

Veep says gov't backs capacity enhancement of renewable power plants

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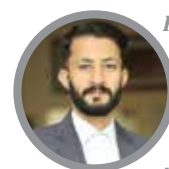
## Araghchi: Upon US to return to diplomacy by gaining Iran's trust

Japan calls for resumption of Iran-US nuclear talks

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### Iran-Pakistan security dialogues deepened after 12-day war

INTERVIEW  
EXCLUSIVE



Recent developments and the frequent visits of senior Iranian and Pakistani officials, particularly after Israel's 12-day war against Iran, have paved the way for more security dialogues between Tehran and Islamabad. Syed Ali Abbas, a research officer at the Center for International Strategic Studies in Islamabad, has told Iran Daily that such dialogues not only improve security stability but could also lay the groundwork for greater cooperation under the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and the formation of a collective security architecture in Southwest Asia.

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**IRAN DAILY:** How significantly can the renewed political will in ECO strengthen economic and security cooperation between Iran and Pakistan in the coming years?

**ABBAS:** The renewed political attention to ECO, including Iranian FM [Abbas] Araghchi's emphasis on its potential, comes at a time when both Pakistan and Iran are looking for regional economic cooperation framework. For Pakistan, ECO has always been a natural platform to advance its vision of regional connectivity and geo-economics.

If this political will is translated into implementation, it can strengthen Pakistan-Iran cooperation in three practical ways. First, by putting into operation already agreed measures such as border markets, facilitated customs procedures and improved transport links, ECO can help increase bilateral trade and embed it in wider regional supply chains. Second, ECO offers a useful umbrella for energy, transit and even digital connectivity projects that link Pakistan's ports to Iran, Central Asia and Turkey, which is consistent with Pakistan's own policy directions. Third, as economic interdependence grows, it can create a more favourable environment for cooperation on shared security concerns along the Pakistan-Iran border, including terrorism, smuggling and narcotics.

For Pakistan, ECO's primary vocation lies in economic cooperation and connectivity. Within that broad framework, there is also space for some calibrated security-related collaboration, for instance, technical working groups on border management, disaster response and counter-terrorism, anti-narcotics cooperation developed in a manner that fully respects the priorities of all member states.

**Pakistan openly supported Iran during the 12-day war with Israel. What does this alignment mean for possible defence and security collaboration within the ECO framework?**

Pakistan's position during the 12-day crisis was guided by long-standing principles of the UN Charter. Islamabad expressed solidarity with the Iranian people, voiced concern over the use of force and violations of international law, and reiterated its consistent stance on the need to protect civilians and uphold the rights of the Palestinian people, a continuity with Pakistan's broader approach to conflicts in the Middle East.

That episode has nonetheless contributed to a higher level of political trust and dialogue between Pakistan and Iran. It has reinforced the space for more structured discussions on border security, counter-terrorism, smuggling and the protection of critical infrastructure, where both sides face similar threats and share an interest in stability.

Within ECO, Pakistan's emphasis naturally falls on economic cooperation and connectivity. In that context, it sees value in "soft" and functional forms of security collaboration, such as information-sharing on terrorism and organised crime, coordinated disaster management, maritime safety and the protection of trade corridors.

**Frequent high-level visits especially the recent one by Iran's security chief Ali Larijani have deepened Tehran-Islamabad bilateral security dialogue. Can these bilateral gains be scaled up into a genuine multilateral security mechanism inside ECO?**

Recent high-level engagements, including the visit of Dr Ali Larijani, have certainly given greater depth and structure to the Pakistan-Iran security dialogue. Discussions have focused on counter-terrorism, border stability, developments in Gaza, and the need to remove impediments to economic cooperation while working towards an ambitious trade target. This reflects a maturing bilateral relationship in which political, economic and security tracks are increasingly interlinked.

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## Pezeshkian urges stronger collaborative ethos in Iranian society

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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (R) unveils a commemorative stamp during an international conference on the role of the family in society in Tehran on December 1, 2025.

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World Karate Championships: Golshadnejad makes history as Iran collects three medals

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Historic Golabar village offering adventure, culture, relaxation

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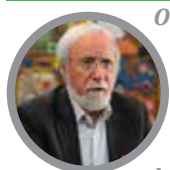
Women power 30% of Iran's microbusiness jobs, lead 7,000 cooperatives

INTERVIEW  
EXCLUSIVE

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## Iran-Saudi cooperation essential to halt Israel's expansionism

INTERVIEW  
EXCLUSIVE



On Sunday, Saudi Arabia's Deputy Foreign Minister Saud bin Mohammed al-Satti visited Iran and held talks with Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. The visit was described as part of the ongoing diplomatic consultations between the two states and aimed at discussing bilateral ties as well as exchanging views on regional developments, including the situations in Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria. The trip comes at a moment of heightened tensions between Israel and Lebanon following the assassination of Haitham Ali Tabatabai, a prominent Hezbollah commander, and several other resistance members, an incident

Hezbollah considers a breach of the cease-fire and has vowed to retaliate for. Iran and Saudi Arabia, as major regional players, are seen as capable of playing a meaningful role in defusing these tensions.

The visit also follows Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's recent trip to the United States and his meeting with President Donald Trump, during which Iran was reportedly discussed. Iran's direct contacts with Washington have been entirely severed since the 12-day war in June, but various countries are seeking to step in to prevent regional escalation. Speaking to Iran Daily, Middle East affairs expert Sabah Zanganeh said the Saudi delegation probably briefed Iranian officials partly on the Trump-MBS discussions.

**IRAN DAILY:** How should the tim-

ing of the Saudi deputy foreign minister's visit and his meeting with Abbas Araghchi be assessed, and what were the main points potentially addressed during the talks?

**ZANGENEH:** Visits and diplomatic exchanges constitute a fundamental pillar in improving and expanding relations between states. Following several recent trips, during which various Iranian ministers participated in events held in Riyadh and engaged in discussions with their Saudi counterparts, the pattern indicates Iran's commitment to advancing these ties. Political relations already in place need to be built up so that different dimensions of engagement can progress with goodwill and full mutual understanding, allowing both sides to lay down a solid foundation for future cooperation while safeguarding the interests of each country. The deputy foreign minister came

to follow up on earlier rounds of dialogue. And now, after Mohammed bin Salman's visit to the United States, it appeared that Saudi Arabia intended to brief Iranian officials on the crown prince's meeting with President Trump. Since Iran's name had been raised multiple times in those conversations, both by MBS and in Trump's replies, it was likely deemed necessary for a senior Saudi official to travel to Tehran and inform Iran of what had been discussed.

Nevertheless, the issue did not necessarily involve the delivery of a formal message, but what mattered was clarifying what exactly had been said and how each side had positioned itself. Whatever the outcome, once the Foreign Ministry judged it expedient, the relevant information would either be released publicly or factored into its strategic assessments.

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# Araghchi: Upon US to return to diplomacy by gaining Iran's trust

Japan calls for resumption of Iran-US nuclear talks



Abbas Araghchi

## International Desk

Iran's foreign minister said on Monday that it was the United States that



Toshimitsu Motegi

should return to diplomacy by gaining Iran's trust after his Japanese counterpart called for the resumption of nuclear talks between Tehran and Washing-

ton as soon as possible. During a 30-minute phone conversation, Abbas Araghchi and Toshimitsu Motegi discussed a range of issues including bilateral ties, international issues, as well as Iran's nuclear program. The Japanese foreign minister also urged Iran to resume full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). On November 20, Iran canceled a cooperation agreement it had signed with the IAEA in Cairo following the passage of an anti-Iran resolution at the agency's Board of Governors. Iran had earlier suspended cooperation with the IAEA over military strikes by the US and Israel on Iran's nuclear sites in June. Tensions between Tehran and the West have increased in recent months, especially after the three European parties to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal – Germany, France and Britain – triggered the so-called snapback mechanism embed-

ded in the nuclear agreement on August 28, which led to the reimposition of international sanctions against Iran. They accused Iran of not honoring its obligations under the nuclear deal from which the US unilaterally withdrew in 2018 and the European trio failed to fulfil their commitments. Tehran has repeatedly said it was the United States and its European allies who undermined the nuclear deal by failing to live up to their commitments. Despite their failure to fulfil their commitments, Iran began new negotiations with the US in April to resolve differences over its nuclear program. However, in the midst of the negotiations, Israel, greenlit by the US, launched attacks on Iran, which derailed talks between Tehran and Washington. Referring to anti-Iran measures by the Western parties to the Iran nuclear deal, the top Iranian diplomat told his Japanese counterpart that now "It is the United States that must return to

diplomacy by gaining Iran's trust."

## West not ready for talks

In response to a question about a recent statement by the French Foreign Ministry, in which it said that "Iran must return to the negotiating table as soon as possible", Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman said that repeating the claim that "We are ready to negotiate" would not change the fact that the Western parties were not ready for talks. During his weekly press conference, Esmail Baqaei said that Iran's position on the nuclear issue was clear. "What Iran is doing is focused on exercising a right that, under international law and according to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, has been granted to Iran and every other country," Baqaei said. He also urged the West to refrain from pursuing coercive policies and demands that had no basis in international law.

## President offers humanitarian aid to Indonesia after deadly floods

### International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Monday expressed sympathies to Indonesia over deadly floods and landslides in the country, saying that Tehran was ready to provide humanitarian aid to the affected people. "On behalf of the government and people of Iran, I extend my condolences to Your Excellency and the people of Indonesia," Pezeshkian said in a message to his Indonesian counterpart Prabowo Subianto, according to IRNA. He also hoped for the swift recovery of the people injured in the floods and landslides which claimed the lives of more than 600 people.



Damaged houses hit by flash floods are seen near a river bank in Padang, West Sumatra Province, Indonesia, on November 28, 2025. **REUTERS**

Flooding and landslides have killed more than 1,100 people across Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Malaysia following tropical storms in recent days, with efforts under way to help thousands affected by the extreme weather. At least 604 people have

been killed, and hundreds remain missing after days of heavy rain triggered severe flooding and landslides across parts of Sumatra, according to Indonesian tallies. The provinces of Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra have been hardest hit, with thousands of

people reportedly isolated without vital supplies. Hundreds of thousands of people have been evacuated from homes across three provinces on the western Indonesian island of Sumatra alone. In Sri Lanka, the government called for international aid and used military helicopters to reach people stranded by flooding and landslides triggered by Cyclone Ditwah. At least 355 people have been killed, according to officials, with another 366 estimated to still be missing. Over 170 people are also reported to have been killed in Thailand, with the southern province of Songkhla being the hardest-hit.

## Iran issues ownership documents for its Trio Persian Gulf islands



MEHR

Iran has formally issued land demarcation and ownership documents for the islands of Abu Musa, as well as the Greater and Lesser Tunbs in the Persian Gulf, asserting its sovereignty over the territories.

The State Organization for Registration of Deeds and Properties announced on Sunday that the title deeds have been registered in the name of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, stressing the islands' integral status as part of Iranian territory, Press TV reported.

According to the Judiciary, the move is part of a broader national strategy to safeguard land resources and prevent unauthorized use or encroachment. The Judiciary described the measure as a "practical step" towards safeguarding Iranian territory.

The initiative is also intended to address international disputes and counter "false claims by foreign parties," particularly regarding sovereignty over the three islands.

The Persian Gulf islands of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs have historically been part of Iran, proof of which can be found and corroborated by countless historical, legal, and geographical documents in Iran and other parts of the world.

However, the United Arab Emirates has repeatedly laid claim to the islands. The islands fell under British control in 1921, but on November 30, 1971, a day after British forces left the region and just two days before the UAE was to become an official federation, Iran's sovereignty over the islands was restored.

## Iran hosts SCO anti-terror drill

### International Desk

A large-scale anti-terror exercise of the members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) kicked off in Iran's northwestern province of East Azarbaijan on Monday. Hosted by the Ground Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), the drill, named "Sahand-2025," will run for five days in Shabestar county, said a statement by the IRGC. The exercise has been designed under a directive from the General Staff of Iran's Armed Forces and the IRGC, with cooperation from the Iranian

Foreign Ministry and the Executive Committee of the SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure, said Shahram Askarian, the IRGC Ground Force's public relations deputy. He pointed to the strategic importance of the exercise, saying it could enhance regional security cooperation. Referring to over 17,000 victims of terrorist attacks in Iran over the past decades, Askarian said that the country had played a key role in fighting terrorist groups. The drill is expected to bolster international cooperation against terror-

ism and enhance the capabilities of participating nations in addressing security challenges in the region, according to the official. Sahand-2025 is the second joint counter-terrorism drill conducted by the SCO member states. The first, coded "Interaction-2024," was held in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in July last year. The SCO is a Eurasian political, economic and international security organization grouping China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan, Iran and Belarus.

## Iran-Saudi cooperation ...

In your view, what shared priorities do Iran and Saudi Arabia have regarding regional files, and which areas offer the greatest potential for cooperation?

Lebanon is a highly significant issue. Both Iran and Saudi Arabia are closely attuned to Lebanon's circumstances and to how they might act in favor of the Lebanese people, regional calm, and efforts to hold back Israeli violations and aggressions. On Syria, given recent developments, the country needs assistance from both Iran and Saudi Arabia to contain Israeli expansionism on Syrian territo-

ry and to support Syria's reconstruction. Such cooperation is essential.

With tensions rising between Hezbollah and Israel after Tabatabai's assassination, to what extent can this visit be viewed as part of efforts to reduce tensions and manage the crisis?

Hezbollah has its own calculations and capabilities and can adopt whatever response it deems appropriate in reaction to recurring Israeli attacks. Any assistance requested from the Islamic Republic of Iran or from Saudi Arabia will be aimed at curbing Israeli expansionism. These measures are

necessary because such acts could trigger a broader confrontation and, if left unchecked, would likely be repeated over and over, a pattern witnessed across past decades. Therefore, countries invested in regional stability must take the lead in preventing Israeli aggression. Iran and Saudi Arabia need to coordinate on this issue and focus on the shared position of both nations, namely, the pursuit of calm and enforcement of the cease-fire. Although differences may exist in other domains, those can be addressed through dialogue and consultation, allowing for convergence on key positions.

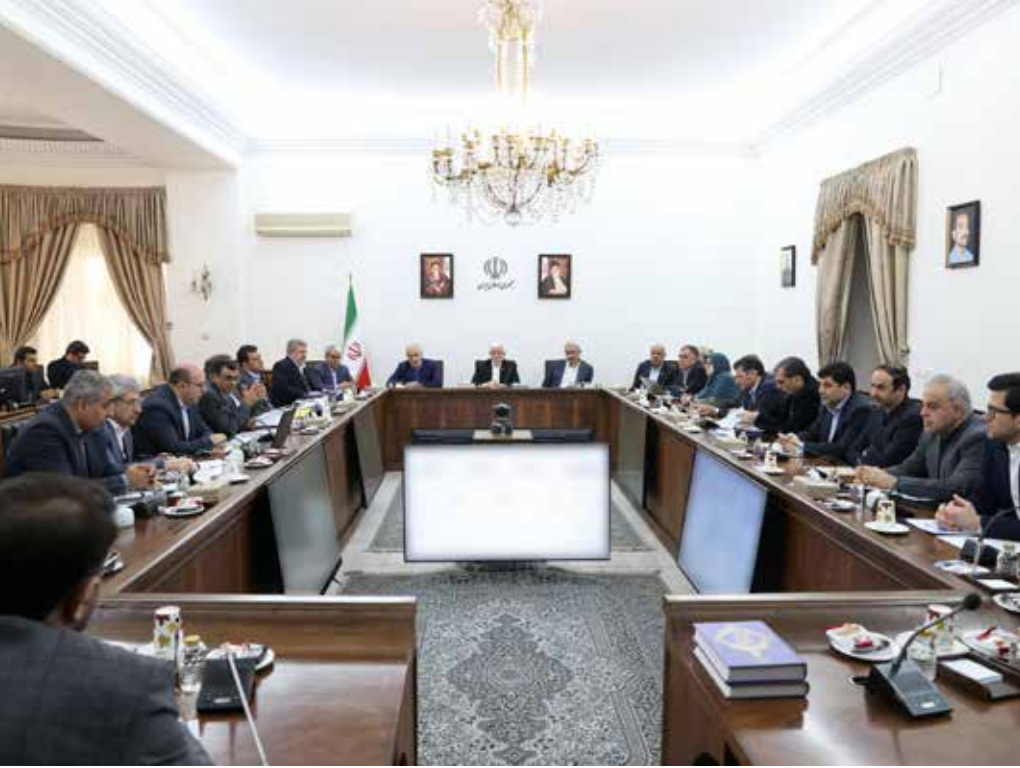
Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

CARTOON





# Veep says gov't backs capacity enhancement of renewable power plants



Economy Desk

Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref expressed on Monday the government's support for a rise in the production of electricity from renewable power plants across the country via cooperation between the private and public sectors. Aref made the statement in a meeting with members of Economy Council in Tehran as he underlined the need for the preparation of a comprehensive plan aimed at increasing the national power generation capacity. "A good action has been taken to generate more than 3,000 megawatts of electricity from renewable power plants," the first vice president said. "The government supports in-



Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref (back c) addresses a meeting with members of Economy Council in Tehran on December 1, 2025.  
● [fvpresident.ir](http://fvpresident.ir)

creasing the capacity of renewable power plants. Good and valuable measures have been taken in this regard, and now the public and private sectors are fully prepared to increase electricity generation capacity from renewable power plants. However, a comprehensive plan is also needed so that we do not have a power deficit next summer." According to a report presented at the Monday meeting of Economy Council, a total of 3,165 megawatts of renewable power plant capacity have been established up until December 1st, and 528 sites with a capacity of 7,850 megawatts are under construction. Such issues as the method of financing for increasing the capacity of renewable power plants were also discussed at the meeting.

445 MW of solar power plants come online

Aref's announcement coincided with the commissioning of 445 MW of solar power plants and the executive operations of 177 MW of new projects in more than 90 regions across the country via video link with the presence of Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi.

As reported by IRNA, with the power plant projects inaugurated on Monday, Iran's renewable power plant capacity exceeded 3,100 megawatts of renewables, which is unprecedented in the history of the country's solar energy development. The construction of every 100 megawatts of solar power plants annually saves 56 million cubic meters of natural gas, prevents the emission of 138 thousand tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, and saves 44 thousand cubic meters of water. Monday's major inauguration is regarded as an important step in strengthening the national power grid stability, reducing shortages, and moving towards a green and sustainable future.

## TPO highlights Iran's extensive capacities for D-8 trade development

Economy Desk

The head of the Africa office of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) stressed on Monday the importance of Iran's presence at the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, saying the Islamic Republic, as one of the founding members of D-8, enjoys extensive capacities for active participation in the development of intra-group trade. Addressing a meeting of D-8 senior trade officials in Cairo, Mohammad Reza Safari underlined that Iran's excellent geopolitical position as a cross-roads connecting East and West, and North and South, provides a unique opportunity for expanding trade corridors, multimodal transport, and facilitating transit of goods among D-8 members. "Iran's reliable port, rail, and road infrastructures,

especially the southern ports in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, can be an effective link in the regional and global supply chain," he added. The TPO official stressed that Iran's industrial and technological capabilities in such fields as petrochemicals, steel, energy, nanotechnology, pharmaceutical industries, and medical equipment can create valuable opportunities for industrial cooperation and joint production. Safari said Iran's extensive market and skilled workforce can also provide opportunities for joint investment and the creation of regional industrial clusters for D-8 members. The official also underscored the necessity of defining initiatives and joint projects for moving D-8 group collaborations from agreements to implementation.

Proposing several key axes, Safari said, "First, establish a D-8 preferential trade network and complete technical processes to reduce tariffs and facilitate trade documents, especially for goods with a competitive advantage in each country, launch joint transportation corridors, and integrate transit regulations, especially connecting member ports through regular maritime lines and developing rail transport among the group's countries." He added in the second proposed axis that a financial settlement system among members should be launched using local currencies or multilateral barter mechanisms to reduce transaction costs and increase resilience against international fluctuations. "Now, more than ever, cooperation among D-8 member countries can become a driving force for shaping regional value chains and increasing our



A view of the meeting of D-8 senior trade officials in Cairo, Egypt, on December 1, 2025.  
● [IRNA](http://IRNA)

countries' share of global trade," Safari concluded. "We believe that by relying on shared political will, diverse economic capacities, and rich human capital, this group can become a successful model of South-South cooperation in today's world."

## First Iranian train with domestically manufactured wagons departs for Uzbekistan



Economy Desk

The director general of foreign trade of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways announced on Monday the departure of a first Iranian train with indigenously manufactured wagons from Sarakhs in Khorasan Razavi Province to Bukhara in Uzbekistan. "This important achievement was realized through the extensive railway diplomacy adopted since the beginning of the current government, and in this regard, today the first train with 40 Iranian wagons departed from Sarakhs border to Bukhara station in Uzbekistan," Shahrar Naqizadeh said in an exclusive interview with IRNA. Stressing that Iranian fleets in the past were not allowed to operate in Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and shipments from our

country were allowed to pass with wagons from Commonwealth countries, he said Iran Railways is witnessing after extensive efforts and follow-ups the dispatch of trains with Iranian wagons in such countries. "This train is carrying iron and sponge iron products and is currently traveling towards Bukhara after passing through Turkmenistan," Naqizadeh added. Last week in Istanbul, an important six-party railway agreement was signed between the Islamic Republic of Iran, China, Uzbekistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan, aiming to develop commodity exchanges from China to Europe via Tehran. The East-West railway corridor has managed to reduce the transit time for goods by about one-third compared to the sea route.

## Iran-Pakistan security ...

From Pakistan's perspective, the confidence and experience built bilaterally can usefully inform ECO-level cooperation, but in a gradual and technical manner. Islamabad would be receptive to thematic working groups under ECO, for instance on border management, counter-narcotics, cyber issues, maritime safety and disaster response. This would remain consistent with ECO's mandate and the diverse partnerships of its members.

Given Pakistan's defense ties with both Iran and Saudi Arabia, can ECO serve as a neutral platform to bring members who are sometimes on opposite sides of regional equations closer together on security issues?

Pakistan's security and defence relationships with both Iran and Saudi Arabia are anchored in a consistent policy of avoiding involvement in intra-Muslim disputes and encouraging dialogue and de-escalation. While Persian Gulf Arab states are not members of ECO, developments in the ECO region inevitably interact with Persian Gulf security through energy flows, trade routes and investment corridors. In this sense, Pakistan sees ECO as part of a wider stabilising architecture in its neighbourhood. A more integrated ECO space that is focused on trade, connectivity and people-to-people exchanges can help reduce polarisation and offer all partners, including Persian Gulf states, more reliable economic and logistical options.

Araghchi described ECO as potentially one of the most dynamic emerging regions of the Global South. What concrete role can Pakistan play with its unique links to Iran, China, and Persian Gulf states in making this vision a reality? Pakistan is geographically central to ECO's connectivity ambitions. It links the Arabian Sea and the approaches to the Persian Gulf with Central Asia, western China and, through Turkey, Europe. This gives Pakistan a natural role as one of the key implementing states of ECO's vision. Concretely, Pakistan can help in several ways. It can work to align ECO's priority projects with corridors already under development, particularly the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. That would allow exporters and investors from Iran, Central Asia and Turkey to tap into Chinese and global markets via Pakistan's ports. Pakistan can also build on the practical steps already taken with Iran, such as opening border markets and improving road links, and encouraging their expansion under ECO branding. This would showcase ECO's ability to deliver visible benefits on the ground.

In addition, Islamabad can use its diplomatic channels with Persian Gulf partners to attract more investment into ECO-based logistics, warehousing, energy and industrial projects, positioning ECO as a land bridge between the Persian Gulf and Eurasia. Finally, Pakistan can be an advocate within ECO for regulatory harmonisation, modern transit agreements, digital customs, e-commerce facilitation and mutual recognition of standards, which are relatively low-cost measures but can significantly boost intra-ECO trade and investment.

As Iran seeks greater "eastern strategic depth," how big a connector and facilitator can Pakistan become for energy, infrastructure, and transport projects across the ECO region?

Iran's search for greater "eastern strategic depth" coincides with Pakistan's own shift towards a geo-economic outlook. Both countries support connectivity projects that link Persian Gulf energy and industrial output with South Asia, Central Asia and western China. Pakistan can play a meaningful connecting role in three areas. In energy, Pakistan and Iran already cooperate on cross-border electricity, and there is long-standing discussion around gas pipeline options. In infrastructure and transport, Pakistan can help tie Iranian

ports and special economic zones to CPEC routes and to Central Asian Road and rail networks, improving access in both directions. Recent joint steps to address logistics bottlenecks and facilitate border trade are encouraging signals. Lastly, Pakistan's experience in areas such as digitalisation of customs, the use of the TIR system and public-private partnership models can be shared within ECO to support the financing and operation of large projects. In all these sectors, Pakistan favours inclusive frameworks that are open to participation by interested extra-regional partners under transparent and rules-based conditions.

What are the main political or structural factors that still prevent Iran-Pakistan security cooperation from becoming institutionalized at the ECO level and how can they be overcome?

Several political and structural factors shape how far Iran-Pakistan security cooperation can be undertaken within the ECO framework. Some are external. The international sanctions environment around Iran makes financial and technological cooperation more complex, even when the focus is on training or capacity-building. The wider regional setting is also delicate. Parts of the ECO region, particularly around Afghanistan, continue to face instability. This

naturally encourages some member states to move with caution on any initiative that might be read as different. There are also internal considerations. ECO was originally created as an economic and development organisation. Its institutions and resources reflect that mandate. At the same time, member states have different external partnerships and varying levels of mutual confidence. This can slow consensus on more ambitious ideas in the security domain. From Pakistan's perspective, the way forward is to proceed in a measured, transparent and clearly defined manner. A practical first step is to concentrate on areas that are widely viewed as non-controversial and mutually beneficial. Examples include border management, disaster relief, counter-narcotics, cyber hygiene and the protection of trade corridors. All such efforts would need to remain fully consistent with international law and relevant UN decisions, and coordinated with other regional organisations to avoid duplication. If ECO can show steady progress in these technical areas, it will help build trust among members. Over time, this can create more space for Iran-Pakistan cooperation, within ECO, to be seen as a supportive contribution to regional stability and resilience rather than as a move against any other state.



# Iran's performance at COP30; threats and opportunities



By Mohammad-Hossein Emadi

Member of HLPE for UN Committee on World Food Security

## OPINION

The COP30 summit, with a focus on the implementation of the Paris commitments, the tripling of adaptation finance by 2035, the establishment of the “Global Implementation Accelerator,” and the invitation to members to present more exigent national plans in 2025, concluded its proceedings on November 21. Yet its resolutions, akin to previous summits, were accompanied by profound global questions and challenges. The purpose of this piece is to examine Iran's performance and positions in the recent conference and the corresponding opportunities and threats. The avoidance of an explicit commitment to the exit from fossil fuels, the financial fissures, and the geopolitical divergences constituted, for Iran — as one of the 10 principal carbon-emitting countries in the world, and a country that procures more than 90 percent of its energy from fossil fuels — not merely a diplomatic event but an immaculate mirror reflecting Iran's domestic predicaments and its potential international opportunities.

An emphasis on climate justice and on its indirect effects on the economy and environment, as well as the condemnation of sanctions, could have been transmuted into an opportunity for an overhaul in Iran's future policymaking; yet the faint presence of the Iranian delegation on the one hand, and the contradictions between its international positions and its conduct on the other, converted it into yet another forfeited opportunity. Iran, with a population exceeding 85 million, is situated in an arid and semi-arid region rendered extraordinarily vulnerable by climate change. The grave peril of a “day zero” for the capital's water supply, after the desiccation of numerous wetlands and Lake Urmia, continual droughts, dust storms, and rising temperatures, inflicts billions of dollars of damage annually upon Iran's fragile economy. COP30, with its focus on adaptation and financing, could have constituted a point of departure for Iran's access to global financial resources, but unilateral sanctions as well as weakness in representation and diplomatic positions circumscribed these opportunities.

### Diplomacy in shadow of sanctions

The Iranian delegation, headed by Shina Ansari, vice-president and head of the Department of Environment, traveled to Belém for two days and conducted more than 11 bilateral meetings with officials from regional countries, ministers of environment, and representatives of the United Nations. In her speech, Ansari emphasized “climate justice and global cooperation,” and, despite sanctions, accentuated Iran's progress in adaptation to climate change. She noted that Iran, notwithstanding limitations in access to modern technologies, knowledge, and foreign investment, has undertaken considerable steps in the domain of adaptation and has formulated plans for the years ahead.

Nevertheless, on the international level, Iran's presence was described as “faint,” and domestically, there were criticisms regarding the rial-denominated costs of the dispatched delegation and the absence of concentration on key issues. Iran has always manifested contradictory positions at COP summits due to its economic conditions and its political stances. On one side, as an oil exporter, it shares positions with Saudi Arabia and the United States; on the other side, as

one of the countries of the Global South, it seeks the realization of its rights in relation to industrialized and developed countries.

Iran participated actively in technical negotiations, such as the Enhanced Transparency Framework and the Belém Just Transition Work Programme, but in other subjects such as gender and climate policies, it requested “national considerations”. Furthermore, Iran, together with Saudi Arabia, Russia, and China, obstructed the proposal of more than 80 countries to include the explicit phrase “gradual phase-out of all fossil fuels,” a matter highlighted by environmental advocates as one of the frailties of the final Belém agreement. These positions are rooted in Iran's severe economic dependence on oil and gas.

Iran, a member of OPEC, procures more than 80 percent of its exports from this sector, and any global commitment to the reduction of fossil fuels can threaten its foreign-exchange revenues. At COP30, Iran underscored the necessity of “support for developing countries” and the termination of “unilateral coercive measures (UTMs),” which referred directly to Western sanctions. This diplomacy furnished an opportunity for the cultivation of regional support, but without progress in nuclear negotiations, access to climate funds, such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF), remains obstructed.

COP30, through the tripling of the adaptation-finance target by 2035 (from the current \$100 billion) and the establishment of the Global Implementation Accelerator, provided instruments for vulnerable countries such as Iran. Iran, which according to the UN Adaptation Gap Report (2025) receives only 10–15 percent of its financial needs, can utilize these mechanisms for key projects, such as water management, sustainable agriculture, and early-warning systems. In her meetings, Ansari emphasized the transfer of clean technologies and the financing of climate actions in developing countries, which can contribute to the development of renewable energy in Iran — where the potential solar capacity is 60,000 megawatts.

In addition, the Belém Action Mechanism (BAM) for Just Transition provides an opportunity for Iran to formulate national programs to support workers dependent on the fossil-fuel sector. Iran is currently advancing projects, such as the installation of solar panels in rural areas and the protection of wetlands, but sanctions have hindered the attraction of foreign investment. If Iran presents its national plan by February 2025 with more ambitious objectives (such as a 20-percent reduction in emissions by 2030), it can potentially benefit from the Paris Article 6 carbon markets, which were finalized at COP30.



### Direct challenges: economy, energy, water, and environment

Of course, it must not be forgotten that the effects of COP30 on Iran are more challenge-inducing than opportunity-generating. The Belém agreement, by avoiding binding commitments to the reduction of fossil fuels, does not exert immediate pressure on oil exporters such as Iran, but the global trajectory toward clean energy (such as the increase in energy-company investment to \$148 billion annually) can reduce global oil demand by approximately 10–15 percent by 2030. This, considering Iran's plans to increase oil production (to more than four million barrels per day), threatens foreign-exchange revenues and will intensify inflation and budget deficits. Domestically, however, climate change — which COP30 recognized as a global crisis — has placed Iran on the threshold of a vital crisis.

The recent droughts, which, according to a 2025 study, were directly attributed to global warming, have produced threats to the viability of the capital and the partial forced migration of inhabitants from Tehran. Forest fires in the northern regions and in the Zagros, sandstorms in the south, and a 50-percent reduction in groundwater resources inflict, at a minimum, more than \$10 billion of annual damage upon Iran's fragile and sanction-burdened economy. Iran at COP30 emphasized subjects, such as “early-warning systems” and the Loss & Damage Fund, within which progress was achieved, yet without specified budgets, their implementation will be arduous. Sanctions, which were highlighted at COP30 as the principal obstacle to Iran's sustainable development, themselves constrain access to green technologies and maintain Iran ever more firmly with-

in the cycle of fossil-fuel dependence.

### Long-Term consequences: a test of resolve

COP30 for Iran, akin to many developing countries, constituted a test of courage to establish equilibrium between global commitments and national interests. The Belém agreement, despite its frailties, provided instruments, such as the transparency framework and carbon markets, that Iran can potentially use to attract domestic and eastern investments (from China and India, for instance). But without the removal of sanctions — which were condemned in the summit as “unilateral measures” — these instruments will remain ineffectual. On the domestic level, COP30 compels Iranian policymakers to reconsider the national plan and to invest in renewables (the 10,000-megawatt target by 2030). Ultimately, the impact of COP30 on Iran is dual: an opportunity for justice-centered diplomacy and a challenge for an economically vulnerable state. Iranian policymakers must assume the requisite courage to resolve their policy contradictions and strive to translate their pledges in Belém — from the protection of the Zagros forests to the transition to clean energy — into action. The future will be shaped not in sheets of paper and signed documents, but in good governance and the ability to provide clean air and potable water to the capital, to end the forest fires of the northern regions, to eradicate extreme dependence on fossil fuels, to secure territorial sustainability, and to restore agricultural water resources.

The article first appeared in the Persian-language newspaper Shargh.



Iran's Vice President Shina Ansari (c-l) meets with the Turkish delegation (R) during her visit to Belém for the COP30 UN Climate Change Conference in Brazil.

● ARNET (IRIS/ANADOLU)



COP30, through the tripling of the adaptation-finance target by 2035 (from the current \$100 billion) and the establishment of the Global Implementation Accelerator, provided instruments for vulnerable countries such as Iran. Iran, which according to the UN Adaptation Gap Report (2025) receives only 10–15 percent of its financial needs, can utilize these mechanisms for key projects, such as water management, sustainable agriculture, and early-warning systems.



The photo shows a view of the oil refinery on Khark Island, located 25km off the coast of Iran.

● ARNET



# G20 without US

## Multilateralism after hegemony?



By Miguel Otero Iglesias  
Professor at the IE School of  
Global and Public Affairs

### OPINION

The 2025 G20 Summit in Johannesburg marks a turning point in the history of global economic governance. For the first time since the forum's inaugural meeting of leaders in 2008, the US not only failed to shape the agenda but chose to boycott the entire process. President Donald Trump refused to attend, justifying his absence with the fabricated claim that "Afrikaners are being killed" in South Africa, and attempted to downgrade the summit by insisting that the host country hold a handover ceremony with a junior US diplomat. President Cyril Ramaphosa — encouraged by the other members of the G20 — declined to bow to US pressure. Rather than yielding, he even "dared" to issue a G20 Leaders' Declaration without the consent of the White House. Was this an unprecedented move towards a world "after hegemony," as Robert Keohane would have it? Of course, this moment does not signal the arrival of a new world order. Far from it. But it does show — tentatively, imperfectly, symbolically — that multilateralism can survive without the US. The G20 produced a final declaration, climate commitments were restated, and major economies coordinated their diplomatic positions. These are not trivial achievements. They hint at a world that is beginning to function "after hegemony": a world in which cooperation persists because states, and their civil societies, see value in collective action, not because a hegemon orchestrates the process. This has been palpable in the Think Tank 20 (T20) discussions I have attended over recent years, where the US has been increasingly noticeable by its absence. Yet this is only the beginning. The outcome of the Johannesburg summit raises more questions than answers about what a post-hegemonic multilateral system might look like.

#### US boycott

The political context of the US boycott set the tone for this G20 summit. And this was clearly observable in my conversations at the T20. South African officials and think tankers, as well as many other African voices, interpreted Trump's absence as an insult to the host and the continent. His emphasis on a fabricated narrative about the killing of Afrikaners added racial and ideological undertones. More broadly, the boycott exemplifies the broader transformation of the US from a stabilising presence in global governance to a more unpredictable, selective, and, at times, openly confrontational actor. The shift was reinforced by the timing of the US 28-point plan to end the war in Ukraine, released a few hours before the G20 Summit, despite Washington's absence. The plan was widely perceived by European capitals as skewed in favour of Russia, offering concessions that undermined core principles of Ukraine's sovereignty. What troubled European delegations most was not only the content but the method: the US sought to impose a peace framework unilaterally, without consultation, and by not even being present in the most important multilateral gathering. This combination of boycott and unilateralism constitutes a clear break with the historical role the US once played. Instead of providing the leadership that sustains cooperation, Washington now acts openly as a "predatory" hegemon, using its power to shape outcomes in its interest while disregarding institutional processes and, most importantly, the reaction that these measures might trigger, even among its closest allies. The implications for the G20 are existential. Can it survive without the engagement of the US?



#### Europe, Plural South

One of the central dynamics at Johannesburg was the emerging — albeit fragile and situational — convergence between Europe and parts of the Global South. This is not a new political axis, nor a coherent coalition, nor a unified worldview. It is a provisional alignment born of necessity, driven by a shared interest in preventing the G20 from collapsing into irrelevance. For Europe, the stakes are existential, too. This is why the Europeans were reportedly among the forefront of those who were in favour of issuing the G20 leaders' declaration. Not issuing a final declaration simply because the US objected to it would mean "ceding sovereignty to Washington" at a crucial moment when Europe's security is at stake. In this regard, it was significant that European countries — together with Japan and Canada — took an even bolder stand in Johannesburg when they collectively resisted the US-Russian proposal on Ukraine, calling for "additional work" and refusing to endorse a process that circumvented multilateral norms altogether. For the Global South (which would be better termed the Plural South, given that it is not a coherent bloc but rather dozens of countries with their idiosyncrasies and interests), the priority here is to increase its influence on world affairs. South Africa, Brazil, India, and Indonesia share an interest in demonstrating that the G20 cannot be held hostage by US political cycles or used as an instrument in the rivalry between great powers. Ramaphosa's decision to issue a full summit declaration, despite US complaints, was a deliberate affirmation that emerging powers can act as responsible stewards overseeing global processes. This Europe-Global South convergence is thus better understood as a coalition of the willing for institutional continuity. It is not ideological, and it is not directed against the US per se. It stems from the recognition that in a fragmented world, the cost of letting institutions fail is higher for everyone, including for the US, even though Trump, and some of his aides, might not be able to see it.

#### Symbolic multilateralism

Although it might be characterised as a list of good intentions unlikely to be fulfilled, the Johannesburg G20 declaration carries real symbolic weight. Climate change is mentioned 13 times, sustainability 66, equality 44, and gender five. These numbers matter politically. They signal priorities that a broad range of countries — from Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America (this is the case for Brazil at least, not so for Argentina) — are willing to articulate collectively, even when the US chooses not to participate. But symbolism is not substance. It is true that the declaration is ultimately a catalogue of aspirations rather than a

roadmap of action. The G20 has rarely produced binding commitments, and without the US, the gap between rhetoric and implementation grows even larger. The success or failure of multilateral cooperation cannot be measured by the number of times climate appears in a communiqué, but by whether emissions fall, financial flows change, and development goals are met. In this regard, the 2025 summit reveals the possibility, not yet the reality, of multilateralism after hegemony. The system has proved resilient enough to operate in the absence of the US, but is not yet effective enough to deliver collective outcomes.

#### EU's strategic role

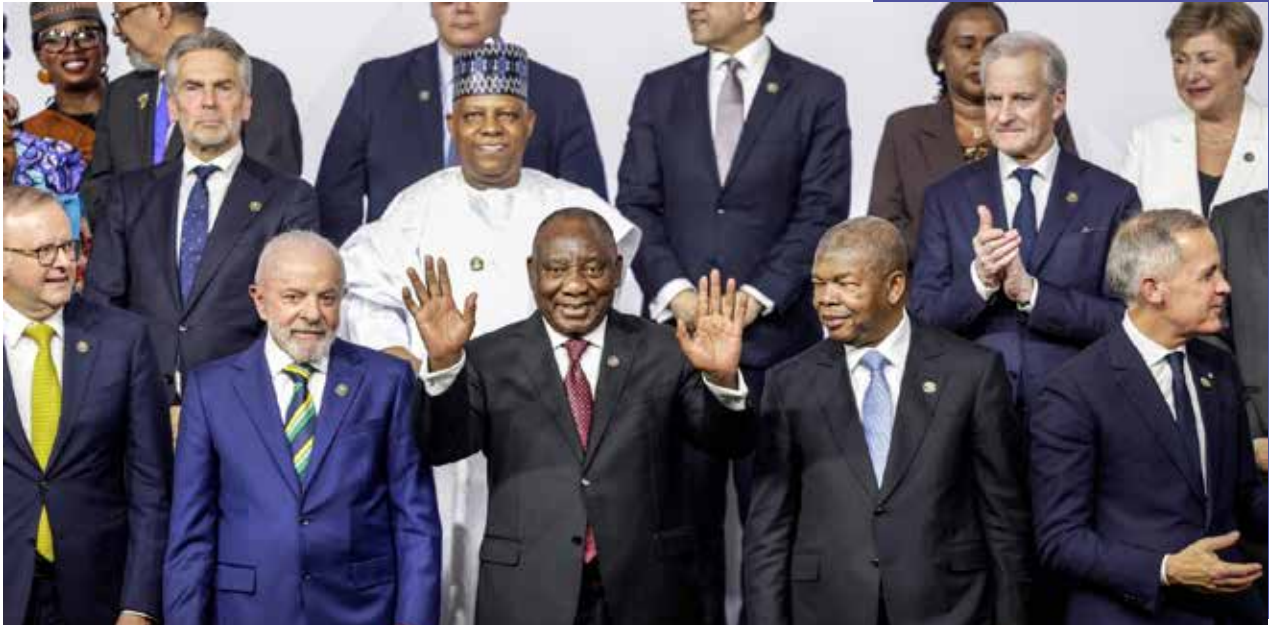
If the US retreats from multilateral leadership and China remains unwilling to assume that role, the EU becomes the only major actor with both the normative identity and institutional commitment to defend the principles of the liberal order. But doing so requires a strategic shift. First, the EU must understand that the Global South is a Plural South, diverse in interests, political systems, and strategic cultures. Engagement must therefore be bilateral, respectful, and devoid of moral superiority. A single EU narrative will not resonate in Brasília, Jakarta, Riyadh, or Pretoria. Tailored partnerships are essential. Secondly, the EU should not fear that by deepening cooperation with the Plural South, it is betraying Washington. The US itself is moving outside multilateral structures and attempting to shape outcomes extraneously. Preserving global governance is not disloyalty; it is strategic autonomy through diplomatic action. Thirdly, Europe must recognise that neither the US nor China will lead the new multilateralism "after hegemony". They are the two superpowers, and they think multilateralism constrains more than it facilitates their power. This is why the

EU needs to work with its partners from both the plural north and south in the creation of a new multilateralism. Finally, today it is the EU — not Trump's America — that most consistently defends the core values of openness, rules-based cooperation, democracy, and human rights. This is not Eurocentrism. It is a reflection of geopolitical reality. If these values are to remain part of the international system, it will fall to Europeans and their partners in the Plural North and South to uphold them.

#### Next stop: Miami

The Johannesburg G20 Summit offers a fragile and preliminary glimpse of what global governance might look like without US leadership. The world has not entered a full "after hegemony" system, but it has experienced its first mini rehearsal. Cooperation proved possible, a declaration was adopted, and Europe and the Global South collaborated pragmatically. But the limits are clear. Symbolism cannot replace implementation. The absence of the US creates political space but also institutional weakness. Whether this emerging multilateralism can deliver real results — on climate, development, or macroeconomic and financial stability — remains an open question. The South African presidency of the G20 marks the end of a cycle. All the countries that belong to this club have now hosted the forum. It is thus rather unfortunate that the US boycotted this last summit, and more worrying still is the fact that the 2026 G20 meeting in Miami risks becoming an exercise in presidential showmanship, with Trump planning a summit calibrated around personal prestige, bling, and political theatrics rather than collective problem-solving.

The article was first published by the Elcano Royal Institute.



Seating signage for the US delegation is displayed ahead of the opening plenary session of the G20 Finance and Central Bank Deputies Meeting at the Cape Town International Convention Centre, in Cape Town, South Africa, on February 24, 2025.  
● ARI. AUSTRIA/REUTERS



The shift was reinforced by the timing of the US 28-point plan to end the war in Ukraine, released a few hours before the G20 Summit, despite Washington's absence. This combination of boycott and unilateralism constitutes a clear break with the historical role the US once played. Instead of providing the leadership that sustains cooperation, Washington now acts openly as a "predatory" hegemon, using its power to shape outcomes in its interest while disregarding institutional processes and, most importantly, the reaction that these measures might trigger, even among its closest allies.



World leaders, including South African President Cyril Ramaphosa (front-C), react as they attend a family photo event during a G20 Leaders' Summit plenary session in Johannesburg, South Africa, on November 22, 2025.  
● GIANLUIGI GUERINIA/REUTERS





## World Karate Championships: Golshadnejad makes history as Iran collects three medals

### Sports Desk

Atousa Golshadnejad etched her name into the history books of Iranian sport by claiming the country's first-ever women's gold at the WKF World Karate Championships on Sunday.

Golshadnejad's gold in Cairo headlined a three-medal haul in Cairo for Iran, which finished as joint runner-up in the team standings alongside Türkiye, Japan, and Italy.

Saleh Abazari earned a silver in the men's competition, while Sara Bahmanyar won the second world bronze of her career in the women's -50kg event.

Golshadnejad pulled off one of the biggest upsets on the final day, defeating defending champion Li Gong of China 4-2 in the women's kumite -61kg showdown.

The victory capped off a glorious international season for the 22-year-old Iranian, who had already captured a second Asian gold medal and a Karate 1-Premier League title earlier this year, before winning the ultimate prize at the Islamic Solidarity Games in mid-November.

Golshadnejad began her glorious campaign with back-to-

back victories over Cameroon's Dzeu Nelly (8-0) and Uzbekistan's Sevinch Otaboyeva (2-1) before sharing the spoils with Latvian Beata Girvica (0-0) to top Pool 6 table and advance to the round of 16, where prevailed over Chile's Bárbara Huaiquiman by hantei.

The Iranian then saw off Belarussian Maryia Azarava, competing as a neutral contestant, 5-0 in the quarterfinals, before a 4-1 win against Tunisia's Wafa Mahjoub – in a rematch of the ISG final in Riyadh – sent Golshadnejad into the championship bout.

Iranian women had managed a silver and a three bronze medals over the previous 26th editions of the World Championships, with Hamideh Abbasali taking credit for a silver (2014) and a bronze (2016). Bahmanyar and the kata trio of Mahsa Afsaneh, Najmeh Qazizadeh, and Elnaz Taqipour won the other two medals in 2018 and 2014, respectively.

Elsewhere, Abazari came from behind to level the score at 2-2 in the final second against Matteo Avanzini in the men's kumite +84 kg final, only to see the Italian earn a hantei victory and walk away with gold on his World Championships debut.

This was Abazari's second silver medal in November, though the Iranian – a

world team kumite gold medalist in 2018 – had already made amends for his final setback in Riyadh by defeating Saudi karateka Sanad Sufyani in the quarterfinals.

Meanwhile, Bahmanyar – also a gold medalist in Riyadh – bounced back from a 4-1 semifinal defeat against Malaysian Shahmalarani Chandran to beat Ecuador's Lili Alvarado 3-0 and win a joint-bronze alongside Venezuela's Yorgelis Salazar.

Uzbekistan's Gulshan Alimardanova, who was beaten by Bahmanyar in the ISG final, defeated Chandran 6-1 to claim the gold medal.

Bahmanyar will still have every reason to be proud of her 2025 season, having also secured prestigious gold medals at the Chengdu World Games in August and the Karate 1-Premier League event in Paris last January.

Fatemeh Sadeqi, Mobina Heidari, and Fatemeh Sa'adati were the other Iranian female competitors in Cairo but finished without medals in their respective events. Ali Meskini, Amirreza Borzouei, Mahdi Khodabakhshi, and Morteza Ne'mati also missed the podium in the men's competition.

Egypt claimed the team title on home soil, courtesy of three golds and one bronze medal.

## Iran stunned by India to miss out on U17 Asian Cup finals

### Sports Desk

Iran failed to secure a place in the 2026 AFC U17 Asian Cup after a 2-1 defeat to India on the final day of the qualifiers in Ahmedabad, India.

Sunday's result saw India leapfrog Iran to the top of the Group D standings on goal difference, with both sides finishing on seven points, and book its place among the 12 teams heading to next May's finals in Saudi Arabia.

Needing only a draw to qualify, Iran broke the deadlock in the 19th minute when Amirreza Valipour controlled a through ball with a deft touch before slotting into the bottom-right corner.

The host clawed its way back after being awarded a penalty for a foul on Heeranganba Seram, with Dallalmuon Gangte making no mistake from the spot as he sent Iranian goalkeeper Bardiya Dorri the wrong way.

India then went ahead in the 52nd minute after Amirmahan Afrouziani failed to clear a cross, allowing Gunleiba Wangkheirakpam to drill a low

shot that slipped past Dorri into the bottom-right corner.

Iran pushed bodies forward but could not mount a comeback as India held on for the win, leaving the 2008 champion to miss out on the finals for the first time since the 2002 edition.



● AFC

Iran had begun its qualification campaign with a commanding 5-0 win over Chinese Taipei, followed by a 1-1 draw against Lebanon, before coming from behind to beat Palestine 3-1 on Friday to stay in pole position prior to the final match.

## FIBA World Cup Asian qualifiers:

## Iran maintains perfect start with second win over Iraq

### Sports Desk

Iran defeated Iraq for the second time in four days, prevailing 86-71 in Zouk Mikael, Lebanon, on Sunday to maintain its perfect start in Group C of the FIBA Basketball World Cup Asian qualifiers.

Young shooting guard Piter Girgoorian contributed a game-high 21 points – including 12 from behind the arc – for Iran, which rested Asia Cup 2025 All-Star Five point guard Sina Vahedi for the game.

Behnam Yakhchali (14 points), Mobin Sheikhi (12), and Matin Aqajanzpour (11) also scored in double figures, while another emerging talent, Seyyed Mahdi Jafari, impressed with nine points and nine assists.

Ramon Galloway led Iraq with 19 points, followed by Ihab Al-Zuhairi with 18.

Having enjoyed a record shooting spree (19 three-pointers) in Thursday's 94-68 win, Iran may have anticipated another lopsided encounter. Iraq, however, had other ideas, showing tremendous fighting spirit in the first half.

Late in the opening quarter, Iraq nosed ahead 19-18 thanks to an Abdullah Alibraheemi breakaway dunk, suggesting a tight contest was in store. But seconds later, during another transition play, Alibraheemi suffered an injury and did not return.



Iran's Navid Rezaeifar (top) goes up for a basket during a victory over Iraq in the FIBA Basketball World Cup Asian qualifiers in Zouk Mikael, Lebanon, on November 30, 2025.

● FIBA

Iraq continued battling through Galloway and Al-Zuhairi, even leading briefly midway through the second quarter. But Iran gradually began to pull away, taking a 61-50 lead into the final frame.

Later in the day, Jordan routed Syria 100-48 at home to leapfrog Iran at the top of the group table. Iran will host Jordan when the Asian qualifiers resume in February.

Elsewhere on Sunday, Saudi Arabia defeated India 81-57 in Group D to move to 2-0 in the opening window of the qualifiers.

Qatar, meanwhile, pulled off a massive upset with an 86-

83 away victory over West Asian powerhouse Lebanon to sit second behind Saudi Arabia in the group.

The top three teams from each of the four groups will advance to the second round of the qualifiers. The twelve qualified teams will be split into two groups and will face the three teams advancing from the corresponding group twice – Group A will be paired with Group C, and Group B with Group D.

The top three teams from each second-round group, along with the best fourth-placed team, will qualify for the 2027 World Cup in Qatar.

## IFBB World Bodybuilding Championships:

## Iran finishes runner-up in men's amateur, semi-pro events

### Sports Desk

Iran settled for runner-up finishes in the men's amateur and semi-pro categories at the IFBB World Bodybuilding Championships in Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia.

This marked the end of Iran's decade-long dominance in the competition.

Iranian contestants collected 11 med-

als – including five golds and five silvers – across bodybuilding, physique, classic physique, and muscular physique categories in the semi-pro event on the final day of the competition. The first two day of the event had seen Iranians secure 22 medals across various disciplines – including fitness challenge, body classic, couple's physique, fit model, and physique – earning second place in the amateur seniors' event.



● IRNA



Iranica Desk

Villages with natural, historical, cultural, and local traditions — valued for their authenticity and scenic beauty — have increasingly become key tourism destinations in Iran, attracting both domestic and international visitors.

According to IRNA, 120 villages across the country have been designated as official tourism-target villages based on specific criteria and indicators. The initiative aims to develop the necessary infrastructure to harness their tourism potential, support sustainable local development, and empower rural communities.

In Zanjan Province — home to more than 900 villages featuring pristine natural landscapes, diverse historical monuments, and numerous tourist attractions — 43 villages with valuable traditional structures have been identified as tourism-target sites. These villages are expected to contribute significantly to the expansion of the local tourism industry and the growth of the regional economy.

Among Zanjan's designated tourism villages, Golabar stands out like a jewel in the heart of Ilrud, offering breathtaking scenery and historic landmarks that evoke a sense of freshness, vitality, and natural charm. Golabar village is now fully prepared to welcome tourists, nature enthusiasts, and history lovers. The village's inauguration was attended by Seyed Reza Salehi Amiri, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts,

# Historic Golabar village offering adventure, culture, relaxation

during his mid-November visit to Zanjan.

Seyyed Mikaeil Mousavi, Director General of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization of Zanjan Province, provided further details to IRNA regarding Golabar's rich natural and historical attractions. The Golabar recreational and tourism complex spans 976 hectares, with 16 hectares dedicated to built facilities, located beside the scenic Golabar Dam. The complex includes 40 accommodation units with a total floor area of 3,200 square meters, while the overall area of the village's tourism facilities reaches 6,500 square meters.

As one of the largest tourism projects in Zanjan Province, the Golabar complex is expected to play a pivotal role in expanding lodging services and attracting tourists to the region. In addition to strengthening tourism capacity in the province and across western Iran, the project aims to generate job opportunities and stimulate local economic growth. Golabar village itself is a lush, terraced settlement combining pristine natural landscapes with historic sites. The complex is fully equipped to host tourists year-round, in both summer and winter, and was developed with



the goal of establishing standard tourism infrastructure, promoting economic activity, and supporting the expansion of accommodation and recreational services in the area.

The complex has a capacity for 80 guests and includes a dining hall that can host 200 people, expandable to accommodate up to 400 visitors. The Golabar Dam and the village's tourism facilities — developed in line with a balanced tourism development policy — play an important role in promoting sustainable employment and driving economic activity in the region. The dam is also considered a key site for the devel-

opment of water sports such as rowing, jet skiing, fishing, and swimming, offering significant growth potential. Efforts are underway to develop these opportunities effectively, providing a source of income for the residents of Ilrud.

Plans for constructing standard four- and five-star hotels are also being pursued in the province to attract more visitors and increase their length of stay. Historic Golabar village is located 52 kilometers south of Zanjan and dates back to the Sassanid era. Its dam, historic mosque, pristine natural landscapes, and other unique attractions make it an exceptional destination. Like



all tourism-target villages, Golabar has undergone strategic tourism studies to guide its development.

Although the village now features both traditional and modern architecture, it remains primarily a lush, terraced settlement. One notable area, known as Chehel Pelleh (Forty Steps), includes a mountain with dense rock formations. To facilitate hiking for nature enthusiasts, the mountain has been terraced with stone steps — a structure dating back more than 4,000 years.

Situated on the mountain slopes, Golabar village enjoys a pleasant, cool climate. While many

local men work as bakers, women play an active role in the local economy through pottery production, crafting jars, ovens, and other clay products distributed across the country.

The village currently has a population of over 2,400 residents. It is also home to the country's first carved mosque, which has stood since the Seljuk era and now requires extensive restoration. The Golabar Mosque is unique in the province for its stone mihrab and inscriptions featuring Kufic script and Quranic motifs dating back to the Seljuk period. A similar plaster mihrab can be seen in the Jameh Mosques of Qorveh and Sojas.

## Naderi Hill tells story of Shirvan through millennia



Iranica Desk

In the heart of Shirvan, North Khorasan Province, alongside the Atrak River, rises a historic hill that has witnessed thousands of years of human settlement and culture. Today, it is known as Naderi Hill or Naderi Citadel Hill. Archaeological studies indicate that, due to its strategic natural location, this site has been continuously occupied from the mid-fourth millennium BCE

through the Islamic period.

Ali Akbar Vahdati, a researcher and archaeologist with North Khorasan's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization, wrote that Naderi Hill elevates more than 20 meters above the surrounding terrain and spans three hectares in the city center. Evidence suggests that during the Safavid and Qajar periods, a fortress and strong ramparts were erected atop the hill. Historical photographs taken by Naser al-Din

Shah's official photographer, along with the memoirs of Etemad al-Saltaneh in Matla' al-Shams, reveal that the fortress and ramparts once constituted a central part of Shirvan's old urban fabric, according to chn.ir.

Following the 1929 earthquake and subsequent urban development programs, much of the historic neighborhood surrounding the hill gradually vanished. Today, only the ancient hill itself and remnants of

the Safavid and Qajar fortress remain, including eroded towers and walls, encompassing approximately seven hectares. Under a collaborative research agreement between Iran's Cultural Heritage Research Institute and Nanjing University in China, joint archaeological excavations were conducted at Naderi Hill in 2016 and 2018. The project, involving Iranian, Chinese, and French archaeologists, aimed to reconstruct the local settlement sequence,

establish a regional chronology, and explore cultural connections between Iran and Central Asia along the Silk Road.

The findings shed new light on the history of North Khorasan. Excavations in the lower layers of the hill uncovered pottery from the early urbanization period (Bronze Age) with similarities to Central Asian ceramics. Upper layers revealed architectural remains and artifacts from the Achaemenid, Parthian, Sassanid, and Islamic periods. Notably, a large mudbrick wall over three meters thick was discovered deep underground, likely a defensive structure from the earliest settlement phases at Naderi Hill. Radiocarbon dating confirms that this wall is over five thousand years old. Excavations also yielded a diverse collection of artifacts, including clay figurines, spindle whorls, grindstones, bronze spearheads, and decorated and polished ceramics. Many of

these items are now preserved at the Bojnord Museum and the Shirvan City Museum.

Interdisciplinary research in archaeometry, zooarchaeology, and archaeobotany has been published in several international journals, providing valuable insights into the livelihood, agriculture, livestock breeding, technology, and trade of ancient inhabitants of the region.

In recent years, given Naderi Hill's location within a deteriorated and underprivileged urban area, challenges such as unauthorized construction and social irregularities have emerged. To address this, a comprehensive plan for the rehabilitation and revitalization of the Naderi historic complex is underway, aiming to transform the site into a cultural, historical, and tourist hub. The project is being implemented collaboratively by the Cultural Heritage Organization, Shirvan Municipality, Endowments and Charity Affairs Organization, and the Agriculture Jihad Organization, with active participation from the Shirvan governor's office.

## Need for Malayer to join Historical Cities Network of Iran

Iranica Desk

The head of the Malayer Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts has emphasized the necessity of the city's inclusion in the Historical Cities Network of Iran, noting that Malayer is among the oldest urban centers in western Iran. The city hosts an extensive collection of historical sites, traditional architectural spaces, and significant cultural monuments, many of which date back to pre-Islamic periods.

Ebrahim Jalili highlighted ancient sites and archaeological zones such as the Nushijan Citadel — considered the most important

and best-preserved mud-brick structure of the Median era — as well as the ancient Anuch Castle and the villages of Pari and Gourab, all with histories extending to BCE times. These sites, he said, give Malayer a distinguished historical standing.

Jalili pointed out that Malayer is one of 168 Iranian cities with a registered historic fabric. Numerous cultural and historical monuments within this area have been inscribed on the National Heritage List due to their exceptional value, chn.ir wrote.

Among the notable sites within the city's historic fabric, he listed the Traditional Bazaar of Malayer,

Babak Zurkhaneh, the historic mosques of Haj Ghasem and Ashura, Farhang Caravanserai, Sara-ye Now, Kermanshahi Caravanserai, Sara-ye Lahaf-Dozha, Sara-ye Moghadam-e No, as well as the Ferdowsi and Ketabi guesthouses, and the Safi Mosque.

He underscored that historic urban fabric plays a vital role as an authentic element of urban identity, preserving unique spatial and architectural patterns. It also serves as a foundation for sustainable urban development and tourism growth.

Referring to the significance of the Historical Cities Network of Iran, Jalili explained that the organiza-

tion has an international structure and presidency, and that member cities participate in its global assembly.

Citing Malayer's two international brands — Monabat (woodcarving) and grapes — along with its nationally recognized heritage assets and landmarks such as the Nushijan Citadel, he stressed that the city is well-qualified to join the association. Membership, he added, would enable Malayer to gain global visibility through interaction with other historic cities and strengthen the presentation of its ancient heritage both nationally and internationally.

He noted that with the efforts



of the Malayer City Council, the mayor and municipal bodies, the governor's office, the city's representatives in Parliament, and the Cultural Heritage Organization, Malayer is well-positioned to achieve this milestone, further

highlighting its historical identity. Jalili concluded that the Cultural Heritage Department, as the custodian of historical monuments, can play a decisive role in documenting, promoting, and registering Malayer's historical assets.





# Pezeshkian urges stronger collaborative ethos in Iranian society

## Social Desk

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian urged Iranians to priorities social trust and collaborative skills, saying even the brightest minds cannot succeed without human networks and the ability to work in teams. He told attendees at the closing session of the second international symposium on "Family, Future, Sustainable Bonds" that schools must teach problem-solving and communication, preparing children to face real-world challenges rather than sheltering them in elite environments, president.ir reported. "Even the brightest minds need a human network and group-work skills to succeed," Pezeshkian said, stressing that

schooling should equip children to face challenges rather than shield them. He argued that some families mistakenly believe enrolling their children in elite schools guarantees social success, but without teamwork and interpersonal skills, true excellence is impossible. Pezeshkian positioned honesty as the bedrock of durable social bonds. He warned that relationships built on superficial traits crumble under pressure. "When people and families share a sacred goal and direction, their connections deepen. No virus, no problem can cut them," he said. Pezeshkian also called for social tolerance, modesty and the ability to resolve conflicting views without turning differences into hostility.



Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian delivers a speech at the second international symposium on family, future and sustainable bonds at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on December 1, 2025.  
● president.ir

He cautioned against grudges or retribution, calling them "a scourge of human connections." In this vein, he described educational reform as "an urgent necessity," noting that schools, families, neighborhoods and communities must instill the skills to engage respectfully and constructively. Describing hardship as a path to collective growth, he likened life's difficulties to a climb toward a summit. For Pezeshkian, social reform begins at home, with values, sincerity and solidarity.



## Iran pushes to transform its tourism hub into cultural engine



● ILNA

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Ministry began restructuring its Investment and Economic Affairs Center on Monday, with Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri vowing to embed the unit at the heart of national efforts to revive tourism and cultural heritage. In a meeting with senior officials of the ministry, Salehi-Amiri laid out a three-phase roadmap. The first stage focuses on setting firm foundations, organizational structure, human resources, and financial capacity, IRNA reported. Once these are in place, the ministry will draft a ten-year master strategy to steer investment toward cultural tourism, heritage restoration and regional handicraft industries. The final phase, he said, will mobilize resources and launch concrete projects from next year. "The first task," he told ministry staff, "is to build

a solid base. Without that there can be no leap forward." He made clear the new center must evolve into "a full-fledged deputy-level body", a flagship branch overseeing all tourism and heritage investment efforts. Salehi-Amiri acknowledged the steep constraints on government budgets, so far only 12% of allocations have been disbursed, and insisted the ministry must tap private capital, regional funds and the offices of governors and local representatives. It is, he argued, the "only viable route" to revive cultural tourism across Iran's provinces. He described this revamp as more than institutional change. It marks a shift toward long-term planning, strategic execution and professionalism. "Our success today rests on skilled experts," he said. "We must prepare proposals, business plans and funding bids now, so we hit the ground running with the next big project."

## Women power 30% of Iran's microbusiness jobs, lead 7,000 cooperatives



● By Sadeq Dehqan  
Staff writer

## INTERVIEW

Over the past decade, the quiet yet impactful presence of women in Iran's small-scale enterprise sector has steadily transformed into a powerful voice within the country's economy. Once largely confined to the margins of economic activity, women now represent a driving force in social entrepreneurship and economic resilience. Their participation in home-based businesses has quadrupled, and they now account for roughly 30% of all microbusinesses, underscoring their growing influence in shaping Iran's grassroots economy. The remarkable surge in home business licenses, rising female participation in cooperatives, and increasing focus on handicrafts, carpets, eco-tourism, and digital-based services demonstrate that women are not only key job creators but also crucial contributors to household income stability and local economic development, especially under the pressures of international sanctions. In an exclusive conversation with Iran Daily, Khatereh Ostadrezaei, CEO of the Tehran Province Handicrafts Cooperatives Union, advisor to the Director-General of the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor,

and Social Welfare, and chairperson of the Iran Trade Cooperatives Network, offered an in-depth look at the state of cottage industries in Iran. She discussed the entrepreneurial potential of these ventures, women's role in the sector, and the contribution of handicrafts to the microeconomic landscape. The full interview follows.

**IRAN DAILY: How would you describe the state of entrepreneurship and small businesses in Iran, and what is their contribution to the economy?**  
**OSTADREZAEI:** Globally, microbusinesses play a significant role in economic production, and Iran is no exception. In the field of small and quick-return enterprises, particularly home-based businesses, we have observed remarkable activity. These businesses primarily include handicrafts, carpets, various home-based productions, and domestic services. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, small businesses had become a leading trend in the employment sector, attracting growing attention from both the public and the government. Today, this sector is one of the most important pillars of Iran's economy, especially at the household level.

**What are the main opportunities for developing microbusinesses**

**and entrepreneurship in Iran, and how do they support the economy under sanctions?**

The majority of the working-age population cannot be absorbed into the traditional public or private employment sectors, this is not unique to Iran but a global reality. Key opportunities for creating employment in home-based businesses include individual empowerment and skills training, forming small production or service teams, and expanding online and digital services. Small groups producing scalable goods and digital services play a critical role in household economies. Moreover, the shift from traditional business models to technology-driven models, especially those leveraging artificial intelligence, has significantly enhanced their impact. Even under sanctions, these sectors, less reliant on industrial raw materials, have helped sustain family livelihoods and maintain local economic activity.

**How significant is women's participation in microbusinesses and entrepreneurship, and are there comparative statistics with men?**

Women constitute about 51.5% of the population in terms of education and employment potential. While their representation in the formal public sector remains lower than regional and global averages, women's presence in small ventures is substantial and highly visible. Over the past seven to ten years, we have seen a four-and-a-half-fold increase in home business licenses. More than 200 occupational categories are registered in the national home business database, with women leading in many of them. This growth has been especially pronounced over the past three to four years. Although Iran still lags behind leading countries such as the US or East

Asian nations, the presence of Iranian women in this sector is both significant and steadily increasing.

**What share of microbusinesses does the handicrafts sector represent?**

Handicrafts and small-scale home-based productions, requiring minimal and accessible materials and moderate skills, are among the primary components of Iran's small businesses landscape. The diversity of urban and rural handicrafts, along with rural micro-credit funds, handicraft investment funds, carpets, tourism, and home-based businesses, has allowed this sector to contribute significantly to employment and income generation, especially over the past three to four years.

**And what is women's share in handicraft production and related microbusinesses?**

In the cooperative sector, which is my area of expertise, women dominate in handicrafts, carpets, tourism, and rural production. Currently, 7,000 women's cooperatives operate nationwide, accounting for approximately 10 percent of all cooperatives in Iran. Most of these cooperatives focus on small-scale and quick-return businesses, with 35 to 40 percent active in handicrafts, carpets, and tourism. These cooperatives have directly employed between 1.5 and 2 million people. While the activities are mostly non-industrial or small-scale, they are highly diverse. Notably, in recent years, home-based professions related to social media influencing, online services, platforms, and digital work have been officially recognized, enabling women to enter these sectors legally with financial and educational support. Overall, women now hold a growing and impactful role in both household and national economies, accounting for approximately 25 to 30 percent of all microbusiness employment in the country.