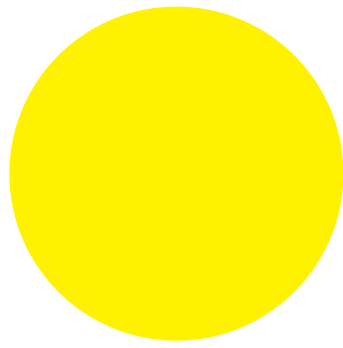


'Shahnameh' manuscript unveiled in Mashhad as Iran honors Ferdowsi's legacy



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Armed Forces ready to shock aggressors, Qalibaf warns

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Pezeshkian urges stronger 'economic diplomacy' to boost forex revenues

President Masoud Pezeshkian (c) addresses a meeting attended by Minister of Industry, Mines, and Trade Mohammad Atabak and his deputies as well as a group of union leaders in Tehran, Iran on May 12, 2026.

president.ir

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Iran in new Cold War: How to understand US-China rivalry



By Asgar Ghahremanpour
Editor-in-chief

OPINION

The intensifying rivalry between China and the United States is the most significant development in the international system of the 21st century. The central question is: what is the nature of this competition, and how can Iran's position within it be explained? Is this confrontation primarily ideological, or does it stem from geopolitics and economics? And when theorists like Barry Buzan speak of a "new Cold War," what exactly do they mean?

A significant body of international relations analysis suggests that the core of the US-China rivalry is not ideology, but the shifting balance of power in the global system. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US was the dominant power. But China's emergence as an economic, technological, and military power has challenged that supremacy. From this perspective, the current rivalry can be seen as a classic contest between an established power and a rising one—a familiar pattern in international political history.

However, this rivalry is not purely geopolitical. Economics and technology have become the primary battlegrounds. Competition over semiconductors, artificial intelligence, supply chains, 5G, and data control reveals a deeper struggle over which country will control the infrastructure of the 21st-century economy and technology. In this sense, geo-economics has become a central component of power politics.

An ideological dimension exists, but its role is more limited than during the classic Cold War. The US continues to defend the liberal order, democracy, and market economics, while China represents a model of "developmental authoritarianism"—one that makes economic progress possible without Western-style democracy. Yet many analysts argue that even if China had a different political system, its rise as a major power would still have pushed the US into strategic competition.

Within this framework, the China-US rivalry over other countries becomes understandable. The US seeks to preserve its global security and financial network, built on the dollar, military alliances, and major tech companies. China, in contrast, relies more heavily on economic and infrastructural tools. The Belt and Road Initiative is a prime example of Beijing's effort to expand its economic influence and connect different regions of the world to China's economy.

Yet most countries do not wish to enter into rigid bloc politics as in the old Cold War. Many regional powers—such as India, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Southeast Asian nations—are simultaneously expanding economic ties with China while maintaining security links with the US. This suggests that today's world is not truly bipolar, unlike the 20th century.

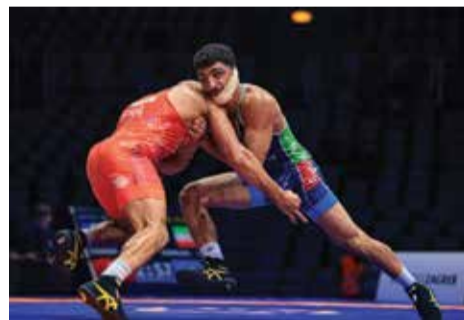
Iran holds a unique position in this rivalry. For the US, Iran is primarily a security issue and part of the broader Middle Eastern order. Washington's concerns over Iran's nuclear program, regional influence, and the security of US allies in the region have ensured that a policy of containment, sanctions, and pressure remains at the core of the American approach.

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Speaker: No alternative to Iran's 14-point peace proposal

Armed Forces ready to shock aggressors, Qalibaf warns

International Desk

Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said on Monday that the United States has "no alternative" but to accept Tehran's 14-point peace proposal, warning that any other approach would lead to repeated failure.

"There is no alternative but to accept the rights of the Iranian people as laid out in the 14-point proposal. Any other approach will be completely inconclusive; nothing but one failure after another", Qalibaf wrote in a post on X.

"The longer they drag their feet, the more American taxpayers will pay for it".

Iran's 14-point proposal includes the withdrawal of American forces from the region, removal of sanctions on Iran, reparations payments, end to fighting in Lebanon and a new method to govern the Strait of Hormuz.

The proposal has been submitted to the US through Pakistan,

which has been mediating talks. On Sunday, US President Donald Trump said, "I have just read the response from Iran's so-called 'Representatives.' I don't like it — TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE!" in a post on Truth Social.

Trump has repeatedly urged Iran to permanently dismantle its nuclear enrichment program — the issue that Iran always said will not negotiate on it.

Trump has threatened new aggression against Iran if Tehran does not accept the US proposal.

Ready for new confrontation

Qalibaf in a separate post on X said that Iran's armed forces are battle-ready to deliver a crushing, well-deserved response to any aggression, warning enemies that mistaken strategies will only bring them disastrous results.

"Our armed forces are ready to deliver a well-deserved response to any aggression; mis-

taken strategy and mistaken decisions will always lead to mistaken results. The whole world has already figured this out. We are prepared for all options; they will be surprised," Qalibaf said.

Ali Akbar Velayati, a top advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, said on Monday that the US will never be able to win in diplomacy against Iran after it lost on the battlefield.

No victory for US

Velayati said that Trump is wrongly thinking that he could pressure Iran into a deal to conclude a war of aggression that came to a halt with a ceasefire in early April.

"We defeated you on the battlefield; never imagine that you will emerge victorious in diplomacy," said Velayati.

He referred to a recent social media post by Trump, in which the US president claimed Iran had underestimated and laughed at the US for decades,



Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf
IRNA

while repeating his threats against Iran and saying, "They will be laughing no longer!"

"Trump says 'Iran will no longer laugh' while boasting about a 'glorious ceasefire.' Yet he threatens Iran with nuclear innuendos as if he still believes the Pentagon's lies about hiding

the heavy casualties of American soldiers," said Velayati.

The former Iranian foreign minister also pointed to Trump's upcoming visit to China, where he is expected to repeat his claims about victory against Iran, saying the US president shouldn't exploit the calm and

restraint in Iran.

He said that Iran's response to the US-Israeli war of aggression, which involved attacks on various targets in the region and the establishment of new shipping rules in the Persian Gulf, had changed the geopolitical order in the region.

China part of Iran's political strategy to offset Western pressure: Envoy



Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli
IRNA

International Desk

Iran's ambassador to China said Beijing plays a key role in Iran's political balancing strategy, as Tehran seeks to explain its position on security developments in the Strait of Hormuz.

In an interview with IRNA published on Tuesday, Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli said China has worked to reduce tensions in West Asia following the US-Israeli aggression against Iran.

He said Beijing pursued this goal

through consultations with influential regional actors, a joint peace initiative with Pakistan that helped facilitate talks in Islamabad, and a four-point proposal by Chinese President Xi Jinping aimed at keeping the door to dialogue open and strengthening it. "In this framework, China is not merely an economic partner or an energy buyer for Iran; rather, it is regarded as part of Iran's political balancing strategy against pressure, threats, and unilateralism," he noted.

According to the envoy, Tehran's message to Beijing has been clear. "Iran's security measures are a reaction to threats and imposed war, not actions directed against legitimate trade or the interests of its strategic partners."

Rahmani Fazli said Iran fully recognizes that stability in the Strait of Hormuz is of vital importance to China, just as China understands that the roots of insecurity in the region lie in external pressure and intervention.

On this basis, he said cooperation between Tehran and Beijing could help shape a shared understand-

ing of energy security, one that seeks security through respect for Iran rather than pressure on it. He added that the Iran-China comprehensive strategic partnership gains particular significance at such critical moments.

The document, he said, is not limited to investment, oil, infrastructure, or trade, but reflects how Iran defines its position in a changing global order.

Rahmani Fazli said long-term cooperation with China provides Iran with diplomatic strategic depth, enabling Tehran to show that it has real options, important partners, and alternative capacities in the face of US pressure.

The envoy said the central issue for Tehran is whether the other side is prepared to hear Iran's real message.

That message is explicit, he said, adding that a permanent end to the war, consolidation of a lasting ceasefire, the lifting of blockades, and respect for Iran's legitimate rights.

China, he went on, can help convey this message at the level of major powers.

Tehran denounces US-backed UN resolution on Strait of Hormuz

International Desk

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi in a statement condemned latest attempt by the United States to push a draft resolution through the UN Security Council on the Strait of Hormuz, describing it as a blatant effort to distort facts and shield the real aggressors. Gharibabadi in a statement posted on X on Monday night said the US, together with some of its regional allies, is once again trying to "shift the terms of the issue," turning the consequences of military aggression and an illegal siege into an indictment against Iran, the very country that has been the victim of threats, pressure and direct attacks.

"Freedom of navigation' is a respected legal principle, but it cannot be interpreted selectively, politically, and detached from the United Nations Charter," he wrote.

The senior Iranian diplomat stressed that any genuine initiative on maritime security in the region cannot possibly ignore the repeated resort to force, the imposition of a naval blockade, ongoing threats, and the direct role played by the United States and the Israeli regime in creating the current crisis, while pretending to act with neutrality or legal credibility.



Kazem Gharibabadi
IRNA

Gharibabadi made it clear that the core problem is not the passage of ships "in a vacuum." Rather, he said, certain governments are attempting to reframe the results of their own illegal actions in the language of so-called "international order."

"Such an approach contributes neither to de-escalation, nor to maritime security, nor to the credibility of multilateral mechanisms," he warned.

Gharibabadi's remarks come after Washington held closed-door talks with certain Persian Gulf states last week to promote its draft resolution.

The US text demands that Iran immediately halt what it calls "attacks" in the Strait of Hormuz and threatens Tehran with new sanctions and even the possible authorization of force if it refuses to comply.

FM spox: US offer rejected as Washington sought 'total surrender'

International Desk

Foreign Ministry's spokesman said Tehran dismissed a peace proposal submitted by the United States because Washington is seeking the Islamic Republic's "total surrender" rather than genuine negotiations.

In an interview with India Today Global, Esmail Baqaei said the US's approach in the negotiations is the imposition of its will instead of political dealings.

Baqaei said since the beginning of Iran-US negotiations brokered by Pakistan, Iran has emphasized an end to the US-Israeli aggression against the country, re-opening of the Strait of Hormuz and an end to what he called the US "piracy" before any discussions on Iran's nuclear

program can resume.

His remarks came as regional efforts are underway to end the ongoing tensions in the region, which have been caused by a weeks-long US-Israeli aggression against Iran that began on February 28.

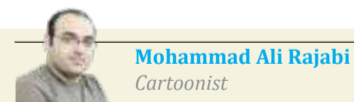
On April 11-12, Iran and the US held the first round of negotiations brokered by Pakistan, days after Islamabad mediated a ceasefire to halt the aggression on Iran. However, it failed to produce an agreement due to the US excessive demands. Efforts to bring back the sides to the negotiating table also failed after Iran refused to take part in the second round due to the US violation of the ceasefire. However, the two countries have been exchanging proposals through mediator Pakistan to find a way out of the crisis

which has also disrupted global economy.

Iran submitted its response to the American side's proposed text earlier on Sunday.

But the US President rejected Tehran's response as "totally unacceptable". During his interview, Baqaei also underlined that responsibility for the closure of the Strait of Hormuz lies with the US, and that a naval blockade imposed by the US on Iran's ports constitutes an act of war under international law.

He said the strategic waterway was open before February 28, stressing that Iran was forced to close it after the US and Israel used territory belonging to Persian Gulf Arab states to launch attacks on Iran.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Pezeshekian urges stronger 'economic diplomacy' to boost forex revenues

Economy Desk

President Masoud Pezeshekian underlined on Tuesday the need to pursue "economic diplomacy" at a time that the country is facing wartime pressures, calling for the expansion of exports with focus on enhancing foreign exchange revenues.

Addressing a specialized meeting on post-war production, distribution, and market regulation process in Tehran, Pezeshekian said the current conditions of the country require careful demand management as creating unrealistic demand without adequate supply would lead to public dissatisfaction and market imbalance.

Pointing to the enemies' strategy to intensify economic pressure and create public discontent, the president said, "One of the most important goals of the enemy in the current situation is to disrupt the economy and put pressure on people's livelihoods, and we must act in a way that, while ensuring the real needs of society, producers also benefit and consumer satisfaction is maintained."

Underscoring the empowerment of forex-earning exports as a fundamental requirement for increasing the resilience of the country's economy, Pezeshekian said, "The development of exports, especially through the country's borders and by leveraging the delegation of powers to border governors and expanding economic interactions with neighboring countries, should be pursued seriously."

The president also emphasized the necessity of utilizing the potential of "economic diplomacy" to compete in regional and international markets.

"Proper quality, competitive pricing, and the use of economic diplomatic tools are the main components of success in global markets, and the government will in no way support low-quality productions."

Emphasizing the government's strategic focus on international trade and regional cooperation, Pezeshekian stated that Iran is taking decisive steps to manage current challenges while prioritizing economic diplomacy and sustainable market stability.



President Masoud Pezeshekian (C) chairs a specialized meeting on reviewing models for involving guilds and trade unions in the production and distribution process in Tehran on May 12, 2026.
● president.ir



Touching on the hybrid war and economic pressures exerted by enemies, the president warned against any exploitation of the current sensitive situation.

"The government does not intend to restrict healthy economic activity; however, we will not allow anyone to target the people's livelihoods or seek illegitimate gains by exploiting war conditions."

Pezeshekian also issued several strategic mandates to the Ministry of Industry, Mine, and Trade (MIMT), including prioritizing support for export-oriented goods and aligning domestic production with the real needs of society.

Meanwhile, Minister of Industry, Mine, and Trade, Mohammad Atabak, provided a report on the status of strategic reserves and the production of essential goods, assuring the president that

despite external pressures and the economic war, production in key industrial and mining sectors continues without interruption.

Atabak noted that the ministry, in coordination with trade unions, has implemented special programs to control

prices, counter hoarding, and manage supply. He reaffirmed that the priority remains supporting export-oriented industries and leveraging the potential of regional markets and neighboring countries to increase the nation's foreign exchange earnings.

Minister unveils bids for 140,000 MW projects with foreign currency

'Gov't bent on reducing reliance on fossil fuels'



Economy Desk

Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi announced on Tuesday that the ministry had received applications for the construction of more than 140,000 megawatts of power plant capacity from investors holding foreign currency reserves, as the country pushes to expand renewable energy and reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

Speaking to journalists, Aliabadi said the govern-

ment was seeking to make Iran's energy sector less reliant on fossil fuels, describing the shift as beneficial both environmentally and economically.

"President Masoud Pezeshekian supports this program, which aims to diversify the country's energy supply basket and reduce reliance on fossil fuels," he said, adding that the plan would continue "with strength and power." Iran, one of the world's largest holders of oil and gas reserves, has in recent

years faced mounting pressure on its electricity grid due to rising domestic demand, aging infrastructure and recurring summer shortages.

Aliabadi said the country planned to increase renewable power generation capacity to 30,000 megawatts by the end of the sitting administration, while also lowering costs and accelerating project implementation.

The energy minister said renewable energy capacity had expanded to nearly five times the level that existed before the current government took office, adding that several new power plants would soon be inaugurated.

The minister also highlighted Iran's hydroelectric and pumped-storage capabilities, saying they could help the country

store electricity more effectively as renewable generation expands.

"Our plan for developing renewables is to carry out this work in a dispersed manner to reduce vulnerability," he said.

Addressing concerns over financing and access to foreign currency, Aliabadi said many investors interested in renewable energy projects already possessed foreign exchange resources.

"We have over 140,000 megawatts of power plant applicants in Iran who themselves have foreign currency," he said. "Therefore, we hope we will not face currency problems."

The minister added that multiple renewable energy projects were expected to become operational by the end of the year and early next year.

100K tons of extraterrestrial yields imported to ensure food security

Economy Desk

Minister of Agriculture Gholamreza Noori-Qezeljah said on Tuesday that the number of countries targeted for extraterrestrial cultivation and overseas farming projects had increased, with the Islamic Republic recently importing some 100,000 metric tons of crops through its northern trade route under the initiative.

The minister said food security remained one of the country's top domestic security priorities amid regional economic pressures and supply chain concerns. "Today, food security is one of the main pillars of social and economic stability," Noori-Qezeljah said, according to remarks carried by state media.

Iran has increasingly sought to secure food supplies through a combination of domestic production and overseas ag-

ricultural investments, a strategy often referred to as "extraterritorial agriculture," under which Iranian companies cultivate crops abroad for shipment back to the country.

Noori-Qezeljah said no shortages of essential goods had occurred across Iran and that authorities had maintained a stable market, while some countries in the region had experienced price increases and food shortages.

He said about 85% of Iran's food needs were currently met through domestic production, with the remaining 15% supplied through imports.

"Domestic agriculture plays a crucial role and should be supported even more," he said.

The minister said the government had streamlined procedures for overseas agricultural investment, adding that related guidelines had been uploaded to



Gholamreza Noori-Qezeljah

the ministry's website and applicants could complete procedures remotely without physical attendance. He added that the number of target countries for overseas cultivation projects had increased this year.

"The first products of this plan included approximately 60,000 tons of barley and nearly 40,000 tons of oil imported through the northern route," he said.

Noori-Qezeljah said supporting domestic production remained the government's main agricultural policy, adding that all programs were designed to strengthen local output and back producers.

Iran in new ...

China's perspective on Iran is different. For Beijing, Iran is more of a geopolitical and economic opportunity. Its vast energy reserves, transit location, and position along the route connecting East Asia to the Middle East and Europe give it special importance to China. Moreover, Iran's remaining outside the US orbit indirectly benefits China by absorbing some of America's focus and resources in the Middle East.

Nonetheless, the China-Iran relationship should not be seen as a full-fledged strategic or ideological alliance. China is fundamentally pragmatic: it maintains broad economic cooperation not only with Iran but also with Tehran's

regional rivals, including Saudi Arabia and even Israel. Beijing does not wish to enter into a direct confrontation with the US over Iran, as China's economy remains dependent on Western markets.

This is where Barry Buzan's concept of a "new Cold War" becomes relevant. Buzan argues that US-China relations are acquiring some features of the Cold War—structural rivalry between two great powers, the formation of nascent blocs, and a competition over the future of the global order. But he emphasizes that this is not a full replay of the US-Soviet Cold War.

The most important difference is the two powers' economic interdependence. The US and

Soviet Union operated largely separate economies, but China and the US are deeply enmeshed in the global economy. Moreover, today's world is not strictly bipolar; many countries are trying to balance between the two powers. And the main arena of competition is less military or nuclear than it is economic, technological, and geo-economic.

Thus, when Buzan speaks of a "new Cold War," he does not mean a return to the 20th-century model. Instead, he points to the emergence of a long-term, structural rivalry between China and the US over the shape of the future global order—a rivalry in which Iran, as a key regional player, is very much a part.



N.I.S.O.C
NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY
AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO.: 08-21-0340014

The National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC) is seeking to procure the specified goods listed in the table below through a Qualitative Evaluation Call for conducting a public tender via the Government Electronic Procurement System (SETAD). All stages of the tender process including the receipt of tender documents, submission of bidders' proposals, and the opening of bid envelopes, shall be carried out exclusively through the Government Electronic Procurement System (SETAD) portal at www.setadiran.ir. Bidders who have not previously registered must complete the registration process on the aforementioned portal and obtain an Electronic Signature certificate to participate in the tender.

Item	Material Description	Quantity
01	CASING, NON API, GRADE P-110SS, SEAMLESS, "N.VAM", THD OR EQUIVALENT, RANGE 3 (MAX LENGTH: 40.5 FT), AS PER API 5CT / ISO 11960 NACE MR0175, MARKING: STENCIL PRINTING IN ACCORDANCE WITH API 5CT MAX. H.R.C:29, H2S (PPM): 21600, CO2 (PPM): 49000, TEMPERATURE: 225 F, SIZE, WEIGHT, DRIFT AS SPECIFIED; REF. NISOC/ NIOC APPROVED STANDARD MANU COLLAPSE PRESSURE: 8530 PSI BURST PRESSURE: 11220 PSI, 7 IN., 29 PPF, DRIFT: 6.125 IN.	4,000 LE
02	COUPLING CASING, NON API GRADE, SML AS PER API 5CT/ ISO 11960 NACE MR0175 TO BE ELECTRO PLATED MARKING: STENCIL PRINTING IN ACCORDANCE CASING SIZE, GRADE, THREAD AS SPECIFIED REF. NISOC/ NIOC APPROVED STANDARD MANU NON-API GRADE P-110SS, 7 IN., NEW VAM OR EQUIVALENT	200 NO

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: www.setadiran.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded. The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 48,935/29 EURO or 78,385,328,896 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex,
Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran
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PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Trump-Xi meeting will revolve around Iran

The fate of war, or the continuation of the cease-fire between Iran and the United States, remains indeterminate. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar has announced that Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani met with Marco Rubio, the American secretary of state, and Steve Witkoff, the American envoy for Middle Eastern affairs, in Miami. During this meeting, the strategic partnership between the two countries, as well as the regional situation and Qatar's mediation for the attenuation of tensions, were discussed and examined.

Qatar's endeavor toward mediation between Iran and the United States, comes at a time when the principal loci of tension between the parties remain unresolved, and it remains unclear what decision Israel will make regarding the continuation of the war.

The existing circumstances are accompanied by questions, including: Will mediation and negotiation exert influence upon the current trajectory? What is the plan of the United States regarding war or peace? Will Israel, independently and without preamble, orchestrate a new attack against Iran? Mohsen Jalilvand, professor of international relations and senior foreign policy analyst, and Reza Mirabian, a regional affairs expert, have responded to these questions below:



US President Donald Trump (R) and Chinese President Xi Jinping greet attendees waving American and Chinese flags during a welcoming ceremony outside the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China, in November 2017.
● QILAI SHEN/BLOOMBERG

Trump irrational, master of surprise



By Mohsen Jalilvand

Expert on international affairs

OPINION

From my perspective, in general, holding Iran-US negotiations and reaching an agreement is not feasible. Let's examine this matter from several angles. The first point is that between Iran and the United States, there exists an exceptionally profound divergence. This divergence is far greater than what could be resolved within the framework of a simple memorandum of understanding. Another issue is that, as long as, from the perspective of the Israelis, Iran's nuclear program threatens the existence of Israel and its missile program and the Axis of Resistance threaten the security of Israel, the subject of negotiation with Iran will, fundamentally, remain devoid of relevance. Before anything else, Iran's nuclear

program, missile program, and the issue of the Axis of Resistance must be resolved. Israel's strategic designs are entirely manifest; after the October 7 attacks, they initiated two wars against us, and the cease-fire memorandum concerning Lebanon is being violated every day through incursions into Lebanon and attacks against Hezbollah. Regarding the Gaza Strip, similar actions are currently underway. So long as these behaviors continue, rest assured that neither the United States, nor Israel, nor the Western world, will reconcile with Iran.

The probability of war is higher Iran desires, through various methods, to disrupt the game. One of the most significant methods for disrupting the game, is closing the Strait of Hormuz. But in general, with consideration of all indications and existing circumstances, the probability of attaining an agreement with which both parties would

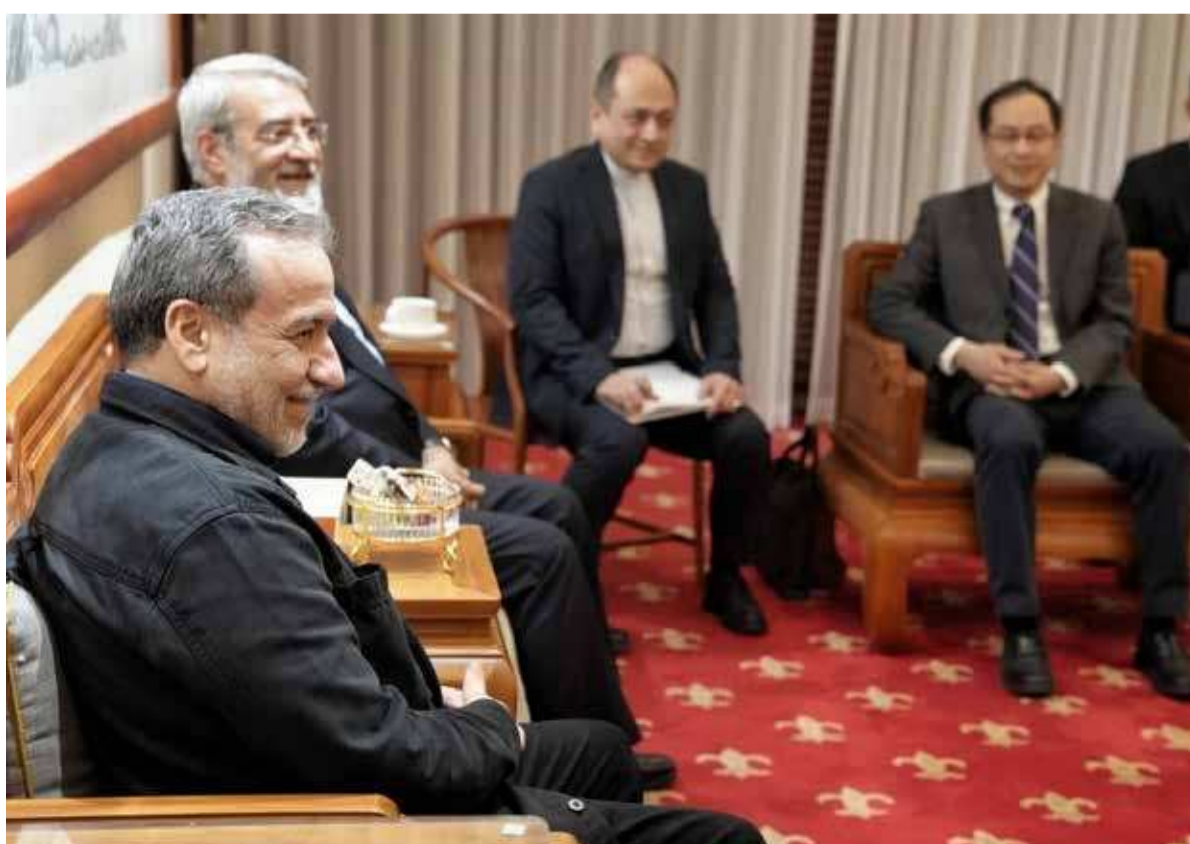
be satisfied is not high. The probability of renewed war is substantially higher than the probability of no war. The intensity of the attacks and their dimensions, however, depend upon Iran's reaction. In reality, if following a renewed American attack, particularly in the southern parts of the country, Iran's reaction is extremely severe, war will assume expansive dimensions. Israel shall not attack Iran unilaterally. The operations of these two parties, should they occur, will be of a combined nature. The Americans will intervene with severe assaults and a high level of destruction, whereas actions such as precision targeting and targeted assassinations will be executed by Israel. The Americans are habituated to attacking with high volume and immense intensity.

Upcoming meeting between Trump and Xi

I believe that more than 50% of the

substantive content of this upcoming meeting, will concern Iran, and the situation in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf will be discussed. Let us not forget this point regarding Donald Trump and his decisions, particularly his wartime decisions, that they are usually irrational actions that astonish others. And Donald Trump is a master of surprise. To say that, for logical reasons, Donald Trump will not attack, is erroneous. If one intended to analyze Donald Trump's actions according to normal logic, fundamentally, there would never have been any surprise. From my perspective, war is inescapable, and its probability is exceedingly high because Israel seeks a guarantee for the preservation of its existence against threats from Iran.

The article first appeared in Persian on Fararu.



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (front) arrives in China on May 5, 2026, for a meeting with his counterpart.
● IRNA

First meeting where Trump comes empty-handed



By Reza Mirabian

Expert on regional affairs

OPINION

While certain foreign media outlets have claimed that the United States is inclined toward Qatar playing the role of mediator, and considering that other countries such as Pakistan, Oman, and China, are also being presented as mediators, I think the selection of Qatar as mediator, at present, possesses no substantive relevance because with consideration of recent events, it cannot function as an impartial mediator. Iran has retaliated against American bases in Qatar during the last two conflicts with the US. So, even if this idea has been put forward, it appears that the Qataris proposed it. At present, mediation between Iran and the



China will insist upon the positions and rightfulness of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and upon the fact that the United States has transgressed against the Islamic Republic and violated international law and human rights. They have also declared this explicitly. China, as a friendly country and strategic partner of Iran, can articulate our principled positions before the Americans and insist upon them.

United States is Pakistan's responsibility.

We should not forget that American air bases in the Persian Gulf are located in Qatar. Therefore, Qatar cannot possess a neutral position regarding mediation, but it is natural that the United States would desire Qatar to be present as mediator. However, that would not be acceptable to us.

Iran has not expressed a position in this regard, and there is no necessity for it to express an opinion on this matter either because the subject does not pos-

sess sufficient value for Iran to issue commentary regarding it. When Qatar was active as mediator, conditions were normal and not like the present circumstances.

Similarly, Foreign Minister Araghchi's trip to China took place at the invitation of his Chinese counterpart, and was within the framework of strategic relations between the Islamic Republic and China. Naturally, before the meeting between the United States and China, China wants to hear the latest regional conditions and the most recent

regional conditions from the words of Iran's foreign minister, and to go to its own meeting with the United States fully prepared.

Do not forget that the Americans, during this upcoming Thursday trip and in the meeting with Xi Jinping, for the first time, are empty-handed, unlike the past, when they could possess instruments of pressure against China. China will insist upon the positions and rightfulness of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and upon the fact that the United States has transgressed against the

Islamic Republic and violated international law and human rights. They have also declared this explicitly. China, as a friendly country and strategic partner of Iran, can articulate our principled positions before the Americans and insist upon them.

Regarding the future of Iran's negotiations with the US, one cannot speak on the basis of speculation. The events in the Strait of Hormuz during recent days, in reality, were an issue that the Americans created in order to impose pressure upon us and to possess a

trump card against us in negotiations. But their plans did not materialize, and they neither acquired a trump card, nor succeeded in imposing pressure upon Iran; on the contrary, they themselves departed from the Strait of Hormuz in a considerably more disadvantageous position. In reality, the Americans possess nothing that can function as an instrument of pressure against Iran.

The article first appeared in Persian on ILNA.

Iran war hangs over China summit

By Annie Linskey, Alexander Ward & Gavin Bade

Reporters

PERSPECTIVE

As the heads of the world's two superpowers meet in Beijing this week, President Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping will have another nation looming over their summit: Iran.

The long-anticipated meeting has already been delayed once due to the US and Israel's war against Iran, which has led to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Trump is eager to move on from the Middle East war that is sapping his domestic power and straining the global economy.

He will land in Beijing prepared to push China, which relies on Iran for low-cost oil in their transactional relationship, to help broker an agreement that ends the conflict, according to US officials.

Xi also wants the fighting to stop, as Middle East turmoil restricts China's oil supply and shrinks countries' ability to buy Chinese goods. Finding a resolution could raise Xi's stature as a global statesman who swooped in at the precipice of a possible military escalation, analysts and US officials said.

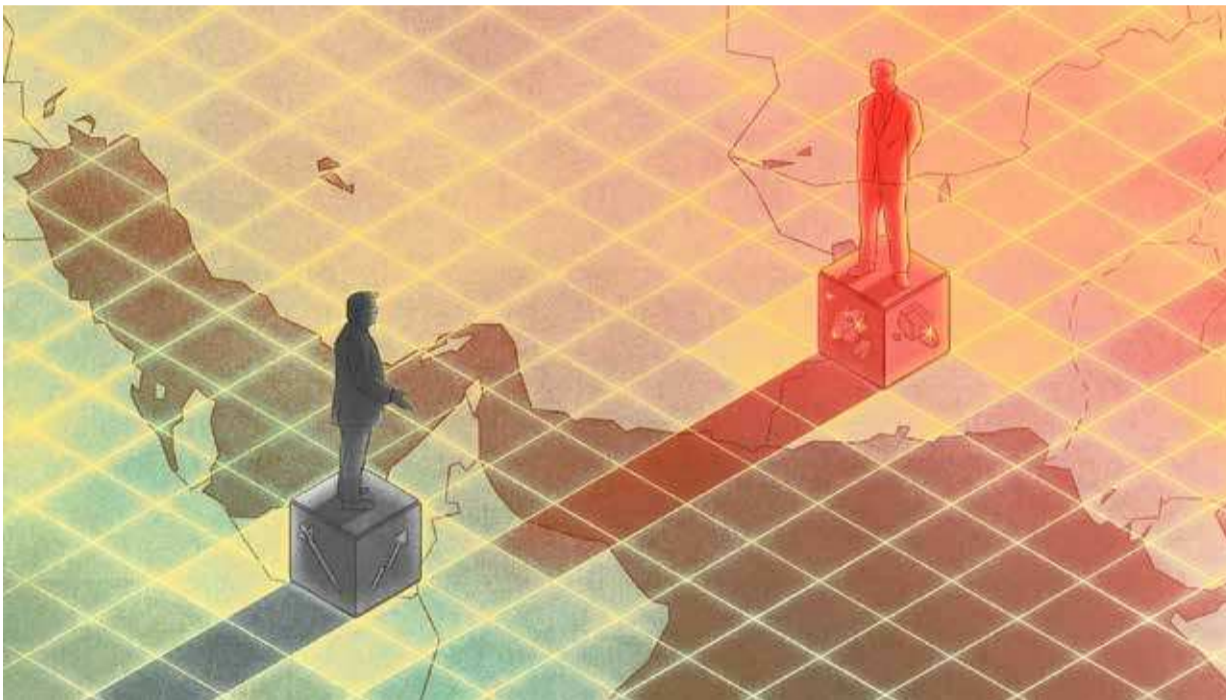
Trump on Friday threatened to resume "Project Freedom," the US-led operation to help ships navigate the strait safely, adding this time that the operation would include "other things".

The president on Sunday said a multi-page response that Iran sent to the US proposal to end the war, which didn't include commitments about Tehran's nuclear program, was unacceptable.

Senior US officials insist the crisis in the strait and Tehran's refusal to make nuclear concessions will prove an afterthought once Trump and Xi step into the Great Hall for trade talks. But both men head into the high-stakes summit aligned in seeking their own victories on Iran — with the Chinese particularly eager to ensure that the current Iranian regime remains intact so it can recover.

At a minimum, Trump will have to keep one eye on a major conflict during a vital, multiday engagement halfway around the world. Trump is scheduled to land in Beijing on Wednesday night and leave Friday local time — giving the leaders two days of backslapping and handshaking. The schedule includes bilateral meetings, a tour of the Temple of Heaven, a state dinner Thursday night and tea between the two leaders on Friday before Trump departs, US officials said.

"Trump will have to juggle briefings and updates on two different, multifaceted sets of policy issues at once, all while a bit jet-lagged," said Jacob Stokes, deputy director of the Center for a New American Security think tank's Indo-Pacific program. "Trump arguably faces a tight-wire act of simultaneous diplomacy and negotiation more complicated than any he's yet seen in either of his presidencies." The discussions will focus largely on trade issues, namely the Chinese purchases of American agricultural goods, energy products and aerospace technologies such as Boeing airplanes, a senior US official said. The leaders will also discuss establishing a US-China board



The AI-generated image shows US President Donald Trump (L) and his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, squaring off at the Strait of Hormuz. ISABEL SELIGER/BLOOMBERG

of trade that would consider how the countries can trade goods that aren't related to national security.

The US doesn't anticipate China will propose a major investment package for manufacturing in the US, the official said. Even so, the sides are likely to discuss establishing a US-China Board of Investment through which the two governments could consider investment plans in the future. Such an entity wouldn't interfere with existing US investment-screening entities, such as the Committee on Foreign Investment in the US, the official added.

"President Trump will continue doing what he has done over the past year — rebalancing the relationship with China and prioritizing reciprocity and fairness to restore American economic independence," White House spokeswoman Anna Kelly said in a call with reporters Sunday afternoon.

Trump's tariffs on China and Beijing's riposte of export restrictions on rare earths last year unsettled the world's most important bilateral relationship. Since then, Trump has sought to recalibrate US-China ties, including during

an in-person meeting in South Korea in October. Gone are the first-term days of Trump bashing China as a rogue security threat stripping Americans of their jobs. Now, Trump strikes a more peaceful tone aimed at turning former enemies into friends.

"President Xi will give me a big, fat, hug when I get there in a few weeks," Trump posted on Truth Social in April. All isn't so rosy in the relationship.

China denied visas for some lower-level US officials ahead of Trump's visit, a step Beijing rarely takes. The coming summit is occurring against a backdrop of tightening media access. American journalists have faced increasing difficulties obtaining Chinese visas. Typically, administrations fight to bring who they want as part of a broader American delegation, even if the host country objects. But US officials say those decisions lie solely with China and that the denials won't materially affect the meeting.

Trump is expected to bring up Beijing's financial support for Iran and Russia and potential weapons exports to both countries, as he has during other en-

counters, according to a senior US official. On Friday, the State Department sanctioned four Chinese entities for "providing satellite imagery that enables Iran's military strikes against US forces in the Middle East".

Despite Xi's hopes for resolving the Iran crisis, he and Trump don't see eye to eye on how it should end. China hosted Iran's foreign minister last week. The timing was widely seen as designed to highlight ties between Beijing and Tehran ahead of the US summit.

"Xi will want to make sure the latest American regime change war in the Middle East is seen as a failure — and naturally, Trump wants the opposite," said CNAS's Stokes.

Trump's struggles to bring the war to a close on his terms have driven him to seek Xi's support. But the president, analysts said, should expect little from Beijing on Iran because China's strategy is to appear useful in the conflict while avoiding a costly Middle East entanglement of its own.

"It's hardly an ideal position for a US president visiting China for the first time in a decade," said Aaron David Miller, an American Middle East negotiator during Democratic and Republican administrations. "Trump comes without leverage he might have had now without tariffs and a war that's alienating much of the world, handing Xi more than a few points."

Taiwan and China's claims on the self-governing island didn't come up the last time Trump and Xi met in South Korea, US officials said. This time those aides believe the topic will be addressed, though the US has signaled that Trump isn't eager to bog down negotiations with Taiwan-related talk, according to one adviser in touch with the White House.

Trump's prep for the summit hasn't included any plans for the US to make a shift on its stance toward Taiwan, said senior administration officials.



Fu Cong, China's permanent representative to the UN, votes against a sanctions resolution targeting Iran, at the UNSC in New York, the US, on March 12, 2026. EDUARDO MUNOZ/REUTERS



Despite Xi's hopes for resolving the Iran crisis, he and Trump don't see eye to eye on how it should end. China hosted Iran's foreign minister last week. The timing was widely seen as designed to highlight ties between Beijing and Tehran ahead of the US summit. "Xi will want to make sure the latest American regime change war in the Middle East is seen as a failure — and naturally, Trump wants the opposite," said CNAS's Stokes.

The article first appeared in The Wall Street Journal.

Sohrabi aims to erase 2025 heartbreak with world gold

Sports Desk

Iranian Greco-Roman wrestler Daniyal Sohrabi has declared his intention to wipe away the bitter memory of the 2025 World Championships by claiming gold at the 2026 edition – but first, he must secure his place on the national team.

The 72kg wrestler, who battled his way to a bronze medal at last September's world showpiece in Zagreb despite a controversial defeat in the quarterfinals, says his immediate focus is on the national team trials, set to take place at the upcoming Ranking Series event starting June 4 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, where

he will face Mohammad-Javad Rezaei – an Asian silver medalist from April.

"Thank God, everything is going well. We are holding very good, high-quality training camps under the supervision of the technical staff," Sohrabi told reporters.

When asked about his objectives, the wrestler outlined a step-by-step approach.

"First, I have the national team trials against Mohammad-Javad Rezaei in Mongolia in June. That's why I want to take things step by step, and my focus right now is entirely on that match," he said. "God willing, if I succeed in the trials, my next goal will be to win the gold medal at the

2026 World Championships." Sohrabi's determination is fueled by the disappointment of last year's event, where he felt robbed of a shot at the final. The Iranian, who had multiple bleeding stoppages against France's Ibrahim Ghanem, was medically timed out as the four minutes allotted for bleeding finished and the Frenchman, who was leading 4-2, had his hand raised as the winner.

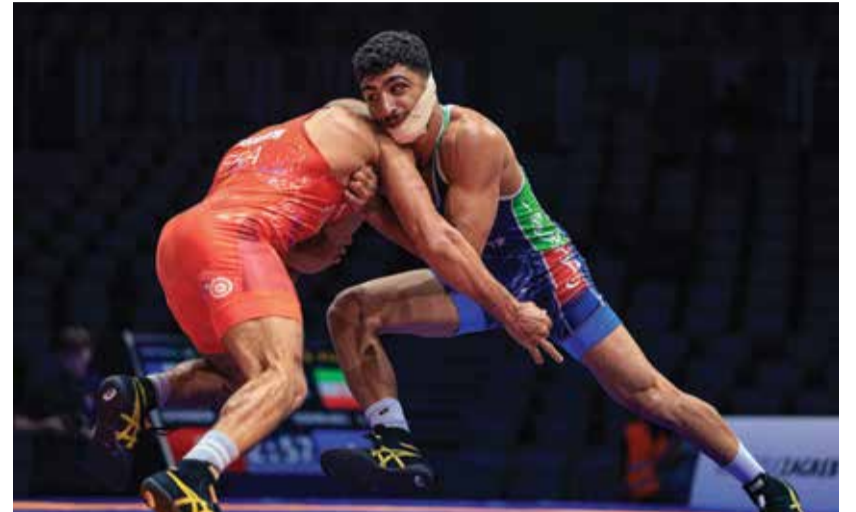
"Last year, a bitter incident happened to me," he explained. "My opponent caused bleeding on my face, but due to the four-minute medical rest rule and the fact that no caution was issued to my opponent, I lost

the match that would have taken me to the semifinals. The gold medal slipped away from me."

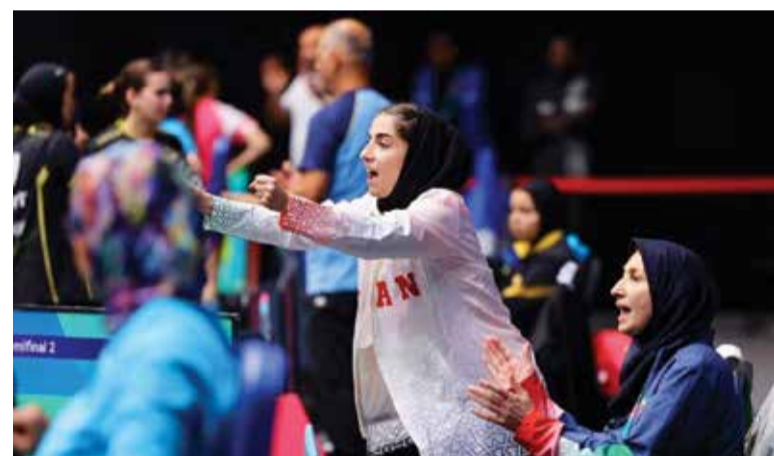
Despite that setback, Sohrabi managed to secure a bronze medal thanks to a comfortable 8-0 win against Kazakhstan's Meray Maulitkanov, but the taste of that near-miss has lingered.

"This year, I hope to bring honor to my country and raise the Iranian flag," he vowed.

With the trials looming and a world title in his sights, Sohrabi is leaving no room for distraction. For the 72kg star, 2026 is not just another season – it is a chance at redemption.



Iranian wrestler Daniyal Sohrabi (blue) is seen in action against France's Ibrahim Ghanem in the Greco-Roman 72kg contests at the UWW World Championships in Zagreb, Croatia, on September 19, 2025. **JAWFIR**



Limouchi becomes first Iranian to chair ITTF committee

Sports Desk

Sima Limouchi was officially confirmed as head of the Para Table Tennis Committee of the International Table Tennis Federation after receiving overwhelming support from members of the federation's general assembly.

According to IRNA, the decision was finalized during

the ITTF General Assembly, held alongside the World Table Tennis Championships in London. During the meeting, members reviewed the status of the federation's specialized committees and their interim heads before unanimously approving Limouchi's continued leadership of the Para Table Tennis Committee.

Limouchi had initially been

appointed interim chair of the committee during an ITTF Executive Board meeting in Chengdu in October last year.

Following approximately six months in the role, she has now officially secured the position on a permanent basis.

Currently serving as head coach of Iran's women's national table tennis team, Limouchi has become the first Iranian repre-

sentative in the country's table tennis history to chair one of the International Table Tennis Federation's official committees. The Para Table Tennis Committee is considered one of the ITTF's most important specialized bodies and is responsible for policymaking, development and oversight of international programs for athletes with disabilities.

Persepolis to stick with Osmar despite poor run: Report

Sports Desk

Persepolis hierarchy has reaffirmed its commitment to head coach Osmar Vieira, insisting the Persian Gulf Pro League giant has no plans to make a change despite the team's alarming dip in form during the second half of the season, before the Iranian top flight campaign was called off on February 28.

The Tehran Reds endured a nightmare run after the Brazilian took charge of the bench for a second spell last November, managing just two wins in seven matches while suffering five defeats. The dismal stretch has seen Persepolis, who finished the first half of the season in second place, tumble all the way down to sixth in the standings. Unsurprisingly, fan discontent grew louder with each passing matchday.

According to reports from Football 360, the club remains fully behind the Brazilian tactician even as speculation swirls over potential replacements. Notably, Mahdi Taj, the head of the Iran Football Federation, recently revealed that only two teams had fully supported the decision to continue the league season despite the ongoing wartime circumstances in the country – and Persepolis was one of them.

The reasoning is clear: With eight matches still to play, Persepolis is fighting to salvage its hopes of securing a place in Asian competitions next season. If the season were to end now and spots were allocated based on the

current standings, the Reds, who have lifted the domestic trophy on seven occasions over the past decade, would miss out on continental competition for the second consecutive year – an unthinkable scenario for a club of Persepolis's stature.

Osmar's first stint at Persepolis could hardly have gone better. Over 17 matches across all competitions, he recorded 13 wins and lost just once in regular time, guiding the club to the league title in the 2023/24 season.

His second act, however, has been a different story. Appointed as successor to Wahid Hashemian, the Brazilian has won only seven of 14 matches – a 50 percent win rate – with two draws and five defeats in regular time. Despite those under-



whelming numbers, club officials have shown no signs of wavering.

During the recent 40-day period of conflict and the subsequent ceasefire, Persepolis's management held several on-line coordination meetings with Osmar, who left Iran following the outbreak of war. A short preseason-style training block during the ceasefire was reportedly conducted according to the Brazilian's specifications.

With airspace now reopened, Vieira and his assistants are preparing to travel to Iran and have asked the club to arrange training sessions from the early days of June. The Brazilian remains the only foreign head coach currently active in Iran's top flight, and he is expected to be on the bench when the season resumes.

Despite rumors linking several high-profile Iranian coaches – including Yahya Golmohammadi, Karim Baqeri, Mahdi Tartar, and Hossein Abdi – to the Persepolis job for next season, follow-up inquiries have confirmed that club directors have not been swayed. Initial discussions regarding Persepolis's transfer market strategy for the upcoming campaign have already taken place with Osmar's input.

For now, Persepolis appears determined to tune out the noise. With their Asian hopes hanging by a thread and eight matches remaining to rescue their season, the club is banking on Vieira to turn things around – and has no intention of looking elsewhere.

Iran, IJF discuss expanded cooperation during Kazakhstan Grand Slam

Sports Desk

Arash Miresmaeili, President of the Iran Judo Federation, said he held a "highly important, private and influential" meeting with Marius Vizer, President of the International Judo Federation (IJF), on the sidelines of the Qazaqstan Barysy Grand Slam 2026 in Kazakhstan. According to Miresmaeili, the meeting lasted nearly two hours.

Miresmaeili said a wide range of issues related to Iranian judo were discussed during the talks. He added that Vizer expressed satisfaction with his recent meeting with Iran's Minister of Sports and Youth and pledged continued cooperation with Iranian judo. It was also agreed that the IJF would support members of Iran's national judo team to help ensure their participation in upcoming international competitions.

The Iran Judo Federation president said that taking part in IJF joint training camps and competing in high-level tournaments would help accelerate the progress of Iran's young judokas.

Miresmaeili also stated that discussions were held regarding Iranian referees and the possibility of expanding their presence at the international level. He announced that, with the support of the IJF president, an international coaching course involving 50 Iranian coaches and taught by world-class instructors will be held in Tehran in the coming months.

"Our coaches have been absent from such courses for several years, and this program could



Arash Miresmaeili **IRNA**

represent a major leap forward for them," Miresmaeili said.

Referring to the four-year suspension of Iranian judo, he said the federation had remained active throughout the ban and was now focused on returning strongly to international events. "After six years, we competed in a Grand Slam event again, which itself shows that we are aiming for major international arenas," he said.

Miresmaeili further revealed that Vizer expressed condolences over the deaths of eight Iranian judokas during the recent war and asked him to convey his message of sympathy to their families. Vizer also expressed regret over the destruction of Iran's national judo training camp during recent attacks.

The Iran Judo Federation president added that the IJF chief had formally invited Iran's Minister of Sports and Youth to attend the Senior World Judo Championships, scheduled to be held in Azerbaijan in October, as a special guest. Commenting on the participa-

tion of three Iranian judokas in the Grand Slam tournaments in Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, Miresmaeili said the federation had gradually promoted teenage and youth athletes over the past two years. After competing in World Cup events last year, the athletes advanced to higher-level competitions, including this year's Grand Slam tournaments. He praised the courage of the national team coaching staff, noting that the team had gone two months without training and missed several competitions, yet still chose to participate in the Grand Slam events. "Due to the special circumstances, we spent nearly 30 hours traveling overland," he said.

Miresmaeili emphasized that the Iranian judokas competing in the events were between 17 and 20 years old and needed exposure to elite-level tournaments in order to gain experience and prepare for larger international competitions.

Given the circumstances, he said the athletes' performances should not be judged, stressing that the main goal was participation and the accumulation of world ranking points ahead of future events, including competitions in Nagoya.

Describing the federation's recent efforts as "a major transformation" for Iranian judo, Miresmaeili said the recent defeats could ultimately prove to be "a valuable investment for the future."

"We must strive for a strong performance at the 2026 Asian Games in Nagoya and then begin thinking about the Olympic Games," he said.

Iranica Desk

In the winding alleys of Kashan, the scent of silk and the craftsmanship of hands that once wove Sha'r-Bafi are fading. Sha'r-Bafi — an ancient silk-weaving craft with a history stretching back more than 2,000 years — is struggling to survive and now stands on the brink of extinction.

According to IRNA, the Persian word Sha'r traditionally refers to human or animal hair, but in the context of traditional weaving it describes a delicate silk fabric produced on a four-harness loom. The craft yields a variety of products, including belts and headbands for Kurdish clothing, towels, women's scarves, bed covers, bundles, and coats.

What distinguishes Sha'r-Bafi from other textiles is not merely the silk itself, but the spirit woven into every thread.

The craft is practiced in two styles: A "simple" form using purple, black, yellow, and green colors for women's garments, and a black-and-white "striped" style, typically measuring two by 1.5 meters, for men's clothing. Until about six decades ago, more than 1,000 Sha'r-Bafi workshops operated in Kashan. At the time, nearly every household in the city maintained a small weaving workshop, and weaving tools were considered essential household items.

Today, however, only 25 workshops remain active, largely due

Ancient Sha'r-Bafi in Kashan faces extinction



● khabaronline.ir

to the mass production of inexpensive machine-made textiles. Statistics from Kashan's Cultural Heritage Department show that Sha'r-Bafi flourished during the Safavid era. Its decline began in the late Qajar period with the arrival of cheap industrial textiles. Neglect in preserving and promoting handwoven fabrics has dealt a severe blow to the craft. Locals have long believed that the silk fabrics possess healing properties, and some contem-

porary studies suggest that silk thread and handwoven silk textiles may have anti-cancer properties. As a result, Sha'r-Bafi is viewed not only as an art form, but also as a craft that could contribute to public health. Observers say the industry's biggest challenge now lies elsewhere: with the exception of a few veteran masters, most Sha'r-Bafi products have failed to adapt to modern tastes or appeal to tourists. Ordinary products,

mainly used for traditional Kurdish clothing, have a limited market and are sold mostly during the spring and Nowruz holiday season, leaving workshops nearly idle for the rest of the year. The economic situation facing artisans has also become increasingly difficult. A skilled Sha'r-Bafi weaver working full time can earn an income that barely covers the basic living costs of a family in present-day Kashan. As a result, younger

generations are showing little interest in entering the profession, and the average age of weavers has risen above 50. In July 2018, Kashan was officially designated Iran's "National City of Textiles" by the National Handicrafts Council. The title, however, represents not only an honor but also a significant responsibility. Handicrafts are considered part of a region's cultural identity and history, and their survival depends on

two key factors: skilled artisans and sustained public demand. Experts warn that unless serious efforts are made to revive Sha'r-Bafi — from marketing tourist-friendly products to providing insurance and financial support for weavers — the craft could soon join the growing list of Iran's forgotten cultural heritage. Kashan, with a population of more than 364,000 people, is located nearly 200 kilometers north of Isfahan.

Suspension bridges among Iran's most thrilling tourist attractions

Iranica Desk

Suspension bridges are among the most exciting tourist attractions in Iran, drawing large numbers of travelers and visitors throughout the year who seek a unique experience of walking at height.

A bridge is generally used to connect two points on opposite sides of a river, valley, or other natural landscape. However, such structures are not always solid and fixed; they can also be flexible and dynamic, as in the case of suspension bridges, according to IRNA.

When crossing a suspension bridge, visitors are often less focused on the destination ahead and more attentive to the moving pathway beneath their feet.

Negel

The Negel Glass Suspension Bridge, located in Negel village in Kurdistan Province, is considered one of the longest and largest in Iran and the Middle East. The bridge was inaugurated in 2021 and has since become a popular tourist attraction. It was built with the aim of developing regional infrastructure and attracting more visitors to Kurdistan Province. The bridge stretches 450 meters in length and stands 88 meters above a river flowing through the village.

The distance from Tehran to the bridge is approximately 550 kilometers, a journey of around seven to eight hours by car. The bridge is located along the Sanandaj-Marivan road, about 65 kilometers from Sanandaj, which takes roughly one hour and 15 minutes by car. It is also about 60 kilometers from Marivan, a journey of around one hour.

In addition to the glass bridge, a variety of recreational facilities are available for visitors, including an 88-meter jump platform, a 370-meter zipline, as well as swimming and rafting activities along

a 4-kilometer route for water sports enthusiasts.

Due to its geographical location and natural attractions, the bridge area can be visited throughout the year; however, such structures are not always solid and fixed; they can also be flexible and dynamic, as is the case with suspension bridges, according to IRNA.



Negel Glass Suspension Bridge
● IRNA

A visit to the Negel Glass Suspension Bridge offers an unforgettable experience for nature lovers, history enthusiasts, and adventure seekers alike.

Hir

Hir, a pleasant town in Ardabil Province located south of Ardabil city, is known for its orchards of cherries and sour cherries and is often referred to as the "City of Cherry Blossoms" and a garden city of the province due to its unique natural scenery.

One of its main attractions is the Hir Glass Suspension Bridge, built over a river in a remarkable valley. The bridge stands at a height of 100 meters above the ground, is 250 meters long, and 1.2 meters wide. Its deck consists of five-layer glass panels (each three centimeters thick), connected by metal joints and supported by steel cables. The bridge was designed and constructed by Iranian engineers.

The complex is not limited to the suspension bridge itself and includes various recreational facilities such as a swimming pool, a musical fountain, bungee jumping, a trampoline, and a zipline that crosses the valley at a height of nearly 150 meters. Due to its location near the Sarab-Ardabil road and its pristine natural environment, Hir is considered one of

by the private sector in Phase 2 of Nahj ol-Balagheh Park and was completed in 2018. The bridge extends from the parking area of the park on Arabshahi Boulevard to Pardisan Park. It is 285 meters long, two meters wide, and stands 65 to 80 meters above the Pounak riverbed. To ensure stability, 12 galvanized steel cables with a diameter of 43 millimeters were used. The bridge can support the simultaneous weight of around 200 people. Its flat, red-colored deck and nighttime lighting enhance its visual appeal. A platform in the middle of the bridge allows for activities such as two-person swings, aerial rappelling, and bungee jumping.

the most attractive destinations in Ardabil Province. Access to the Hir Bridge is possible via the Ardabil-Khalkhal road. Hir is located about 30 kilometers southeast of Ardabil, and after reaching the town, visitors can access the Darband Valley, where the bridge is situated. The distance from Tehran to the bridge is approximately 560 kilometers, taking around 7 to 8 hours by car.

The best time to visit the Hir Suspension Bridge is from late spring to late summer, when the weather is mild and the surrounding nature is at its most vibrant.



Nahj ol-Balagheh Bridge
● kajara.com

The surrounding Nahj ol-Balagheh Park covers more than 35,000 square meters and offers a wide range of recreational and leisure facilities, including walking and cycling paths, sports areas, children's playgrounds, 6D and 7D cinemas, an art garden, an open-air amphitheater, and other attractions.

Access to the bridge is possible via Hakim and Hemmat highways, and nearby metro stations facilitate visitor access. From Hemmat Metro Station, visitors can reach the park in approximately 15 minutes by car.

Namak Abroud

The Namak Abroud tourist complex is one of the popular recreational destinations in Mazandaran Province. Its cable car, which passes through forests and mountainous landscapes, is the most visited attraction in the area.

Other recreational facilities in the complex include sled rides, ATV vehicles, aerial sports, karting, a shooting club, a 6D cinema, paintball, restaurants, an aquarium, cycling tracks, and an animal exhibition.

Adventure attractions such as ziplining, suspension bridges and quad biking are part of the adventure park. The park was opened in 2012 and includes two motorized zipline routes and two suspension bridge lines.

restrooms, handicraft shops, accommodation facilities, and hotels, as well as picnic areas.

The distance from Tehran to Namak Abroud is approximately 160 kilometers, taking about three to four hours depending on traffic. The best time to visit is spring and summer, although autumn is also popular due to its colorful scenery.

Avaj

The Avaj Suspension Bridge is one of the attractions of Qazvin Province, located in the pleasant town of Avaj, about 120 kilometers (90 minutes) from Qazvin.

This bridge is considered one of the most famous suspension bridges in Iran and is known as the second-highest suspension bridge in the country after the Meshgin Shahr Suspension Bridge. It was inaugurated in 2019 and has since become a popular tourist destination. A portion of the bridge is made of glass and it is also known as the Avaj Glass Suspension Bridge.

The bridge is 170 meters long and 1.5 meters wide and is located above Avaj Waterfall and Shah Valley, a region characterized by tall cliffs and a scenic waterfall. It is capable of supporting significant weight.

The deck is made of metal, and its lighting enhances its nighttime appearance. The bridge is constructed with strong steel cables and equipped with safety railings. Facilities such as parking, restrooms, fountains, and green spaces are available nearby.

The distance from Tehran to Avaj is about 250 kilometers. The route passes through the Tehran-Qazvin highway, and after about 110 kilometers on the Qazvin-Hamedan road, visitors reach Avaj. The best time to visit is spring and summer, when the weather is mild and suitable for sightseeing. A typical visit takes about one to two hours.

'Shahnameh' manuscript unveiled in Mashhad as Iran honors Ferdowsi's legacy

Arts & Culture Desk

A rare 350-year-old manuscript of Ferdowsi's 'Shahnameh' (Book of Kings) was unveiled Tuesday at the Central Library of Astan Quds Razavi in Iran in Mashhad, as Iranian cultural institutions launched a series of events marking Ferdowsi National Day (May 15) and celebrating the Persian epic's enduring international stature. The handwritten volume, preserved at the Astan Quds Razavi manuscript center, was presented during the shrine complex's 289th weekly cultural and academic gathering, according to IRNA. Scholars said the lavishly produced manuscript was likely copied in Mu-

ghal India in the late 17th or early 18th century before being endowed to the Razavi shrine in 1753. "This edition was clearly prepared for a prominent figure in India," manuscript expert Amir Mansouri said, citing its six-column format, fine Nasta'liq calligraphy and large folio dimensions. The 325-page manuscript, cataloged under No. 4127, is now accessible to researchers and literary scholars. Mansouri said the library currently houses 34 handwritten volumes centered on the Shahnameh, many of them produced in India, reflecting centuries of cultural and literary ties between Iran and the Indian subcontinent as well as Indian patrons'

devotion to Persian heritage. The unveiling coincides with nationwide tributes ahead of May 15, officially observed in Iran as Ferdowsi National Day. The Iranian National Works and Cultural Figures Association is set to host a virtual ceremony titled 'Shahnameh, the Epic of Iran's Resilience,' bringing together leading Persian literature scholars and cultural figures. Widely regarded as one of the world's greatest epic poets, Ferdowsi safeguarded the Persian language through the 'Shahnameh,' a monumental work chronicling Iran's ancient history, mythology and civilizational memory across generations.



Iran eyes regional tourism rebound after conflict

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran is moving to revive its tourism industry through regional outreach, rural travel initiatives and international cultural events after the sector sustained losses estimated at 28.5 quadrillion rials (\$15.6 billion) during the recent Ramadan war, Deputy Tourism Minister Anoushirvan Mohseni-Bandpey said on Tuesday. The losses, excluding airlines, hit hotels and accommodation providers hardest, accounting for 20 quadrillion rials (\$10.9 billion), while travel agencies lost 5.5 quadrillion rials (\$3 billion), tour guides one quadrillion rials (\$546 million) and other tourism-related activities two quadrillion rials (\$1.09 billion), Mohseni-Bandpey told reporters at a press briefing, IRNA reported. Despite the conflict coinciding with Iran's peak spring travel season and the 12-day hostilities disrupting operations across the sector, the official said more than 29 million domestic trips were recorded during the Nowruz holidays, showing what he described as the resilience of the country's travel market. Seeking to rebuild international confidence, Iran has secured the hosting



rights for Economic Cooperation Organization tourism events and plans to stage additional regional gatherings aimed at restoring inbound travel flows and rebranding the country's tourism profile. The ministry is also banking on a surge in religious and medical travel. More than 140,000 pilgrimage and health travelers entered Iran in March 2026, with arrivals rising to over 178,000 in April despite wartime conditions, Mohseni-Bandpey said. Authorities are preparing a support package for tourism businesses that includes six-month tax and insurance deferrals as well as delayed loan repayments. Separately, 14 quadrillion rials (\$7.6 billion) in low-interest financing has been earmarked for eco-lodges and handicraft operators, with loans carrying a 4% rate. The tourism official said rural tourism had emerged as a new growth driver after three Iranian villages

Iran's Deputy Tourism Minister Anoushirvan Mohseni-Bandpey (C) attends a press briefing with journalists in Tehran, Iran, May 12, 2026. ● CHTN

were added to a global tourism list in 2025, while eight more villages are competing for international recognition in 2026. Under a long-term "stable peace" scenario outlined by the ministry, Iran aims to increase inbound arrivals by 50%, expand electronic visas to 33 countries and attract foreign investment into health tourism and ecotourism projects. The deputy minister also announced the imminent launch of a national tourism card for Iranian travelers and said eco-lodge operators had been exempted from paying insurance contributions as part of broader efforts to shield small operators from mounting financial pressure.

Cinematic palette widens in bid to lure audiences back to theaters

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's cinema industry has broadened its production slate across social dramas, children's features and youth-oriented works, the head of the Cinema Organization of Iran said, as authorities seek to reinvigorate theaters, nurture emerging filmmakers and strengthen the country's cultural appeal for international audiences and artists. Raed Faridzadeh, speaking to IRNA in Tehran, said the diversification of film production had widened options for domestic screenings and boosted momentum across the industry at a time of economic strain.

"The country's cinematic slate has become increasingly diverse," he said, pointing to the growing range of genres moving into both production and theatrical release. Faridzadeh said the organization had worked over the past year to ensure that "all genres" could secure space in both production pipelines and cinema schedules, amid efforts to revive audience engagement and expand cultural activity nationwide. He also stressed that Iran remained open to filmmakers and actors living abroad, describing the country's embrace of cinema professionals as broad and inclusive. "There is no restriction or obstacle for

cinematic activists returning to the country," he said, adding that filmmakers from "different perspectives" had stood alongside the public in recent years. The cinema chief called on directors and producers to help capture contemporary social realities on screen and contribute to public morale through cultural production. Faridzadeh also highlighted the emergence of a "gifted and skilled" younger generation showcased at the Fajr Film Festival, saying cultural institutions were moving to create more opportunities for new filmmakers to present their work and sustain the industry's creative renewal.

Tehran, Kabul expand cross-border healthcare cooperation

Social Desk

Iran and Afghanistan are advancing plans to expand cross-border healthcare services and establish a joint border marketplace, Iranian officials said Tuesday at a bilateral meeting with authorities from Afghanistan's Farah Province, as Tehran moves to strengthen regional cooperation and improve services for border communities. Speaking at the second joint session on economic and border cooperation, Iran's Consul General in Herat, Alireza Marhamati, said officials from both sides were pursuing coordinated measures to ease border issues, broaden cooperation and improve public services along the frontier, IRNA reported.



He described the initiative as a potential "model" for collaboration across other shared borders. A central focus of the talks was healthcare access for Afghan citizens. Marhamati said Tehran and Kabul were drafting a joint framework to streamline medical treatment and visa procedures for Afghan patients traveling to Iran.

Iran's policy in this field, he said, is aimed primarily at helping Afghan patients receive treatment rather than generating revenue. The discussions also highlighted growing cooperation in agriculture and livestock. Marhamati said several Iranian delegations had traveled to Afghanistan to explore investment opportunities, including

cotton cultivation projects. He added that two slaughterhouses in Herat built according to Iranian standards had received approval from Iranian representatives and were expected to begin operations soon. Officials also reviewed plans for a joint border marketplace designed to facilitate easier exchanges for residents living on both sides of the frontier and support economic activity in border regions. Alireza Khomehzar, head of the Birjand Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, said smoother customs procedures, stronger private-sector coordination and improved transport infrastructure could further deepen cooperation between the neighboring countries.

Lake Urmia hits six-year high after favorable precipitation

Social Desk

Lake Urmia's water level has climbed to its highest point since 2020, Iranian officials said during a field inspection of the northwestern salt lake on Tuesday, as authorities stepped up efforts to stabilize one of the Middle East's most fragile ecosystems. Reza Rahmani, governor of West Azarbaijan Province and secretary of the national task force for Lake Urmia restoration, said the lake's water level had reached 1,271.03

meters after months of increased inflows averaging roughly 30 million cubic meters per day. The improvement has triggered the revival of Artemia, the lake's native brine shrimp, and the return of migratory birds to the internationally known wetland, IRNA reported. Rahmani attributed the recovery to heavier rainfall, river dredging, controlled water releases and the refilling of surrounding wetlands, but warned that "summer evaporation cycles" could reverse the gains if current

conditions fail to hold through 2027. He said authorities had launched a broad campaign to cut agricultural water consumption by 50% across the basin through crop-pattern reforms and modern irrigation systems, while also calling on universities in Urmia and Tabriz to help develop long-term stabilization plans. The revival of Artemia has also drawn attention to the lake's economic potential. Nasser Agh, head of the Artemia Research Institute at Urmia University, said expanded Artemia

cultivation and exports could help finance restoration projects while supporting Iran's aquaculture sector. A pilot artificial-lake project near Rahmanlu Port in East Azarbaijan Province is expected to produce up to 50 tons of Artemia annually, alongside five tons of Artemia cysts used in fish and shrimp farming. It is said that public participation and tighter controls on illegal water extraction remain essential to preventing renewed drought conditions in the basin.

