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President Masoud Pezeshkian (3rd L, back row) poses for a photo during a ceremony to honor benefactors who built schools across Iran, in Tehran on January 26, 2026.

president.ir

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## US military drill in Middle East, part of strategy to avoid direct conflict with Iran

INTERVIEW  
EXCLUSIVE



Mohsen Farkhani

The US Air Force has announced it is gearing up for a multi-day military exercise across the Middle East. The drill is set to kick off in Qatar with the participation of Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states and will run for 11 days. In recent weeks, the US has also significantly beefed up its military presence in the region. This exercise comes amid escalating tensions between the US and Iran, raising the specter of renewed conflict. Should military hostilities erupt, regional countries would inevitably be caught in the crossfire, making the GCC's in-

volvement a point of considerable interest. Mohsen Farkhani, an international affairs expert, told Iran Daily that the US is unlikely to seek direct conflict with Tehran and that the increased military build-up in the region is a way to pile on psychological pressure and facilitate the re-entry of Israel into conflict with Iran.

**IRAN DAILY:** How do you assess the US Air Force's exercise at this juncture? Is this drill merely a military maneuver, or are there other objectives at play?

**FARKHANI:** The joint exercise between the US and GCC member states, taking place amid rising tensions between Iran and the United States, cannot be simply written off as a routine military exercise between allied nations. The timing itself contradicts such an assessment. According to the

US 2025 National Security Strategy, and considering the Trump administration's return to the Monroe Doctrine (emphasizing a focus on national interests within the Western Hemisphere and distancing itself from past alliances) and the expectation that allies will shoulder the costs of their own security in line with the Nixon Doctrine, this joint exercise is significant in two respects.

Firstly, the US is attempting to pass the buck of security costs onto its allies in the Persian Gulf through arms and logistical support, thereby distancing itself from a full-scale war with Iran due to domestic challenges within the US. Secondly, the United States is unlikely to pursue direct conflict with Iran, and the escalation and increase of US military weaponry in the region is a means of ramping up psychological pressure and facilitating the re-entry of Israel into the continuation of war with Iran and

violating the ceasefire [in June]. On this basis, a game is being played, consisting of several simultaneous scenarios. One: The US is projecting a full-fledged commitment to its allies in the GCC, having already reaped billions of dollars from the leaders of these countries, to support them in times of security crises. However, at the same time, it is waking them up to its disinterest in direct involvement in Middle Eastern wars. The fact that 70 different scenarios will be practiced over the 11-day duration of the exercise suggests an effort to avoid direct involvement and to provide only arms and training support, which aligns with the Nixon Doctrine.

Two: Given the deployment of diverse military weaponry in the region, the likelihood of war is considered highly probable, but seems somewhat far-fetched during the joint exercise.

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# Iran vows huge payback to enemy's 'miscalculation'

## International Desk

Iranian officials on Monday reiterated the readiness of all sectors of the country, including Armed Forces, to respond to any "miscalculation" by the enemy. Addressing a conference of top state companies, First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref said that the Islamic Republic will resolutely defend its people against any threat. Aref said that Iran is not seeking war and has no intention of initiating conflict, but it will not hesitate to defend itself. "God willing, there will be no war today as well; however, if the enemy makes a miscalculation, the government has a wartime economic plan and specific mechanisms in place to manage wartime conditions."

Commander of the Army's Ground Forces Brigadier General Ali Jahanshahi also announced the force's readiness

to confront the enemies' conspiracies and defend the "sacred soil of our country" with full strength.

## FM spox warns of 'regret-inducing response'

Speaking during his weekly press conference, Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei also warned that the country would deliver a "regret-inducing response" to any act of aggression, stressing that Iran is now more capable than in the past. Reacting to recent US military moves in the region, especially conducting a joint military drill with the Persian Gulf Arab states, Baqaei said that countries in the region are aware that any insecurity in the region is not directed solely at Iran, which is why there is a shared concern among regional states.

"Iran has confidence in its own capabilities and has also kept the experiences of June in mind, and it will respond to



Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref speaks during a conference of top state companies in Tehran on January 26, 2026.  
● IRNA

any aggression more powerfully than in the past with a regret-inducing response," he added. "We have faced, and continue to face, a form of hybrid warfare. Following the June aggression, over the past few months, we have been confronted with new threats from the United States and the Zionist regime," he said. Foreign-instigated riots in Iran escalated on January 8 and continued for several days, following peaceful protests in Iranian bazaars and markets where traders called for government action to halt the devaluation of the Iranian rial. The violence, encouraged openly by the Israeli regime and US President Donald Trump, resulted in extensive



damage to public and private property, with widespread destruction of shops, government institutions, public service

facilities, and the killing of thousands of civilians, including women and children, as well as security forces.

## Senior MP says US paralyzing int'l bodies to control global resources



Iran's Deputy Parliament Speaker Hamidreza Haji Babaei addresses the 16th General Assembly of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly in Manama, Bahrain, on January 26, 2026.  
● IRNA

pressure, and threats". He said the United Nations Security Council, specialized international forums, human rights bodies and other international bodies are now facing pressure, sanctions and threats from the US. Haji Babaei said that Iran has been one of the main targets of this US "malicious strategy." "Actions by the United States that are contrary to the UN Charter — including threats to use force, illegal sanctions, and direct and indirect aggressive measures against my country — have intensified in recent years", particularly in the recent months, he added. The direct military attack by the US on peaceful nuclear facilities of Iran in June "is a clear example of this lawlessness."

Hamidreza Haji Babaei made the remarks in an address to the main plenary of the 16th General Assembly of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) in Bahrain's capital, Manama. "The message of this policy is clear: no country, regardless of its size, power, or history of relations with the United States, will be immune from excessive demands,

## International Desk

Iran's deputy parliament speaker said on Monday that the United States is deliberately weakening, discrediting and even paralyzing international organizations in a bid to control natural resources, wealth, markets, and strategic capacities of other countries, especially in Asia's strategic regions.

## Russia urges Iran, US to exercise restraint; says war will destabilize region

### International Desk

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said on Monday that a possible US military strike on Iran on the pretext of supporting Iranian protesters would further destabilize West Asia region, calling on both sides to show restraint and focus exclusively on peaceful negotiations. "Russia continues its efforts to de-escalate tensions. In this situation, we would like to see restraint from all parties involved as well as their focus exclusively on peaceful negotiations to address the issues they consider relevant," Peskov said. Peskov added that such a move would represent "another step toward serious destabilization in the

region."

The comments came as tensions have been on the rise between Tehran and Washington over the US meddling remarks about recent protests in Iran. Foreign-instigated riots in Iran escalated on January 8 and continued for several days, following peaceful protests in Iranian bazaars and markets where traders called for government action to halt the devaluation of the Iranian rial. The violence, encouraged openly by the Israeli regime and US President Donald Trump, resulted in extensive damage to public and private property, with widespread destruction of shops, government institutions, public service facilities,



and the killing of thousands of civilians, including women and children, as well as security forces. Iranian authorities have confirmed that US and Israeli spy agencies were directly involved, providing funding, training, and media support to rioters and armed terrorists acting on the streets. Since then, Trump has repeatedly threatened Iran with military attack over what he calls Tehran's suppression of protests.

## Iranian Navy acts as an 'anchor' of regional stability: Cmdr.

Commander of the Iranian Army's Naval Force, Rear Admiral Shahram Irani, said the Iranian Navy acts as an anchor of stability and security in the region. Irani underscored the importance and status of the Army Navy in the region and beyond while addressing the students at Imam Ali Military University on Monday, IRNA reported. Referring to the continuous and powerful presence of the Iranian Navy in the open waters, he said that the



waving of the national flag thousands of kilometers away from the country's maritime borders is a clear message of "peace and friendship" for neighbors, and a "serious warning" to ill-wishers.

He stressed that the Navy not only ensures the security of commercial lines, but also solidifies Iran's position as a maritime power in the new geometry of global power equation. The naval commander underlined that today the Navy is much more advanced and more powerful in international waters and at the country's maritime borders than it was during the Iraq-imposed war in the 1980s.

## US military drill ...

However, given the current tense conditions, the US disinterest in a full-scale war with Iran, and its desire for Israel to initiate the conflict alone, it is possible that the US would take advantage of this exercise to place GCC member states in a fait accompli and to prevent them from backing out of a collective war with Iran, potentially leading to the commencement of Israeli attacks during the exercise.

## What kind of reactions could be expected from Iran in the event of any provocative action?

With US unlikely to initiate military action, should any such move occur from Israel and drag GCC member states into war, the necessity of Iran entering combined military actions against US military bases and equipment in regional countries and Israel would be unavoidable. This would also include cyberattacks and the involvement of Shiite movements aligned with the Islamic Republic of

Iran, threatening the economic targets of GCC member states, the US, and Europe in the Persian Gulf.

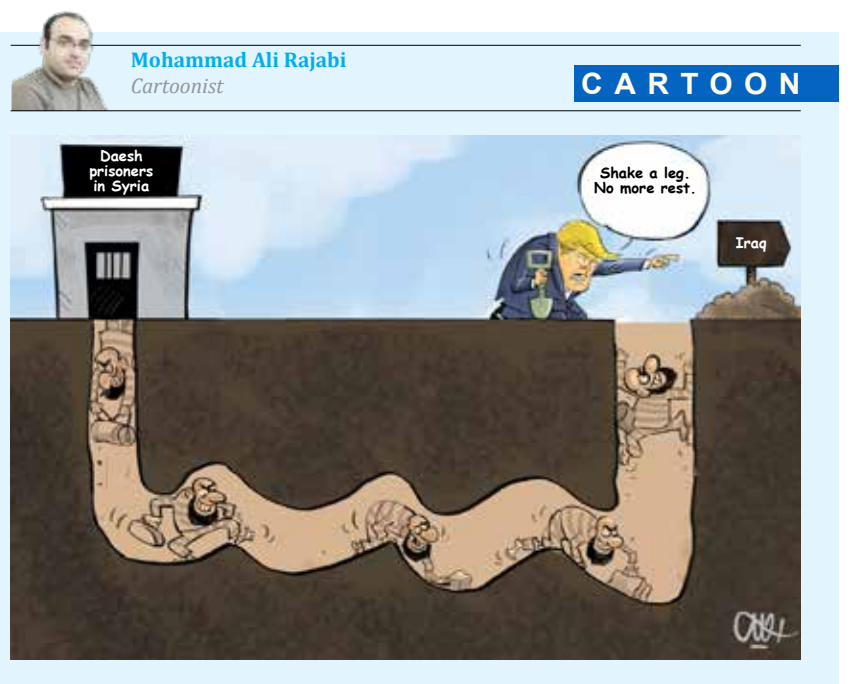
## In your opinion, what is the best way to deter and prevent the escalation of tensions?

Currently, the US is applying diplomatic and psychological pressure on Iran in the most aggressive manner possible. Moreover, the conditions the US has set for diplomatic engagement and de-escalation are essentially a zero-sum game. Therefore, the only way to create deterrence for the US is to convey the sense of incurring a prohibitive cost and engaging in a full-scale war, so that Washington, due to its lack of interest in entering a widespread conflict and the risk to its own national interests and security, will back down from its positions. The use of deterrent language by Iranian officials and actions that reflect Iran's seriousness in responding to any malice from the US and Israel will both discourage Washington

and Tel Aviv to enter a war with Iran and will also cause the GCC member states to calculate correctly about not joining the US game.

## How would you characterize the cooperation of the GCC member states in this exercise? Is this cooperation an action to prepare for potential threats?

Given that this exercise is designed to send a multi-layered message to regional actors in the Persian Gulf, GCC member states will not only benefit from US logistical, arms, and training support, but will also see themselves as operational allies of the US, who will not be alone in the event of a crisis and will see the US as an active security partner. Participating in this joint exercise, given their concerns about potential Iranian attacks on US bases in their countries, is a bid to send a message of strong willingness to avoid tensions with Iran and deter Tehran from engaging in retaliatory operations in their territories.





# Petropars ups South Azadegan output by over 63,000 bpd in 17 months

## Economy Desk

Iran's Petropars Group CEO Hamidreza Saqafi announced on Tuesday that the company has increased crude oil production at the South Azadegan field by more than 63,000 barrels per day over the past 17 months through a series of technical and operational measures.

"This production increase resulted from drilling, completion and rehabilitation of wells, acidizing operations, and resumption of the downhole pump lifting process after a two-year hiatus in work package execution," Saqafi said, as reported by IRNA.

During the period, crews completed 4,180 meters of new well drilling and 1,626 meters of workover well drilling. One new well was drilled and completed, while two suspended workover wells underwent drilling, suspension removal and completion.

Regarding well stimulation, "acidizing and production enhancement operations on 22 wells were implemented to improve flow rates and reservoir performance," Saqafi added.

He highlighted the restart of downhole pump operations after a two-year suspension, noting that "over the past 17 months, 38 downhole pumps along with all associated surface equipment were designed, manufactured, tested and delivered by three domestic manufacturers."

Saqafi attributed the results to coordinated efforts by Petropars specialists supporting national economic objectives. "The outcome has been production of 1,100 barrels per day from wells number 51 and 96 on pad number 14, and 1,800 barrels per day from wells number 184 and 192 on pad number 9, collectively contributing to the record production increase of more than 63,000 barrels per day at this field," he said.

The Azadegan field ranks among the region's largest oil reservoirs and is shared with Iraq. After years of suspended operations, development responsibilities transferred to Petropars Group in 2019. International companies currently operate the Iraqi section of the field, known as Majnoon.

According to the National Iranian



Oil Co. (NIOC), Iran is expected to raise its crude output by 135,000 barrels per day (bpd) through the installation rapid-deployment modular projects — known as "skid-mounted" units under newly signed service contracts.

The NIOC head, Hamid Bovard, said on Wednesday, "Given the signing of two contracts — one for crude oil processing services at oil fields and another for supplying onshore drilling rigs — we have scheduled the installation of 11 skid-mounted units."

Iran does not release detailed crude export figures, citing US sanctions that it says require confidentiality. Data from the International Energy Agency (IEA) show Iran has significantly increased oil production over the past year despite continued

sanctions aimed at curbing its output and exports. According to the IEA, Iran's oil production reached 3.5 million barrels per day in November, unchanged from October but up 110,000 bpd from December 2024 levels.

## RAI reports double-digit growth in freight, int'l transport volumes



## Economy Desk

Mirhasan Mousavi, the deputy managing director of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (RAI), said on Monday that railway transport indicators across the country have grown this year compared with the same period last year.

"Loading volume on the railway network has increased by approximately 10 percent, and a 10 percent growth in international transport and

a 5 percent growth in inter-city and suburban passenger transport have been recorded," IRNA quoted Mousavi as saying at a coordination council meeting of railway managers.

He emphasized that continuity of uninterrupted operations for both passenger and freight trains remains a primary priority for the national railway operator. "Continuity of uninterrupted operation of passenger and freight trains is among the main priorities

of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways and must be maintained with full vigilance and seriously as planned," he added.

Mousavi expressed confidence that expanded freight targets remain achievable with sustained government support. "With the continuation of planned measures, achieving the 20 percent and then 30 percent targets for increasing freight transport with the help of the government and Parliament will not be out of reach on the railway network," he said.

He noted that expanded loading capacity, development of international and passenger services, and safety improvements are collectively advancing the railway system's performance. "Increased loading, development of international and passenger transport alongside safety enhancement has directed the railway network toward productivity and better services," Mousavi said.

## SCI: Annual inflation rises to 44.6% as consumer prices surge

## Economy Desk

Iran's annual inflation rate for households reached 44.6 percent in the month ending January 20, marking a 2.4 percentage-point increase compared with the previous month, according to data from the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI), reported by Mehr News Agency. The consumer price index for households reached 469.4 during the month, reflecting a 7.9 percent rise compared with the prior month, a 60.0 percent increase versus the same month last year, and a 44.6 percent gain in the 12-month period ending this month compared with the corresponding period a year earlier.

Point-to-point inflation, defined as the percentage change in the price index compared with the same month of the previous year, stood at 60.0 percent for households last month. The figure indicates that Iranian households spent on average 60.0 percent more to purchase an identical basket of goods and services compared with the same period last year. The point-to-point inflation rate increased by 7.4 percentage points compared with the previous month.

Monthly inflation, defined as the percentage change in the price index compared with the prior month, reached 7.9 percent in the month ending



January 20. Within this figure, the major group of "food, beverages and tobacco" recorded monthly inflation of 13.7 percent, while the major group of "non-food goods and services" registered monthly inflation of 4.4 percent. Annual inflation, defined as the percentage change in the average price index

over a 12-month period ending in the current month compared with the corresponding 12-month period of the previous year, reached 44.6 percent for households in the month ending January 20, representing a 2.4 percentage-point increase compared with the same indicator reported for the previous month.

## SAOI: No Iranian cargo, vessels seized under UN resolution since snapback invocation

## Economy Desk

Shipping Association of Iran (SAOI) Secretary Masoud Polmeh said in an interview with ILNA on Monday that no cases of cargo or vessel seizure due to enforcement of UN Security Council Resolution 1929 have thus far occurred since the implementation of the snapback mechanism.

Polmeh addressed the impact of Resolution 1929 enforcement on maritime activities and cooperation with foreign shipping lines, stating, "The subject of Resolution 1929 is that if strong suspicion exists that a vessel is carrying cargo belonging to Iran which is considered prohibited, that cargo will be seized."

He explained that strong suspicion under the resolution means authorities

must be certain weapons or equipment prohibited for use in Iran are aboard a vessel, in which case the vessel becomes subject to inspection. "If cargo with these specifications exists on a suspected vessel, only that cargo will be seized and not the vessel," Polmeh said.

"In this cycle the vessel is not seized, and since the implementation of snapback until today no case of cargo or vessel seizure due to enforcement of Resolution 1929 has occurred," he added. Asked whether this process has caused fear among Iran's partners and affected continued cooperation, Polmeh responded, "No, because prior to snapback all these matters were already in effect and enforcement of Resolution 1929 was already on the agenda, and if prohibited cargo was discovered on

a vessel it would be dealt with accordingly."

The UN Security Council on September 29 reinstated several sanctions against Iran's nuclear activities that had been lifted under the JCPOA, after France, Germany, and the UK triggered the deal's "snapback" mechanism.

"Currently all companies and shipping lines that are in contact with Iran, aware that such a threat exists, cooperate with our country. Moreover, shipping companies fundamentally do not undertake any illegal actions or operations outside the framework defined by the United Nations," he said.

Responding to a question about whether Iranian vessel and cargo seizures under Resolution 1929 occurred during previous governments, Polmeh stated that in the past years, the country wit-



nessed seizures of its tankers and reciprocated with similar actions, though this does not confer comprehensiveness or legitimacy on such behaviors.

He added that vessel seizures occurring in recent months were unrelated to the resolution and instead involved smuggling of fuel.



# Transatlantic rift widens; from economic spats to geopolitical crisis in Greenland



By Asgar  
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## OPINION

The transatlantic alliance, once the cornerstone of the liberal international order, is undergoing its most profound transformation since the Cold War's end. While united against Russian aggression, the United States and Europe are now entrenched in deep structural competition over trade, technology, and strategic influence. This analysis contends that the relationship is shifting from a "strategic partnership" toward a new paradigm of "cooperative competition." A hypothetical 2026 crisis over Chinese investment in Greenland's critical mineral reserves crystallizes this new reality. The incident exposes core fissures: America's security-first approach demanding a veto versus Europe's insistence on sovereignty and strategic autonomy, alongside a damaging transatlantic subsidy race. The article concludes that the alliance's future hinges on managing this inherent tension, preserving unity against direct threats while establishing new frameworks to govern inevitable competition over the resources and technologies defining the future. Failure to adapt risks the alliance's strategic atrophy. For decades, the US-European relationship formed the bedrock of the international order. Today, that foundation is fracturing. The remarkable solidarity displayed following Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine has, by 2026, given way to a more complex and contentious reality. Beneath the surface of ongoing military coordination, profound structural divides over economics, strategy, and global influence are boiling over, finding a flashpoint in an unexpected arena: Greenland. This is not a narrative of alliance collapse, but of its painful evolution. The transatlantic partnership is mutating from a hierarchical strategic alliance into an untested model of cooperative competition, where collaboration on existential threats coexists uneasily with fierce rivalry across economic and technological domains.

### Part 1: Unhealed wounds (2024-2026)

These fissures did not emerge overnight. They result from years



• DOW JONES

of diverging priorities now codified into concrete policy.

● **Subsidy war:** The US Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022 was a seismic event. By 2026, it has triggered not merely complaints but a full-blown transatlantic subsidy race. The European Union, initially outraged by what it decried as «green protectionism,» has responded with its own massive industrial policy packages, most notably the Green Deal Industrial Plan. While both sides pursue the noble goal of accelerating the clean energy transition, the effect has been a costly fragmentation of supply chains and deep-seated resentment. Brussels perceives its industrial base as being undermined by its closest ally.

● **Strategic drift:** Europe's long-debated goal of «strategic autonomy» is gradually materializing. By 2026, concrete progress on EU defense initiatives, from the Eurodrone to a more integrated command structure, is evident. In Washington, this development is met with profound ambivalence. While the Pentagon welcomes a more capable partner, a faction within the US security apparatus worries about duplicated efforts and a Europe that might eventually chart an independent course, thereby complicating NATO cohesion. Simultaneously, America's strategic gaze remains fixed on the Indo-Pacific, leading some European capitals to feel relegated to a secondary theater.

● **Populist reshaping:** A new wave of populist parties, often

skeptical of Russia yet pragmatically engaged with China, holds significant sway in several European capitals. Their ascent injects volatility into established foreign policy consensus. Concurrently, a new generation of leaders on both sides of the Atlantic, unburdened by Cold War nostalgia, approaches the alliance with a cooler calculus of immediate national interest.

### Part 2: Case study: Greenland crisis of 2026

It is against this fraught backdrop that a hypothetical "Greenland Crisis" erupts in 2026, serving as a pressure cooker for these simmering divisions.

**The Spark:** Greenland, an autonomous territory of NATO-member Denmark, sits atop vast untapped reserves of rare earth elements and other critical minerals. As Arctic ice recedes, its geostrategic value soars. In early 2026, a Chinese state-owned mining conglomerate, CMGC, submits an extraordinarily lucrative bid to develop mines and associated port infrastructure. The cash-strapped local government in Nuuk, eager for greater economic independence from Copenhagen, is strongly inclined to accept.

### Fault lines exposed:

**1-Security versus sovereignty:** Washington immediately frames the deal as a grave national security threat. A permanent Chinese strategic foothold in the Arctic on NATO territory is viewed as utterly unacceptable.

The message to Copenhagen is unequivocal: «Block this deal.» Brussels and Copenhagen, however, face a dilemma. They share concerns over Chinese influence but are equally committed to the principles of sovereignty and Greenland's right to self-determined development. They advocate for a European-led alternative investment package, arguing for a proactive strategy rather than a reactive US veto.

**2- Economic competition turns direct:** The crisis transforms the abstract subsidy war into a direct, unseemly bidding confrontation. American and European diplomats scramble to outbid each other with counter-offers of investment, technology, and green partnerships to Nuuk. The transatlantic alliance, in effect, begins auctioning against itself, much to the delight of Greenlandic negotiators.

**3- China dilemma fractures Europe:** The US demands a united, hawkish front against Beijing. While Eastern and Nordic EU members align with Washington, other capitals with deeper economic ties to China urge a more nuanced, «de-risking» approach focused on diplomacy and alternatives. The crisis tests European unity as severely as it strains transatlantic solidarity.

**4- Autonomy in action:** European leaders insist the crisis must be managed through a coherent, EU-led Arctic policy, not merely by acceding to an American diktat. This assertion of a distinct European strategic

interest constitutes a quiet but firm challenge to Washington's traditional primacy in alliance leadership.

**Likely outcome & lasting scars:** After weeks of tense diplomacy, a fragile compromise is brokered: a Western-led consortium with a European company at the helm, featuring conditional American investment and explicitly excluding CMGC. While the immediate threat is contained, the damage is lasting. Mutual trust is diminished. Europe emerges more determined than ever to secure its own critical mineral supply chains, reducing future dependency. In Washington, a pervasive fear is reinforced: that European allies are reluctant to make the hard strategic choices necessary to counter China.

### Era of cooperative competition

The Greenland crisis is a harbinger. It demonstrates that the central theater of transatlantic tension has shifted from trade in widgets to the race for the resources and technologies defining the 21st century. China has masterfully evolved from an external challenger into a potent wedge issue, exploiting latent divisions between the US and Europe.

The old paradigm is broken. The emerging reality is one of cooperative competition.

● Cooperation will remain strong, and essential, in confronting clear, direct military threats, such as a revanchist Russia.

● Competition will be the default state in economic, technological, and geo-economic spheres, from the Arctic to Africa. This rivalry must be managed with clear, mutually agreed rules to prevent it from becoming destructive.

● Crisis management will require new, dedicated forums for consultation, a respect for respective spheres of influence, and, at times, an agreement to disagree.

The transatlantic relationship is not ending; it is entering its most complex phase. Its future hinges not on nostalgic appeals to past glory, but on the pragmatic, unglamorous work of building institutions and frameworks sturdy enough to withstand the constant, delicate tension between working together and racing against one another. The winds blowing from Greenland are cold, and they carry a clear message: The alliance must adapt, or it will atrophy.



The transatlantic partnership is mutating from a hierarchical strategic alliance into an untested model of cooperative competition, where collaboration on existential threats coexists uneasily with fierce rivalry across economic and technological domains.



China has masterfully evolved from an external challenger into a potent wedge issue, exploiting latent divisions between the US and Europe.

## Davos World Economic Forum dominated by Trump threats over Greenland



By Andre Damon  
World Socialist Web  
Site contributor

## OPINION

The World Economic Forum, which opened Monday, January 19, in Davos, Switzerland, was dominated by the deepening rift between the United States

and the European powers over US President Donald Trump's efforts to take control of Greenland. By the end of Wednesday evening, Trump had announced that he would walk back his earlier threats to annex Greenland by military force or impose tariffs against European states, in exchange for what he called an agreement over control of the

territory. Greenland is an autonomous territory of Denmark, a founding member of the NATO alliance. Trump met with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte on Wednesday and announced the "framework of a future deal," though the precise terms remain unclear and disputed. The New York Times reported,

citing unnamed senior officials familiar with the discussions, that NATO military officers discussed "a compromise in which Denmark would give the United States sovereignty over small pockets of Greenlandic land where the United States could build military bases." Two officials compared the proposal to Britain's sovereign base areas in

Cyprus. The Telegraph said the framework would allow the US to "perform military operations, intelligence, and training" without seeking permission from Denmark, an arrangement similar to the US military's control of Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. Danish officials rejected the characterization that any real agreement had been reached.

Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen told public broadcaster DR that US ownership of Greenland remains "a red line" for Denmark. Sascha Faxe, a member of the Danish parliament, told Sky News the purported deal "is not real," adding: "It's two men who have had a conversation. It's definitely not a deal." Rutte himself told



Fox News that the question of whether Greenland would remain under Danish control “did not come up” in his talks with Trump.

Trump withdrew tariff threats against eight European countries following the announcement, sending stock markets sharply higher after the S&P 500 had posted its worst day since October on Tuesday.

The crisis at Davos exposed the advanced state of disintegration of the transatlantic alliance. Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, speaking at the forum on Tuesday, delivered a stark assessment of the global situation. “Let me be direct: We are in the midst of a rupture, not a transition,” Carney declared. He warned that “the rules-based order is fading” and invoked the ancient Greek historian Thucydides: “the strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must.” Carney received a standing ovation from the audience, while Trump’s address was met with tepid applause.

French President Emmanuel Macron denounced the Trump administration’s trade strategy as an effort to “weaken and subordinate Europe.” The depth of the rift between the US and Europe was illustrated by European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde, who walked out of a dinner during a speech by US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick that was critical of European economic policies.

Whatever the final form of the arrangement, it represents an expansion of US military control over the Arctic. In his address to the forum, Trump framed his efforts to control Greenland within the context of the US conflict with Russia and China.



President Donald Trump speaks during a meeting of Global Business Leaders at the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, January 21, 2026. ● EVAN VUCCI/AP

“Greenland is a vast, almost entirely uninhabited and undefended territory sitting undefended in a key strategic location between the United States, Russia and China,” he said. Doubling down on this bizarre geography (Greenland is 5,000 miles, or 8,000 kilometers, from China), he added, “That’s exactly where it is, right smack in the middle.”

While walking back his threat to use military force, Trump made clear he would use economic coercion to achieve his aims. “You can say yes and we will be very appreciative,” he declared, “or you can say no and we will remember.”

The Trump administration’s drive to seize control of Greenland is part of a broader effort to reorganize the Western Hemisphere under direct US domination. The administration views the consolidation of American power over its “near abroad” as essential for projecting power against American imperialism’s principal rival: China. Cana-

da and Greenland, with their vast mineral resources, energy deposits and access to Arctic seaways, are critical to this effort, as is the Panama Canal. This strategy of hemispheric consolidation aims to secure a continental resource base for great-power conflict.

Greenland’s strategic value has grown as climate change transforms the Arctic. The Northwest Passage, once impassable for most of the year, is becoming increasingly navigable, offering a shipping route that cuts thousands of miles and weeks of transit time from journeys between Asia and the Atlantic. Control of the Arctic waters and the territories that border them has emerged as a central preoccupation of all the major imperialist powers.

The Arctic has become a zone of intensifying militarization. The United States maintains the Pituffik Space Base, formerly known as Thule Air Base, in northern Greenland, its north-

ernmost military installation. The base houses critical missile defense and early warning systems that would provide minutes of additional warning time in the event of a nuclear exchange with Russia or China. Trump has spoken repeatedly of his “Golden Dome” missile defense system, for which Greenland’s position would be invaluable. The high Arctic territory sits astride the shortest flight paths between the continental United States and both Russia and China, making it irreplaceable for both offensive and defensive military operations.

Beyond its strategic location, Greenland contains enormous deposits of rare earth minerals essential for advanced technology and weapons systems, as well as uranium and substantial oil reserves beneath its continental shelf.

The gathering of the world’s financial oligarchy at Davos took place against the backdrop of the staggering growth of billionaire wealth documented

in the Oxfam report “Resisting the Rule of the Rich,” released to coincide with the forum. The report found that billionaire wealth grew at three times the rate of the previous five years, with the 12 richest individuals on Earth now possessing more wealth than the poorest half of humanity combined.

The crisis over Greenland sent investors fleeing toward safe-haven assets. Gold prices surged to record highs as precious metals registered their sharpest gains in months. The flight to gold and other stores of value reflects the deep unease within financial markets over the trajectory of great-power relations and the growing risk of a broader conflict. The surge in precious metals is a barometer of capitalist instability, indicating that sections of the ruling class see in the current crisis the harbinger of something far worse.

Whatever the temporary resolution of the standoff over Greenland, the underlying trajectory is toward mounting conflict between the US and Europe, in which American imperialism will be increasingly impelled to rely on its one main advantage: military force. The eruption of this crisis at the premier gathering of the global capitalist elite exposes the crisis of the entire post-World War II international order.

Neither Trump’s “America First” nationalism nor the European bourgeoisie’s response offers any way forward for the working class. Both represent factions of a ruling class that is incapable of resolving its conflicts through any means other than violence, economic warfare and ultimately military confrontation.

The article was first published on World Socialist Web Site (wsws).



The Trump administration’s pursuit of control over Greenland is not an isolated incident but rather a component of a larger strategy to restructure the Western Hemisphere under direct US dominance, aiming to secure a continental resource base for potential great-power conflicts.

# Concerns about US armed seizure of Greenland ease, transatlantic rifts remain

A freewheeling speech by US President Donald Trump in the Swiss Alpine town of Davos on Wednesday stunned the audience, putting transatlantic rifts under the spotlight, despite eased concerns about a possible US armed seizure of Greenland, a self-governing territory of Denmark.

In his speech, Trump ruled out taking Greenland by military force, saying he did not intend to use “excessive strength and force,” while insisting the United States was uniquely positioned to secure the territory.

“I don’t have to use force. I don’t want to use force, I won’t use force. All the United States is asking for is a place called Greenland,” he said. Trump called for “immediate negotiations” on a US acquisition of the territory, describing it as “a strategic national and international security interest.”

“His comments marked a strategic shift and a walkback for the White House,” CNN said Wednesday in an analysis. “Trump’s walkback notably comes after we saw something pretty unusual on Tuesday: foreign leaders standing up to him and talking about banding together to resist the United States.”

“His pledge, if he sticks to it, makes much more unlikely the previously unthinkable prospect of the United States effectively invading a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) ally,” the analysis added.

Trump also announced on



US President Donald Trump talks to media during the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, January 22, 2026. ● AP

Wednesday his decision not to follow through on his threat to impose new tariffs on eight European countries over Greenland following a meeting with NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte. In a social media post, Trump said a framework had emerged from a “very productive meeting” with Rutte. “Based upon this understanding, I will not be imposing the Tariffs that were scheduled to go into effect on Feb 1,” Trump wrote.

While the concern is eased “at least for now,” the CNN analysis warned, “the clash is hardly over.”

Trump told Fox Business on Thursday morning that the United States will get everything it wants, in relation to Greenland, “at no cost,” adding that a part of the Golden Dome

missile defense system will be on the island.

The White House is negotiating a deal to secure US “total access” to Denmark’s Greenland with no time limit, Trump said.

“I mean, we’re talking about, it’s really being negotiated now, the details of it, but essentially it’s total access. There’s no end, there’s no time limit,” Trump said in the interview.

**‘NATO chief has no mandate to negotiate’**

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen stated on Thursday that Rutte does not have a mandate to negotiate on behalf of Denmark or Greenland.

The statement followed comments from US President Donald Trump,



People wave Greenlandic flags as they take part in a demonstration that gathered almost a third of the city population to protest against US President Donald Trump’s (not in the photograph) plans to take Greenland, in Nuuk, Greenland on January 17, 2026. ● AFP

who said Wednesday that his meeting with Rutte produced “the framework of a future deal” concerning Greenland and the broader Arctic region.

Frederiksen told Danish media that while Denmark has coordinated with a number of partners, including Rutte, to address the challenges facing Greenland, Rutte is not authorized to negotiate on behalf of Denmark or Greenland.

“The aim is to find a path that respects international law as well as the sovereignty of Denmark and Greenland,” she added.

Ahead of an emergency European Council summit in Brussels, Frederiksen said the status of Denmark as a sovereign state cannot be negotiated.

She said Denmark has asked the

NATO to strengthen its presence in the Arctic region. “We need a permanent presence from NATO in the Arctic region, including around Greenland.”

Frederiksen reaffirmed that the kingdom’s sovereignty is the red line. “We have said from the very beginning that our status as a sovereign state is not up for discussion and cannot be changed,” she added.

Meanwhile, Greenlandic Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen reiterated that sovereignty remains a red line for his government, even amid intense pressure from the US.

“Our territorial integrity and borders are absolutely red lines that must not be crossed,” Nielsen told a press conference in Nuuk, capital

of Greenland. “Greenland chooses the Greenland we know today, as part of the Kingdom of Denmark.”

When questioned whether Greenland now considers itself safe, Nielsen said that, prior to Wednesday’s statement by Trump, the possibility of a US military attempt could not be dismissed.

## Greenland issue unrelated to Russia

Also on Thursday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said current developments in Greenland are entirely unrelated to Russia.

Peskov said that issues concerning Greenland have nothing to do with Russia, and that Russia has a great deal of its own affairs to attend to.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Wednesday that the United States and Denmark would resolve this dispute on their own.

## EU unity urged

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said Europe should draw lessons from its response to the United States over Greenland and strengthen unity.

Speaking at a press conference in Stockholm alongside Foreign Minister Maria Malmer Stenergard and Finance Minister Elisabeth Svantesson, Kristersson commented on the Greenland issue and Europe’s relations with the United States.

The article first appeared on Xinhua.



# Aiming to roll back the years, Geraei plots fresh start in 77kg



By Amirhadi  
Arsalanpour  
Staff writer

When Mohammadreza Geraei defied all expectations by winning a stunning gold medal on his senior international debut at the Tokyo Olympics five years ago, Iranian wrestling appeared to have found its next Greco-Roman sensation, following in the footsteps of lightweight legend Hamid Sourian.

Nicknamed 'The Iceman' by United World Wrestling for his cold-blooded composure when executing his trademark throws and body locks, Geraei swiftly backed up his 67kg Tokyo triumph with another gold at the World Championships in Oslo just two months later.

However, the following three years failed to yield the success his early promise had foretold.

Geraei again made it to the final at the 2022 World Championships, but was undone by home-favorite Serbian Mate Nemeš.



Iranian Greco-Roman wrestler Mohammadreza Geraei is seen in action during a national team training session in Tehran, Iran, on January 24, 2026.  
● IAWFIR

The following year, the Iranian recovered from a technical-superiority loss

to Azerbaijan's Hasrat Javrov in the quarterfinals to finish with a consola-

tion bronze at the world showpiece. His bronze secured Iran a

67kg quota for the 2024 Paris Olympics, but Geraei missed out on a title de-

fense in the French capital after falling short against young prodigy Saeid Esmaeili – who would go on to win gold in Paris – in the Iranian trials.

With Esmaeili emerging as the new dominant force in the 67kg category, Geraei moved up to the 72kg division for the 2024 World Championships – featuring four non-Olympic weight classes – but hit a new low in Tirana, as he suffered a devastating 11-3 loss to American underdog Benji Peak in the first round.

His most recent international outing was equally disappointing: a fifth-place finish at the Zagreb Open Ranking Series event in February 2025.

Now, 11 months later, the 30-year-old Geraei is poised for a fresh start. Having moved to the Olympic 77kg class, he has set his sights on glory at the Los Angeles Games in 2028.

Geraei did not compete in last month's National Championships, which served as the opening

phase of Iran's trials for major 2026 tournaments. However, he has earned the trust of national team head coach Hassan Rangraz, who called him up for a recent training camp in Tehran.

While Geraei has already shown glimpses of a renewed version of himself in training, his prospects will be put to the test by Rangraz and his staff at an international tournament in the coming months. A strong performance there is essential if he is to fancy a realistic shot at a second world title in Manama this September.

The race for Iran's 77kg slot in Bahrain will be fiercely contested, as Geraei will face competition from 2024 world U20 champion Alireza Abdevali, who also impressed at last year's Senior Worlds; Islamic Solidarity Games silver medalist Amir Abdi; national champion Ali Oskou; reigning world junior silver medalist Ahoura Boveiri; and former world cadet champion Amirmahdi Saeidinava.

## Judo jubilation as Parhizgar wins captures gold in Casablanca

### Sports Desk

Elyas Parhizgar claimed a gold medal to power the Iranian men's judo team to a third-place finish at the Casablanca African Open 2026 in Morocco.

Russia dominated the men's competition with a remarkable 12 medals – including five golds – while host nation Morocco took second place with one gold, one silver, and one bronze. Parhizgar, an Asian junior

silver medalist in 2024, defeated Angola's Antonio Candeiro with a pin after 1 minute and 34 seconds to take the title in the men's -81kg class.

The Iranian began his campaign with a win over Ivorian Konin Junior Emmanuel Kossan in Group A, then overcame Argentina's Ivan Ferreyra and Dutch judoka Mika van Sinderen to reach the quarterfinals.

A victory over Bosnia's Mustafa Hebib sent Par-

hizgar into the semifinals, where he beat Canada's Olivier Gagnon by ippon to advance to the final.

Amir-Abbas Choopan added to Iran's tally with a fifth-place finish in the men's -90kg event, after falling to Russia's Eldar Allakhverdiev in the bronze-medal contest.

Amirhossein Valizadeh (-73kg), Mohammadhossein Yaqouti, and Alireza Nikseresht (-100kg) also competed for Iran but did not

medal in their respective weight classes.

Iran's Sobhan Hakimi, meanwhile, secured an impressive silver in the men's -81kg at the Cadet African Cup in Casablanca.

After a first-round bye, the young Iranian opened with a victory over local hopeful Yahya Benouna, then defeated Lithuania's David Khatchatourian to reach the final, where he was undone by Estonia's Aleksei Kikas to settle for silver.



Iranian judoka Elyas Parhizgar (R), pictured at last November's Islamic Solidarity Games, won the men's -81kg gold medal at the Casablanca African Open 2026.  
● IRIJF

## Asian Men's Handball Championships: Iran to vie for 11th spot after China setback

### Sports Desk

Iran will look to secure 11th place in the Asian Men's Handball Championship when it faces Jordan at the Kuwait Handball Association Hall in

Da'iya today.

The match follows a 33-23 loss to China on Sunday, which saw Iran finish second in Group IV of the Martyr Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Cup – the classification bracket for 9th to

15th places.

Spanish head coach Rafael Guijosa fielded a young, new-look roster for the China game, resting star players Pouya Norouzinejad, Mohammadreza Oraei, Yassin Kabirian, Vahid Masoudi, and Saber Heidari. Ali Heidarian led the Iranian scoring with eight goals, supported by six from Mehran Rahana and four from Alireza Mousavi.

For China, Fangwei Sun led all scorers with eight goals, while Hao Wang added six. Iran's campaign in the 22nd edition began with a narrow 24-22 loss to four-time bronze medalist Saudi Arabia in Group D of the preliminary round. The team rebounded strongly with a 39-13 rout of Australia in its second outing. A draw in its final pre-

liminary game against Japan would have secured Iran a main-round spot. However, after holding a five-goal lead in the second half, Guijosa's side collapsed in the final moments, conceding a winner from Daisuke Tanaka for a crushing 30-29 Japanese victory.

Iran recovered to beat India 39-16 in its Group IV opener last Thursday and routed Australia once more, 37-17, on Friday. In today's semifinals, 2024 finalist Japan will meet Bahrain, while defending champion Qatar faces host nation Kuwait for the other spot in Thursday's final. The continental championship also serves as a qualifier for the 2027 World Championship in Germany, with the four semifinalists securing berths.



● AHF

## Mojarrad makes winning debut with Alanya Belediye in Turkish league

### Sports Desk

Iranian middle blocker Aliasghar Mojarrad enjoyed a winning start to life in Turkish top-flight volleyball, helping Alanya Belediye sweep Istanbul Başakşehir in straight sets (25-22, 25-18, 25-17) in the Efeler Ligi on Sunday. The victory, secured just a day after Mojarrad joined the club, ended a six-game

losing streak in the league and lifted Alanya Belediye out of the relegation zone. The team now sits 11th in the 14-team table with five wins and 18 points from 11 matches.

Mojarrad contributed six points in the win, while his fellow Iranian and international teammate, opposite spiker Bardia Saadat, chipped in 15 points to help snap the skid.



Mojarrad, who was part of Iran's squad at the Tokyo Olympics, was once widely touted as the natural successor to Seyed Mohammad Mousavi following the veteran middle blocker's retirement from national team duty.

However, the 28-year-old's trajectory in recent years was derailed by a series of recurring injuries, which repeatedly sidelined him for long periods, making recovery and rehabilitation the dominant theme of his career.

Last season, after transferring to San'atgaran Omid in the Iranian Super League, he was struck by another severe injury that kept him off the court for nearly a year. His career now appears to be turning a new page with his recent move to Turkey.



# How Korsi shaped family life in traditional Iranian homes

In today's modern world, where advanced technologies and heating systems have become embedded in everyday life, some cultural and traditional heritages have gradually faded from view. One such heritage is the Korsi — a household fixture that not only provided warmth during cold winter days but also played a significant social, cultural, and even therapeutic role in Iranian family life.

Beyond its practical function, the Korsi played an essential role in transmitting Iranian culture and customs from one generation to the next. Beneath the Korsi, elders would share stories, proverbs, and life wisdom, passing down knowledge and cultural values to younger family members. This process of intergenerational transmission not only helped preserve cultural identity but also strengthened feelings of belonging and social cohesion, according to ISNA.

However, in today's fast-paced world and with the rise of modern technologies, the Korsi has gradually receded from daily life and now remains largely as a nostalgic memory. This is despite the fact that the values embedded in the use of the Korsi can still help address the challenges of modern living and reinforce human connections.

A folklore researcher, offering a multifaceted analysis of the Korsi, highlighted its appeal and significance as a functional civilizational masterpiece, saying that the Korsi goes far beyond a heating device and serves as a symbol of emotional cohesion



● ifjnews.com



● garlandmag.com

and cultural transmission between generations. Mohammad Dehqan, in an interview with ISNA, described the Korsi not merely as a source of warmth for cold days, but as a practical masterpiece of civilization that functioned above all as a sophisticated social, cultural, and even therapeutic institution.

He explained that this traditional heritage managed all aspects of Iranian family life in an integrated manner — from physical health and energy conservation to emotional cohesion and the transmission of cultural heritage — under a system that reached its fullest expression through the central role of grandparents.

Comparing the Korsi with modern heating systems, Dehqan pointed to a fundamental dif-

ference in how energy is transferred. "Central heating systems merely warm the air," he said. "This warmth is superficial and often leads to dry environments and damage to the respiratory tract. The Korsi, however, was an intelligent architecture designed to warm the body from within." He described the Korsi as a model of sustainable household-level energy economics, adding that there was no need to heat the entire volume of air in a house up to the ceiling. "Only a small space was kept warm with exceptionally low energy consumption. This approach represents an outstanding example of optimal resource management — one we should learn from today."

The greatest achievement of the Korsi lay in its social and cultural function, something that

would not have been possible without the strong presence of grandparents. "The Korsi was where the unparalleled cohesion of the Iranian family took shape," he said.

He added that the Korsi was a physical meeting point for all generations, yet this gathering was far more than a simple family get-together. Grandparents occupied a central role beneath the Korsi, and their physical position reflected their moral authority and respected status within the family. Their constant and tangible presence provided psychological security, allowing grandchildren — protected by both the physical warmth of the Korsi and the emotional support of elders — to experience a deep sense of safety.

The folklore researcher continued by describing the Korsi as a

living archive. Long hours spent together created a rare opportunity to strengthen verbal communication. In this setting, grandparents transmitted stories, wisdom, and the family's oral history. These narratives conveyed moral lessons, proverbs, and literary texts indirectly to younger generations, turning the Korsi into a space for nurturing literary taste within the household.

He emphasized that the Korsi also functioned as a space for learning vital social skills. Elders often acted as mediators in family disputes, with discussions and misunderstandings raised in the intimate atmosphere beneath the Korsi and resolved through experience and wisdom. This process taught children the importance of tolerance, respect, and justice in conflict resolution,

effectively making the Korsi a school of ethics and social order within the family.

Dehqan pointed to the social expression of the Korsi in winter rituals, noting that it formed the central setting for long winter gatherings, especially on Yalda Night. On this occasion, the eldest family member — usually the grandfather — was responsible for conducting the rituals, from distributing refreshments to performing the Fal-e Hafez ceremony. He explained that the recitation of Hafez by the grandfather was not merely a literary act, but a ritual practice imbued with deeper meaning through his presence. This ceremony ensured that traditions were passed on to the next generation with the same depth and authenticity experienced by earlier generations.

## Ancient cisterns in Hormozgan continue to support water storage



● IRNA

### Iranica Desk

The historic water cisterns of Hormozgan Province — known locally as Berkeh — stand as a striking example of the close link between vernacular architecture, traditional engineering knowledge, and the social culture of the region. During periods of rainfall, these structures once again demonstrate their original function and enduring relevance.

Hormozgan Province has long faced chronic shortages of fresh water. Its hot and arid climate, low and irregular rainfall, high evaporation rates, and limited surface and groundwater resources have historically made daily life challenging. Under such conditions, the collection and storage of rainwater emerged as a vital and intelligent solution among the inhabitants of southern Iran, with Berkeh serving as the most important infrastructure within this water management system. These structures not only met the everyday needs of local communities but also

enabled sustained settlement, the formation of villages, and the flourishing of communication and trade routes across Hormozgan, according to chn.ir.

Rainfall in the province during autumn showed that Berkeh, despite the passage of time and changes in modern water supply methods, continues to function efficiently. In many parts of the province, runoff from the rains was channeled through old waterways and passages into the cisterns, allowing significant volumes of rainwater to be stored in these reservoirs. This demonstrates that the placement of Berkeh was based on a precise understanding of land topography, water flow patterns, and the behavior of seasonal rainfall — evidence of the deep environmental knowledge possessed by past architects and builders.

From an architectural perspective, Hormozgan's cisterns display remarkable diversity, each designed in response to local environmental conditions and community needs. Circular plans

with domed roofs are the most common type in the province, a form that enhances structural stability while reducing water evaporation and maintaining a suitable internal temperature. Alongside these, elongated and rectangular cisterns with barrel vaults, as well as cross-shaped examples, can also be found — each reflecting the creativity and adaptability of southern Iran's indigenous architecture. Tall domes, multiple openings, skylights, and overflow channels not only serve technical purposes but also contribute distinctive visual elements to the cultural landscape of Hormozgan's plains and settlements.

The materials used in constructing cisterns were entirely local and well suited to the region's climate. River stone, coral stone, and Sarooj mortar form the core components of these structures. Sarooj — a mixture of lime, gravel, sand, and organic materials — was used as the primary waterproofing layer due to its high resistance to humidity, pre-

venting leakage and water loss. Coral stone, in addition to being lightweight and readily available, helped improve water hygiene thanks to its insect-repellent properties. The careful selection of materials reflects a sophisticated use of natural resources and accumulated indigenous knowledge.

Estimates suggest that nearly 2,000 cisterns exist across Hormozgan Province, underscoring the scale and importance of this traditional water storage method in southern Iran. Cities such as Bandar Lengeh, Bastak, Qeshm, Bandar Khamir, Parsian, Bandar Abbas, and Kish host the highest concentration of these structures. Many were built alongside historic roads, caravanserais, and settlements, supporting the commercial and maritime routes of the Persian Gulf. From this perspective, cisterns were not merely water facilities but an integral part of Hormozgan's historical economic and infrastructural network.

The social and cultural dimensions of cisterns are equally sig-

nificant. Their construction and maintenance have long been intertwined with religious beliefs and traditions of endowment (waqf) in southern Iran. Providing drinking water was regarded as a lasting charitable act, and many cisterns were built by benefactors and dedicated to public use. Maintenance activities such as cleaning, dredging, and periodic repairs were traditionally carried out with community participation, strengthening a sense of collective responsibility and social attachment to these structures.

Beyond their immediate role in water storage, the rainfall in autumn 2025 offers an opportunity to reconsider the place of Berkeh within the province's broader water resource management system. As climate change leads to more irregular rainfall patterns and increasing pressure on groundwater reserves, traditional infrastructure can serve as a complementary and sustainable solution. Due to their low construction and maintenance costs, environmental compatibility, and

reliance on natural resources, they can play a meaningful role alongside modern systems in addressing water stress.

From a cultural heritage perspective, these structures represent a valuable part of the province's historical identity and landscape. Their protection, proper restoration, and functional revival not only help preserve Iran's architectural water heritage but also contribute to cultural tourism and introduce younger generations to the indigenous knowledge of their ancestors.

Overall, the historic cisterns of Hormozgan symbolize the wise coexistence between humans and nature in one of the country's harshest climates. Recent rainfall demonstrates that this legacy of the past is not merely a historical relic but a valuable resource for addressing present and future challenges in water management in southern Iran — one that, with proper planning, can enhance community resilience and ensure the sustainability of water resources.





# Gov't seeks educational reform, aiming to foster conscious learning



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks during a national appreciation ceremony for school-building philanthropists in Tehran on January 26, 2026.  
● president.ir

school-building philanthropists held Monday, January 26. Addressing the gathering, Pezeshkian lauded the significant contributions of private donors to expanding educational access and equity under the current administration's fourth development plan. The president's remarks signaled a broader governmental strategy to move beyond merely constructing school buildings, aiming instead to cultivate critical thinking, teamwork, and civic engagement among students. He asserted that a fundamental shift in pedagogical approaches and teaching methodologies is essential to equip future gener-

ations with the skills necessary to navigate complex societal challenges and contribute to national progress. Pezeshkian's vision extends to reforming administrative practices, suggesting that deficiencies in the public sector stem from inadequate training in collaboration and ethical conduct within the education system. Pezeshkian highlighted instances of extraordinary generosity, including individuals diverting funds earmarked for personal expenses, such as vehicle allocations or even blood money payments for deceased relatives, towards school construction projects. He characterized these acts as evidence of the nation's collective potential to overcome obstacles when citizens actively participate in addressing societal needs. "The citizens of tomorrow are the children of today, and their future is inextricably linked to

the education they receive today," Pezeshkian stated. He further emphasized that he found it "unacceptable" for Iranian citizens to face deficiencies in essential services like education and healthcare, pledging his full commitment to improving the nation's welfare. The president called for a concerted effort to address shortcomings within the education system, acknowledging that responsibility rests collectively with all stakeholders. He urged educators and administrators to continuously strive for improvement, asserting that collaborative action can overcome any impediment to national development. Pezeshkian concluded by emphasizing the transformative power of education, stating that a reformed education system holds the key to resolving Iran's social tensions and empowering future generations to tackle the nation's challenges.

## Social Desk

Iranian President Masoud

Pezeshkian underscored a commitment to overhauling Iran's educational system and fos-

tering a more holistic learning environment during a national appreciation ceremony for

## My Iran section of Fajr Int'l Theater Festival

### From 12-day war to national epics

By Sadeq Dehqan  
Staff writer

## INTERVIEW

The 44th Fajr International Theater Festival has taken another step towards strengthening a national and identity-focused perspective in performing arts with the addition of a new section. The 'My Iran' section, developed in collaboration with the festival's policy council, provides a new platform for artistic portrayals of concepts such as patriotism, Iranian Islamic power, and reflections on events related to the 12-day war and the axis of resistance. It appears this section not only responds to the contemporary societal need for a re-examination of national identity but also demonstrates the festival's attention to the deep connection between art, contemporary history, and the nation's strategic concerns.

Farhad Besharati, judge of the 'My Iran' section of the 44th Fajr International Theater Festival, told Iran Daily in an interview, referring to the addition of this section in the 44th iteration of the festival, that 'My Iran' has been added this year and features works created by theater groups across the country, or commissioned by various institutions, focusing on themes of resistance, Iranian power, the 12-day war, and its aftermath. According to him, the subject matter and themes of the works in this section relate to patriotism and Iranian Islamic power. Some of these works have been previously showcased at other festivals, while others are participating in the Fajr Theater Festi-



val for the first time and have been selected for performance. He added that judging the 'My Iran' section is separate from the usual judging process of the Fajr International Theater Festival, and 'My Iran' is, in fact, one of the five sections whose works will be evaluated by the judges this year. The judge, commenting on the number of works selected for this section, revealed that a total of 21 theatrical productions have qualified for the 'My Iran' section, slated for performance in both stage and street theater formats. "To date, we, as the judging panel for this section, have meticulously evaluated and assessed a number of submissions. The plays explore themes centered around the 12-day war and the ongoing discourse surrounding the axis of resistance in Lebanon and Palestine." He added, "Several of the works were remarkably compelling, exhibiting strong playwriting alongside commendable directing, acting, and design. Skilled and seasoned professionals have contributed to the production of these pieces, bringing a distinctly professional approach to these theatrical endeavors. It's fair to say that, overall, these are commendable and well-supported works."

Besharati emphasized that "we assess these works solely in comparison to others created on similar themes. Fundamentally, the discussions of patriotism and Iranian power, the core objectives of the 'My Iran' section, are effectively conveyed within these productions." He further elaborated, "There are also works that delve into national and patriotic narratives, with some groups drawing inspiration from the 'Shahnameh' to craft their pieces. It appears that the 'My Iran' section, with its exploration of love and affection for Iran and a diverse range of other subjects, possesses the potential to flourish in the years to come, given the demonstrated public interest in national and patriotic themes. As we've witnessed previously, works related to the 'Shahnameh' and Iran's epic tales have consistently garnered a positive reception." The jury member concluded, "groups undertaking the creation of such works should avoid overly direct references to these themes, lest the pieces become excessively propagandistic. Instead, they should strive to address the themes indirectly and with greater depth, approaching and narrating them with enhanced artistry and creativity."

## Philippine's cultural heritage on display in Tehran



Philippine Ambassador Roberto G. Manalo points to a photo on the wall of the Maryam-e Moqaddas (Persian for Holy Virgin Mary) metro station in Tehran, Iran, on January 26, 2026.  
● hamshahronline.ir

## Arts & Culture Desk

A photographic exhibition highlighting the Philippines' natural beauty and cultural heritage, titled 'The Hidden Pearl,' opened on January 26 at the Maryam-e Moqaddas (Persian for Holy Virgin Mary) metro station in Tehran. The event, attended by Philippine Ambassador Roberto G. Manalo and Tehran municipal officials, marks the 62nd anniversary of diplomatic relations between Iran and the Philippines, Hamshahri Online reported. The exhibition aims to provide Iranian commuters with a visual introduction to the Philippines' rich culture and architecture, serving as a cultural bridge between the two nations. "We are proud to carry the distinction of transporting over two million passengers daily," stated Masoud Lotfi, CEO of Tehran Urban & Suburban Railway Operation Corporation. "We must leverage these opportunities to

elevate the travel experience and improve the well-being of our citizens. These art galleries offer a valuable platform to foster familiarity with diverse cultures and expand the intellectual horizons of our society." Ambassador Manalo underscored the potential for further collaboration, noting that the Philippines, with its archipelago of over 7,000 islands, currently has only one city with a metro system. He expressed the Philippines' eagerness to partner with Iranian metro construction companies to expand urban transportation infrastructure. "We are prepared to collaborate with Iranian metro construction companies to develop metro lines in the Philippines," Manalo stated. He also highlighted the extensive cooperation between the Philippines and Iran over the past 62 years, emphasizing the exhibition as a key element in sharing Filipino culture with the Iranian public. The Philippines, a nation with a significant Muslim population in its southern regions, hopes the exhibition will dispel misconceptions and showcase the country's diverse landscapes and attractions.

## Iran to resubmit Masuleh cultural landscape for UNESCO World Heritage listing

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iran intends to soon submit an updated nomination dossier for Masuleh and its cultural landscape to UNESCO, a senior cultural heritage official said on January 26. The dossier, which has been completed and signed, will be resubmitted following further studies requested during a previous review by the World Heritage Committee. Ali Darabi, Deputy Minister for Cultural Heritage emphasized that the dossier is ready to be sent to UNESCO headquarters in Paris. It is hoped that this action will be an effective step towards registering this historic and beautiful village on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The move represents a sig-

nificant step in preserving the integrity of Masuleh, a picturesque village nestled within the verdant Hyrcanian forests. Experts believe the successful inscription would underscore Iran's rich industrial heritage, specifically demonstrating iron extraction practices dating back to the Islamic era. The village's strategic location, diverse ethnic demographics, and distinctive architectural style further bolster its claim to global recognition, potentially boosting tourism and safeguarding its cultural identity. Darabi noted that the dossier had previously been presented at the 45th UNESCO World Heritage Committee meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in September 2023, where further research was requested.