners.

Known for prestige titles like 'Spotlight,' 'The Revenant,' and 'Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind,' Anonymous Content brings serious clout to the table. Its television credits include 'True Detective' and 'Mr. Robot.' Sales and rights will be launched at the Cannes Film Festival by Charades and UTA Independent Film Group. Charades will handle international sales, with UTA repping US rights. Memento will distribute the film in



France, where it's slated for a spring 2026 theatrical release.

While plot details are being kept under wraps, the title points to a multi-threaded narrative — a hallmark of Farhadi's work, known for "layered human relationships" and intense moral conflict.

Farhadi last premiered a film at Cannes in 2021 with 'A Hero,' which went on to win the Grand Prix. Expectations for 'Parallel Tales' are already running high.

## Tehran Int'l Book Fair gateway to affordable reading, cultural exchange

The Tehran International Book Fair is a key opportunity for easier public access to books, as the event gears up for its 36th edition, former Iranian lawmaker Ali Motahari has said.

Motahari described the annual fair as a "good opportunity" both for readers and publishers, pointing to its dual role in bringing books closer to the people and helping publishers showcase their work more effectively, IRNA reported.

"When publishers gather in one place," he said, it creates a rare chance for book lovers to find titles they've been searching for. The event typically offers "special discounts," making it more accessible financially.

Beyond book sales, Motahari highlighted the fair's broader cultural value. Alongside sales booths, the fair features side programs such as book reviews and discussions. These, he noted, offer a "cultural opportunity" for the public to engage more deeply with literature.



The 36th Tehran International Book Fair will run from May 7 to May 17, under the theme "Let's Read for Iran." The venue is the Imam Khomeini Mosalla, a major exhibition space in the capital.

The fair, one of the region's largest, has been a fixture on the country's cultural calendar since its launch in 1987. It draws hundreds of domestic and international publishers and typically sees over a million visitors each year.