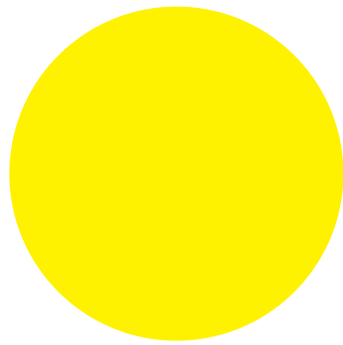




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No deal with US  
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President Masoud Pezeshkian (c) speaks at a meeting with senior officials of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology in Tehran, Iran on May 31, 2026.

president.ir



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## Israel's goals in Lebanon extend beyond Hezbollah

By Delaram Ahmadi  
Staff writer

**INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE**

Israel has intensified its military operations against Lebanon in recent days, expanding its ground offensive in southern Lebanon across Litani River. The escalation comes as the Lebanese government seeks to reach an agreement with Israel to halt hostilities through US-mediated talks. A ceasefire in Lebanon has also been among Iran's conditions in its negotiations with the United States. Speaking to Iran Daily, Mohammad Irani, an expert on Lebanese affairs, said Israel's objective is not merely to defeat Hezbollah. Rather, he argued, it is pursuing broader and longer-term goals, including the potential reoccupation of the Lebanese capital.



Mohammad Irani

**IRAN DAILY:** By expanding its ground operations in southern Lebanon, what military and political objectives is Israel pursuing? Should these actions be viewed solely as pressure on Hezbollah, or are they part of a broader strategy?

**IRANI:** Israeli aggression against Lebanese territory has a long history. In fact, one could say that since the establishment of this regime, it has repeatedly harassed neighboring countries through aggressive actions beyond the borders it defined for itself. This is part of the very philosophy underpinning the Zionist regime.

Among Arab capitals, Beirut is unique in that it was occupied by Israeli forces once before, in 1982. What Israeli officials are now declaring goes beyond southern Lebanon. Under the three-phase plan they have outlined for achieving their objectives, the third phase effectively encompasses all of Lebanon and envisages an advance toward Beirut, including the reoccupation of the capital.

Looking at this regime's expansionist approach, both historically and today, it is true that its primary pressure is directed at the resistance, which remains the main obstacle to the expansion of Israeli aggression. At the same time, however, the regime and its military appear to be focused on broader and longer-term objectives. In reality, one could say that Lebanon's capital itself has become a target.

What impact will this escalation have on the negotiations currently taking place between Lebanon and Israel under US mediation? Should the intensification of military operations be seen as a sign of diplomatic failure or as part of the bargaining process toward a final agreement?

Israelis do not adhere to commitments or agreements. Whenever they have reached agreements, they have generally failed to uphold them as in deals with their other neighbors. Take Jordan, for example. After signing the Wadi Araba Treaty in 1994, Jordanian officials later stated that it was never fully implemented. Jordan was supposed to receive half of the water from the Jordan River, yet that share was never actually delivered.

Likewise, with the Palestinians,

despite the Oslo Accords being formally signed with American mediation, Israel was never willing to withdraw from the West Bank, not to mention the unresolved issue of East Jerusalem. Today, the Lebanese government believes that through American mediation—and through pressure that Washington may exert on Israel—it can secure an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. Yet there is no tangible evidence that this request is yielding any real or practical results. Although [US President Donald] Trump has promised to exert pressure on [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu, in practice what we are witnessing is the opposite: the Israeli military presence in southern Lebanon has become more extensive than before.

**Given that Tehran has consistently emphasized the link between the Lebanese conflict and wider regional developments, how will Israel's intensified operations in southern Lebanon affect Iran-US talks?** Any agreement reached with the Americans on ending hostilities across all fronts, including Lebanon, could materialize and may even be put on paper. However, I doubt the Israelis would abide by it.

Still, the Americans are fully aware that the Iranian negotiating team keeps Lebanon firmly in view. If any breakthrough is to occur, it can only happen within that framework. Otherwise, the Lebanese government is not likely to be able to persuade Israel to withdraw from southern Lebanon, nor will it be able to convince—or compel—the Americans to force such a withdrawal.

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مزایده صادراتی بیلت آلیاژی ریخته گری مداوم

شرکت فولاد آلیاژی ایران

شماره مرجع مزایده: IASCO-EXPT1405-03 مورخ: ۱۴۰۵/۰۳/۱۱



شرکت فولاد آلیاژی ایران (IASCO) در نظر دارد نسبت به فروش بیلت آلیاژی صادراتی، از طریق مزایده عمومی اقدام نماید. خاطر نشان می سازد که عرضه در گرید منتخب و به شرح جزئیات ذیل انجام می پذیرد. از علاقمندان به شرکت در مزایده مزبور دعوت به عمل می آید که از تاریخ ۱۴۰۵/۰۳/۱۱ لغایت ۱۴۰۵/۰۳/۱۹ برای دریافت اطلاعات مزایده و راهنمایی های لازم با واحد صادرات به شماره تماس های +۹۸۳۵-۳۱۲۲۲۶۷۵ و +۹۸۲۱-۸۸۳۲۲۶۲۱ و نشانی ایمیل [Salesexp@iasco.net](mailto:Salesexp@iasco.net) در ارتباط باشند. مهلت ارائه پیشنهاد قیمت مزایده یادشده حداکثر ساعت ۱۵:۰۰ روز سه شنبه مورخ ۱۴۰۵/۰۳/۱۹ می باشد.



Iran Alloy Steel Company

Tender Announcement for Export of CC-Alloy Steel Billet

Tender Ref. No.: IASCO-EXPT1405-03

Date: 01/06/2026

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

**1. Product Specifications and Commercial terms:**

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

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

- **Size & Dimensions:** (130\*130) \* 12,000 mm.
  - **Quantity:** 25.000 MT (±10%).
  - **Delivery Time:** approximately 20 days after receipt of advance payment.
  - **Delivery Term:** FOB Bandar Abbas.
- Note:** Other delivery ports including BIK, Parsian and Chabahar may be considered upon buyer's request, subject to amended delivery time and mutual agreement.

**2. Tender General Conditions:**

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

**3. Offer Submission:**

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

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

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

**4. Closing Date:**

**Deadline for Offer Submission: Tuesday, Jun 9, 2026- by 3:00 p.m. (Tehran Local Time)**

# Top negotiator: No deal with US until Iranian rights secured



Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf  
IRNA

## International Desk

Iran's chief negotiator Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said on Sunday that Iran would not agree to any deal with the United States to end the war unless it fully secures Iranian rights.

During a virtual session of the parliament, the top lawmaker said "words and promises" of the United States cannot be trusted.

"We will not approve any agreement until we are sure that we have upheld the rights of the Iranian nation."

His remarks came as reports emerged that US President Donald Trump had sent a tougher peace proposal back to Iran to end the ongoing tensions in the region, that began after the US-Israeli aggression against the Islamic Republic on February 28.

Iran was already in negotiations with the US about the fate of its nuclear program

when the US and Israel launched air and missile strikes.

And, while Tehran has long insisted that its nuclear program is for purely civilian ends, the US and its Western allies have long claimed that it aims to develop a weapon.

The New York Times and Axios reported on Saturday that Trump had sent back a "tougher" new framework to be considered by Iran, though details remain unclear.

Trump has said his priorities include stopping Iran from any nuclear weapon development and re-opening the Hormuz shipping lane, over which Iran has sought to impose control since the war began.

According to Tasnim news agency, "exchanges between Iran and the United States regarding the text of a possible memorandum of understanding are ongoing, with both parties regularly proposing amendments."

"No agreement has yet been finalized, and it is possible that any agreement will be rejected," it said.

Talks between Iran and the US, mediated by Pakistan and facilitated by Qatar, are continuing based on Iran's 14-point proposal. The discussions aim to produce a memorandum to end the war, lift a US blockade on Iranian ports, and secure the release of frozen Iranian assets.

The wide-ranging strikes on Iran sparked conflict across the Middle East. Iran responded by attacking Israel and US military bases in the Persian Gulf, and effectively closing the Strait of Hormuz, through which around 20% of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas travels.

Shortly after a ceasefire was agreed in early April, the US established a blockade of Iranian ports which Trump says will remain "in full force and effect until an agreement is reached, certified, and signed."

## Israel seizes castle in Lebanon as it expands ground offensive

France calls for UNSC emergency meeting over Israel's 'occupation of Lebanese territory'

### International Desk

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to push deeper into Lebanon after his military took over the medieval castle of Beaufort on Sunday as the regime escalates its aggression against the Arab country.

"Now my directive is to deepen and expand our hold in places that were under Hezbollah's control. The capture of Beaufort is a dramatic stage and a dramatic shift in the policy we are leading," Netanyahu said in a video statement released hours after the military took Beaufort.

Lebanon's resistance movement, Hezbollah, also said on Sunday it targeted Israeli army positions and infrastructure in Shlomi and Nahariya in northern occupied territories, while air raid sirens blared in the Acre area.

The conflict between Israel and Hezbollah began in March after the Lebanese resistance group launched military operations against the Israeli regime in response to its aggression against Iran. A truce to halt the fighting began on April 17, but has never been observed.

### Call for UNSC emergency meeting

As fighting escalated in Lebanon, France said on Sunday it requested an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council, alarmed



by Israel's "ever-deeper occupation of Lebanese territory".

Israeli forces used the Beaufort castle, also known as Qalaat al-Chakif, as a base during their previous two-decade occupation of southern Lebanon that ended in 2000.

The push to Beaufort came as the Israeli military issued a sweeping evacuation order to areas south of the Zaharani River, north of the Litani and around 40 kilometers (25 miles) from the border.

UNESCO, the UN cultural agency, said on Friday that it was "deeply alarmed" by Israeli strikes near Beaufort Castle, which has a provisional protected status. Such sites should receive the "highest level of legal protection against attack and use for military purposes," the body said.

The crossing of the Litani River and capture of Beaufort Ridge are a major escalation in the current conflict. The river has become a de facto boundary in Lebanon since Israel's invasion, with large areas to the south under Israeli military control



An Israeli flag flies over the medieval Beaufort Castle following the capture of the historic site by the regime's forces in southern Lebanon on May 31, 2026.  
AFP

and residents ordered to leave. Israeli forces had already begun striking and destroying bridges over the Litani that connect the south to the rest of the country. Israel's military claims they were being used by Hezbollah to smuggle weapons and move fighters.

### Israel pursuing 'scorched-earth policy'

Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam accused Israel on Saturday of pursuing a "scorched-earth policy and collective punishment" in the south, urging a halt to the fighting. French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said on Sunday that "nothing can justify the continuation of Israeli military operations in Lebanon and its ever-deeper occupation of Lebanese territory".

The Israeli army said Sunday that one of its soldiers had been killed a day earlier by a Hezbollah explosive drone, bringing to 25 the number of Israeli military deaths in Lebanon since early March.

The Lebanese Health Ministry says Israeli attacks have killed more than 3,371 people since early March.

## Denmark's 'baseless' terror allegations aimed at isolating Iran: Embassy

The Iranian Embassy in Copenhagen rejected Denmark's terror accusations against the Islamic Republic, saying they are aimed at isolating the country.

The embassy released a statement on Saturday, one day after the Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET) claimed that Iran was playing a larger role when it came to the threat of terrorism against the Scandinavian state, Press TV reported.

The Iranian diplomatic mission said that PET's allegations are largely based on general assessments, rather than on documented and undeniable evidence.

"The baseless accusations against Iran are part of a broader process of political and international isolation



Iran's Embassy in Denmark

of Iran, and not the result of proving a real and documented threat against Denmark or any other Western country," it added.

It also said Tehran has consistently and officially rejected any involvement in the alleged terror activities on Danish soil and believes that PET reports have, over the past years, presented a repetitive and inaccurate picture of the purported Iranian threat.

It further emphasized that there was no evidence proving Tehran's role in the 2018 case of the attempted assassination of a leader of the anti-Iran ASMLA terrorist group in Denmark and the 2024 case of the attack on the Israeli embassy in Copenhagen. "The Islamic Republic of Iran is unfairly portrayed as a source of threat, while it is itself the target of hostile actions and political pressure," the embassy said.

## IRGC downs intruding US MQ-1 Predator drone over Persian Gulf

### International Desk

Iran's air defense forces successfully shot down an intruding American MQ-1 Predator drone over Iranian airspace in the Persian Gulf.

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) announced in a statement that the multi-mission and long-endurance remotely piloted aircraft was intercepted and destroyed as it entered the Iranian skies in the early hours of Sunday. The unmanned aerial vehicle was immediately tracked by IRGC air defense systems and targeted by advanced surface-to-air missiles before it could carry out any act of aggression. The IRGC also emphasized that Iranian



airspace over the country's territorial waters is under full control of its air defense units, warning that any intrusion will be met with a decisive response. It came a day after Iran's Army air defense units managed to intercept and successfully destroy an enemy Orbiter drone in the skies over Qeshm Island. The recent intrusions by American and

Israeli drones came as Iran and the US have been observing a ceasefire since April 8 to give a chance to diplomacy to end the US-Israeli aggression against Iran.

A senior Iranian Army commander strongly warned the country's adversaries against attempting fresh aggression against Iran, asserting that such miscalculation will receive a response more forceful than previous retaliation. Deputy Army Commander for Coordination, Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari made the remarks on Saturday. "The enemy should know that any aggression against the country's territory will be met with a response even more forceful than before," he stated.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

## CARTOON



# South Pars offshore platforms resume output after Israeli strike

## Economy Desk

Iran has restored gas extraction at three offshore platforms in the South Pars field after output was suspended due to an Israeli air strike in March that disrupted processing operations at onshore facilities.

Touraj Dehghani, CEO of the state-run Pars Oil and Gas Company, said on Sunday that the platforms themselves had not sustained any damage during the attacks, Press TV reported.

However, Dehghani added that production was suspended because several gas-processing facilities along the coast of Bushehr Province were damaged, preventing the handling of gas extracted from the offshore installations.

According to Dehghani, technical and operational measures implemented in the downstream sector, combined with the use of spare capacity at operational refineries, have enabled the resumption of production at three offshore platforms in the giant gas field.

The restored output is being re-directed to other gas-processing plants in the region while repairs continue at damaged facilities,

including the Phase 14 refinery. He added that rich gas – natural gas with high hydrocarbon content – produced from the platforms was being transferred to other gas refineries in the region in coordination with downstream operations to optimize production from the South Pars field and help ensure a stable supply of feedstock to refineries and support management of the country's gas network.

South Pars, the world's largest gas reservoir shared with Qatar, is responsible for 70% of Iran's natural gas supply and 40% of the feedstock needed in the country's gasoline production sector. It covers 40 offshore drilling rigs, hundreds of wells, and thousands of kilometers of underwater pipelines across 24 development phases.

## Phase 11 gas output to surge

Separately, Petropars Group's chief executive said gas production at South Pars Phase 11 has surged and will exceed 25.7 million cubic meters per day once the field's 11th well comes online.

"Gas production at this phase, which was about 11.6 million cu-



SHANA

bic meters per day at the beginning of the current administra-

tion (July, 2024), has now reached around 23.8 million cubic meters

per day, and with the 11th well entering service, we expect pro-

duction to surpass 25.8 million cubic meters per day," he said.

## Iran launches transit operations at Jask with first shipments from Oman



ISNA

## Economy Desk

Iran has officially launched transit operations at the southern port of Jask with the arrival of the first vehicle shipments from Oman, a ports and maritime official said on Sunday.

Hamidreza Mohammad-Hosseini Takhti, director of Shahid Bahonar Port and Eastern Hormozgan Ports and Maritime Administration, said that vehicle transit procedures had become operational at Jask port, according to ILNA.

The new trade route has been launched despite efforts by the US Navy in the Indian Ocean to

choke the Iranian economy. Iran's southern ports in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman remain under a naval blockade, which US President Donald Trump imposed in mid-April, aiming to pressure Tehran into a peace deal after a 40-day conflict waged by the US and Israel against the country on February 28. "Following extensive consultations and the issuance of a temporary three-month permit by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration, unloading operations for the first phase of these vehicles have begun," Takhti said. He added two landing

craft carrying imported vehicles had arrived through the port in the initial phase, with each vessel transporting eight vehicles.

"Despite limitations and damage caused by war, suitable port services were being provided at Jask," the official said, adding that further shipments were expected to arrive in the very near future.

Referring to the significance of the development, Takhti said the special position of the ports on the Iranian coastline along the Sea of Oman, known as Makoran, had become more evident than ever under current conditions.

Located on the Gulf of Oman outside the Strait of Hormuz, Jask has emerged as one of Iran's most strategically important ports.

The facility serves as the terminus of the Goreh-Jask oil pipeline and forms part of the International North-South Transport Corridor, the

multimodal route linking the Indian Ocean with Russia and Northern Europe.

The operational launch at Jask aligns with accelerating trade momentum between the two neighbors. According to Omani statistics, bilateral trade reached approximately \$1.33 billion in 2024, up 52% year on year, showing growing commercial links across the Persian Gulf. Omani exports and re-exports to Iran rose 69% to roughly \$939 million during the year.

Recent institutional agreements have also laid the groundwork for deeper trade integration. Oman approved a preferential trade agreement with Iran in September 2025, aimed at lowering tariffs and reducing non-tariff barriers, while a separate customs cooperation agreement entered into force the same month to streamline customs procedures and facilitate cross-border cargo movements.

## AEOI working with Russia to deploy small nuclear reactors, official says

## Economy Desk

Iran is working with Russia to develop small nuclear reactors for domestic deployment, a senior atomic energy official said on Sunday.

Behrouz Kamalvandi, deputy head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), announced the cooperation at a meeting of the Iran-Russia Joint Chamber Commission and highlighted the role of small reactors in the future of energy and industry, according to Tasnim.

"The future of nuclear energy will be the future of small reactors. They may even be used in aircraft in the future."

"Iran has very good human resources capacity. We have good cooperation with Russia to develop work on small reactors so that we can make several of them operational in the country," he said.

Kamalvandi said the private sector could play a significant role in such projects, but added that the initial stages up to 70% to 80% comple-

tion should be financed through government resources and the National Development Fund before private investors enter.

Speaking about targets for nuclear power generation, he said diversification of energy sources was highly important and that Iran should reach a point where around 13% of the country's electricity needs are supplied through nuclear energy. Iran generates about 2% of its electricity from nuclear power, through the Russian-built Bushehr plant in the south, according to data from the World Nuclear Association and the World Bank. Kamalvandi said Iran had substantial domestic capacity to expand its nuclear industry.

"We started work on the Darkhovin power plant [in the southwestern Khuzestan province] to generate 350 megawatts so that it can supply industries. Today, a significant portion of Bushehr Units 2 and 3, which are under construction, has been built domestically. Serious measures have also

Behrouz Kamalvandi  
TASNIM

been taken in non-energy fields, including healthcare and agriculture," he said.

The official noted that nearly every industrial sector required nuclear technology, saying perceptions that Iran's nuclear program had created challenges for the country overlooked as a challenge stemming from national strength.

Kamalvandi also highlighted progress in medical applications of nuclear technology.

"We currently have two very important projects. One is ion therapy, which can treat cancers in sensitive areas such as the eye with a success rate close to 100%. At the same time, radiopharmaceuticals are also on the agenda. If this trend continues, we will be the only country to have both treatment facilities in a single complex and in one location," he said.

## Israel's goals in ...

On the contrary, since the start of US-mediated talks, Israel has steadily expanded the territory under its control and pushed further forward. Today, it is openly discussing a three-stage plan that is even more dangerous than its previous proposals.

In the Iran negotiations, one possibility is that the Americans may formally accept Iran's conditions concerning Leb-

anon while quietly giving Israel a free hand in southern Lebanon, allowing it to continue its operations.

Another possibility is that the Americans genuinely want an arrangement to be reached. Beyond the Iran issue, there is also growing international pressure over Lebanon. Even the French have been exerting considerable pressure on Washington in this regard. Whether Netanyahu will ulti-

mately heed Trump's wishes, however, remains an open question.

**France has criticized Israeli advances into Lebanese territory and called for an emergency UN Security Council meeting. Can such political pressure alter the calculations of the parties involved and help contain tensions?** France's actions should be analyzed from two different angles. One con-

cerns the withdrawal of the occupying force, and the other concerns France's determination to see Hezbollah disarmed.

What the French are advocating falls within the framework of UN Security Council resolutions, particularly those calling for the withdrawal of resistance forces north of the Litani River. The French have long insisted that Hezbollah's weapons south of the Litani be

handed over to the Lebanese state so that Israel, in turn, would be compelled to comply with Security Council resolutions and withdraw.

However, I do not believe this issue will be resolved solely within the Security Council chamber. Much will also depend on developments on the ground in southern Lebanon and on how the resistance chooses to deal with this case.

# Evolving security order of Persian Gulf

## From Trump's failed hegemony project to multilateral competition



By Hossein Ajorlou  
Middle East security analyst

### OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The security order of the strategic Persian Gulf region, the beating heart of global energy and, to some extent, global investment, is once again at a fateful historical turning point. The February 2026 US-Israeli attack on Iran, which was justified by the fabricated notion of a "weak Iran" and a "post-Iran Middle East," bears the hallmarks of a new regional security architecture.

The ongoing Iran-US negotiations, mediated by Pakistan and Qatar and aimed at de-escalation, cover the release of Iran's frozen assets, the lifting of the maritime blockade, the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, the withdrawal of US forces from areas adjacent to Iran, and the joint management of the Strait by Iran and Oman, and they reinforce this perception. Should these talks succeed, they could usher the Persian Gulf's security order into an entirely new phase with legal and political appendages; should they fail and lead to renewed conflict, the inability of either side to achieve strategic change would likely pave the way for greater instability and the emergence of a new, unwritten order.

The order once anchored by US-led balancing and commanding, which was underpinned by political-security agreements and an operational presence that included the Fifth Fleet in Bahrain, Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, and a security umbrella for the GCC states, is now giving way to a competition-driven order among international and regional actors. In this new dispensation, Iran, with the Strait of Hormuz as its hyper-lever, has become a geopolitical pole; the Arab states find themselves in strategic doubt about US security guarantees; and powers such as China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Israel, and Turkey are redefining their roles. This article analyzes historical trends and current dynamics to chart the trajectory of the Persian Gulf's security order in light of the post-2026 war developments and the ongoing negotiations.

### Historical foundations of the Persian Gulf's security order

To understand present developments, one must trace the historical roots of the Persian Gulf's security order. From the 19th century until the end of World War II, Britain served as the order's regulator, maintaining a military, political, and economic presence that secured its desired stability and kept the littoral states under its protection. After Britain's withdrawal from East of Suez in 1971, the United States, under the Nixon Doctrine, assumed that role, and until Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, American hegemony was virtually unchallenged. The challenges of this period, including the leftist coup in Iraq and its turn toward the Soviet Union in the 1960s, as well as the 1973 oil crisis, were manageable given their limited impact. However, the Islamic Revolution and Iran's exit from the Western bloc posed the

most persistent challenge to US hegemonic order over the past five decades, defining Washington's grand strategy toward Tehran as one of containment.

In response to the perceived Iranian threat, whether grounded in geopolitical realities or fabricated by Washington to bolster containment, the southern Persian Gulf states gravitated toward balancing. This balancing rested on three pillars: first, internal alliance-building, which included the formation of the GCC in 1981 and support for Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War; second, external alliance-building with the United States, which involved military bases, a naval presence, and security agreements; and third, extensive arms purchases to gain technological superiority over Iran and other actors.

Simultaneously, and despite arms embargos and economic sanctions, Iran turned to a hybrid doctrine of symmetric and asymmetric warfare, strengthening a strategic blue-water navy while developing asymmetric capabilities such as speedboats, unmanned surface vessels, sea mines, drones, and cruise missiles, and creating strategic depth through the Axis of Resistance, particularly in Yemen. This relative balancing, notwithstanding the power and technology gap, enabled Iran to impose significant costs on its rivals.

After the Yemen war and the 2019 attacks on Saudi Aramco facilities, the Arab states, realizing that the United States was not an entirely reliable partner, moved toward hedging, a strategy that maintained strategic ties with Washington while simultaneously deepening political and security relations with China, Russia, Turkey, Israel, and even Iran. This trend reached its zenith with the Beijing Initiative, the 2023 Iran-Saudi Arabia agreement, signaling a gradual transformation of the US-centric security order.

### Post-war Persian Gulf: between strategic doubt and a new order

President Donald Trump's decision to launch the February 2026 assault on Iran, actively encouraged and lobbied for by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his allied distortion ecosystem, combined with Iran's unexpected resilience and the ensuing diplomatic negotiations, has produced the following structural consequences for the Persian Gulf's security order:

**1. Relative enhancement of Iran's position and its possible consolidation in the talks:** Iran's asymmetric control over the Strait of Hormuz, which serves as Tehran's lever in geopolitical equations, and America's inability to reopen the waterway through diplomatic, military, or security pressure have shifted the balance relatively in Iran's favor. The current negotiations, if successful and if they recognize any Iranian role in managing the Strait, would institutionalize and solidify this shift, making the Strait a permanent bargaining chip in regional equations.

**2. Deepening strategic doubt among Arab states regarding US security guarantees:** The 2026 war experience, and especially Washington's prioritization



● ZEHRA KURULTUS/TÜRKIYE TODAY

of Israel over its Arab allies, has intensified pre-existing doubts. A prospective agreement that entails the withdrawal of US forces from areas adjacent to Iran, as outlined in the draft provisions, would reinforce the perception that the United States is no longer the guarantor of Arab security. This serves as the engine for diversification and the strengthening of hedging policies, as well as the entry of multiple military actors. While maintaining strategic military ties with the United States, the Persian Gulf states are simultaneously expanding defense relations with China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Egypt, Turkey, and even Israel. The Persian Gulf's future will likely witness a multi-actor military presence.

**3. Movement toward new political and legal mechanisms with Iran:** Observing their own security and defense weaknesses vis-à-vis Iran, and with diminishing confidence in the US security umbrella, the Arab states are likely to move toward containment through political and legal mechanisms. The emergence of overt and covert bilateral negotiations with Iran,



Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (2nd R), president of the United Arab Emirates, meets with Volodymyr Zelenskyy (2nd L), president of Ukraine, as Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine Rustem Umerov (L) look on, in the United Arab Emirates in this undated handout picture released March 28, 2026.

● ABDULLA AL NEYADI/  
UAE PRESIDENTIAL COURT

and the proposal of initiatives such as non-aggression pacts and bilateral or multilateral security agreements, is noteworthy in this regard. While such a trend weakens the US-centric order, it aligns with Iran's approach of endogenous security and is likely to be welcomed by Tehran.

**4. Iran's strategic goals in the new order and their reflection in the talks:** Despite the war's costs, Iran pursues four key objectives in the Persian Gulf, all of which are reflected in the recent negotiations: first, weakening the US military-operational role, via the provision on reducing forces in the vicinity; second, preventing the consolidation of an Israeli military-security position in the region, via potential overt or ambiguous security and military reactions in regional states; third, securing control over the Strait of Hormuz, through joint management with Oman; and fourth, deepening ties with rising powers to reduce dependence on the West, via the release of frozen assets and parallel financial corridors.

**5. The role of international and regional powers in the transition from a US-centric order:** China and Russia, which seek stability and balance in the Persian Gulf, view the gradual diminution of US power as an opportunity to expand their own influence. The ongoing negotiations, mediated by Pakistan and with the possible role of China and Russia as observers, reinforce this opportunity. However, actors dissatisfied with the current trajectory, such



The optimal scenario is one of collective security. In this scenario, the negotiations yield a comprehensive agreement, and recognizing their mutual vulnerability, regional states move toward a collective security architecture with Iran's participation. Joint management of the Strait of Hormuz, involving Iran, the US, and Oman, and the creation of bilateral and multilateral political and legal mechanisms, such as non-aggression pacts, are the initial steps in this scenario.

as Israel and the UAE, remain influential variables. Despite the failure of its regime-change project in Iran, Israel seeks to re-engage the United States in regional order-building. The UAE, for its part, with its exit from OPEC and alternative pipeline routes, aims to reduce dependence on the Strait of Hormuz and enhance its strategic autonomy. These two dissatisfied actors, through political, security, and military obstruction of the talks, may seek to perpetuate instability and conflict until their desired outcomes are achieved.

In light of the above developments and the ongoing negotiations, the security order of the Persian Gulf is in a period of transition from US-centric balancing to competition-driven balancing. This state of affairs, in which Iran enjoys a relatively enhanced position, the Arab Persian Gulf states face a relative decline in geopolitical weight, and signs of diminishing US stature are apparent, is extremely fragile. If the current negotiations lead to an agreement, they could manage this fragility to some degree; if they fail, that fragility could transform into long-term, intractable instability. Against this backdrop, three future scenarios can be envisioned.

• The optimal scenario is one of collective security. In this scenario, the negotiations yield a comprehensive agreement, and recognizing their mutual vulnerability, regional states move toward a collective security architecture with Iran's participation. Joint management of the Strait of Hormuz, involving Iran, the US, and Oman, and the creation of bilateral and multilateral political and legal mechanisms, such as non-aggression pacts, are the initial steps in this scenario.

• The likely scenario is one of a stable balance of terror. A temporary agreement is reached, including a cease-fire, the lifting of the blockade, and the reopening of the Strait, but a comprehensive accord on nuclear, regional, and missile issues is postponed. The current coercive equilibrium, in which Iran holds the Strait lever and the US maintains its military presence, persists. A state of neither war nor peace, accompanied by creeping arms races and periodic crises, will be the outcome.

• The undesirable scenario is one of attritional warfare and instability. Under pressure from the "ecosystem of destruction," which includes Israel, the UAE, neoconservatives, right-wing think tanks, and vested arms and oil interests, the talks reach an impasse. Through immediate or gradual escalation, the entire Middle East and Persian Gulf region enters a new, chaotic, and attritional era. It appears that regional states can, by reinforcing these negotiations and a potential agreement, take a new step toward a transition to collective security for the sake of stability. This requires diplomatic campaigns founded on initiative and goodwill, the weakening of destructive ecosystems such as Israel, and the integration of countries, particularly Iran, into regional equations based on their actual weight, thereby reducing their perception of threat within the current order.



## 15th Conference on Islamic-Iranian Model of Progress

## Convergence, justice, and resistance

Muslim luminaries chart path of progress

## CONFERENCE

The 15th Islamic-Iranian Model of Progress Conference recently hosted a gathering of erudite figures and scientific-political dignitaries from the Islamic world, spanning from Iran to Malaysia and from Tunisia to Turkey, who convened to deliberate upon the relationship between “convergence and progress”.

During this assembly, discourse pertained to justice as the foundational bedrock of progress, to resistance as the source of civilizational power, and to the necessity of establishing a more humane order within the globe. The orators at the conference, whilst underscoring the role of culture, ethics, and spirituality in development, issued a cautionary declaration that progress dissociated from justice could transmute into an instrument for hegemony and warfare.

At this international gathering, Sadeq Vaez-Zadeh, head of the Center for the Islamic-Iranian Model of Progress and a professor at the University of Tehran; Ahmet Davutoğlu, the former prime minister and minister of foreign affairs of Turkey; Mohsen Bouazizi, a professor of sociology at the University of Tunis El Manar; Mahmoud Al-Khafaji, a faculty member of the Islamic University of Najaf Al-Ashraf; Maszlee bin Malik, an advisor to the prime minister of Malaysia and the chairman of the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS); and Chigo Azmi Abdul Hamid, an advisor to the prime minister of Malaysia, each addressed the concepts of progress, justice, resistance, and convergence from a different perspective.

## Justice and progress; two inseparable concepts

Sadeq Vaez-Zadeh, the head of the Center for the Islamic-Iranian Model of Progress, during his address, entitled “The Convergence of Justice and Progress,” emphasized that the contemporary world suffers from a schism between development and justice. This condition, according to his assertion, has caused industrial and technological advancements to serve humanity less and to transform into instruments of domination and warfare. He deemed the imposition of the recent war by the United States and the Zionist regime against Iran as an example of this dichotomy and stated unequivocally: “Progress without justice can become an instrument of tyranny.” He stressed that the sole rectification for this situation is the theoretical and practical convergence between justice



Distinguished figures and guests listen to an address at the 15th Conference on the Islamic-Iranian Model of Progress, held both in-person and online in Tehran, Iran, on May 19-20, 2026.  
● SHAFQA

and progress. The university professor, whilst reviewing historical perspectives on justice, from Plato and Farabi to Ibn Khaldun, articulated that, in the modern world, the concept of progress has become detached from justice, and this very issue has engendered the contemporary crises.

Subsequently, he elucidated the theory of “progressive justice” and declared that justice does not merely signify legal equality but rather signifies the placement of every entity in its proper station. The member of Iran’s Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution further explained that the realization of justice is, in actuality, the process of actualizing capacities and talents, and this actualization constitutes the genuine meaning of progress. According to him, progressive justice occurs when society can actualize human and social talents and elevate the genuine station of human beings.

The professor, also referencing the capacities of artificial intelligence, could serve the realization of justice and the determination of proper and optimal social stations, provided that it operates under humane and ethical guidance.

## Malaysia; development along with diversity and coexistence

A substantial segment of this assembly was allocated to the Malaysian experience in the domain of development and convergence. Maszlee bin Ma-

lik, the scientific advisor to the prime minister of Malaysia and the chairman of the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies in that country, by reciting the celebrated poem of Saadi, “Human beings are members of one another,” affirmed that the contemporary world, despite vast technological advancements, suffers from an ethical and social schism.

He inquired: “Can progress be reduced solely to economic growth and industrial development?” and responded that authentic progress must encompass social trust, ethical cohesion, and human dignity. Professor Malik characterized the Malaysian experience as an example of striving to establish equilibrium between economic growth, Islamic identity, and multicultural coexistence and stated that this nation has endeavored to create a balance between modernity and tradition, and between development and social justice.

Chigo Azmi Abdul Hamid, the advisor to the prime minister of Malaysia and the Director of the Malaysian Consultative Council of Islamic Organizations (MAPIM), similarly, in his address, considered inclusive development as the key to social stability and stressed that economic growth without justice and social inclusion leads to instability.

He stated that Malaysia has attempted to convert ethnic and religious diversity not into a source of crisis but into a factor of strength and dynamism. He also underscored the role of ethics-centric education, transparent governance, and human development upon the trajectory of progress. Doctor Abdul Hamid deemed the Malaysian model of Islamic development as an example of “the judicious application of Islamic principles” and articulated that this

model endeavors to establish a balance between faith, justice, cultural diversity, and economic progress.

## Resistance, ethics, and the redefinition of the concept of power

One of the most significant segments of this assembly comprised the address of Mohsen Bouazizi, a professor of sociology at the University of Tunis El Manar, Tunisia, who talked about the “post-technical paradigm”; a concept that, according to his conviction, is emerging as a consequence of the resistance of Gaza, Lebanon, and Iran.

Professor Bouazizi believes that the contemporary world is re-evaluating the concept of power. He stated that power is no longer confined solely to nuclear weaponry, technology, and economics, but rather that ethical, symbolic, and spiritual elements also play a determinative role in the production of authority.

He emphasized that Iran’s steadfastness against pressures is not merely a military resistance but rather an ethical and civilizational resistance that could transform the world’s perception of power. According to Bouazizi, Iran’s fidelity to its commitments and allies constitutes a component of this same ethical power. This Tunisian professor also spoke of the necessity for the formation of a “sociology of resistance” and stated that resistance must transcend the level of a political action and become a constituent part of social consciousness and everyday existence.

Mahmoud Al-Khafaji, a faculty member of the Islamic University of Najaf Al-Ashraf, likewise employing a religious and philosophical approach, analyzed sustainable development within the framework of Islamic

thought and asserted that Islam not only does not conflict with progress and civilization but is itself a religion founded upon knowledge, justice, and human dignity.

He emphasized that Islamic nations, in order to achieve authentic progress, have no recourse other than returning to the divine and justice-centric principles of Islam. Al-Khafaji also considered combating colonialism and domination as part of the trajectory of development and the preservation of the dignity of nations.

## Davutoğlu: development is impossible without peace

Ahmet Davutoğlu, the former prime minister and minister of foreign affairs of Turkey, whilst expressing sympathy with the Iranian people following the recent aggressions by Israel and the United States, emphasized that the nations of the region must stand alongside one another against external pressures.

He conceived development as possessing three levels: the internal structure of nations, regional relationships, and position within the global order. Davutoğlu stated that Iran, due to its history and geography, possesses a vast capacity to transform into an advanced power, but the realization of this capacity necessitates law-abiding governance, transparency, and political ethics. He stressed the necessity of establishing relationships predicated upon trust amongst the countries of the region and declared that sustainable development is impossible without regional cooperation.

According to his belief, economic interdependence could be the most significant factor for peace in the Middle East. Davutoğlu also issued a warning that religious and ethnic dissensions must not be permitted to become instruments of conflict, and that the countries of the region must move towards convergence based upon a shared destiny. He, referencing the experience of the European Union, stated that just as France and Germany, after centuries of warfare, were able to achieve cooperation, the countries of the Middle East, by abandoning erosive rivalries, can also construct a future predicated upon development and peace.

The 15th Conference on the Islamic-Iranian Model of Progress, in sum, presented a picture of the shared preoccupation of the luminaries of the Islamic world; a preoccupation concerning a future in which development is not separate from justice, technology serves humanity, and resistance is not defined merely as military warfare but rather as the preservation of human dignity, identity, and ethics. The orators of this assembly emphasized that the Islamic world, in order to surmount the contemporary crises, requires convergence, dialogue, and a redefinition of the concept of progress more than any other time.



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Ahmet Davutoğlu, the former prime minister and minister of foreign affairs of Turkey, is pictured on screens addressing the attendees of the 15th Conference on the Islamic-Iranian Model of Progress, held both in-person and online in Tehran, Iran on May 19-20, 2026.  
● ABNA24



# Iranian wrestlers to chase Senior Worlds spots at Ulaanbaatar Open

## Sports Desk

Two World Championships spots on the Iranian Greco-Roman national team will be up for grabs when the country's wrestlers compete at the upcoming Ulaanbaatar Open.

The third UWW Ranking Series event of the season will kick off on Thursday at Buyant Ukhua Sport Palace in the Mongolian capital.

The 72kg spot will be on the line between Danial Sohrabi and Mohammad-Javad Rezaei, who will go head-to-head in a best-of-three series. Sohrabi needs just one victory to secure his place at the World Championships, which begin on October 24 in Astana, Kazakhstan.

A gold medalist in Ulaanbaatar last year, Sohrabi will be eager to earn another shot at the world stage after last September's heartbreak in Zagreb, where he suffered a controversial quarterfinal defeat to French wrestler Ibrahim Ghanem before rebounding to claim bronze



● FARSHAD BANDANI/IWFIR

through the repechage. Rezaei, an Asian silver medalist in April, will look to build on his strong form after winning gold at February's Muhamet Malo

Ranking Series tournament in Tirana, Albania. Meanwhile, Mohammad-Mahdi Keshtkar and Erfan Jarkani will battle it out for the 63kg berth.

Keshtkar also needs only one win to punch his ticket to Astana after capturing an impressive bronze medal on his Senior World Championships debut in

Zagreb. Jarkani enjoyed Ranking Series success at the Zagreb Open in February, but a defeat in the final to Kyrgyzstan's Aftandil Taa-

laibek Uulu forced the former world junior and under-23 bronze medalist to settle for silver at the Asian Championships.

Elsewhere in Ulaanbaatar, Payam Ahmadi and Ali Ahmadi-Vafa, both already guaranteed spots in Astana, will compete in the 55kg and 60kg divisions, respectively.

The highly touted Ahmadi enjoyed a prolific international campaign last year, winning world and Asian under-20 titles before claiming silver at the Senior World Championships. Asian bronze medalist Ahmadi-Vafa, who suffered a first-round exit on his World Championships debut last year, will be eager to add a senior international medal to his collection of three world titles across different age groups.

Reigning world and Olympic champions Saeid Esmaili (67kg) and Mohammad-Hadi Saravi (97kg) will headline Iran's Greco-Roman squad for Astana. The lineup also includes Asian

silver medalist Ali Oskou (77kg), world champion Gholamreza Farrokhi (82kg), and Alireza Mohmadi (87kg), who has won consecutive world silver medals on either side of his Olympic silver at Paris 2024.

The remaining national team spot will be decided in a highly anticipated 130kg showdown at the International Takhti Cup, which begins on June 15 in Kerman.

Two-time world champion and Olympic bronze medalist Amin Mirzazadeh will need a victory in a best-of-three contest against Fardin Hedayati, who is aiming for a breakthrough at senior level after already collecting three world age-group titles.

The Greco-Roman competition in Ulaanbaatar will be followed by the freestyle event, with Ahoura Khatari (61kg), world champion Rahman Amouzad (65kg), Mohammad Nokhodi (79kg), and Abolfazl Rahmani (92kg) representing Iran across various weight classes.

## 'Pistol Queen' Javanmardi ends retirement, targets Asian Para Games glory

## Sports Desk

Iranian shooting great Sareh Javanmardi is set to come out of retirement and target glory at October's Aichi-Nagoya Asian Para Games in Japan. Nicknamed the "Pistol Queen," the 41-year-old star appeared to bring the curtain down on her illustrious career after winning the women's 10m air pistol title at the Paris 2024 Paralympics – her fourth gold medal in as many appearances at the Games.

In an interview with Mehr News Agency last year, Javanmardi insisted she had no plans to compete again, citing "personal reasons as well as certain circumstances within the Iranian sports structure" behind her decision. However, the decorated shooter appears to have had a change of heart. She has resumed training with the national team in recent weeks and is set for her first international appearance in 22 months when she competes

at the upcoming WSPS Grand Prix, which begins on June 16 in Novi Sad, Serbia. The tournament, featuring various pistol and rifle events, also serves as a qualification pathway for the Asian Para Games. Javanmardi, who also won a Paralympic bronze medal at London 2012, will be aiming to secure a place at the continental showpiece and challenge for a fourth Asian Para Games medal. Javanmardi claimed gold in the 10m air pistol and silver

in the 50m pistol event at Jakarta 2018 before settling for silver behind fellow Iranian Faezeh Ahmadi in her favored 10m air pistol discipline at Hangzhou 2022. Ahmadi is also included in the Iranian squad for Novi Sad. She will be joined by Nasrin Shahi – the 10m air pistol champion at last year's WSPS World Cup – as well as Mohammadreza Mirshafiei, Mostafa Khadem, Mobina Moslemi, Zahra Jafari, and Mahsa Haji-Mohammadi.



● GETTY IMAGES

## Iran's table tennis trials confirmed for Aichi-Nagoya 2026

## Sports Desk

Iran's Table Tennis Federation will hold selection trials to determine the remaining members of the men's and women's national teams for September's Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games.

The men's squad for the continental event will consist of four players, while the women's team will feature two athletes.

According to the federation's selection criteria, 16 players in each category will compete in the trials. The field will comprise the top four Iranian players in the world rankings and 12 players from the country's premier domestic division, based on last year's results.

In the men's competition, veteran star Noshad Alamiyan has already secured an automatic place on the Asian Games roster as Iran's highest-ranked player in the world standings. His younger brother, Nima, has with-



● Neda Shahsavari will compete in the Iranian women's trials for the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games. ● ISNA

drawn from contention due to personal reasons. The Alamiyan brothers were part of the Iranian trio – alongside Amirhossein Hodaei – that won the men's team bronze at the Hangzhou Asian Games three years ago – the country's first table tennis medal at the multi-sport showpiece in 65 years – and then teamed up to repeat the success in the doubles event. The women's team, however, will have no automatic selections, as Iran's top-ranked fe-

male player, Neda Shahsavari, will be required to compete in the trials for a place at the Asian Games. Shahsavari will look to build on a glorious Islamic Solidarity Games campaign in Riyadh last year, where she won singles and doubles gold, as well as team bronze along with Shima Safaei and Setayesh Illoukhani. Safaei, who also paired with Shahsavari for the doubles gold in Riyadh, will also miss the trials after announcing her unavailability

for "personal reasons." Teenage prodigy Benyamin Faraji will be among the players to watch in the men's competition, which also features Hodaei, Navid Shams, Amirmahdi Keshavarzi, Amin Ahmadian, Mohammad-Javad Sohrabi, Seyyed Mahmoud Mousavi, Arian Ghafari, Hamidreza Taherkhani, Soroush Amirnia, Mohammad-Hassan Habibi, Amirabbas Hodaei, Afshin Norouzi, Arshia Lorestani, Mobin Alipour, and Samran Karimi.

In the women's event, Shahsavari and Illoukhani will compete alongside Mahshid Eshtrati, Elina Rahimi, Helia Asghari, Zeinab Shams, Kimia Rostami, Parinaz Hajipour, Fatemeh Yari, Saba Seraji, Elina Monsef, Melika Karimi, Melika Abbasi, Fatemeh Jamalifar, Effat Ranjbar, and Elina Ebrahimi.

The men's selection tournament will take place from June 17 to 19, while the dates for the women's trials have yet to be finalized.

## Iran volleyball prospect Hosseini on verge of Perugia move: Report

## Sports Desk

Iranian volleyball prodigy Seyyed Matin Hosseini is closing in on a high-profile move to Italian powerhouse Umbria Volley Perugia, Varzesh3 reported on Sunday. The outside hitter, who played for Iranian club Paykan last season, is expected to have the transfer officially confirmed in the coming days.

If finalized, the move would rank among the most significant overseas transfers involving an Iranian

volleyball player in recent years, joining the likes of Amir Ghafour and Pouria Hosseinkhanzadeh at Lube Civitanova, Amin Esmailnejad at Verona, Milad Ebadi-pour at Allianz Milano, and legendary setter Saeid Marouf at Zenit Kazan.

Hosseini first rose to international prominence two years ago when he helped Iran win the FIVB Boys' U21 World Championship and was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player. The young star produced a standout performance in

the final against Italy, particularly with his serving, and reports suggest Perugia's scouts may have begun tracking him during that tournament. Perugia has established itself as one of the world's leading volleyball clubs, winning 10 major titles across domestic, European, and international competitions over the past three seasons, including success at the FIVB Club World Championship last year.

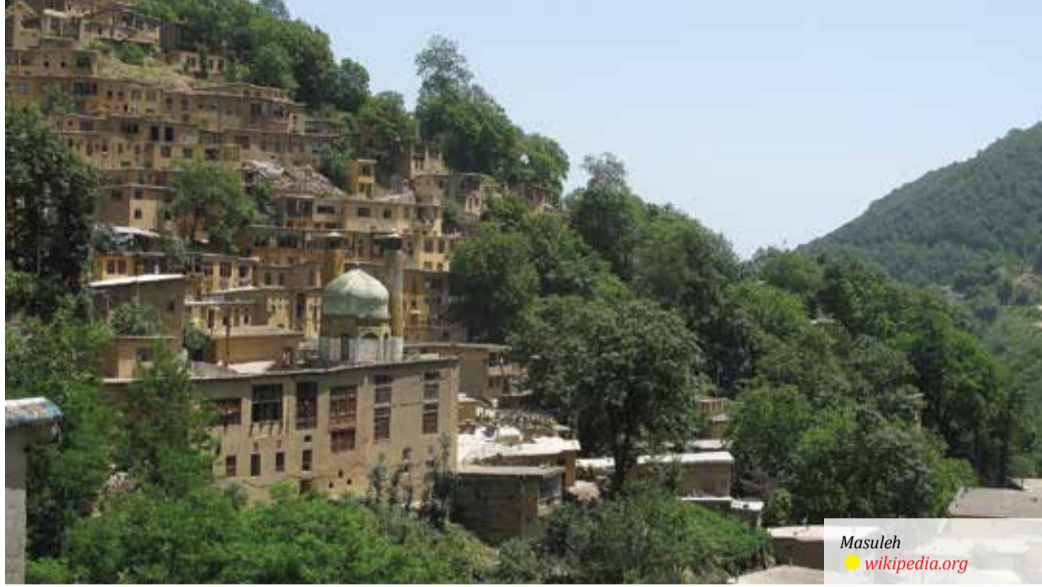
A move to the Italian heavyweights would see Hosseini work under renowned head coach Angelo Lorenzetti – a development that could accelerate the youngster's progress and ultimately benefit the Iranian national team.

According to reports, Hosseini is being lined up as a replacement for Japanese international Yuki Ishikawa, who is expected to leave Perugia for Turkish side Ziraat Bankasi ahead of next season.



● FIVB

# Masuleh, Gisum moving toward UNESCO status



Masuleh  
wikipedia.org



Gisum Forest  
nody.ir

## Iranica Desk

Governor General of Gilan Province, Hadi Haghshenas, has expressed optimism that the historic town of Masuleh and the Gisum village will achieve UNESCO World Heritage status by 2027, highlighting Masuleh's thousands of years of history and its position as one of Iran's most significant cultural and historical treasures.

Speaking at a meeting convened to review the progress of the UNESCO nomination process for the historic town of Masuleh and the village of Gisum, attended by provincial officials as well as Parliament representatives from Fuman and Talesh, Haghshenas said that Masuleh, as a valuable civilizational and cultural landmark, has been on the path toward international recognition for several years. He described the site as a unique testament to Iran's rich heritage

and emphasized its importance as a symbol of the country's historical identity, IRNA reported. The governor noted that the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, in close coordination with provincial authorities, is actively pursuing the finalization of the nomination dossier. He said ongoing efforts are focused on meeting all necessary requirements and ensuring that the groundwork is in place for the successful inscription of the site on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

Referring to the nomination of Gisum, Haghshenas stated that out of 100 villages selected nationwide, only eight have advanced to the final stage of consideration for international recognition. Gisum, he noted, represents Gilan Province on this shortlist and is steadily progressing through the process toward global recognition.

He described the area as one of the province's most valuable natural and tourism assets, with considerable potential to attract visitors from around the world. The governor stressed the importance of close cooperation among all relevant government agencies in fulfilling the requirements of the nomination process. According to Haghshenas, organizations including the Natural Resources Department, the Department of Environment, the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, municipalities, and local administrations have been instructed to take all necessary measures to accelerate the completion of the required documentation and infrastructure-related obligations. Haghshenas emphasized that there are no financial or budgetary obstacles hindering Gisum's nomination and pledged that all available provincial resources would be mobilized to

complete the dossier. He added that authorities remain committed to promoting the region as an internationally recognized tourism destination and ensuring that it receives the attention it deserves on the global stage. Describing the prospective inscription of Masuleh and Gisum as a major opportunity for the development of tourism in Gilan Province, the governor said that UNESCO recognition would undoubtedly attract greater interest from both domestic and international travelers. He noted that such recognition would not only enhance the visibility of the province's historical and cultural heritage but would also contribute to economic growth, cultural exchange, and the expansion of tourism-related opportunities throughout the region.

The governor also ordered the establishment of a special committee tasked with overseeing

the UNESCO nomination efforts for both sites and monitoring the implementation of decisions adopted during the meeting. He expressed hope that existing challenges and administrative obstacles would be resolved before the next review session, enabling officials to report positive developments and meaningful progress to the people of Gilan.

Highlighting the province's broader tourism and historical potential, Haghshenas pointed to recent improvements in transportation infrastructure, noting that Rasht's Sardar Jangal International Airport has reached a satisfactory level of development in the field of air transportation. He said that the number of weekly flights operating through the airport has increased to 80, reflecting growing demand and improved connectivity.

The governor further stat-

ed that the airport currently handles an average of 11 to 12 flights per day. He noted that a direct flight route between Rasht and Baghdad was launched last week, while direct flights to Istanbul are scheduled to commence on June 10. According to Haghshenas, the new Istanbul service has already generated considerable public interest and is expected to strengthen the province's international connections.

Haghshenas underscored the importance of transportation infrastructure in supporting sustainable tourism growth. He said that the expansion of air travel routes and improved accessibility can play a crucial role in showcasing Gilan's historical, cultural, and natural attractions to a wider international audience, while also contributing to the province's long-term economic and tourism development goals.

## Veteran Rafugar warns of challenges facing carpet restoration

### Iranica Desk

In the world of art, some create, while others bring creations back to life. For Hamidreza Akbari, a renowned carpet restorer, known as Rafugar, and founder of what he describes as the world's first Rafugari Museum in Mazandaran Province, every knot tells a story and every repair is akin to a surgical operation. In an interview with chnt.ir, Akbari reflected on a lifetime devoted to preserving one of Iran's most treasured artistic traditions.

He said his journey into the world of carpet restoration began in 1978 in the narrow streets of Tehran's District 7. At the time, his family lived in a rented house, and while his father worked tirelessly to support the household, the young man spent his days watching him weave intricate carpet panels featuring Qur'anic motifs.

"Those scenes were my first art classes," he recalled. Later, after the family moved to Firouzabad, near Varamin, his father expanded his work, weaving large carpets and entering a new stage of professional craftsmanship. Akbari said his father not only taught him the basics of carpet weaving but also recognized his talent at an early age, chnt.ir wrote.



chnt.ir

"When he saw that I could accurately fill in the patterns and colors of a carpet design, he told me I had talent but needed to pursue a more specialized profession if I wanted to advance," Akbari said.

That advice proved decisive. In 1989, after leaving school, he was introduced by his father to a master Rafugar in Rey, south of Tehran, where he began formal training in the highly specialized craft of carpet restoration.

Akbari draws a clear distinction between an artist and a Rafugar. "I have deep respect for all artists, but there is a subtle difference between the two," he said. "An artist creates something new — a painter produces a

painting, a weaver creates a carpet. A carpet restorer, however, is a re-creator. We give new life to carpets that are on the verge of destruction."

He argues that carpet restoration is more than a traditional handicraft.

"If I want to be precise, carpet restoration is similar to medical science," he said. "Our work is surgery on the body of a carpet. We operate on its structure and weave to save it from certain death. The restorer is the surgeon of this art."

Despite the cultural significance of the profession, Akbari believes the field faces serious challenges in the modern era. "The first challenge is that the profession has become less



arias.ir

attractive to younger generations," he said. "Carpet restoration requires immense patience, precision and concentration — qualities that are increasingly difficult to cultivate in today's fast-paced digital world."

Economic concerns pose an additional obstacle, he added. Inadequate wages and limited career prospects have made it difficult to attract young people to the profession.

"If we fail to make this path attractive and sustainable for future generations, we risk losing this knowledge and skill altogether," he warned.

For aspiring restorers, Akbari emphasizes the importance of apprenticeship under experi-

enced masters.

"This is not a profession that can be learned from books alone," he said. "You must learn its principles and foundations directly from a master craftsman."

Reflecting on his own experience, he recalled spending months as an apprentice before gradually mastering the trade. "The path was not easy," he said. "Everything I have achieved is the result of learning from master craftsmen and gaining experience through years of practice."

The story highlights a profession that extends far beyond repair work. Carpet restoration serves as a form of cultural preservation, safeguarding centuries of artistic heritage and

national identity. As Akbari describes it, if carpet restoration is indeed a form of surgery, then those who practice it are the surgeons entrusted with preserving one of Iran's most enduring cultural treasures.

Persian carpets have long been recognized as among the most celebrated expressions of Iranian art and craftsmanship, admired worldwide for their intricate designs, technical sophistication, and cultural symbolism. Many antique carpets held in museums, private collections, and historic buildings require specialized restoration to preserve their artistic and historical value. Experts warn that the decline of traditional restoration skills could pose a serious threat to the survival of these irreplaceable works for future generations.

For Akbari, preserving the craft is not merely a professional responsibility but a cultural mission. He believes greater institutional support, improved training opportunities, and increased public awareness are essential to ensuring that the knowledge of carpet restoration continues to be passed down to younger generations. Without such efforts, he cautions, a vital link in the chain of Iran's artistic heritage could gradually disappear.

# Pezeshkian urges universities to become driving force for tackling nat'l challenges



President Masoud Pezeshkian (3rd L) speaks at a meeting with senior officials of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology in Tehran, Iran on May 31, 2026. [president.ir](http://president.ir)

## Social Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian called on Iran's universities to become engines of practical problem-solving during

a meeting with senior officials from the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology in Tehran, stressing that scientific capital must be transformed into tangible solutions for the country's

economic and social challenges. Reviewing higher education policies in the aftermath of the recent conflict and the government's plans to reshape science, technology and education strategies, Pezeshkian said universities should move beyond their traditional teaching role and assume a more active position in national development, president.ir reported.

"The country's progress depends on converting knowledge into problem-solving capacity," he said, adding that higher education institutions are best placed to identify challenges, generate expertise and deliver workable solutions.

Pezeshkian argued that universities should be assessed primarily on their ability to address real-world issues rather than on academic output alone. He urged every university, regardless of size or location, to engage with the needs of its surrounding community and contribute to resolving regional

and national challenges.

He also emphasized the need for multi-disciplinary approaches to increasingly complex problems, calling for greater involvement by academics, researchers and students in policymaking and implementation.

Criticizing the expansion of some higher education institutions without clear objectives or measurable impact, the president said resource allocation and performance evaluations should be redesigned around effectiveness, scientific output and mission fulfillment.

He advocated merit-based funding and remuneration systems that reward meaningful contributions to research, education and social development.

Pezeshkian further encouraged stronger student participation in practical initiatives ranging from social and cultural programs to efforts aimed at improving productivity and efficiency, saying direct engagement would strengthen responsibility and civic in-

volvement.

Addressing governance, he said national management should not remain concentrated within a limited circle of decision-makers and stressed the importance of drawing on the expertise of a broader range of scholars and specialists.

The president also stressed the importance of accurate public communication during sensitive periods, warning against narratives that could create distorted perceptions of national realities. He said universities have a responsibility to promote evidence-based analysis, strengthen public understanding and help guide decision-making through credible research.

Pledging full government support for academic participation in tackling national challenges, Pezeshkian said mobilizing the country's scientific and human resources could help accelerate development and narrow remaining gaps with more advanced nations.

## Tehran Virtual Book Fair draws strong demand with 804,000 copies sold

### Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian readers purchased more than 804,000 books during the Seventh Tehran Virtual Book Fair, featuring the resilience of the country's literary culture despite post-war time circumstances, Ebrahim Heydari, chief executive of Iran Book and Literature House and deputy head of the Tehran International Book Fair, announced. The nationwide online fair, held from

May 16 to May 25 under the slogan "Let's Read for Iran," generated book sales worth about 3.19 trillion rials, equivalent to roughly \$1.87 billion at the stated exchange rate. Government support for book purchases and postal costs totaled more than 410.6 billion rials, or about \$241,000, IRNA reported.

Heydari said domestic print and digital publishers, alongside foreign Arabic- and Latin-language publishers, offered 496,129

titles for readers to browse. Of those, 134,491 titles recorded sales, including 132,772 from Iranian publishers and 1,719 from foreign publishers. In total, readers bought 804,421 copies, highlighting sustained public engagement with books and publishing across the country.

Heydari said the turnout delivered a clear message about the enduring vitality of Iranian culture, noting that readers continued

to support the publishing industry even during difficult periods.

He thanked book lovers nationwide for backing authors, publishers and booksellers through their purchases.

The annual virtual fair has become an important platform connecting readers with publishers across Iran, extending access to books beyond major urban centers and helping broaden the reach of the country's publishing sector.



## Iran eyes handicrafts centers nationwide to boost cultural economy

### Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri called for the establishment of specialized handicrafts centers in cities across the country on Sunday in Tehran, saying dedicated venues for showcasing and selling traditional crafts are essential to strengthening the cultural economy and supporting urban development.

Speaking at a meeting with mayors of Iran's major cities, Salehi-Amiri said the handicrafts sector's most pressing challenge remained marketing and sales, ILNA reported. He described specialized marketplaces and exhibition centers as a missing link in the value chain, helping artisans and craftspeople bring their products to wider domestic and international markets. The minister said the ministry was also looking to harness startups



and emerging technologies to expand the global reach of Iranian handicrafts, while pointing to successful cooperation with Tehran's municipal authorities as a model that could be replicated elsewhere. Salehi-Amiri said closer coordination between city administrations and the ministry would help safeguard historical identity, strengthen tourism infrastructure and advance sustainable urban development. He stressed that heritage preservation must remain central to urban planning, describing the historical fabric of Iranian cities as a civilizational asset shaped

by archaeological research and cultural evidence over centuries. He also proposed a structured mechanism for resolving shared issues between municipalities and the ministry. Under the plan, discussions would first be handled at the provincial level by governors, heritage officials and mayors before being elevated to the national level for final review. "Every issue can be resolved through dialogue, understanding and shared determination," Salehi-Amiri said, urging the country's major-city mayors to establish a regular channel for consultation and cooperation with the ministry.

## Smoking claims 60,000 lives yearly in Iran as youth tobacco use alarms health officials

### Social Desk

Smoking-related diseases claim about 60,000 lives in Iran each year, while tobacco use among adolescents, particularly teenage girls, is rising at an alarming pace, senior health officials said on Sunday in Tehran during the 22nd Health and Life Conference focused on tobacco-free hospitals. Mohammad Reza Masjedi, secretary-general of the Iranian Anti-Tobacco Association, said tobacco use remains one of the country's most pressing public health challenges, with annual deaths equivalent to the loss of two passenger aircraft every year, ISNA reported.

He warned that the age of tobacco initiation has fallen sharply, with some cases reported among children as young as nine and 10.

Masjedi said official studies showed tobacco consumption among girls aged 13 to 15 surged by 135% between 2017 and 2021. He attributed the trend to aggressive marketing strategies targeting young consumers through flavored products, including electronic cigarettes and vaping devices. He also noted a marked rise in tobacco use among women, with prevalence increasing from around 1%-1.5% in previous years to nearly 5% today. While rates remain lower than in several neighboring countries, the upward trajectory represents a growing public health concern, he said. Health authorities urged stronger enforcement of tobacco-control laws, including restrictions on advertising, wider public education campaigns and higher tobacco taxes. Masjedi said Iran was among the earliest

signatories to the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and called for renewed efforts to implement its key provisions.

Alireza Raeisi, deputy health minister, said tobacco consumption in Iran reaches an estimated 77 billion cigarettes annually, generating a vast market that places heavy pressure on the healthcare system. He warned that the increasing normalization of smoking, including through electronic cigarettes and vaping products, risks drawing more young people into nicotine addiction.

Officials also called for stricter measures to prevent underage access to tobacco products and for healthcare facilities to play a larger role in promoting smoking cessation and tobacco-free environments.



**Second Announcement**  
**Call for Tender 1<sup>st</sup> Announcement**  
**for Purchase of Hub Connector**  
**for Belal Gas Field Development Project**  
**Tender No. 1011012**

**Iranian Offshore Engineering and Construction Company** intends to purchase the **Tender of Hub Connector for Belal Gas Field Development Project** through a public tender. Therefore, the applicants are allowed to have 30 days after the date of 2<sup>st</sup> publication of the tender notice in the newspaper to participate in this tender. To download the tender documents, please visit the tender's section of the IOEC's website: [WWW.IOEC.COM/EN/TENDERS](http://WWW.IOEC.COM/EN/TENDERS), and Please do not hesitate to contact with Transaction Committee office with Tel: +9821-82841632 under sign for any inquiries and more information.