

AFC Asian Cup
Saudi Arabia 2027:
Iran drawn
against Syria,
Kyrgyzstan, China
in group stage



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Iran Daily

Vol. 8114 • Monday, May 11, 2026 • Ordibehesht 21, 1405 • Dhu al-Qadah 23, 1447 • 100,000 rials • 8 pages



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INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE

The United Arab Emirates, which has become entangled in the United States and Israel's war against Iran, appears to be drawing ever closer to Israel while simultaneously distancing itself from Arab states. Evidence of this can be seen in the expansion of Abu Dhabi's defense and security cooperation with Israel, alongside its withdrawal from OPEC and OAPEC. These developments could reshape regional equations and influence the policies of Persian Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia and Iran.



Parham Pourramezan

In an interview with Iran Daily, political science researcher Parham Pourramezan said the UAE has adopted a strategy of separation in its competition with Saudi Arabia for leadership of the Arab world and is seeking to outmaneuver Riyadh by elevating its own geopolitical standing. According to him, the alliance with Israel is unfolding along the same lines and is also aimed at securing a backer capable of sustaining the UAE's economic development agenda in the post-war era.

IRAN DAILY: Could this UAE-Israel convergence evolve into a sustainable strategic partnership? Under the current tense regional conditions, to what extent would this approach benefit the UAE, and what costs could it carry?

POURRAMEZAN: Cooperation between the UAE and Israel in the economic, defense, and security spheres has, in fact, been underway covertly for many years. This is not a new phenomenon at all. What appears new is simply that these ties have now been brought into the open. For years, the two sides have been engaged in various forms of cooperation behind the scenes.

What is now pushing their ties from ordinary relations toward a strategic partnership is, above all, the deepening of economic cooperation, followed by increasingly extensive security and defense collaboration.

There is little doubt that, particularly in the near future, more will be heard about the deepening of relations between the UAE and Israel. The reason lies in the ongoing rivalry between the UAE and Saudi Arabia over leadership of the Arab world. Abu Dhabi has now adopted a strategy of separation, seeking to distinguish itself from the broader West Asian region by enhancing its geopolitical standing — first to gain an advantage over Saudi Arabia and then to use Israel as an ally and backer capable of helping sustain the economic development policies it has pursued in recent years, policies that were disrupted during the war.

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President Masoud Pezeshkian (L) attends a meeting with a group of government officials in Tehran, Iran on May 10, 2026. president.ir



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