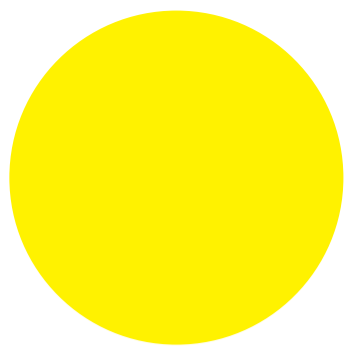


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President Masoud Pezeshkian (l.) shakes hands with a firefighter during a surprise visit to a fire station in Tehran, Iran on April 20, 2026. president.ir

Naval blockade of Iran & China's high-stakes test against US

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Following a sharp escalation in tensions and direct confrontation between Iran and the United States, one of the region's most critical geopolitical chokepoints—the Strait of Hormuz—has once again moved to the forefront of global security and economic developments. This vital passage, through which a significant share of the world's energy flows, holds the power to reshape not only regional equations but also global balances if disrupted. Against this backdrop, Iran's move to restrict or control maritime traffic, alongside Washington's efforts to impose a form of naval block-



Mohammadreza Elhami

ade on Tehran, has given rise to a complex and multilayered situation, forcing international actors—particularly major powers—to respond and reassess their positions. In this environment, China—one of Iran's key economic and energy partners, while also maintaining extensive ties with Persian Gulf states and engaging in structural rivalry with the United States—has found itself in a sensitive and decisive position. On the one hand, Beijing depends on the steady flow of energy from the region and the security of its trade routes; on the other, it seeks to avoid direct confrontation with Washington. These considerations have gradually pushed China's stance from initial neutrality and calls for restraint toward a more cautious role and even indirect involvement in certain areas, particularly regarding the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran Daily spoke with Mohammadreza Elhami, Vice Chairman of the Iran-China Friendship Association (ICFA) and a China affairs expert, to unpack various dimensions of this approach—from Beijing's political and diplomatic positions to its role in field and economic developments.

IRAN DAILY: How would China's stance—as Iran's economic and political partner—be assessed during the military offensive against Iran and afterward?

ELHAMI: In the early stages of the war, China largely acted in a neutral manner, limiting itself to calling on the parties involved to cease hostilities and exercise restraint. This continued until a resolution was proposed to condemn Iran's attack on Persian Gulf countries. At that point, due to lobbying by Saudi Arabia and the UAE, as well as China's desire to preserve relations with these

states, no reference was made to the role of the United States and Israel, and China abstained from voting on the resolution.

Subsequently, in the five-point proposal by China and Pakistan to end the war, there was no mention of condemning the United States or Israel, nor was there any discussion of compensation for Iran by China. However, as the war progressed, China gradually—and albeit indirectly—became more involved in war-related issues. This was particularly evident regarding the Strait of Hormuz, when a resolution introduced by Bahrain against Iran, in support of reopening the strait and stating that Iran had no right to close it, was vetoed by China alongside Russia. As the war continued, the importance of the Strait of Hormuz for China—as one of the largest buyers of oil from the region—became more pronounced, prompting Beijing to move away from

strict neutrality.

Why did China not demonstrate stronger support for Iran from the outset?

It appears that China prefers US engagements in West Asia to remain confined there, rather than spilling over into more sensitive areas such as the South China Sea or the Taiwan issue. At the same time, China did not want to be accused of providing military support to Iran. Even if assistance was provided, China typically carries out such actions quietly. Another key factor is China's extensive economic and political ties with Persian Gulf countries such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia, which it was unwilling to jeopardize. As a result, it adopted a cautious approach until the Hormuz crisis and the threat to its energy interests became more serious. [Page 3 >](#)

President stresses power diplomacy while voicing skepticism about US

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Monday that every rational and diplomatic path should be used to reduce regional and international tensions caused by the recent US-Israeli aggression against Iran.

"War benefits no one. While standing firm against threats, we must use every rational and diplomatic path to reduce tensions," Pezeshkian said during a visit to the Justice Ministry.

However, the Iranian president said that vigilance and distrust in interactions with Washington were an "undeniable necessity."

Pezeshkian noted that through "empathy, honesty, and collective participation, we can get past this stage and continue the

country's path toward dignity and progress."

The president noted that passing through the battlefield "does not mean the end of the road. Rather, it marks the beginning of a more important phase: the 'Greater Struggle.'" He described this as a crusade in which all people must play a role through patience, tolerance, cooperation, and active participation in rebuilding the country and solving its problems.

"This phase requires greater mental and social readiness than the war era," he added.

A two-week ceasefire between Iran and the US is set to expire on Wednesday, with US representatives set to reach Islamabad for Iran negotiations on Monday while Tehran has yet to announce whether it will send a

delegation to Pakistan.

Iran and the US reached the ceasefire after nearly 40 days of aggression by the US and Israel against Iran which met with Iran's retaliation.

The Iranian president also said on Monday that strengthening unity among Islamic countries is the most important way to counter conspiracies and prevent foreign powers from taking advantage.

On Sunday, Pezeshkian underlined that Iran is not seeking to expand the war in the region, adding that some powers are trying to drag regional countries in conflicts in order to exploit their resources, while the nations of the region must stand against such approaches through unity and solidarity, and strengthen the path of cooperation and cohesion.



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks during a visit to the Justice Ministry in Tehran on April 20, 2026. president.ir

Iran reviewing US proposals for possible Islamabad talks

Tehran 'not optimistic' as Washington is 'unrealistic'



Pakistan's security forces guard a checkpoint in Islamabad, Pakistan, on April 20, 2026 as hoardings are mounted on lamp posts ahead of possible Iran-US peace talks.

AFP

heading to Pakistan for the second round of negotiations, as the ceasefire, due to expire on Wednesday, edges towards its deadline.

"We're offering a very fair and reasonable DEAL, and I hope they take it because, if they don't, the United States is going to knock out every single Power Plant, and every single Bridge, in Iran," Trump wrote.

Before Trump's post on Sunday, Iran's Supreme National Security Council said "new proposals" from the US had been put forward during a visit to Iran by Pakistan's army chief and were being reviewed.

Next round of talks

However, the Foreign Ministry's spokesman accused Washington of violating the ceasefire, saying that no decision had been made yet regarding the next round. Baqaei added that Iran could not forget the costly experience of Washington's previous breaches of its promises. "So, we remain vigilant against the enemy's schemes, and this is the duty of the negotiating team and all Iranian institutions," the spokesman asserted.

In light of the absence of all trust be-

tween the two sides, Iran is "not optimistic" about the talks, rather adopting a "realistic" attitude towards the matter, the official noted.

He again urged vigilance in the face of the enemy's schemes, and said Iran had to exercise even more caution under the current circumstances than it would during wartime.

Baqaei, meanwhile, underlined that the US has repeatedly tested Iran before by reneging on its pledges and facing decisive backlash from the Islamic Republic, saying Washington would face the same experience upon repeating its past mistakes.

"The US insists on repeating its mistakes, and it will receive a response similar to the past."

Violation of ceasefire

Baqaei added that Washington had "violated the ceasefire from the beginning of its implementation," citing the US naval blockade of the Strait of Hormuz since April 13, and the overnight capture of an Iranian container ship by the US military as breaches of the truce as well as international law.

He underlined that the US is not serious about negotiations with Iran. Baqaei also cited contradictions between Washington's words and actions as a case in point regarding the latter's indecisive attitude towards the issue of the talks.

"[Their] words and actions are not consis-

tent, and Iran will make the appropriate decision with careful consideration of its interests and national priorities," he stated.

The Iranian official additionally pointed out continuation of the Israeli regime's violations against Lebanon, despite the Islamic Republic's insistence on cessation of aggression on all fronts as an indivisible part of any ceasefire.

Referring to the Israeli regime's rehashing its claim of acting in "self-defense" to try to justify its violations, Baqaei said, "This is another example where the other side shifts the blame and conceals its own shortcomings."

'Unreasonable positions'

The spokesman said the US continues to insist on its "unreasonable and unrealistic positions."

Baqaei, however, reiterated Iran's positions, saying transfer of enriched uranium outside Iran has never been an option for the country, dismissing American officials' remarks in this regard as mere claims and ideas pursued by Washington.

Iran, he added, would not put its defense capabilities, including missile power, up for negotiation either.

The first round of talks in Islamabad failed to produce an agreement, with Iranian officials blaming the US side for putting forward excessive demands and shifting its position at the negotiating table.

Armed Forces vow to retaliate US act of 'piracy' in Sea of Oman

China voices concern over US seizure of Iranian cargo ship

International Desk

Iran's military vowed to decisively retaliate the latest act of "piracy" by the US military forces against an Iranian commercial vessel in the Sea of Oman. Lieutenant-Colonel Ebrahim Zolfaghari, spokesperson for the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, stated that after the blatant aggression by US terrorist commandos against an Iranian commercial ship in the waters of the Sea of Oman, the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran were ready to deal decisively with the American aggressor forces.

However, he said due to the presence of several family members of the ship's crew — whose lives and safety were at constant risk — they faced certain limitations.

"Given the current situation, once the safety of the families and crew of the vessel targeted by American aggression is ensured, the

powerful Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran will take the necessary action against the terrorist US army," Zolfaghari said.

His remarks came after the United States carried out a flagrant act of aggression on an Iranian merchant vessel in the waters of the Sea of Oman, deploying its terrorist marines onto the ship's deck and disabling its navigation systems.

In immediate response, Iranian forces struck back, targeting several American military vessels in the area with drone attacks. On Friday, Iran had declared the Strait was open to commercial shipping, weeks after it was shut down to vessels associated with the US, Israel and their allies following the launch of an unprovoked war of aggression against the Islamic Republic on February 28.

However, the IRGC Navy said in a statement

on Saturday that Iran has closed the Strait of Hormuz after the United States chose to retain its blockade of Iranian ports in violation of the conditions of a two-week ceasefire declared by US President Donald Trump.

China expressed concern over the "forced interception" by the US of the Iranian cargo ship, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said on Monday, urging relevant parties to abide by the ceasefire agreement in a responsible manner.

"The situation in the Strait of Hormuz is sensitive and complicated," said spokesman Guo Jiakun during a regular press briefing. Parties involved should avoid further escalation and "create the necessary conditions for normal transit through the strait to resume," he added.

Beijing on Monday also urged relevant parties to "continue to maintain the momentum of the ceasefire and negotiations."



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Mobarakeh Steel granted hot-roll import permit to ease post-war shortages

Smart overhaul of damaged production lines, power units under review

Economy Desk

Iran's Industry, Mine and Trade Minister Mohammad Atabak announced Monday that Mobarakeh Steel Company has been granted a permit to import hot-rolled steel sheets to address market shortages and ensure uninterrupted supply to downstream industries, following damage to the facility's production lines during the American-Israeli war on Iran that began February 28. Speaking during a visit to the Isfahan-based steel complex alongside the provincial governor, Atabak emphasized the government's commitment to supporting the steel production chain and preventing disruptions, ISNA reported.

"Due to specific conditions that have arisen in Mobarakeh Steel's production lines, and the current inability to produce certain hot-rolled sheets domestically, the ministry has granted the necessary permit to the company to import

this product," Atabak said. "The aim of this decision is to ensure the timely supply of industries dependent on these sheets. The allocation and distribution of these imported products will be carried out strictly based on previous records and in line with past procedures for producers who had previously met their needs through Mobarakeh Steel."

Atabak addressed recent supply challenges affecting certain steel products, noting that extensive planning is underway to secure a significant portion of the slabs required by the complex through increased capacity at other domestic plants.

"These slabs, once sourced from various suppliers, will be delivered to sheet-producing units to ensure that production in this sector does not stop," he said.

Mobarakeh Steel Company (MSC) and Khuzestan Steel Company in southwestern Khuzestan Province were hit



Iran's Industry, Mine and Trade Minister Mohammad Atabak chairs a meeting to review the smart reconstruction project for production and power plant units at Mobarakeh Steel Company in Isfahan, on April 20, 2026.

● ILNA

multiple times during the American-Zionist war. MSC is currently working to restore stable production after parts of its production lines sustained damage during the hostilities.

On the sidelines of the visit, Atabak toured various sections of the Mobarakeh Steel complex, inspecting damaged areas and receiving briefings on recent measures taken to secure and clear those sites.

Later Monday evening, a meeting was held at Mobarakeh Steel to review a smart reconstruction project for its production and power plant units. The session was attended by Atabak and



Masoud Saminnejad, deputy minister and head of IMIDRO, the state organization responsible for overseeing Iran's mines and mining industries. According to ILNA, the meeting fo-

cused on strategies for the intelligent modernization of production lines and power facilities, as well as planning for the upgrade of the complex's key infrastructure.

Passenger flights resumed in Tehran; more airports to reopen



● IRNA

Economy Desk

Iran has authorized the resumption of passenger flights at Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport and Mehrabad Airport from Monday, a senior aviation official said, as the country gradually restores air travel following recent security disruptions.

Hamid Reza Sanaei, deputy head for aviation and international affairs at the Civil Aviation Organization of Iran (CAO), said passenger flights would also be allowed at airports in Urmia, Kermanshah, Abadan,

Shiraz, Kerman, Rasht, Yazd, Zahedan, Gorgan and Birjand starting Saturday (April 25), IRNA reported.

"We have tried by opening the airspace over central and western regions of the country to ensure that all areas have access to flights in the first phase, and in particular to make Haj flights possible. With coordination from military sectors, other regions will also gradually become operational," he said.

Flights from Mashhad International Airport in northeast of the country are gradually resuming,

he added, noting that operations have already restarted at six airports including Mashhad, Gorgan, Birjand, Zahedan, Mehrabad and Imam Khomeini.

Iran on Saturday reopened the eastern section of its airspace for international overflights following a security and safety review, after a closure imposed during the Israeli-American aggression that began on February 28.

Maqsood Asadi Samani, secretary of the Association of Iranian Airlines, said on Saturday that six airports have resumed operations.

"Since the start of the war on February 28, around 90 cargo flights have been carried out to transport medicines and raw materials for pharmaceutical production, and these flights are continuing," Sanaei said. "Ticket sales for passenger flights are also gradually resuming, taking into account flight safety and security," he added.

Iran-ECO trade soars 82% as Tehran backs regional economic ties

Economy Desk

Iran's trade with members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) has grown by 82% over the past five years, a senior official from the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran said at the first meeting of the ECO Trade Agreement Technical Committee (ECOTA).

According to IRNA, Elham Haji Karimi, head of the Office for Reviving Trade Agreements and International Organizations at the TPO, reaffirmed Tehran's commitment to strengthening regional trade cooperation.

Haji Karimi said the ECO region holds significant potential for economic and trade growth, adding that all member states — beyond the current ECOTA participants — could move toward a more comprehensive agreement using the existing ECOTA framework, in a way that reflects current needs and anticipates future ones.

"Despite unjust sanctions and the imposed war against the country, and damage to some trade and economic infrastructure during the war that has created limitations, the Islamic Republic of Iran is fully prepared to actively participate in



● IRNA

the ECO and in drafting a new trade agreement," she said.

The United States and Israel launched attacks on Iran on February 8, which were halted by a 15-day ceasefire announced on April 8. Iran has also faced Western sanctions for decades over its nuclear program, with measures primarily targeting its oil and energy sectors.

Haji Karimi also stressed the need for cooperation among all members to achieve the ECO Vision 2035, adding that Iran has focused its

economic and trade diplomacy on maximum engagement with friendly countries, including ECO members. The Economic Cooperation Organization is a regional body comprising 10 member states: Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. ECO aims to promote economic, trade, scientific, technical, cultural and infrastructure cooperation among its members. Its permanent secretariat is based in Tehran.

Naval blockade of ...

How did the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and the imposition of a form of naval blockade by the United States affect China's interests and relations?

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In this regard, China's defense minister stated that Chinese vessels would continue to pass through the Strait of Hormuz and that the United States had no right to obstruct the implementation of China's energy contracts with Iran. During the blockade, some Chinese supertankers entered Iranian waters, loaded cargo, and then moved out toward their destinations via routes close to Iranian waters, such as near Jask and Chabahar.

It appears that part of this passage occurred either with a degree of US acquiescence or due to Chinese warnings, or alternatively because routes were selected to remain within safer zones. At the same time, some reports indicated that certain Iranian vessels were seized or turned back.

Under conditions of naval blockade, what alternative routes does Iran have to maintain ex-

changes with China?

One of the most important alternatives is the overland route. Even before the war—and afterward—a railway line has operated from Shanghai, passing through Xinjiang and Turkmenistan into Iran, eventually reaching the Aprin port west of Tehran. This route is mainly used for non-oil goods, although the transport of oil products is also possible, but in smaller volumes compared to maritime shipping.

The advantage of this route is its shorter transit time—around 12 to 15 days—compared to 40 to 50 days by sea. It could develop into a transit and even energy hub.

How can the petro-yuan project and its potential replacement of the petrodollar in China's Persian Gulf oil transactions play a role in relation to the war and Iran?

China's main objective is the internationalization of the yuan and reducing dependence on the dollar. This is part of broader economic competition

between China and the United States and is not necessarily limited to Iran or wartime conditions in the region. China is seeking to advance this policy with various countries, particularly in the Persian Gulf.

However, due to these countries' close ties with the United States, China proceeds cautiously. In Iran's case as well, because of sanctions and the high risks associated with economic engagement, China seeks to keep its level of interaction with Iran managed and maintains a conservative approach.

How could increased alignment between China and Iran possibly happen under these conditions?

China already demonstrates a degree of alignment, even if not publicly acknowledged. Iran could leverage the Strait of Hormuz as a bargaining tool—meaning that in exchange for reopening or facilitating passage, it could call on China to play a role in pressuring the United States to ease sanc-

tions and release blocked assets.

Additionally, mediation through countries such as Pakistan—which maintains relations with China, the United States, and Arab states—could serve as an important diplomatic channel.

Ultimately, could the continuation of the naval blockade draw China into a more serious confrontation with the United States?

In practice, yes. However, China does not want to enter into direct confrontation with the United States, yet it will not back down from its interests either. The relatively smooth passage of some Chinese tankers through the region suggests that China opposes a full-scale restriction and is seeking to preserve its own energy supply routes.

In reality, the naval blockade is primarily directed at Iran, while other countries continue to enjoy greater freedom. Nonetheless, China is using its influence to work around or reduce these constraints, as Iran remains one of its key partners in oil supply.

Passive defense during attack barrages

Advantages, deficiencies, and structural scars of Iran's energy sector



TASNIM



Amir Moharreri

INTERVIEW Amidst the “Third Imposed War” against Iran, while the nation’s critical infrastructures — from refineries to water facilities and power plants — are subjected to unrelenting, targeted threats of assaults, the paramount question of these days pertains to the degree of resilience possessed by Iran’s energy and water security. Nevertheless, the response to this query does not constitute a mere technical analysis; rather, it should reflect upon Iran’s structural advantages, accumulated deficiencies, and the modality of confronting novel, belligerent paradigms. Under such circumstances, Amir Moharreri, a researcher in the domain of energy security and an advisor to the Khorasan Razavi Water & Energy Synergy House (WESH), presents in the following interview a clearer picture of the scene — a picture that neither rests upon unrealistic optimism nor upon unduly pessimistic narratives. He references both intermittent improvements in surface water resources and an improved state of the power grid, while concurrently issuing a cautionary advisory that the resilience of infrastructures amidst modern warfare depends, above all else, upon design, geographic dispersion, technological diversity, and reparative capacity — domains wherein Iran possesses both advantages and serious deficits.

What is your assessment of the current state of energy and water security in the country, and what constitute the most significant concerns or gaps demanding attention?

MOHARRERI: Generally speaking, with due consideration for recent precipitation, the condition of the nation’s surface water resources has improved relative to the arid years of the past, and, in many regions of the country, there exists no serious short-term concern regarding the provision of potable water and a portion of consumptive uses. Nevertheless, owing to the persistence of multi-year droughts and elevated rates of extraction, the depletion of groundwater tables remains a grave and long-term reality, one not resolvable by a few seasonal rainy periods. Precipitation has facilitated a partial replenishment of dam reservoirs, and this circumstance engenders a degree of confidence and relative tranquility in the short term; however, the groundwater crisis persists unabated.

In the energy domain, assuming no extraordinary or unforeseen event occurs, projections indicate that this year’s situation will surpass that of the previous year, and the probability of electricity outages will be lower compared to last year. This improvement derives from a constellation of factors, some of which are articulable while others, for various reasons, have not been disseminated via media channels. Nonetheless, in aggregate, one may state that the security of electricity supply is improving during the current year, though this does not signify that all concerns have been entirely alleviated.

What is the status of Iran’s energy and water infrastructures with respect to resilience against security and military crises? Have appropriate measures been undertaken in recent years to confront a crisis of the magnitude of the ongoing war?

In the domains of energy and water, limitations and vulnerabilities do exist, yet simultaneously, we possess certain structural advantages. From the perspective of passive defense, the absolute protection of power plants against modern warfare is not feasible nowhere in the world, neither in Iran nor elsewhere. Nonetheless, the structure of Iran’s electricity generation network



A speedboat performs a U-turn in the waters of Urmia Lake in northwestern Iran in late April 2026 after previous weeks of strong rainfall temporarily revived the drying lake.
● SOHEIL FARAJI/ISNA

holds a significant advantage over certain regional nations: power plants are dispersed throughout the country, and a noteworthy diversity exists in energy resources and electricity generation technologies.

This diversity and dispersion, when compared to countries such as the United Arab Emirates (which concentrate several thousand megawatts of capacity at a single point), gives Iran a type of superiority in passive defense. The Arab nations of the Persian Gulf are exceedingly vulnerable concerning the security of their energy infrastructures; whereas the majority of their consumption is oriented toward cooling, and, as temperatures rise, their dependence on electricity intensifies dramatically. An electricity outage in those countries, particularly during the hot season, nearly signifies the disruption of a substantial aspect of life and economic activity.

In Iran, due to climatic diversity, a heterogeneity of needs, and the possibility of utilizing a varied composition of energy resources, the situation regarding resilience is comparatively superior, although this does not imply an absence of weaknesses and threats; passive defense at power plants remains one of the serious challenges, one that cannot be easily resolved.

If the enemy’s attacks upon energy infrastructures and water installations persist, upon which factors shall the degree of resilience and stability of this front depend? Is the capacity to compensate for damages inflicted upon infrastructures available?

Resilience under these conditions depends upon several factors:

1. The manner and selection of targets by the enemy;
2. The degree of geographic and technological dispersion and diversity of power plants and installations;
3. The availability of alternative and emergency capacities (distributed generation, diesel generators, CHP systems, etc.);
4. The industrial and equipment-based capacity for reconstruction and replacement.

At the international level, the cost of attacking energy and water infrastructures for the opposing party — and even for global public opinion — must be rendered so high that perpetrating such attacks imposes a heavy political, economic, and human toll; otherwise, solely through military and technical means, one cannot prevent attacks.

However, we must carefully consider the model by which we can elevate the cost of this affair for the enemy so that it refrains from assaulting such instal-

”

In Iran, due to climatic diversity, a heterogeneity of needs, and the possibility of utilizing a varied composition of energy resources, the situation regarding resilience is comparatively superior, although this does not imply an absence of weaknesses and threats; passive defense at power plants remains one of the serious challenges, one that cannot be easily resolved.

lations. In a world wherein the term “energy poverty” has become increasingly tangible, specifically in European nations, attacks upon installations and infrastructures must impose economic and social costs upon the entire world. If this matter carries no cost, then effectively, preventing attacks will not be very feasible.

Regarding resilience, one point must be taken into account: “an eye for an eye” possesses no conceptual validity. Consider, for instance, that one of our petrochemical facilities might presently be attacked, and we, in turn, strike one of theirs; however, the facility they strike might constitute our entire asset, whereas they possess dozens of petrochemical plants. Hence, an eye for an eye loses meaning here.

Therefore, diverse sectors and domains must be affected so that the cost of attack increases. The cost of attack encompasses economic costs, human costs, and social costs — all of which must be considered.

Another point pertains to water installations. There, this same issue arises, and compensation for damages can be even more complex. Of course, in water installations, our primary concern is not typically the repair of equipment because the majority of these are structural; nevertheless, certain components require specialized equipment, and if those sustain damage, their management and restoration necessitate specific methods and protocols for which planning must be undertaken.

In my estimation, within the framework of compensating for war-induced damages, emphasis must be placed on securing new power plants and turbines from the resources and countries whose military bases served as the origins of these attacks.

My assessment is that, irrespective of existing capacities, the nation, over a 10-year horizon, requires approximately 120,000 megawatts of new power plant capacity — to compensate for deficits, to reduce dependence on climatic fluctuations and precipitation variability, and to accompany the trajectory of industrial and economic development.

In your opinion, what are the principal structural and managerial challenges that engender vulnerability in the energy and water sectors during the ongoing war?

One challenge is the relative concentration upon large-scale power plants and national grids, which, if damaged, affect a substantial portion of the load. Although Iran possesses better dispersion than some countries, the dependence of the consumption and industrial structure upon the national grid remains high.

Another significant challenge is the reliance of vital infrastructures upon these grids. Although appropriate measures have been undertaken in recent years, and for many sensitive centers, alternative energy supply systems have been designated so that service provision does not cease upon disconnection from the grid, this process must be rendered deeper and more complete. From a managerial perspective, in many domains, the passive defense approach to the siting, design, and operation of power plants and water installations has not yet been systematically institutionalized. Dependence upon a few limited technologies and weaknesses in the indigenous development of certain sensitive equipment constitute additional challenges.

In the current situation, what role do you ascribe to novel technologies, demand-side management, and renewable energies in enhancing the country's energy and water security? In the domain of novel electricity generation technologies, no extraordinary leap has occurred in the country during recent years. This matter represents a double-edged sword: on one hand, technological backwardness may generate risks, but on the other hand, rushed entry into certain technologies without localization and without passive defense considerations can itself constitute a point of vulnerability.



A textile vendor works in his shop during a power outage in Tehran, Iran, on August 5, 2025. **VAHID SALEMI/AP**

Renewable energies, particularly solar power, are undergoing development in the country and can play an important role in peak management and fluctuation mitigation, especially given that the daily consumption peak and solar irradiation partially overlap. However, one must note that renewable energies are costly and, at times, do not deliver stable load to the grid.

Drawing inspiration from the experiences of the current war, what changes in approach or policymaking are necessary to fortify the energy front and the security of its infrastructures?

The experience of war and sanctions has demonstrated that dependence upon large, centralized power plants must be reduced, and passive defense in energy production and supply must be pursued more seriously. In recent years,

appropriate measures have been taken, and for many sensitive points, alternative energy supply systems have been provided so that, in the event of grid disconnection, vital services do not cease. In my view, policymaking must, more than ever before, concentrate upon the development of distributed generation (DG), Combined Heat and Power (CHP) and Combined Cooling, Heat, and Power (CCHP) systems, diesel generators, and other local and regional energy supply solutions, particularly for sensitive centers and vital infrastructures.

The overarching approach must be a transition from "sole dependence upon the national grid" toward a "hybrid of the national grid plus emergency and sustainable local generation". This approach elevates the cost of attacking infrastructures for the enemy and augments the nation's resilience.



In a world wherein the term "energy poverty" has become increasingly tangible, specifically in European nations, attacks upon installations and infrastructures must impose economic and social costs upon the entire world. If this matter carries no cost, then effectively, preventing attacks will not be very feasible.

Upon which factors does the compensation for damages inflicted upon energy and water infrastructures depend in the short term, medium term, and long term, and what actions must officials undertake in each phase?

In the short term, focus must be placed upon maintaining service continuity and preventing grid collapse. Here, the role of emergency generation, demand-side management, load shifting, and the utilization of reserve capacities is paramount. The employment of diesel generators, DG units, and existing capacities, alongside consumption management, constitutes the principal toolkit.

In the medium term, the reconstruction of damaged equipment, the replacement of lost units with new and more resilient ones, and the diversification of resources and siting configurations must be placed on the agenda. At this stage, the experience of attacks must be leveraged, and design and siting weaknesses must be rectified.

In the long term, the approach must move toward the partial redesign of the energy and water system's structure. This means that policies must be calibrated such that they simultaneously fulfill the nation's developmental needs (a minimum of 120,000 megawatts of new capacity over the next 10 years) and reduce dependence upon sensitive and vulnerable points. Over this horizon, the nature of war damage compensation contracts also assumes importance, and, as I have indicated, the provision of new turbines and power plant units by the countries that served as the origins of attacks must be among the central pillars of negotiation and agreement.

The full article was published in Persian by Iran Think Tanks.

Impact of US/Israel-Iran crisis on Asia

At the peak of the crisis, oil surged to \$110-116/bbl. But it remains volatile at \$90-100 after cease-fire pause. Liquefied natural gas (LNG) took an even harder hit. Oil price surged more than 50%, but LNG soared as much as 143% — a 3-year high.

In Asia, supply risk is significant because 20% of global oil and major LNG flows via Hormuz to the region. Here's the difference between the two sources of the shock. LNG is the binding constraint; oil is volatile but more substitutable.

By April 12, the region is overshadowed by LNG tightness, shipping frictions, foreign exchange pressure and already-locked second quarter damage.

Inflation, industrial slowdown, bottlenecks

In energy crises, inflation has always been a dominant transmission channel. A shortage of fuel, electricity and fertilizers means that increased costs for businesses (higher wages, rising shipping costs, higher prices for raw materials) are passed on to consumers across a wide variety of goods and services.

LNG shock tends to result in an industrial slowdown. As prices soar for petrochemicals, plastics, and fertilizers, a major disruption has ensued in Asia, the "world factory". In this regard, the gas-reliant Japan, Korea and Vietnam are the most exposed.

In shipping and logistics, the Hormuz disruption means higher freight plus insurance expenses, which have resulted in supply chain bottlenecks across Asia.

With foreign exchange and capital flows, oil importers have suffered currency depreciation. As central banks delay rate cuts, tight financial conditions ensue.

Nor is tourism immune to airfare spikes and Middle East airspace disruptions. For now, the impact is moderate. But that could change if the crisis lingers.



THE VIETNAMESE MAGAZINE

Systemic shock

The Iran crisis is primarily an oil/LNG and supply chain shock. In East Asia, it is manifested as industrial squeeze. In Southeast Asia, it is reflected by inflation and the foreign exchange squeeze.

Cease-fire relief does not mean normalization. Due to uncertainty, risk premium persists even if prices dip. The status quo has deteriorated faster than consensus estimates suggest, as evidenced by the Philippines. Not so long ago, the Marcos Jr. government still suggested that the stage was set for 5-6% growth. Now some multilateral institutions have downgraded the country's GDP growth to 3.6-4.4%.

Across Asia, growth estimates are being recalibrated. Even the IMF signals broad global downgrade and "permanent scarring". This crisis is a systemic energy shock.

Why the revisions?

First of all, the LNG shock was underestimated. The foreign exchange and inflation feedback loop has proved more challenging than anticipated. Third, the inventory illusion is fading.

Finally, March data still reflected pre-shock inventories but demand compression will ensue in April-May.

Downgrades after downgrades

In Japan and South Korea, the status quo is worse than earlier assumed, due to vulnerability to LNG, petrochemicals and exports.

In Japan, inflation and weak yen have adverse implications. The central bank is reassessing the rate trajectory. South Korea's GDP growth is likely closer to 1% or below, not 1.5-2%.

As a trade, shipping and refining hub, Singapore remains highly sensitive to freight costs and energy flows. It is facing a large downgrade in percentage terms.

Ever since the first Trump administration, China has been buffered by multiple US-led penalties. But it benefits from Russian energy and diverse policy tools. Though resilient, Beijing must cope with weakening export and industrial demand.

Vietnam is trying to manage its rising supply chain exposure, particularly manufacturing input costs (plastics, chemicals). With lagged effect, the damage is accelerating.

With its very high oil dependence and scarce reserves, Philippines is already facing energy emergency, a currency shock and transport disruptions — amid the greatest corruption debacle and political polarization in decades.

Risk trajectory if war persists

So, what if the cease-fire fails and the war persists another month? Oil prices would rebound toward \$105-120 as risk premium returns. If the crisis intensifies, they would surge to the \$150 territory.

LNG prices would stay elevated and spike further with tight supply. Inflation would surge with a lag in the second and third quarters.

points of the GDP growth.

Persistent supply shock

For now, the energy shock remains the largest on record. Downside risks dominate. Growth distributions continue to shift lower. And there are no meaningful upgrades.

As the regional stabilizer, China's growth hovers around 4.0%, but it is being challenged by weakening exports and softer global demand. Korea and Japan are deteriorating further.

In Southeast Asia, Singapore is taking a hard hit. Malaysia and Indonesia are somewhat buffered. Southeast Asia's importers are now in a 3-4% growth zone. Philippines is already in

Economy	Energy exposure	Tourism impact	Currency impact	Market impact	Supply chain impact	Inflation impact	GDP growth 2026
China	M (diversified)	Mild ↓	Stable/slight ↓	Mixed	Moderate-High ↑	Moderate ↑	3.7-4.3%
Japan	H (LNG-heavy)	Mild ↓ (improved)	JPY weak ↓	↓ (energy drag)	Severe ↑ ↑	High ↑ ↑	0.2-0.7%
South Korea	H	Mild ↓	KRW weak ↓	↓	Severe ↑ ↑	High ↑	0.7-1.3%
Singapore	H (hub)	Mild/Moderate ↓	Slight ↓	Volatile	High ↑ ↑ (shipping)	Moderate ↑	0.8-1.5%
Malaysia	M (export buffer)	Mild ↓	Resilient	Mixed/neutral	Moderate ↑	Moderate ↑	3.3-4.0%
Indonesia	M-H	Mild ↓	IDR weak ↓	↓	Moderate ↑	High ↑	3.9-4.6%
Philippines	H (oil importer)	Mild/down ↓	PHP weak ↓	↓	Moderate ↑	High ↑ ↑	3.6-4.0%
Vietnam	M	Mild ↓	Slight ↓	↓ (exports)	High ↑ ↑	Moderate ↑	4.8-5.5%

Impact table: East & Southeast Asia
Exposure: H = high vulnerability, M = medium, L = lower

MODERN DIPLOMACY

Foreign exchange would suffer further depreciation, especially in Korea (KRW), Philippines (PHP) and Indonesia (IDR). At the same time, supply chains would crumble further with inventories depleted.

Key escalation triggers feature a renewed Hormuz disruption, Qatar LNG outages and crisis expansion to Bab el-Mandeb, which would serve as a trade shock multiplier.

According to the IMF, the Iran shock is already affecting 80% of countries. In developing Asia, the crisis could shave off -1.3 percentage

emergency. What the region must cope with now is a persistent supply shock with partial financial relief. Although markets can bounce, the real economy won't rebound in parallel. Global growth prospects are shifting lower to 2.0-2.4%.

What happens in Asia won't stay in Asia — neither Europe nor North America is immune to the impending tsunami.

The article first appeared on Modern Diplomacy.

Iranian women aiming for clean sweep of karate golds at Asian Games

Sports Desk

Iran will be looking to build on a stellar international season last year to chase an ambitious goal of a clean sweep of three women's karate golds at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games in Japan, Fatemeh Pourzamani, the vice-president of the Iranian Karate Federation, said. "Thank God, Iranian women achieved brilliant results last year," Pourzamani said of the country's 10-medal haul across different competitions on the sidelines of a national team training camp in Rasht this week. "We hope this upward trend continues this year." Atousa Golshadnejad headlined Iranian girls' medal hunt, starting with her second Asian title in May, before the 22-year-old was one of three Iranian female gold medalists – alongside Sara Bahmanyar and kata practitioner Fatemeh Sadeqi – at November's Islamic

Solidarity Games in Riyadh. Golshadnejad then capped off a glorious run of results with a historic feat in Cairo, grabbing the country's maiden women's gold at the World Championships, since the showpiece was first introduced in 1970.

For Bahmanyar, meanwhile, the international season was also one to remember as she added a second world bronze, as well as Asian individual and team bronzes to her ISG triumph, while walking away with the top prize at the Chengdu 2025 World Games in August.

"We have three major events ahead of us this year. One of our main objectives for the upcoming season is to win three women's golds at the Asian Games in September," Pourzamani added.

Before the Asian Games, however, Iranian women must compete at the Asian Karate Championships, which will kick off on June 19 in

Bali, Indonesia.

"The event in Bali will be of huge importance for us, as it serves as a qualification path for the World Team Championships," Iran head coach Pegah Zanganeh said on the penultimate day of the training camp on Sunday.

"The women's national team is enjoying a golden era. I hope it inspires all three Iranian girls to win gold medals at the Asian Games," Zanganeh added.

"Unfortunately, our preparation program was massively disrupted by the war, but my coaching staff and I have been designing proper training sessions to make sure the athletes enter the upcoming tournaments in peak physical and mental form," said Zanganeh, a five-time medalist at the Asian Championships.

The newly concluded camp was the first of four set to be held until the Asian showpiece in Bali.



Atousa Golshadnejad (L) won Iran's maiden women's gold at the World Karate Championships in Cairo last November. **WKF**

Iran calls up 30-man squad for World Cup training camp



ILNA

Sports Desk

Iran head coach Amir Qaleneoei named a 30-man squad, comprising domestic league players, for an upcoming training camp ahead of the FIFA World Cup, which will be co-hosted by the United States, Mexico, and Canada from June 11.

The players reported for a first training session of the camp on Monday, which is expected to continue for three to four weeks.

The decision to hold the camp with 50 days remaining until the global showpiece came after the League Organization of the Iranian Football Federation confirmed on Friday that the remainder of the Persian Gulf Pro League will resume after the conclusion of Team Melli's World Cup campaign.

The Iranian top flight has been postponed since February 28, when the United States and Israel initiated a war campaign against Iran, and Qaleneoei is desperate to ensure his domestic players remain in proper condition despite a lack of competitive action until the World Cup.

Iran will kick off its Group G campaign in the United States against New Zealand at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California, on June

15, before facing European heavyweight Belgium at the same venue six days later. The team will then travel to Seattle, Washington, to face Egypt in its final group game at Lumen Field on June 26.

With eight third-placed teams across the 12 groups advancing to the round of 32, Iran will fancy its chances of securing its first-ever knockout spot at the seventh attempt.

Team Melli was last in action in a friendly double-header in Antalya, Türkiye, during March's international break, falling to a 2-1 loss to Nigeria before bouncing back to hammer Costa Rica 5-0.

However, Mahdi Taj, the chairman of the sport's national governing body, cast further doubt on Iran's World Cup participation on Sunday, saying "high-ranking authorities in the country will have the final say on the issue."

His remarks came after U.S. President Donald Trump said in the early stages of the ongoing military conflict that he considers it not "appropriate" for Iran to take part in the tournament "for their own life and safety."

FIFA chief Gianni Infantino, however, said last week that Iran will play "for sure"

at the World Cup, insisting that "sports should be outside of politics."

The following is Iran's 30-man squad for the World Cup training camp:

Goalkeepers: Alireza Beiranvand (Tractor), Payam Niazmand (Persepolis), Seyyed Hossein Hosseini (Sepahan), Mohammad Khalifeh (Iranco)
Defenders: Shoja Khalilzadeh (Tractor), Ali Ne'mati (Foolad Khuzestan), Aref Aqasi (Esteghlal), Hossein Kar'anizadegan (Persepolis), Hossein Abarqouei (Persepolis), Danial Eiri (Malavan FC), Masoud Mohebbi (Khaybar Khorramabad), Ramin Rezaeian (Foolad Khuzestan), Danial Esmailifar (Tractor), Saleh Hardani (Esteghlal), Arya Yousefi (Sepahan), Milad Mohammadi (Persepolis), Ehsan Hajsafi (Sepahan)
Midfielders: Rouzbeh Cheshmi (Esteghlal), Amirmohammad Razaqinia (Esteghlal), Omid Nourafkan (Sepahan), Aref Haji-Eidi (Sepahan), Hadi Habibinejad (Chador-malou), Mahdi Hashemnejad (Tractor), Mahdi Torabi (Tractor), Mohammad-Mahdi Mohebbi (Sepahan)
Strikers: Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh (Tractor), Ali Alipour (Persepolis), Ehsan Mahrouqi (Foolad Khuzestan), Amirhossein Mahmoudi (Persepolis), Kasra Taheri (Zob Ahan).

Iran finishes FS runner-up in Champions wrestling tournament

Sports Desk

Iran bagged 13 medals, including three golds, at the Champions international wrestling tournament in Antalya, Türkiye, claiming the runner-up spot behind Russia in the freestyle competitions.

The three-day showpiece featured under-20 wrestlers from global powerhouses of the sport, including Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Türkiye, Kyrgyzstan, and Georgia.

Reigning world under-23 champion Abolfazl Mohammadnejad – also a

silver medalist at the U20 Worlds last year – added a second freestyle gold to Iran's medal haul when he triumphed in the 125kg final on Sunday.

Abolfazl Shamsipour, meanwhile, settled for silver in the freestyle 86kg class on the final day.

Former world cadet champion Ahoura Khateri had walked away with the top prize in the freestyle 61kg weight class thanks to a 7-5 victory over Ali-Asghar Soltani in a thrilling all-Iranian showdown on Saturday.

Mohammad-Mahdi Mamiwand (74kg) was the other Iranian silver medalist in the freestyle division, with Amirhossein Khakpa (92kg) and Danial Tavakkoli (97kg) finishing with consolation bronze medals in their respective events.

In the Greco-Roman category, world cadet champion Amirsam Mohammadi claimed the 97kg gold on Friday, while Ali Gharibi (63kg) and Mohammadreza Gholami (67kg) bagged two silver medals.

Alireza Amiri (55kg), former world under-17 gold medalist Amir-Mahdi Saeidi-Nava (77kg), and Alireza Mohammadhosseini (82kg) added three bronzes to the medal count for Iran, which was represented by 26 wrestlers at the tournament.



Iranian freestyle wrestler Abolfazl Mohammadnejad (red), pictured in last October's U23 World Championships, won the 125kg gold medal at the Champions international tournament in Antalya, Türkiye. **UWW**

Iranian men's saber sinks to 30th in FIE World Rankings

Sports Desk

Iran dropped by six spots to sit 30th in the latest men's saber world rankings, released by the international fencing governing body, the FIE, on Sunday.

The Iranian team – comprising Taha Kargarpour, Ahmadreza Shammiri, and Nima Aqaei – suffered a first-round exit in the fourth Saber World Cup event of the season in Padova, Italy, on Sunday, after a 45-30 setback against Poland.

The Iranian trio also finished empty-handed in the individual event as they all failed to progress beyond the preliminary stage. France overtook Hungary to move atop the team

ranking, while Italy retained the third spot, with South Korea and Romania completing the top five.

Ali Pakdaman, who was ab-

sent in Padova, is the highest-ranked Iranian in the individual rankings, standing 30th with 51,000 points.

Nima Zahedi is 137th on

9,875 points, followed by Mohammad Fotouhi (141st), Farzad Baher (168th), and Kargarpour, who is in 207th place.



ISNA

Government moves to protect handicraft sector

Iranica Desk

A meeting of professional guilds and handicraft entrepreneurs was held with the participation of Seyyed Reza Salehi Amiri, the Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts. The gathering was aimed at fostering synergy between policymakers and those who are active in the field, and was dedicated to examining the existing challenges and charting the future path of the handicraft sector amidst the country's complex economic conditions.

According to ISNA, Seyyed Reza Salehi Amiri, by outlining an analytical framework of the current situation, emphasized the necessity of forming a "shared mindset" between the government and those who are actively working in this field. He stated, "In the present circumstances, it is essential to simultaneously analyze three key components in order to reach a common understanding of the situation and the path for-



● irachi.ir

ward." Referring to the government's supportive approach toward handicrafts, he added, "We are thinking about the sur-

vival of the handicraft sector, and this survival is defined around three fundamental axes: first, the continuity of production; second, the pres-

ervation and sustainability of employment; and third, the strengthening of the marketing and sales system." He explained, "In the current

situation, it is natural for society's priorities to shift toward meeting basic needs. However, our duty is to protect the sectors of tourism and handicrafts and to prevent any disruption in their cycle of life."

Salehi Amiri went on to announce the government's facilitation measures in the area of financing and stated, "In line with supporting small handicraft workshops, we raised the issue of removing the insurance requirement for receiving financial facilities with the government and successfully finalized it, in order to ease the path of access to financial resources for these production units."

He also announced the holding of specialized meetings with bank managing directors and added, "In the sessions that have been held so far, the issues and obstacles related to the payment of facilities have been examined in great detail, and we are actively following up to facilitate the relevant processes."

Emphasizing the ministry's intermediary and driving role in transmitting demands to the country's high decision-making levels, he stated, "Our duty is to convey your issues and concerns accurately and operationally to the government, and to have executive mechanisms properly designed and consistently pursued in order to solve them."

He also announced effective interaction with other executive bodies and said, "Appropriate cooperation has been established with the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare in all related fields, and this cooperation is currently being expanded further."

Salehi Amiri stressed the importance of continued dialogue and constructive interaction between the government and the private sector, considering it a necessary condition for successfully navigating the current situation and maintaining the dynamism of the country's handicraft industry.

Comprehensive strategic plan unveiled for Arg-e Naderi Hill

Iranica Desk

Arg-e Naderi Hill (Naderi Citadel) in Shirvan, North Khorasan Province, an ancient remnant whose occupation dates back to the mid-fourth millennium BCE, is now on the verge of a new transformation with the formulation of the "comprehensive strategic plan for cultural heritage protection and development management at Arg-e Naderi of Shirvan."

The plan, resulting from a joint collaboration between the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization of North Khorasan Province and

the Architecture Department of Bojnord University, adopts an innovative approach seeking to transform the current challenges facing this national heritage site into an opportunity for integrated development and the strengthening of Shirvan's urban identity.

Ali-Akbar Vahdati, head of the Historical Heritage Preservation and Restoration Department of North Khorasan Province, wrote that Arg-e Naderi Hill is registered on Iran's National Heritage List and is considered one of the most significant prehistoric settlements in the north-eastern region of the country,

according to chtn.ir. Archaeological evidence from excavations conducted by a joint Iran-China mission reveals an urban center with extensive cultural and commercial ties from the Chalcolithic period (Copper Age) through the Qajar era.

However, the destruction of the old city of Shirvan in the earthquake of 1929 has severed this valuable

hill from the living fabric of the city and turned it into a symbol of neglect. Vacant lands, abandoned and unsafe spaces within the 23-hectare perimeter surrounding the hill have exacerbated physical and social

disintegration, giving rise to greater damage that has not only fueled an unbalanced urban landscape but also sparked social disorders in this area. The complexity

of the situation has been compounded by the mixed ownership structure and the lack of integrated management. The comprehensive strategic plan seeks to forge a deep connection between cultural heritage and modern urban life.



● IRNA

Reading Room

New study explores poetry, poetics of Iran's Constitutional era

Iranica Desk

Recently, Morvarid Publishing released Poetry and Poetics in the Constitutional Era, a research-based and analytical work examining one of the most pivotal periods in Iranian literary history. Translated by Behzad Zarehdaran, the book compiles a series of essays by various scholars, curated by Hodayoun Katouzian and Alireza Korangi. It offers a comprehensive picture of the transformation of Persian poetry during the Constitutional Revolution, exploring its roots, precursors, and the ways it reflected social and political change. The work examines poetry's role in shaping public awareness and discourse, the transition from traditional poetic forms to socially and politically engaged expression, thematic innovations, and the contributions of key poets of the period.

Hodayoun Katouzian, one of the book's editors and contributors, noted in an interview with IBNA that the volume highlights aspects of Constitutional-era literature that have received less attention in previous studies. "A significant body of work already exists on this period,

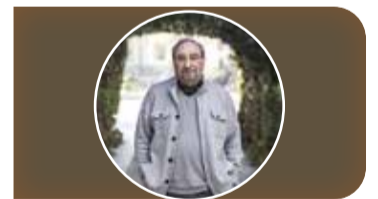
but we focused on areas that have been relatively underexplored," he explained. Katouzian added that while the literature of the Constitutional era is extensive and important, research has tended to emphasize only a few poets and satirists, leaving room for further exploration. One of the essays in the book, authored by Katouzian, focuses on the poet Iraj Mirza, titled Iraj: Poet of Love and Satire. The essay emphasizes the role of humor and satirical literature in the Constitutional era. Katouzian explained that only a portion of his essay was published in the book, noting that only one satirical poem by Iraj from the Constitutional Revolution period survives. Later works established him as one of the most prominent Persian satirists of the twentieth century, though he was not politically active in the strict sense.

Katouzian also highlighted the key difference between satirical poetry of the Constitutional period and classical Persian satire, "Constitutional-era satire is largely political, unlike classical satire. For instance, works by Ubayd Zakani (and Iraj) contain sharp social critique but generally lack explicit political objectives."

Another essay in the collection, Anthem of Freedom: Women and the Praise of Poets during the Constitutional Era, explores the contributions of female poets. Katouzian emphasized that the themes and forms of women's poetry in this period mirrored those of male poets, since the subject matter was largely political and introduced many new terms and expressions.

Other essays include The Gilaki Poetry of Mohammad Ali Afarashteh and the Legacy of the Constitutional Revolution by Nasrin Rahimiyeh. Katouzian noted that while Afarashteh's poetry in the Gilaki language differed slightly in colloquial tone, its structure and themes were closely aligned with other Constitutional-era works. Afarashteh later became a skilled political satirist writing in standard Persian, publishing much of his work in the satirical newspaper Chelanger, which he directed and edited.

A defining feature of Constitutional-era poetry, Katouzian explained, was the introduction of new themes into classical forms. In the essay The Song of Modernity in the Language of Tradition: Theory and Literary Practice of Moham-



Hodayoun Katouzian

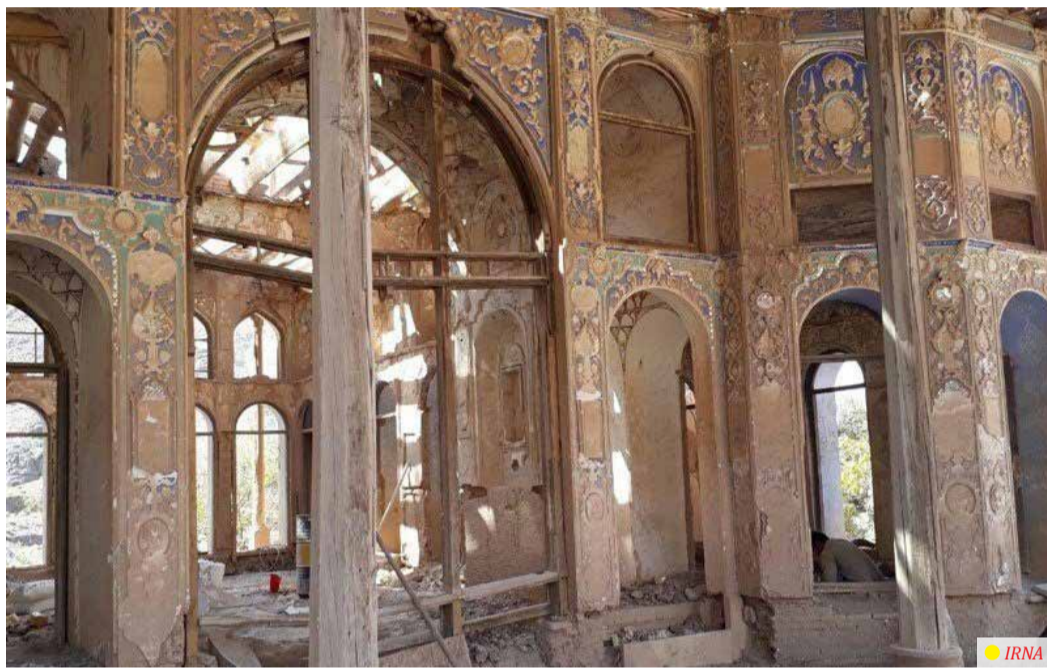
mad-Taqi Bahar by Salur Malayeri, this feature is explored, raising questions about potential tensions between form and content. Katouzian stressed that no such incompatibility existed: classical forms could accommodate any content, and many new words and expressions emerged in this poetry, even in Bahar's work. He further noted that certain forms, such as Mostazad poetry, which had nearly disappeared, were revived during this period, opening new literary paths alongside the introduction of political and social themes.

When asked about the necessity of revisiting Constitutional-era literature, Katouzian stated that while he does not see it as essential, "every poem has value and deserves attention." He emphasized the importance of pursuing neglected research in this field, though he currently has no plans for further projects on Constitutional-era literature.



Pezeshkian vows 'targeted' aid for Iran tourism business after strikes

President lauds firefighters as 'front line of sacrifice' in wartime rescues



Social Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian on Monday ordered "targeted" support for tourism businesses and accelerated restoration of war-damaged cultural sites during a visit to the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts in Tehran, then praised firefighters as the "front line of sacrifice" at a separate unannounced fire station visit. Pezeshkian reviewed damage assessments from recent US and Israeli strikes, pushing for "emergency" funding and faster documentation of destroyed monuments. Officials reported 149 historical sites across 18 provinces affected, with emergency repairs already under way. "Targeted" support is essential,

the president warned, outlining aid packages including financial facilities, deferred debt repayments, insurance backing, and capacity-building programs for tourism operators. He directed the economy and labor ministries to design and implement the measures. Despite wartime constraints, the ministry reported "acceptable" management of the Nowruz travel season, citing balanced trip distribution, expanded lodging and transport services, and improved traveler satisfaction. Separately, at a Tehran fire station, Pezeshkian thanked emergency crews for their "round-the-clock" efforts during the 40-day conflict. Officials said firefighters operated at more than 1,300 sites across 270 affected cities, rescuing between

2,000 and 3,000 people. Abbas Masjedi Arani, head of Iran's Forensic Medicine Organization, announced that from the start of the Ramadan War until the final hours of April 10, 2025, a total of 3,375 people died in US and Israeli strikes. "You entered the field when many were forced to leave," the president told firefighters. "This spirit of sacrifice is a great asset for the country." Operations included containing massive firestorms, clearing rubble, extracting survivors, securing high-risk zones, and evacuating civilians. Officials also reported damage assessments completed on roughly 88,000 private residential and commercial units nationwide, with repairs finished on about 27,000 homes outside major cities.

ICOM expresses readiness to help Iran's museum recovery

Arts & Culture Desk

The International Council of Museums (ICOM) has pledged its support to Iran's damaged museums and cultural heritage sites in the aftermath of the 40-day conflict that severely impacted the nation's historic monuments. Responding to a request from ICOM Iran, ICOM's President Antonio Rodríguez emphasized that the organization stands ready to provide both expert advice and practical assistance for restoration and security efforts. Rodríguez, in his letter to Monir Kholghi, head of ICOM Iran, acknowledged the extent of the damage, which has been confirmed by international organizations including UNESCO, IRNA reported. He highlighted that ICOM can facilitate consultations with specialists in areas such as preservation, museum security, and crisis management. "We can rapidly connect with ICOM's international committees and experts from organizations like ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property)," Rodríguez said. Rodríguez also praised Iran's initiative to install protective blue shields at its museums



and historical sites, a move that has garnered significant attention on social media. "The widespread sharing of images showing blue shields on Iran's cultural landmarks demonstrates the effective use of available resources amid the current conflict," he added. Also, Rodríguez discussed the importance of maintaining a "Red List" of cultural artifacts, a crucial tool for combating illegal trafficking. While this list typically targets the black market, he noted that recent observations in Iran indicate significant threats to cultural heritage due to damage and destruction. "Updating and documenting museum inventories with high-resolution images is vital to ensuring the protection of these collections," he explained. He stressed the need for backing up these records in multiple locations to ensure

their security, particularly in the event of theft or loss. He further proposed that Iran submit a list of its most globally significant cultural treasures to UNESCO for special protection, citing Lebanon's recent successful request for protection of 39 of its historical sites. ICOM, a key partner in this effort, has expressed full support for such initiatives. In his final remarks, Rodríguez reaffirmed ICOM's commitment to supporting Iran's efforts and facilitating access to emergency funding. Through partnerships with entities like UNESCO's Heritage Emergency Fund and the ALIPH Coalition, ICOM is positioned to help meet the urgent financial needs of Iranian museums. "All ICOM members stand in solidarity, and we eagerly await further collaboration to safeguard Iran's rich cultural heritage," Rodríguez concluded.

Minister calls for responsive cultural research amid social change

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi called for faster, field-oriented cultural research during an April 19 visit to Tehran's Research Center for Culture, Art and Communication, urging state-linked bodies to "keep pace" with rapid social transformations and deliver actionable insights for policymakers. The directive targets a broader institutional realignment across state-linked cultural agencies. Long-range academic studies frequently lag behind fast-moving public sentiment, ILNA reported. Scholars must "bridge the gap" between theoretical models and field realities, particularly in cinema, music, and visual arts. Raw survey data requires immediate translation into actionable policy frameworks. "Cultural planning must anchor in empirical feedback rather than publishing isolated metrics." Rapid technological adoption has reshaped consumption patterns across the region. Legacy distribution networks face mounting pressure from digital platforms. Research units must map out emerging media ecosystems and assess



how algorithmic curation influences regional taste. Provincial centers require upgraded funding pipelines to capture demographic shifts outside the capital. Academic output currently concentrates in Tehran, leaving peripheral narratives underrepresented. Policy councils will embed within existing academic frameworks to synchronize research agendas with executive priorities. Cultural institutions carry a shared responsibility in navigating socioeconomic stressors. Recent regional developments serve as a catalyst for immediate scholarly review. Studies will track community

Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi (3rd L) visits Tehran's Research Center for Culture, Art and Communication on April 19, 2026. IRNA

resilience, safeguard creative assets, and flag disruptive influences before they fracture social cohesion. State-backed cultural bodies will now prioritize crisis-responsive publications. Long-term projects remain active, but emergency research tracks receive expedited review.

Iran cuts dam discharge 19% below average to conserve water reserves



Social Desk

Iran slashed dam water discharge by 19% below the 10-year average through April 19, implementing conservative release strategies as reservoirs reached 59% capacity despite improved inflows, according to the latest weekly water index. Total outflow dropped to 17.12 billion cubic meters (bcm), representing a 6% year-on-year decline and a

19% shortfall against the long-term mean. The reduction signals heightened caution in water management as authorities brace for peak demand seasons, IRNA reported. Storage levels climbed to 30.55 bcm, marking a 14% recovery from last year but remaining 7% below the decade average. Total inflow surged 53% to 27.98 bcm compared to the previous year, though volumes matched rather than exceeded the 10-year benchmark of 28.09 bcm. The weekly index noted the "cautious approach" to releases aims to preserve supplies amid fluctuating precipitation patterns. The data covers the water year beginning late September. While the inflow improvement provides temporary relief, the persistent storage deficit show ongoing water stress challenges. Officials continue monitoring hydrological conditions as agricultural and municipal demand intensifies in coming months.