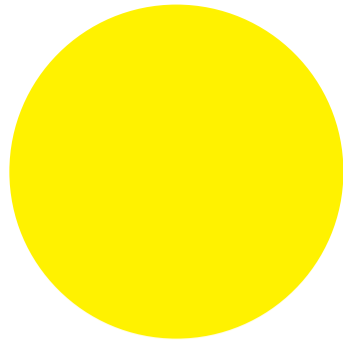


Honar Hall restored after Ramadan War, soon to resume activities

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Iran says reviewing US response to proposal

Nuclear issue not on agenda of talks: **Araghchi**

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A win-win opening for Tehran, Islamabad amid regional tensions

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

Contrary to the common view that Pakistan's recent moves are purely regional mediation, there are signs Islamabad's role is less independent and more aligned with broader strategic designs. In an interview with Iran Daily, former Iranian ambassador to Pakistan Mashallah Shakeri sheds light on the less visible dimensions of this role, pointing to energy dependencies, geopolitical considerations, and Pakistan's efforts to maintain a balance among the United States, China, and regional actors. A role that, if sustained, could also open the door to progress in Tehran-Islamabad relations, particularly in areas such as energy and transit corridors.



Mashallah Shakeri

IRAN DAILY: Why has Pakistan been so active at this particular juncture in interactions among Iran, the United States, and other countries?

SHAKERI: Pakistan views itself on several levels as one of the key entry points in managing the crisis that has taken shape in the Persian Gulf region. First is its neighborhood with Iran, which naturally creates a sense of responsibility and affinity. As seen previously, Oman has stepped in, and Turkey has also signaled its willingness to play a role.

The second point is the degree to which Pakistan is affected by ongoing developments in the region. While many countries have been impacted by the current situation, Pakistan's heavy reliance on Persian Gulf energy resources—particularly oil and gas—has significantly driven up its economic costs.

The third factor is the social and economic fallout of this crisis on Pakistani society, which, as in many other countries, has been considerable, though more pronounced in Pakistan due to certain structural vulnerabilities.

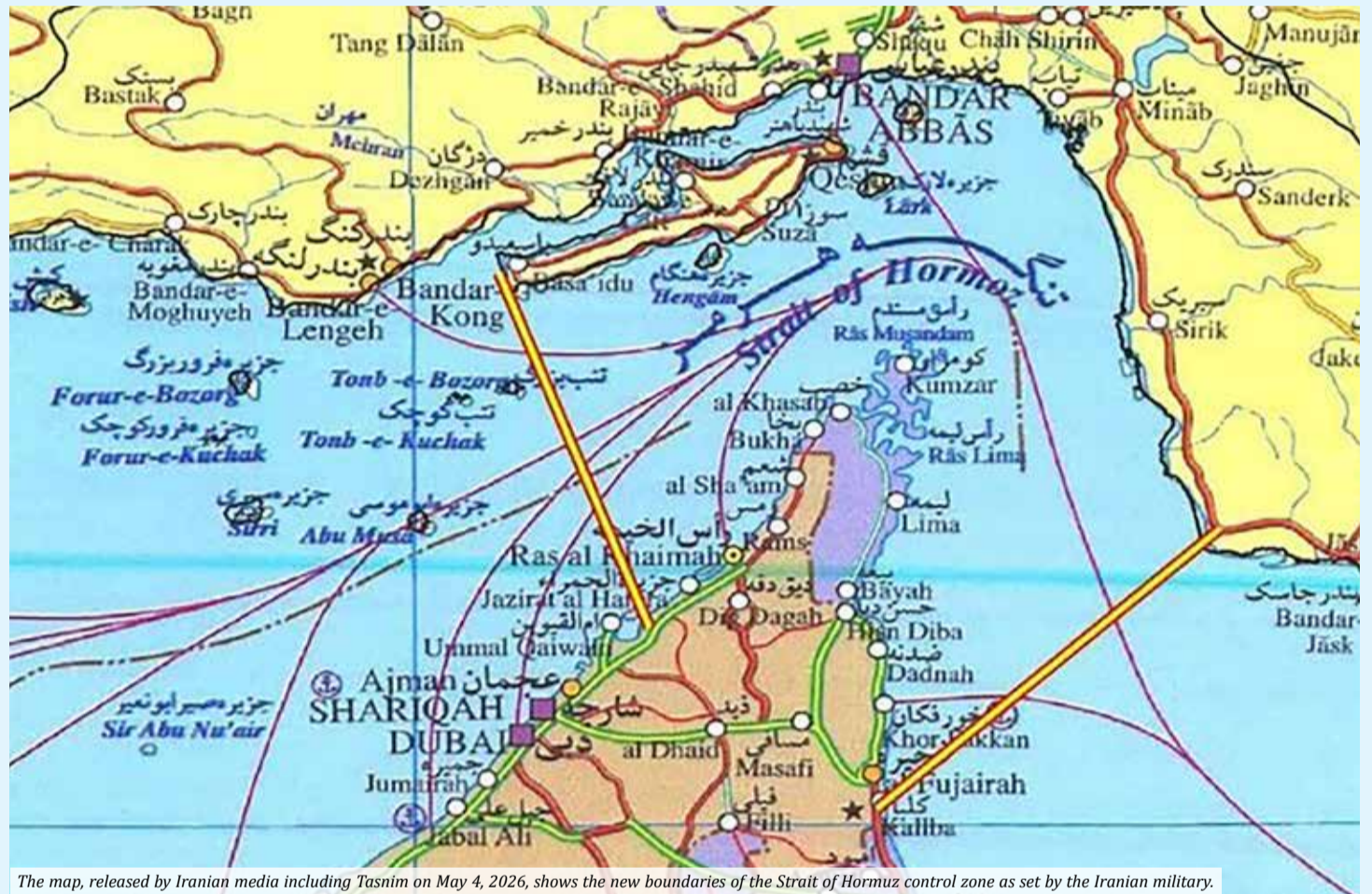
However, the most important factor can be traced to Pakistan being chosen by the United States. In August last year, Asim Munir traveled to Washington and met with US president Donald Trump, who noted, as reported by media, that Pakistanis have a better understanding of Iranians than many other countries. This remark can be interpreted as signaling an expectation or indirect request for Pakistan to play a role in this equation. Following subsequent developments, the United States appears to have identified a degree of alignment and readiness within Pakistan's governing institutions—particularly its military—and has accordingly reached out to Islamabad to help manage and steer the situation out of its current state. Pakistan, in turn, appears to have taken on a sense of responsibility in this regard.

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Iran vows to target any ship approaching Strait of Hormuz

IRGC sets new control zone for waterway

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The map, released by Iranian media including Tasnim on May 4, 2026, shows the new boundaries of the Strait of Hormuz control zone as set by the Iranian military.



Iran airports traffic rises gradually after ceasefire, official says

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INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

India refuses to 'miss out' on strategic port of Chabahar: **Businessman**

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Iran vows to target any ship approaching Strait of Hormuz

IRGC sets new control zone for waterway



International Desk

Iran's military warned on Monday it will target any foreign forces approaching or entering the Strait of Hormuz after the United States said it would help guide ships through the strategic waterway.

Commander of Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters Major General Ali Abdollahi in a statement said the security of the Strait of Hormuz is solely under the authority of Iran, emphasizing that all safe passage through the waterway must be coordinated with Iranian military forces.

He called on all commercial vessels and tankers to refrain from any attempt to transit without prior coordination with the Iranian armed forces stationed in

the strait, warning that failure to do so would endanger their safety.

On Sunday, US President Donald Trump said that the new maritime operation was a "humanitarian" gesture for crews aboard the many ships stuck in the Persian Gulf who may be running low on supplies. He said the US would help ships from countries not involved in the US-Israeli war with Iran that broke out in late February.

Once out, "they will not be returning until the area becomes safe for navigation," Trump said in a post on Truth Social.

The United States Central Command, CENTCOM, said it would use guided-missile destroyers, over 100 land and sea-based aircraft, multi-domain unmanned platforms and 15,000 ser-

vice members in the operation.

As of April 29, more than 900 commercial vessels were located in the Persian Gulf, according to maritime intelligence firm AXSMarine.

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) also announced a new maritime control zone in the strait.

The zone stretches between two defined maritime lines: one running from the western tip of Iran's Qeshm Island to Umm Al-Quwain in the United Arab Emirates, and another extending from Kuh-e Mobarak in Iran to the area south of Fujairah in the UAE.

Shortly after Iran's warning, Fars News Agency reported that a US frigate in the strait "was targeted by a missile attack after ignoring a warning from the Iranian navy", adding that it was hit and

forced to turn back.

However, CENTCOM denied the report, saying that no US frigate was struck by the Iranian forces.

Navy's warning

The Navy of Iran's Army also in a statement warned that any attempt by the US warships to enter the strait is considered as the violation of a ceasefire in place since April 8 and will be met with a decisive response from the Iranian forces.

It came after Iran's Navy warned several US destroyers the Sea of Oman about the consequences of the breach of the ceasefire after they switched off their radars to enter the Strait of Hormuz which is a major transport route for oil, gas and fertilizer.



Vessels stranded in the Strait of Hormuz are seen on May 1, 2026 following the closure of the waterway by Iran in response to US-Israeli aggression.

● REUTERS

"Following the Zionist American destroyers' disregard for the initial warning, the Navy issued a warning shot by firing cruise missiles, rockets, and combat drones around the aggressor enemy vessels", the statement added. Iran shut down the chokepoint to enemies and their allies following the unprovoked aggression.

It began exercising far stricter controls last month after Trump announced a blockade of Iranian vessels and ports in violation of the terms of the ceasefire agreement.

Iran says reviewing US response to proposal

Nuclear issue not on agenda of talks: Araghchi



Esmail Baqaei
● TASNIM

International Desk

The Foreign Ministry on Monday confirmed receiving Washington's response to

Tehran's 14-point proposal regarding negotiations to end war against the Islamic Republic, saying that reviewing the US response is not easy

due to its pattern of "excessive demands and unreasonable requests".

Speaking at his weekly press conference, Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said Tehran has received the response through Pakistan but did not discuss specific details of the reply, IRNA reported.

"The United States' habitual greed and unlimited demands never end. We are facing a party that constantly changes its views which will complicate any diplomatic process," Baqaei added.

He rejected media speculation about nuclear issues based on matters discussed in previous negotiations which exclusively focused on the nuclear issue. "Therefore, topics about en-

richment and uranium are speculation. At this stage, we are not talking about anything other than a complete halt to the war," the spokesman said.

No nuclear negotiations

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in a meeting with the members of the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee on Monday confirmed the issue, saying that there are currently no nuclear negotiations on the agenda.

On Thursday, Iran delivered a new proposal for peace talks with the US via mediator Pakistan, with negotiations between the two sides frozen despite a weeks-long ceasefire. Iran's latest 14-point proposal

to the United States reportedly calls for issues between the two countries to be resolved within 30 days and aims to end the war rather than extend the ceasefire.

Issues such as guarantees of non-aggression, withdrawal of US military forces from the areas surrounding Iran, lifting the naval blockade, release of Iran's frozen assets, payment of compensation to Tehran for war damage, removal of sanctions, and ending the war on all fronts, including Lebanon, as well as a new mechanism for the Strait of Hormuz, are also among the topics included in the Iran's proposal, as per a report by Tasnim.

The war, launched by the US and Israel with a vast wave

of surprise strikes on February 28 has been on hold since April 8, but only one round of direct talks has taken place between Iranian and US representatives.

Since the failure of the first round of the negotiations in Pakistan, regional countries have been trying to get the US and Iran to the second round of negotiations.

But 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.

Iranian officials have also blamed the US side for putting forward excessive demands and shifting its position at the negotiating table for the failure of the first negotiations.

Crew members of US-seized Iranian vessel arrive home



● IRIB NEWS

International Desk

The crew of an Iranian commercial vessel that had been seized by the United States in the Gulf of Oman, were repatriated to the country on Monday through a border crossing in southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan.

The 15 Iranian crew members of Touska vessel had earlier been trans-

ferred to Pakistan.

"As a confidence-building measure by the United States of America, twenty-two crew members held aboard the seized Iranian container ship, 'MV Touska', have been evacuated to Pakistan," Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement on Monday. The individuals had been flown to Pakistan on Sunday night, the statement read.

"The Iranian ship will also be back-loaded to Pakistani territorial waters for return to its original owners after necessary repairs," Islamabad said, adding that the returns are being coordinated with the support of both the Iranian and US sides.

Family members of the vessel's crew had previously returned to Iran.

US forces attacked and seized Touska in the Gulf of Oman on April 19, detaining its 28 crew and claiming the ship had violated the so-called naval blockade.

Six crew members of the ship were previously released. Seven others are still in Pakistan.

The small container ship, which was part of the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) group that has been hit with US sanctions, was boarded off the coast of Iran's Chabahar port in the Gulf of Oman.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Iran airports traffic rises gradually after ceasefire, official says

Economy Desk

Passenger traffic at Iran's main airports has risen steadily following an April 8 ceasefire, with more than 57,000 travelers handled across domestic and international flights in late April and early May.

At Tehran's Mehrabad International Airport, more than 36,000 passengers were dispatched and received between April 25 and May 2, airport chief Ramin Azari said, according to IRNA on Monday. Flights have increased gradually since the ceasefire, he added, following a 40-day US-Israeli war on Iran that broke out in late February.

Azari said over 357 flights operated during the period, serving destinations including Mashhad, Shiraz, Kerman, Zahedan, Abadan, Gorgan and Urmia between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m.

"These flights were carried out

thanks to the coordination and sustained efforts of airport staff across different sectors," he said. Seven Iranian airports were targeted during the aggression, with attacks focused more on tourism, passenger and cargo infrastructure than on military facilities.

Iran Air, the national carrier of the Islamic Republic of Iran, resumed domestic flights on April 25 after a 55-day suspension, with its first service operating between Tehran and Mashhad. International flights also resumed late last month, beginning with an Iran Air Hajj flight to Medina, Saudi Arabia with services to three destinations on the first day.

At Imam Khomeini Airport City, more than 21,549 passengers were transported on 202 inbound and outbound flights between April 25 and May 1, deputy airport operations head Javad

Salehi told ILNA.

Of the total flights, 100 were departures and 102 arrivals, with 11,427 outbound and 10,122 inbound passengers recorded, he said, citing the latest weekly operational data.

The busiest day during the period was May 1, with 38 flights, while peak hourly traffic occurred between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. with 22 flights, reflecting operational readiness during high-demand periods.

A total of 11 airlines operated flights to 25 international destinations during the week. Mahan Air accounted for 77 flights, or 38% of total traffic, while Iran Air carried 6,159 passengers, representing a 29% market share.

Istanbul remained the top destination, with 59 flights and more than 12,000 passengers, followed by Muscat, Najaf and Medina.



IRNA

TPO: Trade pacts in place with five nations, three blocs

Economy Desk

Iran is currently implementing a network of bilateral and multilateral trade agreements, including preferential deals with five countries and three blocs, with efforts underway to sign new such deals, a senior official at Iran's Trade Promotion Organization said.

Elham Hajikarimi, head of the Revival Office of Trade Agreements and International Organizations at the TPO, said preferential bilateral trade agreements are in effect with Pakistan, Tunisia, Cuba, Turkey and Bosnia, according to IRNA.

Hajikarimi added that Iran's trade agreements are being pursued in both bilateral and multilateral formats, with a free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in force since May 2025. Preferential multilateral agreements are also being implemented with



IRNA

the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

"The product lists of these agreements are published annually in the annexes to Iran's export and import regulations, allowing exporters and importers to benefit from tariff discounts and related advantages," she said. A free trade pact with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)

Under preferential trade frameworks, the official said, tariff reductions apply to selected goods traded between Iran and partner countries, while in free trade agreements more than 80% of goods

are typically covered by zero tariffs. "A limited list of items remains subject to existing tariffs, special conditions or quotas."

In the case of Iran's agreement with the Eurasian bloc, 87% of tariff lines are subject to zero tariffs on both sides, with remaining items listed under negative lists in official regulations, Hajikarimi said. Iran and the EAEU member states — comprising Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Belarus and Armenia — launched a zero-tariff free trade agreement on May 15, 2025, following seven years of negotiations,

and it is now being fully implemented.

Hajikarimi also said additional bilateral agreements have been signed and finalized, with legal procedures underway for implementation, including preferential trade deals with Oman, Uzbekistan and Indonesia.

She said the Eurasian agreement could serve as a model for future trade deals, adding that a key feature of such agreements is the establishment of a clear legal framework governing economic relations, helping ensure trade continuity even during emergencies or crises.

The official added that joint working groups have been formed between Iran and EAEU member states, with cooperation planned in customs, standards and transport. Infrastructure developed in recent years could help sustain and strengthen trade ties during periods of disruption, she said.

Industry official says red meat supply stable despite wartime conditions

Economy Desk

Iran's livestock sector is in a "favorable" condition and domestic meat supply remains sufficient despite wartime pressures, an industry official said on Monday, rejecting a claim by US President Donald Trump that the country's food reserves could run out within three months.

Mansour Pourian, head of Iran's Livestock Supply Council, said red meat production has risen by about 25% due to favorable rainfall and increased seasonal births, according to IRNA.

The country remains under wartime conditions following a recent US-Israeli war. Tehran and Washington agreed to a temporary ceasefire on April 8 through Pakistani mediation, though tensions persist. Washington imposed a naval blockade on April 13 targeting vessels entering or leaving Iranian waters, later extending the measure to all Iranian-flagged ships on the high seas. Pourian said around 80% of the country's meat needs are met domestically, limiting the impact of any disruption to imports.

"A significant share of frozen meat imports is sourced through non-maritime routes," he said, adding that only about 20% of supply depends on sea-based

imports, which could also be substituted through alternative channels.

Efforts have been made to meet part of domestic demand through frozen meat imports, but current production and import levels are sufficient to meet consumption needs in the coming months, he said.

"The livestock sector is in a notably favorable condition this year, with significant growth in live animal and meat production, reflected in supply levels," Pourian said. According to data from Iran Veterinary Organization, more than 1.8 million head of livestock were slaughtered over the past two months, with meat production — particularly lamb — rising compared to last year, easing concerns about food shortages.

Improved pasture conditions due to favorable rainfall and seasonal breeding have helped fresh domestic meat supply cover more than 85% of the market, indicating stable conditions in the red meat sector, he added.

A decline in frozen meat distribution compared to last year reflects a 25% increase in domestic supply during peak seasonal breeding periods in winter and spring. Pourian said fewer animals left the country in the past three months in major livestock-pro-



ISNA

ducing regions such as the southwest and west, leaving larger herds domestically. In previous years, significant numbers of animals exited through smuggling and illegal exports.

He attributed the decline in smuggling partly to wartime conditions and said strong production levels could lead to lower meat prices in the near future.

Light livestock population rises

Iran's light livestock population has also increased to more than 73 million head, up from last year, supporting domestic supply and helping stabilize the market, he said.

"Daily slaughter stands at about 30,000 head of light livestock and 5,000 head of heavy livestock."

Under plans by the Agriculture Ministry, Iran's red meat production is expected to reach between 980,000 and 1 million tons this year, indicating a substantial increase in domestic output and no anticipated shortages, Pourian said.

A win-win opening ...

Some analyses attribute the primary mediation role to China and view Pakistan as acting within that framework. Given the perspective that Pakistan is operating more in line with the United States, how can the role of China-Pakistan relations be explained?

This proposition is partly valid, but it does not carry decisive weight. Pakistan has traditionally sought to calibrate its positions in a way that does not alienate any of the main pillars of the equation. Evidence suggests that Islamabad engaged in regional consultations before formal exchanges between Iran and the United States began, including hosting meetings attended by foreign ministers of key regional countries such as Turkey, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia.

Following these consultations, Pakistani officials traveled to China and put forward proposals that were ultimately not accepted by the Islamic Republic of Iran. This process shows that Pakistan is trying to maintain an

active role while not losing China's support, thereby striking a balance across its foreign policy orientations.

However, under current conditions, the operational role Pakistan is pursuing appears to be defined primarily within the framework of US expectations and demands. Statements by the US president further reinforce this perception. Overall, Pakistan appears to be playing a multilayered role, seeking to keep both the United States and China satisfied simultaneously, although its current trajectory seems more aligned with Washington.

How has Pakistan managed to maintain its balance in the recent crisis while preserving relations with both Iran and Saudi Arabia?

This issue relates to the legal and security dimensions of regional relations. In its interactions with Saudi Arabia, the Islamic Republic of Iran has consistently sought to keep tensions under control. Even in cases

where actions have been taken against US bases in the region, such measures are not legally interpreted as targeting the territory of host countries, including Saudi Arabia, but rather as actions against US facilities and interests.

This distinction is significant because Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are bound by a defense pact under which an attack on one is considered an attack on the other. The absence of a response from Pakistan, or the lack of a request for one from Saudi Arabia, may indicate an understanding that the actions in question did not constitute a violation of Saudi territorial sovereignty.

Given Pakistan's energy dependence and the history of projects such as the Peace Pipeline, why has the country not shown serious willingness to cooperate so far? Under current conditions and with Pakistan's mediating role, can a new approach in Iran-Pakistan relations be expected, or will the situation revert to the

status quo after the crisis?

If the Peace Pipeline project were implemented and Iran's commitment to export approximately 30 million cubic meters of gas per day were fulfilled, a significant portion of Pakistan's energy shortfall would be addressed. By contrast, alternative methods such as ad hoc LPG imports by truck or LNG shipments by sea are neither comparable in stability nor in economic terms to a long-term, integrated pipeline. Such a pipeline could provide relatively stable energy security for Pakistan for at least two decades. However, Pakistan has faced two major constraints. First, the inability to finance the project domestically and the failure to attract foreign investment, largely due to prevailing political and economic conditions in the international environment. Second, geopolitical considerations and pressure from certain regional and extra-regional actors, which have led Islamabad to act cautiously—and at times hesitate—in advancing the project.

In practice, Pakistan has sought to maintain a balance between Iran and other players—a strategy that may offer short-term advantages but, in this specific case, has come at the expense of its national interests. Beyond its economic dimension, the project also carries significant geostrategic importance for Pakistan and could strengthen its position as an energy corridor, both in relation to India and within the framework of cooperation with China.

From a broader perspective, Pakistan's integration into Iran's transit corridors—including the North-South and East-West routes—could prove mutually beneficial. In this regard, an agreement signed in 2008 established transit on the basis of reciprocity, meaning two-way movement.

Overall, there is optimism that once the current crisis subsides, a new environment may take shape in which Pakistan, with a sharper focus on its national interests, adopts a more active and pragmatic approach toward energy cooperation with Iran.

India refuses to 'miss out' on strategic port of Chabahar: **Businessman**



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

With the intensification of regional tensions and the disruption of main maritime arteries, Iran's commercial exchanges with several of its key partners have entered a novel phase. In this context, economic relations with India have, more than ever before, been impacted by wartime conditions, maritime restrictions, and developments at critical chokepoints such as the Strait of Hormuz; a passage that plays a pivotal role in energy transmission and global commerce. Adjacent to these developments, the significance of alternative harbors and novel routes has become increasingly pronounced, particularly the Port of Chabahar, which, as one of the strategic alternatives for the continuation of Iranian-Indian exchanges, is proposed and can compensate for a portion of the limitations arising from wartime conditions. Within such an atmosphere, an examination of the status of the two countries' commercial relations before and after the war, as well as the role of alternative routes in preserving the flow of commerce, can provide a clearer picture of the prospects of Iranian-Indian economic cooperation. In the forthcoming interview with "Mahdi Rangrona," vice president of the Iran-India Joint Chamber of Commerce, the status of Iranian-Indian exchanges and its modalities, the rerouting of commercial pathways, and the role of political and sanctions-related factors therein are examined.

Mehdi Rangrona



IRAN DAILY: What is the status of Iran-India commercial relations during the pre-war period and the war itself?

RANGRONA: Prior to the commencement of the Ramadan War, the majority of commercial transactions between Iran and India were conducted through third countries, owing to sanctions and India's conservative approach, which stems from that country's extensive commercial ties with the United States. This conservatism was also manifest among Indian traders. With the exception of sanction-exempt items such as pharmaceutical and food products, other commodities were definitely moved via intermediary nations, including financial intermediaries, as well as the documentary and commercial mechanisms of other countries. During the recent war, the difficulties generated along the maritime route for vessels resulted in a cessation of maritime transit. Consequently, Bandar Abbas, Iran's principal commercial nexus, suffered disruption. This situation adversely impacted even that meager volume of commercial dealings with India and, specifically, caused a severe reduction of exchanges.

However, in the middle of the war and after the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, the United States of America applied certain sanctions exemptions to control oil prices. India, too, was included in these exemptions in the domain of oil and gas condensate purchases. Subsequently, India was able to benefit from this exemption and, after years, made direct oil purchases from Iran.

Does India's oil exemption remain active? If so, is it still practically relevant now that the US naval blockade has commenced?

According to certain reports, the Indian government is endeavoring to convince the United States to extend the oil exemption for one additional month, and ru-

mors are that this exemption will probably be extended. However, it appears that this exemption is applicable mostly to oil tankers that were already present in the waters prior and are navigating outside the framework of the naval blockade.

How were commodity exchanges between Iran and India before the war and under sanctions conditions, and through what mechanism did these exchanges occur?

As I indicated, prior to the war and the formation of the naval blockade, Iran-India commerce was extremely limited due to sanctions and India's conservative approach. This conservatism definitely exerted an influence upon economic relations between India and Iran. As was noted, the majority of commerce between the two countries was directed toward sanction-exempt commodities such as foodstuffs and pharmaceuticals. However, a portion of commodities outside the purview of sanctions were exchanged via the rupee payment arrangement mechanism. Another portion of

commerce between the traders of the two countries takes place as barter and commodity-swapping fashion. For example, due to the difficulties existing in monetary transfers, an Iranian exporter sends agricultural products to India and, in return, imports commodities such as rice and tea from India.

After the war, did the non-oil commodity sector of commerce between the two countries cease?

During the Ramadan War, we witnessed the activation of a number of Iran's other ports and the establishment of shipping lines exclusively for India. These developments, which commenced in the middle of the war, facilitated the flow of exports and imports with India to some extent. Among these ports was the Port of Chabahar. Of course, this segment of maritime commerce, via Chabahar, was exclusively for India, and it was almost infeasible to send commodities to other countries. Due to the limitation of maritime routes arising from the war, India became one of the

few countries that gained the ability of receiving commodities directly from Iran in the realm of goods shipment as well.

Currently, regarding Indian investment in the Port of Chabahar, various views and statements have emerged. Some believe that the Indians are seeking a sanctions exemption for this port, while others state that they intend to sell their shares. What is your opinion in this regard?

The Indians had commenced investment in Chabahar at one point, but this process ceased with the reimposition of sanctions and the United States' exit from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Subsequent to the collapse of the JCPOA, the Indians retreated from investing in Chabahar, although, prior to that, they had made investments in Chabahar that required resolution. At present, the Indians' preference is to leave the matter in suspension and pull out of investment in Chabahar. Nevertheless, it has recently been heard that the Indian parties have raised a



The Liberia-flagged tanker Shenlong, carrying crude oil from Saudi Arabia to India via the Strait of Hormuz, arrives at Mumbai Port in Mumbai, India, on March 12, 2026. Iran allowed the oil tanker to pass through the Strait of Hormuz following diplomatic talks between External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi.

● DIVYAKANT SOLANKI/EPA



During the Ramadan War, we witnessed the activation of a number of Iran's other ports and the establishment of shipping lines exclusively for India. Among these ports was the Port of Chabahar. Of course, this segment of maritime commerce, via Chabahar, was exclusively for India, and it was almost infeasible to send commodities to other countries. Due to the limitation of maritime routes arising from the war, India became one of the few countries that obtained the possibility of receiving commodities directly from Iran in the realm of goods shipment as well.



Harbor security stand guard during an inauguration ceremony of new equipment and infrastructure at Shahid Beheshti Port in the southeastern Iranian city of Chabahar on February 25, 2019.

● ATTA KENARE/AFP

request with the United States for a renewed exemption for investment in the Port of Chabahar. It is noteworthy that Chabahar, under the post-JCPOA arrangements, was included in exemptions for India, which persuaded that country to invest. However, after the United States' exit from the JCPOA, that agreement was effectively nullified. Now, the Indians have again requested from the United States that this port also be included among the exemptions so that investment may become feasible.

For what reason is the Port of Chabahar significant to India, such that this country insists upon its presence there?

First, Chabahar's geographical proximity to India drastically reduces transit time and fuel costs for vessels and, consequently, lowers the final cost of commodities. Through this means, India can send its commodities at a competitive price to Afghanistan, the countries of Central Asia, and Russia. Second, the transit time from Chabahar to India is approximately 2 to 3 days, whereas this time for Bandar Abbas is estimated at 7 to 10 days. Third, Chabahar's proximity to India's target consumer markets, such as Afghanistan and Central Asia, has transformed this port into a regional hub for India. Furthermore, via this route, India can deliver its commodities to the Central Asia region and other export target countries without dependence on Pakistan (given the transit and logistic disputes between the two countries) and by circumventing that country. These characteristics have generated strategic and absolutely vital significance for India, and, for this reason, that country has placed presence and investment in Chabahar on its agenda.

So, if India now withdraws from Chabahar, it appears that not only will it derive no benefit, but it will also incur a loss. Is that true? What is your prediction concerning India's final decision?

Based on statements by Indian officials, it is possible that they will cede their shares to one or several Iranian companies so that, while preserving interests, they may continue their presence in that region. Although such a statement has been made, it seems improbable that India would consent to miss out on such a strategic concession. To a near certainty, India will endeavor to obtain this exemption once again and keep its foothold. Ultimately, if it does not succeed in obtaining the exemption, it will be forced either to form a joint venture with Iranian companies or to cede the majority of its shares. This is an option available to the Indians, and they

themselves must decide upon it.

To what extent can the recent war in the Persian Gulf be considered an economic threat to India, given that India and a number of other countries

supply the majority of their required oil from the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz? The recent war has, primarily, inflicted losses upon all countries dependent upon the Persian Gulf's oil and energy,

including European countries, India, Japan, and China. Iran's action in blockading the world's energy artery at the Strait of Hormuz as a lever of pressure has generated extreme volatility in energy prices worldwide,

such that the dissemination of any news concerning the war and the Strait of Hormuz exerts a direct effect upon oil and energy price fluctuations. This matter demonstrates the sensitive strategic location of the Strait of

Hormuz and the conditions arising from the war. India, as one of the major consumers of Persian Gulf oil, will undoubtedly be affected by this situation. This effect will be consequential both for the final

price of that country's manufactured commodities and, in the energy domain, for India's ordinary populace. To state it more clearly, this is a war from which all countries have been economically affected.

India's yuan settlement with Iran reconfiguring energy trade



By Kashif Hasan Khan
Head of the Economics
Department at Paragon
International University

OPINION

India's decision to settle payments for Iranian oil in Chinese yuan marks a subtle yet potentially consequential shift in the evolving architecture of global energy trade and finance. While the transaction may appear technical, its implications extend well beyond bilateral trade, touching on sanctions regimes, currency politics, and the long-term trajectory of the dollar-centred international system. In a world increasingly shaped by geopolitical tensions and economic fragmentation, such moves are better understood as part of a broader structural transition rather than isolated events.

Breaking from dollar-centric order

For decades, the global oil trade has been conducted overwhelmingly in US dollars, forming the foundation of what is commonly referred to as the petrodollar system. This arrangement has ensured sustained global demand for the dollar while reinforcing US financial dominance through institutions such as SWIFT and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It has also provided Washington with a powerful geopolitical tool: the ability to impose sanctions that restrict access to dollar-based financial networks.

Against this backdrop, India's decision to pay for Iranian oil in yuan represents a notable departure from established norms. What makes the move particularly significant is that it was not strictly required. A temporary 30-day US sanctions waiver allowed transactions with Iran to proceed in dollars without immediate legal consequences. The choice of yuan, therefore, appears deliberate rather than constrained, signalling a cautious attempt to diversify financial channels.

This shift reflects a growing concern among countries about overdependence on a system that can be weaponised. While the dollar offers unmatched liquidity and stability, it also exposes users to political risks. India's move suggests that even major economies with strong ties to the United States are exploring ways to reduce vulnerability without fully abandoning the existing system.

Strategic drivers behind the yuan shift

Several factors help explain why India opted to settle in yuan. One key driver is the desire to avoid US financial surveillance and the unpredictability associated with sanctions enforce-



● UNIQUE TIMES

ment. Even when waivers are granted, transactions routed through dollar-clearing systems remain subject to oversight and potential disruption. In an uncertain geopolitical environment, reducing such exposure becomes a strategic necessity. Iran's economic realignment also plays a crucial role. Due to prolonged sanctions, Tehran has been largely excluded from the dollar system and has increasingly turned toward China as a primary economic partner. China is not only a major buyer of Iranian crude but also a key source of goods and investment. As a result, the yuan has become a practical medium of exchange for Iran, enabling it to recycle its earnings into imports from China. This creates a self-sustaining trade loop that reduces reliance on Western financial systems.

China's broader geo-economics strategy further reinforces this shift. Beijing has long aimed to internationalise the yuan and reduce dependence on the dol-

lar, particularly in strategic sectors such as energy. Expanding oil trade in yuan — often described as the emergence of a "petro-yuan" system, is central to this ambition. By facilitating such transactions, China not only increases the global use of its currency but also strengthens its influence in shaping the future of international finance. India's participation in this arrangement may not reflect alignment with China's long-term goals, but it nonetheless contributes to the gradual normalisation of yuan-based trade. This highlights the complex interplay between national interests and systemic change in today's multipolar world.

India's pragmatism and parallel financial channels

Despite the geopolitical implications, India's decision is best understood through the lens of pragmatism. As one of the world's largest energy importers, relying on external sources

for nearly 85–90 percent of its crude oil, India must prioritise energy security above all else. Iranian oil offers clear advantages, including competitive pricing and flexible contractual arrangements, particularly during periods of elevated global prices.

At the same time, India continues to pursue a strategy of multi-alignment, maintaining relations with a wide range of global actors, including the United States, Russia, Iran, and China. Rather than aligning exclusively with any single bloc, New Delhi seeks to preserve strategic autonomy by engaging with multiple partners. The use of yuan in this context reflects a practical adaptation rather than a geopolitical shift.

The mechanics of the transaction also illustrate the emergence of alternative financial infrastructures. By routing payments through a Shanghai-based banking channel, India has effectively bypassed traditional dollar-clearing systems.



India's decision to pay for Iranian oil in yuan represents a notable departure from established norms. What makes the move particularly significant is that it was not strictly required. A temporary 30-day US sanctions waiver allowed transactions with Iran to proceed in dollars without immediate legal consequences. The choice of yuan, therefore, appears deliberate rather than constrained, signalling a cautious attempt to diversify financial channels.



Banners calling for Russia's sanction from SWIFT are seen at the square in front of the Consulate General of Russia in Krakow, Poland, on March 30, 2022.

● BEATA ZAWRZEL/NURPHOTO

This demonstrates how parallel financial networks are gradually developing, enabling countries to conduct trade outside Western-dominated institutions. While still limited in scope, such systems are gaining traction as geopolitical tensions encourage diversification.

Global implications and emerging risks

The broader significance of India's yuan-based oil payments lies in their cumulative potential. On their own, such transactions do not pose an immediate challenge to the dominance of the dollar. The dollar continues to benefit from deep capital markets, institutional credibility, and global trust. However, incremental shifts, repeated across countries and sectors, could gradually erode the structural foundations of the petrodollar system. This process, often described as de-dollarisation, remains slow and uneven. Yet the underlying drivers are becoming more pronounced. The increasing use of sanctions as a policy tool has prompted many countries to seek alternatives, while China's economic rise provides a viable — though still imperfect — counterweight. Alongside yuan-based trade, discussions around local currency settlements and potential BRICS financial mechanisms reflect a broader search for diversification within the global system. At the same time, the transition toward a more multipolar financial order carries certain risks. The yuan is not fully convertible and remains subject to state control, limiting its appeal compared to the dollar. For India, increased use of yuan could also translate into greater indirect dependence on China, raising strategic concerns, given existing geopolitical tensions. Moreover, such moves are likely to attract scrutiny from the United States, particularly if they expand beyond isolated cases. The temporary nature of sanctions waivers further complicates the sustainability of these arrangements.

Ultimately, India's decision to pay for Iranian oil in yuan should be seen as a signal rather than a rupture. It reflects a world in transition — one in which economic pragmatism, geopolitical rivalry, and institutional change are reshaping the contours of global finance. While the dollar's dominance is unlikely to disappear in the near term, the gradual expansion of alternative systems suggests that the future international monetary order will be more fragmented, more competitive, and increasingly defined by strategic choice rather than default dependence.

The article first appeared on Valdai Discussion Club.



Unfazed by wartime, Iranian volleyball girls move ahead with international meets

Sports Desk

The wartime situation might have made a massive impact on Iranian sport over the past 10 weeks, but the circumstances have barely kept the women's national volleyball team from pressing forward with an unprecedented preparatory program ahead of a congested international calendar in the coming months.

With a first participation at the Asian Games since 1974 on the horizon in September, the team embarked on a long journey on April 21 from Sari, traveling overland to Türkiye before flying to Bangkok to take part in the AVC Women's Champions League under the name Mehregan Noor Club, joining up with South Korean head coach Lee Do-hee. Lee had left the country days after the United States and Israel launched a military campaign against Iran on February 28.

The team's campaign in the Thai capital ended after only one game – a straight-set loss to the host's Nakhon Ratchasima, which went on to finish runner-up in the tournament.

Iran has benefited from the FIVB's development program over the past two years, hiring Lee as part of a generational overhaul in a bid to qualify for the 2028 Volleyball Nations League.

Following that tournament in



Iranian national team players, branded as Mehregan Noor Club, celebrate a point during a defeat against Thailand's Nakhon Ratchasima at the AVC Women's Champions League in Bangkok, Thailand, on April 26, 2026.

● VOLLEYBALL WORLD

Bangkok, Iranian federation president Milad Taghavi held talks with Ramon Suzara, president of the Asian Volleyball Confederation, and FIVB president Fabio Azevedo, securing FIVB's financial support to use the international governing body's training facilities in Thailand.

The national team, as a result, extended its stay in Bangkok for

a 20-day training camp, as well as several friendly games, before leaving for Nepal for the CAVA Women's Volleyball Championship, a tournament that carries significant importance for the country in terms of FIVB ranking points.

The Iranian girls have fond memories of the tournament, as they enjoyed a milestone campaign at

the event last year in Tashkent, defeating Uzbekistan in straight sets in the final to capture a maiden international gold medal for Iranian women's volleyball since the first national team was established in 1963.

International appearances will come thick and fast for Team Melli, which will follow the CAVA tournament with the AVC Women's Nations Cup – starting June 6 in Candon, Philippines – where Iran has been drawn against defending champion Vietnam, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Hong Kong, and Lebanon in Pool B.

The event marks Iran's third participation in the tournament, following last year's sixth-place finish in Hanoi, Vietnam, and a fifth-place finish in the 2023 edi-

tion in Gresik, Indonesia. The preliminary round will feature 30 matches across June 6-9 and June 11-12, with teams competing in a round-robin format within their respective pools. A rest day is scheduled for June 10.

The top teams from each pool will advance to the knockout stage, beginning June 13, which includes the semifinals and classification matches. The tournament will culminate on June 14 with finals for all ranking positions, including the gold medal match.

Looking to build on a decent run of results last year – which also included a bronze medal at the Islamic Solidarity Games in November – Iran will play in a couple of rematches from the 2025 edition. That campaign saw the team beat Indonesia in a five-set thriller in the pool phase before falling in four sets in the classification match. Lee's side also faced Kazakhstan in Hanoi, suffering a 3-1 loss.

The national squad – featuring Shabnam Alikhani, Mahsa Kadkhoda, Sepinood Dastbarjan, Reyhaneh Karimi, Elaheh Poursaleh, Zahra Karimi, Fatemeh Khalili, Zahra Salehi, Masoumeh Qadami, Negar Hashemi, Hasti Vahedi, and Negar Abbasi – is expected to return home on June 14 after the conclusion of its campaign in the Philippines.



● MOHAMMAD-JAVAD AMINI/volleyball.ir

CAVA U18 Beach Volleyball Championship: Iranian boys impress with silver, bronze medals

Sports Desk

Iranian teams secured silver and bronze medals at the CAVA U18 Beach Volleyball Championship in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on Sunday.

The pair of Amirreza Jamshidi and Amin Vakili, which had beaten Sina Al-e Yassin and Vahab Owanaq 2-0 (23-21, 24-22) in a thrilling all-Iranian semifinal, had to settle for runner-up finish in

the men's event – featuring seven Central Asian teams – after a straight-set loss (21-14, 24-22) to Kazakhstan Team A in the final showpiece.

The Iranian duo had made a clean sweep of three victories to finish atop the table in its group. Al-e Yassin and Owanaq, meanwhile, ended their campaign with a consolation bronze, thanks to an emphatic 2-0 victory (21-4, 21-8) over the other Kazakhstani pair

in the tournament. Sunday's feats marked the latest success for the Iranian beach volleyball in less than a week. Abolhassan Khakizadeh and Amirali Qalenovi had won an impressive silver medal at the Asian Beach Games, failing 2-0 (21-15, 21-12) to formidable Qatari duo Cherif Samba and Ahmed Tijan – bronze medalists at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics – in the final last Wednesday in Sanya, China.

IWF World Junior Championships: Iranian weightlifters depart for Egypt after visa delay resolved

Sports Desk

The Iranian eight-man weightlifting squad finally departed for Egypt on Monday morning after a visa delay threatened to derail their participation in the IWF World Junior Championships, which began in Ismailia on Saturday.

While the team had been stuck in limbo in recent weeks, the Iranian federation worked hard to secure entry visas for its members amid the ongoing wartime situation in the country. The International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) also reportedly intervened on Iran's behalf, pressing for the team's participation.

The visas were finally issued in the early hours of Monday,

allowing the contingent to travel immediately.

Before the recent military conflict disrupted domestic sports programs, the Iranian squad – coached by former world and Olympic champion Sohrab Moradi – had shown impressive form in training. However, the outbreak of hostilities forced the closure of national team camps.

The coaching staff says the young Iranians have posted notable records during their preparation period and will be highly regarded as serious medal contenders in the Egyptian city.

The Iranians will get their campaign underway on Wednesday, with Amir-Mohammad Rahmati and Mohammad-Amin Dadvand vy-

ing for success in the men's -88kg contest.

Hamidreza Zarei – a clean and jerk gold medalist at last year's competition in Lima, Peru – will be joined by fellow Iranian Mohammad-Amin Habibi in the -94kg event on Thursday.

The final day of the showcase will see reigning world junior silver medalist Abolfazl Zare and Farhad Qolizadeh compete in the -110kg class, before Hamidreza Mohammadi-Tanha and Taha Nemati-Moqaddam conclude the Iranians' run in the tournament.

Tanha and Nemati dominated the superheavyweight class last year, completing an all-Iranian one-two, with the former claiming a clean sweep of golds.

Two Iranians among top 30 in FIDE rankings

Sports Desk

Two Iranian grandmasters have made it into the top 30 of the latest FIDE men's rankings for May, released by the sport's international governing body.

Mohammad-Amin Tabatabaei ranks 28th in the men's standard category – and 12th in Asia – with a rating of 2714. Fellow Iranian Parham Maqsoudlou sits 30th globally and 14th in Asia on 2710.

Norwegian chess sensation Magnus Carlsen remains atop the list with a 2840 rating, followed by Americans Hikaru Nakamura (2792) and Fabiano Caruana (2788). Uzbekistan's Nodirbek Abdusattorov (2780) and Javokhir Sindarov (2776) are the highest-ranked Asian players, placing fourth and fifth, respectively. In the standard junior category, Iranian grandmaster Bardia Daneshvar is 17th with a 2596 rating, while Sina Movahed is 22nd on 2575. Daneshvar also ranks seventh in the junior rapid division with a



Iranian grandmaster Mohammad-Amin Tabatabaei stood 28th in the men's standard category of May's FIDE rankings.

● FIDE

2546 rating and stands 13th in junior blitz. Tabatabaei, Maqsoudlou, and Daneshvar lead the Iranian men's rankings, followed by Pouya Idani and Movahed. Mahdi Gholami, Amirreza Pourramezanali, Reza Mahdavi, Arash Tahbaz, Arian Gholami, Seyyed Khalil Mousavi, and Artin Sharif round out the top 10. In the women's junior category,

Melika Mohammadi is 14th globally – and top-ranked in Iran – with a 2342 rating. Sara Davari follows in 38th place on 2250. Mohammadi, Mobina Alinasab, Davari, Anahita Zahedifar, Mitra Asgharzadeh, Tannaz Azali, Dorsa Mohammad-Ebrahimkhan, Rosha Akbari, Rezvaneh Haddadi, and Maryam Mohammadi are the top 10 players, respectively, in the Iranian women's rankings.

Torqabeh and Shandiz recognized as leading tourism destination in eastern Iran

Iranica Desk

The governor of Torqabeh and Shandiz in Iran's Khorasan Razavi Province has emphasized that the region holds a distinguished position on the province's tourism map, pointing to its exceptional combination of natural landscapes, historical heritage, and cultural richness as key factors that have made it a popular destination for visitors.

Speaking during a visit to the registered archaeological site of the Dizdar rock carvings, Yadollah Beshkani stressed the importance of protecting this ancient heritage. He described the site as a valuable cultural asset that reflects the identity and historical depth of the region. He also called for coordinated planning and closer cooperation among government agencies to ensure effective preservation of this ancient legacy, ISNA wrote. Beshkani noted that the Dizdar rock carvings are estimated to be more than 4,000 years old. He added that their national registration represents an important step in both introducing and safeguarding the site. According to him, the protection of such historical works should not be limited to administrative procedures alone, but should be regarded as a collective social responsibility requiring public participation and awareness. He further stressed that sustainable development in the region must follow a comprehensive and balanced approach. In his view, economic growth and infrastructure expansion should

go hand in hand with the preservation of cultural and historical heritage. He highlighted that it is essential to advance tourism facilities while simultaneously maintaining the authenticity and historical identity of the area.

tourists and pilgrims traveling to the holy city of Mashhad. According to him, the region has effectively become one of the main drivers of tourism activity in the province. He also highlighted the strong economic and commercial di-

features, he emphasized the importance of local culture, traditional hospitality, and widely recognized regional cuisine, all of which contribute to the area's appeal as a major tourism destination in eastern Iran. He added that many visitors consider

ic village of Kang was introduced as one of the most prominent examples of rural tourism. Known for its stepped architecture, ancient texture, and stunning natural scenery, Kang attracts a large number of visitors each year and is considered one of the

commercial base. He pointed out that over 1,600 industrial units are currently operating in two industrial zones, alongside around 650 active trade and service businesses. This economic diversity, he said, shows that the region is not solely dependent on tourism but also plays an important role in production and employment within the province.

He added that strengthening tourism could also help create sustainable job opportunities for young people and reduce rural migration to larger cities. According to him, tourism development — especially in rural areas — can serve as a driving force for local economic growth while also preserving cultural and environmental heritage.

Beshkani called for stronger cooperation between government institutions, private investors, and local communities to fully realize the region's tourism potential. He said that simplifying investment procedures, supporting development projects, and encouraging private sector participation are essential steps toward achieving long-term growth.

He also expressed appreciation for the hospitality of local residents, noting that their warm reception of visitors plays an important role in shaping the region's positive reputation. He emphasized that maintaining high-quality services for tourists while preserving cultural and natural authenticity will ensure that the region continues to shine as one of the leading tourism destinations in Iran.



He also underlined the importance of identifying, documenting, and protecting other historical and cultural sites throughout the region. Expressing optimism, he said that with public participation and inter-agency cooperation, significant progress could be made in preserving and introducing these valuable heritage assets to a wider audience.

Describing the region's tourism position, Beshkani referred to Torqabeh and Shandiz as a "jewel" in the tourism landscape of Khorasan Razavi. He said the area plays a vital role in attracting both domestic

mension of the area, stating that it is not only a tourism destination but also a dynamic hub for production, business, and services. Beshkani noted that more than 30 million visitors travel to the area annually. The presence of active tourism facilities, large commercial complexes, and a wide range of local businesses has created a strong economic foundation for the region.

Referring to natural and cultural attractions, he pointed out that the area is known for its pristine environment, mild climate, lush gardens, flowing rivers, and unique landscapes. In addition to these natural

their trip to Mashhad incomplete without visiting Torqabeh and Shandiz.

Beshkani also highlighted the significance of rural tourism in the region. He explained that 30 villages have been designated as tourism villages, reflecting their potential in attracting visitors and supporting local development. He said that investing in infrastructure, accommodation facilities, and tourism services in these villages could transform them into attractive destinations while also improving the quality of life for local residents.

Among these villages, the histor-

oldest and most distinctive tourism sites in the region.

The governor also mentioned other villages such as Noqondar, Jagharq, and Dehbar, noting that each has unique natural and cultural characteristics. He stated that with proper planning and targeted investment, these villages could become key tourism hubs in the province. Improving road infrastructure, expanding eco-tourism accommodations, and preserving cultural landscapes were among the priorities he outlined.

Beyond tourism, Beshkani emphasized that the region also has a strong industrial and

Reading Room

A new approach to narrative in Iran

Iranica Desk

The book "Iran: A Narrative of a Non-Newtonian Fluid," focusing on narrative writing and documentary accounts during the period of national defense, authored by Mehdi Kamoos, has been released.

According to IBNA, the book has been published by the Mahva Student Cultural Collection. In part of the book's introduction, the author raises fundamental questions about the nature of contemporary conflict:

"Is the nature of our struggle now political and economic, or has it become military? Is it a civilizational battle, an apocalyptic one, an ethnic conflict, or a religious war? What should be done now? In other domains, too, we have not always acted consciously. For example, during the sanctions period—which, in my view, is the most difficult form of conflict, and one we have endured for over 25 years in an unprecedented way—we must ask: how have we written and narrated these sanctions? We still lack ethnographic accounts, oral histories, or memoirs of this period. In the near future, it will be-

come clear that sanctions have been even more difficult than military conflict, and now the two have become intertwined. Military confrontation, in fact, serves to complete this broader struggle.

While we anticipated in our discussions that sanctions would be the hardest form of conflict, their traces are absent from novels, films, plays, and memoirs. We do not see how sanctions have affected family structures, public health, industry, or employment.

Today, with military conflict more visible, there is a shared sense of urgency to document these moments — hopes, acts of bravery, martyrdom, fear, anxiety, faith, miracles, political concerns, and psychological operations. Yet what comes to mind less often, though it is more important, is the narration of the primary battle — the enduring struggle rooted in the confrontation between the divine human being and demonic forces."

The book also explores the concept and structure of narrative. It defines narrative as the structuring of human experience, emotions, and thought. To express feelings, ideas, or events, a framework



is needed — one with a beginning, middle, and end, as well as its own form and language. Narrative, therefore, becomes essential for explaining how people endure conflict, manage emotions, and understand their surroundings.

According to the text, every narrative consists of three essential elements: the narrator, the story, and the discourse. While the narrator and the story are usually visible and identifiable, discourse — the act and method of narration — remains implicit and can only be inferred through its signs. The author emphasizes that the narrator need not always be the writer; it may be a con-

structed character capable of effectively conveying the story and influencing the audience. Narratives can be told from diverse perspectives — a child, a young woman, an elderly man, an object, or even abstract or imaginative voices.

In narrative, we need a story, a memory, a biography — some event or occurrence. After all, there must be something we intend to narrate. What is it that we want to tell? In any case, expressing any action requires both a narrator and a story (a tale or account).

If the narrator tells a tale, it becomes a story; if they recount a memory, it becomes a memoir; if they present a news event or

report, it becomes a documentary narrative. If they produce a poetic and emotional piece of writing, it becomes a personal reflection.

Here, by "story," "tale," or "narrative," we mean an experience, incident, event, memory, feeling, or idea that requires a narrative structure in order to be expressed. In fact, within a narrative, the "story" is the content the narrator intends to convey. This story may take the form of news, a report, a memoir, a biography, oral history, a travelogue, or even fictional accounts.

Discourse in narrative refers to the act of narration itself, which shapes the hidden ideology of the narrative. In other words, discourse is the underlying ideology embedded within events, characters, settings, dialogue, and descriptions. It is conveyed through the arrangement of events, the actions of characters, dialogue, atmosphere-building, and the depiction of place, environment, and moments.

For instance, if someone intends to present the conflict between Iran and Israel directionally as an apocalyptic or civilizational battle, they would move toward writing an article or a

statement. In narrative, if we express ideas directly, the result becomes closer to an article or a news report. Narratives should avoid such direct exposition.

For example, if we aim to portray this conflict as civilizational or apocalyptic, this discourse should emerge through the setting and characters. The lasting impact of works like "Revayat-e Fath" by the late Morteza Avini lies in their narration of the Iran-Iraq War within the discourse of the "Sacred Defense," conveyed through depictions of fighters, environments, and locations in language suited to that atmosphere. Similarly, works such as "Zakhmdar" by Jahangir Khosrowshahi and "Shab-haye Qadr of Karbala-5" by Nosratollah Mahmoudzadeh endure for the same reason.

However, when discourse is discussed in narrative, the focus shifts to how the narrator tells the story and what methods and patterns they employ. In other words, discourse determines from whose perspective the story is told, what the narrator's characteristics are, and what tone and style of expression the narrator uses.

Honar Hall restored after Ramadan War, soon to resume activities

Arts & Culture Desk

Honar Hall, known as a specialized center for children and youth theater in the capital Tehran, after completing its post-war renovation, is ready to host artists, performances, and children and youth enthusiasts of performing arts once again, according to IRNA. The cultural and artistic complex, which suffered damages due to a missile attack in its vicinity on March 16, 2026, was quickly restored and repaired through the efforts and dedication of officials and experts. "We are committed to enhancing a safe and inspiring space for future generations," said Amir Mashhadi Abbas, the head of Tehran's Honar Hall. "The successful renovation of Honar Hall, in areas such as

replacing the hall's windows, refurbishing the waiting room furniture, upgrading the electrical post, and repairing damaged doors, reflects the spirit of sustainability and love for art among our colleagues, as well as the supportive attitude of cultural and artistic enthusiasts." The Honar Hall manager said it is actually during times of war that we should pay attention to arts like theater. "Our only recommendation is to keep children away from the war's atmosphere; in other words, to shield them from news. Instead of having them sit down to watch the news and constantly be stressed, let's encourage them to watch theater. It would be better to take them to cinemas and libraries." Mashhadi Abbas underlined that Honar Hall, with its specialized

spaces, will continue to host diverse theatrical performances, educational workshops, and special cultural events for children and teenagers, welcoming esteemed and discerning artists and audiences for children's and youth theater shows. Built around 1960 for artistic performances, Honar Hall initially focused on traditional theater and shadow plays. In the last decade, it has become a hub for puppet shows, children's and youth theater, and puppet and children's festivals. The hall has a capacity of 244 spectators across two sections, ground floor and balcony, and operates under the Department of Performing Arts of the Islamic Cultural and Guidance Ministry. The US-Israeli aggression against Iran began on February 28 with airstrikes that assassi-



The photo shows the aftermath of US-Israeli aggression in the vicinity of Honar Hall in the capital Tehran on March 16, 2026. sahebkhavar.ir

nated senior Iranian officials and commanders, including Leader of the Islamic Republic Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei. Iran's Armed Forces responded

by launching daily missile and drone operations targeting locations in the Israeli-occupied territories as well as US military bases and assets across the re-

gion. Forty days into the war on April 8, a Pakistan-brokered temporary ceasefire between Iran and the US took effect.

Iran's chief rabbi: Jews are 'integral part of great Iranian nation'

Social Desk

Rabbi Younes Hamami Lalehzar, the leader of the Iranian Jewish community, emphasized on Monday that Iranian Jews consider themselves as an "integral part of the great Iranian nation." The leader of the Iranian Jewish community made the remarks in an interview with ISNA in reference to the historical companionship of the community with the Iranian nation in various periods, including in the 1979 Revolution, the Sacred Defense era in the 1980s, and the latest acts of aggression by the US and Israeli regimes over the past year. Pointing to the presence of the Jewish community in defending the country during the Ramadan War, Hamami Lalehzar stated that, "Iranian Jews consider themselves as an integral part of the great Iranian nation and have been alongside the majority of society in all fields." The leader of the Iranian Jewish community, referring to the statements condemning the recent attacks, said, "During these days, various statements have been issued by myself, the representative of the Jews



Younes Hamami Lalehzar

in the Iranian Parliament, and Jewish associations in different cities such as Shiraz and Isfahan, condemning the enemy's attacks; attacks that led to the martyrdom of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution and innocent children in Minab school, or attacked a synagogue in a dead-end alley in a residential area where there was no military zone around it, and martyred its members and individuals, showing that their enmity is with the Iranian nation." Hamami Lalehzar underlined that the Zionist regime introduces itself as the defender of the world's Jews, but it has shown that it has no respect even for Jewish holy sites. "Any place of worship for the

one God has sanctity. They attacked synagogues and Jewish religious festivals like the "Passover" festival (the festival of freedom and exodus from Egypt following the uprising of Prophet Moses and the defeat of Pharaoh). This shows that they are pursuing their own interests and are misusing the name of Judaism," he said. "We do not accept Zionism as representatives of Judaism, especially in this period with [Benjamin] Netanyahu, who has tried to cling to certain verses of the Torah. Their behavior is contrary to the Torah and the commandments of God. The main slogan of the Torah is "Love your fellow man," and these behaviors cannot be justified at all."

Gov't urged to ensure post-war secure Internet, support businesses

Social Desk

Iran's Content Production and Distribution Union in the Virtual Space, in a statement on Monday, supported secure access to the Internet for the public and, while backing sovereign decisions regarding the Internet in wartime, suggested that any plans should be drafted and implemented with the participation of private sector representatives. "We believe that the interests of businesses in the virtual space and the integrity of the country's territory can only be preserved with the independence of the country's digital economy and the completion of the national information network," the statement read, as reported by IRNA. "Continuity of digital business operations in crisis conditions is a national necessity. Internet-dependent businesses are not only the source of livelihood for millions of Iranian households, but they also play a central role in maintaining social connections, providing public services, and



ensuring the continuity of the national economy. Therefore, we consider ensuring the sustainability of business Internet connectivity in emergency situations as a legitimate goal in line with national interests and support the will of the highest officials of the system to achieve it. We also consider the dual approach of some relevant actors and stakeholders in this field as harmful to the digital ecosystem of the country." The union also voiced readiness to actively and responsibly participate in the implementation, amendment, and optimization process of the Business Internet

Scheme as a partner. Pointing to support for war-affected businesses, the statement said, "Digital businesses have suffered significant losses during the periods of Internet instability. The union calls on the government and responsible institutions to consider financial support packages, low-interest loans, and temporary tax exemptions for them, while quickly identifying the affected parties." The union added that supporting the livelihoods of stakeholders in this field is not just a sectoral demand, but a necessity for the resilience of the country's digital economy.

Anti-Iran Hollywood project flops at box office

Arts & Culture Desk

The movie 'Desert Warrior', produced with a staggering \$150 million budget and a narrative against Iran, suffered a significant defeat at the global box office. Despite the presence of stars such as Ben Kingsley and Anthony Mackie, the cinematic work failed to attract audiences even in the Middle East markets and Saudi Arabia.

In the American market, the project only generated \$600,000 in sales, which is considered a financial disaster for a film of this scale. In Saudi Arabia, the movie did not even make it to the top-selling list and ranked at the bottom of the chart. Many experts believe that the Saudi cinema was confused in identifying the film's identity and presented a Hollywood narrative in an awkward format that lacks appeal for any

group of Eastern or Western audiences. The ambitious project, after five years of controversial production, has effectively lost its chance of profitability as negative feedbacks in test screenings and very low ratings on movie review sites showed that spending huge amounts without considering the dramatic quality and audience taste cannot guarantee the box office success of Desert Warrior.

Another point could be the political agenda of the film, as it has been described as an anti-Iranian work focusing on the attack on Iran during the Sassanid era, which could lead to the display of Arabian civilization and history being overshadowed by its political goals, especially during the days of US and Israeli war against Iran, and may deter audiences seeking to watch Arabic life and identity.

