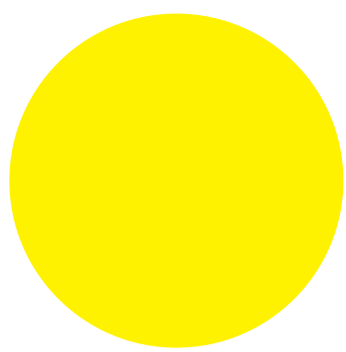


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Israeli strikes on Lebanon aim to pressure gov't into disarming Hezbollah



By Behnam Saeedi
Iranian lawmaker

O P I N I O N E X C L U S I V E

In recent days, southern Lebanon has witnessed a sharp escalation in Israeli military offensive, with waves of airstrikes and drone attacks targeting various locations across the region. The assaults have resulted in civilian casualties and widespread destruction of vital infrastructure. Simultaneously, Israel has launched a new round of attacks against Hamas positions throughout the Gaza Strip.

These attacks blatantly violate existing cease-fire agreements between the parties. By breaking its commitments and flouting international law, Israel has stepped up its military campaign against the Resistance Front, targeting both Hezbollah and Hamas.

It appears that Israel's latest moves in southern Lebanon are aimed at pressuring the Lebanese government to move toward disarming Hezbollah. Yet such efforts are bound to fail, as Hezbollah enjoys deep-rooted popular support within Lebanon and has built a strong social and political base. For years, Israel and its allies have repeatedly sought to strip Hezbollah of its weapons through various means, but none of those attempts have succeeded—and this latest push is unlikely to fare any better.

From both a military and social standpoint, pressure to disarm Hezbollah has been met with stiff resistance from the public. Reports indicate that despite numerous efforts to weaken the movement, the Resistance has not only remained intact but stands fully prepared to respond decisively. As Hezbollah officials have stated, any continuation of attacks or violations of the cease-fire will draw a firm and proportionate response.

Over the years, Israel has demonstrated a consistent pattern of flouting international regulations, crossing red lines and violating human rights and state sovereignty without consequence. The silence or inaction of international organizations, coupled with the tacit support of certain UN Security Council members, has effectively given Israel a free hand to carry on with these aggressions. Some of these very nations, instead of condemning Israel's crimes, have thrown their weight behind the regime, effectively endorsing its brutality.

Global public opinion holds all states involved in supplying arms or logistical support to Israel complicit in its atrocities against the people of Gaza and southern Lebanon. Both direct and indirect assistance from certain countries has emboldened Israel's continued offensives. Nevertheless, the Resistance Front, anchored in its popular and ideological backing, has repeatedly proven its resilience, emerging victorious even under the harshest circumstances. Consequently, plans for disarmament are destined to fail.

A review of Lebanon's wars makes it clear that despite Israel's numerous plots and relentless aggression, it is Hezbollah that has consistently come out on top. Israel and its allies should have realized by now that Hezbollah and the broader Resistance are indestructible. The struggle between right and wrong has existed since the dawn of history and will endure forever, but history shows time and again that the camp of truth ultimately prevails, while the forces of falsehood are doomed to perish.



Deputy FM decries nuclear negotiations with set outcomes as 'meaningless'

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Egypt's mediation efforts to resume Iran-IAEA cooperation

Araghchi says Tehran ready for talks
'free from threats, intimidation'

➤ Egypt's Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty (c) meets with his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi (l) and Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi in Cairo on September 9, 2025.
● AFP

International Desk

Egypt's foreign minister once again called his Iranian counterpart and the UN nuclear agency's chief in less than two weeks in an effort to help resumption of cooperation between Tehran and the watchdog. Badr Abdelatty emphasized the impor-

ance of continuing of talks between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) under the framework of an agreement signed between the two sides in Cairo on September 9.

According to Egypt's Foreign Ministry, the talks focused on reducing regional tensions surrounding Iran's nuclear ac-

tivities.

Talks between the Egyptian top diplomat, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and the IAEA chief Rafael Grossi was the second contact between the three officials after the expiration of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal on October 18.

Iran, China and Russia in a joint letter to Grossi have stated that with the expiration of Resolution 2231, which endorsed the 2015 nuclear deal, the IAEA head's mandate to report on the verification and monitoring of Iran's nuclear activities has come to an end.

Iran suspended cooperation with the UN agency following Israeli and US attacks

on Iranian nuclear facilities in June.

Tehran accused the IAEA of effectively paving the way for the Israel-US attacks with a report on May 31 that led the IAEA's 35-nation Board of Governors to declare Iran in breach of its non-proliferation obligations.

However, Iran reached a new agreement with the IAEA in Egypt in September as a goodwill gesture to prevent the return of international sanctions against Iran.

But, with the return of sanctions against Iran and the termination of the UN Resolution 2231, Tehran sees no reason to resume cooperation with the IAEA as before.

In 2015, Iran and world powers – including France, Britain and Germany – reached an agreement that saw the easing of international sanctions on Tehran in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program.

But the United States unilaterally withdrew from the accord in 2018 and reimposed biting economic sanctions.

Tehran adhered to the deal until Wash-

ington's withdrawal, and then began rolling back on its commitments.

The European parties to the deal also failed to fulfill their commitment to the agreement. Several rounds of talks between Tehran and the US to revive the agreement failed, and in August, the UK, Germany and France triggered the so-called "snapback" process on the pretext of Iran's non-compliance with its obligations, leading to the re-imposition of the UN sanctions.

Despite the failure of talks, Iran has repeatedly announced its readiness for reaching a new agreement based on mutual interests.

Iran's foreign minister said on Thursday that Iran has never had any problem with negotiations, "but negotiating is different from dictating, ordering, and bullying".

"Whenever the negotiating parties are ready to engage from an equal footing and to reach an agreement based on mutual — not one-sided — interests, and free from threats and intimidation, the Islamic Republic of Iran stands ready."

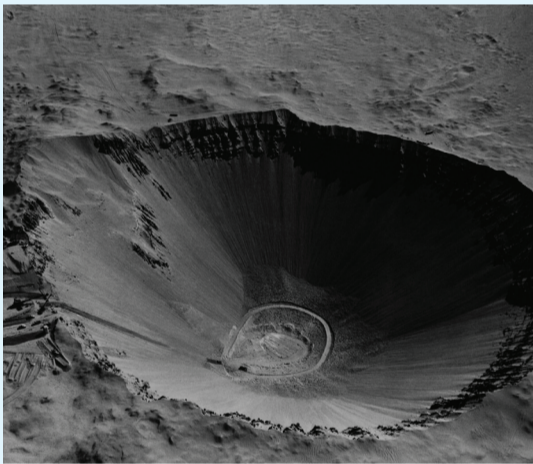
FM: US resumption of nuke tests
'regressive, irresponsible'

International Desk

Iran's foreign minister condemned US plan to resume nuclear arms testing as "regressive and irresponsible," calling the move a serious threat to international peace and security.

"Having rebranded its 'Department of Defense' as the 'Department of War', a nuclear-armed bully is resuming testing of atomic weapons. The same bully has been demonizing Iran's peaceful nuclear program and threatening further strikes on our safeguarded nuclear facilities, all in blatant violation of international law," Abbas Araghchi said in a post on X.

"The (US) announcement of a resumption of nuclear tests is a regressive and irresponsible move and a serious threat to international peace and security," he added. The Iranian official condemned the US for its longstanding criti-



➤ A crater left behind after a 100-kiloton thermonuclear bomb test at the Atomic Energy Commission's Nevada Test Site in July 1962.
● GETTY IMAGES

cism of Iran's peaceful nuclear program while simultaneously resuming its own atomic weapons tests, actions he says violate international law.

"Make no mistake: The US is the World's Most Dangerous Proliferation Risk," Araghchi stated.

The United States has long accused Iran of pursuing nuclear weapons and in June bombed Iran's nuclear facilities in violation of international law.

Araghchi further urged the global community to unite in holding the US accountable for normalizing the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

US President Donald Trump on Thursday ordered the US military to immediately restart the process for testing nuclear weapons after a halt of 33 years, a move that appeared to be a message to rival nuclear powers China and Russia.

Trump made the sur-

prise announcement on Truth Social while aboard his Marine One helicopter flying to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping for a trade-negotiating session in Busan, South Korea.

"Because of other countries testing programs, I have instructed the Department of War to start testing our Nuclear Weapons on an equal basis. That process will begin immediately," Trump posted.

"Russia is second, and China is a distant third, but will be even within 5 years."

It was not immediately clear whether Trump was referring to nuclear-explosive testing, which would be carried out by the National Nuclear Security Administration, or flight testing of nuclear-capable missiles. No nuclear power — other than North Korea most recently in 2017 — has carried out explosive nuclear testing in over 25 years.

Top cmdr. calls passive defense
'strategic necessity' after 12-day war

Iran's top commander declared that integrating passive defense into national planning is a "strategic necessity" and a "legal and national obligation," directly referencing the lessons learned from a recent 12-day war with the Israeli regime, as reported by Press TV.

In a message marking passive defense days on Thursday, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Abdulrahim Mousavi underscored that given the lessons of the 12-day war, "establishing the principles of passive defense in vital infrastructure is not only a strategic necessity but also a legal and national obligation." The realization of this important matter, he said, "will pave the way for enhancing national resilience and ensuring sustainability."

He noted that the passive defense is the "most strategic, scientific, and peaceful form of national defense."

According to the top general, it is a critical shield against a modern spectrum of threats, in-



Abdulrahim Mousavi
● IRNA

cluding cyber, biological, chemical, and hybrid warfare, by relying on the core principles of "forecasting, prevention, and preemption." General Mousavi highlighted that the historical experiences of Iran, particularly during the Iran-Iraq War have long proven the necessity of this approach.

The recent 12-day imposed war once again "showed that threats can emerge in complex and combined forms, with speed and intensity; and only nations that have resilient infrastructure, general preparedness, and national cohesion will have the ability to

withstand and maintain stability," he added.

On June 13, Israel launched an unprovoked aggression against Iran, triggering a 12-day war that killed at least 1,064 people in the country, including military commanders, nuclear scientists, and civilians.

The United States also entered the war by bombing three Iranian nuclear sites in a grave violation of international law.

On June 24, Iran, through its successful retaliatory operations against both the Israeli regime and the US, managed to impose a halt to the terrorist assault.

Deputy FM decries nuclear negotiations with set outcomes as 'meaningless'

International Desk

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Majid Takht-e Ravanchi said on Friday that any negotiation whose outcome is predetermined is "meaningless," adding that the United States shows no readiness to engage in talks on equal footing.

Takht-e Ravanchi made the remarks in a press conference after his one-day trip to Oman, where he said Tehran and Muscat exchanged their views on Iran's peaceful nuclear program and the Islamic Republic expressed its "clear position" on the issue.

The senior diplomat stated that the US government's unwillingness to negotiate on an equal footing compels Iran to see no justification for continuing the talks under the current circumstances.

He stressed that any negotiation process must lead to balanced outcomes for both sides, stressing that "negotiations

whose results are predetermined are meaningless."

In a post on his X account on Friday, Takht-e Ravanchi also said he held talks with Omani officials on bilateral, regional, and international issues during his trip to the Persian Gulf country.

Takht-e Ravanchi described his trip to the neighboring country as "fruitful," saying that he held meetings with the Omani Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi and his deputy, Khalifa al-Harthi.

"We highly value our regular consultations with our brothers in Oman, and Muscat is a trustworthy neighbor and a key partner," the Iranian official said.

Takht-e Ravanchi also held separate meetings with spokesman for the Yemen's Ansarullah movement Mohammed Abdul Salam as well as UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg.

The visit to Oman came less than a week after the Omani Minister of Interior Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal al-Busaidi visited



➤ Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Majid Takht-e Ravanchi (l) meets Omani Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi (c) in Muscat, Oman, on October 30, 2025.
● IRNA

Iran.

During his visit to Tehran, the Omani official held several meetings with Iranian officials including President Masoud Pezeshkian and Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Larijani.

Pezeshkian told the Omani official that unity among Muslim nations is essential for safeguarding their collective interests and security, as well as deterring foreign aggression.

Pointing to the deep-rooted and cordial relations between Iran and Oman, he said interactions have always been based on mutual respect and goodwill.



The two countries have always supported each other through the ups and downs of regional developments, the president said.

He hailed Oman's "constructive" role in regional developments, particularly in the context of mediation and hosting negotiations between Iran and the United States, which reflects "wise and peaceful performance" of the Omani authorities.

India secures six-month US waiver to run Chabahar Port

Economy Desk

India confirmed on Thursday that the United States had granted it a six-month sanctions waiver to operate Iran's Chabahar Port, a move that will help New Delhi bolster trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia.

"I can confirm that we have been granted an exemption for a six-month period," Indian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal told a weekly news briefing, referring to the port, Reuters reported.

He added that New Delhi remained engaged with the US on a bilateral trade agreement. "We continue to remain engaged with the US side on finalizing the trade deal. Both sides are continuing to hold discussions. For any further update, I would refer you to the Ministry of Commerce," Jaiswal said.

The announcement follows Washington's decision in September to revoke a sanctions waiver that had allowed India to operate the Chabahar Port since 2018. The White House said on September 18 the exemption would end on September 29, a move that had threatened India's multimillion-dollar investment in the strategic southeastern Iranian port and exposed anyone involved in its operation to possible sanctions. The waiver followed word by US President Donald Trump this week that he wanted to reach a

trade deal with India, signaling a thaw in relations that soured to their lowest point in decades after he doubled tariffs on Indian imports to 50% as punishment for Indian purchases of Russian oil.

India has already provided equipment worth \$25 million, shipped food supplies through Iran's Chabahar Port. The country signed a 10-year agreement with Iran in May 2024 to develop and operate the port, pledging \$120 million in investment and offering an additional \$250 million credit line for infrastructure upgrades.

The port was initially planned with a rail link to Afghanistan for building the landlocked country's economy through trade and reducing Kabul's dependence on the Pakistani port of Karachi. This month India stepped up engagement with Afghanistan by reopening its embassy in Kabul, which had been closed after the Taliban seized power in 2021.

An Indian official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the US waiver took effect on Wednesday. The US embassy in New Delhi did not immediately respond to a request for comment, the report by Reuters added.

Iran has long slammed Washington's use of sanctions, with officials in Tehran describing the approach as an "addiction" since the 1979 Islamic Revolution by repeatedly targeting various Iranian entities under shifting pretexts.



ISNA

IRENA meeting in Abu Dhabi

Tehran vows continued renewables expansion despite sanctions



Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the IRENA, Reza Ameri (r.), addresses the agency's 30th Council meeting in Abu Dhabi, UAE, on October 30, 2025.

ISNA

Economy Desk

Iran has made progress in developing renewable energy despite unilateral sanctions and remains committed to diversifying its energy mix, the country's ambassador and permanent representative to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) said on Thursday.

Reza Ameri highlighted Iran's progress in developing solar, wind, biomass and geothermal power plants, as well as in implementing national energy efficiency programs at the agency's 30th Council meeting in Abu Dhabi, IRNA reported.

According to the latest data from Iran's Renewable Energy and Electricity Efficiency Organization (SATBA), the country's renewable energy plants now have a daily generation capacity of over 2,700 megawatts, accounting for only 2.8% of Iran's total daily electricity generation capacity of around 95,000 megawatts. The country plans to raise its installed renewable energy capacity to 7,000

megawatts per day by the end of the current Iranian year (March 20, 2026) and further to 11,000 MW per day by next summer, according to the Energy Ministry.

President Masoud Pezeshkian's government has set a goal of installing 30,000 MW of renewables in the next three years to help ease daily power shortage which was around 12,000 MW last summer. At the IRENA meeting on Thursday, the Iranian envoy stressed that the Islamic Republic's efforts to advance clean energy continue in the face of economic restrictions. The 30th IRENA Council meeting, held in the United Arab Emirates, brought together more than 400 senior officials from 170 member states and international organizations to review implementation of the agency's 2024-2025 work program and budget and discuss global strategies for clean energy expansion. Ameri underlined IRENA's key role in advancing global renewable energy development and supporting developing nations.

Citing new IRENA statistics showing a 91% increase in newly installed renewable electricity capacity in 2024 and \$460 billion in savings on fossil fuel costs, he said, "These achievements demonstrate the growing resilience and competitiveness of clean energy. However, regional disparities in access to finance and technology must remain a top priority for global cooperation."

"The energy transition must be just, inclusive and based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities," he added. "Without equitable access to financial resources and technology, achieving global goals will not be possible." Ameri welcomed IRENA's initiatives such as the Climate Investment Platform (CIP) and the Energy Transition Accelerator Financing Platform (ETAF), calling for their expansion to provide stronger support for developing countries. Reaffirming Iran's backing for IRENA's mission, he said, "The agency's role in realizing a sustainable, secure and equitable future for all nations is vital."

He concluded that the international community should "strengthen cooperation, technology transfer and investment facilitation so that the energy transition becomes not only faster but also fairer, leading to sustainable development and lasting peace for all."

Minister urges free zone officials to expedite \$10b investment plan

Economy Desk

Iran's Economy Minister Ali Madanizadeh on Thursday called on managers of the country's free trade zones to accelerate the implementation of a nationwide transformation plan aimed at attracting \$10 billion in investment over the next three years.

Speaking to a meeting of Kish Free Zone Organization managers in southern Iran, he said, "My request is to finalize and operationalize the discussion of anonymous investments mentioned in the free zone transformation plan as quickly as possible so that the \$10 billion investment target over three years is achieved."

Madanizadeh said that the overall plan for transforming Iran's free zones is being prepared by Kish Free Zone authorities and urged them to finalize the plan quickly, following his recommendations and with the support of foreign consultants.

The minister urged Kish Free Zone officials to "think big," highlighting the potential to turn the island in the Persian Gulf into a regional technology and innovation hub.

Madanizadeh suggested prioritizing the attraction of domestic talent that may face limitations on the mainland, as well as Iranian innovators abroad who could feel more comfortable operating in free zones.



He proposed developing a broader innovation ecosystem beyond the digital economy, concentrating major innovative companies on Kish and bringing leading universities to the island.

"If a nationwide model change is to occur, the first place it should happen is in the free zones," the minister said, highlighting the strategic role of these zones in driving economic transformation.

According to ISNA, Iran currently has 18 approved free trade zones, eight of which — Kish, Qeshm, Chabahar, Aras, Anzali, Arvand, Maku, and Imam Khomeini Airport City — are operational, while the remaining ten — Mazandaran, Incheh Borun, Sistan, Mehran, Qasr-e Shirin, Baneh and Marivan, Sarakhs, Dogharoon, Ardabil, and Bushehr — are in the process of being activated.

Kish Free Zone, located in the Persian Gulf, is one of Iran's most prominent economic zones, aimed at promoting trade, investment, and innovation in the country.

Gilan Province planning Rasht-Oman air cargo route to boost exports



Economy Desk

Gilan Governor General Hadi Haqshenas announced on Thursday that authorities are

working with airlines to launch an air cargo route from Rasht to Oman, aiming to expand the northern province's export capacity.

"With the cooperation of airlines, we are planning to establish an air cargo line from Rasht Airport to Oman to activate air exports," IRNA quoted Haqshenas as saying.

He added that the planned Rasht-Oman route, along with the completion of the Rasht-Astara railway, would further facilitate exports of the province's agricultural products to global markets.

Trade between Iran and Oman reached \$1.153 billion in the first five months of the Iranian calendar year (began on March 21), marking an 11% increase from a year earlier, with Iran's exports — up 16% — driving most of the growth, according to Mehr News Agency.

According to the Gilan governor general, between 400 and 500

trucks currently enter or leave the province daily, and the provincial goal is to raise that figure to 800.

He underscored the importance of export standardization, warning, "If within the next two years products such as kiwifruit lack traceability documents and QR codes, many countries will stop accepting them."

He pointed to a recent instance in which part of a bell pepper shipment was returned, calling it a proof that "our production must be based on scientific principles and global standards."

"The development of processing

and complementary industries — the missing link in agricultural value-added — can help reduce waste and improve productivity," the governor said.

Haqshenas also described the Rasht-Astara railway as one of the country's key development priorities, noting that 90 kilometers of the route have been cleared so far, including 70 kilometers in the past six months.

He expressed hope that upon completion, the line, which is part of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), would allow Gilan to export goods directly by rail to international destinations.

Regional dialogue policy



By Mohammad Mehdi Mazaheri

Scholar, former head of ECO Cultural Institute

OPINION

Until the unprovoked attack by Israel and the United States on Iran's nuclear and military sites, the country's diplomatic apparatus had pursued an active and multilateral regional policy. The goal was to keep influential regional states — particularly Saudi Arabia — in the loop regarding the course of nuclear talks with Washington, thereby winning over their trust and cooperation in this diplomatic process. This strategy seemed to pay off. Unlike in previous periods, when these countries were highly likely to team up with any strike on Iran's nuclear facilities, this time the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council spoke with one voice, condemning Israel's aggression against Iran.

However, after the attacks ended, regional diplomatic exchanges and initiatives died down to some extent. This drop was somewhat understandable, given the need to let the situation stabilize to reassess regional dynamics. Meanwhile, Iran's security priorities shifted toward strengthening military deterrence and beefing up its preparedness for defense.

The apparent failure of mediation efforts by Oman, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Qatar to ward off the Israeli assault — and Iraq and Qatar's seemingly involuntary complicity in the aggression — also ate away at Iran's confidence in these diplomatic channels for a genuine resolution. In such a climate, the spotlight naturally moved away from active regional diplomacy toward deterrence-oriented policies.

Still, regional developments — especially Saudi Arabia's role and activities — should not slip off Tehran's diplomatic radar. To push forward its foreign policy goals and safeguard national interests, Iran must make full use of all available regional potential.

Saudi Arabia's position carries special weight. Analysts recognize that in recent years, Riyadh has set out to reshape its foreign policy around tension reduction and active diplomacy at both global and regional levels. After ending the war in Yemen and pulling through the Khashoggi crisis, Saudi officials sought to patch up their tarnished image and get their economy back on track. Their strategy boiled down to focusing on economic and technological projects, while overhauling foreign policy priorities to turn the kingdom from a notorious interventionist military actor into a credible regional balancer and peace-seeker. Its main approaches have been as follows:

1. Easing tensions with Iran and deepening ties: Once relations with Tehran were on the brink of a severe crisis and Saudi officials openly backed unrest inside Iran, but Riyadh later backed away from that stance, realizing it ran counter to its economic growth plans. This policy shift, launched after the Beijing Agreement in 2023, has since been shored up by positive diplomatic exchanges. Riyadh's goal is to tone down threats and set the stage for a stable environment for its ambitious economic projects, particularly under Vision 2030.

2. Normalizing ties with Israel: Although the push to normalize relations with Israel hit a wall due to the Gaza war and the regime's brutal campaign against Palestinian civilians, Riyadh still considers normalization a long-term strategic goal. The kingdom wants to cash in on American economic and security concessions and the benefits of the normalization, but is in no rush to jump on the bandwagon. Keen to save face domestically and within the Islamic world, Saudi leaders intend to join the Abraham Accords only when they can frame the move not as betray-



al but as a way to press ahead with the Palestinian cause. To that end, Riyadh has laid down preconditions such as the establishment of a Palestinian state and aims to take the lead in regional peace talks.

3. Acting as a regional mediator: In recent years, Saudi Arabia has stepped in as an active mediator in several regional crises. In 2023, it hosted talks between Sudan's warring parties. Riyadh also weighed in on Gaza cease-fire efforts, publicly backing an independent Palestinian state. Yet, given the sheer complexity of the conflict, its mediation has taken a back seat, with Saudi goals largely revolving around maintaining balance in its dealings with Israel and the US.

The kingdom has also tried its hand at global diplomacy — chipping in on nuclear negotiations between the US and Iran, and on Russia-Ukraine peace efforts — to boost its clout worldwide.

4. Economic diplomacy: Realizing that economic stability goes hand in hand with political stability, Riyadh has poured money into investment projects in China, the US, the UK, Iraq, Syria, and Egypt, while branching out into African markets. It also seeks to draw in foreign direct investment from China, India, and the US to work toward its Vision 2030 goals. The long-term objective is to wean its economy off oil and turn the country into a re-

gional economic hub with diversified sources of income.

Saudi Arabia aims to stake a claim in shaping global digital infrastructure, with heavy investments in undersea cable routes, data centers, and cloud-computing partnerships. Its engagement in AI governance, cybersecurity norms, and tech investments speaks volumes about how economic policy and strategic ambition go hand in hand in Riyadh's worldview.

5. Expanding ties with global powers: While keeping up its traditional alliance with Washington, Riyadh has at the same time tightened links with Beijing and Moscow. This multi-vector diplomacy allows it to play one off against another when necessary, securing greater strategic autonomy. Its participation in BRICS is a prime example of this balancing act.

6. Domestic reforms: On the domestic politics front, Saudi officials have thrown their weight behind sweeping social and economic reforms. Internal stability is key to seeing through major projects such as NEOM and drawing in foreign capital. Hence, the kingdom strives to project an image of a reliable, modern, and stable state attractive to investors.

Overall, Riyadh's approach over the past year shows a clear shift away from confrontation toward equilibrium and cooperation. Aware of the tangled

geopolitics and new power structures at play, it has set about recalibrating its foreign and regional policies to lock in long-term security and interests.

Iran must now build on Riyadh's altered outlook to serve national interests and post-war security priorities. Given the geography and economic setup of the Strait of Hormuz, Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf states stand to lose the most from any renewed escalation between Iran and Israel. Another military face-off could cripple energy flows and spook investors. Flight cancellations, rerouted shipping in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, and electronic jamming that throws off vessel navigation systems could easily shatter the region's economic growth dreams.

At this juncture, the interests of Iran and the Arab Persian Gulf states — especially Saudi Arabia — align squarely around one goal: security and stability in the Persian Gulf. It is therefore imperative to get regional talks back on track, breathe new life into dialogue, and call on Saudi Arabia and other emerging middle powers to turn their influence into concrete peace initiatives — standing shoulder to shoulder with Iran to head off another devastating war in the Persian Gulf.

The article first appeared in Persian on the Institute for Political and International Studies website.



Iran's Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Ali Larijani (3rd-L) meets with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (R) at Al-Yamamah Palace in Riyadh on September 16, 2025, to discuss bilateral relations and regional developments.

● FARS



Once relations with Tehran were on the brink of a severe crisis and Saudi officials openly backed unrest inside Iran, but Riyadh later backed away from that stance, realizing it ran counter to its economic growth plans. This policy shift, launched after the Beijing Agreement in 2023, has since been shored up by positive diplomatic exchanges. Riyadh's goal is to tone down threats and set the stage for a stable environment for its ambitious economic projects, particularly under Vision 2030.



The Persian Gulf Cooperation Council holds a ministerial meeting in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

● GCC

Iran and Saudi Arabia

From rivalry to realism



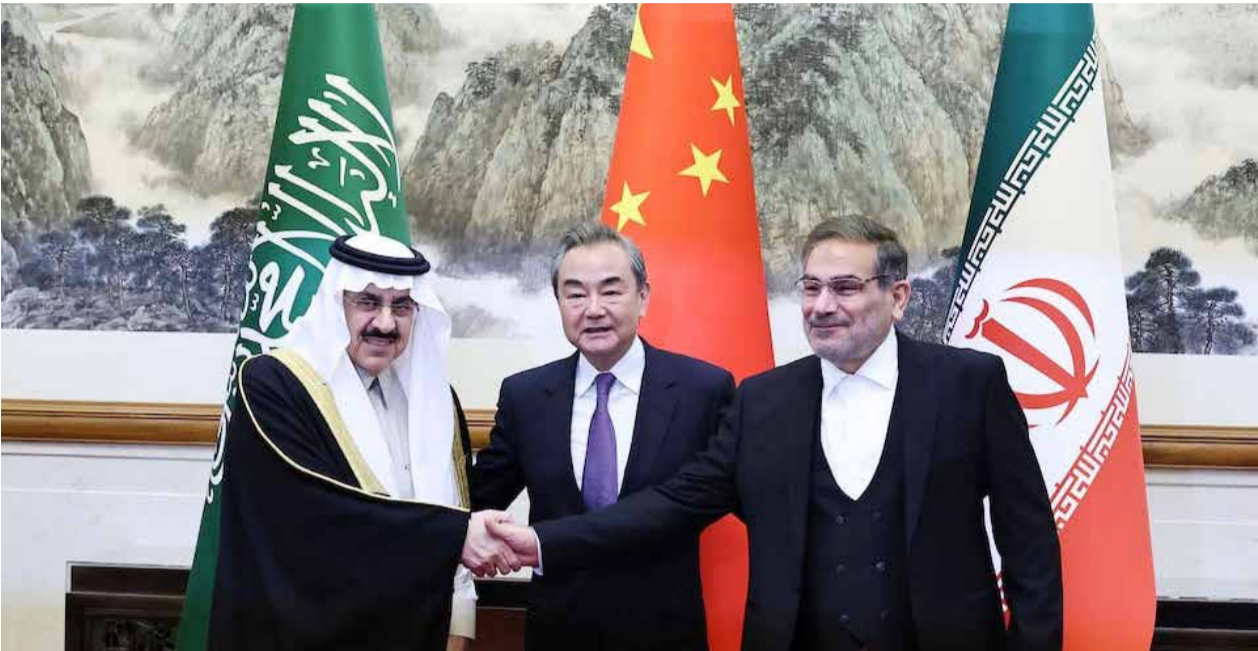
By Zakir Hussain
Expert on political economy
and Mideast affairs

OPINION

Today, Iran and Saudi Arabia need to bury their old grudges. They should not waste the rapprochement mediated by China, which had not only surprised the world but also reshaped regional geopolitics that thrived on the belief that, without Israel, the Shias and Sunnis would keep fighting like "cat and dog". The reconciliation between the two has created a wave of hope across the region and among peace-lovers worldwide. Whatever Beijing's motives might be, it brought the two arch-rivals, after decades of open and hidden hostilities, face-to-face to discuss and resolve their differences. It has given both sides a rare opportunity to pause, rebuild confidence, deepen trust, and provided a joint platform on peace and stability, ending sectarianism, settling political boundaries, and pursuing post-oil diversification. Since both claim leadership, Riyadh and Tehran must work together. Today, their challenges are common, and the costs are too high to ignore. Both share deep historical and cultural roots, which can benefit them if they cooperate instead of competing. Even if they agree only on the idea of "peace," that alone can have huge dividends in the form of prosperity, stability, and well-being to their people and the world at large. Iran is known as the last "great underdeveloped" country, while Saudi Arabia is pursuing some of the most ambitious diversification projects in the world. Both countries have enormous resources. Instead of sending them abroad, they can create a mutually beneficial ecosystem to work together on economic, trade, investment, and technology projects. This cooperative model can easily be extended to other countries, including the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, the League of Arab States, and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member countries. Such a model should rest on complementarity, not competition; on cooperation, not exploitation; and on shared benefit, not isolation. The rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran has damaged not only each other but also Islam's image and the Muslim world as a whole. Since Islam is a global faith, these divisions and misunderstandings have crossed borders and poisoned the minds of believers everywhere. Their sectarian conflict, which Islam strictly forbids, turned Muslims against Muslims and gave the enemies of Islam a chance to label it violent and extremist. Both states funded madrasas, trained cadres, and produced literatures to justify their political versions of Islam. After decades of doing so, they gained little except a world that now misunderstands Islam. The real tragedy is that in this so-called "war on terror," Muslims have killed more Muslims than anyone else.

How can they further patch up differences

Times have changed. If they continue their rivalry and ignore their divisions, they may never get another chance to correct their mistakes. Their economies, too, are changing. The global energy landscape is no longer the same. The US, once dependent on imports, is now a net exporter of oil and gas. It is directly competing with major oil producers such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Iran. Under President Trump, Washington is forcing its trade partners to reduce the trade deficit by importing American oil and gas, even though it was expensive and less reliable in terms of security of energy and safe transport of oil tankers (VLCCs). Countries like India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, and Sri Lanka are all pressured to buy US energy, cut-



ting into the Persian Gulf's market share. At the same time, sanctions on Russia have pushed Moscow to divert its oil and gas exports to Asia, intensifying competition in the Asian energy market. To protect its oil shipments, the US may further increase its naval presence, raising the risk of maritime tensions among major powers. Europe offers a powerful lesson. Decades of brutal sectarian wars between Catholics, Protestants, and Calvinists, including the Thirty Years' War, which even saw acts of cannibalism, made them realize that no side could win. They finally signed the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, which brought peace, tolerance, and respect for state sovereignty, thus ending centuries of bloodshed and laying the foundation for peaceful coexistence in Europe. The Middle East needs the same wisdom today. Saudi Arabia, Iran, and other regional states should sit together and form an umbrella body to handle political, sectarian, and ideological differences, reduce tensions, and end divisions once and for all.

What they are expected to do

This is a decisive moment in history. The region is facing two contradictory trends moving in parallel: first, "challenging circumstances on all possible fronts," and second, "sitting on a pile of enormous economic, mineral, and cash reserves." To harness these resources, the countries must reduce challenges and overcome negative factors. People understand how to handle these contradictions — by promoting trust, combining resources, and creating a win-win ecosystem for the benefit of the region and beyond. What is needed now is a strong political and moral commitment to act. Some of these are:

- **Build unity and trust:** They must develop unity and trust at the economic, po-

litical, defence, security, and intelligence levels. Saudi Arabia and Iran need to work on three fronts: bilateral, regional, and extra-regional.

- **Bilateral level:** They should sit together and address both mutual benefits and differences. More importantly, they must send a clear message of reconciliation, as they did in Beijing. This will strengthen their credibility and make regional cooperation easier.
- **Regional level:** Both need to evolve a common policy for engaging and disengaging with friends and adversaries. They must accept that religion and ideology were misused for political ends. A "pan-regional" approach is essential to address the grievances of marginalised populations. A representative committee should be formed to draft a time-bound plan focused on housing, health, infrastructure, and employment — all destroyed by prolonged wars.
- **Extra-regional level:** Both should clarify their policies toward major powers. They must prevent external forces from turning the region into a conflict zone and instead build a shared security and intelligence network. If the distant US and Europe can operate the "Five Eyes," regional countries can create their own version to share real-time intelligence and prevent crises. The cooperation seen among intelligence agencies during the Israel-Gaza war can serve as a model.
- **Manage proxy and technological warfare:** This is the age of drones and wars between backed groups. Controlling backed groups is difficult since they often act independently or serve external agendas. Still, the problem can be reduced through public trust and close coordination among defence, security, and intelligence agencies.
- **Regulate telecommunication data:** They must adopt a common policy on telecommunication companies, both

domestic and foreign. These firms often leak user data, enabling targeted killings. During the Gaza war, several such breaches occurred despite claims of end-to-end encryption.

- **Form defence agreements:** Defence and security pacts should be signed bilaterally, regionally, and with external partners, ensuring transparency to avoid mistrust. Smaller defence groups — the Arab League, Central Asia, or Southeast Asia — can focus on local security issues, joint research and development, training, and innovation. Military force should remain the last resort; Dialogue and diplomacy must lead.
- **Build a common economic ecosystem:** Riyadh and Tehran can lead a 57-nation economic network to align national visions, open captive markets, and promote a Persian Gulf-led, Muslim-favoured economy. Wealthy states should invest in industries within resource-rich countries, not just extract minerals. This will generate local jobs, reduce costs, and build goodwill.
- **Create a social and religious network:** Beyond defence and economy, a broader social-religious network is needed — like a Shura Council — independent and inclusive. The existing OIC has failed to serve this role. A new network of smaller, issue-focused groups can operate more effectively and address local problems without domination by powerful states.

Way forward

- Institutionalise Saudi-Iran cooperation at bilateral, regional, and extra-regional levels.
 - Form a Pan-Regional Committee for reconstruction and humanitarian recovery.
 - Develop a joint regional intelligence-sharing framework on the pattern of "Five Eyes".
 - Ensure transparency in all defence and security pacts.
 - Form a pact with telecommunication communities on data security and accountability for its misuse, if they share.
 - Create a 57-nation economic cooperation network to align growth and trade. It should be backed by local-level economic groupings cooperating and coordinating with the bigger one.
 - Establish a social and religious consultative body functioning like a broader Shura Council, with broad-based representation by NGOs, community gatekeepers, and local leaders.
 - Promote political and moral commitment from all regional actors to replace conflict with cooperation and minimise domination of big countries with a common consensus and equal representation of all major and important sects.
- The entire world, not just the region or the two billion Muslims, needs a break from these endless, exhausting conflicts.

The full article first appeared on Middle East Monitor.



Ali Shamkhani, then-secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (R) and Saudi Arabia's Minister of State Musaad bin Mohammed Al Aiban shake hands, while the mediating Wang Yi, China's senior diplomat, poses for pictures, after signing an agreement in Beijing, China, on March 10, 2023.

● REUTERS



Iran is known as the last "great underdeveloped" country, while Saudi Arabia is pursuing some of the most ambitious diversification projects in the world. Both countries have enormous resources. Instead of sending them abroad, they can create a mutually beneficial ecosystem to work together on economic, trade, investment, and technology projects.



Iranian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Alireza Enayati (L) and the Saudi Minister of Islamic affairs Sheikh Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Sheikh hold the Holy Qur'an during their meeting to discuss issues facing the Islamic world, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on September 18, 2023.

● SPA

World Taekwondo Championships: Iran finishes second in men's event but women fall short

Sports Desk

Iran had a mixed campaign at the World Taekwondo Championships in Wuxi, China, securing its best run in the men's competition in a decade, while all seven Iranian girls finished without a medal.

Amirsina Bakhtiari settled for a joint third-place finish in the -74kg weight class on Thursday to help the Iranian men's squad stand runner-up to South Korea in team table with one gold, one silver, and one bronze medal.

While the result marked the best for Iran since the 2015 title-winning campaign, it ended the country's eight-year team podium drought at the sport's flagship international tournament.

Former world junior champion Bakhtiari began the final day with a victory over Thailand's Krittayot Phrompatju and went on to defeat former world bronze medalist Javad Aghayev of Azerbaijan and Italian Angelo Mangione – world champion in 2022 – to reach the quarterfinals.



Abolfazl Zandi celebrates with the Iranian flag after winning the gold medal in the men's -58kg class at the World Taekwondo Championships in Wuxi, China, on Oct. 29, 2025.

● WORLD TAEKWONDO

Bakhtiari then came out victorious in straight rounds against Kazakhstan's Yergesh Bekassyl before suffering a last-four setback against Brazilian Edival Pontes – an Olympic

bronze medalist last year – to share the third podium with Russian Magomed Abdusalamov, who competed as a neutral athlete.

Bakhtiari's bronze came after Abolfazl Zandi had

ended Iran's decade-long wait for a gold at the world showpiece by capturing the ultimate prize in the men's -58kg category on the preceding night.

The Iranian sensation produced an emphatic run in Wuxi, not conceding a single round across five bouts en route to the final before defeating 2023 silver medalist Georgii Gurtsiev of Belarus – also a neutral contestant – in straight rounds (7-3, 12-8) to add the senior glory to his 2022 world junior gold.

Mahdi Hajimousaei, meanwhile, finished with silver in the -63kg category in controversial fashion after a punch to his neck forced him to withdraw midway through the final against Tunisia's Mohamed Khalil Jendoubi last Saturday.

Mahdi Razmian (-54kg), Mohammad-Sadeq Dehqani (-68kg), and Mohammad-Hossein Yazdani (-87kg) as well as Arian Salimi (+87kg) and Mehran Barkhordari (-80kg) – last year's Olympic gold and silver medalists respectively – all missed out on the podium in Wuxi.

South Korea claimed a 25th men's title in 27 editions – thanks to two gold medals, one silver, and double bronzes – with Brazil, Uzbekistan, and Egypt

finishing third to fifth respectively.

Women's woe

Elsewhere on the final day, Mobina Nematzadeh capped a dreadful campaign for the Iranian women's team with a last-16 exit in the -53kg division.

Given a bye in the first round, the 20-year-old Iranian, who won an impressive bronze medal at the Paris Olympics, got off to winning start to her World Championships debut, beating Lebanon's Mariella Bou Habib 2-0 (8-0, 7-0) but fell in straight rounds (4-3, 2-0) against Turkey's Merve Dinçel, who went on to secure back-to-back world golds.

Earlier in Wuxi, Kowsar Asaseh (-62kg) and former world silver medalist Mahla Momenzadeh (-49kg) had their campaigns ended after two bouts, while Saeideh Nasiri (-46kg), Olympic silver medalist Nahid Kiani (-57kg), and Melika Mirhosseini (-73kg) failed to go beyond last 16 in their respective classes. Nastaran Valizadeh, meanwhile, suffered a first-round exit in the -67kg division.

Asian Youth Games: Record medal haul sees Iran stand fourth in overall table

Sports Desk

Iran enjoyed its best medal count in three editions of the Asian Youth Games, capturing 24 golds, 29 silvers, and 40 bronzes in Bahrain 2025. The impressive haul saw the Iranian delegation finish fourth in the overall standings of the multi-sport event. Iran had bagged six medals – including a single gold – at the inaugural edition in Singapore 2009, before settling for six silvers and double bronzes four years later in Nanjing, China.

China dominated the table in Bahrain with 147 medals, including a remarkable 63 golds, followed by Uzbekistan (37 golds) and Kazakhstan (24 golds), with Thailand in fifth place on 15 gold medals.

Iranian weightlifter Hossein Yazdani rounded off the country's decent campaign by grabbing the gold in the boys' +94kg division on Thursday.

A world youth champion in May, Yazdani posted a 201kg effort to claim the



Iranian under-17 futsal players celebrate after winning the girls' gold medal at the Asian Youth Games in Isa Town, Bahrain, on October 30, 2025.

● FFIRI

ultimate prize in the clean & jerk, having won the snatch bronze with a 151kg lift. There was further success for Iran's 'Ambassadors of Hope' on the final day of the Games.

Mohammad-Mahdi Gholami collected his second swimming gold at Khalifa Sports City, clocking 2:01.75 minutes in the final to beat India's Tirthank Pegu (+0.81)

and Wang Yi Shun of Hong Kong (+1.70) to the top spot in the boys' 200m butterfly showdown.

In beach wrestling, meanwhile, Sina Shokouhi (70kg) and Touraj Khodaei (80kg) claimed gold in their respective weight classes, alongside silver medals for Amir-Ali Domirkolaei (60kg) and Mohammad-Mahdi Fotouhi (90kg).

The pinnacle of the final day for the Iranians perhaps came in the girls' futsal showdown, where the country's under-17 team defeated China 3-2 in the shootout to win a sensational gold medal.

The two sides played to a goalless stalemate at the Khalifa Sports City Hall, before Iranian goalkeeper Fatemeh Shokrani denied

Lian Yutong in the penalties, while Ren Yunuo and Tong Wenjing also missed their efforts.

The Iranian boys' team, however, had to settle for silver after being stunned 2-1 by Afghanistan in the final later on Thursday.

Abbas Heidari and Ali Ahmadi found the net for Afghanistan either side of halftime before Hossein-Reza Yousefi

pulled one back for Ali Sanei's side three minutes after the break.

A chaotic ending to the game saw four players – including Yousefi and his teammates Mohammad-Ali Shekarchi and Amirhossein Abdolrazzaqi – receive their marching orders for being involved in a physical altercation with five minutes left on the clock.

Glittering girls

Female contestants were instrumental to Iran's medal-laden run at the Games, securing 29 of the country's medals through history-making achievements across different sporting events.

While the Iranian girls' team walked away with the ultimate prize in the volleyball, handball, and futsal competitions, Zeinab Shahriari bagged a couple of golds in the individual and mixed pair recognized poomsae events.

Baran Jani and Rozhan Behnami added double girls' combat golds to Iran's medal count in muaythai, with Vania Fathalipour and Tiam Dehpahlevan striking in mixed martial arts.

Mahsa Shakibai, meanwhile, made history by winning a maiden women's gold for Iran at an international judo event – thanks to a victory over Kazakhstan's Alua Baltabay in the -48kg final.

Iranian girls also collected five silvers and 15 bronze medals.



Iranian judoka Mahsa Shakibai (blue) celebrates after winning the girls' -48kg gold at the Asian Youth Games in Sakhr, Bahrain, on October 29, 2025.

● FFIRI

WSPS World Cup: Iranian women collect air pistol gold, bronze

Sports Desk

Iran's Nasrin Shahi claimed the gold medal in the women's 10m air pistol SH1 event at the World Shooting Para Sport World Cup in Al Ain, United Arab Emirates, on Thursday.

Shahi scored 239 points to beat India's Bhakti Sharma

(236.8) to the top spot with Iran's Faezeh Ahmadi settling for bronze with 215.6 points.

Elsewhere on the third day of the competition, Iranian men's and women's squads finished with silver medals in the 10m air pistol contests. The traditional WSPS World Cup wraps up the 2025 sea-

son of major shooting para sport.

The Zayed Higher Organisation Al Ain Equestrian, Shooting & Golf Club will host 213 athletes from 39 nations, who compete across 40 individual and team events in rifle, pistol and shot gun disciplines, until Wednesday.



● ISNA

Kafarin Gorge inspires new vision for eco-tourism in Ilam Province



IRNA



kojaro.com

Iranica Desk

Nestled deep within the Zagros Mountains, amid the silence of the rocks and the whisper of flowing rivers, lies a serene and majestic gorge known as Kafarin or Kafari — a place still untouched on Iran’s tourism map, yet one that could easily become a dream destination for nature lovers.

With its towering cliffs, crystal-clear waters, diverse vegetation, and enchanting landscapes, Kafarin Gorge (Tange Kafarin) showcases the pristine beauty of western Iran—a land where every turn tells a story of erosion, time, and natural splendor, according to ISNA.

Despite its remarkable natural and cultural potential, Kafarin Gorge remains in obscurity. There are no tourism facilities, no signposts, and no mention in the country’s official list of national attractions. Yet, this



kite.ir

very anonymity has preserved its purity, offering a rare opportunity to introduce this natural heritage to the world with care and responsibility.

Farzad Sharifi, director general of the Ilam Province Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, told ISNA that Kafarin Gorge is one of the

most beautiful and least-known natural attractions in Ilam Province. Located near the town of Badreh, it holds immense potential for the development of sustainable tourism.”

Sharifi explained, “In recent years, efforts have been made to identify and include this area in the list of the province’s nat-



kite.ir

ural attractions. However, it still needs greater attention from government agencies and the media.”

He added that the gorge, with its high cliffs, clear river, rich flora, and breathtaking views, can be an appealing destination for eco-tourists, researchers, and nature enthusiasts alike.

Sharifi emphasized that Kafarin is one of Ilam’s overlooked treasures which, with proper introduction and the creation of basic infrastructure, could become a major tourism hub in southern Ilam.

Sharifi also noted that maintaining the gorge’s untouched state alongside responsible tourism

development could serve as a successful model for coexistence between humans and nature in the Zagros region.

He concluded by stressing that, in addition to its natural beauty, Kafarin Gorge is home to valuable plant and animal species that must be protected from pollution and destruction.

“Educating visitors, installing warning signs, and involving local guides can play a key role in preserving this natural heritage,” he said.

Promise of a sustainable future

Experts believe that destinations such as Kafarin Gorge represent the next frontier of eco-tourism in Iran. As more travelers seek authentic, low-impact experiences, regions like Ilam — with their unspoiled landscapes and welcoming communities — are poised to benefit from a growing global interest in sustainable travel.

Developing Kafarin responsibly could not only boost the local economy but also create jobs for residents in guiding, hospitality, and conservation services.

The area’s proximity to other natural attractions and ancient sites of the Zagros Mountains adds further value. Integrating Kafarin into regional tourism routes could help balance visitor flow and prevent over-tourism in more crowded destinations. However, environmentalists warn that any development must prioritize conservation, using eco-friendly infrastructure and strict waste management policies to protect the gorge’s delicate ecosystem.

Ultimately, Kafarin Gorge stands as both a hidden paradise and a test of commitment — to see whether modern tourism can evolve in a way that truly respects the land it seeks to celebrate.

Experience surreal landscapes of Jask

Iranica Desk

The Martian and Miniature Mountains of Jask — a geological phenomenon renowned for their unique shapes and vivid colors — rise in the eastern part of Hormozgan Province. With their pristine landscapes and striking formations, these mountains hold significant potential for nature-based tourism and geotourism in Jask. Situated near the Lirdaf coast, Pyveshk village, and historical sites such as the Jask Telegraph House, the area presents visitors with a rare and compelling blend of natural beauty and cultural heritage.

Along the turquoise shores of the Makoran coast, under

the blazing sun and caressing sea breeze, this extraordinary mountain range emerges as if it belongs to another world. With sharp folds and dazzling hues, the Martian and Miniature Mountains of Jask stand out not only as one of Hormozgan Province’s most distinctive natural wonders but also as one of its most untouched tourist destinations — a landscape where the Earth seems to display its artistry on a planetary scale, chntn.ir wrote.

Located in the southeast of Hormozgan, within the Lirdaf district and near Pyveshk, the Jask Martian Mountains are approximately 80 kilometers from the city center. Visible from the main Jask–Sirik road, they im-

mediately capture the attention of travelers. These formations are part of the wider Makoran geological system, stretching from the vicinity of Gwadar Bay in Sistan and Baluchestan to the area near Minab in Hormozgan. The mountains are composed of clay, marl, and soft sandstone, shaped over millions of years by the erosive forces of wind, rain, and seasonal streams. The sparse vegetation and low humidity leave their sharp ridges and dense sedimentary layers exposed, creating a striking visual display. At sunrise and sunset, sunlight reflecting off their silvery-gray surfaces produces a surreal scene, as though the earth and sky converge at a border of colors.

Jask, particularly the Lirdaf district, experiences a hot and arid climate, yet the mountains’ proximity to the sea generates refreshing air currents and contrasting landscapes of aridity and moisture. Not far from the slopes, visitors can encounter small village palm groves, seasonal ponds, and migratory bird routes, each revealing a unique facet of Makran’s diverse natural environment.

During winter and early spring, the region’s limited rainfall forms runoff streams that carve through the valleys and grooves of the mountains, further revealing their layered structure. Alongside the scenic Lirdaf beaches and neighboring villages, the Martian Mountains

of Jask present an extraordinary array of opportunities for ecotourism. Beyond their visual appeal, the area offers an ideal setting for the development of geological tourism (geotourism) and educational excursions.

The mountains’ unique allure lies in their combination of contrasting colors, natural forms, and the profound silence that envelops the landscape, giving visitors the sensation of stepping into another world. Moreover, their proximity to Jask’s main roads and easy accessibility make them an attractive destination for short trips by both domestic and international travelers.

An additional advantage of the Martian Mountains of Jask is

their closeness to other historical and natural attractions of the region. Less than an hour away, the historic Jask Telegraph House — a valuable Safavid-era structure later used by the British as a communications and trade center — stands as a testament to the region’s rich heritage. Today, it is registered on Iran’s National Heritage List. Visitors can also explore the unspoiled Lirdaf beaches with their coral reefs, the sandy hills of Pyveshk village, and Jask’s traditional palm groves. The combination of these natural and historical attractions positions the area as a promising hub for nature-based tourism in eastern Hormozgan Province.



seeiran.ir



Veep calls on academies to lead scientific governance, solve challenges



Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref (c) speaks at the General Assembly of the Academy of Sciences of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Tehran, on October 31, 2025.
● fvpresident.ir

the Academy of Sciences of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Aref said the government views the academies as "the country's scientific think tanks" and central to developing the National Innovation Document and long-term research strategies, fvpresident.ir reported.

"The government counts on the academies to guide the country's scientific governance and future," he said. He recalled the early post-revolution years when the number of students and faculty members was too small to meet national needs but stressed that systematic investment in education led to the creation of a 20-year national vision document for science and technology.

"That roadmap put Iran's scientific

leadership at the center of national development," he said. "We aimed to become the region's top country in science and technology, but while we moved ahead at a steady pace, the world raced forward. We must now catch up."

Aref said the administration's approach rests on extending the earlier long-term vision into a practical national innovation agenda, emphasizing high technology and advanced research.

"Artificial intelligence is no longer a choice, it's an obligation," he said. "Just as we achieved a single-digit global ranking in nanotechnology, we must now aim to be among the world's top ten in AI."

The vice president called for tighter co-operation among universities, research centers, and industries, warning that the current disconnect was limiting national growth.

Addressing environmental and economic imbalances, Aref said the Academy of Sciences should lead efforts to resolve crises such as water shortages, climate change, and structural imbal-

ances in national resources.

Aref urged the government and the academic community to restore Iran's international scientific engagement, which he said had suffered from "a narrow-minded fear" of foreign infiltration. "It's unrealistic to think we can cut scientific ties with the world," he warned. "The country loses when we isolate our scholars."

Calling the academies "the conscience of scientific governance," Aref said they must act as "the nation's strategic compass," shaping the eighth development plan and charting Iran's scientific future. "The academies must not only observe but guide," he said. "They should be the torchbearers of innovation, ethics, and responsibility in national decision-making."

Aref concluded by saying the Pezeshkian government believes that "the country's real power lies in its scientists and thinkers." He added, "We see the solutions to Iran's problems in scientific assemblies, and above all, in the academies that gather the country's most distinguished scholars."

Social Desk

Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref on Friday urged the nation's academies and research institutions to take the lead in solving the country's

pressing economic, environmental, and social challenges through scientific solutions, calling them the "highest authority" in the nation's pursuit of progress and innovation. Speaking at the General Assembly of

After years away, Iran makes literary return to Algiers book fair

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's publishing industry returned to the Algiers International Book Fair after years of absence, marking its re-entry into one of Africa's largest cultural gatherings.

The 28th edition of the fair opened on Wednesday at the Pins Maritimes Exhibition Palace under the theme "The Book: A Meeting Place of Cultures," IRNA reported.

The event runs from October 29

to November 8, 2025, bringing together 1,254 publishing houses from 49 countries and showcasing more than 240,000 book titles. Mauritania is this year's guest of honor.

Iran's participation, coordinated by the Iran Book and Literature House in cooperation with the country's cultural center in Algiers, features a diverse range of works spanning literature, history, art, and children's books. The return follows what officials described as years of "per-

sistent effort" to reestablish Iran's cultural presence in the North African market.

Algerian Prime Minister Sifi Ghrieb inaugurated the fair alongside Algeria's Culture Minister and her Mauritanian counterpart, who led the guest delegation. Senior government officials, diplomats, and representatives of national institutions also attended the ceremony.

Crowds poured into the exhibition halls on opening day, with

many visitors stopping by the Iranian booth to browse Persian titles and pose for photos beside the Iranian flag, a gesture organizers described as a sign of "warm public reception."

This year's fair, held on the eve of the 71st anniversary of Algeria's revolution, features more than 50 cultural events, including lectures, panel discussions, and poetry evenings focusing on history, creativity in the digital age, and the Palestinian cause.



November 30 designated as nat'l day for Persian Gulf trio islands



● MEHR

Social Desk

The Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution (SCCR) of Iran on Friday officially declared November 30 as the national day commemorating the trio of islands, Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, in the Persian Gulf.

SCCR official Gholamreza Basirnia said the decision was taken because November 30 marks the anniversary of Iranian Navy forces re-taking the three islands from British forces in 1971, IRNA reported. He described the date as a "symbol of

regained sovereignty" for Iran in the Persian Gulf, Tasnim News Agency reported.

In the same meeting, the council named November 12 as "National Aerospace Day" in tribute to the late Hassan Tehrani Moghadam and Amir Ali Hajizadeh, two senior figures in Iran's missile and aerospace sector.

The islands, located near the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz, have been under Iranian control since Iranian naval forces moved in on November 30, 1971, just prior to the formal founding of the United Arab Emirates.

Basirnia said the move to register November 30 in the national calendar follows "persistent efforts" by the Iranian Navy's legal office to compile historical evidence of Iran's sovereignty and to restore tombstones of the islands' defenders.

The islands have been an integral part of Iran for many centuries, supported by numerous legal, historical, and geographical records both within Iran and internationally. However, the UAE has challenged Iran's sovereignty over the islands in recent decades, while Iran emphasizes they are an inseparable part of its territory and has urged the Arab country to avoid actions that could harm bilateral relations.

The origins of the issue trace back to the early 20th century, during the decline of Iran under the Qajar dynasty and the growing influence of British imperialism in the Persian Gulf. Britain took control of Abu Musa in 1904 and the two Tunbs in 1921, delegating local governance to British-appointed sheikhs of Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah for the next fifty years. Iran and the UK repeatedly debated the islands' status, but without tangible outcomes.

Iran's sovereignty over the islands was lawfully reinstated on November 30, 1971, shortly after the British withdrawal and just two days prior to the official formation of the UAE federation.

Iran forms task force to protect historic sites from land subsidence

Social Desk

Iran has launched a national task force to combat land subsidence threatening the country's cultural heritage, officials said Thursday. The initiative, ordered by First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref, follows an analytical report from the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts highlighting the escalating risk to historic sites.

Farhad Azizi, director-general of the Office of National and World Heritage Sites, said the subsidence "is the result of unchecked groundwater extraction, illegal well-drilling and unsustainable cropping patterns."

He noted that while his ministry does not directly oversee land management, the threat to historical artefacts requires urgent intervention.

The task force will focus on four main areas: safeguarding historical and cultural assets, integrated management of groundwater resources, reforming water consumption with smart restrictions, and preserving the natural environment.

Specialized provincial working groups have also been established in Isfahan and Fars. These teams bring together provincial departments of cultural heritage, agriculture, water and energy, and envi-



● ISNA

ronmental protection, implementing a participatory model prioritizing heritage conservation.

In addition, the Research Institute for Cultural Heritage and Tourism has formed a scientific study group to monitor data, develop preventive models, and provide actionable, research-based solutions to both national and provincial task forces.

"This is a multi-layered, specialized and participatory structure," Azizi said. "We will strive to halt subsidence alongside our heritage sites." He emphasized that the approach combines inter-agency coordination, modern technologies, and local community involvement, offering a model for integrated natural resource and heritage management in Iran.