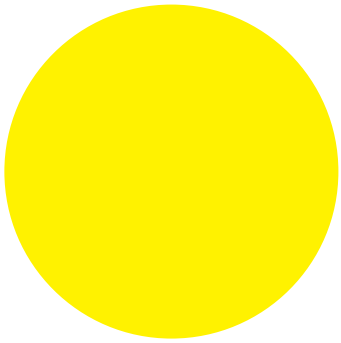


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Masoud Pezeshkian
● president.ir

Egypt seeks to stay out of conflict, defuse Persian Gulf tensions at their source

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

A drone attack on Egypt’s Damietta Port targeted two liquefied natural gas (LNG) carriers, setting off a major fire. While no group has claimed responsibility and Cairo has not officially blamed any party, speculation has emerged over a possible Iranian connection, particularly due to the port’s proximity to the Suez Canal — an alternative route for energy exports following the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and the deterioration of security in the Bab al-Mandab Strait. Iran has firmly denied any involvement, describing the attack as an Israeli plot aimed at undermining peace. Egypt, meanwhile, has adopted a cautious stance, saying it will not



Abdolmohsen Agha-Araghchi

be drawn into the conflict and that any response will depend on the outcome of a thorough investigation. In an interview with Iran Daily, Abdolmohsen Agha-Araghchi, an expert on Middle Eastern and North African affairs, said Egypt would do everything it could to stay out of the conflict and help resolve the crisis through meaningful negotiations among the parties involved. However, he warned that a further escalation or the direct involvement of the southern Persian Gulf states could prompt Cairo to reconsider its approach. Even so, he stressed that Egypt’s overriding objective is to address the crisis at its source by resolving the conflict in the Persian Gulf.

IRAN DAILY: Given Cairo’s cautious position, how serious do you think is the possibility of Egypt being drawn into a confrontation between Iran and the United States? What factors could push Egypt toward direct involvement?

NABAVI: Like other countries in the

region, Egypt is deeply concerned about the crisis spiraling to a point where it can no longer be managed or contained. Throughout this period, Cairo has sought to act as a mediator, or at the very least as a messenger of peace, bringing the positions of the conflicting parties closer together. The statements and diplomatic engagements of the Egyptian president and foreign minister clearly reflect Cairo’s serious and genuine efforts to contain the crisis and facilitate effective negotiations among the parties involved, particularly Iran and the United States. In this regard, Egypt, much like Turkey and Pakistan, has sought to make full use of its diplomatic capabilities. Nevertheless, other considerations are also at play. While Egypt is concerned about security in the Persian Gulf, it is even more sensitive to the security of the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab Strait, as developments there have more immediate and serious implications for its national interests.

Egypt also maintains important strategic agreements and partnerships with Israel, the European Union, the United States, and the southern Persian Gulf states. Naturally, it cannot simply disregard their concerns and sensitivities. Egypt’s response, including its reaction to the attack on the two vessels at Damietta Port, reflects the continuation of its cautious policy of avoiding involvement in the conflict or any escalation. However, if the crisis reaches an uncontrollable stage, or if the southern Persian Gulf states become directly involved in the fighting, it is entirely possible that Egypt’s support for them will become more pronounced and that Cairo will adopt a firmer position on the current crisis. Unofficial reports suggested that during the 40-day war, Egypt demonstrated its support for the southern Persian Gulf states by deploying several aircraft, pilots and air defense assets. A further escalation could lead to a more active Egyptian role, just as similar discussions have emerged re-

garding Pakistan. Immediately after the incident, Iran described Egypt as a friend and an important partner, while calling the attack on Damietta Port a false flag operation aimed at undermining relations between Tehran and Cairo and expanding the war. Could this approach help prevent misunderstandings between the two countries? Iran and Egypt have both sought to contain the current crisis and prevent it from becoming a major source of tension in bilateral relations or a catalyst for wider regional escalation. Iran has therefore tried to demonstrate its support for Egypt’s peace-oriented and mediating role. Still, two points should not be overlooked. First, the findings of Egypt’s independent investigation will be important. Second, Israel’s negative role in this context should not be underestimated. Israel continues to seek to further undermine Iran’s relations with other countries in the region.

President calls Iranians country's 'real heroes'

National Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Saturday that Iranians have been the "real heroes" of the country's current difficult times which have caused by the recent acts of aggression by the United States and Israel against Iran.

"Two years ago, our work began with the assassination of our dear guest by the Zionist regime; two years during which imposed wars, pressure and repeated hostility were inflicted on the people of Iran", Pezeshkian said in a post on X as he marked two years since taking office. Ismail Haniyeh, former head of the political bureau of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas, was as-

sassinated in an attack in the Iranian capital Tehran in July 2024.

"In all these difficult days, the real heroes were the people. The future of Iran will be shaped by the people of Iran," he wrote.

Pezeshkian's remarks looked back on the start of his administration two years ago, which coincided with the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, former leader of the Palestinian resistance group Hamas, by Israel in Tehran.

Since the beginning of Pezeshkian's tenure, Iran has endured a series of wars of aggression imposed by the United States and the Israeli regime, including the 12-day war in June 2025 and the 40-day war, as well as ongoing US attacks on Iranian soil

since earlier in July.

The US and Israel claimed the lives of many high-ranking Iranian officials, including the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, many top military commanders, thousands of personnel of armed forces and ordinary people.

The wars have also made many economic problems for the country as the US has imposed a naval blockade on Iran's ports. However, the current administration has managed to handle the situation despite economic pressure imposed on the country.

Despite the problems, Iranians have shown their support for the country and the establishment by attending nighttime gatherings across the country.



Masoud Pezeshkian
● president.ir

Araghchi: Foreign Ministry pursues national interests within guidelines of Leader

National Desk

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi stressed on Saturday that Iran's diplomatic apparatus pursues the country's national interests within the framework and guidelines of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei and the directives of the Supreme National Security Council.

Addressing a meeting of the government's Information Council in Tehran, the Iranian top diplomat explained the developments after a Memorandum of Understanding reached between Iran and the US to end the war and the repeated violations of the treaty by the US as well as efforts made by the foreign policy apparatus to protect national interests.

Tehran entered Pakistan-mediated negotiations with Washington to end an unprovoked aggression against the country. The negotiations led to



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi speaks during a meeting of the government's Information Council in Tehran on August 1, 2026.
● IRNA

a Memorandum of Understanding to stop conflict and reach a comprehensive agreement which will address Iran's nuclear program and sanctions imposed on Iran.

Back in June, Ayatollah Khamenei approved the Memorandum of Understanding. The Leader said he initially disagreed with the memorandum of understanding but ultimately approved it after receiving assurances from president and other officials that the country's interests would be protected.

Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei said he had "a different opinion" on the agreement but granted permission

after President Masoud Pezeshkian and other officials pledged to safeguard "the rights of the Iranian nation and the resistance front" and accepted responsibility for the deal.

During the Saturday's meeting, Araghchi also referred to the role of media in the ongoing war against Iran, stressing the need for the country's media to reflect the defense of the Iranian people in the face of the enemy's barbaric aggression, as well as to promote national unity and cohesion.

The Iranian foreign minister pointed to the critical role that the media can play in presenting a true narrative of the Iranian people's resistance and steadfastness against the aggressors.

US warmongering will tighten closure of Strait of Hormuz: Iran's security chief

International Desk

Iran's security chief warned that continued warmongering on the part of the United States towards the Islamic Republic will tighten the closure that the country has imposed on the Strait of Hormuz in response to Washington's violations.

Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Mohammad Bagher Zolqadr made the remarks in a message issued on Friday as he cautioned against continuation of the US's warlike attitude towards the Islamic Republic, including the illegal naval blockade that Washington has imposed on the country.

The two sides signed a memorandum of understanding last month to end the cycle arising from the latest bout of unprovoked American-Israeli aggression against the Islamic Republic, which had begun on February 28.

Under the understanding, Iran agreed to allow fee-free maritime transit through the strait for a period of 60 days.

In compliance with the MoU, the Islamic Republic devised a special maritime route for vessels to cross the chokepoint, warning vessels against using illegal routes.

The US has, however, been trying to escort transit through the strait along an illegal passageway, prompting the Islamic Republic to confront every instance of Washington-instigated transit through the chokepoint and shut



A commercial vessel is anchored in the Strait of Hormuz as a small fishing boat sails in the foreground in southern Iran on July 27, 2026.
● ISNA

the corridor until Washington ended its interference in regional maritime movement.

Adding to his remarks, Zolghadr noted that, not only would Washington's prolonged adversarial approach further complicate the closure of the waterway, "but also close other straits and chokepoints."

"The global economy, energy markets, and American voters will pay the price," he concluded as skyrocketing gasoline prices continue to exact a toll on American taxpayers.

The Strait of Hormuz, located between Iran and Oman, is one of the world's most critical maritime chokepoints, linking the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. A significant share of global oil and liquefied natural gas exports passes through the narrow waterway, making any disruption a source of concern for international energy markets and global shipping.

Iran shut down the chokepoint to enemies and their allies after February 28, when the US and the Israeli regime began their latest bout of wholesale

unprovoked aggression against the Islamic Republic.

It began exercising far stricter controls after US President Donald Trump announced continuation of an illegal naval blockade of Iranian vessels and ports in spite of a ceasefire that the US president, himself, had declared on April 7.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in a phone conversation with his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar described the US's violations of the MoU and continued military aggression against Iran — including the naval blockade and attacks on Iranian commercial shipping — as the primary causes of insecurity in the region and the Strait of Hormuz.

The US violations of the agreement's clauses, especially those related to the management of the Strait of Hormuz, have worsened situation in the strategic waterway and have caused incidents involving vessels attempting to use unauthorized routes.

In the latest of such incidents, a tanker off the coast of Oman was hit by an "unknown projectile" on Saturday, a British maritime agency said.

No injuries were reported in the incident, which occurred 12.5 miles off the coast of Lima, Oman, according to the agency.

Regional states serving as US shield will 'burn in fire of war': Top commander



Ali Abdollahi
● IRNA

International Desk

Commander of Iran's top joint military command, the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, warned regional countries against aligning with the United States, saying any state that acts as a "defensive shield" for Washington will "burn in the fire of war."

In a message addressed to countries in the region on Saturday, Major General Ali Abdollahi said the United States is "pursuing, with increasing speed, the path of widespread warmongering in a regional war," describing the approach as part of "a dangerous strategy aimed at expansion and illegitimate domination across the entire region."

"We explicitly declare that Muslim countries must exercise foresight, monitor America's crimes, and reconsider cooperation and alignment with the United States," he said. "Otherwise, any country that turns itself into a defensive shield for the criminal and aggressor United States will burn in the fire of war."

The United States has used its bases that are spread out in regional countries in its 40-day joint war of aggression on

Iran, which began on February 28. Iran, in response, has attacked US military bases and interests in those countries, in addition to Israeli targets in the occupied territories.

In its latest retaliatory attacks, Iran's Armed Forces launched strikes on the US bases in Kuwait on Saturday.

The commander said the recent war against Iran demonstrated that the "criminal United States" would refrain from no act of "mischief or destruction" in pursuit of its "satanic objectives," even at the expense of the interests and resources of Muslim nations.

He said Muslim countries should recognize that Washington is using their capital, wealth, critical infrastructure, and strategic resources "as a defensive shield for its worn-out army" while simultaneously strengthening the military and security apparatus of the "child-killing and terrorist Zionist regime."

He further said Iran, its armed forces, and the Axis of Resistance have shown that the regional balance of power "no longer follows its previous parameters," arguing that the United States and Israel have failed to achieve their "aggressive and illegitimate strategies" against the Islamic Republic.

However, the US President Donald Trump reiterated his threats against Iran on Friday.

Speaking to reporters Friday during a meeting with members of his Cabinet at the Camp David presidential retreat in Maryland, Trump said "we just want to win" in Iran and signaled that he expected US military action to continue for some time.

He claimed the US will hit Iran "very hard" until they can't take it anymore.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Gov't approves East-West transit corridor plan linking Afghanistan railway project

Economy Desk

Iran approved the general framework of an East-West transport corridor anchored by the Herat-Mazar-e Sharif railway project on Saturday, aiming to increase its share of the international transit market, strengthen its geo-economic position and expand regional economic cooperation and investment.

The framework was approved at a meeting chaired by First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref, according to IRNA. It also seeks to deepen economic ties with Afghanistan and other countries along the route, while creating new financing mechanisms for strategic infrastructure projects. Aref described the development of transport corridors as one of the government's strategic priorities.

"Increasing the capacity of transport corridors and expanding dry ports and northern ports alongside the Persian Gulf ports will strengthen Iran's role in re-

gional transit," he said.

He added that the government had taken effective steps over the past two years and regarded the expansion of transit corridors as one of its main priorities.

The meeting also approved measures to facilitate customs procedures and the through-transport of goods, as well as regulations covering the clearance of returned empty containers and temporary imports.

It further approved plans to use alternatives to southern ports for supplying essential goods and handling transit through Iran's shared borders with neighboring countries. The meeting also approved the design of a smart platform to monitor public transport fleets, linked to the country's integrated single-window border crossing system.

Iran's state railway chief last week told ILNA that Iranian companies had begun construction of an 800-kilometer railway linking Herat and Mazar-e Sharif in Afghanistan.

Jabbar Ali Zakari, who serves as deputy minister of roads and urban development, said the project aims to expand regional rail connectivity and complete a transport corridor linking Iran, Afghanistan and China.

He said the project is being financed by the Afghan government and will be carried out under a "railway-for-minerals" arrangement, under which Iran will build the railway in return for participating in the development of and investment in Afghanistan's mining sector.

Iran's southern ports remain under a US naval blockade imposed by President Donald Trump in mid-April, aimed at pressuring Tehran into an agreement after a 40-day US-Israeli war that began in late February. After a pause of several weeks, strikes on Iran's infrastructure resumed in mid-July, and the naval blockade was also reinstated. Iran is seeking to diversify its logistics corridors to counter growing restrictions on its trade routes.



First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref (C) chairs a meeting to review a general framework of an East-West transport corridor on August 1, 2026.

● fvpresident.ir

Iran, South Korea to roll out prefabricated construction cooperation



Economy Desk

Iran and South Korea are set to implement a cooperation agreement on industrialized construction, including the use of prefabricated building methods, to improve the strength and earthquake resistance of buildings in Iran, an official with Iran's Chamber of Cooperatives said on Saturday.

"South Korean officials are due to visit Iran in the coming days to begin implementing a bilateral agreement on industrialized construction," Mojtaba Mahallati,

deputy head of Iran's Chamber of Cooperatives, was quoted as saying by Fars news agency.

Iran's Ministry of Roads and Urban Development had previously signed a memorandum of understanding with Seoul to transfer South Korean knowledge and technology to Iran and build structures using industrial methods and updated construction technologies, according to Fars. The agreement, however, has not yet become operational.

The Chamber of Cooperatives has invited South Korean ambassadors and officials to the 26th

International Construction Exhibition, scheduled to be held in Tehran from Aug. 18 to 21, where the implementation of the agreement is expected to be launched in their presence.

Representatives from China, South Korea, Turkey, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Oman and Russia will participate in the exhibition, which will showcase the latest construction technologies and expertise from participating countries.

The event will also provide a platform for promoting exports of Iranian construction prod-

ucts to markets including Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Oman. Iran has repeatedly faced challenges related to building safety during natural disasters, particularly earthquakes. The country is located in one of the world's most seismically active zones, and weak enforcement of construction standards, quality control issues for building materials and non-compliance with engineering regulations have been cited as factors reducing the resilience of some buildings against earthquakes and other natural hazards.

Oman's re-exports to Iran more than double during Strait of Hormuz tensions

Economy Desk

Oman's re-exports to Iran more than doubled during the peak of military tensions in the Strait of Hormuz, reaching \$134 million in the March-May period, official Omani data showed.

According to Oman's National Centre for Statistics and Information, re-exports to Iran rose 127% from \$59 million in the same period a year earlier, Tasnim reported. For the first five months of 2026, Oman's re-exports to Iran increased 59% year on year to \$450 million, making Iran the second-largest destination for Oma-



ni re-exports and accounting for 17% of the country's total re-

port trade.

Total trade between Iran and

Oman reached \$572 million in the January-May period, down 2% from a year earlier, according to the data.

Iran's exports to Oman fell 61% year on year to \$117 million, while imports of Omani-made goods totaled \$5 million, up from about \$3 million a year earlier.

Tensions in the Strait of Hormuz have affected regional trade routes and shipping activity. The strategic waterway, through which a significant share of global oil shipments passes, has faced heightened security concerns following a US-Israeli coalition's attack on Iran that began in late February.

TPO plans new roadmap to boost non-oil exports, shift toward higher-value goods

Economy Desk

Iran is preparing a new roadmap to boost non-oil exports and shift away from shipments of raw and semi-processed materials toward higher-value finished goods, the head of the country's Trade Promotion Organization said. The plan was outlined at a joint meeting between the head of the Trade Promotion Organization and representatives of Iran's Chamber of Guilds, which focused on increasing the role of businesses in international supply chains and addressing administrative, foreign exchange and regulatory barriers facing exporters, Tasnim reported. The official said one of the country's main foreign trade challenges was the low average value of exported goods compared with imported products. The average value of each ton of Iran's exported goods currently stands at about \$300, while the figure for imported goods is around \$2,000 per ton, he

said, adding that the gap reflected the continued reliance on traditional exports of raw materials.

He stressed the need to improve Iran's position in global value chains, saying a large share of non-oil exports was concentrated in upstream industries such as steel, iron ore, pellets and billets.

These products, due to their nature as raw materials, require less complex marketing and sales strategies, he said.

In contrast, production and distribution businesses deal with finished and consumer-ready products, including furniture, clothing, footwear, leather goods and handicrafts, where the export value per ton starts at more than \$1,000 and reaches several thousand dollars in sectors such as clothing and footwear.

The official said moving toward higher-value finished products was a key priority for improving the country's foreign exchange indicators.

Egypt seeks to ...

Relations between Iran and Egypt have experienced many ups and downs over the past decades and, despite recent improvements, have yet to reach the level of full diplomatic ties. Could the latest crisis derail the fragile progress made in bilateral relations?

Yes, because Egypt still views its relationship with Iran primarily through a security lens rather than a political one. Therefore, if the conflict continues and Egypt becomes more deeply involved, it is quite possible that even the limited progress achieved during President [Abdel Fattah] el-Sisi's tenure could be reversed.

Given Egypt's historical standing in the

Arab world, if Cairo refrains from entering the conflict, how might that influence the positions of other Arab states toward the Iran-US confrontation? Could Egypt set an example for other regional actors?

I would not say it would serve as a model, but it would certainly be influential. Arab countries pay close attention to Egypt's historical political status and military weight. At the same time, however, every country ultimately pursues its own interests and priorities. Egypt's position will therefore matter to other Arab states, but each country is likely to assess the conflict through the prism of its own national interests, challenges and security concerns.

Egypt has joined the 14-member maritime

coalition led by Saudi Arabia to safeguard the Bab al-Mandab Strait, the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. To what extent could this membership influence Cairo's position toward tensions between Iran and the United States? Can Egypt still maintain its balanced foreign policy?

In my view, Egypt's diplomatic establishment is capable of maintaining balanced relations with all countries, including Iran.

The Egyptians are deeply concerned about instability in the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab Strait because it carries immediate economic and security consequences for the country. At the same time, Cairo's primary objective is to address the problem at its source—that is, by resolving the conflict in the Persian Gulf.

Ukraine's anti-Iran moves made at behest of third parties: *Former envoy*

INTERVIEW

Ukraine's attack against an Iranian commercial vessel in the Caspian Sea and the martyrdom of an Iranian sailor immediately elicited a vehement reaction from Tehran. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphatically condemned the action, and Ukraine's Chargé d'Affaires was summoned to the ministry.

On the evening of July 26, Abbas Araghchi, the foreign minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, published a message on the social media platform X, in which he described Ukraine's president under the title of the "opportunist based in Kyiv" and emphasized that, in his conversations with Russia's foreign minister and the European Union's high representative for foreign affairs, he had declared that Ukraine's action "cannot go unanswered".

On July 27, Esmail Baqaei, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, during the ministry's weekly press conference, emphasized that Iran has "no involvement whatsoever in the Ukraine-Russia conflict," and stated: "All parties that, in one manner or another, consider themselves patrons and supporters of the Ukrainian regime must be held accountable in this regard." Baqaei, while stating that "Ukraine's action is an absolutely unlawful, unjustifiable act, contrary to the Charter of the United Nations, and a perilous adventurism," stressed that this action "most certainly will not go unanswered by us". The Foreign Ministry spokesperson stated: "Zelensky's elders must both restrain him and exercise vigilance over him in this matter because the actions of the Ukrainian regime may generate consequences for various parts of the world."

To examine the objectives and motivations underlying the Ukrainian government's military aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran, an interview was conducted with Mohsen Baharvand, the former Deputy Foreign Minister and former Iranian ambassador to London. Below, you may read the translated text of the interview.

Mohsen Baharvand



Ukraine's military action against an Iranian commercial vessel in the Caspian Sea is regarded as a significant escalation of tensions between Iran and Ukraine. Since the outset of the war, Ukraine has pursued a belligerent course toward Tehran, yet it had not undertaken direct aggression against Iran before. Under the present circumstances, why do you believe Ukraine has made such a decision?

BAHARVAND: Ukraine most likely intends, through this action, to attract attention and obtain greater financial resources and additional weaponry from the United States and Europe. Simultaneously, it may, by provoking certain adversaries of Iran, undertake actions designed to draw the United States into direct military intervention in the Ukraine war or embroil Iran in a confrontation with NATO. Nevertheless, Ukraine is intensifying its hostile actions against Iran, and Iran has thus far demonstrated restraint toward that country.

Throughout recent months, Ukraine's conduct in the war has become markedly more aggressive, and actions such as targeting Russian energy infrastructure and oil tankers have become part of Ukraine's agenda. Do you believe this expansion of objectives may also encompass additional military action against Iran?

Unfortunately, because of the adventurism of its president, Ukraine became embroiled in conflict with Russia, which resulted in immense losses and the forfeiture of a considerable portion of its territory, and it has now reached a condition in which it has nothing left to lose. As a consequence of the war, Ukraine has forfeited its independence, and its decisions and activities are executed under the instructions of third countries. If we accept this premise, additional actions by Ukraine remain possible, and, in my opinion, Kyiv must receive a serious warning to desist from new adventurism.

Although Russia possesses diverse resources for procuring its own military equipment and capabilities, the government in Kyiv demonstrates an extraordinary obsession with accusing Iran. What accounts for this obsession with publicizing military and defense cooperation between Iran and Russia?

Indeed, Russia possesses extensive military capabilities and



The illustration shows US President Donald Trump (above), Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (L), and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.
● KLAWE RZECZY/FOREIGN POLICY

retains the logistical capacity to sustain the war against Ukraine and even wars of greater magnitude. Ukraine's alleged military assistance, in comparison with Russia's capabilities, can never alter the strategic landscape or produce any substantial effect.

Furthermore, while Iran itself is engaged in defending itself against the largest military force in the world, how could it simultaneously provide military assistance to Russia? This assertion appears to be nothing more than a falsehood and a pretext. By every available means, Ukraine seeks either to attract the attention of Western countries through the expansion of the conflict or to serve as part of a new scheme against Iran in the northern region of our country, with the objective of

damaging the northern corridors.

To what extent has the propaganda of the government in Kyiv contributed to the deterioration of Europe's relations with Iran?

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky (C), flanked by European Council President Antonio Costa (L) and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, attends a European Union leaders special summit to discuss Ukraine and European defense, in Brussels, Belgium, on March 6, 2025.
● REUTERS



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Russia possesses extensive military capabilities and retains the logistical capacity to sustain the war against Ukraine and even wars of greater magnitude. Ukraine's alleged military assistance, in comparison with Russia's capabilities, can never alter the strategic landscape or produce any substantial effect. Furthermore, while Iran itself is engaged in defending itself against the largest military force in the world, how could it simultaneously provide military assistance to Russia? This assertion appears to be nothing more than a falsehood and a pretext.

rioration of Europe's relations with Iran?

At the outset of the Ukraine war, Europe sought to isolate Russia to the greatest extent possible. Iran supported Russia and, in addition to opening routes, also prevented, within the limits of its capabilities, the formation of a consensus against Russia in international organizations. Europe regarded these actions as contrary to its own security and policy. In this matter, Europe, without opening a diplomatic avenue with Iran, irrationally and from an arrogant perspective, selected confrontational methods against Iran. It is not Ukraine's propaganda that incites Europe to confront Iran; rather, it is possible that Ukraine's actions have been undertaken with Europe's knowledge or even under Europe's instructions.

The Israeli regime maintains close relations with Volodymyr Zelensky, and claims have been advanced that the targeting of the Iranian vessel was conducted with Israeli intelligence. To what extent do you believe Israeli influence in Kyiv has contributed to escalating tensions and undermining relations between Iran and Ukraine?

The present situation is highly intricate, and its analysis requires more information and greater detail. In any event, Ukraine's actions are not executed in isolation or independently, and it is highly probable that a larger conspiracy underlies these actions. Nor can the possibility of Zionist influence upon Ukraine's actions be dismissed.

To what extent do you consider it probable that Ukraine seeks to open a new front in the Russia war and extend the conflict into Iran? In your view, is the possibility that Israel or the United States is encouraging the expansion of war against Iran through the northern front a plausible assertion?

Yes, I believe that a desperate puppet such as the president of Ukraine may participate, on behalf of the West, in any conspiracy directed against Iran or any other country. Ukraine's direct military confrontation against Iran possesses no political or military rationale whatsoever. The most probable explanation is that Ukraine is one component of a new machination against Iran.

The interview first appeared in Persian on IRNA.

Ukraine, Iran and how regional wars go global



● ANN KIERNAN/FT



By **Gideon Rachman**
Chief foreign affairs
columnist for the
Financial Times

OPINION

Russia's attack on Ukraine has led to the bloodiest war in Europe since 1945. The conflict between Iran, the US and Israel has seen 12 countries in the Middle East directly involved in fighting — making it the most widespread war in the region for decades. In east Asia, North Korea is pursuing a rapid military build-up and has renounced the goal of peaceful reunification with the South. Meanwhile, China has stepped up its naval exercises around Taiwan and seems to be rehearsing cutting off the island's supply lines. At present, these regional conflicts in Europe, the Middle East and Asia are largely distinct. But they are beginning to overlap. Over the weekend, Iran said that Ukraine had sunk an Iranian merchant vessel in the Caspian Sea, killing a sailor. The Ukrainians have acknowledged long-range strikes on Iranian ships in the Caspian, saying they were aimed at military cargo vessels heading for Russia. Volodymyr Zelenskyy has also just warned that North Korea is preparing to send another 30,000 troops to participate in the Ukraine war. When the initial deployment of North Korean troops arrived on the frontline in 2024, the Ukrainian president described their deployment as the "first step to a world war". Now that the Ukrainians are clashing directly with Iran, it is arguable that a second step has been taken. The first and second world wars, as their names suggest, took place on several continents at the same time. Both conflicts also involved identifiable global alliances. Between 1939 and 1945, the Axis powers of Germany, Italy and Japan faced off against an alliance centred around the UK, the US and the

USSR. These two world wars also entailed direct conflict between the most powerful countries in the world. The current set of conflicts already meets a few of these criteria. Overlapping wars now span two continents — Europe and Asia — and are influencing conflicts in Africa. The growing alignment between Russia, China, Iran and North Korea has led some strategists in the US to characterise those four countries as an "axis of adversaries" (or "axis of upheaval"). However, Donald Trump's often adversarial attitude to many of America's traditional allies — as well as the fact that Israel is increasingly seen as a pariah state in Europe and parts of the Persian Gulf — makes it harder to identify a unified bloc pushing back against the anti-American grouping. Ukraine's decision to take on Iran may be, in part, an attempt to create a more cohesive bloc to challenge the axis of adversaries. Any analysis of Kyiv's motives has to be tentative since

the details of what is happening in the Caspian are disputed. At the same time, Kyiv may see an opportunity to dramatically improve relations with the Trump administration by emphasising the extent to which Russia is helping Iran fight the US. Zelenskyy has already pointed to Russia's provision of intelligence which Iran has allegedly used to target American troops and bases in the region. US efforts to blockade Iran are also hampered by the fact that Iranian goods and oil can cross the Caspian to Russia. Disrupting that route would help any American effort to collapse Iran's economy. The Ukrainians feel that they are slowly gaining the upper hand in their war with Russia. But the arrival of fresh troops from North Korea would clearly help Putin. Kim Jong Un, North Korea's despotic leader, has every incentive to aid the Kremlin — since Russia is providing North Korea with advanced technology and helping the Pyongyang regime break out of its economic

and diplomatic isolation. China's aid to both Iran and Russia is more discreet. But close observers believe that it is nonetheless vital. Thomas Wright, who was senior director for strategic planning in the Biden White House, pointed out recently that "China has helped Russia rebuild its military capacity far more quickly than would otherwise have been possible, supplying machine tools, micro-electronics, and other crucial technologies while co-operating on drone production". The Chinese have also supplied Iran with "dual-use goods" — such as fuel that can be used for missiles and commercial satellite imagery. There is no formal alliance between the "axis of adversaries". But China, Russia, North Korea and Iran do share common aims. All four countries want to hasten the decline of American power. China also has realistic aspirations to displace the US as the world's most powerful country. The aspirations of a rising nation to replace the dominant

global power have often led to war in the past, a phenomenon labelled the "Thucydides trap" by the Harvard academic, Graham Allison — and much discussed by Xi Jinping, China's leader. There is no doubt that both China and the US are actively preparing for war against each other. But both Washington and Beijing seem to be simultaneously trying to prevent their rivalry turning into outright conflict. That is encouraging — but it does not guarantee that another world war is impossible. As the history of the 20th century demonstrated, regional conflicts and great-power miscalculation can be a deadly combination.

The full article first appeared on the Financial Times.



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un (front) meets soldiers in the Ukraine war, during a ceremony to honor fallen soldiers in Pyongyang on August 21, 2025.
● KCNA



The first and second world wars, as their names suggest, took place on several continents at the same time. Both conflicts also involved identifiable global alliances. Between 1939 and 1945, the Axis powers of Germany, Italy and Japan faced off against an alliance centred around the UK, the US and the USSR. These two world wars also entailed direct conflict between the most powerful countries in the world.

Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games:

Reduced quotas, new rules raise stakes for Iran weightlifters

Sports Desk

Iran's weightlifting team faces a far more demanding task at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games as reduced athlete quotas, new competition regulations, and stronger regional rivals threaten the country's hopes of a prolific campaign.

Weightlifting has traditionally been one of Iran's richest sources of Asian Games gold medals alongside wrestling, but the sport heads into Nagoya under a significantly different format.

The most notable change is the introduction of the "total-only" medal system, with medals to be awarded solely based on combined lifts rather than separate snatch and clean and jerk results. In addition, each nation will be allowed to enter only one athlete in each weight category, making team selection more challenging for countries with multiple medal contenders.

Iran has secured eight quota places for the Games, comprising five men and three women, two fewer than it had at the previous edition in Hangzhou. The men's team will compete in the 75kg, 85kg, 95kg, 110kg and +110kg categories, while the women's representatives will contest the 69kg, 77kg and 86kg divisions. The national men's team's preparations began last week at Tehran's Azadi Sports Complex, with 12 lifters taking part in the



● IWFFIR

training camp under head coach Behdad Salimi. The squad resumed training immediately after a training camp and performance trials in Chalous, Mazandaran, as it gears up for the Asian Championships, World Championships and ultimately the Asian Games. The final squad has yet to be con-

firmed. Two more selection trials are scheduled for August 11 and early September, the latter to coincide with the opening week of the domestic Premier League season. Although the names of the preliminary candidates have already been submitted to Iran's National

Olympic Committee, Salimi said the final lineup will depend on performances in the remaining trials.

"We started our preparations on April 8 with a high-altitude training camp in Ardabil before moving to Chalous for sea-level training," the 2012 Olympic

champion said.

"In the first selection trials, the athletes produced world-class lifts. One or two of them even unofficially surpassed world records."

Salimi highlighted several stand-out performances, revealing that Ali Alipour unofficially exceeded the world clean and jerk record, while 18-year-old Hamidreza Zarei lifted just two kilograms below the senior world record and unofficially bettered the world junior mark by two kilograms.

"We have healthy competition in every weight category, and I hope it helps us select the strongest possible team," he said.

Salimi added that the World Championships in China, scheduled one month after the final selection trials, will carry added significance as the first qualifying event for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

"We have a busy year ahead with several Olympic qualifying competitions and the Asian Indoor Games. Our priority is not only to prepare the athletes physically but also to keep them healthy so we can send a strong and balanced team," he said.

The head coach expects Iran to send four or five lifters to the Asian Games, while an eight-member squad is planned for the World Championships. Competition for places remains fierce across the squad. Mohammad Javad Beiranvand and Reza

Baghi are battling for the 75kg berth, while former world champion Mostafa Javadi is competing with Abdollah Beiranvand in the 85kg division after returning from a lengthy back injury.

The 95kg category features a three-way contest between Zarei, Alipour, and Alireza Moeini, while Alireza Nasiri and Farhad Qolizadeh are vying for selection in the 110kg class.

Iran is looking to bounce back from its disappointing campaign at the Hangzhou 2022 Asian Games, where it claimed just one medal – Ali Davoudi's silver – despite fielding 10 athletes. It was the country's poorest weightlifting performance in the history of the Games.

Weightlifting Federation president Sajjad Anoushiravani has previously said Iran's best gold medal prospects lie in the three heaviest men's categories.

However, the revised competition format, reduced quotas, and the growing strength of traditional and emerging Asian powers such as China, Uzbekistan, Bahrain, India, Thailand, Qatar and South Korea are expected to make the race for medals considerably tougher.

Many of Asia's leading lifters are also expected to use the Games to earn valuable ranking points on the road to the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics, further raising the standard of competition in Nagoya.

Iranian GM Tabatabaei climbs to world No. 20 in latest FIDE rankings

Sports Desk

Iranian grandmaster Seyyed Mohammad-Amin Tabatabaei climbed four places to a career-high 20th in the men's standard category of the latest FIDE world rankings released for August.

Tabatabaei gained four positions after reaching a rating of 2726, extending his run as Iran's highest-ranked player to four consecutive months. He remains ahead of compatriot Parham Maqsoodlou, who moved up one place to 30th in the world with a rating of 2705.

Norway's Magnus Carlsen retained the world No. 1 spot with a rating of 2823, while Americans Fabiano Caruana and Hikaru Nakamura occupied second and third places, respectively, both on 2792.

In the women's rankings, China's Hou Yifan remained the world No. 1 with a rating of 2596, ahead of compatriots Lei Tingjie (2561) and Ju Wenjun (2553).

Iran's Melika Mohammadi is ranked 98th in the women's world standings with a rating of 2342.

In the world junior rankings, Sina Movahed slipped one place

to 10th with a rating of 2595, while Bardia Daneshvar remained 23rd on 2572.

Reza Mahdavi dropped five places to 80th, Radin Yadegar is ranked 91st, and Artin Ashraf also fell five positions to 101st.

In the girls' junior rankings, Mohammadi dropped two places to 15th with a rating of 2342, while Sara Davari slipped one spot to 42nd on 2250. Dorsa Sadat Khalafvand is ranked 71st.

Tabatabaei continues to lead Iran's domestic men's rankings ahead of Maqsoodlou, followed by Pouya Idani, Movahed, Daneshvar, Mahdi Gholami, Amirre-

za Pourramazani, Mahdavi, Seyyed Khalil Mousavi, Arash Tahbaz, Yadegar and Ashraf.

In the national women's rankings, Mohammadi remains Iran's top-ranked female player, followed by Mobina Alinasab, Davari, Sadat Khalafvand, Anahita Zahedifar, Anoosha Mahdian, Mitra Asgharzadeh, Rosha Akbari, Dorsa Mohammad Ebrahimkhan, Asal Ebrahimi, Maryam Mohammadi and Tannaz Azali.

Iran retained 17th place in FIDE's national team rankings with an average rating of 2573, unchanged from the previous month.



● ISNA



● SEPIDE ABDOLAHY/volleyball.ir

Asian Women's Volleyball Championship:

Iran determined to learn from past setbacks, says captain Alikhani

Sports Desk

Iran captain Shabnam Alikhani says the national women's team has learned from previous setbacks and is determined to produce a stronger showing at the upcoming Asian Women's Volleyball Championship.

Iran has been drawn alongside host China, Chinese Taipei and Iraq in Pool A of the continental event, which will get underway on August 21 in Tianjin, China.

The tournament marks the third major event in what has been a congested international season for the Iranian team.

Iran retained its CAVA Championship title in June with a final victory over Kazakhstan before enduring a disappointing campaign at the AVC Women's Nations Cup, where it finished seventh in the 12-team tournament in Candon, Philippines.

"We've been in camp for about 20 days and, thankfully, everything is going well," Alikhani said after a training session on Friday.

"The players are fully focused and following the coaching staff's program to prepare for the competition ahead," added the Iranian setter.

Reflecting on Iran's recent campaigns, Alikhani admitted the team struggled to cope

with the physical and mental demands of a packed schedule. "In our previous tournaments, we had a long and demanding trip. Playing in three consecutive tournaments put a lot of pressure on the players," she said.

"In the Nations Cup, which mattered most to us, the psychological pressure and the overall atmosphere affected the team's concentration, and we couldn't achieve the result we wanted."

The captain said those experiences have helped the squad grow as it targets an improved performance at the Asian Championship.

"Those tournaments are behind us now, and we've learned

from them," Alikhani said.

"We've returned to training with complete focus and determination, hoping to reach the level that Iran's women's volleyball deserves."

Alikhani acknowledged the challenge awaiting her team, noting that China will benefit from home support while Chinese Taipei arrives fresh off the runner-up finish at the Nations Cup.

"Despite the tough group, we will give everything on the court and try to deliver our best performance against every opponent," she said.

This year's tournament will mark Iran's ninth appearance. The team finished 10th at the previous edition in Thailand

in 2023, with its best-ever result coming in 2019, when it placed seventh.

With the champion securing direct qualification for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games, China – runner-up in 2023 – will be eager to claim a record-extending 14th continental title and its first since 2015 on home soil.

Chinese Taipei, meanwhile, will look to improve on its ninth-place finish in 2023, while Iraq is set to make its tournament debut.

The top two teams from each of the three pools will advance to the quarterfinals, while the remaining two knockout berths will go to the best two third-placed teams.

Bandar Abbas historic quarter reveals city's rich maritime past

Iranica Desk

As the capital of Hormozgan Province, Bandar Abbas has long occupied a strategic position on the southern coast of Iran. Historical records and archival documents show that the city was once protected by several defensive fortifications that safeguarded the coastline and secured vital shipping routes across the Persian Gulf. Among these were at least two major fortresses in old Bandar Abbas. One stood in the Naband area, while another was located between present-day Delgosha Street and what is now Amin Hotel. Built on elevated ground overlooking the Persian Gulf, the coastal fortress commanded a strategic vantage point. Three watchtowers enabled defenders to monitor passing vessels and maintain security along the shoreline. The fortress was occupied by Portuguese forces following their arrival in the Persian Gulf in the early 16th century. The occupation formed part of Portugal's broader campaign to dominate maritime trade in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean, with Bandar Abbas becoming one of the key centers



● asemooni.com

of its military presence in the region. The balance of power shifted during the Safavid era when Shah Abbas I ordered his commander, Imam-Qoli Khan, to launch a campaign to recapture the port. About 400 years ago, Iranian forces expelled the Portuguese from the fortress and demolished their military installations, a victory widely regarded as a milestone in restoring Iranian control over the Persian Gulf. A new fortress, known as Qal'eh-ye Shah Abbasi and referred to in historical sources

as Qal'eh-ye Shahi, was subsequently built on the site. Beyond its defensive function, the fortress became the focal point of Bandar Abbas' expanding urban settlement, with residential communities developing around it. The historic neighborhood offers a window into Bandar Abbas' centuries-old role as one of Iran's most important ports on the Persian Gulf, reflecting a legacy shaped by military conflict, maritime trade and migration. The surrounding district eventually became known as the



● google.com

Qal'eh-ye Shahi neighborhood, one of the city's oldest quarters and an enduring symbol of its historical and social heritage. The neighborhood entered a new phase of development during the Qajar era, when migrants from the town of Evaz in southern Fars Province settled in the area, attracted by Bandar Abbas' expanding commercial opportunities. Many of the newcomers established themselves as merchants engaged in maritime trade and commerce with domestic and international markets. Their commercial success strength-

ened the neighborhood's economy. Today, historians regard Qal'eh-ye Shahi as a unique intersection of military history, urban development and migration. While the neighborhood preserves the memory of Iran's successful struggle to end Portuguese rule along its southern coast, it also reflects the entrepreneurial spirit of the merchant families who contributed to Bandar Abbas' economic growth. Although the historic fortress has disappeared, its legacy survives through historical re-

cords, archival documents and the collective memory of local residents. Heritage experts say preserving and promoting neighborhoods such as Shah Abbasi Castle can help safeguard Bandar Abbas' historical identity while encouraging cultural tourism. More than a historic district, the Qal'eh-ye Shahi neighborhood represents the evolution of modern Bandar Abbas — from a fortified coastal settlement to a thriving commercial center whose cultural heritage continues to shape the city's identity. As Bandar Abbas continues to expand as one of Iran's leading port cities, historians and heritage advocates stress the importance of documenting and preserving neighborhoods such as Qal'eh-ye Shahi. They say these historic quarters not only reflect the city's architectural and urban evolution but also provide valuable insight into the people, events and cultural exchanges that shaped Bandar Abbas over the centuries. Preserving their stories, they add, will help ensure that future generations remain connected to the city's rich maritime heritage and enduring role in the history of the Persian Gulf.

Iranica Desk

Taftan, the highest peak in southeastern Iran, is not only a major natural and tourism attraction but also a region with significant potential in tourism, geology, agriculture, and economic development. Experts believe that the proper utilization of these resources could create employment opportunities, increase local incomes, and strengthen development infrastructure in surrounding communities. The presence of sulfurous vapors and gases, hot springs, evidence of hydrothermal activity, and unique geological features have made Taftan situated in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, one of the promising areas for geothermal energy studies. Alongside these characteristics, the distinctive climate of its highlands and foothills, natural attractions, and the potential for cultivating drought-resistant agricultural products offer diverse opportunities for regional development. Geological studies conducted on Taftan have identified signs indicating the presence of a geothermal system in the area. The release of sulfur vapors, fumarolic activity, hydrothermal alterations, and the existence of hot springs are among the main indicators highlighting the need for further research, according to chtn.ir. Although Taftan's geothermal potential has been discussed in scientific studies, exploiting this resource requires extensive exploration, environmental assessments, economic evaluations, and specialized drilling operations. Therefore, experts say it is not possible to make definitive claims about the feasibility or potential scale of electricity generation in the region before completing comprehensive studies.

Taftan geothermal tourism hub waiting to be unlocked



● chtn.ir

The involvement of the Geological Survey and Mineral Exploration of Iran, the Ministry of Energy, academic institutions, and specialized investors could help develop a roadmap for geothermal studies in Taftan. Obtaining accurate data on underground reservoirs, temperature levels, depth, and the volume of available resources would be the first step toward making decisions about the future of this natural potential. The hot and mineral springs on Taftan's slopes are another important but underdeveloped resource. If their properties are scientifically assessed and suitable infrastructure is created, they could contribute to the growth of nature-based and health tourism in the region. Establishing standard hydrotherapy facilities, eco-lodges, service and recreational centers, safe access routes, and emergency facilities are among the requirements for transforming these natural resources into tourism products. Development in this sector should follow environmental standards and involve local residents directly to ensure that

economic benefits reach nearby villages and communities. Tourism development in Taftan should not be limited to seasonal climbing activities and the presence of a small number of mountaineers. Designing nature tourism routes, introducing hot springs, training local guides, creating handicraft markets, and promoting agricultural products could extend visitors' stays and help create sustainable jobs. Local management plays a key role in introducing regional capacities, coordinating government agencies, and facilitating investment. In this regard, the Central District Office of Khash can contribute to development efforts by identifying village-based opportunities, prioritizing infrastructure needs, and pursuing investment projects. Mahshid Chalish, Governor of the Central District of Khash, said strengthening the connection between rural demands, government programs, and investors' capacities is essential. She noted that improving access roads, expanding communication networks, providing emer-

gency and welfare services, and supporting local businesses should be among the priorities in planning for the region. Chalish added that Taftan's development would achieve desirable results only when the needs and perspectives of local communities are incorporated into decision-making processes. The participation of residents in surrounding villages can not only increase the effectiveness of development projects but also contribute to better protection of natural resources and the sustainability of investments. She further noted that climate-adapted agriculture is another foundation for economic development in Taftan and the surrounding areas of Khash. The region's elevation and climatic diversity provide opportunities for producing certain orchard crops and medicinal plants, which could generate higher incomes if supported by a complete value chain. The director of Taftan's Agricultural Jihad Department also emphasized that developing suitable cultivation patterns, expanding modern irrigation



methods, training farmers, and supporting processing industries could play an important role in strengthening agriculture in the region. Fazlollah Kordi said selling agricultural products in raw form remains one of the main obstacles preventing farmers from achieving real added value. He added that establishing processing, drying, packaging, and branding units for medicinal plants and orchard products could reduce waste while creating new employment opportunities for young people and rural women. Kordi said Khash, with its service, agricultural, livestock, and transportation capacities, could serve as a supporting hub for economic activities around Taftan. Creating a complementary economic chain between Khash and Taftan could improve access to services, product pro-

cessing facilities, and consumer markets. He added that joint planning between authorities in the two areas could prevent scattered and ineffective projects. Developing transportation links, supporting private investment, strengthening local markets, and introducing regional capacities at the national level are among the measures that could help stimulate the local economy. The director of Taftan's Agricultural Jihad Department stressed that activating the region's potential requires a comprehensive, scientific, and phased development plan. Such a plan, he said, should focus on three main areas — geothermal studies, health tourism, and climate-adapted agriculture — while also ensuring environmental protection and safeguarding the interests of local communities. He noted that Taftan should not be introduced merely as a high mountain or natural attraction. Instead, the region has the potential to become a model of development based on local resources, where scientific expertise, targeted investment, local management, and public participation work together. Completing scientific studies, providing essential infrastructure, and designing transparent investment packages are three fundamental steps needed to move from identifying Taftan's potential to practical implementation. Achieving this goal could transform Taftan into one of southeastern Iran's major centers for tourism, agriculture, and clean energy research.



From Achaemenid courier stations to AI-powered robots 2,500-year Journey through Iran's postal service inside Tehran's iconic Beehive Building

Iran among world's three leading countries using intelligent sorting systems



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

FEATURE REPORT

At one of Tehran's busiest intersections, the distinctive beehive-shaped head office of the National Post Company (NPC) stands as both an architectural landmark and the nerve center of Iran's postal network. For decades, the building at Lashkar Crossroad has served as the country's main postal exchange, handling the flow of millions of letters and parcels across the nation.

Today, however, its significance extends well beyond its striking design. Behind its concrete honeycomb façade, artificial intelligence and robotic technology are reshaping how mail is processed, sorted and dispatched, turning a traditional postal hub into one of the country's most advanced logistics centers. This is the story of that transformation, tracing Iran's postal system from the courier stations of the Achaemenid Empire to the AI-driven technologies now operating inside one of Tehran's most recognizable public buildings.

From Achaemenid courier stations to modern postal service

Iran's postal history stretches back nearly 2,500 years, making it one of the world's earliest organized communication networks. The ancient Persians were pioneers of vast communication networks that would later go on to inspire countless other nations around the world.



NPC Deputy for Technical & Commercial Affairs Amirhossein Karimi, told Iran Daily that the origins of the country's postal system date to the Achaemenid Empire, whose rulers established the Royal Road and a network of courier stations, known as Chapar Khaneh, to move official correspondence across an empire spanning vast parts of the known world.

"The system was created to ensure communication between governors and provincial administrators," he said. "At the time, however, postal services were reserved exclusively for the state."

That changed during the Qajar era, when Prime Minister Amir Kabir opened postal services to the public. "During the reign of Naser al-Din Shah, under Amir Kabir's government, the postal system became a public service," Karimi said. "He created the conditions that allowed ordinary people to use postal services. What we now recognize as Iran's modern, institutional postal system took shape during that period."

Iran also joined the international postal community early in its history. According to Karimi, the country established a formal postal administration before many others and became the 22nd member of the Universal Postal Union in 1877, only three years after the organization was founded.



Workers sort parcels at the head office of the National Post Company in Tehran, Iran, on July 29, 2026.

● IRAN DAILY

Historic landmark still at heart of postal operations

More than six decades after it was built, the honeycomb-shaped building at Lashkar Crossroad remains the operational heart of Iran's postal network. Karimi described it as one of Tehran's most significant architectural works. "The building has been operating for nearly 60 years," he said. "Following the 1979 Islamic Revolution, it became fully dedicated to postal services and continues to serve as the NPC's primary exchange hub."

Despite its architectural importance, the structure has never been officially listed as a national heritage site. Karimi said heritage designation could impose restrictions that might interfere with postal operations, although he believes the building possesses clear architectural and artistic value worthy of preservation.

Keeping postal network running, even in wartime

Today, the NPC operates one of the country's largest logistics networks, supported by an extensive nationwide workforce. Around 300 million postal items move through the network each year, Karimi said. Some 200 million are conventional physical deliveries, while nearly 20 million are generated by e-commerce.

Karimi noted that Iran had been part of the Universal Postal Union for about 150 years, enabling postal links with nearly 200 countries and allowing customers to send parcels worldwide under internationally recognized standards. One of the organization's most significant tests came during the recent war, when many public institutions scaled back operations.

"Despite the restrictions we faced, our contingency planning allowed postal services to continue without interruption throughout the conflict," Karimi said. "Post offices remained open, distribution networks continued operating and our transportation routes stayed active. While many government agencies were only partially functioning, the postal service continued working at full capacity."

International deliveries were suspended only temporarily because the closure of the country's airspace made overseas transport impossible. "We halted outbound international shipments solely to avoid disappointing customers when air connections



The photo shows the iconic Beehive Building, the head office of the National Post Company, in downtown Tehran, Iran.

● IRAN DAILY

were unavailable," he said. "Once flights resumed, international postal services immediately returned to normal."

Smart revolution; third generation of postal services

In recent years, the NPC has accelerated its digital transformation through what it calls the third generation of postal services, or Nova Post, an initiative aimed at reinventing the customer experience through AI, automation and advanced digital infrastructure. The program focuses on integrating AI into every stage of postal operations, from intelligent sorting systems that dramatically shorten processing and dispatch times to smart parcel lockers that allow customers to send and collect deliveries round the clock.

"The goal of the third generation of postal services is to use technology, digital innovation and artificial intelligence to improve the customer experience," Karimi said. "Smart robots and automated sorting systems have significantly reduced processing and delivery times. We are using these technologies to raise both the quality and efficiency of our services."

Inside AI sorting hub
The transformation is most visible inside the NPC's central sorting facility, where AI-powered robots equipped with computer vision work round the clock, marking a decisive shift from traditional mail processing to an intelligent logistics system. Designed to improve speed, accuracy and operational efficiency while creating a modern digital infrastructure, the robots represent a home-grown technological achievement developed by Iranian engineers.

up founded by graduates of Sharif University of Technology.

"The technology has evolved through several generations over the past two years," he told Iran Daily. "The first generation was introduced in mid-2024, the second in early 2025 and the third in early 2026, even as the country was facing wartime conditions. The system is now being rolled out nationwide."

Nine provinces currently use the AI-powered sorting technology. Unlike conventional sorting machines, which require large facilities, heavy power consumption and specialized infrastructure, the new systems occupy far less space and can operate efficiently within one or two floors.

New procurement model
The partnership between the NPC and the startup behind the technology has also introduced a different approach to acquiring advanced equipment.

Instead of purchasing the robots outright, the postal service pays only for the sorting services they provide. "We made no upfront capital invest-

ment to purchase the machines," Dolati said. "The startup developed the technology with support from the Presidential Office and funding allocated for innovation, while Sharif University invested in bringing the systems into production. We simply pay for each successful sorting operation."

Ownership and maintenance of the equipment remain with the startup, eliminating maintenance costs for the postal operator. Dolati explained that each robot scans parcel barcodes while cameras mounted above the conveyor capture images of the shipping labels. AI then converts handwritten or printed addresses into digital text, matches them to the country's road network, identifies the destination and automatically assigns each parcel to the correct geographic distribution route.

Barcode processing is virtually error-free, he said. Address recognition, however, can produce an error rate of between 5% and 8%, largely because of illegible handwriting, incomplete addresses or streets with similar names.

Among world's tech leaders
According to Dolati, Iran's AI-powered robotic sorting system has attracted attention well beyond its borders. "Conventional sorting machines are widely used around the world," he said. "But when it comes to AI-based robotic sorting systems, Iran is among the leading countries."

He noted that several technologically advanced Asian nations, including Japan, China, South Korea, India, Malaysia and Indonesia, have adopted similar technologies. "When we present our robotic postal technologies at international conferences attended by industrialized countries, many delegates are surprised by what we have developed and express interest in working with us and learning from our experience."

The system also offers another important advantage: energy efficiency. Compared with conventional mechanized sorting equipment, the AI-powered robots consume significantly less electricity, a benefit that carries added weight as Iran continues to grapple with energy shortages.



Homegrown tech, built with startups

A defining feature of the project is that both the technology and its development model are domestic.



Kaveh Dolati

Kaveh Dolati, Deputy for IT, Network Security and Infrastructure Development at the NPC, said the robotic systems were developed by Tensor, a startup founded by graduates of Sharif University of Technology.

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