

India between aspiration and reality

Strategic ambiguity instead of leadership in US-Israeli war against Iran

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

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Putin hails Iranians' heroic fight for independence

Araghchi calls Tehran-Moscow relations 'strategic partnership'

Russian President Vladimir Putin (R) shakes hands with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (L) during their meeting at the Boris Yeltsin Presidential Library in Saint Petersburg on April 27, 2026.

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Hormuz may take precedence over nuclear talks in short term

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

Iran's foreign minister has presented Tehran's proposals for ending the war to Pakistani mediators, who have reportedly conveyed them to Washington. An English media outlet recently published a report claiming Iran has proposed that the issue of the Strait of Hormuz and the US naval blockade be resolved first, with the nuclear file deferred to a later stage. In an interview with Iran Daily, international affairs analyst Hossein Kazemi argues that even if the proposal were accepted by the United States, it would likely remain confined to the current phase of the conflict and the short term.

IRAN DAILY: If reports about Iran's new proposal are accurate, do you believe Washington would accept such sequencing? What factors could increase or reduce the chances of US acceptance?

KAZEMI: If the United States were to accept such a proposal in the dimensions reflected in media reports, it could be interpreted as part of an effort to manage and contain global market prices. Domestic factors such as the upcoming electoral climate—which is highly sensitive to price trends—could strengthen the case for short-term acceptance in Washington.

Beyond that, US regional partners, as influential external actors, may seek through their own lobbying channels to overcome anti-Iran lobbies and raise the odds of this scenario gaining traction, particularly given their own serious food security challenges and the need to repair

their economies.

Overall, Washington may in the short term regard such sequencing as a form of "temporary ceasefire." But if it concludes that the initiative would weaken its nuclear pressure leverage, the likelihood of acceptance would diminish. In that case, any acceptance would be better understood as aimed at restoring and replenishing vital energy reserves. Yet, considering the scale of US military activity during the current ceasefire period, the type of strikes inflicted on infrastructure, and Washington's expectation of generating fractures on Iran's domestic front through economic and cognitive pressure, the prospects of sustained long-term acceptance remain very low. Therefore, even if accepted, it would likely be limited to this phase of the conflict.

What role could Israel play in facilitating or disrupting this path? Could Tel Aviv, through political pressure or actions on the ground, block progress on this new diplomatic track?

While Israel's role in shaping outcomes is undeniable, the United States should still be viewed as the principal architect of "governance of tension," while Israel is better understood as an executor that manages the costs of escalation, as well as the pace of implementation within the broader US design.

Tel Aviv has consistently been an influential actor in calibrating the balance of tension in this file. If it perceives that any maritime or regional arrangement could lead to greater convergence between Iran and Arab states, it would likely seek—through political pressure on Washington or through intelligence and deterrent field actions—to slow the process or make it more costly. Nevertheless, the macro-design and framework of tension gov-

ernance are largely formulated in Washington, while Israel acts more as an operational arm, or as an accelerator and decelerator. It can regulate the level of friction, but is not necessarily the ultimate architect of the trajectory. On the other hand, given recent field confrontations, Israel's capacity to open a new front may be limited. Under such conditions, its focus may shift away from direct action and more toward influencing public opinion and US decision-making structures.

In short, Israel's role should be analyzed through the lens of "managing the scope and rhythm of tension"—a role more concerned with containment, calibration and delay than with outright determining or halting the course altogether.

How should the Iranian foreign minister's trip to Moscow and meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin be interpreted in relation to this proposal? Could the visit be aimed at securing strategic backing for the plan or exerting indirect pressure on the United States?

The meeting with Putin can be seen as an effort to align the Tehran-Moscow axis both in the battlefield and in regional diplomacy. From Iran's perspective, the visit carries meaning on at least two levels:

First, securing strategic backing, in a way that sends a clear signal to Washington that this is not merely a unilateral initiative by Tehran, but one that can be understood within a shared geopolitical weight.

Second, increasing indirect pressure on the United States, especially at a time when Washington-Moscow relations remain strained and Russia has the capacity to bring both the energy card and the Strait of Hormuz into broader global calculations.

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مزایده صادراتی بیلت آلیاژی ریخته‌گری مداوم

شرکت فولاد آلیاژی ایران

شماره مرجع مزایده: IASCO-EXPT1405-01 مورخ: ۱۴۰۵/۰۲/۰۷



شرکت فولاد آلیاژی ایران (IASCO) در نظر دارد نسبت به فروش بیلت آلیاژی صادراتی، از طریق مزایده عمومی اقدام نماید. خاطرنشان می‌سازد که عرضه در گرید منتخب و به شرح جزئیات ذیل انجام می‌پذیرد. از علاقمندان به شرکت در مزایده مزبور دعوت به عمل می‌آید که از تاریخ ۱۴۰۵/۰۲/۰۷ لغایت ۱۴۰۵/۰۲/۱۴ برای دریافت اطلاعات مزایده و راهنمایی‌های لازم با واحد صادرات به شماره تماس‌های ۰۹۸۳۵-۳۱۲۲۲۶۷۵ و ۰۹۸۲۱-۸۸۳۲۲۶۲۱ و نشانی ایمیل Salesexp@iasco.net در ارتباط باشند. مهلت ارائه پیشنهاد قیمت مزایده یادشده حداکثر ساعت ۱۵:۰۰ روز دوشنبه مورخ ۱۴۰۵/۰۲/۱۴ می‌باشد.



Iran Alloy Steel Company

Tender Announcement for Export of CC-Alloy Steel Billet

Tender Ref. No.: IASCO-EXPT1405-01

Date: 27/04/2026

Please be informed that Iran Alloy Steel Company (IASCO) intends to launch a general Tender for the export of CC-Alloy Steel Billet under the following terms and conditions:

1. Product Specifications and Commercial terms:

Main Tender Grades & Quality	Acc. to attached specification No.
94031	C07KU9403140411A042

Other Grades may also be considered By Customer Request with related premium price. (Please clearly specify the desired grade, analysis and etc.)

- Size & Dimensions: (130*130) * 12,000 mm.
- Quantity: 25.000 MT (±10%).
- Delivery Time: approximately 30 days after receipt of advance payment.
- Delivery Term: FOB Bandar Abbas.

Note: Other delivery ports including BIK, Parsian and Chabahar may be considered upon buyer's request, subject to amended delivery time and mutual agreement.

2. Tender General Conditions:

- The offer must remain valid for at least seven (7) Iranian working days from the submission deadline.
- Vague, conditional or incomplete offers will not be considered.
- The buyers company must be legally registered outside the Islamic Republic of Iran.
- IASCO reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers at its sole discretion.
- All payments shall be deemed valid only upon the Seller's receipt of official bank confirmation.
- Submission of offer implies full acceptance of all tender terms and conditions.

3. Offer Submission:

For instructions and further information, kindly contact the Export Department using the following details:

Tel: +9835-31222675 & +9821-88322621.

Email: Salesexp@iasco.net (For registration only, not to send any offer).

4. Closing Date:

Deadline for Offer Submission: Monday, May 04, 2026- by 3:00 p.m. (Tehran Local Time)

Putin hails Iranians' heroic fight for independence

Araghchi calls Tehran-Moscow relations 'strategic partnership'

International Desk

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday praised Iranians' courageous and heroic fighting for their independence and sovereignty in the face of an unprovoked aggression by the United States and the Israeli regime.

The Russian president made the remarks during a meeting with Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in Saint Petersburg which was the final leg of his regional tour, which also took him to Pakistan and Oman.

Putin told Iran's top diplomat that Moscow would do everything it could to help secure peace in the Middle East. "For our part, we will do everything that serves your interests, the interests of all the people of the region, so that peace can be achieved as soon as possible," the Russian state media quoted Putin as telling Araghchi.

Putin also hailed "how courageously and heroically the people of Iran are fighting for their independence and sovereignty," the TASS news agency reported.

"Russia, just like Iran, intends to continue our strategic relationship," the

Kremlin chief added.

The Iranian foreign minister, for his part, said relations between Moscow and Tehran are a strategic partnership and will continue to be strengthened. Regarding the ongoing aggression against Iran, Araghchi said that the whole world witnessed Iran's true power in confronting the US, and it became clear that Iran is a stable and powerful system.

He added that the people of Iran, with their courage, were able to resist American aggression and will be capable of overcoming it.

Araghchi also thanked Moscow for its support for Iran, noting that in the recent war, it became clear that Iran has great friends and allies such as Russia. His tour came as regional countries, especially Pakistan, are trying hard to hold the second round of negotiations between Tehran and Washington after the first round in Islamabad failed to produce an agreement.

Peace talks

Speaking on his arrival in Russia, Araghchi blamed Washington for the failure of talks on brokering a deal to end



Russian President Vladimir Putin (R) shakes hands with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi during their meeting at the Boris Yeltsin Presidential Library in Saint Petersburg on April 27, 2026.

• TASS

the fighting, with a ceasefire between the sides still holding.

Araghchi said it was America's approach that "caused the negotiations to be delayed" that had been planned in Islamabad.

"The previous one, despite the progress that had been made, could not achieve its goals," he said, blaming what he called Washington's "excessive demands."

Washington and Tehran are at a costly impasse as Iran has largely closed the Strait of Hormuz, which normally carries one-fifth of global oil shipments, while the US blocks Iran's oil exports. Iran refused to participate in the second round due to the US violation of a Pakistan-brokered ceasefire by imposing a blockade on Iran's ports.

The US and Israel launched a war of aggression against Iran on February 28, assassinating Leader of the Islam-



ic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, several top military commanders and hundreds of Iranian civilians.

Iran's Armed Forces responded with 100 waves of retaliatory strikes un-

der Operation True Promise 4 against American military bases across West Asia and Israeli positions throughout the occupied territories.

On April 8, a ceasefire was brokered by Pakistan between the two sides.

Resistance Front standing firm by Hezbollah: Quds Force cmdr.

Hezbollah chief rejects Lebanon-Israeli talks, vows to confront regime

International Desk

The chief commander of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) categorically dismissed Israeli propaganda aimed at downplaying Hezbollah's power, while underlining regional resistance forces' all-out support for the movement.

"The heroic resistance of Hezbollah in Lebanon has proven that the narratives being communicated by the child-killing Zionist regime claiming the end of resistance and the destruction of Hezbollah are nothing but lies," Brigadier General Esmail Qa'ani said in a message on Monday.

"The [entire] arenas of resistance are standing by the heroic Hezbollah's side stronger and more cohesively than ever," he added.

The comments came amid the regime's continued violations of a 10-day ceasefire announced earlier this month, which has been met with steadfast retaliation on the part of Hezbollah.

Tel Aviv has simultaneously been trying to pressure Lebanon to act towards Hezbollah's disarmament, besides spreading propaganda alleging weakening of the movement's firepower and resolve, only to be faced with the group's unequivocal rebuttal of such claims.



Iran's unbridled support

Meanwhile, Hezbollah's secretary general said on Monday Iran's insistence on ending Israeli aggression against Lebanon during indirect negotiations with Washington was the decisive factor that made a ceasefire with Israel possible.

"A ceasefire would not have been achieved without Iran's position during the Pakistan talks," Sheikh Naim Qassem said in a televised statement on Monday.

The Hezbollah chief noted that the Tel Aviv regime is currently at an impasse, and Hezbollah remains staunchly prepared, strong, and invincible.

Earlier this month, negotiations began between Iranian and US delegations in Islamabad on an end to the US-Israeli aggression against the Islamic Republic.

Ever since, Tehran had kept pushing for a ceasefire in Lebanon as a major condition for any progress in the talks

and the start of the second round of negotiations.

This finally forced US President Donald Trump and the Tel Aviv regime to comply on this issue.

Israel was trying to continue the war on Lebanon despite the ceasefire in Iran, and the United States was also trying to evade this issue by violating its initial commitment.

Iran once again showed that it stands by its principled positions and that resistance pays off.

"The resistance continues to be strong and cannot be defeated, and the enemy was surprised by the steadfastness of the fighters," the Hezbollah leader said.

Talks with Israel

Sheikh Qassem went on to roundly dismiss the notion of direct negotiations with Israel, emphasizing such talks would neither be in the interest of Lebanese authorities nor the Arab nation at large.

The Hezbollah leader also sharply criticized the Beirut government for making concessions to the occupying Tel Aviv regime, urging officials to abandon the initiative seeking direct talks and instead opt for indirect negotiations.

Sheikh Qassem also underscored that Hezbollah's weapons are tied to deterring Israeli aggression and stressed that the Lebanese resistance movement would not disarm.

Qalibaf: US has burned its oil options as Iran holds major levers in reserve

International Desk

Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf issued a direct response to fresh provocations from the US administration, exposing Washington's exhausted playbook in the oil market while Tehran holds decisive strategic cards.

Qalibaf on Sunday took to social media to dismantle American bravado over energy leverage, reminding Washington that the global oil equation remains firmly balanced, with Iran still possessing major unplayed cards, Press TV reported.

He posted on X, "They brag about the cards. The message was interpreted by analysts as a calm, factual warning to US policymakers: do not mistake temporary market maneuvers for real strength. While the Islamic Republic has only partially activated its options -- including the Strait of Hormuz, the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, and key pipeline routes -- the United States has already burned through its easiest and most immediate measures, notably Strategic Petroleum Reserve releases and limited demand-side pressure.

Iranian officials have repeatedly stressed that the Islamic Republic maintains full sovereign control over critical energy chokepoints that supply a massive share of



Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf
• IRNA

the world's oil. These assets remain largely unplayed, giving Tehran significant flexibility to respond to any escalation.

In contrast, Washington's toolkit is visibly depleted. The US has already drawn heavily on emergency reserves and witnessed partial demand erosion, leaving it with few genuine options as the American summer driving season -- a period of peak gasoline consumption -- approaches.

Analysts note that further US provocations risk driving pump prices toward six dollars a gallon or higher, directly threatening the summer vacation plans of ordinary American families.

Speaker Qalibaf's pointed reference to "summer vacation" underscores the domestic political cost the US administration would face if its aggressive posture backfires on voters.

Hormuz may take ...

Still, the success of such maneuvering ultimately depends on how far Moscow is prepared to bear the political cost of openly backing such a plan.

What matters here is that Iran appears to have correctly recognized that the core conflict is not simply a war over a maritime passage, but a contest over control of one of the principal nodes in the vital flows of global order. Such a field naturally requires a degree of prior strategic coordination before any new order becomes institutionalized at the international level.

From that angle, making intelligent use of the capacities of powers that share interests with Iran in certain domains is not a luxury option, but a necessity for elevating Tehran's position in the architecture of a future order.

If the United States does not agree to this proposal, what alternative short-term scenarios could Iran pursue?

First, intensifying tactical control over the Strait of Hormuz in a way that raises the cost of ignoring its proposal, while avoiding direct military confrontation.

Second, strengthening parallel diplomatic tracks with Russia, China and Arab states to demonstrate that Iran's complete isolation is not feasible.

Third, managing time by preserving the status quo in the nuclear file to prevent a new consensus from forming against it until political conditions in the United States or the region shift.

It could be said that although this phase carries risks of escalation, it still forms part of a "diplomatic timing game," through which Iran seeks to leverage time itself while increasing its bargaining power.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Iranian crude tops \$104 as Strait tensions stoke supply fears

Economy Desk

Prices of Iranian crude rose about 1.5% on Sunday to above \$104 per barrel in global markets, according to data reported by Tasnim based on figures published by Oilprice.com for the last trading day of the week.

Iranian Light crude for delivery to northwest Europe was priced at \$103.07 per barrel, while Iranian Heavy and Forozan grades traded at \$101.17 and \$101.42, respectively, in the same region.

In the Mediterranean market, Iranian Light was priced at \$102.42 per barrel and Iranian Heavy at \$100.27, while Forozan crude stood at \$100.52.

The highest prices were recorded at Egypt's Sidi Kerir port, where Iranian Light crude reached \$104.32 per barrel. Iranian Heavy and Forozan grades were priced at \$102.17 and \$102.42,

respectively.

Also, according to Reuters, oil keeps pushing higher, with Brent crude touching a three-week high of \$108 per barrel. Traffic through the Strait of Hormuz is still at a crawl, and no new peace talks between Iran and the United States have been scheduled so far, though Pakistani efforts to broker discussions continue.

Reuters reported on Monday that Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) economies are sliding into their worst economic crisis since the pandemic, with several expected to contract this year due to spillovers from the US-Israel war on Iran.

The war's knock-on effects have rippled through energy markets — the lifeline of Persian Gulf economies — driving oil prices sharply higher and triggering a supply shock, drawing comparisons to the 1970s.

The United States, seeking to pressure Iran into a peace agreement after a 40-day conflict, imposed a blockade on vessels entering or leaving Iranian coastal waters on April 13, later expanding it to include Iranian vessels on the high seas. However, dozens of tankers linked to Iran have managed to bypass the blockade, according to data from cargo tracking firms.

Also, under new conditions set by Tehran, only commercial vessels with prior authorization from Iran are allowed to transit the Strait of Hormuz, while ships linked to the United States, Israel and other "hostile states" are barred.

Iran says the measures reflect its key role in global energy markets, noting that around 20% of the world's oil and 35% of its gas pass through the waterway, which it is using as leverage in response to Washington's failure to uphold the ceasefire.



SHANA

Pakistan opens six transit routes for third-country goods to Iran



Shipping containers are seen at the Karachi Port in Karachi, Pakistan.
● REUTERS

ing ports including Karachi, Port Qasim and Gwadar with key border crossings in southwestern Balochistan Province.

The notification was issued during a visit to Islamabad by Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who met Pakistani officials for talks amid tensions between the United States and Iran.

The order took immediate effect. According to AP, analysts said Monday the new policy allows cargo bound for Iran to move across Pakistan swiftly without facing delays due to bureaucratic hurdles. They said it could also help Pakistan strengthen its role as a regional transit route and improve connectivity with Iran and beyond the region in future.

Economy Desk

Pakistan has cleared the way for Iran to import goods from third countries through its territory by opening new transit routes.

The country introduced a new framework allowing transit of goods to Iran through its territory, opening designated trade corridors under the Transit of Goods

through Territory of Pakistan Order 2026.

The framework, notified by its Ministry of Commerce, permits movement of goods destined for Iran through Pakistan under regulated transit arrangements aimed at facilitating bilateral and regional trade. According to a government notification issued Saturday, six routes have been designated link-

Tehran pushes digital cooperation at SCO, warns of cyber threats

Economy Desk

Iran's Deputy Minister of Communications Ehsan Chitsaz presented a set of strategic initiatives to expand digital cooperation within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), while warning that modern conflicts are increasingly driven by cyber and data-based threats. Speaking at a meeting of SCO information technology ministers in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, Chitsaz outlined a set of strategic initiatives to expand regional digital cooperation, including the creation of a joint framework to protect critical digital infrastructure and establish rapid response mechanisms, the development of regional data and computing infrastructure, and coordinated regulation of international platforms aimed at safeguarding data sovereignty and ensuring algorithmic transparency. He also proposed launching a shared regional pay-

ment system based on central bank digital currencies and blockchain technology, establishing a joint data and artificial intelligence ecosystem to develop indigenous models, and advancing satellite internet alongside national governance frameworks.

The meeting was held as part of Kyrgyzstan's rotating presidency of the SCO and served as a key multilateral forum on technology, digital economy and cybersecurity, with extensive discussions among member states. The Iranian deputy telecom minister for digital economy said the nature of conflicts has fundamentally changed. "Wars are no longer confined to the physical domain and now begin in cyberspace, extending to critical information technology infrastructure," he said. He described combined cyber-physical attacks targeting data centers, communication networks and satellite systems as



evidence of a new phase of warfare driven by data and algorithms.

"The concept of security in the era of artificial intelligence and the digital economy must be redefined," he said, calling for joint frameworks to regulate platforms, protect critical infrastructure and strengthen regional cooperation in digital governance.

Chitsaz said attacks on information technology infrastructure pose a direct threat to economic stability and public service delivery, describing them as violations of countries' digital sovereignty. He added that such

Iran's Deputy Minister of Communications Ehsan Chitsaz attends a meeting of SCO information technology ministers in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on April 27, 2026.
● IRNA

actions not only damage the digital economy but also undermine trust in international technology cooperation.

He also pointed to the expansion of satellite internet, saying that while it offers connectivity opportunities, the absence of national governance frameworks could create challenges for data security and management.

Ministry allocates \$4.4b to boost output with focus on small firms

Economy Desk

Iran's Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Mohammad Atabak said on Monday that capital and credit facilities must be steered toward production units, stressing that manufacturers need liquidity to revive and sustain output.

"Priority of the ministry is supporting small and medium-sized units; these units are the driving engine of employment in the country," Atabak said at a meeting with members of Parliament's Economic Committee, according to the ministry's information portal.

He pointed to a \$4.4 billion (700 trillion tomans) support package for industries, saying sectors had been prioritized based on national necessities and that credit allocation would follow the same framework.

"These facilities must be spent on keeping production wheels turning; therefore, a change in approach in managing liquidity and distributing credits should be considered so that the industrial sector can secure raw materials for production," he said.

Atabak added that without large-scale liquidity injections and fundamental solutions to structural problems, production units would face difficulties, calling for cooperation from Parliament and relevant institutions including the Central Bank of Iran.

He also referred to the revival of maritime transport by the Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO), stressing that investment in repairing and reconstructing ocean-going vessels and marine craft is vital.



Mohammad Atabak
● mimt.gov.ir

He said these infrastructures should be restored through special credit allocations to the Marine Industries Development Fund, with IDRO taking the lead.

The minister reiterated that Mobarakeh Steel Company has been tasked with supplying steel sheets to downstream and affiliated companies through imports at prices approved by the Organization for Supporting Consumers and Producers.

"Issuing this permit to Mobarakeh Steel is support for production and preserving employment in affiliated industries. Of course, alongside imports, we are also pursuing the approach of increasing steel production capacity in the country," he said.

Rasoul Khalifeh Soltani, a member of Iran's steel association, said on Sunday the ministry has placed smart and targeted imports of steel slabs and hot rolled sheets on its urgent agenda.

Western sanctions against Iran, followed by recent damage caused by military attacks on production infrastructure, have further intensified challenges to the sector. Mobarakeh Steel Company (MSC) in the central

province of Isfahan and Khuzestan Steel Company in southwestern Khuzestan Province were hit multiple times during the American-Israeli war that began on February 28. MSC is working to restore stable production after parts of its lines were damaged during the hostilities.

Iran's steel industry, with annual production of about 31.9 million tons and ranking tenth globally, is one of the main pillars of the country's industrial economy. However, it has faced structural challenges in recent years, including imbalances in the value chain, shortages of raw materials, outdated technology, energy and infrastructure constraints, weak exploration, inefficient pricing mechanisms and government intervention.

Separately on Monday, Iran's Trade Promotion Organization notified executive customs offices of a ban on exports of a wide range of steel products, including slabs, hot-rolled sheets, cold-rolled sheets, tin-plated sheets, other coated sheets, galvanized sheets, colored sheets, hot strips, cold strips, tin-plated strips, galvanized strips, other coated strips and colored strips.

India between aspiration and reality

Strategic ambiguity instead of leadership in US-Israeli war against Iran



By Asghar Ghahremanpour
Editor-in-chief

INTERVIEW

Annunthra Rangan, senior research officer at the Chennai Centre for China Studies in New Delhi, in this exclusive interview with Asghar Ghahremanpour, editor-in-chief of Iran Daily, provides a detailed analysis of India's performance during the US-Israeli war against Iran. The analysis is significant because it reveals the contradiction between India's aspirations to play a leadership role in the "Global South" and the on-the-ground realities of its foreign policy.

According to Rangan, instead of adopting a proactive and leadership-oriented approach, India chose a strategy of "strategic ambiguity" during this crisis and paid a heavy price for its international reputation. The clear faults with this diplomacy includes: condemning Iran's retaliatory strikes while remaining conspicuously silent on the initial US-Israeli attacks on Iran; ignoring Tehran's explicit request for coordination within the BRICS framework despite India holding the group's presidency; the Indian foreign minister's dismissive and insulting reaction to Pakistan's mediating role (labeling it a "broker nation"); and failing to protest the sinking of the Iranian frigate IRIS Dena by the US Navy — especially since that same frigate had participated in joint naval exercises with India.

From an energy security perspective, the war laid bare India's structural vulnerabilities with devastating speed. Before the war, the Strait of Hormuz supplied 41% of India's crude oil, 55% of its LNG, and 88% of its LPG imports. Following Iran's closure of the strait, India's LPG imports fell by over 45%, the average price of India's crude basket surged from \$69 to \$113 per barrel, and key industries — such as ceramics in Gujarat and restaurants in Mumbai — faced widespread shutdowns. In response, India was forced to secure a 30-day waiver from the United States to purchase Iranian oil — an action that clearly demonstrates New Delhi's energy decisions remain subject to US approval.

At the geopolitical level, Rangan highlights India's gradual marginalization from the region's core dynamics. With the institutionalization of the "Islamabad process" — mediated by Pakistan and backed by China's political and strategic weight — India was effectively excluded as a meaningful player. While China and Pakistan jointly launched a five-point peace initiative, India played no role in this effort and even ignored Iran's request for BRICS-coordinated action. India's investment in the strategic Chabahar Port was halted, the vital North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) was paralyzed, and contrary to India's long-standing desire to reduce dependence on Pakistan, its alternative route failed precisely when it was needed most.

At the broader level of the international system, this analysis demonstrates that India's "multi-alignment" strategy — under which New Delhi sought



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi
REUTERS



Annunthra Rangan

to maintain strategic ties simultaneously with the US, Russia, Israel, and Iran — has in practice failed. Not only was India unable to use this crisis as an opportunity for strategic independence, but it has also become more dependent than ever on the US-led sanctions architecture. According to Rangan, India has moved away from its long tradition of independent foreign policy (rooted in the Non-Aligned Movement) toward a pro-imperialist alignment with the US-Israel axis — an alignment whose price has been the weakening of India's standing among emerging powers of the Global South and the relinquishing of strategic initiative to rivals such as China and Pakistan.

IRAN DAILY: During the war launched by the US and Israel against Iran, what was India's actual policy? Did India manage to maintain neutrality, or did it lean toward one side in practice? How do you evaluate the performance of Indian diplomacy in that period?

RANGAN: India practiced strategic ambiguity when the moment demanded strategic leadership and paid a reputational price for it. Indian PM Modi had visited Tel Aviv just 36 hours before the strikes began, signing defense agreements and elevating ties to a "Special Strategic Partnership". India condemned Iranian counter-strikes on Arab states but stayed conspicuously silent on the US-Israeli attacks. When the US Navy sank the Iranian frigate IRIS Dena, a ship that had just

participated in India's own naval exercises, New Delhi offered no protest, citing it as Sri Lanka's responsibility. India also ignored Tehran's request to coordinate a BRICS response, despite being the group's current chair, making it the only founding BRICS member not to condemn the attacks. The diplomatic cost was severe. Pakistan, alongside Turkey and Egypt, stepped in to mediate the cease-fire, a stinging humiliation for a country that aspires to Global South leadership. Rather than engaging constructively, External Affairs Minister Jaishankar dismissed Pakistan's role by calling it a "dalaal" (broker) nation. India's constraints were real. 85% oil import dependence, nine million diaspora workers in the Persian Gulf, and the Strait of Hormuz crisis driving domestic LPG shortages. But structural pressures explain the

caution, not the silence. Over all, India wanted to implement the multi-alignment strategy, which was a failure in the end.

What specific impact did this war have on India's energy security? Did India face fuel shortages, severe inflation, or supply chain disruptions? And did New Delhi use this crisis to diversify its energy sources (e.g., increasing imports from Russia, Venezuela, or tapping strategic reserves)?

The war exposed India's deep structural vulnerability with devastating speed. The Strait of Hormuz accounted for approximately 41% of India's crude oil imports, 55% of its LNG imports and 88% of its LPG imports during FY2026. When Iran closed the strait in early March, the consequences were immediate. India's LPG imports fell over

45% month-on-month to around 1.12 million tonnes in March 2026, down from 2.04 million tonnes in February. Long queues and delayed deliveries became common — with many households switching to kerosene, coal, and wood as stopgap measures. In Gujarat, the ceramics industry shut down; in Mumbai, many restaurants closed partially or fully.

The average price of India's crude basket surged from \$69 per barrel in February to \$113 per barrel in March. HSBC estimated a potential 25% shortfall in natural gas supply, which could reduce GDP growth by around 25 basis points if the crunch lasted a quarter.

New Delhi moved on several fronts simultaneously. Indian refiners resumed Iranian crude purchases for the first time since 2019, after Washington granted



Indian PM Modi had visited Tel Aviv just 36 hours before the strikes began, signing defense agreements and elevating ties to a "Special Strategic Partnership". India condemned Iranian counter-strikes on Arab states but stayed conspicuously silent on the US-Israeli attacks. Structural pressures explain the caution, not the silence. Over all, India wanted to implement the multi-alignment strategy, which was a failure in the end.



Sri Lanka Navy personnel assist Iranian sailors during a rescue operation after responding to a distress call from their vessel, the Iranian ship, IRIS Dena, in the Indian Ocean, on March 4, 2026. The ship was hit by a torpedo inside India's maritime neighbourhood.
SRI LANKA NAVY

a 30-day waiver. Russian crude gained further import share, and Indian refiners also increased purchases from West Africa and Latin America. The Indian Navy launched Operation Urja Suraksha, deploying over five warships to escort Indian-flagged cargo ships in the region. India also installed piped gas connections to 580,000 new households in March alone to reduce cylinder dependence.

Now that a cease-fire is in place and Iran and the US are at the negotiating table, what role can India play in these talks? Can India act as a mediator or facilitator, or does it remain under Western pressure? The window for India to act as a mediator in the Iran-US talks has already closed, and India itself shut it. Mediation requires trust from both sides. India condemned strikes on American bases without mentioning Iran, while refusing to condemn the assassination of Ayatollah Khamenei. Tehran has no reason to view India as a neutral broker. A mediator that stays silent while one side kills your Supreme Leader is not a mediator — it's a bystander wearing neutrality as a costume.

The Islamabad Talks on April 11-12 were moderated by Pakistan, with the US team led by VP JD Vance, Witkoff, and Kushner, and Iran's team led by Parliamentary Speaker Qalibaf and Foreign Minister Araghchi. The "Islamabad process" is now institutionalized. Just recently, Iran's Foreign Minister Araghchi was in Pakistan meeting Pakistani officials as part of their ongoing mediation. India resumed Iranian crude imports only after Washington issued a 30-day waiver, meaning India's energy decisions are already subject to US approval. A country that needs American permission to buy oil cannot simultaneously position itself as an independent mediator between America and Iran. Mediation requires proactive diplomacy. India's entire posture has been reactive — waiting, watching, and hedging. The emergence of Pakistan as the primary back-channel interlocutor is a stinging strategic setback for New Delhi. However, India will work its way to balance the situation in the coming days.

During the war, did India's cooperation with China on Iran-related issues (e.g., in the UN Security Council or through diplomatic channels) increase, or did geopo-

litical rivalries prevent coordination? And in the current negotiation context, do India and China hold aligned positions?

China took a clear, activist position from day one. Beijing publicly condemned the US-Israeli strikes, provided limited material assistance to Iran, and let Iran leverage BeiDou navigation systems to direct attacks across the region. At the UNSC, China and Russia vetoed the Bahrain-sponsored Hormuz resolution, calling it biased against Iran. Diplomatically, China played a key role in convincing Iran to accept Pakistan's two-week cease-fire proposal, with Pakistan providing the practical channel and China providing political weight and strategic backing. China and Pakistan jointly launched a five-point peace initiative calling for an immediate cease-fire, halt to infrastructure attacks, and reopening of the Strait of Hormuz. India sat on the opposite end of the spectrum. While China partnered with Pakistan to drive the cease-fire process, India was conspicuously absent. There was no India-China joint statement, no coordinated BRICS initiative, and no shared diplomatic track. India ignored Tehran's request to coordinate through BRICS despite being the group's chair, while China was simultaneously co-authoring cease-fire proposals with Pakistan.

Today, the cease-fire remains fragile, with the Islamabad Talks having ended without a deal on the Strait of Hormuz and Iran's nuclear program. China remains actively engaged in back-channel diplomacy. India remains a bystander. Their positions are not aligned. China seeks to preserve Iranian leverage; India focuses more regarding the Strait reopened to restore its energy supply, regardless of the broader political outcome.

Given possible damage to the Chabahar Port's infrastructure during the war, what plans does India have for its reconstruction or replacement? Has New Delhi used this opportunity to reduce dependence on Pakistan and expand the North-South Corridor? The Indian Budget for 2026-27, released just weeks before the strikes, had already slashed the allocation for Chabahar to zero. With the US sanctions waiver on Chabahar expired on April 26, 2026, India has been forced to consider temporarily divesting its stake in India Ports Global Chabahar Free Zone to an Irani-

an entity, with a condition that the stake be returned once sanctions are lifted. India has already pumped nearly \$120 million into the port. New Delhi insists it does not plan to completely exit as there are plans to expand connectivity through a rail link. The critical Chabahar-Zahedan railway line, slated for 2026 completion, now faces indefinite delays as Iran shifts focus from civil engineering to wartime mobilization. Transit insurance and security costs along the corridor have skyrocketed. Rather than seizing the crisis to reduce Pakistan dependence, India finds its Pakistan bypass route paralyzed precisely when it needs it most. All Indian investments in Chabahar are now on hold while China, which faces no such sanctions pressure, remains relentless in pursuing regional connectivity. The INSTC route is 30% cheaper and 40% shorter than the traditional Suez Canal route, a transformative corridor India has spent decades trying to build. The war has not prompted India to double down; it has forced an embarrassing tactical retreat, with New Delhi surrendering leverage it spent years accumulating, under pressure from the very partner, Washington whose strategic alignment it has been cultivating.

How has the conduct of the US and Israel in this war affected the perception of Western reliability among Indian political elites? Does India remain committed to its strategic partnerships with the US and Israel, or is it moving toward a more independent foreign policy (reminiscent of the Non-Aligned Movement era)? India's positions on Israel, Iran, Russia, and trade have converged with Washington even where they contradicted Indian interests, yet Washington offered nothing in return during India's energy crisis. The IRIS Dena episode crystallized this: former Indian Navy chief admiral Arun Prakash stated publicly that an American nuclear submarine had been operating in waters close to India for days without New Delhi being informed, and called on the government to formally convey its displeasure to Washington. India is moving away from its tradition of independent foreign policy toward a pro-imperialist alignment, increasingly tethered to the strategic priorities of the United States and Israel. The UAE-India-Israel axis may grow tighter after the war and that



Employees sit idle next to a ceramic tile production line at a factory in Morbi, Gujarat, India, on March 5, 2026. **AMIT DAVE/REUTERS**



India is not pivoting back to NAM-era non-alignment. But the war has measurably eroded elite confidence in the US as a dependable crisis partner, with analysts noting that the assumption of the US as a dependable partner in moments of crisis has been repeatedly tested, making India likely to diversify partnerships that outlast the current conflict. The result is less a strategic rupture than a quiet recalibration, deepening hedging while publicly maintaining all partnerships.

Pakistan's temporary mediation role does not represent a structural shift.

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In a post-sanctions scenario (should the negotiations succeed), what priorities will India have toward Iran? Will New Delhi quickly try to restore economic and transit ties with Tehran to pre-war levels, or will it define a new framework of cooperation?

The port remains India's anchor in Iran. With the US sanctions waiver on Chabahar expired on April 26, 2026, India is considering temporarily transferring its stake to an Iranian entity but with a guarantee that the stake

reverts to India once sanctions are lifted. This maneuver reveals New Delhi's core strategy: preserve the foothold at all costs, even symbolically. Post-sanctions, India will move quickly to restore operational control and push the long-delayed Chabahar-Zahedan rail link, which would unlock the full INSTC to Central Asia and Russia. India will seek to revive Iranian crude imports and reopen talks on the Farzad-B gas field, where ONGC Videsh holds discovery rights. However, any serious Indian engagement with Iran now operates inside a US-led sanctions architecture that can reprice commercial behavior almost overnight, meaning Indian banks, insurers, and refiners will move cautiously even after formal sanctions relief.

India's likely policy is persistence under constraint, preserving Chabahar, limiting exposure, avoiding major new bets, and holding on to Iran as a diminished but still usable option. This is a narrower, more pragmatic Iran policy than the transformative gateway New Delhi once envisioned — honest about limits, but strategically indispensable.



The map shows both the INSTC route and the longer, traditional Suez Canal route. **russiaspivottoasia.com**



People wait in line with empty gas cylinders to collect LPG-filled gas cylinders amid a shortage in Nagaon District, Assam, India, on March 19, 2026. **AFP**



Pakistani and Chinese teams, headed by their respective foreign ministers, work on a five-point initiative for restoring peace and stability in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East amid the US-Israeli war on Iran, in Beijing, China, on March 31, 2026. **X**

Asian Beach Games:

Kabaddi kudos as Iran wins men's gold

Sports Desk

The Iranian beach kabaddi team added a second gold to the country's medal count at the Asian Beach Games in Sanya, China, thanks to an impressive 44-31 victory over the sport's powerhouse, India, in the men's final on Monday.

The victory capped off a run of four successive wins for the Iranian team, which had beaten Pakistan (38-28), Bangladesh (47-31), and Syria (53-31) in the group stage.

Hassan Ajami had opened Iran's account in the multi-sport event by grabbing the top prize in the men's shot put on Sunday.

Elsewhere in the Games, Iran continued its perfect run in men's beach handball on Day 7, defeating the host in successive periods.

Mahdi Qashqaei's men won the first period 21-14 before coming out victorious in the second by a 20-10 scoreline at the Tianyaya Haijiao venue to complete a clean sweep of five victories and progress to the semifinals as Group A winners.

Standing between Iran and a fi-



Iranian players celebrate after winning the men's beach kabaddi gold at the Asian Beach Games in Sanya, China, on April 27, 2026. ● ANA

nal spot today will be Thailand, which defeated Bangladesh 2-0 (19-16, 18-6) earlier in the day to finish runner-up to Qatar in Group B on set difference.

Qatar and Bahrain will square off in the other semifinal today, with the two winners going head-to-head for the gold medal on Thursday.

In beach volleyball, the Iranian pair of Abolhassan Khakizadeh and Amirali Qalenovi headed into the men's last four with a straight-set victory (21-10, 21-14)

over Lebanon's Hadi El Chabib and Jad Abi Karam.

The country, however, was denied an all-Iranian semifinal today after the duo of Alireza Aqajani and Abbas Pourasgari surrendered a one-set lead to lose 2-1 (14-21, 21-17, 15-9) to Oman's Mazin Al Hashimi and Hood Rashid Al Jalaboubi – a massive setback for the Iranian Team A, which had not conceded a single set in five outings prior to the last-eight clash.

"My words fail me, and for that, I feel ashamed before the Iranian people and coaching staff," a stunned Aqajani said after the defeat.

"We really had done a good analysis, and as you saw, we did well to win the first set.

"Physically, especially with my knee and shoulder, I was under a lot of pressure. In the third set, I just couldn't play my game.

"We had a decent run in the tournament, but there was perhaps a bit of complacency on our part today, and we just couldn't manage the game properly – not to mention we weren't able to play in any warm-up tournament before the Games due to

the wartime circumstances," added the Iranian.

Iran's 3x3 basketball team, meanwhile, recovered from Sunday's defeat against China to beat the Philippines 21-14 in men's Group A.

Mohammad-Mahdi Rahimi topped the scoring chart for the country with eight points as Iran finished runner-up to the Philippines with two wins in three matches, joining China in today's play-ins for a place in the quarterfinals.

In men's water polo, Iran pulled off a sensational fightback to beat Asian heavyweight Kazakhstan 3-2.

The Iranian team conceded 2-1 and 5-4 defeats in the first two quarters but bounced back to win the next two 3-2 and 2-1, respectively, and force the contest into shootouts, where Iran prevailed 3-2 to remain on top of the table in the round-robin competition with three wins, following triumphs over Hong Kong (3-1) and South Korea (3-1). Next for Iran is a game against Thailand today, followed by a potential gold decider against China on Wednesday.

Yousefi to make international return at Asian Weightlifting Ch'ships

Sports Desk

Iranian weightlifter Alireza Yousefi is set to make his first international appearance in 18 months at the upcoming Asian Championships – starting May 12 – as Iran named a superheavyweight duo for the competition in Gandhinagar, India.

Yousefi will be joined by compatriot Alireza Nassiri in the men's +110kg weight class.

The Asian Championships – postponed by 40 days due to the military conflict in the Middle East – will be part of a busy 2026 calendar for Iranian weightlifting, which also features the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games in September and October's World Championships in Ningbo, China.

"We never intended to send the team to the Asian Championships in the first place, and the wartime conditions only added to that decision. Our focus this year is on a powerful performance at the World Championships and the Asian Games. However, following per-

sistent requests from the world and Asian federations, we eventually decided to have a limited presence at the event," Iran head coach Behdad Salimi said on Monday.

A two-time world junior champion, Yousefi made his senior international debut at the 2024 World Championships in Manama in impressive fashion. He stunned fellow Iranian Alireza Davoudi and Armenian Olympic silver medalist Varazdat Lalayan to claim clean and jerk gold with a continental record lift of 262kg. He went on to secure bronze in the total with 456kg.

The 22-year-old Iranian then had to spend a lengthy spell on the sidelines due to surgery on his injured knee but marked his return to action in style in February, delivering a title-winning performance at the Iranian Weightlifting Pro League.

Yousefi will now look to carry his domestic momentum into the Asian Championships and bolster his case for a place on the Iranian team at the two major tournaments later in the year.

Nassiri, meanwhile, will step onto the platform at the Asian showpiece fresh off a solid display at last year's World Championships in Førde, Norway, where he bagged clean and jerk and total silvers in the 110kg class, setting new world junior records in the process with 231kg and 415kg.

"Yousefi has been away from international tournaments for nearly two years. That's why we will send him to the Asian Championships – to get him back into competitive shape," Salimi said.

"As for Nassiri, he performed poorly in the snatch in his last two competitions, so we decided to send him to the event to help him improve that area of his performance," added the former Olympic champion.

With the Asian Games and the global showpiece fast approaching, Iranian fans will likely be treated to a thrilling four-horse race in the superheavyweight category for a national team spot, which will also feature Davoudi and 2025 Asian champion Ayat Sharifi.



● IWFFIR

"Davoudi has been with the team camp from the very beginning. He's here with us and following the training regimen. After last year's World Championships, he suffered an injury, which is why we

need to take things slowly with him. Fortunately, he's in good condition, but he still needs time to get back to peak fitness," Salimi said of the former Olympic silver medalist.

Qolizadeh dazzles in Polish league to give Iran World Cup boost

Sports Desk

As Iran prepares for the upcoming FIFA World Cup – starting June 11 in North America – Ali Qolizadeh, one of Team Melli's most dynamic attacking players, is heading into the showpiece with an eye-catching statistical record in the Polish top flight.

The wizard winger, who plays for Lech Poznań, has once again turned heads in the Polish Ekstraklasa. The creative playmaker has been one of his team's most influential figures this season, much like the previous campaign, with his consistent displays drawing praise from the club's official media outlets.

The 30-year-old scored with a trademark left-footed curling effort from the edge of the box three minutes into the game at the Poznań Stadium to lead his team to a 4-0 victory over Legia Warszawa on Sunday, helping the club sit atop the

league table with 52 points – three clear of Górnik Zabrze in second – with four games remaining.

Qolizadeh has made 17 appearances for Lech Poznań this season, scoring four goals and providing four assists – numbers that underscore his direct contribution to the team's results. However, the most remarkable aspect of his performance goes beyond goals and assists.

According to published statistics, the Iranian winger has registered 36 key passes in the 2026 calendar year. That impressive figure confirms his status as one of the club's primary attacking architects. Key passes – which create genuine goal-scoring opportunities – are a critical metric in evaluating offensive output, and such a tally cements Qolizadeh's role as his team's creative engine.

Qolizadeh's sparkling form matters not only for his Polish club but also bodes well for the Iranian national

team and head coach Amir Qalenoei, who is eager to lead Team Melli to a maiden knockout spot in seven attempts at 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.

With eight third-placed teams across the 12 groups advancing to the round of 32, Iran will fancy its chances of making World Cup history when taking on Egypt in the final group game at Lumen Field in Seattle, Washington, on June 26.



Iranian winger Ali Qolizadeh (c) celebrates his goal with Lech Poznań teammates during a 4-0 win against Legia Warszawa in the Polish Ekstraklasa in Poznań, Poland, on April 26, 2026. ● lechpoznan.pl

Reclaiming identity through rebuilding historical buildings

Iranica Desk

In recent days and weeks, following the destruction of several historic buildings during US and Israeli attacks on Iran, public debate has intensified over how to deal with damaged landmarks — including more recent structures that, while contemporary, were widely regarded as architecturally significant.

Some argue that whatever has been destroyed should remain as a symbol of foreign aggression and national resistance, transformed into museums or memorial sites. Others strongly disagree.

Among the latter is Behrouz Marbaghi, an architect, restoration expert and university professor who has worked extensively on the revival of Tehran's historic Oudlajan district. He says the ruins should be rebuilt — and made more beautiful than before — free from political symbolism.

Speaking to ISNA after publishing a new design proposal for the destroyed school in Minab, Marbaghi said the restoration of damaged historic buildings should follow three principles.

First, if part of an ancient or historic structure has been lost, any restoration should clearly show its own historical period rather than pretending to be original.

Second, restoration should



fararu.com

not be fake. He said architects should not attempt to recreate buildings so perfectly that the new work becomes indistinguishable from the old.

Third, if a destroyed heritage building is replaced with a grander and more beautiful one, it should be unmistakably both Iranian and contemporary. "Contemporary is not the same as modern," he said, adding that he does not define modernity simply through glass and concrete. "A modern building can also be made of bamboo or adobe."

Marbaghi argued that a society becomes modern when the individuality of its citizens is recognized. At the same time, he said, modern people may voluntarily join institutions and collective structures without sacrificing

personal identity.

Asked how Tehran's historic and modern buildings damaged in the war should be treated, Marbaghi said cultural heritage falls into two categories: priceless landmarks and ordinary structures.

"When a landmark such as Golestan Palace is damaged, it is like damaging a national identity card," he said. "These sites must be restored with the highest degree of precision, using modern reinforcement techniques, and returned to their former state."

But for non-historic buildings — such as one near Sharif University of Technology that was heavily damaged — he said he would choose to build something even better.

Marbaghi also lamented the loss



avash.ir

of several modern-era buildings. He said he was particularly saddened by the destruction of a former police building at the southern entrance to Kargar Street, once used by the gendarmerie and long considered architecturally distinguished.

He also cited damage to the former Senate Palace, describing it as one of the masterpieces of modern Iranian architecture.

Another building he highlighted was the glass headquarters of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, destroyed during the 12-day war. Designed by Abdolaziz Farmanfarman as his original office, Marbaghi described it as "the most complete and modern architecture in Iran."

"It reflected the transparency of the modern world while pre-

serving the hierarchy of traditional Iranian architecture," he said. "These buildings should be rebuilt, with even greater refinement, because they are part of this country's identity."

He questioned the idea of preserving wartime destruction as a permanent symbol. "Why should we memorialize war?" he asked. "Why should these ruins remain like scars on our face? We will rebuild — and build even better."

Marbaghi said he personally does not believe in preserving ruins merely to remember war. "Some respected colleagues believe these sites should teach lessons," he said. "But destruction alone teaches little. I tell my students: seek beauty. If you do not recognize beauty, you cannot fight ugliness."

Asked which damaged building affected him most deeply, Marbaghi pointed to the former Senate Palace (now the old parliament building), saying he was heartbroken and moved to tears by its destruction.

Built in 1956 and inspired in part by Si-o-Se-Pol, the structure was designed by Heydar Ghiai and Mohsen Foroughi. Marbaghi said its asymmetrical execution and stylistic innovation made it one of Iran's earliest postmodern works — even before postmodernism was formally declared as a movement internationally.

He also expressed concern over damage to Azadi Stadium, saying its elegant structural spans, built more than 50 years ago, might be difficult to reproduce even with today's technology.

"Some buildings," he said, "cannot truly be replaced, even if rebuilt more beautifully."

Marbaghi concluded by pointing to postwar reconstruction in Minsk after World War II. Today, he said, visitors may not realize the city had once been devastated because it was rebuilt on its original urban framework but adapted to modern scales and needs.

He urged Iranian municipal authorities not to make unilateral decisions about rebuilding damaged cities, not to politicize reconstruction, and to consult specialists in urban planning and architecture.

Reading Room

Foundation of Iranian identity



By Mahshid Razavi Rezvani

Director of Mahshide Kherad Institute

In a time when Iran's confrontation with the US and Israel and the country's resilience have become central topics in global media coverage, drawing widespread international attention, it is more important than ever to understand Iran and its people more deeply.

The study of Iranian society and civilization over centuries has long fascinated scholars and travelers alike, appealing to a wide range of interests. Such a comprehensive understanding requires a proper grasp of Iran's geography, its history shaped by that geography, and its climatic and environmental conditions — all of which have influenced the formation of Iranian identity.

Anthropologist William Beeman considers the understanding of Iran to be closely tied to the Persian language. In his book *Language, Status, and Power in Iran*, he emphasizes the role and multiple functions of Persian in shaping interpersonal social relations in Iran and reflecting political interactions. From his perspective, Persian is a language with significant complexity and nuance, possessing a strong aesthetic dimension. This aesthetic qual-



ity is reflected in the finest Iranian carpets, works of art, music, and poetry. According to Beeman, this linguistic capacity reflects two prominent characteristics of Iranians: on one hand, an enduring spirit of resistance and defense, and on the other, historical and civilizational continuity and resilience.

These two characteristics — still visible today in various

parts of Iran, whether on battlefields or in urban spaces through poetry and rhetorical expressions — combine elements of Iranian and Islamic civilization. In this synthesis, ancient Iranian identity merges with religious tradition, producing a distinct cultural narrative.

However, in the preservation of these foundational elements of Iranian identity, a

third factor has emerged over the past century: modernity in the contemporary world. This new element seeks engagement with Iran's younger generation and brings with it the importance of science, technology, knowledge, and energy within the borderless world of modern disciplines, once again presenting Iran with new challenges.

Just as in past centuries Iran embraced a new religion while preserving the roots of its civilization, so too did it respond to changing historical conditions. With the opening of its borders, Persian language and culture reasserted themselves through works such as the *Shahnameh*, forming a symbolic and invisible protective boundary around Iran. Today, Iran stands at a crossroads where it continues to express its identity through its language, as if striving to integrate these three elements — tradition, religion, and modernity — into a unified cultural strength that speaks to the world.

In his book *What Does Iran Have to Say?*, Mohammad-Ali Eslami Nodushan, after describing the Iranian reception of Islam and the country's capacity to absorb diverse peoples and cultures, highlights Iranians' inclination toward mysticism and Sufism. He argues that although this inclination may have initial-

ly emerged from necessity in its historical context, it later led to the flourishing of major Persian literary and spiritual figures such as Rumi, Hafez, and Khayyam, producing some of the greatest masterpieces of Persian literature and the emergence of a distinct Iranian mystical tradition.

The understanding of Iranian identity and character cannot be separated from language. In analytical approaches to national character and collective psychology, philosopher and psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan considers language structure fundamental to identity formation and cultural assimilation. He views each individual as being shaped within the linguistic framework of their society.

Lacan has influenced many contemporary critiques of Western modernity. He reinterprets Freud's concept of the unconscious, rejecting biological explanations and instead arguing that the unconscious is structured like a language.

In this view, the structure of language shapes how individuals become culturally defined subjects. In other words, by learning the language of their society, individuals are already embedded within it. From this perspective, each person becomes what their linguistic structure allows them to be: an Iranian

becomes Iranian, a German becomes German, and an American becomes American, because they exist within the linguistic and cultural structure of their society.

Lacan does not see the subject as independent from language or society; rather, he considers the formation of the self to be socially constructed.

The "Real," in Lacanian theory, refers to that which exists both within and beyond the subject. It is something that resists symbolic representation, yet remains within us. In the Real, everything is simply itself. Human beings, however, are inevitably placed within the symbolic order.

Lacan offers no clear hope for a complete escape from this structure. This raises the question: can the Iranian subject find a way beyond "the Other" and external definitions of identity?

Throughout Iran's long history, the Iranian subject has repeatedly responded to encounters with "the Other" by turning to the language of mysticism and Sufism — opening pathways of meaning, abundance, and transcendence beyond imposed boundaries and global orders. In this sense, language in Iran remains alive and dynamic, continuously carrying messages of meaning and renewal for humanity in today's fragmented world.

Iran casts health system as frontline pillar of nat'l resilience amid wartime pressure

Social Desk

Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri on Monday cast Iran's healthcare and emergency apparatus as a core pillar of national stability, after visiting the National Emergency Organization of Iran and holding talks with Health Minister Mohammadreza Zafarghandi. At the 115 emergency call center in Tehran, Salehi-Amiri, accompanied by emergency chief Jafar Miadfar, reviewed dispatch operations and praised responders for sustaining rapid, round-the-clock intervention under pressure. He described the emergency network as both a life-saving mechanism and a visible guarantor of public confidence, linking response speed to perceptions of state effectiveness. Figures presented during the visit pointed to the scale of recent strain. Miadfar said more than 34,000 people were injured and 3,375 killed during the war period, with 268 cities hit and over one

million calls logged. Despite damage to 56 emergency bases, roughly 62% of ambulances and dozens of hospital buildings, services continued without interruption, including more than 400 births carried out in ambulances. In parallel talks at the Health Ministry, Zafarghandi emphasized the system's operational continuity and nationwide coverage, underscoring that hospitals, pharmacies and emergency units remained functional despite infrastructure hits and surging demand. He highlighted the sector's capacity to absorb shocks and maintain access to medicines and care, framing it as critical to crisis governance and public reassurance. Salehi-Amiri, echoing that assessment, labeled the health sector a "third pillar of national power" alongside military forces and society, arguing it underwrites both frontline endurance and civilian welfare. He said the sector's contribution had been underrepresented in public narratives despite its centrality

to managing wartime pressures. The ministers also pointed to shifting social behavior during the Nowruz period, with nearly 29.7 million trips recorded but formal accommodation usage plunging to 4% from about 80% a year earlier. Around 4.7 million people traveled to rural areas, reflecting what officials described as a move toward perceived safety zones. Authorities reported minimal disruption to essential goods supply and healthcare access during the mass movement. Zafarghandi stressed that uninterrupted service delivery, even in degraded conditions, helped prevent shortages and stabilize public sentiment, while Salehi-Amiri called for stronger communication of healthcare efforts to ease psychological strain. He said visible readiness, from emergency roadside coverage to functioning pharmacies, was key to reinforcing social calm. Both ministers framed the health and emergency systems as decisive in sustaining national resilience, combining operational continuity with public trust at a time of acute pressure.

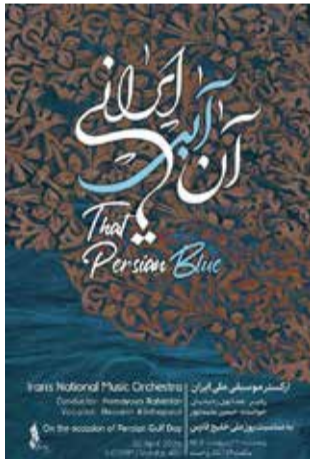


Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Reza Salehi-Amiri (6th L), meets with Health Minister Mohammadreza Zafarghandi (5th L) and senior officials at the Ministry of Health in Tehran on April 27, 2026. ● CHTN

'That Persian Blue' to be staged in Tehran on Persian Gulf Day

Arts & Culture Desk

The Iran National Music Orchestra will perform 'That Persian Blue' at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on Thursday, led by Homayoun Rahimian with vocals by Hossein Alishapour, the Rudaki Foundation said. The program, timed to coincide with Iran's National Persian Gulf Day (April 30), underscores a state-backed cultural push to foreground identity and heritage through flagship performances, as Tehran leans on the arts to project cohesion and historical narrative at home, IRNA reported.



Organizers said the concert adopts a "national" approach,

framing the Persian Gulf as a core cultural and historical touchstone. The work seeks to channel the "deep bond" between Iranians and the Persian Gulf, while evoking the "bravery" and endurance of those who defended the country across centuries. Drawing on the idiom of Iranian classical and orchestral traditions, the set aims to build an atmosphere of emotion, pride and collective resonance. It strives to carry a unified "voice" of patriotism, amplifying themes of identity and continuity on a day dedicated to the Persian Gulf's name and legacy.

Reservoir inflows rise 60% as storage strengthens to 63% capacity in Iran

Social Desk

Iran's water authorities reported a sharp rebound in dam inflows, with volumes jumping 60% year on year in the current water year that began September 23, according to the latest weekly water and electricity indicators cited by IRNA on April 26, 2026. Total inflows into Iran's reservoir system reached 30.85 billion cubic meters by April 26, up from 19.28 billion cubic meters in the same period last year and slightly above the 10-year average of 29.85 billion cubic meters, the report showed.



Outflows from dams stood at 17.51 billion cubic meters over the same period, marking a 5% increase from 16.70 billion cubic meters a year earlier, though still below the decade-long average of 21.19 billion cubic meters. Reservoir storage climbed to 32.5 billion cubic meters, compared with 27.10 billion

cubic meters last year, reflecting an 18% annual increase and sitting about 3% above the 10-year average of 31.27 billion cubic meters. The rise signals a gradual rebuilding of water reserves after prolonged hydrological stress. Overall dam fill levels were reported at 63% nationwide, showing improved but uneven water availability across Iran's river basins and reservoir network. The figures point to a system regaining balance, though still operating under structural pressure from long-term demand and climatic volatility.

Domestic output covers bulk of thalassemia drugs as sanctions strain access



Social Desk

Iran now produces 80% of medicines required by thalassemia patients, the head of the Iranian Thalassemia Association said Monday, citing wartime disruptions and sanctions-related bottlenecks that have driven up prices but expanded insurance coverage.

Younes Arab told a joint press briefing of special-disease associations that some 23,000 thalassemia patients live in Iran, with the southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan accounting for 3,710 cases and more than 3,000 patients based in Tehran. He said over 1,500 patients have died since 2018, IRNA reported.

Arab, himself a patient, said sanctions have choked off access to new-generation therapies, including gene treatments, prompting the association to file a formal complaint over drug supply constraints. He condemned attacks on medical facilities and said wartime stress has aggravated patients' conditions, triggering hemoglobin drops and increasing transfusion needs. Thalassemia patients consume roughly 30% of the country's donated blood, he said, adding that heightened stress can mobilize clots and raise stroke risks. Airborne blood transfers to provinces became "impossible" during the conflict, though local donations helped plug gaps, including in Sistan and Baluchestan where shortages had been chronic. Separately, Masoumeh Sade-

ghzadeh, head of the Iranian Hemophilia Society, said 15,000 hemophilia patients are served through 32 offices nationwide, but sanctions have long posed a structural hurdle. Despite U.S. claims that medicines are exempt, she said ancillary restrictions, including costly cargo insurance, have disrupted imports, leaving three key foreign drugs unavailable and forcing reliance on legacy treatments. She said the Health Ministry's move to build six-month drug reserves stabilized supply during the conflict, with no reported shortages. Domestic producers now supply about 50% of hemophilia drugs, including factors VIII and VII. While prices have risen, comprehensive insurance coverage has largely shielded patients, with associations covering residual out-of-pocket costs of around 1%.

Documentary 'Rebin and the Storks' enters Amsterdam festival lineup

Arts & Culture Desk

The documentary 'Rebin and the Storks,' directed by Nourollah Fattahi and produced by Mohammad Javad Amirani with oversight from Al Jazeera Documentary, has been selected for the official competition of the Amsterdam Kurdish Film Festival (AKFF). The festival, scheduled for May 8-10 in the Dutch capital, will host the film's world premiere, marking its first screening before an international audience, according to ILNA. Set in the mountainous villages of western Iran, the documentary traces a recurring seasonal ritual in which villagers build nests for migrating storks as winter approaches and the birds return

each year to settle in the region's rural landscape. At the center of the story is Rebin, a village schoolboy whose deep attachment to animals collides with local belief and tradition. After failing last year to save a stork chick that fell from its nest, he once again becomes fixated on the fragile line between survival and loss as the migration cycle resumes. The film unfolds as a lyrical study of coexistence between humans and wildlife, weaving together themes of compassion, instinct, and inherited custom. It raises an unspoken tension between intervention and restraint, asking whether rescuing a living creature disrupts nature's order or fulfills a human duty embedded within it.

