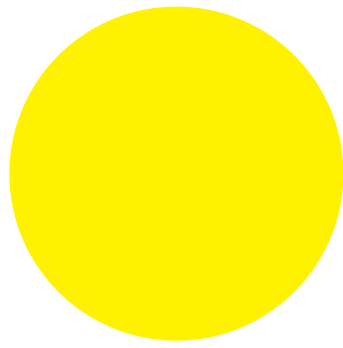


Pezeshkian:
Diplomacy-driven economic gains to fund infrastructure, development



3 >



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IranDailyWeb

Iran reasserts its right to control shipping in Strait of Hormuz

Deputy FM warns vessels against using parallel routes

2 >

Minister: Foreign troop withdrawal key to regional stability, global energy security

3 >



Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad (shown on the screen) addresses the 11th BRICS Energy Ministers' Meeting at Gurugram in Haryana, India on June 25, 2026.

IRNA



Iran's hybrid war with United States, Israel
Competition in cyber, cognitive domains

4 >



Star-studded cast as Iran confirms taekwondo quartet for Asian Games

6 >



Minab showcases blend of history, agriculture, natural attractions

7 >



Iran registers 491 Muharram traditions, Ta'zieh remains UNESCO heritage

8 >

No strategic rift between Iran, Oman over Hormuz management

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

Over the past days, Iran objected to shipping arrangements and navigation routes announced in coordination with Oman but without Iranian involvement. Among them were the coordinates of two new temporary routes for vessel evacuation and traffic guidance proposed by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in cooperation with Oman, which Tehran rejected. These developments have fueled speculation



about possible disagreements between Tehran and Muscat over the management of the strategic waterway. However, Kamran Yeganegi told Iran Daily that Iran's primary concern is safeguarding its sovereign rights. Even if differences exist, they should be viewed as disagreements over "risk management" and "operational coordination" rather than evidence of a strategic divide between Tehran and Muscat.

IRAN DAILY: Does Iran's rejection shipping routes point to fundamental disagreements between Tehran and Muscat over the management and future of the Strait of Hormuz?
YEGANEGI: Not every technical or op-

erational disagreement in the Strait of Hormuz should be interpreted as a strategic rift between Iran and Oman. Relations between Tehran and Muscat—particularly in mediation, crisis management, and regional dialogue—have a long and relatively stable track record. Therefore, in such a sensitive matter, it is important to distinguish between disagreement over the principle of cooperation and disagreement over coordinates, implementation methods, and safety guarantees.

Given the Strait of Hormuz's strategic importance, any temporary shipping route carries security and sovereignty implications for Iran and Oman. Therefore, opposition to a specific route does not necessarily equate to opposition to navigation, cooperation with Oman, or the IMO.

From Iran's perspective, the core issue is that no maritime transit mechanism in the Strait of Hormuz should be designed or implemented without considering the rights, concerns, and responsibilities of the coastal states. For Oman, maintaining maritime safety and preventing the crisis from escalating are key priorities. Therefore, if differences exist, they are better understood at the level of "risk management" and "operational coordination" rather than as clear signs of a strategic dispute between Tehran and Muscat.

Still, even technical disagreements can take on political significance during times of crisis. This is why the best path forward is to strengthen direct channels of dialogue among Iran, Oman, the IMO,

and other relevant stakeholders.

How do Oman's authority under international law in proposing or determining shipping routes in the Strait of Hormuz intersect with Iran's sovereign rights in this strategic waterway?

Answering this question requires attention to a fundamental principle of the law of the sea: the governance of strategic waterways rests on a balance between the rights of coastal states and the security of international navigation. Neither principle can be sacrificed for the other.

As the two coastal states bordering the Strait of Hormuz, Iran and Oman both hold defined rights and responsibilities. Oman may propose technical shipping routes, but such proposals cannot override Iran's rights and jurisdiction in the waterway.

Likewise, The IMO is a technical body that develops standards and recommendations to enhance maritime safety. It facilitates coordination but lacks the authority to impose arrangements in sensitive waterways without the consent of the coastal states.

Iran's legal position warrants particular attention. As one of the two coastal states bordering the Strait of Hormuz, it is not merely a user of the waterway but also holds sovereign rights within its jurisdiction and bears responsibility for maritime safety, security, and order. It is therefore natural that, from Tehran's perspective, any alteration to shipping routes or any new maritime traffic management mechanism should be

assessed with due regard for the rights, security concerns, and effective participation of the coastal states.

If differences do exist between Iran and Oman over maritime traffic management in the Strait of Hormuz, what impact could they have on regional security arrangements and the recent understanding between Tehran and Washington?

First and foremost, it is important to distinguish between two issues: keeping the Strait of Hormuz open to international navigation, and the specific mechanisms used to manage maritime traffic. A disagreement over the latter does not necessarily imply opposition to the former.

If Iran and Oman hold different views on certain traffic-management arrangements, and those differences are handled through dialogue and bilateral cooperation, they need not have strategic consequences for regional security. Over the past decades, Iran-Oman relations have been built on mutual trust, respect for sovereignty, and constructive engagement in managing regional crises. That political capital provides ample room for resolving technical or legal disagreements.

As for the recent understanding between Tehran and Washington, one of its objectives is to ensure maritime security and prevent disruptions to trade and energy flows. Achieving that goal requires implementation mechanisms that are consistent with international law and the legitimate rights of coastal

states.

Therefore, if Iran raises concerns about routes or operational arrangements, this should not be interpreted as backtracking on the understanding or opposing the principle of keeping the Strait open. Rather, it can be seen as an exercise of Iran's legal rights and sovereign responsibilities as one of the two coastal states bordering this strategic waterway.

Under international law, maritime security and coastal-state sovereignty are complementary, not competing, principles. A sustainable framework for the Strait of Hormuz requires both safe navigation and respect for the rights, responsibilities, and security concerns of Iran and Oman.

Ultimately, the durability of any political understanding in the Strait of Hormuz depends less on the text of the agreement than on the quality of its implementation. The more implementation is based on consultation, mutual respect, and the active participation of coastal states—particularly Iran—the greater the chances of success. Ignoring the rights of coastal states, by contrast, could undermine any security arrangement.

What message does Tehran's opposition to some proposed routes send to the international community?

In my view, Tehran's opposition to certain proposed routes is less a rejection of keeping the Strait of Hormuz open than a legal and strategic message to the international community.

Page 3 >

Iran reasserts its right to control shipping in Strait of Hormuz

Deputy FM warns vessels against using parallel routes



Vessels at the Strait of Hormuz are seen from Musandam, Oman, on June 22, 2026.
● REUTERS

must be based on coordination with Iranian authorities and in line with Article 5 of a recent memorandum of understanding signed between Iran and the United States.

"Safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz cannot be guaranteed under ambiguous arrangements, parallel routes or decision-making that does not take Iran's role as a coastal state into account," Gharibabadi said.

He warned that failure to coordinate with Tehran would result in the suspension of any designated parallel route.

Under the 14-point interim deal that halted the war triggered by US-Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28, Tehran committed to making "best efforts" for safe passage of commercial vessels at no charge for 60 days.

Article 5 also provides for Iran to conduct dialogue with Oman "to define the future administration and maritime services in the Strait of Hormuz" and "in line with applicable international law and the sovereign rights of coastal states."

Temporary shipping lanes

Gharibabadi's remarks came after Oman announced on Wednesday it had established two temporary shipping lanes through the strait in coordination with the International Maritime Organization. Iranian officials rejected the Omani initiative, asserting that the only authorized passage route is the one designated by Tehran.

Underlining the risks facing shipping, Iran's newly established Persian Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA) also said on Thursday that any transit outside approved routes by Iran's maritime authorities would be considered unauthorized, with responsibility for any consequences placed on the vessel owner, operator and captain.

The warnings came as Taiwan's Evergreen Marine said earlier on Friday its Singapore-flagged ship Ever Lovely had been hit close to Oman on Thursday by an "unknown object" while on a route recommended by the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO). Nobody was hurt in the incident and the ship later resumed its journey out of the strait.

The incident comes after multiple oil tankers and commercial vessels reportedly changed course at the entrance to the Strait of Hormuz due to security concerns, with at least three ships, including two large tankers, altering course and aborting their transit, according to Bloomberg.

Tehran took effective control of the waterway after US-Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28 triggered the war, disrupting oil flows and rattling global energy markets and the wider economy.

Around a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas supplies typically passes through the strait.

International Desk

Iran reasserted its right to control shipping in the Strait of Hormuz on Friday and warned that safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz cannot be guaran-

teed for vessels using parallel routes or arrangements devised without Tehran's involvement.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi said in a post on X that any credible framework for maritime transit

Iran mocks US for 'solving' domestic hunger problem, lecturing others on issue

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei mocked the United States for "solving" its domestic hunger problem by simply stopping reports while lecturing other countries on the issue.

Baqaei made the remarks in a post on X on Friday after US President Donald Trump claimed that Iran has "a hunger problem" and his deputy JD Vance alleged that the country's unfrozen assets could help "feed" its people, Press TV reported.

Baqaei cited a report by the World Hunger Education Service that found more than 47 million people in the United States, including 1 in 5 children, cannot consistently access or afford enough nutritious food to live healthy lives.

He further referred to another report by the NGO Feeding America that said 47 million Americans struggle daily with hunger.

"The 'solution' from US authorities? In September 2024, the USDA (US Department of Agriculture) quietly terminated its 30-year-old annual report on



household food insecurity — effectively ending the official tracking and acknowledgment of hunger in America," the spokesman said.

"So, after 'solving' domestic hunger by simply stopping the reports, Washington now feels qualified to lecture the world about hunger elsewhere."

Baqaei added, "Charity begins at home — and it is desperately needed there."

The latest Household Food Security report released by the US Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service for 2024 revealed that 47.9 million people lived in food-insecure households last year.

One in seven households (13.7 percent) in America experienced food insecurity, or lack of access to an affordable, nutritious diet, in 2024, accord-

ing to the report. About 14.1 million American children lived in households that experienced food insecurity in 2024, a slight increase from the 13.8 million children reported in 2023.

The findings highlighted a deepening crisis in the US amid cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which enables low-income households to afford more healthy foods and boosts families' food purchases.

Because the USDA's 2025 survey data which would have been released in 2026 was canceled, no official government data on hunger for 2026 is available.

However, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York has stepped in to fill the gap. In a report released in May 2026, the New York Fed presented new findings on food insecurity based on its Survey of Consumer Expectations.

The New York Fed survey found a "remarkable increase in food insecurity," particularly among lower-income, lower-educated households, and households with young children.

Italy denies any military role in US-Israeli aggression against Iran

International Desk

Italy's top diplomat rejected remarks by NATO chief about Washington's use of his country's military bases during the recent war on Iran, stressing that no Italian military bases had been used for attacks on Iran and that no such use would be permitted in the future.

Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani made the remarks during a phone call with his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi on Thursday.

Speaking to Fox News television on Wednesday, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte cited Italy as an example of European support for the US and said 500 US planes had taken off from US bases in Italy "to support Epic Fury", Washington's name for the war it launched alongside Israel on Iran on February 28.

Tajani emphasized that US aircraft involved in bombing operations against Iran did not take off from Italian territory and that the Italian government had never authorized any military action against Iran.

Araghchi welcomed the phone call and the clarification from his Italian counterpart, but stressed that the matter required an explicit and official denial from the Italian government.

"The Italian government must officially deny that its territory



Antonio Tajani



Abbas Araghchi

was used against Iran," Araghchi stressed, underscoring the importance of removing any ambiguity surrounding Italy's position. The comments by the NATO chief also caused a political row in the European country, where Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's government has repeatedly said it did not authorize the use of Italian territory for direct military action against Iran.

In a statement, Defense Minister Guido Crosetto said Italy had acted in full compliance with its constitution, international treaties and agreements governing allied bases on its soil.

"As already clarified in parliament, the government authorized exclusively technical and logistical, non-kinetic activities," the minister said, adding that Italy had refused requests that fell outside those lim-

its. Crosetto expressed surprise that Rutte, who "has nothing to do with Operation Epic Fury", had given an account that conveyed a "totally misleading message" by confusing authorized support flights with combat-related operations.

Opposition leaders in Italy seized on Rutte's comments, demanding fresh explanations from the government.

Five Star Movement leader and former prime minister Giuseppe Conte said Meloni should clarify the matter in parliament, while Nicola Fratoianni of the Green and Left Alliance said either the government had misled lawmakers or Rutte "has suffered a heatstroke".

Italy hosts about 120 US military facilities including the Sigonella naval air station in Sicily and the Aviano air base in northern Italy.

Iran condemns GCC-US joint statement as 'meddlesome, provocative'

'US military presence in regional countries burden on their people'

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry condemned a joint statement by the United States and the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as "meddlesome, irresponsible, and provocative," warning regional states against continuing their hostile alignment with Washington.

In a statement released on Friday, Tehran reacted sharply to the joint communique issued on June 25, dismissing Washington's claims of an "enduring US commitment" to the security of Persian Gulf states as nothing more than "rhetoric and an inversion of reality."

The ministry emphasized that the US military footprint in the region remains a burden on local populations and a primary driver of insecurity.

The ministry pointed to the recent US-Israeli aggression against Iran from February 28 to April 8, during which the US

used military bases hosted by Persian Gulf Arab countries to launch attacks against the Islamic Republic.

The war, which began with US-Israeli airstrikes assassinating senior Iranian officials, saw Persian Gulf littoral states permit the aggressors to use their soil and airspace. Iran subsequently retaliated with 100 waves of missile and drone strikes against American and Israeli targets, and has since demanded compensation from five Arab nations for enabling the illegal attacks.

In its latest statement, the foreign ministry asserted that Washington's use of Arab countries' soil to attack Iran has made it clear that the US has no regard for the security of regional states or their relationships with one another.

The statement urged the Arab council members "to prevent any use of their territory and facilities by third parties to plan, organize, support, and execute ille-

gal actions, including military aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran."

The inclusion of the cliché phrase "threats originating from Iran" is merely a tool of a long-standing "Iranophobia" campaign designed by the US and Israel, said the statement, denouncing this language as a clear sign of the US ruling class's ongoing attempts to "impose its illusions and greed on regional countries."

It noted that the US has been pursuing a "divide and rule" policy that has trapped Persian Gulf states in a dangerous and endless arms race, turning the region into a massive weapons depot.

Israel only proxy in region

Addressing the classification of Palestinian and Lebanese resistance groups, the ministry expressed deep regret over the GCC's alignment with Washington and Tel Aviv in labeling these groups as "Iranian proxies."

It countered that "the only proxy entity in the region is the Zionist regime," asserting that the struggle against occupation and apartheid is fully legitimate under international law.

The statement also addressed the strategic Strait of Hormuz, placing direct responsibility for recent maritime insecurity on the US, Israel, and those regional states that aided their military campaign. Diplomats from the Persian Gulf's Arab states said on Thursday that dealing with what they called Iran's proxies and missiles was key to lasting peace, and that any trade and investment with Tehran would be reversible and contingent on it respecting its deal with the US.

"The ministers further emphasized that lasting regional peace and security requires addressing the full spectrum of Iran's threats, including its ballistic missiles, drones, and support of proxies in the region," they said in a joint statement



IRNA

following a meeting co-chaired by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

"Any trade and investment with Iran is conditional and reversible, contingent on Iran's compliance with the MoU and the final agreement, cessation of its destabilizing behavior, and creation of the conditions necessary for economic engagement," they added.

Pezeshkian: Diplomacy-driven economic gains to fund infrastructure, development

Economy Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said any economic gains resulting from improving international conditions would be invested in strengthening the country's infrastructure and financing development projects.

Speaking at a joint meeting with border management and road construction officials in West Azarbaijan Province, Pezeshkian said development should be aligned with available resources, warning that expansion without regard for existing capacities could create serious long-term challenges.

He also called for a comprehensive strate-

gy to manage water, soil and regional resources as part of efforts to restore Lake Urmia, one of the Middle East's largest salt lakes, whose shrinking water levels have raised environmental concerns for years.

"The continuation of life in this region depends on balancing resources and consumption, reforming cultivation patterns, controlling water-intensive industries and strengthening oversight," Pezeshkian said.

The president rebuked what he described as a lack of reliable data and coordinated planning among some government agencies, saying effective management

required accurate information on livestock, water resources, grazing capacity and regional development plans.

He said policymakers should assess whether crops currently being cultivated are suitable for local conditions and whether they will have viable markets in the future, arguing that sound decision-making must precede effective implementation.

Hailing efforts to reduce water consumption through improved irrigation as valuable, Pezeshkian said changing irrigation methods alone would not solve the problem if unsuitable crops continued to be grown. He said scientific assessments should



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks at a joint meeting with border management and road construction officials in West Azarbaijan Province on June 26, 2026.

● president.ir

determine which crops should remain and where cultivation patterns should change. Pezeshkian added that lasting behavioral change would require government policies, financial incentives, regulations and resource allocation to work in the same direction, with the aim of preserving Lake Urmia, supporting local livelihoods and promoting sustainable regional development.



Minister: Foreign troop withdrawal key to regional stability, global energy security



Iran's Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad (R) attends the 11th BRICS Energy Ministers' Meeting in Gurugram, India on June 25, 2026.
● SHANA

Economy Desk

Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad said lasting stability in West Asia and the security of global energy supplies can only be achieved through the withdrawal of foreign forces from the region and the dismantling of US military bases.

In his address to the 11th BRICS Energy Ministers' Meeting in Gurugram, India on Thursday, Paknejad elaborated on the full scope of repeated attacks on Iran's oil, gas, refining and petrochemical infrastructure that he described as a "blind war against global energy security."

"The only way to reach stability and security in West Asia, which supplies a major portion of the world's energy, is the withdrawal of foreigners from the region, the dismantling of US bases, and entrusting the security of this strategic region to regional countries," he said. His remarks come days after a landmark June 17 Memorandum of Understanding between Iran and the United States that commits Washington to lifting all sanctions on Tehran, unfreezing Iranian assets, and allowing dollar-based transactions. The minister said Iran is ready to play "an active

and constructive role" with BRICS members to achieve secure and affordable energy objectives, but warned that the global energy system is facing "challenges and growing uncertainties more than ever before" – from geopolitical risks and market volatility to climate change and investment constraints that "cannot be addressed by one or two countries alone." In his address, Paknejad detailed the consequences of the US-Israeli war, telling the assembled ministers that the "repeated attacks by aggressors on Iran's oil, gas, refining, and petrochemical infrastructure during this period were not merely an attack on one country's infrastructure, but a blind war against global energy security."

The attacks, he said, caused physical destruction to facilities, "the martyrdom and wounding of a number of oil industry personnel," widespread environmental consequences, disruption in the production of raw materials and the supply chain of essential goods needed for the lives of the Iranian people, and the loss of income and employment for thousands of families in the Persian Gulf region. "The consequences of such aggression have

now led to an energy crisis, a global increase in the price of raw materials and manufactured products, economic pressure, and increased living costs for many civilian populations," Paknejad said.

He described the attacks as a "flagrant violation of international law and specifically the United Nations Charter" that "must be condemned at every level."

Elsewhere in his remarks, the minister said Iran, as one of the world's largest oil and gas producers, has achieved its infrastructure development objectives despite years of sanctions, with annual natural gas production reaching over 280 billion cubic meters in 2025 – about 7% of global output. He added that Iran possesses thousands of kilometers of pipelines for transporting crude, petroleum products, and natural gas, and that electricity generation capacity had exceeded 100,000 megawatts, with both fossil-fuel and non-fossil generation expanding.

BRICS Digital Center comes online

Paknejad on Thursday also welcomed the launch of the BRICS Digital Center of Excellence (DCoE) for Smart Grid and Energy Storage, describing it as a practical platform to strengthen technical cooperation, innovation and knowledge-sharing among member states. Paknejad said the center could help advance several strategic objectives, including enhancing energy security, promoting technology transfer and capacity building, supporting energy transition efforts while maintaining affordable and reliable en-

ergy access, strengthening South-South cooperation, and creating new opportunities for energy-producing and exporting countries.

He noted that varying levels of technological development among BRICS members make the initiative particularly important, as it can help bridge technology gaps and accelerate the deployment of modern energy infrastructure across participating nations.

Iran, India call for expanding energy ties

In a related development, Paknejad met with his Indian counterpart on the sidelines of the 11th BRICS Energy Ministers' Meeting held in Gurugram, Haryana, India, on Thursday.

Iran's oil minister and India's Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri stressed the importance of developing, strengthening, and enhancing bilateral cooperation in the oil and energy sectors.

During their meeting, both sides highlighted the positive relations and cooperation between the two countries.

India has historically been an important buyer of Iranian crude but suspended imports in 2019 following the re-imposition of US sanctions on the export of Iranian oil.

The two-day meeting in Gurugram, on the outskirts of New Delhi, brings together energy ministers from the expanded BRICS group, which now comprises Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and the United Arab Emirates.

Tehran, Beijing agree to pursue rail customs cooperation to boost trade



Foroud Asgari (R), head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), is seen on the sidelines of a meeting of the World Customs Organization (WCO) in Brussels on June 26, 2026.
● IRNA

Economy Desk

Iran and China agreed on Friday to move forward with signing a rail customs cooperation deal aimed at facilitating and expanding bilateral trade, according to state news agency IRNA.

The agreement was discussed during a bilateral meeting between the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) chief Foroud Asgari, and Zhang Baofeng, head of China's General Administration of Customs, on the sidelines of a World Customs Organization meeting.

The proposed agreement is intended to make more effective use of rail transport capacity between the two countries and

support increased trade flows.

The two sides also discussed extending special customs facilitation measures to authorized economic operators (AEOs), a program designed to simplify customs procedures for trusted businesses.

Officials reviewed plans to expand cooperation in customs training, exchange expertise between specialists, and collaborate on coordinated border management practices.

Separately, Asgari met with the head of the Asia-Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building, where he said Iran was prepared to deepen cooperation in areas including smart customs, digital transformation,

risk management, coordinated border management and Time Release Studies (TRS).

Asgari said IRICA was implementing modernization and electronic transformation programs and welcomed greater participation by Iranian customs experts in regional workshops, training courses and professional development initiatives. He also called for more virtual training and on-line capacity-building programs to broaden access for customs personnel.

The head of the regional capacity-building office expressed readiness to expand cooperation with Iran in organizing customs-related training programs, according to IRNA.

No strategic rift...

The first message is that the Islamic Republic re-

Page 1 >

committed to the understanding on keeping the Strait open and ensuring the continuity of international shipping. However, that commitment does not mean accepting every proposed route or mechanism without review and agreement by the coastal states.

The second—and more important—message is that no technical or security mechanism in the Strait of Hormuz, however well-intentioned, can enjoy sufficient le-

gitimacy or durability without the participation, consent, and respect for the legal rights of the coastal states, particularly Iran. This is not merely a political position; it is rooted in established principles of international law and the governance of international waterways.

The third message is that Iran distinguishes between the principle of keeping the Strait of Hormuz open and the way maritime traffic is managed. As a result, opposition to certain proposed routes should not be construed as

opposition to freedom of navigation or the security of global trade. Rather, it reflects Iran's insistence that implementation arrangements also align with the legal, security, and sovereignty concerns of the coastal states.

In essence, Tehran's message to the international community is that lasting security in the Strait of Hormuz can only be achieved when freedom of navigation is guaranteed alongside recognition of the sovereign rights and legal responsibilities of the coastal states.

Iran's hybrid war with United States, Israel

Competition in cyber, cognitive domains

By Razia Bahrami

Expert at Institute for Political and International Studies

OPINION

Tensions between Iran, on one hand, and the United States and the Israeli regime, on the other, have developed over several decades and have been shaped by political, military, and ideological factors. These tensions intensified following the assassination of Iranian Major General Qasem Soleimani by the United States in January 2020, alongside ongoing disputes over Iran's nuclear program and its regional role. During two periods when diplomatic negotiations between Iran and the United States were underway, Washington carried out two separate military attacks against Iran, effectively undermining the diplomatic process. After the multi-day second operation that started on February 28, 2026, Iran fulfilled its promise to retaliate strongly, and the confrontation gradually assumed a regional dimension.

From the early stages of this second conflict, the Israeli regime expanded the electronic dimension of the confrontation through cyber operations and attacks on electronic infrastructure. At the same time, Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz extended the conflict into the economic and energy domains. As a result, the war evolved into a hybrid conflict encompassing military, economic, energy, media, electronic, and even agricultural and industrial arenas. Tensions escalated to the point that the president of the United States openly threatened to destroy Iran's infrastructure. The confrontation between Iran and the Israeli regime has moved beyond conventional warfare into a complex and technologically driven domain. Under the cease-fire, the conflict is now unfolding across cyber, electronic, and information dimensions, placing the vital infrastructure of both sides under constant threat. The following sections examine various aspects of this new form of warfare — from cyber operations to cognitive warfare.

Cyber warfare against electronic infrastructure

As mentioned before, the recent conflict between Iran and the Israeli regime has taken on new dimensions, extending beyond direct military confrontation. The war is now being waged in cyber, electronic, and information spaces, with both sides leveraging advanced technologies to gain superiority. Cyber and electronic attacks carried out during two US and Israeli strikes in 2025 and 2026 can be analyzed across the following dimensions:

1. Cyber warfare and vulnerabilities

Recent events have shown that despite claims of cyber superiority, both sides possess vulnerabilities in their digital infrastructures. Reciprocal attacks targeted banks, cryptocurrency exchanges, government services, and information networks, with the intensity of operations increasing severalfold compared to previous years. In June 2025, the hacker



On the 78th nightly gathering since the start of the 2026 US-Israeli war in Tehran, Iran, a woman and a toddler take a selfie with the blue and pink drones that became famous when Iranian armed forces started sending messages on their retaliatory drones and missiles.

● AHMAD MOEINI JAM/IRNA

group "Predatory Sparrow" disrupted the operations of Iran's Sepah Bank and inflicted damage on the Nobitex cryptocurrency exchange. Months later, on March 11, 2026, a missile strike targeted a Sepah Bank building, tragically resulting in the martyrdom of several employees.

2. Attacks on infrastructure Cyberattacks on financial, communication, and security infrastructures on both sides caused temporary disruptions. Hactivist groups and security structures employed methods such as DDoS attacks, phishing, and targeted intrusions to disable systems. Reports of such reciprocal attacks were circulated in Iranian and Hebrew-language media in January 2026.



The image, reportedly published by the now-infamous news agency SalamPix, showing protesters holding hands in unity during the January 2026 riots in Iran is reviewed by DW to be AI-generated and fake.

● DW



3. Electronic warfare against drones

Drone warfare emerged as one of the primary arenas of confrontation. Both sides sought to disrupt GPS signals, sever communication links, inject false data, and employ artificial intelligence to divert or neutralize drones.

4. Cyber defense structures

The Israeli regime relied simultaneously on specialized electronic warfare units and air defense systems, while Iran employed networks of electronic defense, indigenous counter-drone systems, and retaliatory cyberattacks.

5. Expansion of the conflict into digital space

The spread of warfare into the internet and social media introduced numerous new actors — more than one hundred cyber groups — into the battlefield. Internet restrictions, real-time information dissemination, and an increase in online attacks were defining features of this phase.

Cognitive and narrative warfare

The digital battlefield was not limited to technical intrusions; misinformation, psychological operations, and efforts to influence public opinion also played a crucial role. The rapid transmission of information on social media became a key factor in



Groups of Iranian citizens participated in nightly gatherings and marches over several weeks. Yet due to digital communication restrictions and weaknesses in transmitting domestic narratives to the global arena, these reactions received limited international media and social media coverage, and thus the voices of segments of Iranian society were largely unheard in the global narrative battlefield.

shaping perceptions.

1. AI-generated misleading images and content

The recent conflict witnessed a sharp increase in misleading content, particularly AI-generated materials circulating on social media. Advances in artificial intelligence tools have made the creation of fake images and videos easier, leading to a surge in posts attributed to AI-generated content on the X platform. Although this content still represents a small fraction of overall misinformation, it has introduced new complexities into the information ecosystem.

2. Digital diplomacy or cognitive operations?

Donald Trump, by publishing more than three posts per day on the Truth Social platform, has played a prominent role in shaping global narratives. Analyses suggest that the primary objective of this continuous messaging is to influence financial markets, particularly oil markets, US stock exchanges, and equities. Evidence of suspicious transactions — such as stock purchases or oil trades conducted roughly 40 minutes before the publication of certain posts — points to the possible exploitation of insider information by specific actors for substantial profits. This approach adds new dimensions to the concept of information warfare and its impact on the global economy. On the opposing side, Dr. Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, speaker of Iran's Parliament and head of the negotiating team, has sought to explain the hidden mechanisms of market manipulation to public opinion by publishing targeted analyses and data online. Meanwhile, reactions from users, media outlets, and even accounts affiliated with diplomatic institutions — such as Iranian embassies abroad — through replies, memes, and internet satire, have rapidly amplified war-related discussions in the public sphere. These interactions demonstrate how diplomacy and economics have become increasingly intertwined with the communicative and cultural dynamics of cyberspace.

3. Lego-style animations in digital narrative-building by Generation Z

In recent years, Iran's Generation Z has creatively used digital media to discuss news events. One notable trend is the publication of short videos in a Lego-style animation format, produced by anonymous groups in Iran. These videos typically reconstruct news events in symbolic, humorous, or ironic ways and spread rapidly on social media due to their visual appeal and ease of production. Using Lego characters allows creators to present complex narratives in a simple and accessible format for younger audiences without depicting real individuals or scenes. As a result, this type of content has become a favored medium among younger generations for expressing experiences, reactions, and digital narratives.

4. The strategic role of the Iranian diaspora in the conflict

During periods when domestic communications are disrupted or cut off, the resulting informa-

tion vacuum amplifies the voices of certain expatriate groups beyond their actual weight as access to diverse domestic narratives becomes limited. Under such conditions, some political factions within the Iranian diaspora are presented or perceived in international media as representatives of the opinions of 90 million Iranians, despite the fact that this image does not necessarily reflect the complex and multilayered reality of Iranian society.

Moreover, some migrants may believe that external pressure or international intervention can accelerate internal change — a perception rooted in their distance from domestic realities or their different experiences in Western societies. Consequently, the cognitive gap between the diaspora and domestic society often leads to narrative conflicts and deep misunderstandings, particularly when groups abroad assign themselves a role exceeding the actual capacity of the migrant community.

5. The arena of lost narratives: a silenced voice

With the expansion of social media into the public sphere, contemporary conflicts have entered a new domain — one that unfolds less on the military battlefield and more within the realm of perception, narrative, and public opinion. During the Israeli regime's war against Gaza, a sudden and widespread shift occurred in the online space, as user-generated content formed waves of narratives that influenced public sentiment across many parts of the world. As a result, conflicts increasingly entered the cognitive domain, where imagery, storytelling, and information flows play a decisive role in shaping global perceptions.

In the recent conflict with Iran, the US president adopted a new strategic communication pattern, attempting to provide real-time and widespread war narratives directly to global public opinion. However, Iran's situation differed significantly from cases such as Gaza. Extensive disruptions and shutdowns of the internet inside the country prevented a large portion of Iranian society's narratives and reactions from reaching beyond national borders. As a result, global public opinion had limited access to direct representations of domestic social reactions.

This occurred despite the emergence of social mobilization within Iran, including street presence and demonstrations supporting the state and protesting foreign attacks. Groups of citizens participated in nightly gatherings and marches over several weeks. Yet due to digital communication restrictions and weaknesses in transmitting domestic narratives to the global arena, these reactions received limited international media and social media coverage, and thus the voices of segments of Iranian society were largely unheard in the global narrative battlefield.

Transformation of power in hybrid warfare

An examination of the dimensions

of this confrontation demonstrates that the nature of conflict among actors has shifted from traditional, purely military models toward a form of “full-spectrum hybrid warfare”. The find-

ings of this analysis indicate that superiority in future battlefields will no longer depend solely on firepower in the physical domain, but rather on three key factors: first, the resilience of critical

infrastructure against cyber intrusions; second, the capacity to manage cognitive warfare and construct dominant narratives in the international arena; and third, the maintenance of cohesion be-

tween governance and society under conditions of communication disruption. In contemporary conflict models, the “information and digital space” and the “realm of

collective perceptions” have become decisive components alongside physical battlefields — such that a failure in effective narrative construction can distort the international rep-

resentation of on-the-ground outcomes.

The article was first published by the Institute for Political and International Studies.

Consequences of great powers competing to militarize AI

By Javad Mohammadi
Expert on artificial intelligence

OPINION

During recent decades, technological transformations have fundamentally altered the essence of warfare. Whereas, in the 20th century, military power was defined by heavy armaments and industrial capacities, in the 21st century, algorithms, data, and intelligent systems have become determinative elements.

Analyses published at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) indicate that competition among great powers has, to an increasing degree, been transferred to the domain of military artificial intelligence (AI). This trajectory not only encompasses the development of autonomous weaponry, but also includes the integration of artificial intelligence across all echelons of military operations, from target identification to tactical decision-making. In this same vein, reports from Foreign Policy concerning recent conflicts, particularly in Ukraine, demonstrate that the utilization of algorithms for the guidance of unmanned aerial vehicles and the analysis of battlefield data has become a pivotal element. This evolution has augmented the velocity and precision of operations; simultaneously, however, it has expanded the gap between the human decision-maker and the human consequences of decisions.

A menace surpassing nuclear weaponry

Unlike nuclear weapons, the deployment of which has been limited due to their catastrophic consequences, military artificial intelligence is proliferating rapidly and confronts fewer legal and ethical impediments. Yet, artificial intelligence-based weaponry can operate without direct human supervision, and this very



characteristic engenders novel hazards. Some experts contend that artificial intelligence could transform into an armament even more perilous than nuclear weapons. The rationale for this assertion resides not in its destructive capacity, but in its capacity for widespread utilization, its lower cost, and the lowering of the threshold for its employment. Reports from Stanford University likewise address the regulatory challenges of this technology and demonstrate that the chasm between technological development and the formulation of legal norms is expanding rapidly. This chasm exacerbates the risk of unregulated use of artificial intelligence in warfare.



Fariba Zarei (L), mother of Raha — a 7-year-old girl who was brutally killed alongside her friends by a US air strike on a school in Minab — sees her daughter's belongings for the first time since the February 28 attack, on March 30, 2026. Mourning with her at the family's home in Minab are Raha's aunt and grandmother.

● FOREIGN POLICY

From testing ground to human catastrophe: the Minab school tragedy

The application of artificial intelligence in military operations, when accompanied by incomplete data or algorithmic biases, can produce catastrophic consequences. During recent US-Israeli attacks against Iran, reports have been published regarding the employment of artificial intelligence-based systems for identification and targeting, which indicate that decision-making was, in certain instances, delegated to algorithms.

One of the most grievous examples of this trajectory is the attack that resulted in the martyrdom of 168 students in Minab. This catastrophe demonstrates how reliance upon autonomous systems, absent adequate human oversight, can lead to fatal errors. Under such circumstances, the fundamental inquiry is: who bears responsibility for these errors? Can an algorithm be deemed accountable, or must this responsibility be ascribed to its designers and users? This



“Unlike nuclear weapons, the deployment of which has been limited due to their catastrophic consequences, military artificial intelligence is proliferating rapidly and confronts fewer legal and ethical impediments. Yet, artificial intelligence-based weaponry can operate without direct human supervision, and this very characteristic engenders novel hazards. Some experts contend that artificial intelligence could transform into an armament even more perilous than nuclear weapons. The rationale for this assertion resides not in its destructive capacity, but in its capacity for widespread utilization, its lower cost, and the lowering of the threshold for its employment.”

question constitutes one of the foundational challenges of international law in the age of artificial intelligence.

The erosion of ethics in warfare: human decision vs. machine decision

One severe consequence of the militarization of artificial intelligence is the gradual erosion of ethics in warfare. In traditional warfare, decision-making concerning the employment of force, albeit under duress, was ultimately executed by human beings. This ensured a modicum of ethical accountability. With the advent of artificial intelligence, this relationship has been disrupted. Algorithms operate according to pre-defined data and patterns, and they



People protest Scale AI's Pentagon-funded AI military project, Thunderforge, outside the company's San Francisco headquarters on August 6, 2025. Thunderforge is designed to integrate AI agents into military planning and operations.

● GUSTAVO HERNANDEZ/KQED

lack human comprehension of concepts such as suffering, dignity, and proportionality. This characteristic amplifies the risk of transforming warfare into a merely technical process devoid of human considerations.

The development of novel technologies, without regard for human rights, can lead to widespread violations of those rights. In the military domain, this hazard is substantially greater because decisions made are directly correlated with human lives. Within such an atmosphere, the concept of accountability likewise becomes ambiguous. When an attack is executed by an autonomous system, determining who must be held answerable becomes a complex challenge. This situation can lead to some kind of structural irresponsibility, wherein no actor is entirely accountable. The warfare of the future has, more than any previous epoch, become an arena wherein technology and military power are thoroughly interwoven. Artificial intelligence, as one of the most significant among these technologies, has not only transformed methods of combat but has also challenged fundamental concepts such as accountability, ethics, and legitimacy.

Recent experiences, including the atrocity at the Minab school, demonstrate that the unregulated employment of these technologies can produce catastrophic human consequences. Under such circumstances, the necessity of formulating novel legal and ethical norms is felt more acutely than ever before. Nevertheless, the reality of the international system indicates that the competition for technological supremacy may override these considerations. Consequently, the future of warfare will be shaped less by ethical principles and more by algorithms and the logic of power.

The article was first published in Persian by the Strategic Council on Foreign Relations.



Star-studded cast as Iran confirms taekwondo quartet for Asian Games

Sports Desk

Iran will be among the leading favorites in the men's taekwondo competition at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games after confirming a formidable four-man roster for September's multi-sport event in Japan.

Hadi Saei, chairman of the Iranian Taekwondo Federation, said last week that the country would target "not just one, but multiple taekwondo golds" at the upcoming showpiece. The most decorated Iranian Olympian has every reason to set the bar high, with the men's squad heading into the Asian Games on the back of a string of medal-laden campaigns on the international stage over the past two years.

Amir-Sina Bakhtiari was the last Iranian to secure his place in the team after winning a fiercely contested -80kg selection trial last week, defeating Asian bronze medalist Amirreza Sadeqian, Mohammad-Hossein Yazdani and, most notably, Olympic silver medalist Mehran Barkhordari in Tehran.

Bakhtiari will be looking to cap his impressive run of re-



cent results by ending Iran's Asian Games gold drought. The 22-year-old claimed bronze at last October's World Championships before capturing the Asian -74kg title in May. Iran last won taekwondo gold at Jakarta 2018,

where Mirhashem Hosseini and Saeid Rajabi topped the podium in their respective men's weight classes.

Joining Bakhtiari in the Iranian squad is Abolfazl Zandi, who will be the man to beat in the

-58kg division after dominating the category at three major events in the space of seven months.

The former world junior champion stormed into the World Championships final without



L-R: Arian Salimi, Abolfazl Zandi, Amir-Sina Bakhtiari, and Mahdi Hajimousaei will be the four Iranians in the men's taekwondo competition at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games.

● taekwondo.ir

conceding a single round before defeating Belarusian Georgii Gurtsev in straight rounds to claim the title.

The young Iranian was once again in a league of his own at last December's Under-21 World Championships in Nairobi, earning the tournament's MVP award after completing a clean sweep of five straight-round victories. Zandi amassed 131 points while conceding just 23, capping his campaign with a victory over Russian neutral athlete Magomedg Magomedov in the final.

His third major gold in seven months came at the Asian Championships in Ulaanbaatar, where he defeated former world cadet champion Yang Hui-chan of South Korea in straight rounds in the final.

Another reigning continental

champion heading to the Asian Games is Mahdi Hajimousaei, who will target the top step of the podium in the -68kg category. The 2025 world silver medalist defeated former Olympic bronze medalist and 2019 world champion Jang Jun of South Korea in straight rounds to add the Asian -63kg crown to the -58kg title he won in 2024.

Arian Salimi will be Iran's biggest medal hope in the +80kg division, arriving as the reigning Olympic and Asian champion.

After suffering a shock last-16 exit at the World Championships, Salimi returned to his ruthless best in Ulaanbaatar, reaching the final without dropping a round in three bouts, including a semi-final victory over familiar rival and 2025 world champion Kang Sang-hyun of South Korea.

The 22-year-old got off to a slow start in the final against Uzbekistan's Marat Mavlonov, losing the opening round 7-7 on criteria before responding with a 6-3 win in the second.

Mavlonov looked set to claim the title after taking a 10-9 lead with three seconds remaining in the deciding round, but Salimi had other ideas. The Olympic champion unleashed a trademark three-point head kick in the final second to seal back-to-back Asian +87kg titles and will now look to go one better than the silver medal he won at the Hangzhou 2022 Asian Games.

Iran aiming for improved finish at Asian U18 volleyball meet

Sports Desk

The Iranian team departed for Thailand on Thursday ahead of the Asian Girls' U18 Volleyball Championship, which gets underway in Nakhon Ratchasima on Wednesday.

Making its ninth appearance at the tournament, Iran will open its Pool C campaign against the Philippines on the opening day in a rematch of the group-stage meeting from the previous edition, which the Iranians won in straight sets.

Iran will face Indonesia in its second outing on Thursday before head coach Akram Qahermani's side takes on record nine-time champion Japan in its toughest group-stage test the following day.

Iran and Japan also met at the 2024 tournament, with the latter claiming a straight-set victory before advancing

all the way to the final, where it lost to China in straight sets.

Iran recorded its best-ever finish at the tournament in 2024, placing sixth after a 3-0 defeat to South Korea. However, the team will look to build on last year's Asian Youth Games gold medal in Manama as it targets an improved finish this time around.

"We've carried out a full analysis of our preliminary-round opponents and are in good shape ahead of our matches against them," Iran captain Aida Baqernia, who was part of the gold medal-winning squad in Manama, said after the team's final training session in Tehran this week.

The young setter added that the Iranian senior women's national team's second successive CAVA Championship title last month "has given us extra motivation for the tournament, and I hope we can continue that successful run."

Joining Baqernia in Iran's Under-18 squad are Saina Bahri-Sefidi, Hadis Arfa'-Rafiei, Sana Naqipour, Setayesh Nasr-Esfahani, Maria Mohammadi, Yekta Kasiri, Elina Latifinia, Fatemeh Homayoun, Melina Ghofrani, Sama Yahyapour, Elena Homayounirad, Asal Valipour and Tara Shakki.

The top two teams from each of the four pools in Nakhon Ratchasima will advance to the quarterfinals, while the remaining sides will compete in the 9th-16th place classification matches.

Host Thailand - champion in 2014 and a semifinalist in the previous edition on home soil - has been drawn in Pool A alongside Uzbekistan, Australia and Mongolia. Five-time champion China headlines Pool B, which also features Kazakhstan, Hong Kong and Kyrgyzstan. Bronze medalist in 2024, Chinese Taipei headlines Pool D, where it will face South Korea, India and Vietnam.



● RASOUL SHIRDEL/volleyball.ir

IHF Men's Beach Handball World Championships:

Iran beats Tunisia but misses out on last eight

Sports Desk

Iran defeated Tunisia 2-0 on Friday to finish its main-round campaign at the IHF Men's Beach Handball World Championships in Zagreb on a winning note.

Iran edged a thrilling opening period 23-22 before sealing the victory with a 19-16 scoreline in the second against the African champion.

Ali Heidarian led the scoring for Iran with 17 points, while Amin Kazemi added 16, though their efforts were not enough to secure a place in the quarterfinals for head coach Mahdi Qashgaei's side, which finished fifth in the six-team Group I standings.

Entering the tournament on the back of last year's silver-medal campaign at the Asian Championships, Iran made a losing start in the preliminary round in the Croatian capital, suffering back-to-back 2-1 defeats to Spain and 2024 bronze medalist Portugal.

Qashgaei's men bounced back by beating the United States in straight



● IRIHF

periods (25-20, 22-18) to join the two European sides in progressing from Group A to the main round.

More daunting tests awaited Iran in the second phase, as the Asian side lost 2-0 (23-16, 21-16) to Denmark, runner-up in each of the previous two editions, before falling 22-20, 23-22 to 2010 finalist Hungary later

on Thursday.

Meanwhile, Hungary defeated Spain 2-0 on Friday to finish top of Group I, while Portugal beat Denmark 2-1 to secure second place.

Spain and Denmark also advanced to the quarterfinals, while Iran will now look to match its ninth-place finish from the 2024 tournament.

Mammadov to decide Iran's final judo lineup for Asian Games: Miresmaeili

Sports Desk

Iranian Judo Federation president Arash Miresmaeili said the country has been allocated six quota places for September's Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games, though Azerbaijani head coach Rashad Mammadov will make the final decision on who will represent Iran at the multi-sport event. "Following consultations with the Ministry of Sports and Youth, Iran was allocated three men's and three women's places for the Asian Games," Miresmaeili said on Friday. The federation chief stressed, however, that Mammadov would have the final say on team selection, with medal prospects taking priority over filling the available quota.

"We want to contribute to Iran's medal tally at the Asian Games, so we will not send any judoka who does not

have a realistic chance of winning a medal," Miresmaeili said. "We will carefully assess each athlete's form, and there is no obligation for us to use all six quota places."

Miresmaeili pointed to Mammadov's selection policy for last year's Islamic Solidarity Games as an example of the coach's uncompromising approach. Although Iran had secured eight quota places - five for men and three for women - the Azerbaijani opted to name a five-member squad consisting of three men and two women.

"Mammadov is a truly de-

manding coach," Miresmaeili said. "Even now, he has reservations about including Pouria Banaeian in the squad for the Asian Junior Championships in July, despite him being a member of both the senior and junior national teams." Iran last won medals in judo at the Asian Games in Jakarta-Palembang 2018, where Saied Mollaie claimed silver and Ali Pakdaman took bronze in the men's competition. The country's only Asian Games judo gold came at Busan 2002, when Masoud Haji-Akhoundzadeh won the men's 60kg title.



● MAMA

Minab showcases blend of history, agriculture, natural attractions



Hazareh Castle
● IRNA



Panjshanbe Bazaar
● IRNA



Azini Wetland
● IRNA

Iranica Desk

Minab, located in eastern parts of Hormozgan Province, lies along the Minab River and has long been regarded as one of the most important settlement and agricultural centers in southern Iran due to its fertile lands. Some researchers trace the city's history back to the Sassanid era and even earlier periods. The city of Minab recently came under widespread public attention in Iran and around the world following a devastating military attack by the US and Israel on an elementary school in the city. The strike, which resulted in the martyrdom and injuries of innocent schoolchildren, was widely condemned and sparked profound grief and outrage among the public. The tragedy highlighted the devastating human cost of vi-

olence against civilians, particularly children, and drew significant media coverage both domestically and internationally. In the wake of this heartbreaking event and the increased attention it generated, the following text provides an overview of the city and its historical and cultural significance. Its tropical climate, vast palm groves, mango orchards, and proximity to the Sea of Oman have given Minab a distinct identity, turning it into one of the key tourism destinations in eastern Hormozgan, IRNA wrote. Among the city's historical landmarks, the Hazareh Castle (also known as Bibi Minu Castle) is the most prominent surviving heritage structure. Located in the city center, the fortress is considered the only major historical monument remaining from Minab's past. Local narratives attribute its con-

struction to two sisters, Bibi Minu and Bibi Nazanin. Some sources estimate the castle's age at more than 1,000 years, noting that it served defensive and administrative functions in different historical periods. Built primarily from mudbrick and clay, the structure once featured a surrounding moat. Although parts of the castle have been damaged over time, it remains one of Minab's key historical symbols and offers insight into the region's architectural traditions. One of Minab's most significant cultural attractions is its weekly Thursday Market (Panjshanbe Bazaar). With a long history, the market draws vendors and buyers from across Hormozgan and neighboring provinces. It features handicrafts, local clothing, agricultural products, southern spices, dates, citrus fruits, and hand-

made textiles produced by local women. The vibrant atmosphere and traditional attire of Minabi women create a distinctive cultural experience for visitors. The Thursday Market is more than a trading hub; it functions as a living exhibition of southern Iran's cultural traditions and social life. Among Minab's natural attractions, the Azini Wetland, located near Sirik on the shores of the Sea of Oman, stands out as a protected ecosystem. It serves as a habitat for migratory birds and aquatic species. During cooler seasons, numerous bird species migrate to the wetland for wintering, making it a popular destination for birdwatching and nature tourism. The area's calm environment, coastal waterways, and vegetation have made it one of eastern Hormozgan's most attractive ec-

otourism sites. Another important natural site is the Tiab Wetland, which features interconnected waterways that support diverse plant and animal life. Boat tours through the mangroves — where trees grow in saline water — offer visitors a unique experience. The wetland also plays a crucial role in maintaining regional biodiversity. In recent years, Minab Hilltop (Bam-e Minab) has also gained popularity among tourists. The elevated site provides panoramic views of the city, palm groves, and surrounding plains. Watching sunrise or sunset from this vantage point is considered one of the highlights of visiting Minab, and the area is frequently used by photographers capturing landscapes and urban scenery. The Minab River has been a key

factor in the city's formation and development. The availability of freshwater in a hot and arid region has made agriculture possible and established Minab as one of southern Iran's major farming hubs. The Esteqlal Dam (Minab Dam), built on the river, not only supplies water to the region but has also become a tourist attraction. Its reservoir and surrounding landscape provide a recreational space for families and visitors. Minab is also known for its extensive agricultural landscape. The city is one of Iran's key producers of dates, citrus fruits, and especially mangoes. Its vast orchards and palm groves present a contrasting image of lush greenery in southern Iran. During harvest seasons, tourists can observe traditional farming practices and experience fresh tropical fruits directly from local farms.

Isfahan looks beyond daylight to revitalize tourism

Iranica Desk

In recent years, night tourism has emerged in many of the world's major tourist destinations as a strategy to encourage longer stays, distribute urban activity more evenly throughout the day, and create new employment opportunities. For Isfahan — one of Iran's most important tourism hubs — this trend could provide a significant opportunity to redefine parts of urban life after sunset. Experts believe that in historic cities, night should not simply represent a period of closure and inactivity, but rather an opportunity for a different experience of urban spaces, cultural programs, service businesses, and deeper interaction between residents and visitors. Achieving this vision, however, requires investment in infrastructure, public safety, transportation, and the activation of urban services during late-night hours, according to IRNA. With its exceptional historical heritage, iconic public spaces, traditional bazaars, cultural routes, and diverse capacities in food, arts, and handicrafts, Isfahan has the potential to benefit from night tourism if supported by proper planning and policies. Such development could not only strengthen the local economy but also bring renewed social vitality to the city after sunset. Speaking to IRNA, the Deputy Director of Isfahan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization for Tourism Affairs, emphasized the importance of using the poten-



tial of the night economy in the metropolitan area. "Turning the night into an economic opportunity can be an effective solution to economic stagnation, unemployment, and social fatigue," said Davoud Abian. He explained that the night economy is not merely an economic issue but also a tool for creating equal opportunities and reducing social isolation. "Many people, including students, artists, young mothers, and retirees, cannot participate in conventional working hours due to daily responsibilities or physical limitations. The night economy can provide these groups with opportunities for employment and meaningful activity," he said. Abian added that a silent and dark city can contribute to feelings of loneliness and social isolation, especially among elderly people and teenagers. "By contrast, a lively city at night creates spaces for meeting, conversation, and cultural

exchange — factors that contribute to social well-being," he said. Questioning why Isfahan has not fully used this potential, Abian pointed to several obstacles preventing the growth of the night economy. "The first challenge is the dominance of the traditional 'nine-to-five' mindset, a legacy of the industrial era that divides life into daytime work and nighttime sleep. Modern post-industrial societies, however, have moved beyond these boundaries," he said. He identified the lack of infrastructure as another major barrier, including inadequate public transportation at night, insufficient street lighting, and limited welfare and security services during late hours. "The third obstacle is fear of disorder," Abian said. "Public gatherings at night are often associated with social problems, while global experience shows that active night cities can actually become safer due to greater



● IRNA

public presence and collective oversight in urban spaces." He argued that Isfahan could become a successful example of a 24-hour city in Iran. "The cost of changing the mindset from 'Why should we work at night?' to 'Why should we not turn the night into capital?' is far lower than the cost of economic stagnation, unemployment, and social exhaustion caused by cities that become inactive after dark," he said. Abian expressed hope that cooperation between urban authorities and other institutions would allow Isfahan to experience the true dynamism of a 24-hour city. The governor of Isfahan also highlighted the importance of cooperation between executive bodies, law enforcement agencies, and trade organizations to expand night tourism. Mehdi Jamali-Nejad told IRNA that provincial management's approach toward night tourism has changed. "Fortunately, in joint meetings

with representatives of the police, the Chamber of Guilds, and the Chamber of Commerce, strong coordination has emerged. We aim to move beyond traditional perspectives and create a more vibrant atmosphere in the province," he said. He explained that the goal is to provide the necessary conditions for domestic and international tourists to benefit from Isfahan's nighttime attractions, while also helping tourism businesses recover from recent economic difficulties caused by periods of instability and declining revenues. "The priority is cooperation among responsible institutions, including security authorities, tourism organizations, and cultural bodies, so that — while respecting regulations — suitable conditions can be created for nighttime activities," Jamali-Nejad said. He added that careful planning should ensure visitors experience the beauty and enjoyment of their journey while tourism

businesses are able to present their products and services effectively. "We intend to create a safe and dynamic environment through coordination among all relevant institutions, allowing tourism to regain momentum and helping compensate for previous losses," he said. The Director General of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization of Isfahan Province also emphasized that the city's environmental and climatic conditions are highly suitable for night tourism and announced readiness to support nighttime businesses. Amir Karamzadeh said that night tourism is already unofficially active in Isfahan. "Due to favorable weather conditions and high-quality green spaces, many citizens already spend time in parks and public areas until after midnight. The missing link is the lack of service infrastructure to meet this demand," he said. He added that turning this existing activity into a sustainable economic model requires cooperation with trade organizations and security authorities to extend the operating hours of tourism and service centers. "We need to provide 24-hour services for tourists and citizens in line with major cities around the world," Karamzadeh said. He invited tourism and service businesses across the province to apply for permits that would allow nighttime operations, saying the department is prepared to simplify procedures and provide legal support for such activities.

Iran registers 491 Muharram traditions, Ta'zieh remains UNESCO heritage



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran has registered 491 Muharram and Safar-related rituals on its national list of intangible cultural heritage, with UNESCO-listed Ta'zieh remaining one of the country's most prominent living traditions, a senior cultural heritage official said.

Speaking to reporters, Sima Haddadi, head of the Office for Registration and Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, said 480 are included on the representative list, while 11 are classified as requiring urgent safeguarding,



Actors perform Ta'zieh, a traditional passion play depicting the Battle of Karbala, during Muharram mourning ceremonies in a decorated courtyard in Iran.

● TEHRAN PICTURE AGENCY

IRNA reported.

"Under UNESCO's 2003 Convention, intangible cultural heritage cannot be ranked by importance because the value of each element is determined by the communities that preserve it," Haddadi said. "These traditions together form a living cultural system that strengthens identity, social cohesion and cultural continuity across generations."

She said traditions with broad cultural reach include Ta'zieh, charitable food offerings and communal mourning ceremonies, each reflecting distinct local customs and methods of transmission. Ashura, observed on the 10th day of Muharram, commemorates the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (PBUH), the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), at the Battle of Karbala in 680 AD and is the holiest day of mourning for Shia

Muslims.

Ta'zieh, Iran's traditional ritual passion play depicting the events of Karbala, was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010. Haddadi said UNESCO's safeguarding framework emphasizes community participation and the transmission of living traditions across generations.

Haddadi said Iran added 11 Muharram and Safar traditions from Bushehr, Isfahan, Semnan and Tehran provinces to the national register during the Iranian year that ended on March 20, 2026. The latest additions include regional Ta'zieh traditions, Nakh Gardani processions carrying a symbolic wooden bier representing Imam Hussein's coffin, ritual drumming, traditional recitations and community observances held during Muharram and Safar.

Football tribute honors Mexico's hospitality to Team Melli

Sports Desk

Iranian football players honored Mexico's ambassador to Tehran by presenting him with a signed national team jersey in recognition of Mexico's hospitality toward Team Melli during the 2026 FIFA World Cup, in a gathering that celebrated sport as a bridge between nations.

Aref Gholami of Esteghlal, Mohammad Khodabandelou of Persepolis, and Zob Ahan captain Shayan Mosleh presented the No. 10 Iran jersey to Guillermo Alejandro Pu-

ente Ordorica after joining hundreds of supporters to watch Iran's Group G World Cup match against Belgium at Hadish Mall in Tehran on June 21.

The players thanked the Mexican government and people for their "warm and generous hospitality" throughout the tournament, describing the gesture as a tribute to the friendship forged during the World Cup.

The event brought together athletes, cultural figures, football fans and diplomats in a festive atmosphere. Pu-

ente Ordorica attended as guest of honor and dean of the Latin American Ambassadors' Group, while Venezuela's Ambassador José Rafael Silva Aponte and Nicaragua's Ambassador Ramón Alberto Moncada Colindres joined members of their diplomatic missions in cheering alongside Iranian supporters.

After the final whistle, the diplomats remained with fans late into the evening, exchanging views in a display of football's unique ability to connect people across cultures.

French scholar who opened Hafez to Francophone readers dies

Arts & Culture Desk

Charles-Henri de Fouchécour, the distinguished French Iranologist whose landmark French translation of the complete 'Divan of Hafez' introduced generations of Francophone readers to Persian classical poetry, died at the age of 100. De Fouchécour devoted more than six decades to Persian language and literature, producing one of the most authoritative French editions of Hafez's works with extensive commentary that made the



14th-century Persian poet accessible to readers unfamiliar with Iran's literary tradition, IRNA reported.

His fascination with Persian culture began after studying Arabic in Tunisia. Recalling a pivotal conversation with one of his teachers, he said, "If you

want to go deeper, you must learn Persian," advice that led him back to Paris, where he completed doctoral studies in Persian language and literature under renowned linguist Gilbert Lazard.

In 1968, as a researcher at France's National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), De Fouchécour traveled to Iran, where he collaborated with leading Iranian scholars including Zabihollah Safa, Iraj Afshar, Nasrollah Pourjavady, Bahaeddin Khorramshahi and Hashem Javid.

Oscar invites 12 Iranian cineastes to join voting body

Arts & Culture Desk

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has invited 12 Iranian filmmakers and film professionals to join its membership, underscoring the growing international recognition of Iranian cinema as the organization continues to broaden the diversity of its global voting body.

The Academy announced that 529 artists and film executives from around the world had been invited to become members. Academy CEO Bill Kramer and President Janet Yang said the invitees had made "significant contributions to our global filmmaking community" through their dedication to the craft, Quds

ship will reach 11,319, including 10,338 voting members. The organization said its overall membership would comprise 36% women, 25% members from underrepresented communities and 22% international members, reflecting its ongoing effort to expand global representation. The invitations come ahead of the 2027 Academy Awards season, following recent rule changes that clarify the role of artificial intelligence in filmmaking while maintaining that creative authorship remains central to Oscar eligibility. The Academy has also updated its awards rules to allow performers to receive multiple acting nominations in the same year.

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TENDER NO.: 08-38-0440045

Second Announcement

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

Item	Material Description	Quantity
1	ROCK BITS, JET TYPE, LESS NOZZLES WITH API REGULAR TOOL JOINT PIN CONNECTION I.A.D.C. CODES: 1.1.1 OR 1.1.4 OR 1.1.5 ARE ACCEPTED IN EVALUATION MARKING: ALL SPECIFICATION OF BIT SUCH AS: TYPE, SIZE, MANUFACTURER, SERIAL, THREAD, ISO & IADC IN ACCORDANCE WITH API SPEC 7-1/ISO 10424- SHOULD BE DIE STAMPED ON THE TOP OF THE BIT LOCATION: DRILLING MOVEABLE MCAFP: DR/03/87/003 34 IN. X 7-5/8 IN.	8NO
2	ROCK BITS, JET TYPE, WITHOUT CENTER JET, LESS WITH API REGULAR TOOLJOINT PIN CONNECTION LEVEL OF INSPECTION: 2 (L.O.I.: 2) *QCP/MPS DOCUMENTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO REVIEW & CONF *ITP DOCUMENTS IS ESSENTIAL FOR TECHNICAL EVALUAT MARKING: ALL SPECIFICATION OF BIT SUCH AS: TYPE, SIZE, MANUFACTURER, SERIAL, THREAD, ISO & IADC IN ACCORDANCE WITH API SPEC 7-1/ISO 10424- SHOULD BE DIE STAMPED ON THE TOP OF THE BIT LOCATION: DRILLING MOVEABLE MCAFP: DR/03/85/003, 89/001, 91/001, 90/006 8-1/2 IN. X 4-1/2 IN. 26 IN., I.A.D.C. 1.1.4	60NO
3	ROCK BITS, JET TYPE, WITHOUT CENTER JET, LESS WITH API REGULAR TOOLJOINT PIN CONNECTION LEVEL OF INSPECTION: 2 (L.O.I.: 2) *QCP/MPS DOCUMENTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO REVIEW & CONF *ITP DOCUMENTS IS ESSENTIAL FOR TECHNICAL EVALUAT MARKING: ALL SPECIFICATION OF BIT SUCH AS: TYPE, SIZE, MANUFACTURER, SERIAL, THREAD, ISO & IADC IN ACCORDANCE WITH API SPEC 7-1/ISO 10424- SHOULD BE DIE STAMPED ON THE TOP OF THE BIT LOCATION: DRILLING MOVEABLE MCAFP: DR/03/85/004, 84/005, 79/001, 99/76/020, 78/0, 17-1/2 IN., I.A.D.C. 1.1.1	85NO
4,5,6	NOZZLES FOR DRILLING BITS COMPLETE WITH O-RING & RETAINING RINGS NOZZLES FOR DRILLING BITS ONE SET CONSISTS OF 3 NUMBERS CONNECTION SIZE AS SPECIFIED LOCATION: DRILLING MOVEABLE FOR SIZE 26 TO 34 INCH	48ST
7,8,9	FOR SIZE 14-3/4 TO 26 INCH	149ST

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: www.setadiran.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded. The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 31,974/67 EURO or 54,508,560,000 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex,
Kouy-e-Fadaelan Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran
Tel. No.: 061 34 12 4644 Fax No.: 061 34 45 74 37

www.shana.ir | www.nisoc.ir | http://iets.mporg.ir | www.setadiran.ir

First Announcement



ESCO
Esfahan Steel Company

Brief Notice of International Two-Stage

Tender No. 1032795

It is hereby announced that Esfahan Steel Company (ESCO) intends to procure the bosh locomotive, in accordance with the required conditions and technical specifications, through a two-stage international tender. Accordingly, all the prospective bidders are kindly requested to visit ESCO's website www.esfahansteel.ir so as to obtain the tender document no later than 05.07.2026 and upload their techno-commercial offer to ESCO's website (through Sourcing Field) max. up to 06.07.2026 at **00:45 p.m.** It is evident that this letter is only for notification purpose.

Yours Respectfully,
M. Shateri,
Equipment and Goods Procurement Management
Esfahan Steel Company