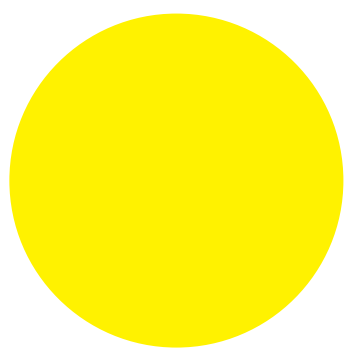


Stronger trade ties sought with Arab neighbors, says business figure



Iran poised to engage in 'fair, balanced' nuclear talks with US

Tehran sees 'no reason' to resume negotiations with E3

Two ministries step up cooperation to promote tourism
Cruise ship licensing to be eased to draw more visitors



Does Gaza truce offer diplomatic opening with Iran?

ANALYSIS



Iran's Choopan stands runner-up at Mr. Olympia 2025



Qeshm Island ushers in new tourism future through music



Hafez honored in Shiraz for timeless poetry Minister hails poet's global influence, as 'one of the world's top 20'



The photo shows a general view of a ceremony marking National Hafez Day (October 12) at the tomb of the renowned Iranian poet in the southwestern city of Shiraz on October 11, 2025.

Opposition to Abraham Accords behind Iran's absence from Egypt summit

INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE



US President Donald Trump has reportedly extended an invitation to Iran to attend the upcoming summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, where a "Gaza peace plan" is set to be signed. While neither Tehran nor Washington has made any official comment on the matter, Iranian media, citing informed sources, have reported that although the Islamic Republic cautiously welcomed the peace proposal, it has no plans to take part in the meeting. The summit, initiated by Trump and hosted by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, aims, according to a statement by Egypt's Foreign Ministry, to "end the war in Gaza, strengthen efforts to achieve peace, and open a new chapter of regional stability." However, the event will take place without the participation of Israel's prime minis-

ter, and regional media have reported that Hamas will also not be represented. To shed light on the motives behind the US invitation and Tehran's decision to stay away, Iran Daily spoke with Mansour Barati, a regional affairs analyst.

IRAN DAILY: Given reports that Iran does not intend to participate in the Sharm el-Sheikh summit, what factors are believed to have influenced this decision?

BARATI: In recent days, the US, during the final stages of negotiations leading to the peace plan, went out of its way to highlight Iran's role. Trump, at least twice during his press briefings, directly thanked Iran for not obstructing the talks, and even spoke about its positive role in the process. That was, in fact, a form of groundwork laid by Trump to draw Iran more closely into the initiative.

What is now being reported is that Iran was indeed invited — and declined to attend. It seems that participating in the Sharm el-Sheikh summit would fundamentally touch on Iran's long-standing policy toward the Isra-

el-Palestine conflict. Since there has been no clear indication of any shift in that policy, the likelihood of Iran accepting the invitation is assessed as very low, if not close to zero.

The Islamic Republic is among those parties in the conflict that reject the very existence of Israel. Across the Arab and Muslim world, countries can be roughly grouped into three categories regarding Israel:

The first includes those who fundamentally oppose Israel's existence and have enmity toward it as part of their official policy—Iran belongs to this camp.

The second group comprises those that officially recognize Israel but push back against its extremist policies and war crimes, advocate Palestinian rights, and support the creation of an independent Palestinian state.

The third includes countries that are largely indifferent to the Palestinian issue and simply look out for their own national interests — states that would continue ties with Israel even if no Palestinian state were ever established. The United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, which joined the "Abraham Accords," fall into

this category, as their normalization with Israel was not contingent upon the creation of a Palestinian state.

Given that no change is visible in Iran's position, it is highly unlikely Tehran would attend the Sharm el-Sheikh summit at a senior level. This remains a key consideration for Iranian officials, who prefer to stay in the camp rejecting Israel's legitimacy rather than drift into policy circles that accept its existence.

One major feature of this summit will be the expansion of the "Abraham Accords." For Iran, this is a red line. The ongoing war and the atrocities in Palestinian territories had long been a major obstacle to normalization between Israel and Arab or Muslim countries. Now that the war has halted, a major part of that barrier is gone — and the summit is expected to pave the way for Israel's deeper integration into the region.

The event will likely showcase the outlines of a Middle East where Israel is firmly embedded in the regional architecture. Iran's principled opposition to attending the summit stems precisely from this — its rejection of the "Abra-

ham Accords" and of any move to normalize ties with Israel.

What, then, is Trump's objective in inviting Iran, especially given that neither Hamas representatives nor the Israeli prime minister is attending? Is this an attempt to lend regional legitimacy to the peace plan?

The US president's decision to invite Iran could serve several purposes, chiefly to shore up the legitimacy of the agreement and the future roadmap it will set for Gaza and Palestine — as well as for decisions concerning Israel itself. By bringing more regional players to the table, Washington hopes to build up collective legitimacy for what emerges from the summit. Broader participation would mean decisions reached there carry more regional weight and face fewer obstacles down the line. As for Hamas's absence, one should note that under the terms of the peace arrangement Hamas itself has accepted, the group will not play a role in the future governance of Gaza or the broader Palestinian political structure.

Iran poised to engage in 'fair, balanced' nuclear talks with US

Tehran sees 'no reason' to resume negotiations with E3



National Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi reiterated that Tehran is ready to engage in nuclear negotiations if the United States

is prepared for a "fair and balanced dialogue," while saying that the Islamic Republic sees no grounds for negotiations with Europe. "Our position towards America has always

been clear; if they are ready to negotiate from an equal footing, to achieve common interests based on mutual respect, and if they do not mistake negotiation for dictation and are prepared for a fair and balanced dialogue, we too will be ready to engage in such negotiations," Araghchi said in a televised interview on Saturday. However, he said that due to the reimposition of international sanctions under pressure by the US and three European parties to the 2015 nuclear deal, Tehran does not see any basis to start new negotiations unless a proposal is presented that can secure Iran's interests. "In that case, we will definitely consider it," Araghchi said.

Confidence-building measures

The Islamic Republic, the official said, was ready, as in the past, to work towards confidence-building and ensuring transparency to prove the peaceful nature of its nuclear activities.

"Provided that, in return, they also build trust with us and lift the unjust sanctions they have imposed." Therefore, in order for fresh talks to take

place, the US should "not mistake negotiation for dictation" of its preferences, he added.

The Iranian top diplomat addressed US President Donald Trump's having tried to tie other issues with the issue of talks concerning Iran's nuclear energy program. He ruled out any connection between the two matters.

"We have always stated firmly that our negotiations are limited solely to the nuclear issue," Araghchi stated.

"Neither in the past nor recently have we ever, ever, held any talks with the Americans or any other party on any matter beyond the nuclear issue, especially as far as the resistance is concerned."

No talks with E3

Araghchi separately pointed to the issue of the European trio of the UK, France, and Germany's having proposed fresh talks with Iran.

He noted that the offer came, while the countries in question had triggered the so-called "snapback" mechanism inside the 2015 nuclear deal that has re-imposed

nuclear-related sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

"We do not see any grounds for negotiation with the Europeans," he said, reiterating Tehran's position that by triggering the mechanism, the Europe had lost its role in the nuclear issue.

"They should give us just one reason why we should negotiate with them again."

"What can they possibly do, and what positive outcome could such negotiations have?" The three European countries said on Friday that they will seek to restart stalled nuclear talks with Iran and the United States. "We are determined to reinstate negotiations with Iran and the United States towards a comprehensive, durable and verifiable agreement that ensures Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon," they said.

The European countries activated a so-called "snapback" mechanism of the 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran – a move that triggered the re-imposition of sanctions against Iran in September.

Since then, relations between Tehran and the three countries have hit a new low.

Deadly clashes unfold along Pakistan-Afghanistan border

Iran calls for restraint, immediate dialogue

International Desk

Intense fighting erupted along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border on Saturday night, after an attack by the Afghan Taliban on Pakistani military posts led to a heavy exchange of fire which has claimed the lives of dozens of soldiers from both sides.

According to officials, Afghan troops opened fire on Pakistani army posts along the north-western border with Pakistan and seized several of the posts. The attacks came after the Taliban accused Pakistan of carrying out airstrikes on Afghan territory, including in the capital, Kabul, earlier this week.

On Sunday, Pakistan responded with retaliatory strikes, gunfire and ground raids on Afghan Taliban posts along the border.

Pakistan's military said 23 of its troops and more than 200 Taliban and affiliated fighters on the Afghan side were killed in the clashes. It also closed border crossings with Afghanistan on Sunday, Pakistani officials said.

However, Taliban have released different figure from the casualties. Taliban said their forces killed 58 Pakistani soldiers but gave no details on how it knew of the casualty figures. It also said that 20 Afghan troops were killed or injured.



The clashes signal a new low in Afghan-Pakistan relations, which have become increasingly hostile amid claims that Afghanistan is giving a safe haven to terrorists carrying out an escalating number of deadly attacks on Pakistani soil.

The cross-border strikes came after two explosions were reported in the Afghan capital and another in south-eastern Afghanistan on Thursday. The Defense Ministry of the Taliban-ruled government in Afghanistan subsequently accused Pakistan of "violating its sovereignty" in connection with the attacks. Pakistan has neither denied nor confirmed carrying out the Kabul strike, only stating that it had carried out "a series of retribution operations."



Taliban security personnel arrive to patrol along a road in the Zazai Maidan district of Khost Province near the Pakistan border on October 12, 2025.

● AFP

Iran on Sunday reacted to the developments on its two eastern neighbors with the Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei expressing concern over the clashes. Baqaei emphasized the necessity of mutual respect for the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of both countries.

He also called for restraint and the immediate dialogue between the two parties to reduce tensions and resolve disputes through diplomacy.

Cease-fire lingering in Gaza ahead of Egypt's summit

International Desk

A cease-fire between Israel and Hamas held in Gaza for a third day on Sunday ahead of the expected release of Israeli captives and Palestinian prisoners and a summit in Egypt's Sharm El Sheikh resort city on ending the war in Gaza. Thousands of Palestinians continued to travel north towards Gaza City, the focus of Israeli attacks over the past two months, hoping the cease-fire would bring an end to the war that has killed more than 67,000 Palestinians so far.

Israeli cabinet official Shosh Bedrosian that Tel Aviv expected the captives to start being released early Monday morning with the 20 living captives to be released together. Their release is to be followed later by the handover of bodies of the remaining 28 deceased captives. Under the cease-fire agreement, Hamas is due by noon on Monday to release the remaining hostages, taken captive on October 7, 2023, when the group launched the surprise attack on the occupied territories.

Trump is due to arrive in Israel on Monday to address the Knesset, the Israeli parliament, before traveling to Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt for a world leaders' peace summit on ending the Gaza war. No Hamas or Israeli officials to attend Egypt peace summit. The United States, along with Egypt, Qatar and Turkey, mediated what has been described as a first phase agreement between Israel and Hamas for the cease-fire.

Iran welcomes cessation of genocide

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said



on Saturday that Iran welcomes cessation of the Israeli regime's genocide in the Gaza Strip, while advising serious caution in light of multiple instances of Tel Aviv's betrayal of previous agreements. "We have always supported any plan or initiative that would put an end to the crimes and genocide against the people of Gaza," he said, but cautioned, "There is absolutely no trust in the Zionist regime, and there have been multiple instances where it has violated ceasefires." The Israel Prison Service said it had transferred some Palestinian prisoners to other facilities ahead of their release. The Israeli ministry of justice has released the names of 250 Palestinians, convicted of murder and other serious crimes, who are to be freed under the deal. The list does not include senior Hamas commanders that the group had sought to free, or prominent figures from other factions such as Marwan Al-Barghouti or Ahmed Saadat. Israel is also to release 1,700 Palestinians who have been detained in Gaza since October 7, 2023 and 22 Palestinian minors, along with the bodies of 360 fighters.

Opposition to Abraham ...

At the same time, the Palestinian Authority — recognized internationally as the representative of the Palestinian people — is taking part in the summit. So, claims by some commentators that "the real representatives of the Palestinian people" are absent are unfounded. Representatives of the Palestinian political spectrum are present, including the PA, which administers the self-rule government and is officially acknowledged as speaking on behalf of the Palestinian nation.

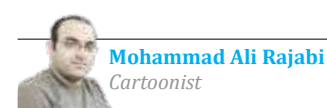
Considering the historically fraught relations between Iran and the United States, can this invitation be interpreted as a sign of a shift in Washington's approach toward Tehran — or just a

tactical move within the Gaza issue? Trump seems to view US-Iran relations in far simpler terms. There are different schools of thought on how to interpret the long-standing confrontation between Tehran and Washington. One holds that there is an essential contradiction between the two systems — meaning that no negotiation can truly alter the nature of their relationship, and any deal on paper will eventually collapse under ideological strain.

A second view argues that all disputes — over missiles, the nuclear issue, regional policies, and human rights — should be resolved in one go. Trump, to some extent, leaned toward this comprehensive approach. Democrats, by contrast, have long fa-

vored separating files: first resolve the nuclear issue, then move on to missiles or regional matters.

Trump's approach is somewhat hybrid — closer to the "all issues at once" stance, yet also notably pragmatic. He tends not to get bogged down in the history of hostilities and is keen to strike a deal that works in practical terms, much like the short, symbolic statement he signed with North Korea's Kim Jong Un during his first term. So yes, Iran's participation in such a summit — had it happened — would undoubtedly signal a change in the atmosphere of US-Iran relations. But it is too early to judge how far such a shift could go, even if Tehran had attended and fully agreed with the ideas put forward there.



Stronger trade ties sought with Arab neighbors, says business figure

High-level trilateral talks in Baku to boost North-South corridor

Economy Desk

Strengthening economic and trade relations between Iran and the Arab countries in the region is of great importance, a senior Iranian business official said on Sunday, as the Shiraz International Expo opened in southern Iran.

The Expo, which runs through October 14 at the Fars International Permanent Fairground, aims “to showcase Iran’s and Fars Province’s export capacities to neighboring and Persian Gulf countries,” said Payam Bagheri, the vice president of Iran’s Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture at the opening ceremony.

“The event highlights Iran’s long-standing economic, historical, and cultural ties with the regional countries,” Bagheri added, IRNA reported. He said exports serve as “a display of the Islamic Republic’s capabilities” to regional partners attending the exhibition.

Bagheri stressed that Iran has always prioritized good

neighborliness and constructive engagement with regional states. “Given our deep historical background, we expect Iran’s trade and international relations — particularly with Arab countries — to reach a higher level,” he said.

The businessman called for greater utilization of shared capacities and cooperation to promote regional sustainable development. “Iran is rich in investment opportunities and possesses considerable potential in various fields,” Bagheri noted, adding that Arab countries have consistently been among Iran’s key trading partners.

However, he said, both sides remain capable of expanding their economic cooperation even further. Achieving this goal requires “forums and events where businesspeople can get acquainted, learn about each other’s needs and capabilities, and develop specific strategies for deeper cooperation.”

Bagheri called for improved transport, logistics, and transit infrastructure between the countries.



Joint production for global value chains

Bagheri also underscored the importance of “joint production and investment” to integrate into global value chains, describing them as key pillars of expanding in-

ternational cooperation. “These strategies can help elevate the economic standing of Iran and its neighbors on the global stage,” he said, highlighting Fars Province’s significant export potential in agriculture, horticultural products, food industries,

oil, gas, petrochemicals, carpets, handicrafts, and tourism. He expressed hope that the Shiraz Expo would mark “the beginning of a new chapter in economic and cultural cooperation between Iran and regional countries.”

Two ministries step up cooperation to promote tourism

Cruise ship licensing to be eased to draw more visitors



Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadeq Malvajerd (L) speaks at a joint meeting with Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Reza Salehi Amiri on October 12, 2025.

Economy Desk

Iran’s Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadeq Malvajerd on Sunday emphasized the importance of closer cooperation with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts to promote tourism and preserve the country’s historical sites. She also

announced new plans to facilitate both domestic and international travel. Speaking at a joint meeting attended by officials from both ministries, Sadeq Malvajerd said the goal was “to enhance coordination and strengthen collaboration” with the tourism ministry, ILNA reported. “The missions of our two minis-

tries in the areas of historical urban fabric and tourism are defined jointly — we never view these two fields as separate,” she said.

Developing marine tourism

Sadeq Malvajerd told ILNA on the sidelines of the meeting that the process for issuing licenses for passenger cruise ships along Iran’s coasts would be simplified.

“We are doing our utmost to accelerate investor attraction and the launch of cruise lines, and to issue the necessary permits as quickly as possible,” she said.

She praised the efforts of Tourism Minister Reza Salehi Amiri, noting that his ministry has been “actively working to attract investors and establish cruise operations along the country’s shores.” Sadeq said her ministry would make every effort to expedite the approval process.

“With the good cooperation established so far, we hope to take great-

er steps in the near future to facilitate domestic and international tourism,” she added, stressing that joint efforts will not only simplify travel but also “unlock barriers” in related sectors, including transport and tourism infrastructure.

Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Reza Salehi Amiri, speaking separately to ILNA, said his ministry has prepared a five-year plan to increase tourist arrivals by 25 percent annually.

“Last year (began on March 21, 2024), 7.399 million tourists entered the country. We had planned for a 25 percent growth, and this was achieved in the first two months of this year (began on March 21, 2025),” he said.

“However, due to the [12-day Israeli-imposed] war, we experienced a sharp decline in the third month,” Salehi Amiri added. “Since September, we have been working to restore normal conditions and continue our growth path.”

Iran to raise gas output by 10 mcm/day via key field projects



Economy Desk

A senior official at the Iranian Central Oil Fields Company (ICOFC) announced on Sunday that the country had launched extensive plans to raise its daily natural gas production by 10 million cubic meters through the development of three major fields — Deir, Tous, and Khartang.

Malek Qanavati, head of engineering and construction at ICOFC, said the initiative aims to help offset the country’s current gas imbalance and ensure stable production flows across its operational regions, IRNA reported.

The development of the three gas fields “is at the core of this plan to add 10 million cubic meters per day to national output,” Qanavati said. “These fields have a much higher level of importance compared to others.”

He noted that developing independent gas fields has become one of the company’s key priorities. “Our planning is not limited to maintaining output from existing fields,” he said, adding that medium- and long-term strategic programs have been designed to both expand new fields and address the country’s gas supply imbalance.

The ICOFC, a subsidiary of the National Iranian Oil Company, is responsible for production and development across several onshore regions and plays a major role in sustaining Iran’s natural gas output.

Car imports rise amid domestic production fall in H1 calendar year

Economy Desk

Iran imported approximately 25,000 vehicles worth \$500 million in the first half of the Iranian calendar year (began on March 21), according to the latest data from the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), marking a noticeable upward trend compared with the same period last year.

In the first five months of the year, about 19,586 vehicles valued at \$432 million were imported, compared with 15,504 vehicles worth \$317 million during the same period last year, Tasnim reported.

The country has a large home-grown car industry, which is capable of responding to a growing domestic de-

mand for various vehicles. Iranian automotive companies produced 1.335 million vehicles in the calendar year to March 2024, making the country the 16th largest car producer in the world.

However, the government has introduced laws in recent months to ease restrictions on imports in a bid to lower prices and to create more competition in the market.

IRNA on Sunday, citing data from the Codal system, reported that domestic production by Iran’s three largest automakers — Iran Khodro, Saipa, and Pars Khodro — fell 12 percent in the first half of the year, resulting in 56,122 fewer vehicles compared with the same period last year.

Data from the system shows that from



March to September, the three companies produced a total of 404,461 vehicles, down from 460,763 units in the same period last year.

Does Gaza truce offer diplomatic opening with Iran?

ANALYSIS

The cease-fire in Gaza has turned into a watershed moment in the tense equations of the Middle East — a transformation that, on one hand, has rekindled hopes of dialing down the violence and bringing stability back to the region, and on the other, shaken up the political and security landscape. The Islamic Republic of Iran was among the first players to welcome the halt in fighting and the end of the Gaza genocide, while warning that true peace will only take root once the roots of occupation and racism are uprooted.

In a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on October 9, Iran reiterated its support for any initiative that brings about an end to the war, the withdrawal of occupying forces, the delivery of humanitarian aid, the release of prisoners, and the restoration of Palestinian rights. The statement also called on the international community to stay alert to the Zionist regime's deceit and bad faith — a call showing that Tehran, even while welcoming peace, remains wary of the shifting nature of Israel's policies and its Western backers.

A few days earlier, on October 5, the Iranian diplomatic apparatus again welcomed the end of hostilities in another statement, noting Israel's "repeated breaches and obstructionism" and asserting that any decisions about Gaza's future belong solely to its people and the Palestinian resistance. These stances underline Iran's consistent policy of backing the Resistance while also voicing support for political and diplomatic avenues to sort out the crisis.

As the cease-fire takes hold, Washington and Europe's major capitals have once again set their sights on Tehran's regional role. In Washington, US President Donald Trump made waves during a cabinet meeting on the Gaza cease-fire when he spoke about Iran, saying that Tehran seeks peace and that the United States is ready to work hand in hand with Iran to push for regional stability. While couched in positive language, his remarks soon drifted into familiar claims about Iran's nuclear program.

Trump asserted that if his administration had not attacked Iran, the country would now have "numerous nuclear weapons," yet he quickly backed up to talk about the possibility of cooperating on rebuilding Iran. This contradiction laid bare the second Trump administration's trademark duality — a mix of cautious engagement and continued pressure and threatening, now sharpened by Israel and America's recent military escalation.

Although it remains early to judge the durability of Gaza's cease-fire, multiple regional and international actors now seem keen to talk up the diplomacy option to head off renewed tensions in West Asia — especially regarding Iran's nuclear file.



● THE ATLANTIC

For instance, on Thursday, Russian President Vladimir Putin told the Second Russia–Central Asia Summit that "there is no reasonable alternative to negotiations" regarding the Iranian nuclear issue. He revealed that Moscow had received messages from Israel to convey to Tehran and added, "Israel is committed to further resolution and is not interested in any kind of confrontation." Such comments suggest that Russia is trying to step in as a mediator between Tehran and other players, preventing the escalation of unnecessary tensions.

Putin went on to say that Iran, too, has expressed willingness to stay the course of diplomacy, maintaining constant contact with Moscow to work out mutually acceptable solutions. As the region cools down after the cease-fire, this approach may pave the way for reviving technical talks with the International Atomic Energy Agency and rebuilding mutual trust between Iran and the West.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's renewed efforts at adventurism haven't gone unnoticed in Tehran, prompt-

ing Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araghchi to remind the US president — in a message posted on X — that in previous talks with Washington's envoy, a historic deal on a "zero nuclear weapons" formula had been within reach. He stressed that no document proves Iran ever sought nuclear weapons and warned that Israel, by cooking up imaginary threats, is only trying to drag Washington back into its old cycle of hostility toward Iran.

Araghchi also stated that the Iranian nation will never back down from its path of legitimate defense and deterrence, yet remains ready to team up with any pragmatic government that seeks understanding and mutual respect. He added that US public opinion has grown weary of Israel's endless wars, and that it's high time for US foreign policy to break free from that repetitive, destructive loop.

Despite these gestures, Europe continues to play a double game with Iran. In a joint statement, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, and British

Prime Minister Keir Starmer touched on issues ranging from Gaza's cease-fire to Iran's nuclear case and the Russia–Ukraine conflict. They welcomed the truce in Gaza, the release of captives, and the resumption of humanitarian aid deliveries. On the British government's website, they praised Donald Trump's role and the mediation efforts of Qatar, Egypt, and Turkey, stressing that "It is now of utmost importance that all parties implement their obligations in full and without delay."

The European trio also expressed readiness to pick up negotiations with Iran. In the same statement, while defending the snapback of international sanctions against the country as a "right" move, they claimed that Iran's nuclear program "poses a serious threat to global peace and security". They insisted, "We are determined to reinstate negotiations with Iran and the United States towards a comprehensive, durable, and verifiable agreement that ensures Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon." They urged all UN members to fall in line with the restrictions imposed by the

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Some experts believe that the end of the Gaza war could open the door to easing tensions across a region Israel has thrown into turmoil over the past two years. Still, other experts argue that the truce may shift the focus of Israel and the United States from the Palestinian front toward Iran. In such circumstances, Iran must keep a close eye on every security, political, and military development around it. Yet even so, a window for diplomacy has swung open.

reactivated sanctions mechanism.

Yet this statement, too, fell into the same old trap of inconsistency. The E3 branded Iran's nuclear activities a global threat, even though, despite Washington's exit from the JCPOA, renewed unilateral sanctions, and European inaction, Tehran has remained committed to its obligations under the NPT. Iran, in spite of the attacks on its nuclear sites by the US and Israel, had signed up for renewed cooperation with the IAEA under the Cairo Accord and had put forward several plans to bring about direct talks with America. The European troika, however, fell in step with Washington's "maximum pressure" policy, effectively undermining their own influence in any future deal-making process with Tehran.

In this vein, Iran's foreign minister said last week, responding to an IRNA question about future relations with Europe: "It has been proven that there is no solution for Iran's nuclear program other than a diplomatic and negotiated one. This reality had been tested and confirmed multiple times in recent years. Iran has been threatened with military action on several occasions, and even at times those threats were attempted, but it became clear that the Iranian issue could not be resolved through military means." He added, "That's exactly what has happened again. The three European countries believed they had acquired a new pressure tool and assumed that by threatening to implement it, they could exert influence over Iran. However, after activating it, they witnessed the outcome: No change occurred, no problem was resolved, and the only result was the weakening of the diplomatic process."

Some experts believe that the end of the Gaza war could open the door to easing tensions across a region Israel has thrown into turmoil over the past two years. The cease-fire, though fragile, may mark the beginning of a new era of rational governance and restored stability.

Still, other experts argue that the truce may shift the focus of Israel and the United States from the Palestinian front toward Iran. In such circumstances, Iran must keep a close eye on every security, political, and military development around it. Yet even so, a window for diplomacy has swung open — one that could prevent further escalation.

To seize it, Europe needs to get real about Middle East policy, while the United States must learn the hard lessons of its fruitless "maximum pressure" approach. A focused diplomatic strategy could help both Washington and Europe step back from confrontation with Tehran and move toward a win-win framework for a lasting agreement.

The article first appeared in Persian on IRNA.



French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot (1), British Foreign Secretary David Lammy (2nd-L), German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul (2nd-R), and the European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas meet at an outdoor terrace table in Geneva, Switzerland, on June 20, 2025.

● FABRICE COFFRINI/POOL

Why Iran matters

What every American needs to know

By M. Reza Behnam
Political scientist

OPINION

Once upon a time, the Iranian government was under the thumb of and in service to the interests of the United States and its Middle East colonial outpost, Israel. Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution — the most consequential revolution of the 20th century — changed all that. The establishment of the Islamic Republic brought to a close the 37-year obsequious reign of America's Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, and the centuries-old monarchical system. It also put an end to the days when a US ambassador, on the orders of a US president, Jimmy Carter, could arrogantly issue ultimatums to the Iranian government, as Ambassador William Sullivan did on January 11, 1979, when he "advised" the besieged Shah to leave promptly. Along with the restoration of national sovereignty, the Constitution of the Islamic Republic (October 24, 1979) documented the revolutionary government's identification with the just struggle of the oppressed against the imperious United States and Israel. Unquestionably, since the revolution, Iran has been the primary advocate of Palestine. As such, the Islamic Republic's regional and foreign policy have come to be defined by its anti-imperialist ideology, culture of resistance, and commitment to the Palestinian cause. From then, until now, Washington and Tel Aviv have been engaged in all manner of treachery to foment the downfall of the government, and to re-impose, once again, a docile leadership in Tehran, willing to bend to their will. What is at the heart of US-Israeli fears that has driven, for close to five decades, such hostile actions toward Iran? Their intense animus and anti-Iran policies can be attributed to the following:

- Iran's defiance in defending against and blocking US-Zionist domination of the Middle East.
- Their apprehension that Iran's independence from and challenge to foreign powers may embolden other states in the region.
- Their fear of the political and economic power of regional unity espoused in the ideology of the Revolution, and an example of political transformation through the collective unifying power of the ummah, the Muslim community.
- Iran's uncompromising support for the Palestinian cause and for national liberation movements that struggle against US-Zionist dominance.

Iran is often described by the United States and Israel as a threat to regional stability. What they are really saying, however, is that Tehran undermines their hegemonic vision of a "new Middle East," a power structure that has benefited the United States, Israel, and compliant Arab regimes. On September 29, 2025, the US-Israeli vision of a "new Middle East," bereft of Palestinians, was undisguised when President Donald Trump, flanked by the Israeli prime minister, rolled out his 20-point proposal to end Israel's genocidal war on Gaza. The so-

called "peace" plan is essentially a list of Israeli demands, a colonial redux (Balfour 2.0), and an extension of the Palestinian Nakba (Catastrophe). Not unlike the Iranian Revolution, the October 7, 2023, Palestinian rebellion was a landmark event that has reshaped and shifted the geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East. It revived attention to the Palestinian cause that had been sidelined by US-led normalization deals (Abraham Accords) and by the growing preoccupation of Arab rulers with containing Iran. Gaza has exposed the Israeli regime's fundamental inhumanity. It has laid bare its decades-long expansionist objectives to control all of Palestine and to eliminate the last "roadblock" to complete domination of the region, the Islamic Republic of Iran. What Gaza has not revealed, however, is the enormous debt the world owes Iran. Iran's principled stand against injustice has come at great sacrifice. For supporting Palestinian resistance forces, it has been subjected to unending hostilities: US-backed wars, assassinations, internal sabotage operations, cyber and terrorist attacks, and draconian economic sanctions. Consequently, the United States has made Iran one of the most sanctioned countries in the world. Ironically, it is Iran, a non-Arab country, which has spearheaded the informal political and military alliance of state and non-state actors known as the "Axis of Resistance".



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu presents two maps delineating his plot for the so-called "New Middle East" in his speech to the United Nations on September 22, 2024. He categorizes the region into two distinct groups: one he deems a "curse" for the Israeli Occupation and the other, a "blessing".

To appease and pacify their restive pro-Palestinian populations, Arab rulers publicly condemn Israel's actions and portray Iran as the regional troublemaker. In light of US-Israeli-inspired divisions, it is worthwhile to recall that Muslim unity was integral to the ideology of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the Islamic Republic's first Leader, who viewed Islam as a revolutionary and politically unifying faith. As early as the 1960s, he warned in his sermons against the dangers of Israel and linked Palestinian liberation and resistance to the wider Muslim struggle against US-Israeli oppression. Khomeini framed the liberation of Palestine as a religious and political obligation for all Muslims. In his oft-quoted statement, "If the Muslims were united — a single fist — none can rise up against them," he espoused the potential power of the faith's two billion adherents, with 414 million Muslims in the Middle East and North Afri-

ca strong, if they chose to wield it. For eight decades, Israel has been using regional disunity to its strategic advantage. However, Arab rulers have begun to show signs of comprehending that the real terrorist threat emanates not from Tehran, but from Tel Aviv via Washington. Israel's cowardly air strike on a residential compound in the heart of Doha on September 9, 2025, apparently with Washington's consent, may have disabused Qatar of the mistaken idea that its country was exempt from Israeli aggression because of its non-NATO alliance with the United States. The attack may have also finally awakened other Arab regimes to the realization that Israel is a danger to them all. The message seems to have been received by Egypt, which moved recently to improve ties with the Islamic Republic, despite long-standing conflicts between the two. It is important to note that Washington and Tel Aviv have been constructing a prejudicial narrative about Iran for decades. Their official storyline, riddled with deceptive language, has been fraught with Orwellian contradictions. For example, Israel has committed genocide and is rewarded with political cover and billions in military assistance, whereas Iran, which has acted to prevent the crime of genocide, is sanctioned, its commanders and scientists were assassinated, and the country was bombed. Another glaring illustration of misrepresentation concerns the

failure of the world community to commend the people and leaders of Iran and Ansarullah (the Houthis) in Yemen, who have taken action in defense of the Palestinians. Currently, they are the only countries living up to the obligations of the 1948 Genocide Convention (Article 1) that clearly states the duty of every nation to prevent and protect people from genocide and to punish the perpetrators and those complicit in the crime. The "responsibility to act" was detailed in January 2024 when the Court ordered Israel to take six provisional measures to end the genocide in Gaza, and in March 2024, when it reaffirmed its previous measures and required additional actions. In addition, the ICJ ruled (July 19, 2024) that Israel's occupation of the West Bank, East Al-Quds (Jerusalem), and the Gaza Strip is illegal under international law and that it must end. In contrast, Washington, deeply complicit in genocide, continues to



support the rogue entity of Israel with lethal weapons and financial support to continue its brutalities in Gaza and the West Bank. Another nurtured storyline is the US-Israeli portrayal of Iran as an expansionist state. It has become so entrenched that it is rarely, if ever, scrutinized or challenged. Unlike Israel, the Islamic Republic has not bombed, seized, or annexed the territory of neighboring states, and has no nuclear weapons. Its strategy is primarily defensive, to deter attacks from the United States and Israel. Washington remains mute as Tel Aviv executes its expansionist "Greater Israel" objectives. Once generally unspoken, the regime's determination to dominate the region is now brazenly proclaimed. While Iran is labeled the aggressor, Israel reoccupied Gaza, continued its colonization and annexation of the West Bank, pushed further into Lebanon and Syria, and conducted air strikes across the region. According to Washington, Iran is the only country that has no right to defend itself. In contrast, Washington has made sure that Israel and the Arab Gulf regimes are heavily armed and fortified with military bases. Currently, Iran is encircled by 30 of those bases. There are numerous examples of Washington's preferential treatment of its allies. Leading the list: After two years of genocide and complete devastation of Gaza, the US Congress, save for a few, has remained absolutely silent. A large bipartisan majority of members have, instead, embraced and have completely supported the Israeli regime. They have yet to pass a single resolution condemning Israel's actions. One of the most blatant examples of political nepotism involved the cover-up by the US government of the aftermath of the deliberate Israeli attack on the US intelligence ship, the USS Liberty, on June 8, 1967. During the brutal military assault, Israel killed 34 servicemen and wounded 171, and rendered the vessel immobile. No condemnation. No sanctions. No punishment. More recent examples include official Washington's indifference and disinterest over the killing by Israeli forces and Zionist squatters of Americans in occupied Palestine. Since October 7, 2023, 12 US citizens have been murdered. Israel has yet to face any condemnation or consequences. A classic example of distorted reality concerns the widely believed "nuclear threat" narrative drummed up by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. For over 30 years, he has been falsely warning the world of an imminent threat, that Iran was on the verge

An Iranian child raises a poster that says, "Palestine is not alone," during one of the many demonstrations that the nation has held for years during International Quds Day.

What Gaza has not revealed, however, is the enormous debt the world owes Iran. Iran's principled stand against injustice has come at great sacrifice. For supporting Palestinian resistance forces, it has been subjected to unending hostilities: US-backed wars, assassinations, internal sabotage operations, cyber and terrorist attacks, and draconian economic sanctions.

of developing nuclear weapons. Against this background, the Islamic Republic agreed, in 2012, to multilateral negotiations. After roughly four years, the nuclear agreement known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was finalized in 2015. To seek relief from economic sanctions, Iran agreed to curtail a nuclear weapons program that did not exist and to implement strict limits on its peaceful program. Despite the Trump administration's withdrawal from the pact in May 2018 and the imposition of even harsher sanctions, Iran continued to implement the pact. It was only after the European signatories (UK, France, and Germany) reneged on their obligations that, one year later, Iran gradually reduced its commitments. Despite numerous obstacles, especially after the June 2025 US-Israeli air strikes on the country's nuclear and military sites — attacks that killed more than 1,000 Iranians and injured thousands more — Iran attempted to honor and revive the JCPOA. Since the 1979 Revolution and, under enormous pressure, Iran has stood as a barrier against the complete subjugation of the Middle East. Fundamentally, it has protected its Arab neighbors from essentially becoming tributary states (more so than they are today), completely absorbed into the US-Israeli imperium. As the nation approaches a half-century since its people replaced monarchy with an Islamic republic, the question arises: What would Iran look like today if, from the outset, it had not been under unceasing pressure and assault, and forced to expend its resources on defending the country? It is interesting to note that, in the throes of profound change and transition, Iranians created an entirely new government organized under a written constitution based on democratic policies. Following the Revolution, Iran was able to reduce poverty and make advances in social services. It has elevated its culture and continues to excel in the sciences and technology. Free of the imposition of foreign wars and challenges to its territorial and political integrity, Iran could have done more. Iran matters because it has laid bare the naked deception and wickedness of the regimes in Washington and Tel Aviv. To the oppressed, Iran has imparted the idea that it is possible to stand up to oppressors and survive. For the besieged Palestinians, experiencing the brutish aggression of the US-backed Israeli war machine, a stalwart Iran is indispensable.

The full article first appeared on The Palestine Chronicle.

IWF World Championships:

Iran's Davoudi vows to bounce back after injury-hit campaign

Sports Desk

Iran's Ali Davoudi vowed to come back stronger after a shoulder injury saw the superheavyweight weightlifter settle for a single bronze medal at the IWF World Championships in Førde, Norway, on Saturday. The former Olympic silver medalist clearly struggled with the injury throughout the men's +110kg contest but still managed a 196kg lift, which placed him behind familiar rivals Varazdat Lalayan of Armenia (211kg) and Bahrain's Gor Minasyan (205kg) in the snatch.

However, that proved to be his only successful attempt of the afternoon, as he bombed out in the clean and jerk, finishing 15th in the overall standings. Lalayan (211-250-461) and Minasyan (205-242-447) completed a triple one-two, while South Korea's Song Yeong-hwan bagged the C&J and total bronzes.

"I did not perform well today. I am not looking for excuses, but I had this severe pain in my shoulder, which made it impossible for me to win a medal in the to-

tal," said Davoudi, who won the total and C&J silver, plus the snatch bronze in last year's World Championships in Manama. "I can only apologize to all the people of Iran for my poor performance.

"We worked extremely hard over the past year, and I thank everyone who supported me. I really don't know why this shoulder pain won't let go of me. I also had to cut seven to eight kilograms in the last few days. I will make amends for this failure in the future," added the Iranian. Meanwhile, Iran head coach Behdad Salimi praised Davoudi for his "tremendous effort" despite the injury setback. "He had to receive an injection in his shoulder last week to compete here. Under different circumstances, a weightlifter of his caliber would not have let his Bahraini and South Korean opponents walk away with medals today," added Salimi, who is a former world and Olympic superheavyweight champion.

Despite the final-day setback, the Iranian team ended its eight-year drought at the World Championships by lifting the men's trophy for only the second time in the history of the sport's flagship inter-



Iranian weightlifter Ali Davoudi prepares for a lift in the men's +110kg event at the IWF World Championships in Førde, Norway, on Oct. 11, 2025.
● IWF

national event.

Salimi was a member of team, winning two medals, when Iran first won the men's title in Anaheim, the United States – courtesy of five golds, four silvers, and five bronzes.

In Førde, the Iranian eight-man squad

collected 387 points – thanks to one gold, four silvers, and one bronze medal

– to finish atop the men's standings, with North Korea (354) and the United States (318) in the following spots.

Alireza Moeini and Ali A'alipour bagged a gold and double silvers between them in the men's 94kg event.

It was an all-Iranian one-two in the snatch, with Moeini walking away with the ultimate prize thanks to a 182kg lift – becoming Iran's first world record holder since Sohrab Moradi – while A'alipour took the silver with 176kg.

Moeini then posted a 391kg tally to finish runner-up to Bulgarian sensation Karlos Nasar on the total podium.

Iranian prodigy Alireza Nasiri also enjoyed a memorable campaign in the 110kg class on Friday, winning double silver medals.

Nasiri recovered from a seventh-place finish in the snatch to shatter the junior world record with a 231kg effort and secure the C&J silver, before a total tally of 415kg – also a new high in the junior division – saw the 20-year-old Iranian pip former world and Olympic champion Ruslan Nurudinov of Uzbekistan to the runner-up place.



● WANA

Iran's Choopan stands runner-up at Mr. Olympia 2025

Sports Desk

Iranian bodybuilding sensation Hadi Choopan had to settle for his third consecutive runner-up finish in the Men's Open competition at the Mr. Olympia event in Las Vegas, as American Derek Lunsford walked away with his second Sandow Trophy in three years on Saturday.

Lunsford's stunning victory earned

him \$600,000 of prize money, completing his remarkable 2025 campaign that included wins at the Arnold Classic and Pittsburg Pro.

Choopan received \$200,000, while there was a bit of consolation for the 'Persian Wolf' as the 2022 winner was voted the People's Champion at the 61st edition of the event.

Andrew Jacked stood third, with his fellow Nigerian Samson Dauda – last

year's winner – and Martin Fitzwater in the fourth and fifth spots respectively.

Nick Walker, Brandon Curry, Tonio Burton completed the top eight in the Men's Open competition.

Behrouz Tabani was the other Iranian at the Mr. Olympia 2025 Open contest but missed out on place in Saturday's final four judging on his debut at the most prestigious bodybuilding event.

Asian Aquatics Championships:

Shootout heartbreak as Iran settles for water polo silver

Sports Desk

Iranian water polo national team settled for the men's silver medal at the Asian Aquatics Championships after suffering a shootout loss to China in Saturday's final in Ahmedabad, India. The two sides shared the spoils in a thrilling 11-11 draw before China came out victorious 5-4 in the shootout showdown to walk away with the ultimate prize.

This was Iran's second shootout heartbreak against China at a major tournament in seven months, following the last-four setback in March's Asian Water Polo Championships in the Chinese city of Zhaoqing. The Iranian team will still have every reason to be proud of its impressive campaign in Ahmedabad.

Mahdi Panamta's men began the event with a 14-9 win against China in their Group A opener, and then went on to breeze past Hong Kong (22-10) and Uzbekistan (28-7) to progress to the knockouts as the group winner.

Iran hammered Thailand 21-6 in the quarterfinals, before edging



● IRSF

out Japan – Asian champion in March – 19-18 for a place in the final showpiece.

Hamed Karimi, Amirhossein Amirian, Amirreza Jalilipour, Mahdi Barzegari, Amir Aqaei-Karim, Farbod Behzad-Sabouri, Ashkan Iranpour, Farbod Borqei, Amin Qavidel, Alireza Mehri, Arman Shams, Mersad Ahham, Mahdi Yazdankhah, Mehrab Golestanirad, and Erfan Sadrnia were the members of the Iranian team in Ahmedabad. Saturday's medal marked Iran's second major silver medal in

the continent after a runner-up finish to China at the 2023 Asian Water Polo Championship in Singapore. Iran also won the Asian Championship bronze in 1984 and 1995, while grabbing the gold on home soil at the 1974 Asian Games in Tehran, as well as the 2018 bronze in Jakarta. Earlier on Saturday, Kazakhstan defeated Japan 16-14 in the third-place contest.

China completed a clean sweep of water polo golds, thanks to a 22-17 win against Japan in the women's final.

WTT Youth Contender Tunis II 2025:

Lorestani wins U15 title as Iranian boys bag double trophies

Sports Desk

The final day of the WTT Youth Contender event in Tunis saw Iran's Arshia Lorestani win the U15 boys' singles title.

The Iranian prodigy defeated Russian Zakhar Varfolomeev, competing as a neutral athlete, in straight games (11-8, 11-2, 11-4) to claim the third trophy for the country across the four-day event.

Lorestani beat Russian Aleksei Marchuk and Tunisian Moemen Sghaier without dropping a single game to progress to knockouts as the Group 1 winner.

The Iranian then came out victorious (3-1) against Liam Bouchoir of France in the round of 16, before marching to a straight-game win (11-5, 11-8, 11-9) against Egypt's Asser Sameh for a place in the semi-finals.

A thrilling 3-2 victory over Russian Evgenii Dosov sent Lorestani into the final.

Elsewhere at the Multidisciplinary Hall of Rades, Nikan Shirvani settled for a runner-up trophy in the U11 boys' singles competition, relinquish-



Arshia Lorestani (L) poses with the Iranian flag after winning the U15 boys' singles trophy at the WTT Youth Contender event in Tunis, Tunisia, on October 11, 2025.
● IRTTF

ing a two-game lead to suffer a 3-2 setback (9-11, 6-11, 11-8, 11-8, 11-9) against Iraq's Andya Mohammed in the final.

This was Shirvani's second trophy in the Tunisian capital, following a third-place finish in the under-13 age class.

Shirvani dominated Group 2, completing a clean sweep of three 3-0 wins – against Algerian Nail Chaichi and the host duo Yaakoub Marnissi and

Ahmed Halaoua – to advance to the quarterfinals.

The Iranian was given a bye in the last eight, before defeating Aleksandr Melnikov 3-0 (11-7, 11-7, 11-8) in the semifinals.

Qeshm Island ushers in new tourism future through music

Iranica Desk

Music tourism, as a new, creative, and interdisciplinary concept, offers a promising solution to increase employment, generate income, and attract both domestic and international tourists to Qeshm Island. This initiative can make a significant contribution to the sustainable development of cultural and artistic tourism in the region, said the Head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department of the Qeshm Free Zone Organization.

Azadeh Abedinzadeh told IRNA that music tourism is one of the sub-branches of cultural and artistic tourism, in which tourists travel to specific destinations motivated by the desire to experience, listen to, or participate in musical events and rituals.

She emphasized that Qeshm Island is a shining gem of Iranian culture due to its ritual and traditional music. With its rich musical heritage, the island serves as a center for intercultural exchange and a stage for both large and small groups of traditional Iranian musicians.

"This untapped potential, which had remained dormant for decades, has now transformed into an economic asset within the field of artistic tourism through the identification of talented artists in the Qeshm Boom Festival, the organization of the Oud Music Festival, and the introduction of the Oud to fellow Iranians,"

Abedinzadeh explained.

She noted that Qeshm Island — as one of the most culturally and ethnically diverse regions in southern Iran — possesses rich musical capacities that cater to a wide range of tastes and interests. The island, she added, has the potential to become one of the main destinations for music tourism. Proper and effective promotion of this unique attraction, alongside Qeshm's other natural and cultural treasures, can help boost tourism while improving the livelihoods and income of coastal residents.

Abedinzadeh said that among the island's diverse musical traditions, the fishing and maritime music of Qeshm holds a special place. These melodies, which



● IRNA

narrate stories of life, hardship, and love at sea, follow rhythms that echo the waves of the ocean.

They are living memories of the experiences of captains, helmsmen, and sailors who once sang

to ease the pain of separation from home or to celebrate the joy of a bountiful catch. These songs and chants have long been interwoven into every aspect of coastal life on the largest Iranian island in the Persian Gulf.

She emphasized that traditional music is an inseparable part of the ancient and authentic identity of the Iranian people and the local communities of Qeshm Island. Today, many of the island's

rural areas remain vibrant spaces where the rhythms and melodies of traditional music continue to live and thrive.

Abedinzadeh further explained that Qeshm's native and traditional music has the potential to create a truly unique experience for both domestic and international tourists — especially for those seeking an authentic cultural experience. She added that the design and organization of

the Kavan Festival is one of the new opportunities that can open a dynamic new market for music tourism on the island.

She stressed that this music and art festival can serve as a powerful starting point for the growth of music-based tourism and act as an innovative catalyst for promoting tourism in Qeshm. This approach not only helps attract visitors but also plays an important role in preserving and revitalizing the region's intangible cultural heritage, while strengthening the cultural economy of local communities.

She also pointed out that this form of tourism can create employment and economic opportunities for local musicians, traditional instrument makers, event organizers, handicraft producers, and related industries. Developing an annual calendar of musical events in Qeshm — aimed at engaging audiences and tourists interested in this art form — could serve as an effective strategy for increasing employment and income on this culturally rich island.

The Kavan Festival, featuring artists and music groups from southern Iran, is being held on Qeshm Island from October 12 to 24. The event celebrates the island's rich musical and ritual heritage and invites lovers of southern Iranian music and culture to experience an immersive journey through performances, handicrafts, and traditional arts.

Unearthing five millennia of civilization in Shahr-e Sukhteh



Iranica Desk

Shahr-e Sukhteh (Burnt City) stands as one of the most distinguished archaeological sites in Iran, representing one of the earliest known urban communities in the history of human civilization. Over recent decades, extensive archaeological research has unveiled new insights into the social, economic, and cultural fabric of the Shahr-e Sukhteh region, according to an archaeologist and researcher from Sistan and Baluchestan Province.

Mohammadreza Jafari highlighted that a defining characteristic of Shahr-e Sukhteh is the presence of enduring peace among its inhabitants, coupled with a notable absence of mili-

taristic evidence. This suggests a societal culture deeply rooted in cooperation and peaceful coexistence, within a community distinguished by cultural diversity and broad-ranging interactions. Furthermore, the discovery of numerous industrial and commercial artifacts serves as compelling evidence of the advanced technological capabilities and sophisticated technical knowledge possessed by the people of that era, chn. ir wrote.

He stressed that through the dedicated efforts of the Cultural Heritage Organization and academic researchers, the preservation of this invaluable heritage site is being continually reinforced. The integration of advanced modern technolo-

gies plays a crucial role in both the conservation efforts and in promoting a better global understanding and appreciation of Shahr-e Sukhteh. Equally important is the education and awareness-building among younger generations, which serves as a foundational element for the ongoing continuation of these preservation initiatives.

Hossein Sarhadi, the director of the Shahr-e Sukhteh World Heritage Site, added the site stands as one of the most significant archaeological locations dating back to the third millennium BCE, with an estimated age of approximately 5,000 years. He further explained that the burned city, spanning an area of 270 hectares, was among

the largest cultural regions extending from Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq) all the way to the Indus Valley in India. Strategically positioned at the heart of a vital communication corridor, it connected ancient civilizations across both east to west and north to south directions, spanning the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman. The role of Shahr-e Sukhteh in shaping and advancing Iranian culture and civilization has been both exceptionally prominent and fundamental throughout history.

The role of Shahr-e Sukhteh in shaping and advancing Iranian culture and civilization extends far beyond its geographic boundaries, serving as a critical bridge linking diverse cultural traditions and technological innovations across the ancient Near East and South Asia. Its strategic location fostered an environment of constant interaction among peoples, facilitating the exchange of goods, ideas, religious beliefs, artistic styles, and scientific knowledge. This dynamic interchange contributed significantly to the emergence of complex societal structures and cultural developments both within the Iranian plateau and in neighboring regions.

Excavations have uncovered evidence of sophisticated water management systems, including canals and reservoirs, which reveal advanced understanding of hydraulic engineering and agricultural practices. These innovations not only supported the city's large population but also reflect early efforts in en-



● visitiran.ir

vironmental adaptation and resource management. Moreover, the artistic achievements found at Shahr-e Sukhteh — ranging from intricate pottery and jewelry to early forms of writing and symbolic representations — provide valuable insights into the symbolic and intellectual life of its people. The discovery of the world's oldest known artificial eyeball at the site also highlights the advanced medical knowledge and craftsmanship present in this ancient society. Today, Shahr-e Sukhteh is an invaluable asset for archaeologists, historians, and cultural

scholars seeking to reconstruct the trajectory of early urban civilization. Ongoing excavations and research continue to reveal new facets of daily life, economic networks, and social organization that challenge and enrich our understanding of prehistoric human societies. The preservation and promotion of Burned City contribute not only to national pride and cultural identity in Iran but also to the global narrative of human history, emphasizing the interconnectedness of early civilizations and the shared heritage of humanity.



Hafez honored in Shiraz for timeless poetry

Minister hails poet's global influence, as 'one of the world's top 20'

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran celebrated the annual commemoration of 14th-century poet Hafez on Saturday at his mausoleum in Shiraz. Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Abbas Salehi called Hafez "one of the world's top 20 poets," highlighting his lasting global impact, while scholars emphasized the poet's unique literary style, spiritual depth, and ongoing influence on Iranian identity and cultural life.

Salehi, speaking at the ceremony, said Hafez, alongside Persian icons Ferdowsi, Rumi, Sa'adi, and Khayyam, occupies a peak position in world literature, IRNA reported.

"Hafez stands apart," Salehi said. "His work traveled beyond Iran, reaching India, Central Asia, and gradually the West."

The minister cited four key reasons for Hafez's international appeal: The essence of Iranian wisdom, linguistic and stylistic brilliance, independent thinking, and playful complexity.

Salehi explained that Hafez's poetry distills centuries of Iranian and Islamic thought, addressing universal spiritual and intellectual needs.

He noted that foreign travelers, including Italian Pietro Della Valle, compared Hafez's literary craft to Virgil for its rhythmic precision and depth.

Emphasizing the poet's influence on global thinkers, Salehi mentioned Russian poet Pushkin and American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson, who admired Hafez's defiance of fanaticism and celebration of free thought.

"His ghazals carry contradictions that enrich the human experience," Salehi said, referring to Hafez's ability to juxtapose opposing ideas in elegant harmony.

Hafez, whose full name was Khajeh Shams al-Din Mohammad Hafez Shirazi, is celebrated as one of the most beloved poets in Persian literature.

Known for his mastery of the ghazal, he blended themes of love, spirituality, and philosophy in verses that remain deeply rooted in Iranian culture.

His profound familiarity with the Qur'an infused his poetry with layers of mystical meaning, earning him the title Lisan al-Qyeb, or "Tongue of the Unseen."

Beyond Iran, Hafez's poetry has influenced great literary figures such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, whose West-Eastern Divan was inspired by the Persian master's work.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei posted a message on X marking National Hafez Day (October 12), praising the poet's enduring wisdom and imagination. He wrote that Hafez "blended timeless wisdom with poetic

imagination, presenting it beautifully and accessibly to all."

Baghai added that Hafez teaches "how to believe in life and love amid the hardships and uncertainties of existence." He concluded with a verse from the poet: "No one like Hafez has unveiled the mask of thought, until the hair of speech is combed with a pen."

Hojatollah Ayoubi, senior advisor to Iran's cultural heritage minister and head of international affairs at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts framed Hafez as a "fearless actor" akin to the concept described by French sociologist Alain Touraine.

Ayoubi called him a "proactive agent" who blends love, wisdom, and resistance to social conformity. Quoting Hafez, Eyubi noted: "What use is worldly prudence to the blazing wit?" to illustrate the poet's independent spirit.

Ayoubi added that Persian poetry continues to open cultural doors even when societal paths are blocked, citing international recognition of Hafez, including literary evenings in Paris's Versailles Palace.

Ali-Akbar Salehi, head of the Iranology Foundation, emphasized that Hafez's legacy extends beyond poetry into the daily life and identity of Iranians.

In a statement, he said, "Every research effort in Persian culture inevitably engages with Hafez," noting the poet's



Iran's Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Abbas Salehi speaks during a ceremony marking National Hafez Day in the southwestern city of Shiraz, Iran, on October 11, 2025.
● IRNA

enduring guidance in wisdom, justice, love, and spiritual inquiry. He described Hafez as a living embodiment of Iran's intellectual and cultural spirit.

The commemoration coincided with international literary events. In Serbia, a session at the Serbian Literary Association explored the global impact of Hafez and Rumi.

Speakers included Nenad Milosevic, president of the association; Omra Khalilovich, Persian language scholar; Petar Janackovic, Persian translator; and Iran's Cultural Attaché Amir Pour-

pezeshk.

They highlighted Hafez's influence not only on Persian literature but also on Indian, Arabic, and Ottoman literary traditions.

Khalilovich emphasized that in Persian mystical poetry, truth is fluid and universal, while Janackovic described Hafez as a poet whose optimism and celebration of life help overcome sorrow. The session underscored Hafez's enduring role in shaping cultural identity and fostering international dialogue.

Tehran Int'l Short Film Festival to screen 94 films from 55 countries



Director of the 42nd Tehran International Short Film Festival (TISFF) Behrouz Shoaybi addresses journalists during the festival's press release in Tehran on October 12, 2025.
● IRNA

The venue was moved from Milad Tower to Iran Mall to improve accessibility and expand screening capacity. "The central city venues had limited capacity," Shoaybi explained. "Iran Mall offered more suitable facilities, and cooperation with local authorities will facilitate audience access."

He also addressed political and cultural sensitivities in film selection. "Filmmakers created works with care and quality; we did not exclude any films due to hijab issues or political content. Only two films were excluded for technical or content reasons," he said.

Recognized by the Academy Awards, the festival continues to be an Oscar-qualifying event and holds an A-grade quality ranking. Shoaybi emphasized the collaborative effort behind the festival's success and its commitment to supporting young filmmakers, "Our role is to stand by them, even amid budget constraints, and ensure their work receives the recognition it deserves."

MENA region.

The festival has also dedicated a special section to socially relevant films. "This year, we received a substantial number of films addressing topics like resistance, Gaza, Lebanon, and the 12-day war," Shoaybi said. "The aim is to give these works visibility with respect and enthusiasm."

This year, TISFF will include restored short films from the 1930s and a special screening for the visually impaired, in collaboration with the Iranian National Cinematheque.

Shoaybi stressed that the festival will also engage young audiences, "We are hosting several art schools from Tehran and other cities to introduce students to filmmaking and the industry."

Arts & Culture Desk

The 42nd Tehran International Short Film Festival (TISFF) will run from 19 to 24 October at Iran Mall, hosting 94 films from 55 countries, festival director Behrouz Shoaybi announced at a press briefing on Sunday. "We will showcase 57 narrative films, 20 animations, 20 experimental works, 21 documentaries, 35 adaptations, and 53 photographic entries," Shoaybi said, highlighting a diverse international program, IRNA reported. The largest number of submissions come from China, Spain, India, and the United States, followed by France and Brazil. Fifteen films explore artificial intelligence, while seven focus on emerging narratives from the

Tehran, Kuwait sign pact to boost land-tourism, motorsports cooperation



Arts & Culture Desk

The Touring & Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kuwait International Automobile Club signed a strategic memorandum in Kuwait to deepen land-tourism links and boost joint motorsport initiatives. At the ceremony, Iran's Ambassador to Kuwait, Mohammad Tout-

ounchi, witnessed the signing by Mohammad Hossein Soufi, head of the Iranian club, and Essa Hamza Al-Failakawi, Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile Vice President for Mobility Essa Hamza Al-Failakawi from Kuwait, IRNA reported.

The agreement tasks both sides with easing border crossings, co-organizing tourism rallies, and exchanging road-safety training. It also mandates reciprocal roadside assistance and streamlined issuance of Carnet de Passages en Douane (custom-passage documents). Soufi called the pact "a crucial step" in expanding people-to-people ties. Failakawi described it as one that will "turn the page" in Iran-Kuwait friendly relations.

Under the deal, both clubs will jointly stage motorsport events across the region. They will pool expertise in road safety education and open new channels in mobility innovation. Officials also pledged to monitor implementation and convene periodic reviews to ensure the agreement yields measurable progress.

Iranian documentary gets kudos at Hanoi festival

Arts & Culture Desk

Vietnamese viewers flooded the screenings of "Tomorrow Is Not Like Today" during the first-ever Cultures of the World Festival, after the film was subtitled in Vietnamese and cleared by Iran's Embassy. Directed by Seyyed Mahdi Karbasi, the documentary unfolds in a school. It tells the moving story of pupils who build "friendship, courage and sacrifice" as they support one another through trials, IRNA reported. The festival, held from October 10 to 12 at Hanoi's Thăng Long Imperial Citadel, drew 48 embassies and

20 film-screening countries.

A dedicated Iranian pavilion showcased the nation's artistry and cuisine alongside the film.

The documentary premiered to applause. One spectator described it as "deeply human". Visitors lingered at the Iranian booth to sample saffron tea, browse handicrafts and chat with embassy staff.

A troupe of Iranian traditional musicians, named Sarafshan, also performed across the festival.

Festival organizers said the Iranian film slot reflects Vietnam's push to "bridge culture and diplomacy" by inviting global voices to share their stories on this world stage.

