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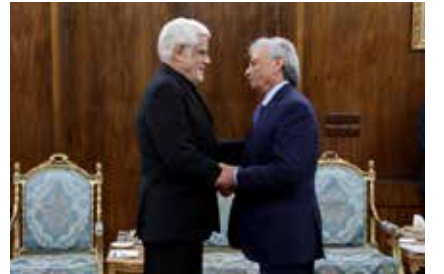
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Pezeshkian in Yerevan

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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian shakes hands with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan after a joint press conference in Yerevan, Armenia on August 19, 2025.
● president.ir

Iran's strategic position casts shadow over Trump Route

By Afifeh Abedi
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OPINION
EXCLUSIVE

The South Caucasus, due to its unique geography, natural resources, and proximity to three major players—Iran, Russia, and Turkey—holds outstanding geopolitical significance. This importance extends far beyond the region itself, directly shaping the way relations between actors are formed, whether through conflict or peace. Much of the historical disputes, as well as the countless plans for energy corridors and transit routes, can be traced back to the fact that the Caucasus lies at a crossroads linking Europe, Russia, Turkey, Iran, and Central Asia. For this reason, Iran has never lost sight of the South Caucasus. Yet in practice, it has not been able to fully

cash in on the potential benefits of the region. Several factors explain this shortfall. Efforts to align with Russia's policies and interests have sometimes curtailed Iran's room for independent maneuver. At other times, the involvement of extra-regional players with far greater financial and political clout has succeeded in luring regional states into their orbit. Meanwhile, Iran has been weighed down by sanctions, distracted by a host of foreign policy challenges, and largely absorbed by its security priorities in West Asia—all of which have diluted its influence in the Caucasus. Still, Iran has at least managed to keep the South Caucasus from becoming a direct source of threats to its national security. The greater concern, however, is that Tehran has failed to make the most of the region's opportunities, while its rivals have often turned even slight chances into big gains. [Page 2 >](#)



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Pezeshkian never says he inherited wreck: Experts

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