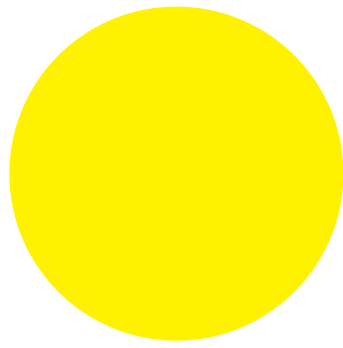


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## US dishonesty main obstacle to ending war: *Araghchi*

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### Pezeshkian tells Iran stars to show 'strength, unity and dignity' at 2026 World Cup

Sports Desk



President Masoud Pezeshkian (5th Left, 2nd Row) poses with a family photo with the Iranian football squad in Tehran on May 13, 2026. [president.ir](http://president.ir)

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian delivered a passionate send-off to the country's national football team before its departure for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, urging players to show "a powerful, ethical and hope-inspiring image of the Iranian nation" on football's biggest stage.

Speaking during a visit to Iran's national team training camp in Tehran, Pezeshkian met players, coaches and technical staff as preparations gear up for the tournament, which kicks off on June 11 in the United States and Mexico. "What the Iranian nation expects from its sons is to stand honorably and fight with all their might on the field of competition," Pezeshkian told the squad.

The president described the national team as the "representatives of the hope, determination, pride and unity of the Iranian nation" at the World Cup. "We hope you head into these competitions with strength, unity and an inspiring spirit, return with dignity and honor," he added.

During the visit, Pezeshkian was presented with Iran's No. 12 shirt in a symbolic gesture from the squad.

Iran, managed by Amir Ghalenoei, will compete in Group G alongside Belgium, Egypt and New Zealand.

All three of Iran's group-stage matches are scheduled to be played in the United States. Their opening fixture comes on June 15 against New Zealand at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California, just outside Los Angeles.

### Time to benefit from war gains

EDITORIAL

Almost forty days into the war, one reality stands out. The United States, the world's leading military, political and economic power, backed by Israel and what is widely regarded as the Middle East's strongest air force, launched an all-out war on Iran in pursuit of clearly stated objectives.

The conflict began on Feb. 28 and quickly evolved into a broad, coordinated campaign against Iran. Several Arab states in the region aided the aggression by opening their airspace and territory to the attacking forces. In effect, Iran faced a multilayered assault. Yet despite the scale of the military pressure brought to bear, the key objective of the war remained unmet. Throughout the conflict, President Donald Trump repeatedly spoke about seizing Iran's stockpile of highly enriched uranium. One week after the war began, he told reporters aboard Air Force One that he believed the map of Iran would "probably not" look the same once the war ended. He also openly encouraged Iranians

to rise up against their government to bring about regime change. "When we are finished, take over your government," he said in an appeal directed at "the people of Iran."

Trump at times went even further, speaking candidly about Iran's oil resources. "My favorite thing is to take the oil in Iran," he said, while also expressing interest in occupying Kharg Island in the Persian Gulf, Iran's largest oil export terminal.

At the same time, he every now and then claimed that Iran's missile program, air force and navy had been destroyed. Those were among Trump's main wartime objectives and ambitions. Yet none of them materialized. Instead, the armed forces of a country that had faced decades of weapons sanctions mounted a response that surprised much of the world. Not only did Washington fail to attain its objectives, but according to available reports, 228 military assets in 15 US bases in the region were destroyed, with some suffering damage beyond repair. Moreover, the Strait of Hormuz, the

world's most critical energy chokepoint through which around 20% of global oil supplies pass, effectively fell under Iranian military control in the early days of the war with most shipping traffic halted.

The situation has become so embarrassing for Washington that reopening the conduit has itself turned into one of the war's primary objectives, despite the fact that the waterway had been fully open before the conflict began.

The war also triggered a wave of national solidarity inside Iran. Even many people who had longstanding disagreements with the Establishment, both at home and overseas, rallied around the defense of Iran once the homeland came under attack. More than 30 million people registered online in a system known as "Janfada," pledging to sacrifice their lives for the country.

These are major achievements that, in the eyes of many inside Iran, must be safeguarded. They have also drawn admiration from many around the world. From the standpoint of a neu-

tral observer, Iran stood for 40 days, resisted fiercely, defended itself and continued striking enemy targets all on its own.

But the war has also had costs for Iran. According to government spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani, the war inflicted an estimated \$270 billion in damage on Iran's economy.

More than 120,000 residential and commercial units have either been destroyed or damaged. Iran's economic and energy infrastructure, including steel plants and petrochemical facilities, was bombed. The consequences are increasingly being felt in ordinary people's lives through rising inflation, unemployment and growing economic pressure.

The Iranian people resisted bravely under bombs and missiles and are now enduring the consequences of war with patience and dignity.

The gains achieved through that resistance must now be protected and, at the right moment, translated into tangible benefits for the public.

President Masoud Pezeshkian said Monday that Iran now faces three

possible paths: entering negotiations while preserving "authority and national interests," remaining in a state of "neither war nor peace," or continuing "the path of war."

At the same time, Pezeshkian revealed what he described as "rational preference" that the battlefield gains secured by Iran's armed forces should be "completed through diplomacy," and that "the rights of the Iranian nation be secured from a position of dignity and strength."

Wars begin with violence and bloodshed and leave a trail of death and destruction, but they usually end through diplomacy.

Iran does not come to the negotiating table empty-handed. If anything, some of the strongest cards may now be in Tehran's hands. Those cards could help secure the rights of the Iranian people, bring the cruel sanctions to an end and open the door to rebuilding the destruction of war through normalized trade and economic relations, allowing Iran to continue its path toward development and prosperity with renewed strength.

# US dishonesty main obstacle to ending war: *Araghchi*

## International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said the United States' threatening and provocative rhetoric, lack of goodwill and dishonesty in the negotiations are the main obstacles to resolution of the current situation in the region. Abbas Araghchi made the remarks during a meeting with Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister Andreas Motzfeldt Kravik in Tehran on Tuesday. The Iranian top diplomat also described the US's maximalist approach as well as its other instances of counterproductive attitude as other obstacles to ending the situation that has arisen out of unprovoked aggression by the US and Israel against Iran in February. Together with the Israeli regime, the US waged its latest bout of unlawful attacks on Iran from February 28 to

April 7. US President Donald Trump announced a ceasefire on the latter date amid decisive Iranian retaliation, but on April 13, declared continuation of an illegal blockade of Iranian vessels and ports. The Islamic Republic began shutting down the strategic Strait of Hormuz to enemies and their allies after the launch of the aggression. Tehran brought in far stricter controls following Trump's decision to sustain the blockade. Iran has ruled out returning to negotiations as long as the US refused to meet its conditions, including cessation of aggression on all fronts and removal of the blockade. Araghchi also stressed that the main source of the current situation in the Strait of Hormuz was the American-Israeli aggression, followed by repeated violations of the ceasefire



Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister Andreas Motzfeldt Kravik (L) talks with Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi during a visit to Tehran on May 12, 2026. **IRNA**

through continued blockade. According to the foreign minister, the Islamic Republic, as a littoral state of the Strait of Hormuz, is engaged in consultations and discussions to formulate regulations related to arrangements concerning the waterway in line with the international law. The arrangements, he added, is aimed at strengthening and facilitating safe passage through the strait. For his part, the Norwegian official emphasized the necessity of establishing lasting peace and stability in the region and efforts to safeguard the international law. He also expressed his coun-



try's readiness to assist in strengthening diplomacy as well as consultations regarding maritime safety and environmental protection in the region.

## Army warns no American arms to transit Hormuz into regional bases



Iran will no longer allow US weaponry to transit the Strait of Hormuz into regional bases, said the Iranian Army, declaring that the strategic waterway is now under the coordinated strategic control of the Iranian Armed Forces. "From now on, we will not allow American weapons to transit the Strait of Hormuz and enter regional bases," Army spokesman Brigadier General Mohammad Akraminia said on Wednesday. "Any country wishing to transit the waterway must do so under the supervision of Iran's armed forces, ensuring a 'passage without harm,'" he said during a ceremony marking the 40<sup>th</sup> day after

the burial of former Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi. According to Akraminia, the western part of the strait is under the command of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy, while its eastern section is controlled by the Islamic Republic of Iran Army's Navy. "This coordinated and synergistic control, while enhancing Iran's monitoring and sovereignty over the region, will generate revenues for the country up to twice the oil income," he stated. Iran has closed the Strait of Hormuz to shipping associated with the aggressors and their allies in

response to the US-Israeli aggression which began on February 28. Iran began enforcing much stricter controls last month following US President Donald Trump's announcement of a blockade targeting Iranian vessels and ports. The general further asserted that despite two decades of planning by enemies to attack Iran, the country's armed forces not only maintained their combat capability but also actively thwarted hostile objectives through missile strikes and ground operations. He noted that in the recent war, all of the enemy's goals, including the destruction of missile and nuclear capabilities, the fragmentation of the country, and the overthrow of the system, failed. Akraminia maintained that Iran's military doctrine is now offensive in nature and any mistake by an enemy will be met with the most severe response. "After the first revolution that expelled the Shah and the second revolution that expelled America from Iran, today we will expel America from the entire region, and its presence will be eliminated from this region forever," he said.

## Deputy FM urges BRICS to defend nations' rights against monopoly, sanctions, coercion

### International Desk

Iran on Wednesday called on the BRICS group of emerging economies to turn into a platform for equal cooperation, mutual respect, independent decision-making, and the defense of nations' rights against monopoly, sanctions, and the policy of coercion.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi, who has traveled to India's capital to participate in BRICS meeting of foreign ministers on Thursday and Friday, made the remarks in a post on X. Gharibabadi said that Iran's active participation in BRICS represents "a strategic choice to strengthen genuine multilateralism, expand equal cooperation and help shape a fairer order in international relations." He expressed hope that the main ministerial session scheduled on Thursday and Friday could be an important occasion to discuss the future of cooperation in the Global South, reform international economic governance, develop independent trade, strengthen financial and banking ties, and reduce dependence on unilateral mechanisms. Referring to Iran's role in BRICS, Gharib-



abadi pointed out that the country, with its geopolitical, energy, transit, scientific, and human capacities, can make an effective contribution to the bloc's agenda for balanced development, economic security, regional connectivity, and strengthening the voice of independent nations. The senior diplomat further stressed the need for opposing the unilateral coercive actions of the United States and defending the rights of nations, saying the future of the world lies in cooperation, justice, and true multilateralism. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi left Tehran for New Delhi on Wednesday to take part in the two-day BRICS summit. He will also hold talks and exchange views with his counterparts attending the meeting.

## Iran calls for Kuwait to immediately release Iranians arrested on 'baseless' accusations

### International Desk

Foreign Ministry in a statement on Wednesday rejected "baseless" accusations leveled by Kuwait against Iran after the Arab country arrested four Iranian nationals for allegedly attempting to "infiltrate" the Persian Gulf state. The ministry strongly condemned the "improper action" of the Kuwaiti government in "politically and propagandistically exploiting" the case of four Iranian personnel who had been on a routine naval patrol mission and entered Kuwaiti territorial waters due to a navigational system malfunction. "The Islamic Republic of Iran, while reiterating its principled policy of respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries in the region, including



Kuwait, declares that it expects the Kuwaiti authorities, while avoiding hasty statements and baseless allegations, to pursue the existing issues through official channels," it said. Iran's reaction came after Kuwait's Interior Ministry claimed on Tuesday that the Arab country has arrested four people affiliated with Iran's Islamic Revolution

Guards Corps who attempted to infiltrate the Persian Gulf state's Bubiyan Island by sea. It also claimed that Iranians injured a soldier during clashes with Kuwaiti forces. Kuwait said the operation took place on May 1 and the naval officers arrested "aboard a fishing boat specially chartered to carry out hostile actions against Kuwait". Iran's Foreign Ministry stressed the need for Iran's Embassy in Kuwait to be granted "the fastest possible access" to the detained Iranian nationals in accordance with international legal norms, and called for their immediate release. Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced on Tuesday that it had summoned the Iranian ambassador and delivered a note of protest to him.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

### CARTOON



# National power generation capacity hits 100,000 MW despite war

**SATBA:** Renewable energy output to reach 7,000 MW



## Economy Desk

A senior official at Iran's Thermal Power Plants Holding Company (TPPH) announced on Wednesday that the country's total electricity generation capacity had reached 100,000 megawatts despite ongoing wartime pressures and threats against national energy infrastructure.

Hamid Seirafianpour, deputy for planning and management development at TPPH, said development work and electricity production programs continued uninterrupted during the Ramadan War, the 40-day aggression that was carried out by the United States and Israel on February 28. "Despite numerous enemy threats to

bomb electricity industry facilities, activities in this sector continued and the total capacity of the country's power plants reached 100,000 megawatts," Seirafianpour said in a televised interview.

He said Iran had also reduced the installation and commissioning time for a gas-fired power unit to 99 days, compared with more than four months under normal conditions.

According to Seirafianpour, the 4th gas unit at the Neka Power Plant was completed entirely using domestic engineering expertise and locally manufactured equipment, reflecting Iran's emphasis on self-sufficiency in strategic industries amid sanctions and regional tensions.

Separately, Deputy Energy Minister Mohsen Tarzatab said Iran aims to increase renewable energy capacity to 7,000 megawatts by late June or early July.

Tarzatab, who also heads Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA), said authorities were consolidating renewable energy projects to reduce the use of fossil fuels, particularly natural gas and diesel.

Iran has faced chronic electricity shortages in recent years due to rising domestic demand, aging infrastructure and fuel supply constraints, prompting officials to accelerate investment in both thermal and renewable power generation.

## TPO: Iran eyes \$10b trade with Pakistan via barter, transit expansion

### Economy Desk

The Islamic Republic is focusing on removing infrastructure bottlenecks, expanding border trade and activating barter mechanisms as part of a roadmap to increase bilateral trade with Pakistan to \$10 billion, a senior Iranian trade official said on Wednesday. Abdolsadeh Neisy, assistant to the head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) and director general for Asia and the Indian sub-continent, said deeper economic ties between Tehran and Islamabad had become a strategic necessity rather than simply a diplomatic choice.

"Deepening relations between Iran and Pakistan is no longer merely a diplo-



matic option, but a strategic necessity aimed at increasing economic resilience," Neisy said during a meeting with traders and business representatives at the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, according to state media. He said Pakistan represented a strong market for Iranian goods and products and added that Pakistani ports could play an important role in the re-export of Iranian products to third

countries, as well as in supplying essential goods and raw materials for Iranian manufacturers.

Neisy called for diversification of trade routes and said Pakistan should be viewed as a regional hub for securing key imports and industrial inputs.

Iran and Pakistan have long discussed boosting bilateral trade, but progress has been constrained by international sanctions on Teh-

ran, weak banking links and logistical barriers.

To ease transport costs and logistical difficulties, Neisy proposed the creation of a joint transportation company to facilitate the transfer of containers unloaded at Karachi Port.

He also highlighted operational challenges facing economic cooperation between the two countries, including sanctions, the absence of direct banking relations and the expansion of informal trade.

As possible solutions, Neisy suggested expanding barter trade, using local currencies in transactions, focusing on non-sanctioned sectors and increasing the role of small and medium-sized enterprises in bilateral commerce.

## Eurasia System launched at IRICA to facilitate int'l trade



### Economy Desk

The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) system is ready for operation at the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), aimed at paving suitable ways for stakeholders to use exemptions predicted in the EAEU agreement, state media reported on Wednesday.

According to Mehr News Agency, the necessary infrastructures have been prepared and ready for implementation for being used by the economic ac-

tors in line with the policies of IRICA in making customs processes "smart and electronic" with the aim of enhancing the transparency, speed, and predictability of trade procedures, especially within the framework of the implementation of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) inked between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union. The system, known as the "Eurasia System," has been designed and prepared for operation with the aim of facilitating the use of economic actors

from discounts and exemptions predicted within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union Agreement, as well as the systematic management of processes related to certificates of origin and goods covered by this agreement.

IRICA's authorities said the move is intended to speed up trade procedures by replacing paper-based processes with electronic documentation and verification systems, while increasing transparency and improving oversight of imports.

Iran signed a free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union in late 2023 as Tehran seeks to deepen economic ties with regional partners amid Western sanctions and efforts to diversify its trade relations.

## Beyond knowledge economy; why resources still rule

By Ehsan Mohebbi Nazar  
Economist, strategy consultant

### OPINION EXCLUSIVE

For much of the past generation, globalization encouraged the belief that the world was moving beyond the geopolitics of raw materials. Data would replace oil, software would eclipse steel, and knowledge would become the ultimate currency of power. For decades, a comforting narrative has dominated global discourse: invest in education, nurture innovation, and build world-class institutions — and prosperity will follow. Singapore, South Korea, and Germany seemed to prove the point: nations with scarce natural resources could outcompete resource-rich rivals through sheer intellectual capital. Yet the reality now unfolding points in a different direction. The century is witnessing not the end of resource competition, but its reinvention — quieter, more complex, and arguably more consequential than before. Scientific knowledge is more accessible than at any point in history, but this inversion — democratized knowledge alongside concentrated resources — may be quietly rewriting the rules of geopolitical power. The late 20th century was an anomaly. The postwar generation in advanced economies produced an unprecedented consumption shock. A vast middle class bought homes, cars, appliances, and electronics at scale. That demand powered industrial growth across East Asia, turned export-led development into a winning strategy, and helped anchor the US dollar at the centre of the global system. It was

not merely military or financial engineering that sustained that order; it was mass consumption.

That demographic engine is now fading. Populations across advanced economies are aging rapidly. Older societies consume differently: less housing turnover, fewer durable goods, more services and healthcare. This is not a collapse of demand, but a structural shift away from the material-intensive consumption that once drove global trade. Meanwhile, many younger societies remain far from the income levels required to replicate that earlier consumption boom. The result is a world in which aggregate demand grows more slowly and unevenly.

In such a world, leverage shifts toward those who control essential inputs. The energy transition illustrates this paradox. Renewable technologies are often portrayed as liberating humanity from resource constraints, yet solar panels, electric vehicles, grid-scale batteries, and modern power networks require lithium, cobalt, nickel, copper, and rare earth elements — materials whose extraction is geographically concentrated in ways that no amount of open-access research can change. According to the IEA, demand for these critical minerals could increase four- to six-fold by mid-century. The knowledge to build a battery may be global; the cobalt inside it is not.

This asymmetry exposes a blind spot in the knowledge-economy thesis. Technology does not exist in abstraction. It requires raw materials, supply chains, and physical infrastructure. A country that leads in artificial intelligence yet depends entirely on externally controlled mineral inputs has built its power on a

foundation others can disrupt. The semiconductor tensions of recent years have already demonstrated that control over materials and manufacturing equipment can matter more than publishing more research papers.

This reality has triggered a new form of strategic competition. Major powers are no longer focused solely on oil fields; they are seeking influence across entire supply chains — from extraction and processing to refining and advanced manufacturing. Long-term mineral offtake agreements, strategic stockpiles, export controls, and investment screening are becoming routine tools of economic policy. Resource diplomacy now sits alongside traditional security alliances.

Multinational corporations are equally active. Automakers are investing directly in mining projects to secure battery inputs. Technology firms are signing long-term power purchase agreements to lock in energy for data infrastructure. Commodity traders are expanding into logistics, storage, and refining. Vertical integration — once dismissed as inefficient in a just-in-time global economy — is returning as a hedge against scarcity and geopolitical risk.

Geography matters again. Critical minerals are unevenly distributed, and processing capacity is even more concentrated, creating chokepoints that can be leveraged economically and politically. Control over a refinery, a shipping lane, or a specialized processing technology can confer influence far beyond the nominal value of the underlying material. In a world of fragile supply chains, resilience becomes power. History offers a caution against determin-



ism. The so-called "resource curse" shows that possessing minerals is not the same as converting them into durable power. Institutions, governance, and the ability to move up the value chain are decisive. The most instructive model today is not simply resource ownership but control over transformation — turning raw inputs into strategic advantage through processing capacity and industrial ecosystems. This is not a return to twentieth-century resource nationalism. The difference today is that resources matter within complex technological systems. The most powerful actors will not be those with resources alone, nor those with technology alone, but those that command the intersection of both.

Innovation will still matter. It will determine how efficiently resources are used, whether substitutes emerge, and how recycling reduces primary demand. But innovation operates within material limits. A battery breakthrough still requires metals; a semiconductor revolution still requires fabrication plants and energy.

The defining feature of the coming decades will be the convergence of technology and geology. Power will flow not only from ideas, but from mines, grids, ports, and processing facilities. In an era often described as digital and dematerialized, the foundations of influence remain profoundly physical. The race for resources is not a relic of the past; it is the structure of the future.

# What will ultimately occur?



By **Jamileh Kadivar**  
Former Iranian  
lawmaker

## OPINION

What will ultimately occur? This is the shortest, yet simultaneously the heaviest question frequently heard in every place these days; a logical question possessing an indeterminate response. What is more, the answer, irrespective of its nature, will not only influence the existence of 90,000,000 Iranians but shall also, through its ramifications extending from Europe and America to the heart of Asia and the most distant points of Africa and Oceania, overshadow the lives of billions of individuals. The future of the region and the globe resides within a profoundly precarious state. Plausible scenarios lying ahead may be classified into the three principal categories delineated below:

1. A deal: Among the occurrences distant from expectation is a comprehensive accord between the belligerent parties. Based upon existent evidence, scant foundation for a durable and exhaustive agreement is discernible. Since Trump seeks a win-lose deal predicated upon Iran's unconditional capitulation, no lucid prospect for such an agreement exists.

Even if negotiations were to be resuscitated, the divergence of goals renders the attainment of a rapid breakthrough for an accord impossible, and, on account of the parties' disparate demands, a compromise to resolve multiple issues does not appear probable, with diplomacy presently remaining in a coma. The sole type of agreement that might possibly achieve realization would be "phased tension reduction" (a circumscribed accord), such that, in light of global economic pressures, elevated petroleum and natural gas prices, and their subsequent effects upon other commodities, the possibility of reaching a provisional compact could be reached. Given Trump's tying of any agreement to the nuclear dossier, the chances of accepting even this are low.

Iran's recent proposal was not warmly received by Washington because the Trump administration maintains the conviction that this proposition constitutes merely an endeavor to defer principal negotiations concerning the nuclear program — the matter that has served as the primary justification for American assaults upon Iran. On April 27, Trump commanded his aides to prepare for a protracted blockade unless Iran consents to the abandonment of its nuclear program.

2. Neither war nor deal: The scenario of "neither war nor deal," which within political circles is also called "frozen conflict" or "diplomatic limbo," represents a condition wherein no extensive or formal military engagement is underway, yet no political or diplomatic agreement to terminate disagreements has been reached either.

Presently, the region is amidst this scenario, with a state of "conditional suspension" characterized by an informal and fragile cease-fire having been established. The Trump administration contends that hostilities have concluded, but, in practice, daily threats persist. The Islam-



DAYBREAK

abad peace negotiations have encountered an impasse. America insists upon "zero enrichment," and Iran posits the complete revocation of the maritime blockade and sanctions as a precondition for any dialogue. The economic warfare and bilateral blockade continue. America has preserved the maritime blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, while Iran has likewise imposed severe restrictions within the Strait, which have engendered a global shock to energy, petroleum, and other sectors. This limbo condition could prove more perilous than war, and the scope of its effects could be more extensive. Economic attrition, enduring sanctions and blockade, and escalating inflation are manifest. This scenario imposes an exceedingly onerous cost upon both parties. In this condition, each side awaits the other's retreat from its positions under domestic pressures (such as America's midterm elections in November or elevated inflation and livelihood pressures in Iran). The United States' entry into such a condition, accompanied by increases in gasoline and other commodity prices approximately six months prior to the November 3 midterm elections, could represent the most adverse political and economic scenario for Trump and the Republicans.



People protest against rising gas prices due to the war on Iran, outside an event featuring US President Donald Trump at The Villages in Florida, the US, on May 1, 2026.

THOMAS SIMONETTI/BLOOMBERG

Iran, too, remains burdened by the weight of escalating economic difficulties.

The perpetuation of this condition could immobilize United States forces within the region for many months, while the Strait of Hormuz remains closed, and both sides await the first erroneous move from the opposing party. At this juncture, time transforms into a determinative factor. Whichever side becomes exhausted first — or "blinks" — will have conceded defeat. Resilience is the condition for victory. Iran relies upon its own resistance, the war's impact upon the global economy, and domestic pressures within the United States. Washington harbors the hope that sanctions and economic pressures, along with the emergence of protests, will ultimately weaken Iran, cause its collapse, and compel its acceptance of the American terms and surrender. The United States and Iran are presently engaged in a struggle whose outcome depends upon the endurance, political will, and resilience of the two parties.

3. Resumption of warfare: In the absence of a permanent, win-win accord permitting both parties to achieve a portion of their demands and claim victory, the resumption of warfare is among the plausible options. Although Trump said, during a telephone conversation with Axios on April 29 that he considers the maritime blockade of Hormuz "somewhat more effective than the bombing," and although



The sole type of agreement that might possibly achieve realization would be "phased tension reduction" (a circumscribed accord), such that, in light of global economic pressures, elevated petroleum and natural gas prices, and their subsequent effects upon other commodities, the possibility of reaching a provisional compact could be reached. Given Trump's tying of any agreement to the nuclear dossier, the chances of accepting even this are low.

he has instructed national security officials to prepare for a protracted blockade of Iranian ports in order to compel Tehran to abandon its nuclear program, the probability of a massive assault or a low-intensity conflict accompanied by periodic attacks — which would also prolong regional instability and global economic disruption — is not remote.

On the same day, Trump shared on his social media platform an image of the Strait of Hormuz, rechristened the "Strait of Trump," which demonstrates his determination to maintain the maritime blockade until Iran's complete submission. This action by Trump has incited a wave of speculation concerning the commencement of a new phase of military tensions within the region and indicates that he now perceives the Strait of Hormuz not as an international waterway but rather as a portion of the assets under his control in this grand gamble. This renaming serves as an indication of Trump's proclivity for the "strategic seizure" of that strait in his mind.

Trump also asserted, in an interview with the Newsmax network, that America "has already won the war against Iran" but desires to win by an even "bigger margin"; a clear omen for the resumption of warfare and for leaving open the path for the continuation of military operations. The United States Senate, on April 30, local time, also rejected, for the 6th time, the resolution limiting the president's war powers that also demanded the cessation of American military attacks upon Iran until congressional authorization has been obtained, thereby leaving Trump's hands free for the resumption of warfare. According to available information, the president of the United States is seriously contemplating the resumption of large-scale combat operations, whether to break the impasse in negotiations or to deliver a decisive blow prior to the war's conclusion.

The day before, on the Truth Social platform, Trump, disseminating an AI-generated image of himself holding a firearm and with a background depicting a region devastated by fire and bombardment with the words "No more Mr Nice Guy!", wrote: "Iran can't get their act together. They don't know how to sign a non-nuclear deal. They better get smart soon!" Later that day, Trump also reposted upon the Truth Social network

another AI-generated image of himself with a backdrop of lightning, within which image the phrases "The storm is coming" and "Nothing can stop what is coming" were written. Numerous military analysts have interpreted this message as a serious warning to Iran amidst the cease-fire negotiation impasse and CENTCOM's preparedness for potential attacks.

America's Fox News network and the Axios news outlet simultaneously unveiled a top-secret session at the White House, during which senior American military commanders presented Donald Trump with a plan for a "final blow" against Iran. The objectives assessed within this plan include remnants of military assets, leadership centers, and infrastructure of Iran; a roster indicating that Washington, having become disillusioned with reaching its desired agreement with Iran, seeks to deliver a disabling and paralyzing strike. Trump was briefed by Rear Admiral Brad Cooper, the CENTCOM Commander, on new options for potential military action in Iran. According to some sources, the options under consideration include the seizure of portions of the Strait of Hormuz to reopen the shipping lane, the deployment of ground forces, and the possible execution of special forces operations to extract highly-enriched uranium stockpiles.

Previously, reports had also been published that the United States Central Command, CENTCOM, had prepared a scheme to execute a wave of "brief and powerful" attacks against Iran with the objective of breaking the negotiation impasse. Subsequent to these attacks, which would presumably target infrastructure, the United States would pressure Iran to return to the negotiating table and submit.

The third aircraft carrier strike group, comprising thousands of elite troops, was deployed within the region recently, representing the largest force augmentation since the 2003 invasion of Iraq. It is estimated that more than 10,000 American troops have been deployed within the region. The continued American military reinforcement within the region indicates that the resumption of warfare is merely a question of time, and the probability of a ground attack is not remote; a step that Trump might contemplate once the necessary conditions, regarding the mobilization of forces and the opening of required borders, have been satisfied.

The confrontation between Iran and America has reached a point wherein "time" and "will" mean more than armaments. While the roar of naval vessels, amidst the profound silence of diplomacy, has placed the world upon the precipice of yet another explosion, both parties are testing one another's threshold of endurance in an historic "blinking contest". The destiny of this costly limbo shall be determined not upon the battlefield but rather within the capacity for national resilience and the political will of the two parties to exit an impasse that has rendered 90,000,000 Iranians, alongside billions of other human beings across the globe, expectant.

The article first appeared in the Persian-language newspaper *Ettela'at*.



# Trump 'bored' with the war he started

## He wants out, but Iran could likely keep going for months



By Jonathan Lemire  
Co-host of MSNOW's  
Morning Joe

### OPINION

President Trump really, really wants the war with Iran to end. He has declared victory many times, including about three weeks ago, when Iran briefly reopened the Strait of Hormuz. He has repeatedly extended his cease-fire deadlines instead of following through on his (sometimes-apocalyptic) threats to resume hostilities. Last week, his administration abruptly abandoned an effort to escort ships through the strait in part because of a fear that it could provoke violent, escalating confrontations. Trump is tired of the war, which has proved far more difficult and lasted far longer than he had expected. His party is warily watching rising gas prices and falling poll numbers. He doesn't want to be bogged down in a Middle East conflict like some of his predecessors were. He doesn't want it to upend his high-stakes summit this week in China. He is ready to move on. But Iran, it seems, does not want the war to come to a close. Or at least not with any sort of outcome that could be acceptable to American negotiators. Trump is now in a bind. The president, five aides and outside advisers told me, is convinced that he can sell any sort of agreement as a win. But at least for now, the man who wrote *The Art of the Deal* can't even get Iran to the negotiating table.

Trump is left with a vexing question: How do you end a war when your opponent won't budge? And while Trump grasps for an exit, Tehran has used the war to tighten its grip on power. Iran seems hell-bent on pulling off something it's historically done well: humiliating an American president.

Trump never thought it would turn out like this. After the impressive military operation to snatch Nicolás Maduro from Caracas, the president set his eyes on Iran, telling confidants that it would "be another Venezuela," a pair of outside advisers told me. They, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal strategy. Trump believed that the US military was unstoppable, and that he had a chance to topple Tehran's theocracy, a prize that had eluded his predecessors. He was redrawing the world's maps and expected a victory to come in days, a week or two at most. The initial US-Israel onslaught killed Iran's Leader and included waves of bombings that allegedly obliterated much of the country's missile capabilities. But Tehran did not capitulate, and instead attacked its Persian Gulf neighbors and seized control of the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20 percent of the world's oil passes. With a mix of mines, small attack boats, and drones, Iran effectively closed the waterway. Energy prices soared. The conflict settled into a stalemate and then a fragile cease-fire. One high-profile, official round of negotiations failed. No more are scheduled. Outwardly Trump has expressed nothing but confidence. Some-



times, he downplays the war, calling it a "little excursion" or "detour" or "mini war". He has proclaimed imminent victory nearly every day, a braggadocio that's matched by Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth at his Pentagon briefings. Behind closed doors, the volume is lower, but US officials do believe a naval blockade of Iran's ports, installed last month, is working and squeezing the country's economy. Facing collapse, two officials predicted, Iran will be forced to negotiate.

But the real question is the timing: A number of experts have forecast that Iran can withstand pressure from the blockade for months, not weeks. A US intelligence assessment delivered to policy makers last week agrees, suggesting that Iran could make it at least three or four more months. If so, and Iran continues to keep the strait closed, then prices will continue to rise in the West, including in the United States during a midterm-election year. It then becomes a matter of pain: Which side can withstand the most economic hardship?

Patience is not Trump's strength. One outside adviser,

who speaks with him regularly, told me the president is "bored" with the war. Others believe he is frustrated at Iran's intransigence. And while Trump at times feels detached from the political concerns of his party, Republicans have been inundated with complaints about rising prices, particularly at the gas pump. Many in the GOP were already preparing themselves to lose the House; the longer the war goes on, they believe, the more likely it is that the Senate could flip too.

Despite the negotiating impasse, Trump is reluctant to resume hostilities, aides and advisers have told me. There is concern about the dwindling supply of American munitions, and Trump last week expressed reluctance about killing more people. Some US allies in the region (including, at times, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) have voiced concern that the resumption of American attacks would make them, once more, targets of Iran's retaliation. Recently, Iran opened fire on US naval vessels in the Strait of Hormuz, and the US retaliated by striking sites in Iran. But despite the spasm of violence, Trump insisted that the cease-fire was still in place and downplayed the strikes as "a love tap". He also, advisers have indicated, wants to tamp down any military action ahead of his trip to Beijing this week to



US President Donald Trump rubs his eye with his fingers.  
● CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping. China has broadcast its unhappiness with the war and the closing of the strait; Trump wants to be able to claim that the fighting is ending as he pursues new trade and business deals with Xi.

As a further complication, the US has largely exhausted its list of significant military targets, advisers have said. To continue to escalate, which is Trump's signature move, he's had to threaten civilian targets such as power plants, bridges, and even desalination plants. At one point, he threatened that "a whole civilization will die tonight," an overt threat to commit war crimes. Trump also has options for a limited ground invasion — seizing highly enriched uranium or attacking Kharg Island, a hub of Iran's energy sector — but he is leery about risking the lives of American troops.

And so, Trump keeps issuing deadlines to force Iran to cave, but Tehran keeps calling his bluff. For weeks now, Trump has blustered about resuming attacks but, each time, has found a way to back down. With the exception of a few hawkish voices, most in Trump's orbit remain



But Iran, it seems, does not want the war to come to a close. Or at least not with any sort of outcome that could be acceptable to American negotiators. Trump is now in a bind. The president, five aides and outside advisers told me, is convinced that he can sell any sort of agreement as a win. But at least for now, the man who wrote *The Art of the Deal* can't even get Iran to the negotiating table.



Vessels anchor a short distance apart from each other in the Strait of Hormuz, as seen from Musandam, Oman, on May 8, 2026.  
● REUTERS



reluctant to restart the attack even as the stalemate continues. With the naval blockade in place to counter Iran's closing of the strait, the administration last Monday unveiled Project Freedom, which deployed the US Navy to help some ships escape the waterway. Although a few ships managed to cross the strait on the first day, Trump quickly abandoned the plan. A South Korean cargo ship was set on fire, there were clashes with US warships, and the Pentagon said it destroyed seven small Iranian boats. But administration officials did not want to risk a major escalation of hostilities, particularly a possible attack on an American naval vessel. Some Persian Gulf allies, fearing retaliation, moved to cut American access to their bases and airspace. Trump also claimed that he was suspending the operation because a deal to end the war could be close. But he has been here before without success. American officials privately say that, with Iran's leadership fractured, they're not sure with whom they are negotiating or who in Tehran is empowered to make a deal. Pakistani mediators have attempted to restart talks, but more moderate elements in Tehran have been largely bypassed. The formal negotiations, led by Vice President Vance, ended without a deal. Another round of talks slated for the end of last month never happened because the Iranian delegation left Islamabad before American officials could arrive. It was an unmistakable rebuke. Publicly, the White House continues to cast the war as going well, with spokesperson Olivia Wales telling me in a statement that "President Trump has all the cards, and he wisely keeps all options on the table to ensure that Iran can never possess a nuclear weapon. The highly successful blockade is strangling Iran's economy, and the United States has proven that we maintain land, sea, and air superiority."

Even without a formal agreement, Trump has considered declaring decisive victory and moving on. Secretary of State Marco Rubio went so far as to say earlier last week that the war was over. But doing so now would leave the conflict's goals, as outlined at various times by the president and his aides, unfulfilled. Iran still possesses, by some estimates, more than half of its ballistic-missile capabilities. Its allied groups, such as Hezbollah, are still fighting. There has not been real regime change. Its nuclear stockpile remains a threat, and there is no deal to dilute it or ship it out of the country. Iran will almost certainly leave the war with more control, either implicitly or explicitly, over the Strait of Hormuz than it enjoyed before the conflict, including knowing that it could again shutter the waterway and inflict global economic pain.

Trump wants the war to end. He wants a deal. But deals take two parties, and there's no evidence that Iran is interested in bailing Trump out of a dilemma of his own making.

The full article first appeared on *The Atlantic*.

# Eiri's double secures win in national team training match



the-fjri.com

## Sports Desk

Iran national football team wrapped up their final intrasquad friendly before departing for Turkey, with the White Team cruising to a 4-1 victory over the Reds on Tuesday. According to ISNA, the Iranian national team split into two squads for the training match, with the Whites dominating the contest and scoring four goals. The White Team lineup featured Alireza Beiranvand, Danial Eiri, Hossein Kana'ani, Ali Nemati, Ramin Rezaeian, Roozbeh Cheshmi, Omid Noorafkan, Hadi Habibi-Nejad, Mehdi Mohabi, Aria Yousefi, and Ali Alipour.

Meanwhile, the Red Team included Mohammad Khalifeh, Shoja Khalilzadeh, Aref Aghasi, Saleh Hardani, Ehsan Hajsafi, Aref Haji-Eidi, Amir Mohammad Razaghi-Nia, Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh, Amirhossein Mahmoudi, and Kasra Taheri. Ali Alipour opened the scoring in the 50th minute after breaking behind the defense and finishing clinically. The goal was initially ruled out for offside, but after a VAR review, officials awarded the strike. The Whites doubled their advantage six minutes later when Hadi Habibi-Nejad delivered a corner kick that Danial Eiri powered home with a header. In the 83rd minute, Aria Yousefi added a third after

finding space inside the penalty area and calmly slotting past the goalkeeper. The White Team struck again in the 89th minute from another set piece. Ramin Rezaeian sent in a free-kick cross and Danial Eiri headed home his second goal of the match to make it 4-0. The Reds pulled one back in stoppage time through Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh, whose long-range effort beat the goalkeeper to seal the final score at 4-1. Iran's national team is scheduled to travel to Antalya in the coming days for a new training camp before heading from Turkey to the United States for the upcoming 2026 FIFA World Cup.

## Talavar tops Iran Davis Cup selection event

### Sports Desk

The Iranian Davis Cup selection process concluded with Younes Talavar being named the winner. According to IRNA, the fourth day of the national team selection event saw Danial Moshtaghifar defeat Kiarash Hanifi 7-5, 6-3 to book his place in the final. In the other semifinal, Younes Talavar secured a 6-1, 6-4 victory over Moein Moazzam to reach the title match.

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However, since the two finalists had already been placed in the same group during the round-robin stage (Group 2), and based on pre-competition regulations stating that if two players from the same group reach the final, the head-to-head result would determine the winner instead of playing the final match, Talavar was ultimately declared the top player.

The Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Group 3 tournament will begin on July 13 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Iran Davis Cup team will compete in a group featuring Vietnam, Jordan, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Uzbekistan.

The selection event featured Younes Talavar, Danial Moshtaghifar, Kiarash Hanifi, Ilya Jafar, Arslan Qomi, Morteza Moazzam, Mohammad Khoshkholgh, and Sam Attaran, with Talavar ultimately emerging as the top-ranked player.

## Beiranvand named in Asia's Best XI

### Sports Desk

South Korean website Chosun has unveiled its current Best Eleven (XI) in Asian football, with Iranian goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand earning a place in the lineup as the only representative from Iran and the continent's top goalkeeper. The squad features a strong Japanese presence alongside three South Korean stars. From South Korea, Son Heung-min of Los Angeles FC, Lee Kang-in of Paris Saint-Germain, and Kim Min-jae of Bayern Munich were all selected.

Japanese players made up the majority of the team, highlighting the country's growing strength in international football. In attack, Son was joined by Ayase Ueda of Feyenoord



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and Kaoru Mitoma of Brighton & Hove Albion. The midfield included Wataru Endo of Liverpool FC and Takefusa Kubo of Real Socie-

dad alongside Lee Kang-in. Japan's influence also continued in defense, where Kim Min-jae was accompanied by his Bayern Munich teammate Hiroki Ito and Yukinari Sugawara of AZ Alkmaar. Beiranvand, who plays for Tractor and the Iranian national team, was named the squad's first-choice goalkeeper. Uzbek rising star Abdulkodir Khusanov of Manchester City was also included in defense. Beiranvand previously represented Iran at the 2018 and 2022 FIFA World Cups and could make a third appearance at the tournament in the future. He suffered an injury during Iran's opening match at the 2022 World Cup and missed the following game against Wales.

## Iranian athletics target 10 medals despite concerns

### Sports Desk

With just a few months remaining until the Nagoya Asian Games, Ehsan Haddadi — the Iranian discus throw Olympic medalist and current President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Athletics Federation — has set an ambitious target of 10 medals, although Iran's athletics team appears to be far less prepared than expected.

According to ISNA, the Nagoya Asian Games will begin on September 19. Athletics is the highest medal-yielding sport at the Games, playing a major role in the overall medal standings of participating countries.

However, Iranian athletics has shown a steady decline in recent years and has failed to play a significant role in the country's medal tally, dropping from five medals at the 2010 Asian Games to just two medals in 2022 — a trend that points to long-term issues in planning and development within the federation.

Despite this, Haddadi, after being elected federation president, pledged to win 10 medals at the Nagoya Asian Games — eight more than Hangzhou and five more than Guangzhou. The key question, however, remains: which athletes are expected to deliver on this promise?

The most recent test for Iranian athletics came at the Sanya Asian Beach Games, where only one medal was achieved from five athletes sent to compete.

To realistically target 10 medals, at least 10 compet-

itive and prepared athletes would be needed to challenge Asia's best. Yet questions remain about who these athletes are, what condition they are in, how they are training, which competitions they have been sent to, and what the federation's overall plan is. The main medal hopes include Ali Amiri (800m), Mohammadreza Tayebi and Hassan Ajami (shot put), and Reyhaneh Mobini (long jump). However, among them, only Ajami competed at the Sanya Beach Games, where he won gold with a throw of

20.17 meters, while the others have only participated in domestic training camps. A look at Asia's top lists shows that rivals are already actively competing. In the women's long jump, India's Anicy Sojan Edappilly recorded a mark of 6.54m on March 15, 2026 — just one centimeter better than Mobini's national record.

In the men's 800m, Japan's 19-year-old Ko Uchiyai set a new Asian-leading time of 1:43.90 on May 3, 2026.

In men's shot put, India's Tajinderpal Singh Toor leads the Asian rankings with a throw of 21.03m, while Tayebi holds the Iranian national record at 20.87m.

Although rankings will continue to change as athletes compete in upcoming events, the key issue remains clear: while Asia's competitors are actively preparing and improving, Iran's current development strategy is under question — along with which athletes are expected to deliver the 10 medals promised by Haddadi.



Hassan Ajami  
afkarnews.com

## Iran handball teams learn opponents at Asian championships draws



irihf.ir

### Sports Desk

Iran's youth and junior handball teams have learned their group-stage opponents following the Asian championship draws held in Kazakhstan. The draw for the Asian Men's Youth Handball Championship took place on Wednesday (May 13), with 11 participating teams split into two groups. Iran national youth handball team were placed in Group A alongside Uzbekistan, Saudi Arabia, Chinese Taipei,

and China, ISNA wrote. Group A: Iran, Uzbekistan, Saudi Arabia, Chinese Taipei, China. Group B: Japan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Hong Kong. The tournament will be held from August 10 to 21 in Uzbekistan. Meanwhile, the draw for the Asian Men's Junior Handball Championship was also completed, featuring 13 teams divided into two groups. Iran national junior handball team were drawn into Group B alongside Japan,

South Korea, Kuwait, Qatar, India, and the United Arab Emirates — a group widely described as a "group of death" due to the presence of at least five title contenders. Junior Championship groups: Group A: China, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong. Group B: Iran, Japan, South Korea, Kuwait, Qatar, India, UAE. The junior tournament will be held from July 14 to August 4, 2026, in China.

# Zanjan's filigree art under pressure as silver prices soar

## Iranica Desk

Zanjan's traditional filigree (Mali-leh) art, a delicate silver-weaving craft that has long been practiced in the province and has survived various ups and downs to reach the present generation, is now struggling under a heavy burden of problems — chief among them the soaring price of raw silver.

Experts warn that without urgent support, this centuries-old art may disappear entirely. Filigree work in Zanjan is regarded as a refined and authentic craft that, despite numerous obstacles, has remained alive thanks to the taste, creativity, and dedication of its artisans, according to IRNA.

The art owes much to generations of craftsmen who worked with extremely simple tools to create valuable works, sometimes even losing their eyesight in the process. In this industry, fine silver wires are intricately twisted and woven together with great precision, producing a magnificent display of artistry and creativity unique to Zanjan's artisans.

When arranged together, these delicate strands form enduring and beautiful works that inspire admiration from viewers — so much so that many affirm Zanjan rightly carries the title of "World City of Filigree."

Beyond their aesthetic value, filigree products such as tea sets, candy dishes, vases, candlesticks, photo frames, and various types of jewelry attract tourists. Equally important are the skilled master craftsmen

and numerous workshops that have played a key role in the international recognition of this craft.



However, in recent times — amid economic instability and broader regional pressures — the industry has faced growing uncertainty, with fears of closure becoming more serious than ever. Experts warn that neglecting this sector could have irreversible consequences. Fatemeh Abdollahi, head of the Association of Handicrafts Producers and Exporters at the Zanjan Chamber of Commerce, pointed to structural problems in the industry, particularly the lack of focused development and support for artisans, which has worsened challenges in the sector.

She noted that Zanjan's filigree industry is currently managed under the Gold, Jewelry, and Watches Union, arguing that it should instead be organized

under a dedicated association. She added that the Handicrafts Association has been working, since its establishment, on ini-

tiatives aligned with social responsibility.

She also highlighted a long-stalled proposal to create a "Silver Bank" to support artisans by stabilizing raw material supply, which was pursued before the COVID-19 pandemic but has yet to be realized.

Another long-standing proposal is the establishment of a permanent Filigree Creativity House, exhibition space, and workshop center to bring together artisans and their products in one location — possibly in the historic Hakimian Mansion, which could also attract tourists. However, this plan has not yet been implemented.

Abdollahi stressed the need for urgent official support, warning that continued neglect could lead to the collapse of this im-

portant but vulnerable craft. She also pointed to declining sales due to rising silver prices (99.99 purity), which have reduced



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purchasing power and pushed filigree products down consumers' priority lists. As a result, many artisans have been forced out of business or turned to informal jobs and street vending. Additional challenges include lack of insurance for artisans, absence of dedicated pavilions and displays at international exhibitions, and customs and export barriers that limit foreign income potential.

A Zanjan artisan with 37 years of experience, Yalda Taghipour Kazemi, shared her personal journey, noting that she trained under master Mansour Kazemian Moghaddam and began teaching filigree in 1997. Despite difficult working conditions and lack of a permanent workspace, she managed to rent a workshop and continue

her craft. She said that when Zanjan was recognized as a World City of Filigree, her works were show-

cased, which was a proud moment for her. However, she emphasized that the most serious ongoing problem remains access to silver, whose price has surged dramatically.

According to her, current market conditions are highly unfavorable, with raw materials becoming increasingly expensive. Many workshops have closed, and exports have largely stopped.

Dariush Naderi, Deputy Head of Handicrafts and Traditional Arts Department of Zanjan Province, confirmed that the city's filigree industry is facing multiple challenges. He said the price of raw silver has increased by more than 500 percent in the past eight months alone.

He added that occasional shortages of silver at critical produc-

tion times, along with the growing influence of middlemen and black-market pricing for broken or recycled silver, have intensified the crisis.

He also pointed to a lack of coordination among responsible institutions — including the Municipality (secretariat of the World City of Filigree), Management and Planning Organization, the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, and the Cultural Heritage Organization — which has contributed to ongoing problems.

Naderi stressed the need for these bodies to work together through the World City of Filigree secretariat. He said efforts are underway to establish a Silver Bank for artisans, which would require forming a dedicated guild or association.

He suggested that funding for raw silver could be sourced from corporate social responsibility programs, similar to how infrastructure projects in water and transportation are financed. He also referred to plans to consolidate artisans in a shared space such as the historic Hakimian House, which could both attract tourists and reduce production costs through shared equipment. Tourism workshops in cooperation with the copper guild have already shown positive results.

Finally, he noted that initiatives such as holding filigree auctions and establishing a specialized museum of filigree in the Handicrafts Museum are on the agenda, which could further promote and preserve this unique art form.

## Crown imperial blooms transform Iran's highlands each spring

### Iranica Desk

*Fritillaria imperialis*, one of Iran's most well-known native flowering species, creates a striking and symbolic landscape during its blooming season due to the distinctive color and unique structure of its petals. The plant features flowers with varied shapes and sizes, each possessing its own aesthetic value. Rising on relatively tall stems, its long, narrow leaves emerge directly from the stalk in a dense arrangement. These features have turned the species, beyond its ecological importance, into a major attraction for nature-based tourism, drawing visitors interested in photography, hiking, ecotourism, and springtime outdoor experiences.

According to nature reports and scientific references, the distribution of *Fritillaria imperialis* is mainly concentrated in mountainous regions and foothills. This distribution gives its associated tourism a clearly seasonal and region-specific character, according to chn.ir.

Belonging to the lily family, *Fritillaria imperialis* is a wildflower with a highly distinctive appearance. Although native to the Iranian plateau, some related species are also

found in Anatolia and the Himalayan foothills. The flower has a bell-shaped, inverted form and contains a clear fluid that sometimes drips downward, while dew often collects on its petals and falls in the early morning.



In nature, the species appears in a variety of colors, including red, white, yellow, and orange. Its petals curve downward from the top of the stem, giving rise to its common name, "crown imperial." One of its notable characteristics is a set of large, glossy segments, and the plant can reach a height of up to 80 centimeters.

In regions such as Mahne-

shan, Zanjan Province, the flower appears in a distinctive form, particularly in its hanging or inverted varieties. Many species within this genus are mountain or foothill plants that grow under specific ecological conditions.

As such, the plant is valued not only for its beauty but also as an indicator of ecosystem health.

In highland areas of Mahnesan, including Khvor Jahan village, red and white crown imperial flowers can be observed. Local communities refer to the flower as "Aqlar Gullar". The inverted red blossoms attract every

observer's attention. Bees also feed on these flowers in the region.

Heavy snowfall during winter creates favorable conditions for spring growth, as melting snow gradually supplies moisture. The plant requires

little irrigation, as rainfall at higher elevations is usually sufficient.

In Mahnesan, crown imperials typically reach peak bloom in spring. For tourism purposes, the exact optimal viewing period must be determined through field observation or phenological calendars, as climate change may shift its flowering season. Proper planning can turn this short seasonal window into a significant tourism opportunity. The *Fritillaria* plains at the foothills of surrounding mountains create remarkable landscapes, enriched by springs, streams, and green pastures, making the area one of the most attractive destinations for observing these flowers.

The plant has a complex genetic structure and requires precise environmental conditions for growth. If protected from human and animal disturbance, up to 10,000 stems can be seen in a single meadow.

Every year, from mid or late April to the end of May, Iran's green plains host the blooming of these striking flowers, offering nature enthusiasts a unique opportunity to experience their beauty.

Iran is considered the native homeland of crown imperials. Historical accounts suggest

that Europeans first took the plant from Iran to Europe, where it was cultivated in greenhouses, although its natural growth remains most prominent in Iran. Due to its resilience in cold and rocky mountainous environments, the flower is also regarded as a symbol of endurance and resistance.

During the flowering season, the main threats include flower picking, damage to bulbs, off-trail walking, trampling, and increased littering, all of which can harm fragile habitats.

*Fritillaria imperialis* is a bulbous plant, cultivated through its underground bulb, which also contains medicinal properties. In traditional medicine, the bulb is used for treating rheumatic and joint pain and is considered beneficial for liver ailments. However, the root is toxic, and no part of the plant is edible.

Visitors are therefore urged to respect and protect these flowers during their visits.

The *Fritillaria* plains in Mahnesan were officially registered as a National Natural Heritage site in January 2021. The flower's short blooming period and rarity highlight the importance of preserving this valuable natural treasure of Iran.

MEHR

# Iran to stage book fair online as digital reach expands amid scaled-back foreign presence

## Arts & Culture Desk

Tehran's seventh Virtual Book Fair will open on May 16 with more than 2,200 publishers and a limited international section, as Iran shifts its flagship literary event online in response to wartime conditions while seeking to sustain public access to books and preserve momentum in the country's publishing industry. Speaking at a press conference in Tehran, Tehran International Book Fair deputy director Ebrahim Heydari said 2,296 publishers had registered for the nationwide digital event and around 80% of titles had already been uploaded to the platform ahead of the eight-day fair running under the slogan "Let's Read for Iran." "This exhibition is not international," Heydari said, noting that authorities opted for a virtual-only format after consultations with publishers, writ-

ers and cultural figures. A full-scale international edition will be held "at another opportunity," he added. The annual Tehran book fair, one of the region's largest cultural gatherings, has been staged every spring for nearly four decades. Organizers said this year's online edition aims to maintain "social vitality," broaden nationwide access to books and demonstrate the continuity of cultural life despite mounting economic and wartime pressures. Although scaled back internationally, the event will still host 19 foreign publishers and literary agencies. Organizers said Arabic- and English-language titles would be available alongside domestic publications, while a new digital media section will debut for the first time. Books published since 2021 will qualify for sale on the platform, with newly released titles added throughout the

fair period. Domestic publications will be offered with combined discounts of up to 25% through publisher reductions and subsidies provided by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. Heydari said books ordered through the platform would be delivered free of charge nationwide in cooperation with Iran's national postal service. Special provisions have also been introduced for children in the southern city of Minab in tribute to victims of what officials described as the "third imposed war." More than 30 cultural forums and literary discussions featuring domestic and foreign guests are scheduled alongside the virtual marketplace. "Reading and buying books help sustain the publishing industry," Heydari said, describing the fair's slogan as a reflection of "continuity and dynamism" in Iranian cultural life.



Tehran's seventh Virtual Book Fair deputy director Ebrahim Heydari (center right) speaks during a press conference in Tehran, Iran, May 13, 2026. ● MEHR

## Minister calls for wider cultural access for children

### Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Culture Minister Abbas Salehi called for wider access to children's books, arts programs and cultural services across poorer communities during a meeting with senior officials from the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) in Tehran on May 13, warning that many low-income families remain cut off from cultural opportunities despite advances in public education. Speaking at the gathering with IIDCYA executives and deputies, Salehi described the long-established institution as one of Iran's most reputable cultural networks, citing its nationwide reach, educational legacy and relative distance from short-term political currents. He said the organization remained well positioned to strengthen cultural diplomacy and preserve Iranian-Islamic identity among younger generations. "Educational justice has improved significantly compared to the pre-revolution period, but we still face a considerable gap in cultural justice," Salehi said. "Poor families may still manage to send their children



to school, but access to cultural and artistic resources, including children's books, is far more difficult." The minister said children and teenagers had become increasingly "vulnerable" in the digital age, arguing that the rapid spread of information had left many families struggling to guide younger generations through social and cultural pressures. He warned that weakening ties to the Persian language and classical literature could erode long-term cultural continuity. Salehi also urged stronger cooperation between state institutions and private-sector cultural actors, saying Iran's children's arts economy remained underdeveloped both financially and theoretically. He called for broader field research, practical studies and coordinated policymaking to address the sector's shortcomings.

Highlighting the international dimension of children's culture, Salehi said youth-oriented productions carried unique cross-border appeal because they were rooted in "human nature" rather than geography or ideology. He said this gave Iran significant capacity in cultural outreach and international engagement through literature, animation, publishing and educational programs for younger audiences. The minister also stressed the need to protect children during crises, referring to the pressures created by regional instability and recent conflict conditions. "Children affected by crises cannot become the future-builders of a country," he said. IIDCYA chief Hamed Allamati and senior officials outlined key challenges facing the organization and proposed measures aimed at expanding cultural access nationwide.

## Over 1,000 scientists urge protection for Iranian universities from US-Israeli strikes

Hundreds of members of the International Union of Scientists have written an open letter to the UN secretary general, director-general of UNESCO, and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, calling for the protection of scientific institutions in Iran, and for the US-Israeli aggressors to be held accountable. "We, the undersigned academics, researchers, students, and members of the global scholarly community, express our grave concern over at least 21 attacks that have damaged laboratories, universities, hospitals, and other scientific institutions during the ongoing unprovoked US-Israel's aggression on Iran," the letter begins, Press TV reported. The US-Israeli aggression targeted Isfahan University of Technology, Iran University of Science and Technology and Amirkabir University of Technology, the letter said. It added that in another strike on March 31, "one of Iran's largest pharmaceutical

R&D centers, Tofiq Daru, a major producer of anesthetics and treatments for MS and cancer, was targeted and severely damaged." Scientific and educational institutions are civilian spaces essential to public health, knowledge, and human survival, and their destruction endangers researchers, students, medical personnel, and the broader public, while causing lasting harm to science and society, the letter noted. The letter called on the UN, UNESCO, and relevant international bodies to document the damage caused to these institutions, protect affected scholars and students, and support independent investigations into violations of international humanitarian law. "We urge the international community to act now to protect scientific infrastructure, defend academic life, and uphold the principle that knowledge-serving institutions must never be treated as expendable in war," the letter concludes.

Among the signatories are two Nobel Prize laureates from Norway, a prominent British physicist, and a colleague of Dr. Masoud Ali-Mohammadi, an Iranian nuclear scientist who was assassinated by the Israeli regime back in early 2010. The criminal US-Israeli aggression against Iran began on February 28 with airstrikes that assassinated senior Iranian officials and commanders, including Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei. The aggression also caused damage to or destroyed civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and schools among other things. Iranian 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 region. Furthermore, Iran retaliated against the strikes by closing the Strait of Hormuz, which resulted in a significant increase in oil prices and its by-products.

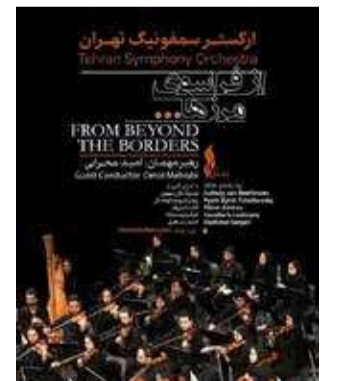
## Tehran Symphony Orchestra opens new season with cross-cultural repertoire

### Arts & Culture Desk

The Tehran Symphony Orchestra will stage its first official performance of the new Persian year on May 21 at Tehran's Vahdat Hall, unveiling a globally themed concert titled "From Beyond the Borders" under guest conductor Omid Mehri, the Rudaki Foundation announced. The performance marks the

latest cultural initiative by the orchestra's artistic council to spotlight emerging Iranian talent, this time by giving the podium to a younger generation of conductors after last year's focus on rising composers, IRNA reported. The program brings together works by celebrated global and Iranian composers, including Ludwig van Beethoven, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Azerbaijani

composer Fikret Amirov, Iranian maestro Heshmat Sanjari, and selections from Pietro Mascagni's renowned opera Cavalleria Rusticana. Organizers described the concert as an effort to foster cultural dialogue through music and to carry audiences "beyond geographical borders" into a shared musical journey spanning diverse traditions and styles.



## 'By the Way' paves way for Iranian animation at US experimental festival

### Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian short animation 'By the Way' by directors Mahboobeh Kalaee and Ali Fotoohi won the "No Violence" award at the 64th Ann Arbor Film Festival in the United States, expanding the international footprint of Iran's independent

animation scene. The experimental animated film, produced by the Documentary, Experimental & Animation Film Center (DEFC) of Iran, was honored at the Michigan-based festival, one of the world's oldest showcases dedicated to experimental and artist-driven cinema, held from

March 24 to 29, ILNA reported. The Lauter/Gräf "No Violence" prize is awarded to films that engage audiences while adhering to a principle of avoiding violent imagery in storytelling. The jury recognized 'By the Way' for its restrained visual language and narrative impact.

The film has continued to build momentum on the international festival circuit. It previously screened at the 26th Monstra Lisbon Animation Festival in Portugal, an event known for blending animation with contemporary artistic forms and experimental visual expression.

'By the Way' is also slated to screen this summer at Slovakia's Fest Anča International Animation Festival, further broadening its overseas presence. The production earlier received the Best International Film award at China's 22nd China Animation Golden Dragon Awards.