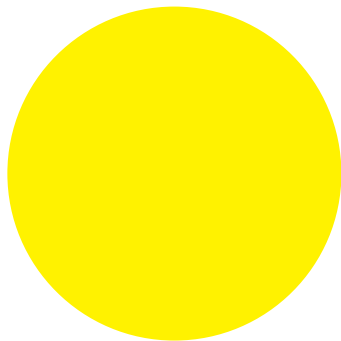




IRGC flexes naval muscles with ballistic, cruise missile launches

2 >



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IranDailyWeb

## Iran calls Persian Gulf islands ‘inseparable part of Iran’s territorial integrity’

2 >



The combo photo shows the Iranian islands of Abu Musa (top), the Greater Tunb (L) and the Lesser Tunb (R) in the Persian Gulf.

● MEHR

## Pezeshkian hails multibillion-dollar investment plan by private sector in SW region

3 >



A teenage boy dressed in a traditional outfit offers flowers to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian during the latter's visit to Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province in southwestern Iran on December 4, 2025.

● pezeshkian.ir

## Quiet cooperation, colossal consequences Why Iran-Turkey alignment is determinative for region

OPINION  
EXCLUSIVE

3 >



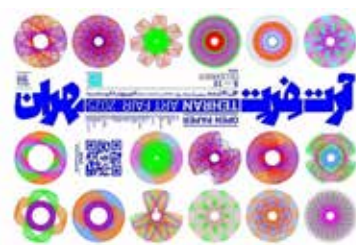
World Taekwondo Under-21 Championships: Iran's Gholami grabs gold, Mohammadi settles for bronze on Day 2

6 >



Weaving identity through Lor traditional attire

7 >



Tehran launches MENA's first paper-based art fair

8 >

## Economic interdependence could help protect Iran's territorial sovereignty

By Delaram Ahmadi  
Staff writer

INTERVIEW  
EXCLUSIVE



Iran and the United Arab Emirates have long been locked in a dispute over the three Persian Gulf islands, Abu Musa, the Greater Tunb and the Lesser Tunb. While Tehran insists the issue is not even open to discussion, the UAE has sought to build up international backing for its claim, at least from the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

Iran, in response, has taken more assertive steps in recent years to underline its sovereignty, including designating an official “National Day

of the Three Islands,” initiating development and settlement projects, and maintaining a formal presence as well as holding military drills. But in its latest communiqué, the GCC adopted markedly harsher language, condemned Iran's actions, and threatened to pursue the case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). According to regional-affairs analyst Javad Heyran-nia, preventing this trajectory requires Iran not only to continue de-escalation with neighboring states but also to build broader shared economic interests with other countries, raising the political cost of siding with the UAE.

IRAN DAILY: Given the GCC's latest statement, which employs a stronger tone than its previous communiqués on the three islands, what legal and diplomatic mechanisms can the UAE utilize at the international level to

advance its claims?

HEYRAN-NIA: Since the formation of the UAE, Abu Dhabi has consistently attempted to internationalize the islands dispute and bring on board other states, institutions and international organizations. One of these bodies has been the GCC, which ever since its creation in 1981, has routinely addressed the dispute in its annual or emergency meetings, emphasizing the UAE's sovereignty claim. In the most recent 46th GCC summit, the language and substance of the statement stood out compared with previous years. Beyond recognizing the UAE's claim over the islands, the communiqué also addressed territorial waters, airspace, the continental shelf, and the exclusive economic zone surrounding the islands, asserting these as integral parts of UAE territory. The statement demonstrates the new

domains into which the GCC has ventured and the extent to which it has linked support for the islands issue to its collective-security framework. If the UAE seeks to take the dispute to the ICJ on its own, it will be unable to do so because the tribunal operates on the principle of mutual consent. And Iran, which does not consider the matter disputable in the first place, would not refer the case to an international court. Thus, direct access to the ICJ is not an option for the UAE. However, the General Assembly or the UN Security Council can request an advisory opinion from the ICJ. In such a scenario, the matter would be referred by either body for a non-binding advisory ruling. Even though advisory opinions do not carry compulsory legal force, the mere referral of the case to the court, regardless of the ICJ's eventual opinion, could be damaging to Iran politically and legally, as it

would cast doubt over the issue under international law.

Given existing historical documents, legal records, and judicial precedents, how do you assess the UAE's prospects of success in pursuing its claims in international bodies?

Considering the UAE's current capacity to build international consensus, and in light of its earlier joint statements with Arab and Islamic states, whether through the GCC, the Arab League, or Western actors such as the European Union, as well as bilateral communiqués with China and Russia, if the matter reaches the UN, the UAE would likely obtain an advisory opinion from the ICJ in its favor. Although such an opinion would not be binding, it could nonetheless influence customary law, shape international legal norms, and function as a judicial precedent.

Page 2 >



# Iran calls Persian Gulf islands ‘inseparable part of Iran’s territorial integrity’



The photo, published on November 17, 2024, shows sunset over Iran's Abu Musa Island in the Persian Gulf.  
● MEHR

## International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman rebuked on Thursday the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)'s insistence on repeating

the United Arab Emirates (UAE)'s “baseless and incorrect” territorial claims over the Iranian islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb. Reacting to the final communi-

qué of the 46<sup>th</sup> GCC Summit in Bahrain, Esmail Baqaei said the islands are an “inseparable part of Iran’s territorial integrity” and that any territorial claim over them is “groundless and invalid.” Stressing that such positions run counter to the principles of respect for states’ territorial integrity and good neighborliness, Baqaei said Iran has exercised “effective, continuous and undisputed” sovereignty over the three islands for centuries, and repeated claims do not change “geographical and historical realities” nor create any legal rights for claimants. Reiterating Iran’s policy of good neighborliness and cooperation to safeguard regional security and stability, the spokesman urged the UAE and the GCC to avoid provocative positions that undermine neighborly relations.

Baqaei also dismissed unilateral claims by Kuwait regarding the Arash gas field, saying repeated statements and unilateral assertions “create no legal rights” for Kuwait. He said achieving a fair and lasting agreement on the field requires bilateral dialogue, joint efforts and a constructive atmosphere to secure mutual interests.

## Warning about Iran’s red lines

Ali Shamkhani, a representative of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei at the Defense Council, warned the GCC against “unconstructive” claims regarding the three islands and the Arash gas field. Shamkhani described in a post on his X account on Thursday

the issues as Iran's red lines. “The role of neighbors is to create security, not to play with the red lines of the Iranian nation,” he said. He warned that the GCC’s “unconstructive” claims regarding the Iranian islands and the Arash field were raised again amid the malicious acts of the United States and the Israeli regime. In its final communiqué, the GCC called on Iran to respond to the United Arab Emirates’ efforts to resolve the issue through direct negotiations or by referring it to the International Court of Justice. 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. The dispute over the Arash gas field, which Kuwaitis call al-Durra, dates back to the 1960s when Iran and Kuwait were awarded overlapping offshore concessions for the field following its discovery. The field is estimated to hold 20 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves, with production capacity of one billion cubic feet per day. Nearly 40% of the Arash gas field is located in Iranian waters.

## Putin, Modi urge ‘dialogue’ on Iranian nuclear program

## International Desk

In a joint statement on Friday, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi reiterated their commitment to peace and stability in the West Asian region, stressing the importance of resolving Iran nuclear issue through negotiations and dialogue.

“The parties emphasized the importance of resolving the issue of the Iranian nuclear program through dialogue,” the document stated, as reported by TASS. On September 26, the UN Security Council rejected a draft proposal by Russia and China proposing a six-month extension of UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which sup-

ported the Iran nuclear deal, with the UN sanctions against Tehran taking effect on September 28. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi stated on October 11 that Tehran sees no reason for resuming negotiations with the European troika — Britain, Germany, and France — on the nuclear issue due to the re-imposition of sanctions.

The joint statement following talks in New Delhi between the two leaders was published on the Kremlin website. The document consists of 70 points, covering Putin's visit to India, trade and economic cooperation, partnership in energy, transport, cooperation in the Far East and the Arctic, cooperation in the peaceful uses of



Russian President Vladimir Putin (r) and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi are seen after their talks at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on December 5, 2025.  
● AFP

nuclear power and space, and other areas of interaction.



## IRGC flexes naval muscles with ballistic, cruise missile launches

## National Desk

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy carried out on Friday simultaneous launches of ballistic and cruise missiles during a large-scale exercise in the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman. The launches were conducted from inland sites during the second phase of a major military drill by the IRGC Navy, codenamed ‘Eghtedar’ (authority) exercise, striking predetermined targets with high precision. Various cruise missiles — Qadr 110, Qadr 380, Qadir — as well as the ballistic missile 303 were fired simultaneously from multiple points deep inside the country during the drill. Moreover, participating drone systems carried out successful



attacks on simulated enemy bases, destroying the designated objectives. In another segment of the exercise, air defense systems deployed on IRGC vessels practiced heavy countermeasures against incoming aerial threats simulating attacks on fast-attack boats and Iranian coasts.

On the first day of the event on Thursday, naval units conveyed their firm message by issuing warnings to American ships present in the region. The exercise, codenamed Shahid Mohammad Nazeri, took place across the Persian Gulf, the Nazeat maritime zone — Abu Musa, Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Siri islands, the

Strait of Hormuz, as well as the Sea of Oman. Advanced air defense systems, including Nawab, Majid and Misagh, operated under electronic warfare conditions, using artificial intelligence to detect flying and naval targets in reduced time and strike them precisely. Nazeri was the commander of the elite commando units of the IRGC Navy. He is widely recognized in Iran for his direct involvement in the capture of 10 American sailors — nine men and one woman — who wandered into Iran’s territorial waters on January 12, 2016. Showcasing its capabilities and signaling deterrence against foreign powers, the Iranian Navy frequently conducts large-scale drills in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman.

## Araghchi voices Iran’s support for Lebanese sovereignty, invites counterpart

## International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araghchi reiterated on Thursday the Islamic Republic’s unwavering support for Lebanon’s sovereignty as he invited his Lebanese counterpart, Youssef Rajji, to visit Tehran in the near future to discuss bilateral ties. Highlighting the long-standing and friendly relations between the two countries, Araghchi reaffirmed in a message to Rajji the Islamic Republic’s continued support for Lebanon’s sovereignty, national unity, territorial integrity, security, and stability, particularly in the face of Israeli aggression. The top diplomat invited his Lebanese counterpart to visit Iran for consultations on strengthening bilateral relations and discussing regional and international developments.

Araghchi expressed confidence that the people and government of Lebanon will successfully overcome the current threats and challenges they are facing. Israel and Lebanon’s Hezbollah resistance movement reached a ceasefire agreement that took effect on November 27, 2024. Under the deal, Tel Aviv was required to withdraw fully from the Lebanese territory, but has kept forces stationed at five sites, in clear violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and the terms of last November’s agreement. Since the implementation of the ceasefire, Israel has violated the agreement multiple times through repeated assaults on the Lebanese territory. Lebanese authorities have warned that the Israeli regime’s violations of the ceasefire threaten national stability.

## Economic interdependence could ...

Regarding the Arash gas field, what legal, technical and diplomatic tools do Saudi Arabia and Kuwait possess to substantiate their claims, and how much might these tools enhance their chances of success?

The Arash gas field is shared between Iran and Kuwait, and it has recently been declared to overlap with parts claimed by Saudi Arabia. Although Iran and Saudi Arabia have delimited their maritime boundaries, Iran has not yet finalized such boundaries with Kuwait. As a result, maritime zones, including the seabed, subsoil and related resources, remain undefined between Iran and Kuwait. Negotiations spanning for decades have failed to produce a resolution. Defining maritime boundaries between Iran and Kuwait is therefore essential. Once those boundaries are established, Iran and Kuwait could address the

Arash field bilaterally and prevent the issue from becoming another permanent fixture in GCC communiqués. The Arab bloc has linked the islands issue to its collective security and the same dynamic must be prevented regarding the Arash field, and Iran should act to stop further alignment among Persian Gulf Arab states on this matter.

## What legal, diplomatic and technical capacities does Iran possess to defend its rights against these claims?

Iran’s options must be viewed as one part of a broader picture of the Islamic Republic’s foreign policy. Iran’s de-escalation efforts, especially in recent years, have helped reduce tensions with Persian Gulf states. They recently underscored at the Manama Security Conference that Iran should not be excluded from regional security structures. These states have drawn lessons from history,

recognizing that excluding Iran cannot deliver regional stability and that lasting stability requires Iran’s inclusion. Iran’s most effective course is to continue this de-escalatory path while strengthening its national power and wealth. Unless Iran becomes sufficiently strong and develops extensive mutual economic interdependence with other states, anchoring its weight in bilateral and multilateral relations, the cost of opposing Iran or siding with its rivals will remain low for other countries. If Iran’s national power — economic, social, political and cultural — stagnates and fails to engage with other states and build up reciprocal dependencies, supporting the UAE will remain the cheaper option for other actors. By altering this equation Iran can halt the momentum behind claims to its territorial sovereignty and simultaneously align other countries with its stance.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

## CARTOON





# Pezeshkian hails multibillion-dollar investment plan by private sector in SW region

Economy Desk

Business leaders and entrepreneurs have promised to invest eight quadrillion rials (\$6.7 billion) in the southwestern province of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Thursday during a visit to the region. Speaking at the session in the provincial capital Yasuj, Pezeshkian called the commitment “a very significant achievement” and “a sweet opportunity” for the region’s development, saying the figure exceeded the entire government budget of six quadrillion rials (\$5 billion) designated for development across Iran. “This development, driven by private actors in coordination with banks and firms, is a major achievement in my view,” Pezeshkian said, according to his website president.ir, reaffirming the government’s commitment to supporting deprived areas.

“The government’s duty is to serve the people, especially in underdeveloped areas.” He noted that all state actions, particularly in sensitive sectors like water, agriculture, soil, and the environment, would strictly follow expert evaluations. “The government will not intervene without expert consensus,” he stated. “Whatever universities determine to be scientifically, technically, and environmentally sound, that’s what we will implement.” Drawing a cautionary example from Tehran which faces water scarcity, Pezeshkian warned against development detached from ecological realities. “We have emptied the land beneath our feet [from water] — we diverted river water, and now Tehran and surrounding cities face severe water stress, land subsidence, and a dangerous environmental future,” he warned. “We must manage resources wisely and make

President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks at a meeting with investors and business leaders in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province in southwestern Iran, on December 4, 2025. ● president.ir

no decisions without scientific backing.”

Infrastructure projects opened

Prior to the president’s remarks, several key infrastructure projects in the province’s health, energy and agricultural sectors were inaugurated. Officials opened the new Zagros specialty and subspecialty hospital in Yasuj, a health-sector project that the government said will create 120 direct jobs. Energy authorities also commissioned substations, transmission lines and related transmission and sub-transmission works intended to strengthen the province’s power grid and improve network stability.



In the city of Gachsaran, the Delnaz slaughterhouse and cold-storage facility was opened with a capacity

of 32,000 tons. The factory is expected to create 250 jobs and add 1,400 tons to the province’s

cold-storage capacity, boosting the region’s food-processing infrastructure.

## Minister: \$3b ‘emergency plan’ to add 250,000 bpd crude output on track for early 2027

Economy Desk

Iran’s Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad said on Friday that the government’s “emergency plan” to boost crude oil production by 250,000 barrels per day (bpd) — supported by \$3 billion in funding — was moving forward on schedule, with full implementation expected by the end of the next Iranian calendar year (March 2027). Speaking to IRNA, Paknejad said the scheme clearly identified the oil fields responsible for delivering the additional output. “The emergency plan specifies which fields will supply the increased production, and the timeline set for it runs roughly until the end of next year, so we can reach this level of output,” he said. The minister noted that the \$3 billion in financing was expected to come from Iran’s National Development Fund (NDF), though



SHANA

only a small portion had so far been released to the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC). The initiative — officially named the “emergency plan” for a crude oil production leap — is the NDF’s first direct involvement in major energy projects. It comes amid ongoing Western sanctions that have sharply limited access to foreign investment, making domestic resources and the NDF’s financial capacity critical for advancing key infrastructure efforts. Iran does not publish detailed crude export figures due to US sanctions, which officials

say require confidentiality. The figures came despite Washington’s “maximum pressure” campaign under US President Donald Trump, which sought to cut Iran’s oil exports to zero. US Energy Department data shows Iran has nonetheless continued to increase production. Paknejad on Friday also discussed the emergency plan’s impact on Iran’s national budget for the next fiscal year, which begins March 21, 2026. “Once the production increase and domestic refinery needs are accounted for, the surplus crude will serve as a key indicator in estimating oil and condensate export revenues for next year’s fiscal planning,” he said. The government has not disclosed its oil export assumptions for the upcoming budget. According to IRNA, since the project directly increases crude production, it is expected to have a significant effect on Iran’s foreign earnings. Revenues from the additional output will both repay the NDF’s investment — protecting the country’s financial assets — and provide the government with quicker access to hard currency at a time of economic pressure.

## Envoy urges top tech firms to build lasting ‘Made in Iran’ presence in Russia

Economy Desk

Iran’s ambassador to Russia, Kazem Jalali, on Thursday called on leading Iranian technology companies to create a “lasting image” of the Made in Iran brand in the Russian market. Speaking at a consultative meeting with executives and representatives of top Iranian tech firms in Moscow, Jalali said their visit to Moscow represents more than a commercial trip but “a national mission” aligned with the country’s “Look to the East” policy and its push to diversify economic partnerships, IRNA reported. He described them as the “true ambassadors of technological diplomacy.” Jalali stressed that Iran-Russia relations serve the interests of both nations and have now become “a strategic necessity and a tangible economic opportunity.” Referring to the fifth meeting of the Iran-Russia Joint Working Group on ICT cooperation held in recent days, Jalali said engagement with Russia — which he called one of Eurasia’s key technology hubs — could evolve into a reliable and powerful partnership that enables Iranian companies to



scale up. He said Iranian tech firms, backed by domestic talent, have strong capabilities in areas such as cybersecurity software, financial solutions, banking platforms and agile startups, and urged their representatives to view cooperation with Russia as extending beyond simple imports and exports. Jalali highlighted joint production and investment, two-way technology transfer and the creation of research consortia as pathways to building long-term and strategic ties with Russia. Also, the first joint meeting of leading Iranian and Russian technology companies was held earlier on Thursday in

Iran’s Ambassador to Russia, Kazem Jalali, speaks at a consultative meeting with executives and representatives of top Iranian tech firms in Moscow, on December 4, 2025. ● IRNA

Moscow with the participation of Meysam Abedi, Iran’s deputy minister for technology and innovation, along with representatives from public and private sector firms from both countries. According to Iran’s embassy in Moscow, participants from Iranian and Russian companies discussed available capacities and areas of cooperation and presented proposals aimed at expanding bilateral technological collaboration.

## Imam Khomeini airport seeks new routes to southeast Asia

Economy Desk

Imam Khomeini International Airport is preparing to negotiate with airlines from Southeast Asia to establish new routes, the airport’s acting head, Ramin Kashef-Azar, said. Kashef-Azar said in an interview with ISNA that the airport has formed a flight network development committee within its airport city and has made outreach to various airlines a core institutional priority. “We have planned to communicate with different airlines and institutionalize this as the airport’s primary duty,” he said. He noted that Austrian Air-

lines is already operating flights to Tehran, currently running four times a week — a service that began several months ago. In addition, extensive follow-ups have been conducted to restore Lufthansa services, which are now confirmed to resume on January 16 with a Tehran-Frankfurt-Tehran route operating six days a week. “Lufthansa is one of Europe’s leading carriers, and its return indicates that many of the obstacles and restrictions that previously caused concern for the airline have now been resolved,” Kashef-Azar said. He added that Lufthansa officials have reviewed airport

procedures multiple times and, after their assessments, announced their intent to restart operations. The airport’s top operational priority remains expanding its flight network. Kashef-Azar said efforts are also underway to ensure Iranian carriers gain access to European destinations alongside the return of foreign airlines. “We are actively engaging with new and emerging airlines to expand their presence in the country, and encouraging signs of progress are already evident,” he added. Currently, approximately 26 foreign airlines operate flights to Imam Khomeini International Airport.



### Notice of tender for export sale No. Z/1404/24

**Golgohar Mining and Industrial Company**

Hereby Golgohar Mining & Industrial Co. announces selling and export 70.000 metric tons of Iron Ore Concentrate (%Fe:66.50 ave) on basis of F.O.B at Rajaei Jetty Bandar Abbas - Iran. Interested bidders should find tender documents at Golgohar website: [www.geg.ir](http://www.geg.ir). All bids on conformity to tender instructions must be submitted no later than 09:00 A.M. on 16. Dec.2025 to Golgohar complex in sirjan (50 km in shiraz road). Bidders are invited to the transactions commission department of the seller with an introduction letter of interested buyer and personal identification of the representative. Tender results shall be announced at 09:00 A.M. on 16.Dec.2025 at the office of the Seller.

**GOLGOHAR MINING & INDUSTRIAL CO.**

Analysis %		
%Fe Ave	66.50	
%Fe O	Min 24	Max 28
%P Max	0.04	
%S Max	1	
%SiO2 Max	3.0	
%Al2O3 Max	0.7	
%CaO Max	0.8	
%MgO Max	2.5	
%Moisture Max	5.0	
Size ave	80% <0.46 mm	



## Quiet cooperation, colossal consequences

# Why Iran-Turkey alignment is determinative for region



By Mohammad-Ali  
Ghanamizadeh Fallahi

Expert on international affairs

### OPINION EXCLUSIVE

At first glance, many defined the trip of Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan to Tehran and President Erdogan's impending trip within the clichéd framework of increased trade volume, transit corridor, energy, and the number "\$30 billion". However, if we perceive these comings and goings in succession to the imposed 12-day war between Iran and Israel and the strike against Iran's nuclear facilities. In addition, if we place beside it Turkey's recent military leap in the domain of missiles, drones, and new-generation fighter aircraft, an entirely different picture emerges.

In this picture, Tehran and Ankara are not merely two economic partners that seek to broaden exchanges, but two actors that, gradually and imperceptibly, are beginning to apprehend the possibility of designing a type of joint and multi-layered deterrence against Israel and a portion of the Western bloc; a deterrence that does not necessarily possess an overt and contractual form, yet can, behind the curtain, reposition the region's security parameters.

The imposed 12-day war constituted a critical juncture for both countries. From Iran's vantage point, this war demonstrated that the nuclear dossier is no longer merely a matter of negotiations, but, in the truest sense, is intertwined with conventional war: any serious tension at the nuclear level can, immediately, engender extensive missile and drone confrontation with Israel, with the direct presence of the United States. From Turkey's vantage point, this war served as a living laboratory through which it observed how the confrontation between Iran's missile and drone capability, Israel's air-defense network, and Western systems would manifest in practice.

Precisely here, Fidan's administrative role as the official responsible for transmitting American messages to Iran at the peak of the confrontation acquired significance for both sides; for Ankara as evidence that it can serve as a crisis-control channel between Tehran and the West, and for Tehran as an indication that Turkey is not merely a NATO neighbor, but can, in critical moments, perform the role of a safety valve.

After the termination of the war and the attainment of a fragile cease-fire, Iran, according to the claim of certain media, requested in an unprecedented manner that Saudi Arabia play a role in opening the avenue of dialogue with the United States. This decision positioned Saudi Arabia as a political hub and a mediating actor for engendering a potential process of de-escalation. Precisely at this juncture, a warning bell resounded for Turkey that its ideological rival, Saudi Arabia, might surpass it in the Islamic world as the mediator between Iran and the West.

The hosting of nuclear talks between Iran and the Europeans in Istanbul, the explicit articulation of the issue of sanctions and the necessity of their removal in Fidan's remarks in Tehran, and the simultaneous emphasis on a purely diplomatic resolution for the nuclear dossier were all among the items of news upon which Turkey concentrated with particular intensity. In reality, Ankara endeavored to convey the message that if a new architecture for managing Iran's nuclear program and preventing subsequent wars is to be designed, this architecture cannot be constituted without Turkey's



Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Hakan Fidan (L) goes to shake hands with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian in Tehran on November 30, 2025.

presence. Similarly, Tehran endeavored to demonstrate that its mediation channels are not confined to Riyadh and Doha, and that it also employs Ankara as a second secure politico-security channel.

However, the more consequential stratum of this political commuting is the locus at which hard security enters the scene. In the background of these movements, the possibility of a type of concealed military cooperation, especially in the domain of missiles and, in its extension, Turkey's new-generation fighter aircraft, is being contemplated. Iran and Turkey, during the past decade, have progressed along two divergent yet overlapping trajectories: Iran, through the development of long-range ballistic and cruise missiles and an extensive drone network, has demonstrated that in stand-off warfare against adversaries such as Israel, it possesses serious capacity, yet in the domain of modern fighter aircraft, advanced engines, and certain intricate aerial subsystems, it confronts constraints. Conversely, Turkey, through a major leap in the drone industry, the development of medium-range missiles and precision rockets, and, above all, the commencement of its new-generation fighter project, is transforming into an emergent aerospace power, yet its access to Western technol-

ogies is limited and conditional, and it is continually subjected to pressure from NATO and the United States.

The combination of these two profiles suggests an attractive, albeit high-risk, scenario: Iran can place upon the table its practical experience from missile-drone warfare with Israel and its attack-and-defense patterns, while Turkey can share a portion of its knowledge and modern aerospace infrastructure, directly or indirectly, with Iran; not necessarily in the form of official purchase or sale of armaments, but in the form of conceptual transfer, cooperation on dual-use technologies, and the definition of joint covert projects.

For instance, the most ordinary level of such cooperation can be the exchange of data and lessons learned regarding the performance of Israeli and Western air-defense systems against missiles and drones; namely, which type of flight profile, which saturation and deception tactics, and which combinations of ballistic missiles and drones possessed greater penetrative capacity, and which points of the adversary's defensive network were more vulnerable. At a higher level, conceptual coordination in deterrence doctrine arises: the two sides better comprehend the roles each could play in constraining the operational space of Tel Aviv in the event of a new war with

Israel, even if not a single projectile is fired directly from Turkish territory toward Israel.

Alongside the missile domain, Turkey's new-generation fighter project constitutes both a potential threat and an opportunity for Iran. If bilateral relations deteriorate toward hostility, the possession of a modern fighter platform by a western neighbor is, naturally, alarming. However, if the current trajectory of dialogue and convergence of interests continues, Iran can employ Turkey's experience in designing aerial platforms, managing a complex supply chain, and developing a data network. Cooperation can occur in domains that are legally and publicly introduced as dual-use or non-military: advanced materials, composites, simulation software, flight algorithms, and even certain navigation and communication subsystems. It is unnecessary that the result of this cooperation be the entry of a Turkish fighter into Iran's air force; the final product may solely be a multi-level enhancement in Iran's comprehension and capability for designing, sustaining, and employing more intricate platforms.

The synthesis of these developments generates the possibility of designing something akin to a joint deterrent blueprint against Israel; a blueprint that is not necessarily inscribed on official paper, but that is formed in the minds of the security architects of both countries. This blueprint contains three principal layers.

The first layer is geopolitical: Israel, in order to exercise power in the region, requires a secure operational space, aerial access from the Mediterranean to Iraq, and a network of aligned partners. If Iran and Turkey attain an understanding that, at a minimum, in Syria, Iraq, and the eastern Mediterranean, they will reduce the ceiling of Israel's freedom of action, Tel Aviv will be compelled to recalculate the cost and risk of any military action against Iran. Even if Turkey possesses no intention to fire a missile, the mere limitation of Israel's intelligence and logistical access to certain areas constitutes, in itself, a deterrent factor. The second layer is missile- and drone-based. The imposed 12-day war demonstrated that Iran is capable of dispatching waves of missiles and drones toward distant targets, and, in contrast, Israel's and the United States' defensive network,



A full-scale model of the fifth-generation "Kaan" warplane, also referred to as the TF and MMU, is presented at the 2019 Paris Air Show. The aircraft completed its maiden flight on February 21, 2024.

ERIC PIERMONT/AFP



Fidan's administrative role as the official responsible for transmitting American messages to Iran at the peak of the imposed 12-day war acquired significance for both sides; for Ankara as evidence that it can serve as a crisis-control channel between Tehran and the West, and for Tehran as an indication that Turkey is not merely a NATO neighbor, but can, in critical moments, perform the role of a safety valve.



The synthesis of these developments generates the possibility of designing something akin to a joint deterrent blueprint against Israel; a blueprint that is not necessarily inscribed on official paper, but that is formed in the minds of the security architects of both countries. This blueprint contains three principal layers.



although intense, is limited and extremely costly. Now, if this reality is situated, within a joint conceptual framework, beside Turkey's drone and missile capability — which possesses both experience in multiple battlefields and leadership in designing and producing unmanned combat platforms — the message to Israel will be that, in the event of a full-scale confrontation with Iran, it is no longer confronted solely by an eastern Shia front, but by an environment in which certain Sunni, NATO-member, and Western-linked states can, even at the level of constraining operational space, alter the equation against it. The third layer is political and narrative. Iran has, for many years, carried the banner of opposition to Israel, yet this opposition, in the dominant Western narrative, is often depicted as an ideological and religious confrontation. Turkey, especially under Erdogan's leadership, is, on the one hand, a NATO member and a serious economic partner of Europe, and, on the other hand, presents itself as a defender of Palestine and an explicit critic of Israel. If Ankara and Tehran arrive at a type of implicit division of labor on the matter of Palestine and the periodic wars in Gaza — one

employing the rhetoric of resistance with severe language, and the other employing a more normalized yet fervent Islamic-national language — Israel will confront a front that elevates its costs both on the battlefield and in media and diplomacy. This narrative overlap, if combined with the aforementioned military and geopolitical layers, elevates deterrence from the level of missiles in storage to the level of multidimensional pressure, although the probability of it remains extremely low. Naturally, such a scenario is both attractive and high-risk for both sides. For Iran, the attraction lies in escaping the trap of the image of Iran as Israel's sole serious adversary, distributing mediation among several capitals, and acquiring a more profound comprehension of the West's defensive and offensive network. However, in contrast, the danger is that, by opening the domain of military and intelligence cooperation to a NATO-member state, a portion of the deep knowledge of Iran's missile and drone capability may be placed at the disposal of an actor that might, in the future, change direction or transmit information to the West.

For Turkey, the attraction lies in becoming a power that can act as the principal negotiator between Israel and Iran, and between the West and the East, and, simultaneously, employ Iran's unparalleled experience in asymmetric and stand-off warfare. However, this path also imposes costs upon Ankara: heightened pressure from the United States and NATO, increased sensitivity from certain Arab countries, and the danger of becoming trapped between two fires if Iran-Israel tension moves toward explosion. Ultimately, the synthesis of these developments indicates that Fidan's trip and Erdogan's future presence in Tehran cannot be summarized within the level of a ceremonial event or an economic roadmap. These comings and goings, in the continuation of the imposed 12-day war, constitute an endeavor by both sides to ensure that the future of wars and peace in the Middle East is not designed without their own presence. Iran endeavors to diversify its deterrence and bloodlines and to exit the monopoly of Saudi and Qatari mediation; Turkey seeks to exit marginalization in the Iran dossier and present itself as one



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan speaks at the Big Palestine Meeting in Istanbul on October 28, 2023.

of the architects of the new order. Meanwhile, the idea of concealed military cooperation in the domain of missiles and fighter aircraft, and the possibility of designing a joint deterrent blueprint against Israel, although presently at the level of potential and capacity, is pre-

cisely the locus that, if taken seriously, can, several years hence, be recalled as a turning point in the history of the regional balance of power; a point at which Tehran and Ankara advanced from mere rivalry toward a calculated convergence of interests against a shared adversary.

# Tehran-Ankara cooperation paradigm during transition of Mideast order



By Samira Karim Shahi  
Researcher on Turkish affairs

## OPINION

The recent visit of Hakan Fidan, the Turkish foreign minister, to Iran, within the framework of consultation concerning bilateral cooperation and regional dossiers, once again reminds us of the importance of the condition of relations between the two neighbors in the regional structure. The fluid developments of Middle East, the elevated dynamism and the displacement of equations in the post-October 7 period, have placed the process of transformation of the regional order on an accelerated trajectory, so that the principal actors in determining the paradigm of bilateral and multilateral relations maintain a long-term vision toward their strategic plan, in order to consolidate their position in the forthcoming order. Amid this situation, Iran and Turkey are among these cardinal actors whose competition-cooperation paradigm, according to their geopolitical capacities and geography, gains significance under the management of conflicting interests and the reinforcement of commonalities. According to the official announcement, the developments of Syria and the cease-fire of Gaza will be the two regional pivotal subjects that, during Fidan's visit to Tehran, were to be discussed. The consultation of the Turkish foreign minister with Iranian officials occurred during the anniversary of the fall of Damascus. Last year, during such days, Fidan transformed his expansive diplomatic dynamism, especially with Tehran and Moscow, into an advantageous asset in his foreign policy dossier. He claimed in numerous interviews that he had succeeded in persuading Tehran and Moscow, as the most significant supporters of the Assad government, that continued support for him would no longer secure their interests. Fidan even criticized Iran's regional policies, especially in Syria, and believed it was now the time for Iran, by accepting the necessity of altering its approach, to join cooperation for the days of peace and stability in Syria. However, now, with the passage of one year since the fall of Assad and the domination of al-Jolani over Damascus, the condition of Syria possesses little correspondence with the statements of Fidan and the supporters of al-Jolani



THE NEW ARAB

one year ago. The stalemate of negotiations of the Kurdish groups east of the Euphrates, the uncertain condition of the northern strip of Syria under Turkish influence, the massacres on the Mediterranean coast and the repression of the Alawites, the occupation of the Golan region and beyond by the Zionist military and their advancement to the outskirts of Damascus, the numerous Israeli bombardments and the annihilation of Syrian military infrastructure, the reinforcement of separatist currents in Sweida Province by Israel, and likewise the daily tensions in the southern provinces with the presence of Zionists constitute part of the developments with which Syrians have grappled during the past year. In such circumstances, the management of the Syrian condition, with the pressures of the United States and the crimes and tension-inducing actions of Israel, has become difficult for the Turks. Although they endeavored, by attracting investment from the Persian Gulf states, by military and logistical support for Damascus, and also by consultation to diminish the energy crisis and ameliorate American sanctions, to delineate a relatively lucid prospect for the future of Syria, nevertheless, the seat of power in Damascus remains unstable. At any moment, an internal or external factor may transform Ankara's one-year achievement

into a quagmire of foreign policy on its southern borders; especially since, until now, they have not been able to discover an endpoint to Zionist movements in Syria and their complete liberty in action and assault at negotiation tables. Abbas Araghchi, our country's foreign minister, last month, in an interview about concerns and common interests with Turkey, also referenced points of divergence, among which one of the most significant is the Syrian dossier. He states that our perspective has been different, and the Syrian issue is among the principal disagreements between the two states. Araghchi, regarding these post-Assad Syrian developments, believed that it had become evident that our concerns were correct, and now these concerns have become clear for our friends in Turkey as well. The Iranian foreign minister also declared that Israel's occupation of Syrian territories and the danger of Syria's disintegration satisfy none of the regional sides. Apparently, Iran, with the Turkish government and the other governments, was still consulting, and if at any time it becomes necessary that Iran assists the stability and territorial integrity of Syria, it shall accomplish this. It appears that, in the current conditions of the instability of the Syrian situation and the record of the new res-

idents of the Damascus palace, Iran's national interests in the region will not be secured by establishing a bilateral communication channel between Tehran and Damascus. However, this cannot necessarily signify Iran's isolation or passivity regarding Syrian developments. On the other hand, Turkey has confronted the harsh reality of the tension-seeking and threat-producing will of the Israeli regime in the Syria that they desired. During the Assad period — with the presence of the Resistance Axis and the communication bridge of Damascus-Beirut and the establishment of a security belt against the malevolence of the regime — the reinforcement of separatist strategies such as the "David Corridor" and the formation of a Greater Kurdistan had been prevented. These are schemes that will direct the threat of territorial disintegration not only toward Syria but also Iraq, Iran, and Turkey. The pressure from Israel upon Turkey in Syria can constitute the groundwork of an opportunity, if in Tehran an intention and an initiative arise in order to benefit from it, preparing the preliminaries of Iran's effective presence in Syrian developments, even in the absence of official relations with Damascus.

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



It appears that, in the current conditions of the instability of the Syrian situation and the record of the new residents of the Damascus palace, Iran's national interests in the region will not be secured by establishing a bilateral communication channel between Tehran and Damascus. However, Turkey has confronted the harsh reality of the tension-seeking and threat-producing will of the Israeli regime in the Syria that they desired. So, the pressure from Israel upon Turkey in Syria can constitute the groundwork of an opportunity, if in Tehran an intention and an initiative arise in order to benefit from it.



# World Taekwondo Under-21 Championships: Iran's Gholami grabs gold, Mohammadi settles for bronze on Day 2

## Sports Desk

The second day of the inaugural World Taekwondo Under-21 Championships in Nairobi, Kenya, saw Amirreza Gholami capture Iran's second gold medal in the men's competition on Thursday. Hasti Mohammadi, meanwhile, secured her second international bronze in less than a month, finishing joint third in the women's -57kg event. Gholami capped off his impressive campaign with a thrilling 3-2, 8-8, 7-6 victory over Spanish

top seed Mikel Fernandez Garcia in the -80kg final. The Iranian prodigy began the day with a win against Türkiye's Idris Atay Sulu, then defeated Morocco's Haitam Zarhouthi – a gold medalist at last month's Islamic Solidarity Games – to reach the quarterfinals, where he beat Jordan's Mohammad Aladarbi in straight rounds. Gholami continued his strong form by overcoming Belarusian second seed Raman Turavinau – competing as a neutral athlete – in back-to-back rounds to book his place in the final.

Earlier in the day, Mohammadi, who captured an impressive bronze at the Islamic Solidarity Games, suffered a semifinal setback against reigning world under-18 champion Amina Dehaoui of Morocco, finishing with a consolation bronze. Mohammadi defeated Germany's Roja Rezaie (2-0) and Jessica Lynn Lee (2-1), before mounting a comeback to beat Greece's Athanasia Repoulia 2-1 and advance to the semifinals. Amirabbas Rahanama was the other Iranian in action on Thursday but was unlucky to finish

empty-handed in the men's -63kg division. He suffered a controversial quarterfinal loss to Türkiye's Hamza Osmay Aydogan, with the Iranian coaching staff believing poor refereeing decisions cost Rahanama a place in the last four. Thursday's results followed Iran's double medal haul in the men's competition on the opening day. Abolfazl Zandi – a world senior champion in late October – capped off a brilliant five-week stretch by winning gold in the men's -58kg category, defeating

Russian neutral athlete Mago-medg Magomedov 2-0 in the final. Zandi delivered an emphatic run in the Kenyan capital, outclassing India's Shaury Chakravarti, Ecuador's Iker Josue Rojas, Mexico's Carlos Cortes, and Brazil's Gabriel Fonseca without dropping a single round en route to the title match. Meanwhile, world junior champion Amirmohammad Ashrafi claimed joint bronze alongside Tunisia's Motaz Ifaoui in the men's +87kg division after a 2-1 semifinal defeat against Kazakhstan's Beibarys Kablan, who went on to beat South Korea's Yang

Jun-young in the final. Ashrafi had earlier defeated Lebanon's Charbel Raad 2-0 before overcoming Russian athlete Kirill Lisitsin in straight rounds to reach the semifinals. In the women's competition, Sara Soufi opened her +73kg campaign with a 2-0 win over Australia's Kim Soohyeon but exited in the round of 16 after a loss to American top seed Naomi Alade. ISG bronze medalist Rojan Goodarzi saw her -49kg campaign end without a bout after she refused to compete against an Israeli opponent in the first round.



Iran's Amirreza Gholami poses with his gold medal at the World Taekwondo Under-21 Championships in Nairobi, Kenya, on December 4, 2025.  
● WORLD TAEKWONDO



Iran's Hasti Mohammadi poses with her bronze medal at the World Taekwondo Under-21 Championships in Nairobi, Kenya, on December 4, 2025.  
● WORLD TAEKWONDO

## Iran enjoys six top-10 spots in latest WKF Rankings

### Sports Desk

Six Iranian karatekas ranked among the top 10 in their respective categories in the latest WKF World Rankings – released on Thursday – following an impressive run of results at last week's World Championships in Cairo, Egypt. Atousa Golshadnejad, who made history by claiming Iran's first-ever women's gold at the global showpiece, earned 4,995 points to overtake Kazakhstan's Assel Kanay at the top of the female kumite -61kg rankings. Saleh Abazari, a silver medalist in Cairo, climbed to third in the male kumite +84kg category with 3,810 points, while Egypt's Taha Tarek Mahmoud and Italy's Matteo Avanzini – who defeated the Iranian in the world final – remained

first and second respectively. In the women's -50kg rankings, Iranian Sara Bahmanyar, who followed her Islamic Solidarity Games gold with a second world bronze in Cairo, stood second behind Kazakhstan's Moldir Zhangbyrbay with 4,150 points. Meanwhile, Fatemeh Sa'adati tallied 3,460 points to rise to fourth in the female -55kg rankings, thanks to her quarterfinal finish at the World Championships, while Ali Meskini placed fifth in the male kumite -60kg category after his last-eight run in Cairo. Fatemeh Sadeqi – a gold medalist at the World Games and the Islamic Solidarity Games earlier this year – surged to sixth in the women's kata rankings, despite a setback against Greece's Georgia-Archontia Xenou in the opening round of the knockout phase at the World Championships.

Iranian world champion Atousa Golshadnejad topped the female kumite -61kg category at the latest WKF World Rankings.  
● IRNA

## Iranians eyeing glory at Asian Youth Para Games

### Sports Desk

Iranian athletes will set their sights on another medal-laden campaign as the Asian Youth Para Games kick off in Dubai today. Named "Children of Iran, Ambassadors of Victory," the Iranian delegation will feature 194 athletes, including 74 female competitors, at the fifth edition of the multi-sport event. Iranians will compete in 11 disciplines: para athletics, para archery, para badminton, bocia, goalball, para powerlifting, para swimming, para table tennis, para taekwondo, and 3x3

wheelchair basketball. The National Paralympic Committee – recognized as the leading organization in the development of women's Paralympic sports – has placed special emphasis on female participation at this event. With the exception of swimming, the delegation includes female athletes across all other 10 disciplines. "Our effort is to maximize the participation of our female athletes and facilitate their attendance at the Games. In line with the National Paralympic Committee's new vision, which emphasizes a strong presence of girls and women in sporting



events as cultural ambassadors, we have placed special focus on this area," said Maryam Ka-

zemipour, Iran's chef de mission in Dubai. "We will have female representation in 10 disciplines, with a higher number of girls in some events and an equal number in others," added the official, who noted that Iranian competitors at the Games are aged between 12 and 24. Iran has participated in all four previous editions of the Asian Youth Para Games, finishing runner-up in the first three – Tokyo 2009, Kuala Lumpur 2013, and Dubai 2017 – before claiming the top spot in Manama 2021. Across these four editions, Iran has collected 144 gold, 139 silver, and 107 bronze medals.

## Esteghlal Qom crowned Iranian GR Premier League champion

### Sports Desk

Esteghlal Qom claimed the title at the Iranian Greco-Roman Premier League, thanks to an emphatic 8-2 victory over Naft-o Gaz Zagros-e Jonoubi in the final showpiece in Tehran on Thursday. Hossein Bijani got Esteghlal off the mark with a superiority win (8-0) over Alireza Amiri in the 55kg contest, before Alireza Nejati made it 2-0 by defeating Hossein Javidi 3-1 in their 60kg clash. Mohammad-Javad Aboutalebi then stunned former world champion Meisam Dalkhani 7-2 in the 63kg showdown to extend Esteghlal's advantage. World U23 bronze medalist Ahmadreza Mohsennejad (67kg) outmuscled Mohammad Kamali 9-0, and Iman Mohammadi – the 72kg champion at October's U23 Worlds – made quick work of Iman Bahmani (10-1) to put Esteghlal within a single win of the team triumph.



Esteghlal Qom's wrestlers and coaching staff pose with the champion's trophy at the Iranian Greco-Roman Premier League champion in Tehran, Iran, on December 4, 2025.  
● IAWF

However, Esteghlal's Amir Abdi – silver medalist at last month's Islamic Solidarity Games – suffered a 2-1 defeat to former Asian champion Amin Kavianinejad in the 77kg bout, before Mohammad

Mokhtari's 3-1 win over reigning continental gold medalist Mohammad Naqousi in the 82kg match gave Naft-o Gaz a lifeline. Naft-o Gaz's hopes for a comeback were ultimately dashed

in the 87kg bout, where Jamal Esmaeili defeated Mohammadhossein Ostadmohammad 8-2 to secure the title for Esteghlal. Four-time Asian champion Nasser Alizadeh (97 kg) and Morteza Alghousi (130kg) capped off Esteghlal's title run with comfortable victories over Mahdi Bali (7-1) and Mohammad Kazemi (8-0), respectively, in the two dead rubbers. Earlier in the day, Ra'ad Padasand Artesh edged Azad University of Khuzestan 48-46 – with both teams claiming five victories – to finish third. Mohammad Hosseinvand Panahi (55kg), Pouya Nassrpour (60kg), Hossein Asadi (67kg), Hojjat Rezaei (72kg), and Rasoul Garmsiri (87kg) secured wins for Ra'ad, while Mohammad Janqoli (63kg), Aliasghar Samdaliri (77kg), Seyyed Mohammad-Mahdi Miri (82kg), Mohammad-Sadeq Abdollahi (97kg), and Seyyed Abolfazl Mirzadeh (130kg) earned Azad University's victories.



# Weaving identity through Lor traditional attire



● MEHR



● MEHR

## Iranica Desk

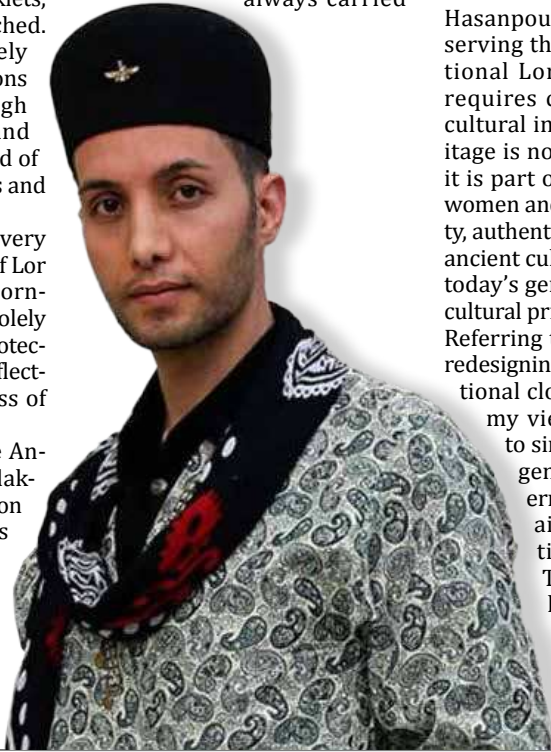
Traditional clothing is more than just fabric and patterns; it is a living document of a nation's identity, cultural memory, and social history. In Lorestan, women's attire — especially the authentic Golvani headband — holds not only artistic and aesthetic value but also embodies layers of meaning, history, and the ancient beliefs of the region's people, according to Mehr News Agency. In recent decades, while waves of modernization and changing lifestyles have marginalized many cultural elements, part of this heritage in Lorestan Province has endured, continuing as a symbol of dignity, modesty, and the deep-rooted traditions of Iranian culture. Ata Hasanpour, Director General of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization of Lorestan Province, discussed the features of authentic Lor clothing in an interview with Mehr News Agency. He said, "Lor attire is a harmonious collection of colors, variety, and beauty, reflecting the spirit, authenticity, and identity of Lor women. Beyond its visual appeal, this clothing provides full coverage, showcasing the elegance of a Lor woman in every sense." He added, "Each component of the outfit — from the headband to the tunic, and shoes — has a specific role and meaning, forming a coherent and identity-rich ensemble."

The researcher also highlighted the historical significance of the Lor headband, or Golvani, noting that archaeological findings in Lorestan, Khuzestan, and western regions of Iran trace its origins back approximately three thousand years, or even longer. "For this reason," Hasanpour emphasized, "the Golvani is recognized among local communities as a three-thousand-year-old scarf." Hasanpour explained that the Golvani was not exclusively worn by women. "Although this headband is commonly seen on Lor women today, it was historically used to adorn men's clothing as well," he said. Lor men would wrap the Golvani around their felt hats during battle, both to make the hat more resistant to the wind and to give their appearance a distinctive and imposing look. He added that men also wore the Golvani during festive occasions, either tied around the hat or draped around the neck, highlighting the headband's prominent role in Lor dress culture. Hasanpour noted, "If we turn to Lor poetry and literature, there are numerous references to the Golvani, for both men's headgear and women's attire. In laments, songs, and many oral traditions, the Golvani symbolizes the elegance and refinement of Lor women and holds a significant cultural role." He added, "In Lor culture, this headband is not merely a piece of clothing; it is part of our collec-

tive memory, expressed through poetry and music as well." The traditional Lor women's tunic comes in several styles, each suited to different occasions and ceremonies. One of these is called the Sardari — a long garment made of velvet, usually reaching the knees. He explained, "The Sardari comes in two types: the first has long sleeves and is simply called Sardari, while the second has sleeves ending just above the elbows, known locally as Balkol. Both types are widely worn by Lor women and are chosen according to age, social status, and the specific occasion." He emphasized, "The variety of colors in Lor clothing is one of its most striking features. These colors not only create visual beauty but also reflect the vitality, culture, and life-loving spirit of the people of Lorestan." Hasanpour noted, "One essential component of Lor women's attire is the Papush (shoe), or traditional women's shoes, which were mostly a type of Giveh and widely worn by women." He explained, "Giveh, due to its lightness, durability, and comfort, was the ideal choice for the nomadic lifestyle and long journeys through nature." Referring to the role of decorations in Lor women's clothing, he added, "If we consider adornments, there are interesting details. Today, among young women, wearing anklets has become a fashion trend and a matter of aesthetics, but in the past, these

embellishments were an integral part of formal Lor women's attire." He explained, "In the past, precisely where the Papush met the ankle, a beautifully crafted anklet was worn. Resembling beadwork, it was decorated with small flowers such as carnations and intricate patterns. These anklets were not only visually appealing but also carried a pleasant fragrance, serving as a complementary decorative element of women's attire." In another part of his remarks, he highlighted the practical, protective function of these adornments: "Alongside these anklets, a very small bell was attached. Its purpose was not purely decorative. During migrations or while walking through plains, deserts, forests, and pastures, the delicate sound of the bell helped keep snakes and scorpions away." He emphasized, "This is a very subtle and creative aspect of Lor women's clothing. The adornments were not designed solely for beauty; they also had protective and safety functions, reflecting the women's awareness of their natural environment." He added, "If you visit the Anthropology Museum of Falak-ol-Aflak Castle, you will see on display a complete women's outfit, including the Sardari and traditional dress." He explained, "At the base of the same display case, we have arranged a collection of personal items tra-

ditionally carried by Lor women — from an old mirror to a double-sided comb, kohl container, kohl applicator, and a small pair of scissors. These were everyday essentials for Lor women and formed an important part of their culture of grooming and adornment." Hasanpour added, "If you look at ancient gravestones in Lorestan, you can see the same decorative elements. On women's gravestones in the past, images of mirrors, kohl containers, double-sided combs, scissors, and so on were carved. These designs reflect the items women always carried



● kashaaneh.ir

and their role in daily life." "For men," he continued, "the gravestones usually depicted a single-sided comb, scissors, prayer beads, a seal, a carved cup, and a copper water jug. These copper jugs were used for boiling tea and serving guests. The presence of these motifs symbolizes the hospitality of the Lor people." Hasanpour emphasized, "I want to stress that these tools were part of Lor women's grooming and adornment—a small but essential set. The most important items among them were the kohl container and applicator." Hasanpour continued, "Alongside all the decorative, aesthetic, and identity-related features of Lor women's clothing, the most important characteristic of this attire is that it ensures full coverage — from the crown of the head to the feet." He explained, "Traditionally and historically, this clothing was designed in a way that, while maintaining dignity, elegance, and refinement, provides complete modesty, covering the entire body of the woman." He added that this feature is not unique to Lorestan Province; similar coverage and decorum can also be seen in the traditional dress of Kurdish, Azarbaijani, Sistani, Baluchi communities, and even in northern Iran. Hasanpour emphasized, "Preserving the Golvani and traditional Lor women's clothing requires careful planning by cultural institutions. This heritage is not merely a garment; it is part of the identity of Lor women and a symbol of modesty, authenticity, and the region's ancient culture. Passing it on to today's generation should be a cultural priority." Referring to the importance of redesigning and updating traditional clothing, he added, "In my view, it is not enough to simply say that today's generation wears modern clothing; we should aim to combine tradition with modernity. This approach can harmonize authentic Iranian designs with the tastes of contemporary youth."

## Official urges action on ancient Kermanshah site

## Iranica Desk

The deputy director general of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization of Kermanshah Province has highlighted the need for coordinated action among several governmental agencies following the discovery of a one-million-year-old archaeological site in 2021 in Kermanshah. Speaking to ISNA, Kiumars Khani La'labadi said that over the past four years authorities have succeeded in confirming the site's historical significance. During this period, the location underwent several rounds of archaeological excavations, and last year — after boundaries were defined, protected zones established, and documentation completed — it was officially added to Iran's National Heri-



● IRNA

tagate List. Khani La'labadi described the site as a major tourism asset for the province. Covering more than 300 hectares, much of the land falls under the ownership of various provincial bodies, including the police force, IRIB,

and the Department of Roads and Urban Development, among others. He noted that the site has the potential to be transformed into an open-air Paleolithic museum, but such a project would require full cooperation from



● ISNA

all agencies that hold portions of the land. Given its exceptional size and antiquity, he said, the site offers a rare opportunity to showcase how early humans lived and to display the artifacts unearthed so far. Achieving this goal would also

require significant funding, he added — resources that could be secured through a long-term plan involving the municipality, the Provincial Management and Planning Organization, the governor's office, and the provincial cultural heritage authority.

Khani La'labadi stated that the province has studied examples of similar museum sites in Europe and is working toward developing an appropriate content plan for the one-million-year-old Paleolithic area in Kermanshah. He emphasized that turning the site into a museum would be a cultural investment for the city — one that is feasible if provincial officials and relevant agencies cooperate and funding is provided. The one-million-year-old Paleolithic site — located south of Kermanshah between Pardis and Imam Khomeini townships — was discovered in 2021 by Saman Gooran, an archeologist from Kermanshah. The area spans roughly 320 hectares, of which 150 hectares constitute the protected zone. Its boundaries were established in 2024.





# Tehran launches MENA's first paper-based art fair

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Culture and Islamic Guidance Ministry on Friday opened 'Open Paper,' the first paper-based art fair in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), at the state-run Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults. The event, organized by the Art Galleries Association and coordinated by the ministry's visual arts office, drew senior cultural officials and dozens of exhibitors from across the country, IRNA reported. Mohammad-Mehdi Ahmadi, the ministry's acting deputy for artistic affairs, toured the fair and called paper a "powerful" medium that still shapes public taste and keeps the commercial side of visual arts turning. He said the material's appeal reaches "both the imagination and the market."

General Director of Visual Arts at the Culture Ministry Aydin Mahdizadeh, noted the fair is designed as a specialist platform. He said the ministry only offered advisory support, adding that the launch marks the "first step" towards regular art fairs tailored to different media. More than 40 galleries from Tehran and provincial cities have taken part, joined by Iranian Illustrators Society, the Iranian Graphic Designers Society, and several publishers and studios active in paper-based work. Their stands range from paintings, drawings and handmade prints to photography, illustration, collage, artist books and papier-mâché sculptures. Curators say the focus on paper blends heritage with pragmatism. Lower production costs and easier transport help artists price their

work more competitively, opening the market to a wider pool of buyers at a time when many households are watching their spending. Exhibitors also argue that the lighter ecological footprint of paper pieces puts the fair in line with global sustainability standards. Alongside sales, Open Paper is staging panel discussions, artist talks and hands-on workshops on topics including the economics of art, paper techniques, archiving and professional development. Tehran art fair plans to run several themed "episodes" each year, with Open Paper serving as its inaugural edition. Officials hope the model will offer a steady, accessible and transparent structure for Iran's visual-arts market and lay groundwork for stronger institutions in the sector. Open Paper runs until December 12.



## ECO puts Aras in frame for future tourism capital slot



IRNA

## Arts & Culture Desk

Aras Free Zone will join the shortlist for future ECO Tourism Capitals, Jandos Asanov, deputy secretary-general of the Economic Cooperation Organization said on December 5 during a visit to the enclave in northwest Iran. He called the zone's position "strategic" and pointed to its spread of heritage sites as grounds for its inclusion, ISNA reported. Asanov told the third coordination meeting for the 2026 ECO tour-operators' forum, jointly planned by Aras and the nearby metropolis of Tabriz, that the bloc had a tradition of naming one host city each year. Sari took the title in 2022, Ardabil in 2023 and Tabriz in 2018. Turkey's Erzurum is lined up for 2026. He said ECO would "seriously examine" Aras for the following years, adding that the enclave's six UNESCO-listed assets and its borders with Azerbaijan, Turkey, Armenia and Nakhchivan gave it rare leverage in regional travel. He welcomed the Aras-Tabriz move

to take on major ECO duties, calling it "an important step" that could stitch together the region's fragmented tourism links. Asanov pressed for a professional network of tour guides to serve as a joint platform for ECO states and said broader cooperation would "open the door to new corridors of exchange". Iran's foreign tourism chief, Moslem Shojaei, said Aras remained the country's only free zone in the UN World Tourism Organization. He called the membership "no small feat", arguing that managers in Aras had read global trends correctly by steering their outreach towards ECO. Tourism, he said, was a "driver" in an economy that moves 1.4bn people a year. Iran holds 30 of the 350 seats in the ECO Tour-Operators' Association, which is due to meet in Aras and Tabriz in May 2026. Shojaei said Aras was one of the three most engaged free zones in Iran's partnership with the ministry, adding that the enclave's stance towards global co-operation suggested "a bright future" for its tourism sector. East Azerbaijan's provincial heritage chief, Ahmad Hamzadeh, said the joint 2026 hosting bid showed that the region was ready to play its part in what he called "dialogue among nations". With more than 4,800 registered heritage sites, including the vaulted Tabriz Bazaar, a string of inscribed monasteries, the Aras geopark and the troglo-

dyte village of Kandovan, the province held "a rare blend" of cultural and natural capital. Strengthening ECO travel, he said, would "anchor peace and stability" in a region shaped by intertwined histories. Hamzadeh said tourism diplomacy needed to "come before" political tracks, arguing that shared customs could bridge gaps still visible among member states. Tabriz and Aras, he said, stood ready to host ECO ministers and a regional tourism fair. Aras Free Zone's tourism deputy, Mohammad Masoudinia, said the enclave had tabled a package of operational proposals to ECO, including plans for an ECO tourism corridor and a pilot scheme making Aras the hub for free-zone tourism across member states. The area's position at the junction of east-west and north-south routes, he said, gave it the potential to become a regional center for travel, trade and logistics. Masoudinia listed cross-border trails such as Aras-Nakhchivan-Kars and Aras-Baku-Astana as potential first steps. He said Aras would host an ECO cultural festival and an international food fair, while offering sites for joint infrastructure projects, from lodging to transport links. He also floated a training center for tour guides and shared tourism standards. He called the Aras geopark a promising field for cross-border work with Azerbaijan and said the enclave aimed to take "an active and responsible role" in ECO's long-term agenda.

## Iranian stage production claims four prizes at Oman festival

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's stage production 'Today, I Will Become a Tree', directed by aramorz Gholamian, swept four awards at the Al-Den International Theater Festival in Muscat, securing top slots for directing, music, acting and stage design. The festival, held in the Omani capital earlier late November, handed Gholamian the prize for best directing after jurors praised what they called his "precise" handling of a narrative built around identity and loss, ISNA reported. He also walked away with the festival's music award, credited for weaving a sparse score into the performance's tightly-drawn scenes. Saghar Tizrou was named best actor, with judges citing the "charged stillness" she brought to the central role. Ali Faridani took the stage-design award for what organizers described as an inventive mix of props, hand-built structures and puppetry that framed the production's shifting moods. The production, led by Teh-



ISNA

ran-based producer Mohammad Dindashti, had travelled to Muscat after a short domestic run. Iranian theater groups have in recent years pushed to expand their presence across Gulf festivals, which have become a prominent showcase for regional works as cultural budgets in some Arab states rise into double-digit growth. Festival officials did not release audience figures, though Muscat's annual theater gatherings typically draw troupes from across the Persian Gulf, North Africa and parts of Europe. Participation offers smaller companies a chance to tap into regional circuits, often

securing invitations to winter seasons in Kuwait, Doha or Abu Dhabi. Gholamian's team said the four wins would help the production secure fresh bookings. "It gives us room to negotiate," one crew member said after the awards night, noting that international exposure can lift revenues by 20% if a play is picked up for touring. The troupe is expected to return to Iran later this month to begin preparations for a possible spring rerun in Tehran's mid-town playhouses, which have recently seen a modest rebound in ticket sales after two difficult seasons.

## Iranian video artist takes 2015 work to Algiers festival



## Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian video artist Armin Amirian sent a 2015 piece ti-

led 'Coalition' to the ninth International Festival of Contemporary Art in Algiers, where it opened on November 29 at the Mufti Zakaria Palace of Culture. The short work, considered one of Amirian's signature pieces, has travelled through several European and Asian collections over the past decade and picked up a handful of prizes on the way, ILNA reported. Its companion video-art edi-

tion, 'More than Coalition,' produced in the same period, has now been given an exclusive slot at the Algiers event after curators earmarked it as "a core work" for this year's program. Festival managers said the screening was arranged jointly with Janet Rady Fine Art, a British contemporary-art house that represents Amirian's portfolio abroad. The London gal-

lery has been steering his overseas engagements, tapping into markets where digital installations have gained ground. Algeria's Ministry of Culture is staging the festival under the banner Beyond Boundaries, with Algerian curator Hamza Bounoua at the helm. The week-long gathering, which runs until December 6, is hosting artists from the Middle East, Africa and Europe, many

of whom are showing experimental works that blur lines between video, performance and installation. Amirian's piece, built around themes of cooperation and rupture, sits comfortably within the festival's attempt to "push borders". One organizer said the Iranian work "carries a tension" that suited this year's brief, noting that audiences in the capital have responded well

to its pared-back structure. The Algiers festival, now in its ninth edition, has been expanding its program to draw in more non-Maghreb voices. Amirian, who has been steadily building his international profile since the mid-2010s, is expected to continue touring his video-art series next year as institutions court works that plug into digital-first exhibition formats.