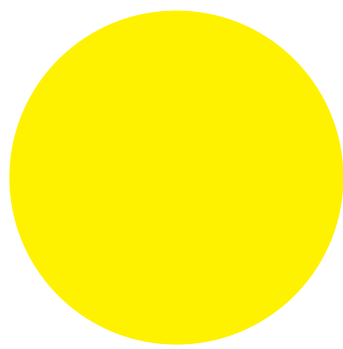


President meets Leader as he begins his third year in office



2 >



Iran Daily

Vol. 8185 ● Monday, August 10, 2026 ● Mordad 19, 1405 ● Safar 26, 1448 ● 100,000 rials ● 8 pages



> irandaily.ir

| newspaper.irandaily.ir

| [IranDailyWeb](https://twitter.com/IranDailyWeb)

Araghchi: No talks as long as US violates Islamabad understanding

Top security chief sets six conditions for reopening Strait of Hormuz

2 >



Iran-Turkey trade jumps 73% in June as maritime routes affected by US blockade

3 >



US geopolitical doctrine under spotlight in Central Asia, Caucasus

4 >

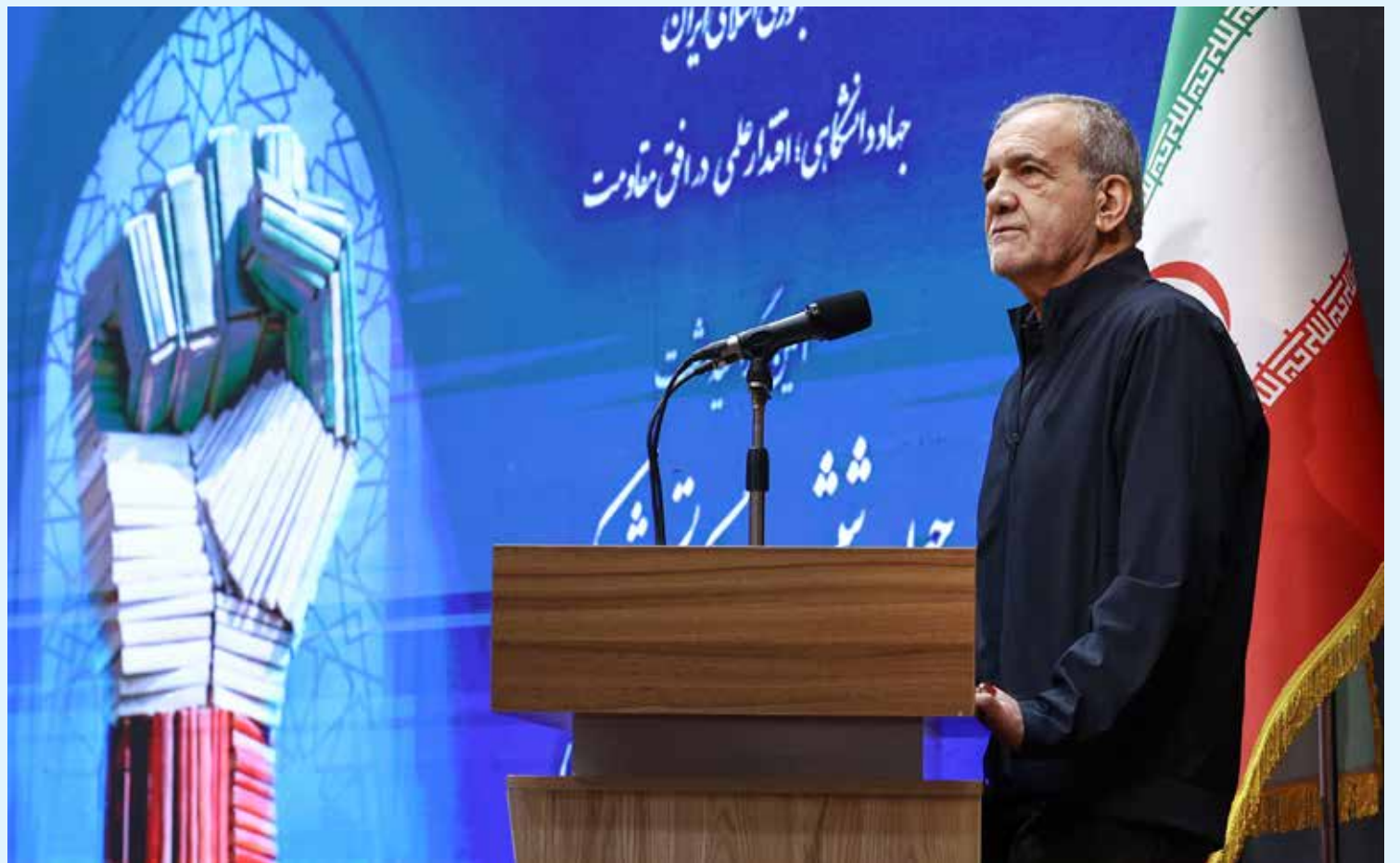


TMoCA to open foreign photo archive ahead of photography's bicentenary

8 >

Pezeshkian says enemies target scientists to hinder country's progress

2 >



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks during a ceremony marking the 46th anniversary of the establishment of the Academic Center for Education, Culture and Research in Tehran, Iran, on August 9, 2026. president.ir

Trilateral defense pact unlikely to affect Pakistan's stalled mediation role

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE

Amid regional tensions, Pakistan has entered a joint defense agreement, with Saudi Arabia and Turkey after previously taking on a mediatory role between Iran and the United States. The pact is significant because Saudi Arabia, which is effectively hosting the agreement, has faced criticism and even retaliation from Tehran over the presence



Amin Rezaeinejad

of US bases on its territory and their use against Iranian positions during the war. Although Pakistan had previously maintained a limited defense agreement with Saudi Arabia that did not lead to its involvement in regional conflicts, the new pact, with Turkey also on board, could affect Islamabad's

neutrality as a mediator. Amin Rezaeinejad, a Pakistan affairs expert, told Iran Daily that Pakistan has so far failed to play a constructive role in mediation and that the signing of the pact is unlikely to affect that role. He added, however, that Iran would be better off limiting Pakistan's role in this regard given the existence of the new pact.

IRAN DAILY: Pakistan has previously had a defense and security agreement with Saudi Arabia. What factors prompted Islamabad to join a trilateral defense framework at this point? Did recent regional developments and shared security concerns play a role in the decision?

REZAEINEJAD: The biggest factor behind the signing of this defense pact is the lack of trust in the United States when it comes to defending its allies. This distrust has emerged as a result of the 40-day war, the 13-day war, and the recent conflict between Iran and the United States, as well as Trump's oscillating policies

during this period. This has prompted countries in the region to move toward a collective security pact so they can fill the void created by the United States' failure to defend its allies. Pakistan's selection as one of the countries in this pact can be attributed to its nuclear capability. On the other side of the pact, there is Turkey, a country with considerable influence in the Levant, and this is attractive to Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, can be viewed as the sponsor of the pact, as a country capable of financing the agreement and once again buying its own security, this time with the help of regional countries. For Pakistan, two categories of interests can be considered. The first is political. In the field of international relations, Pakistan is both strengthening its influence and standing in the Muslim world and giving itself more weight in developments in West Asia. The other motivation is entirely financial. Pakistan can attract resources through both Turkey and

Saudi Arabia, although primarily through Saudi Arabia. This issue can also be viewed from the angle of Pakistan's rivalry with Iran in terms of governance, although it is somewhat unlikely. The Islamic Republic of Iran has a system based on a religious Leader. This model of governance is in competition with secular models. From this perspective, by forming an alliance with Saudi Arabia and Turkey — two countries with different models of governance, one based on the traditional system of sheikhdom and caliphate in the Hijaz, and the other based on a secular model — Pakistan can effectively engage in competition with the model of the Islamic Republic of Iran as well. Of course, this is a hypothesis that requires further consideration and scrutiny, but this possibility also exists.

Pakistan has sought in recent years to play a mediating role in easing tensions between Iran and the United States. Could Islamabad's accession to this pact

affect that role, or can Pakistan still serve as a channel for dialogue and de-escalation between Tehran and Washington? First of all, Pakistan has not been able to play the constructive role between Iran and the United States that had been expected. It was an actor that did not have the capacity for such a role, and, in principle, being given this role was a gift from the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan. Pakistan, however, failed to live up to the role. It appears that its participation in this pact will neither positively nor negatively affect Iran-US relations, at least not directly. Pakistan will, of course, continue its mediation efforts after joining the pact because it has its own objectives in pursuing this role. One is to raise its profile in the international media and on the international stage. The other is to make use of its relations with the United States and leverage its mediation efforts. For example, Pakistan's recent request for a \$10 billion loan from the United States was a result of

this mediation. It is not going to abandon this role — unless Iran puts an end to Pakistan's involvement as a mediator; which, in my view, would be the right thing to do. Given the defense pact signed among the three countries, Iran should somewhat limit Pakistan's role.

Given the recent clashes between Saudi Arabia and Yemen's Ansarullah, what role can Islamabad be expected to play in supporting Riyadh?

Pakistani pilots are already present in Saudi Arabia, and Saudi Arabia has previously used Pakistan's airstrike capabilities against Yemen's Ansarullah. It could fall back on that capability again. But this is a tool that is not particularly effective. Saudi Arabia itself has shown a strong desire to resolve this issue diplomatically because it has already gone down the path of military confrontation with Ansarullah once and knows that this tool is not particularly effective for it.

Page 3 >

President meets Leader as he begins his third year in office



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian met with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei as he began his third year in office. During the meeting, they discussed the country's economic and military affairs.

The talks covered people's livelihood needs, conditions and prospects of the US-Israeli war of aggression against Iran, military developments, and ways to secure resources and manage rial, foreign currency and energy expenditures, as well as economic engagement with foreign partners, Press TV reported.

The meeting comes amid prospects of further escalations between Iran and the United States after the latter failed to achieve its declared goals in an unprovoked war against Iran.

The US and Israel launched their second round of war against the Islamic Republic on February 28 by assassinating the former Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, and several top commanders and officials.

On July 6, 2024, Pezeshkian was elected president after winning the July 5 run-off of the 2024 presidential election. He was formally appointed as the president by Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on July 28, 2024, and was sworn in before the Iranian parliament on July 30.

His election came months after former president Ebrahim Raeisi was killed in a helicopter crash.

Araghchi: No talks as long as US violates Islamabad understanding

Top security chief sets six conditions for reopening Strait of Hormuz

International Desk

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Sunday stressed that Iran will not engage in new negotiations with the United States as long as it keeps violating a war-ending memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between the two sides.

Araghchi made the remarks on the sidelines of a ceremony titled Muharram and Ashura in the Documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, saying there are currently no talks underway between Tehran and Washington, but messages are being exchanged through mediators.

"Some intermediary countries continue to make efforts to create the conditions for a resumption of negotiations. From our perspective, however, negotiations cannot resume unless and until the US ceases its violations of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and takes appropriate steps to remedy the breaches that have occurred," he added.

The US and the Israeli regime launched their illegal war of aggression against Iran on February 28 by assassinating Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, along with senior military commanders.

However, forty days later on April 8, the enemies were forced to accept a ceasefire amid Iran's resistance, successful retaliatory operations, and powerful grip on the Strait of Hormuz.

Tehran and Washington signed the Islamabad MoU on June 17, but the US effectively violated the agreement by striking Iran.

In response, the Iranian armed forces have conducted devastating attacks against strategic American targets



across West Asia.

Araghchi was also asked about Iran's ongoing talks with Oman regarding new arrangements for maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, which has remained under Iranian control since the early days of the criminal US-Israeli military assault. He said that the discussions, which are now in their final stages, will result in the replacement of the existing routes with new ones and that specialists are working on relevant charts and maps.

"This does not mean that the Strait

of Hormuz will be reopened. An agreement on these arrangements may be reached, but the reopening of the strategic waterway is contingent upon the fulfillment of other conditions that have already been conveyed to the US side through intermediaries," he asserted.

Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Mohammad Bagher Zolghadr on Saturday laid out a list of demands for reopening the strait.

The conditions were for the US to refrain from threatening or insulting the



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi speaks at a ceremony titled Muharram and Ashura in the Documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tehran on August 9, 2026.

● MIZAN

sacred beliefs of the Iranian nation, a permanent end of aggression on Iran and its regional allies, lifting the naval blockade and all sanctions on the country, returning its frozen assets, and paying compensation for damage resulting from the aggression.

Pezeshkian says enemies target scientists to hinder country's progress

National Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Sunday that Iran's enemies deliberately assassinate the country's scientists and prominent figures and target its scientific and research centers because they oppose the nation's technological capabilities.

President made the remarks during a ceremony marking the 46th anniversary of the establishment of the Academic Center for Education, Cul-

ture and Research (ACECR).

"The enemy knows whom it is assassinating," Pezeshkian said, adding that those targeted are people who solve society's problems.

He said Iran's scientific institutions are attacked because the enemies are against the country's capabilities.

Pezeshkian said placing greater trust in Iran's young people would ensure that no obstacle could stand in the way of the country's progress and development.

Referring to technological achievements unveiled by the center, he described the innovations as highly valuable and worthy of appreciation. The president said investment in advanced technologies is one of Iran's essential needs, arguing that expanding the sector would reduce reliance on oil and gas while making it harder for sanctions to hold back the country's growth and development. Iran, he said, needs scientists and innovators who can lead the way and help resolve the challenges facing

society.

Pezeshkian also criticized low salaries paid to talented young scientists, calling for wages that reflect living conditions and adequately support their livelihoods.

He said the government is ready to participate in technology projects led by the ACECR and proposed a separate meeting with the institution's scientists and experts to discuss challenges and explore avenues for cooperation with the government.

Pezeshkian also called for greater national unity to safeguard Iran, saying the country should move forward within the framework of the policies of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei and work to pave the way for growth and development. He added that efforts should be made to keep war and its shadow away from the country because, under such conditions, it would not be possible to pursue Iran's growth and advancement.

Yemen attacks Saudi refinery after kingdom signs defense pact with Turkey, Pakistan

International Desk

Yemen said on Sunday its armed forces attacked Saudi Aramco's Jazan refinery two days after the kingdom signed a defense pact with Turkey and Pakistan in response to growing regional instability.

Yemen's military spokesperson Yahya Saree in a post on X said the country's armed forces used a drone to target the refinery. Saree added that the attack on the Aramco's Jazan refinery was launched in response to incursions by drones from the Persian Gulf monarchy into northwest Yemen. The Saudi energy ministry said a fire had broken out at the refinery but was later extinguished with no



injuries and authorities were dealing with the incident.

In a separate statement, Saree said that Yemen's military carried out missile and drone strikes on the Yemeni Red Sea port city of Mocha. The historic port is controlled by Yemen's Saudi-backed government. He said Yemen targeted "Saudi enemy" troops and equipment in the area with missiles and drones. The attacks came days after Saudi

Arabia signed a security pact with Turkey and Pakistan to strengthen collective deterrence against any act of aggression. The alliance stipulates that an armed attack against any of the three countries would be regarded as an attack on all.

It was not clear whether or how either Pakistan or Turkey would join in any Saudi response to the latest attacks by Yemen.

Yemen declared a naval blockade against Saudi Arabia in the Red Sea last month in response to a Saudi siege on the Arab country. The blockade has threatened top oil exporter Saudi Arabia's ability to get its supplies to the world following Iran's blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, cutting off the kingdom's only other maritime route.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Iran-Turkey trade jumps 73% in June as maritime routes affected by US blockade

Economy Desk

Trade between Iran and Turkey rose 73% in June to nearly \$700 million, as Iran faced renewed restrictions on maritime trade routes, according to the latest data from Turkey's Economy Ministry.

The value of trade between the two countries reached \$3.16 billion in the first six months of this year, up 19% from \$2.65 billion in the same period in 2025, Iran's Tasnim news agency reported, citing Turkish Economy Ministry data.

Turkey's exports to Iran rose 6% to \$1.56 billion in January-June this year from about \$1.47 billion in the same period last year, an increase of \$90 million.

Turkey's imports from Iran rose 35% to \$1.6 billion from \$1.18 billion a year earlier.

The pace of growth accelerated in June. Turkish exports to Iran rose 50% year-on-year to \$366 million from \$244 million, while imports from Iran jumped 109% to \$325 million from \$155 million.

Total bilateral trade therefore increased to \$691 million in June from \$399 million a year earlier, a 73% rise.

Land trade gains importance

Trade growth comes as Iran faces renewed restrictions on maritime routes. 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, the naval blockade was reinstated in mid-July. Iran is seeking to diversify its logistics corridors to counter growing restrictions on its trade routes. Iran has land borders with several countries, providing opportunities to diversify its foreign trade routes. Turkey, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan are among the countries that can play a role in developing Iran's land-based trade and transit.

Rail link with Turkey

Jabar Ali Zakeri, head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways, emphasized the strategic role of the Razi rail border crossing in international transportation during a visit to West Azerbaijan province in northwestern Iran on Sunday, according to ILNA.

"Developing rail connections with Turkey through this border is a priority for the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development," Zakeri said.

"With the implementation of development plans, the freight-handling capacity of the Razi border will increase from about 1 million to 1.5 million tons a year to a nominal capacity of 6 million tons."

Zakeri, who serves as deputy minis-



ter of roads and urban development, said development projects were also under way at Razi station, including the addition of rail lines, expansion of

loading and unloading platforms, construction of a new administrative and service building, and efforts to attract private-sector investment.

"Operation of the station's new lines is scheduled to begin next month, while construction of the new building will also start at the same time," he said.

Avicenna institute unveils poultry vaccine with high efficacy



Economy Desk

Iran has unveiled a locally developed inactivated vaccine against Angara disease in poultry that researchers say has an efficacy rate of more than 90%, using strains of the virus circulating in the country.

The vaccine was unveiled on Sunday at a ceremony marking the 46th anniversary of the Academic Center for Education, Culture and Research (ACECR), attended by President Masoud Pezeshkian and senior government officials, according to IRNA.

The product, developed by the Avicenna Research Institute of Modern Biological Technologies at ACECR, is designed to im-

prove control of Angara disease, reduce reliance on imported vaccines and help protect the country's food security.

Mahmoud Jaddi Tehrani, who led the project with Alireza Farasat, said Angara is a viral disease caused by avian adenoviruses and has 12 viral strains, three of which - strains 4, 8 and 11 - are pathogenic.

These strains can kill all the chicks and chickens in a poultry farm within days, he said. Vaccination is the only way to combat the disease, making access to an effective vaccine important for controlling the disease and maintaining poultry meat production. Vaccines previously used against Angara in Iran were imported and re-



A locally developed inactivated vaccine against Angara disease in poultry is unveiled at a ceremony marking the 46th anniversary of the Academic Center for Education, Culture and Research (ACECR), in Tehran on August 9, 2026.

● IRNA

quired significant amounts of foreign currency. But because the strains used in imported vaccines differ from those circulating in Iran, they had an efficacy of only about 30% in preventing the disease, Tehrani said.

That difference has caused significant economic losses and posed a threat to food security, he said.

The locally developed vaccine was produced using strains 4, 8 and 11 of the avian adenovirus circulating in Iran. Tests showed an efficacy rate of more than 90%, creating capacity to improve disease control and increase poultry meat production, according to the researchers.

One of the main features of the project is that the vaccine was developed us-

ing the actual virus strains circulating in Iran and that its production technology was adapted to the country's conditions.

The vaccine is the first domestically produced animal vaccine based on virus strains circulating in Iran, according to the researchers. They said it could play a major role in controlling Angara disease and increasing the efficiency of poultry meat production. The researchers said production of the vaccine could help create domestic capacity to control Angara disease, reduce economic losses from the disease and support the stability of poultry meat production. Domestic production would also prevent foreign currency outflows and provide potential for exports and foreign exchange earnings.

All poultry farms across Iran are potential users of the vaccine, making its development a nationwide project aimed at supporting the poultry industry, food security and poultry meat production.

New techs, AI top priority for agriculture improvement: Minister



Economy Desk

Iran's Agriculture Ministry has launched numerous systems in various fields over the past year and a half, with artificial intelligence already being used in some of them, Agriculture Minister Gholamreza Nouri-Qezeljah said.

"Using new technologies is one of the ministry's main priorities, and we are seriously pursuing the use of these technologies in the agricultural sector," Nouri-Qezeljah said, according to IRNA.

"Using artificial intelligence helps greatly with gaining greater oversight, providing information, regulating and managing supply and demand, and managing the market," he said.

Hormozgan expands water-efficient crops

In a related development, plans are under way to expand the cultivation of low-water-use crops across 150 hectares of farmland in Hormozgan Province as part of efforts to implement a crop pattern and manage water consumption, IRNA reported.

Massoud Gorgij, deputy head of the Hormozgan Agricultural Organization for crop production, said the program had been planned and had begun in some suitable areas of the southern province.

"Implementation programs to expand the cultivation of low-water-use crops have intensified in order to preserve water resources and improve productivity in agriculture," Gorgij said.

"Low-water-use crops not only consume less water but also have significant potential to create added value in

the region's agricultural economy," he said, emphasizing the need to manage water resources and implement a crop pattern.

Gorgij said plans to expand the cultivation of strategic crops across 150 hectares of farmland in the province had entered the implementation stage. "The main objective of this measure is to guide farmers toward following a crop pattern suited to the province's existing water resources," he said.

"To achieve this goal, a range of measures, including promoting modern irrigation systems, holding specialized training and extension courses for farmers, and continuously monitoring cultivated areas through the 'Comprehensive Zoning System,' are on the agenda."

Hormozgan faces water-resource constraints because of its semiarid climate, declining rainfall and persistent drought in recent years. Reforming crop patterns and shifting toward crops suited to the province's water capacity are therefore among the measures considered important for sustaining agricultural activity.

Water scarcity has become one of the country's major challenges in recent years, while excessive extraction of groundwater over past decades has worsened the situation.

Against this backdrop, reforming water consumption patterns in agriculture, expanding modern irrigation systems, eliminating traditional methods, preventing unauthorized extraction from wells and reducing the area planted with water-intensive crops are among the priorities for water-resource and agricultural management. Gorgij said sesame, sorghum, millet, mung beans, beans, quinoa and salicornia were among the low-water-use crops suited to the province.

Hormozgan has more than 160,000 hectares of cultivated farmland and orchards and produces more than 3.8 million tons of agricultural and livestock products annually, giving the province significant capacity to expand low-water-use crops.

Trilateral defense pact ...

Pakistan's role will also be limited to what the Saudis want. A precedent was set once by Nawaz Sharif. At the time, a procedure was established under which parliament would decide on the direct deployment of Pakistani forces in Saudi Arabia. Pakistan's parliament voted against the proposal when General Bajwa was the commander of the Pakistani army. As a result, Pakistan's

role was limited to the air force.

But now, with Asim Munir wielding considerable power, I doubt Shehbaz Sharif would follow his brother's precedent and refer the matter to parliament.

We would probably see a Pakistani military presence along the border between Yemen and Saudi Arabia, although it would most likely take the form of an advisory role. A military

presence involving Pakistani soldiers directly engaging Ansarullah forces is unlikely because of the complications that could arise — for example, if they were taken prisoner and the international consequences that would follow. I doubt such a scenario would happen on that scale. But an advisory presence, along with the continued involvement of Pakistan's air force, is possible if Saudi Arabia makes such a request.

US geopolitical doctrine under spotlight in Central Asia, Caucasus



By Mohammad Sajjad Kashani
Researcher in regional studies

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Developments in the Caucasus and Central Asia since 2025 should not be viewed merely as a collection of bilateral agreements, transit initiatives, or isolated economic projects. Taken together, recent US activities in these regions including mediation in political settlements, support for strategic transport corridors, expanded cooperation in critical minerals, security partnerships, and technological collaboration suggest a relatively coherent strategic logic. Accordingly, this article employs the concept of the “Trump Route Doctrine” as an analytical framework for interpreting these developments.

In strategic studies, a doctrine is more than a series of individual policies or ad hoc decisions. Rather, it is a coherent framework composed of strategic objectives, operational principles, and policy instruments that collectively guide a state's behavior in a particular geopolitical arena. From this perspective, the pattern of US engagement in the Caucasus and Central Asia under the Trump administration can be interpreted as exhibiting the characteristics of a doctrine. Its principal objective appears to be the geopolitical and geoeconomic reconfiguration of Eurasia in favor of the United States by reducing its partners' dependence on Chinese and Russian infrastructure while establishing a network of security and economic partnerships along the Middle Corridor.

The instruments of this doctrine extend well beyond military power. Political mediation, security guarantees, the development of transit corridors, investment in strategic mineral resources, the participation of major American corporations, technological cooperation with Israel, and the establishment of multilateral frameworks such as C5+1 and TRIPP constitute complementary components of a broader strategic approach. From this standpoint, the Trump Route should not be understood simply as a transportation corridor or an infrastructure initiative; rather, it can be viewed as an attempt to shape a new geopolitical order across Eurasia.

At the same time, it is important to distinguish between established facts and analytical interpretation. It is a matter of record that, since early 2025, the United States has expanded its political, economic, and security engagement in the Caucasus and Central Asia while concluding a series of new agreements with regional actors. However, the proposition that all of these initiatives constitute elements of a single, pre-designed doctrine is an analytical interpretation rather than an officially declared US strategy. Throughout this article, therefore, the term “Trump Route Doctrine” is used as an analytical concept designed to explain an



turancenter.org

emerging pattern of US behavior, not as the title of an official policy document.

The Caucasus: starting point of a geopolitical reconfiguration

The earliest indications of this emerging strategic pattern can be observed in the Caucasus. Although relations between Azerbaijan and Israel date back more than three decades, they gradually evolved from cultural and academic exchanges in the mid-1990s into broader cooperation encompassing security, energy, and technology. Over time, intelligence collaboration, defense procurement, and energy exports transformed the bilateral relationship into one of Israel's most significant strategic partnerships within the Muslim world.

Cooperation in the educational and cultural sectors also expanded steadily. The university cooperation agreements signed in 2025 should be understood as the continuation of a process that had begun years earlier rather than as an isolated development. This evolution suggests that relations between Baku and Tel Aviv

have been shaped by a long-term process of strategic convergence across multiple sectors rather than by short-term political decisions.

Economic indicators further reinforce this assessment. The expansion of bilateral trade, growing cooperation in the energy sector, and increasing export volumes demonstrate that the relationship has progressively developed into a multidimensional economic and security partnership. This evolution created favorable conditions for a more active US role in the geopolitical dynamics of the Caucasus — a role that entered a new phase beginning in 2025.

A major turning point can be identified in the Trump administration's approach to the region. Unlike previous periods, during which US foreign policy largely prioritized the Middle East or East Asia, the Trump administration sought to position the Caucasus as one of the principal arenas of strategic competition with China and Russia. This shift in priorities laid the foundation for a series of political, security, and economic initiatives that will be examined in the following sections.

One of the central components of this analytical framework is the Zangezur Corridor. At first glance, the corridor appears to be nothing more than a transportation project intended to connect mainland Azerbaijan with the



This approach differs in several important respects from China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The Chinese strategy is primarily based on long-term infrastructure investment, concessional lending, the construction of ports and railways, and the creation of economic interdependence. By contrast, the pattern of US policy observed since 2025 appears to place greater emphasis on controlling strategic geopolitical chokepoints, securing political agreements, guaranteeing the security of transit routes, and encouraging American private investment once a favorable strategic environment has been established.

Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic through Armenian territory. From a geopolitical perspective, however, its significance extends well beyond transportation. The corridor has the potential to strengthen the Middle Corridor by facilitating overland connectivity between Central Asia, the Caucasus, Turkey, and Europe. In doing so, it could reduce dependence on Russian territory and redirect a portion of East-West trade away from traditional transit routes.

From this perspective, the Zangezur Corridor can be understood as more than an infrastructure project; it represents a geopolitical instrument. If the corridor is consolidated under US political and security support, Washington would gain influence over one of Eurasia's most important strategic chokepoints — a position that, over the past two decades, has been largely dominated by Russia and, increasingly, by China.

It should be emphasized, however, that no official US policy document has identified Zangezur as the cornerstone of an American strategic doctrine. The argument advanced in this article is therefore analytical rather than declaratory. The simultaneous expansion of US political, security, and economic engagement alongside its growing support for the corridor suggests the existence of a broader strategic logic linking these initiatives.

Trump Route: beyond a transportation corridor

Within this framework, the concept of the Trump Route is employed not as the name of an official government initiative but as an analytical construct. It refers to an interconnected network of transport corridors, political agreements, security arrangements, and economic initiatives that, if fully developed, could establish a new US-backed geopolitical architecture across Eurasia. This approach differs in several important respects from China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The Chinese strategy is primarily based on long-term infrastructure investment, concessional lending, the construction of ports and railways, and the creation of economic interdependence. By contrast, the pattern of US policy observed since 2025 appears to place greater emphasis on controlling strategic geopolitical chokepoints, securing political agreements, guaranteeing the security of transit routes, and encouraging American private investment once a favorable strategic environment has been established.

In other words, whereas China seeks to translate infrastructure development into political influence, the United States appears to prioritize political and security arrangements as the foundation for subsequent economic engagement. This distinction constitutes one of the defining characteristics of what this article describes as the Trump Route Doctrine.

Operationalization of the US strategy in the Caucasus

The first practical indications of

this strategic approach became visible in early 2025. Following the beginning of the Trump administration, Washington devoted increased attention to the South Caucasus, placing Armenia and Azerbaijan among the first active regional priorities of US foreign policy.

As part of this broader effort, the White House sought to accelerate the normalization process between Yerevan and Baku. A significant milestone was the initiative known as TRIPP (Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity), introduced in August 2025 with direct support from the US administration. Regardless of its eventual practical outcomes, the initiative was significant because it represented one of Washington's first attempts to directly connect political reconciliation between Armenia and Azerbaijan with broader transit and economic projects.

This linkage between peace, security, and trade represents a defining feature of the emerging strategic framework. Political agreements are treated not as ends in themselves but as prerequisites for the development of transportation networks, investment flows, and regional commerce. Within this model, security is no longer viewed merely as a military necessity; rather, it becomes an integral component of the broader economic architecture.

From the Caucasus to Central Asia

The next phase of this strategy became evident during the C5+1 Summit in November 2025. By inviting the leaders of all five Central Asian republics to the White House, Washington demonstrated that its strategic vision extended beyond the Caucasus to encompass the entire Middle Corridor.

Unlike many previous US engagements with the region that primarily emphasized democracy, human rights, or counterterrorism, the agenda of this summit focused on critical minerals, supply chain security, transportation corridors, and economic cooperation. This shift in priorities may be interpreted as evidence of a broader transformation in US strategic thinking toward Central Asia.

Within this context, discussions centered on investment in critical mineral extraction, expanded cooperation in the mining sector, and reducing US dependence on Chinese-controlled supply chains. These issues are strategically significant because advanced technologies, defense industries, electric vehicle manufacturing, and artificial intelligence all depend heavily on critical minerals, a substantial portion of whose global supply chain remains concentrated in China.

If this trajectory continues, Central Asia is likely to emerge as one of the principal arenas of geoeconomic competition between the United States and China. The rivalry will no longer revolve solely around transportation corridors; increasingly, it will also concern control over the strategic resources that underpin 21st-century economic and technological power.



US President Donald Trump (c) holds the hands of Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev (l) and Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan during a trilateral signing event, at the White House, in Washington, DC, on August 8, 2025.

● KEVIN LAMARQUE/REUTERS

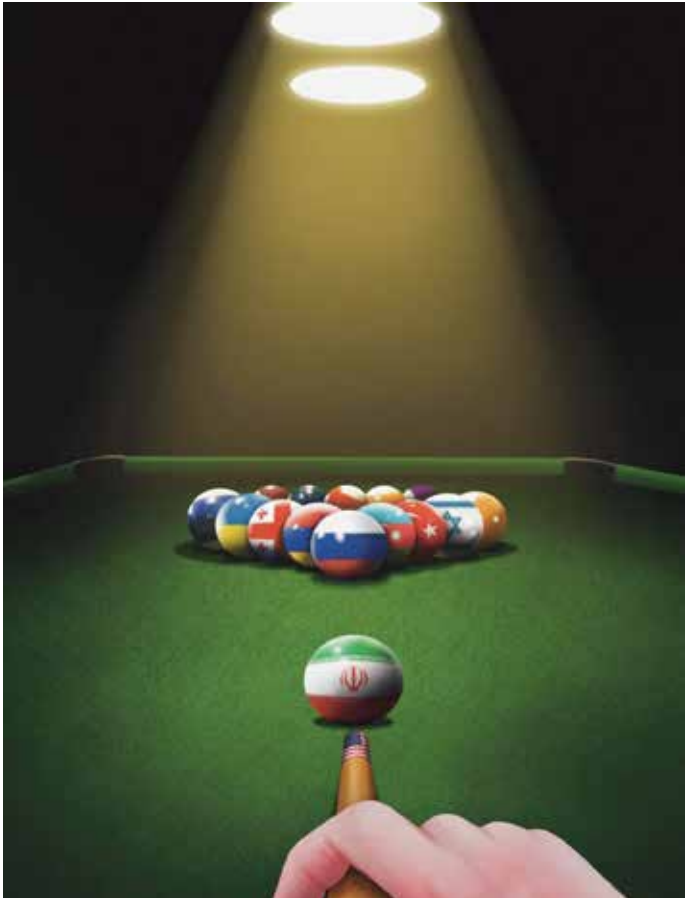


South Caucasus at Crossroads of Iran war


By Sabine Ameer
Researcher and policy analyst
OPINION

The South Caucasus — the region north of Iran comprising Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia — has long been characterised by unresolved ethnic conflicts that have persisted since its split from the Soviet Union. However, the US–Israel strikes on Iran, which began on February 28 this year, highlighted the region’s strategic significance, particularly its transit potential: with east-west air corridors closed off, traffic was forced into a narrow strip of airspace over the South Caucasus, bypassing Iran. As Iran blocked the Strait of Hormuz, the Middle Corridor, which runs through the South Caucasus and across the Caspian Sea, became the alternative route for shipments to Europe and Asia. While the Iran war highlighted the region’s transit significance, it also exposed it to serious security vulnerabilities and economic risks. This piece unpacks the impact of the Iran war on the South Caucasus, deciphering how a prolonged war could shift its regional geopolitics.

Armenia’s multi-vector foreign policy
Armenia shares a long border with Iran, and the two maintain strong economic and defense ties. With the erosion of Russian security guarantees since the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and Armenia’s freeze in CSTO participation, Tehran has steadily emerged as a key alternative partner for Yerevan. Iran’s support stems from its own strategic calculus: preserving access to Europe via Armenian territory while blocking the completion of the Zangezur Corridor. Rebranded as the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP), the corridor would connect Armenia to Turkey via Azerbaijan — bypassing Iran — and is perceived as a security threat in Tehran. Iran is Yerevan’s key link to Persian Gulf and Asian markets, with 25 percent of Armenia’s foreign trade moving through Iranian territory. Armenia supports TRIPP but is wary of the risks of closing its border with Iran, and insists on preserving its southern border with Tehran. The war in Iran could reshape this stance, as the Iran–Armenia corridor has grown increasingly vulnerable since the outbreak of the war, and while alternatives through Turkey and Azerbaijan exist, they remain either restricted or costly. For instance, disruption due to the war could push delivery times between China and Armenia from roughly 50–60 days to around 90 days. The war has not yet directly disrupted Armenia’s trade flows, but transportation costs have spiked — and a prolonged war risks endangering cargo movement, which could have damaging consequences for Armenia’s economy. Iran currently operates a gas-for-electricity swap agreement with Armenia, and any major disruption to this arrangement due to the ongoing war would push Armenia to lean



politicsgeo.com

further on Russian gas, which already accounts for roughly 80 percent of its supply. For the South Caucasus, geography has played a key role in shaping strategic outcomes. For Armenia, the Iran war has exposed the real crevices: the consequences of reliance on a single regional partner. For other external actors, it has increased the appeal of alternative corridors like TRIPP that feed directly into the Middle Corridor, sidelining Iran altogether, especially as the war continues to impact regional oil and gas supply. Yerevan has spent the past few years strategically building a multi-vector foreign policy: deepening its partnership with the US in the AI sphere, purchasing arms from India, opening trade with Turkey, and normalising relations with Azerbaijan. The Iran war will only reinforce Yerevan’s multi-vectorism, rather than reverse it, irrespective of the war’s outcome.

Azerbaijan’s tangled relationship with Iran
Azerbaijan is both a strategic partner and a security concern


A map of the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR)
● TANVIR ANJUM ADIB/THINKCHINA.SG



“

For other external actors, it has increased the appeal of alternative corridors like TRIPP that feed directly into the Middle Corridor, sidelining Iran altogether, especially as the war continues to impact regional oil and gas supply. Yerevan has spent the past few years strategically building a multi-vector foreign policy: deepening its partnership with the US in the AI sphere, purchasing arms from India, opening trade with Turkey, and normalising relations with Azerbaijan. The Iran war will only reinforce Yerevan’s multi-vectorism, rather than reverse it, irrespective of the war’s outcome.

armed groups getting involved in the war could trigger inter-ethnic conflict between Kurdish groups and unarmed ethnic Azeris, raising the risk of a humanitarian crisis along Azerbaijan’s southern border. The war dynamics cut both ways: for Iran, a prolonged war could stoke separatist sentiments among its ethnic Azeri population. For Azerbaijan, however, the biggest concern is the existence of Iran-linked networks that could be activated in times of crisis. Azerbaijan was the only South Caucasus state to face direct military consequences of the Iran war. As per media reports, Tehran threatened to embargo oil exports from the region and target enemy oil lines, which was interpreted as a threat to the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline, which transports roughly 45 percent of Israel’s crude oil. Baku responded with deterrence rather than confrontation, evacuating diplomatic staff while still sending humanitarian aid to Iran. While concerns for Azerbaijan are partly speculative, in the short term, the war has only spiked the value of Azeri Brent oil from \$65 per barrel to \$101.29 and surged demand for TRIPP, to which Azerbaijan is an integral party. But in the long run, a triumphant Iran would likely turn hostile towards Baku, while a defeated one could bring instability along its borders.

Georgia juggling between Iran and the West
Iran has sought a closer relationship with Georgia, aiming to secure access to its Black Sea ports and diversify its trade routes amid mounting Western sanctions. There have been reports citing a surge in Iranian company registrations in Georgia: an estimated 13,000 Iranian companies have been registered in the country, under questionable circumstances. Another report claims that between 2022 and 2025, 72 companies imported Iranian oil and petroleum products, re-exporting them under Georgian labels. The war has already brought Tbilisi under sharper Western scrutiny over allegations of it being used as an evasion hub by Iran, potentially enabling Tehran to fund its wartime economy. A prolonged war would generate more pressure on Tbilisi, as sanction-evasion networks would seek increased use of its territory. As for Tbilisi’s economy, the

war has had mixed effects. For instance, despite facing security risks, the BTC and the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) — which pass through Georgia, bypassing Iran and Russia — are becoming increasingly important. So is the airspace over Georgia: with the closure of Iranian airspace, Trans-Eurasian flights have been rerouted via the South Caucasus, turning Georgia into one of the busiest air corridors between Europe and Asia. Transit of cargo through the Batumi and Poti sea ports also increased by four percent in the first quarter of 2026, compared to the previous year. However, around 99 percent of Georgia’s natural gas demand is met by imports, and the war-induced surge in oil prices has affected the cost of almost all goods and services. The Iran war has raised Georgia’s strategic relevance for Euro-Atlantic partners, particularly in the context of TRIPP. Although Georgia is not formally part of the corridor, the broader logic of regional connectivity makes it unlikely to remain outside US attention. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio’s discussion with Kobakhidze on March 30, 2026 — on areas of mutual interest including security in the Caucasus and Black Sea region — came after a prolonged diplomatic pause, and may already signal this shift. The following day, Iran’s ambassador to Georgia warned on social media that “decision makers in small countries face” a number of risks, a remark interpreted as directed at Georgia. These developments suggest Georgia is becoming an increasingly contested space, potentially drawing renewed Western attention to its role in the region’s shifting dynamics. The South Caucasus has emerged as increasingly strategic against the backdrop of the Iran war. While the war has made its transit potential clear and expedited the need for alternative routes bypassing Iran, it has also exposed the region to distinctive risks. For Armenia, the war risks an over-reliance on a single regional partner, be it Iran or Russia, and a prolonged war would only push that further. For Azerbaijan, the war has increased the value of Azeri Brent oil, but the risk is twofold: a potential refugee crisis if the war escalates, and a risk of ethnic conflict along its southern border should Kurdish groups be activated. Georgia is under scrutiny for allegedly serving as a sanction-evasion conduit for Iran, but the war has also drawn renewed attention from Euro-Atlantic partners, particularly as its oil pipelines and air corridors gain significance while routes through Iran remain risky. In the war’s aftermath, the South Caucasus will continue to be a contested space — one where Iran tries to hold on to its influence while Western actors bid for oil infrastructure and trade corridors, all underpinned by the region’s geography and its proximity to Iran.

U17 Wrestling World Championships:

Iran FS coach hails future prospects despite missing out on team crown

Sports Desk

Iran head coach Sadeq Goudarzi blamed "individual errors" for his team's failure to win the freestyle team title at the U17 Wrestling World Championships in Baku last week, but highlighted several promising wrestlers he believes can go on to represent the senior national team.

A haul of three golds, one silver and two bronze medals across the 10 weight classes saw Iran finish runner-up with 145 points – just one point behind Russia, which was eligible for team points for the first time in five years.

Benjamin Ashofteh (51kg), Reza Shamsipour (71kg) and Amirali Ferasati (80kg) won gold in their respective categories, while Amirhossein Esmali settled for silver in the 110kg event, with Arman Elahi (55kg) and Sam Arshad (65kg) adding two bronzes. The impressive haul still proved insufficient for Iran to secure its first freestyle crown since 2023. Speaking to Mehr News Agency, Goudarzi said Iran faced a difficult draw from the outset but managed to overcome the challenges.

"Most of the Iranian wrestlers were drawn alongside Russian and American wrestlers in the same half of the bracket, but



Benjamin Ashofteh celebrates with the Iranian flag after winning the freestyle 51kg title at the U17 Wrestling World Championships in Baku, Azerbaijan, on August 2, 2026.

● IAWFIR

gradually found their rhythm on the mat," Goudarzi said.

Goudarzi said most of the wrestlers performed according to plan but acknowledged that mistakes are common at the youth level.

"They followed the plan, but at this age group, there are always individual errors, and it is natural for the wrestlers to make mistakes. Unfortunately,

we made too many mistakes in some weight classes," he said.

"Instead of winning one or two bronze medals, we ended up with two fifth-place finishes and were eliminated in another weight class. These mistakes meant we lost the championship very easily."

Despite the disappointment, Goudarzi was pleased with his

niques on the mat.

The former world and Olympic silver medalist stressed that the team's objective went beyond winning medals, saying several wrestlers had emerged as potential future members of Iran's senior squad.

He singled out Ashofteh, Ferasati, Elahi and Arshad as promising prospects, while he was particularly impressed by Esmali, who he believes could eventually challenge for the superheavyweight spot in the senior national squad, currently occupied by world-class star Amirhossein Zare.

"We have introduced wrestlers who can certainly move closer to the senior national team once the current generation moves on and can even compete for a place in the national team," said Goudarzi.

"The level of competition, the atmosphere in the arena and the quality of the bouts were really high.

"In my opinion, this edition was no less impressive in terms of quality than the junior and even senior world championships. The arena was packed, and even the president of Azerbaijan was present during the 51kg final, with the fans passionately supporting their wrestlers."

Goudarzi recalled how Ashofteh

handled the pressure of wrestling an Azerbaijani opponent in front of a partisan crowd.

"I had been to so many competitions and thought to myself, 'How is this kid going to wrestle in this atmosphere?'" he said. "He was leading 1-0 at the end of the first period. During the 30-second break, I told him he needed to score a takedown and a gut wrench to win.

"Interestingly, he tapped me on the shoulder and said, 'That's exactly what I'll do.' And that is what happened."

Goudarzi, meanwhile, acknowledged the strength of the Russian team and the emergence of Azerbaijan as a serious contender.

"Russian wrestlers were in better shape than in previous years, and Azerbaijan is gradually becoming a serious contender as well," he said. "Despite all that, thankfully, we achieved a good result. It was really unfortunate that we lost the title in the final moments, but the world silver medal was the result of these kids' efforts."

Goudarzi insisted that developing young wrestlers must be an ongoing process, with athletes taught the fundamentals correctly before progressing to the junior and senior levels.

"Every year, we need to guide several U17 wrestlers toward the junior and then senior levels," he said. "They must learn the correct techniques from this age so that when they reach the junior and senior levels, they are fully prepared.

"Courage, confidence in executing techniques and all the basics are developed at the U17 level. At the junior and senior levels, the focus should then be on technical details and strategy."



Nekounam set to replace Rabiei as Tractor head coach

Sports Desk

Former Iran international Javad Nekounam is set to be unveiled as the new head coach of Persian Gulf Pro League club Tractor following the shock departure of Mohammad Rabiei, according to Iranian media reports.

Following a lengthy meeting between Tractor CEO Hojjat Karimi and Rabiei on Saturday night, the two sides ultimately agreed to go their separate ways amid differences between the club hierarchy and the coach.

The decision, coming days before the start of the new top-flight season, brings an abrupt end to Rabiei's short spell on the Tractor bench. The former Khaybar and Zob Ahan coach replaced Croatian Dragan Skocic in February but was in charge for only three games.

Tractor defeated Golgozar 1-0 and drew 1-1 with Malavan, leaving the team second in the table before the Iranian league was suspended due to wartime circumstances in the country.

The Tabriz-based club then suffered a 3-0 defeat to UAE side Shabab Al Ahli in the AFC Champions League Elite round of 16 in April.

Nekounam, meanwhile, has reportedly entered advanced talks with Tractor over the role. He has been without a club since leaving Esteghlal in June 2024, after guiding the Tehran giants to a runner-up finish behind archrivals Persepolis in the domestic league.

Tractor, who will represent Iran in the upcoming AFC Champions League Elite, will begin their domestic campaign against Paykan at home on Friday.

Zarrinkamar spearheads Iran's Olympic taekwondo rankings

Sports Desk

Teenage prodigy Hana Zarrinkamar has emerged as the highest-ranked Iranian in the latest Olympic rankings released by World Taekwondo.

The 17-year-old sensation, who won a second successive world junior title in April before claiming an impressive gold medal at the Korea Open last month, sits second behind Russia's Anastasiia Kosmycheva in the women's +67kg category with 60 points.

Elsewhere in the women's rankings, Nahid Kiani, who won Iran's first women's Olympic silver medal in taekwondo at Paris 2024, is ranked 42nd in the -57kg



● WORLD TAEKWONDO

class with 12 points. In the men's -58kg division, reigning world champion Abolfazl Zandi and Yasin Valizadeh, who claimed gold and silver, respectively, at May's Asian Championships, share 22nd place with 20

points each, while Mahdi Hajmousaei, also an Asian gold medalist, is 21st in the -68kg category, also with 20 points. Olympic gold medalist Arian Salimi shares 15th place in the men's +80kg division with fellow Iranian Moham-

mad Hossein Yazdani, with both athletes having 20 points.

World Taekwondo reset the Olympic rankings at the beginning of June, meaning the current standings are based solely on points earned since then.

Iranian athletes' relatively low positions are largely attributed to their absence from June's Grand Prix event in Rome due to the war in the country. Their only ranking points so far have come from the Korea Open.

Further appearances at ranking events are expected to improve the positions of Iran's representatives as they continue their qualification campaign for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics.

Iranian Eckert at the double in Belgian top-flight opener

Sports Desk

Iranian international striker Dennis Eckert Dargahi opened his new club campaign in style, scoring twice as Standard Liège played to a 2-2 draw at home against Cercle Brugge on the opening day of the Belgian Pro League season.

Eckert headed home deep into first-half stoppage time to cancel out Lukas Mondelle's 41st-minute strike for the visitors, then lobbed goalkeeper Gaëtan Coucke three minutes after the break

to put his team in front.

Cercle Brugge still managed to salvage a point through Christiaan Ravych's equalizer with two minutes remaining of normal time.

Eckert, who received his first international call-up in March, was part of Iran's squad at the FIFA World Cup in North America but missed the 2-2 draw against New Zealand due to injury. He was then an unused substitute in the following stalemates against Belgium (0-0) and Egypt (1-1), as Team Melli finished third in Group G and

missed out on a place in the knockout stage.

The decision to name Eckert, who scored seven goals in 37 appearances across all competitions for the Belgian outfit last season, in the World Cup squad drew considerable criticism of Iran head coach Amir Qalenoee among fans and pundits in the country.

Qalenoee, however, attributed the former Germany U19 player's lack of contribution to an untimely injury he suffered during Iran's training camp in Turkey before the World Cup.



Hana Bread Festival to boost food tourism, local economy

Iranica Desk

The head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization of Semirom, Fars Province, has announced that the Hana Traditional and Local Bread Festival has been officially added to Iran's national tourism events calendar.

Saeed Soleimanian said the registration comes ahead of the second edition of the Hana Local Bread Festival, which is being held under the slogan "From Farm to Table." The local festival has now been included in the country's official calendar of

national tourism events, according to chtn.ir.

He said that, in line with the objectives of the government's transformation plan to organize and professionalize tourism events, the Hana Local Bread Festival — which is held annually in the second half of September — was registered in Iran's tourism events calendar in August 2026.

Soleimanian noted that Hana's traditional bread, as an important part of the area's culinary and cultural heritage, holds a special place on the tables of local residents. The annual festival focuses on introducing and demon-

strating the traditional bread-making process while promoting the region's authentic food culture.

He added that this tradition reflects the local identity of the community, as well as the efforts of farmers and the hard work of local bakers. The festival also provides an opportunity to strengthen social interaction, promote public vitality and preserve long-standing traditions.

In addition to baking and selling traditional bread, the festival features a variety of local breads, as well as the region's cultural, social and tourism attractions, handicrafts and traditional



● INSTAGRAM

arts, presented through a range of exhibition stalls.

Soleimanian emphasized that holding the event could help attract more tourists to Hana and the surrounding area, contributing to the growth of the local economy, promoting the region's

cultural potential and strengthening food tourism.

He expressed hope that, through co-ordinated planning and the continued organization of the festival, it can be elevated to a provincial and eventually national-level event in the coming years.

Taleqan rural museum set to preserve region's heritage

Iranica Desk

In Taleqan, among mountains and villages where echoes of the past can still be heard in narrow lanes, a new building has gradually taken shape to preserve the memory of the region.

The Taleqan Rural Museum is rooted in concerns that elements of local culture could disappear if they are not documented and preserved — from tools that have remained for decades in village homes to stories passed down through generations and a way of life that has helped shape the identity of the region.

The idea dates back more than a decade in the mind of Moharram Soltani, a native of Muchan village in Taleqan. Soltani said he could have built the museum on his own property as a private project, but instead chose a different path, seeking to create a collaborative initiative involving local residents, the cultural heritage authorities and his own personal commitment to preserving the region's heritage, chtn.ir wrote. After years of efforts and about three years of construction, the Taleqan Rural Museum has now completed its construction phase. Soltani has fully financed the building, but insists that the project should not be viewed as the work of one individual.

"What matters to me is creating an experience of participation," he said, arguing that cultural heritage can only endure when people see themselves as participants in preserving and telling its story.

Soltani said the idea of creating the museum was not a recent one. "I had been pursuing this concern for more than 10 years," he said. "I was always asking myself how we could preserve part of Taleqan's rural culture, way of life and identity and introduce it to future generations."

The idea eventually developed into a practical project to create a collection that could preserve part of the region's cultural heritage.

He stressed that completing the building does not mark the end of the project but rather the beginning of a more important phase: developing the museum's content, collecting artifacts and documenting cultural narratives.

"A building becomes a museum when it tells the story of a community's life, culture and history," he said. "If you simply build a structure, it remains a building. But when people participate, contribute their objects and preserve the memories and identity of a region there, it becomes a cultural institution."



● chtn.ir

He said people who come from a particular region often have a deep connection to its culture and memories. "Taleqan is a collection of traditions, ways of life, architecture, rituals and memories of people who have lived here for generations," he said. Much of this cultural heritage could disappear over time if it is not documented and introduced to younger generations, he added.

"The purpose of this museum is to preserve part of that heritage and help young people understand what life in this region was like in the past."

He said his first discussions with the Alborz Province Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department took place in 2021.

"I told officials that I had the idea and was prepared to personally undertake all stages of the project, from design and architecture to construction and financing," he said. "My request, however, was that the project ultimately become a collaborative initiative."

From the beginning, he said, he had insisted that the museum's architecture should reflect Taleqan's identity, from the materials and architectural form to the elements incorporated into the building.

Nearly two years of discussions and assessments followed before the project could move forward. An agreement was eventually reached in 2023 and construction began.

"Different managers and experts at the Alborz Province's Cultural Heritage Department were involved along the way," Soltani said. "My priority throughout was for the project to proceed in coordination with the cultural heritage authorities from beginning to end."

Soltani said the museum is expected to be managed by a board of trustees, although a final decision will be made at a forthcoming meeting.

"I believe a cultural institution can succeed when different people and groups have a role in it," he said. "If a museum depends solely on the decisions of one individual or organization, genuine participation cannot develop." The museum, he said, should be a place where people feel that they have a stake in its preservation and development.

"If this project is to serve as a model for the future, the experience of participation must be visible," Soltani said. "I want others to see that cooperation between local communities and cultural institutions can create lasting projects." The museum has now completed the construction phase, although the official opening date will depend on the Alborz Cultural Heritage Organization and the completion of administrative and technical procedures.

"The next important stage involves preparing the museum's content and selecting the artifacts," Soltani said. "Ob-

jects related to Taleqan's rural heritage need to be collected and organized. This requires expertise, and museum specialists should make the relevant decisions."

"People should be invited to bring forward old objects, tools and artifacts related to the region's culture that they have kept in their homes and make them available for display," he said. "That in itself would be a major form of cultural participation."

"I hope this museum can become a home for telling the story of Taleqan's culture — a home that belongs not to one individual or one period, but to the people of the region and future generations."

Shahbaz Mahmoudi, deputy director of cultural heritage at the Alborz Province Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, said the Taleqan Rural House Museum was the result of a heritage enthusiast's commitment to preserving and introducing the cultural assets of the region.

He said Soltani had approached the provincial cultural heritage authorities with the proposal and offered to participate in implementing the project.

"Because the benefactor was from Taleqan and had a detailed understanding of the city's cultural and historical potential, an agreement was signed between the Alborz Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization and the heritage benefactor, after which construction began," Mahmoudi said. He said construction of the building and its structural components had been fully completed and the project had now entered the stage of equipping the museum, preparing its interior and

arranging the exhibits.

Equipping the museum will require co-operation and funding, he said. Under the current plan, part of the funding needed for display cases and exhibition equipment will be provided by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, while the project's benefactor will cover another portion, allowing the interior setup to proceed as quickly as possible.

Mahmoudi said some historical objects currently held in the provincial Cultural Heritage Organization's storage facilities had been selected for display and would be transferred to Taleqan in the near future.

In addition, he said, Soltani's strong ties with residents of villages across Taleqan would help bring locally preserved objects into the museum.

"Some historical, cultural and ethnographic objects that have been kept in people's homes for years are expected to be donated to the museum with the owners' consent," Mahmoudi said. "This will help preserve and introduce aspects of Taleqan's traditional lifestyle, customs and local culture to future generations."

The Taleqan Rural House Museum could serve as a cultural center for introducing the region's historical and social identity and provide residents and tourists with an opportunity to learn about aspects of the county's tangible and intangible heritage, he added.

Officials hoped to complete the interior arrangement by September, provided the necessary conditions were met, and hold the opening ceremony afterward. "Given the benefactor's commitment to preserving the museum and ensuring its long-term survival, the possibility of managing the museum through a board of trustees is being examined, but no final decision has yet been made," he said.

He emphasized that the benefactor had no economic or commercial motive for the project.

"His main objective is to preserve the collection and allow people to visit it," Mahmoudi said. "His primary concern is introducing the culture and history of Taleqan and ensuring that the museum serves the community."

He described the Taleqan Rural House Museum as an example of the role public participation can play in safeguarding cultural heritage.

"It demonstrates how the involvement of heritage enthusiasts and local communities can make an important contribution to preserving the historical identity of different parts of the country," he said.



● chtn.ir



TMoCA to open foreign photo archive ahead of photography's bicentenary

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

The Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMoCA) will display more than 200 photographs from its foreign photo collection to mark the 200th anniversary of the invention of photography, the museum's director said, presenting a selection of global photographic heritage spanning from 1838 to 1980. Speaking to Iran Daily, Reza Dabirinejad said the museum had prepared an exhibition titled "This Face Remains" last year, dedicated to its collection of foreign photographs. The exhibition was designed as the museum's narrative of the world's photographic heritage, but its opening was delayed for various reasons, including the outbreak of war. "The exhibition will finally open this year, on the eve of Photography Invention Day (August 19) and to mark the

200th anniversary of photography," Dabirinejad said. "It will present a selection of works by photographers from different countries around the world." He said the collection features works from around 10 countries, with more than 200 photographs dating from 1838 to 1980 on display. The oldest work in the collection is a photograph by Talbot from 1838. The director added that the exhibition will open on Saturday, August 16, allowing visitors to explore part of the museum's valuable foreign photography archive, a collection that documents a significant chapter in the history of photography's development and evolution worldwide.

Six historic photo albums for first time

Dabirinejad also announced that six historic photo albums will be displayed for the first time as part of the exhibition. "These photographs were taken outside Iran and in-

clude images of people of Iranian descent," he said. According to the museum director, the works were captured by photographers from Russia, the Ottoman Empire, Japan and France, and date back to the Qajar era and earlier periods.

He described this section of the exhibition as particularly significant from both historical and visual perspectives, saying it provides an opportunity to showcase a collection of historic images of Iran recorded by foreign photographers alongside other works from the museum's photographic archive.

Permanent gallery planned

The Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art is also pursuing the establishment of a permanent exhibition space to display works from its collection, Dabirinejad said. He explained that the museum's exhibitions are currently organized mainly on a rotating and seasonal

basis, with new exhibitions held approximately every two to three months on different themes. However, the museum plans to create a permanent section in the future to showcase prominent and valuable works from its archive.

"The necessary follow-ups for establishing this section are underway, and we hope that, with the required conditions, regulations and facilities in place, we can add this permanent gallery to the museum's offerings this year and keep a selection of works from the collection on continuous display," he said.

Dabirinejad highlighted the importance of the TMoCA's collection, describing it as Iran's most significant museum of modern and contemporary art and one of the country's most renowned cultural institutions. The museum houses a collection of major works from Iranian and global modern art, with selected pieces periodically brought out of storage for public



Reza Dabirinejad
Iran Daily

viewing. He added that the museum's rich collection places it among the important repositories of modern art in Iran and the world, making it one of the pioneering institutions for modern art in the Middle East and West Asia. Before its establish-

ment, few museums in the region focused on modern art. The director noted that the museum preserves works by many leading figures in the history of modern and contemporary art, adding that one of its distinguishing features is that its col-

lection is not limited solely to Iranian contemporary art. "Unlike many museums in the country, the TMoCA does not rely only on domestic artistic heritage; it also represents part of the modern and contemporary art of the world," he said.

Post-war reconstruction lies in restoring nation's memory, identity, hope: Deputy minister

National initiative launched to protect cultural heritage after wartime damage



The photo shows the interior of the Golestan Palace in downtown Tehran which sustained damage in the wake of an Israeli strike on a nearby police station in March 2026.

● IRNA

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's post-war reconstruction should go beyond restoring damaged structures and focus on preserving a nation's historical memory, identity and hope, Iran's Deputy Minister for Cultural Heritage Ali Darabi said on Sunday as the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Ministry launched the first academic pre-event of the national "Cultural Heritage and Crisis" congress at the National Museum of Iran. Darabi said the initiative was aimed at developing stronger preservation frameworks and documenting Iran's cultural heritage experiences following recent wartime damage to historical assets. The initiative seeks to turn wartime experiences into practical conservation strategies, focusing on documenting historical memory, strengthening social resilience and improving international mechanisms for protecting cultur-

al heritage during conflicts, IRNA reported. Darabi said cultural heritage had become a "subject of war" during what he described as the "third imposed war," as he addressed experts, researchers and cultural officials at the event titled "Post-war Requirements: Protection and Restoration of Cultural Heritage." He said attacks on Iran's cultural and historical assets had caused material and intangible losses, with 149 historical sites and museums, including five UNESCO-listed sites, affected. At the same time, he said, cultural resilience and public participation demonstrated that heritage remained a source of national cohesion and identity even during crises. "Cultural heritage is not only a collection of historical monuments; it is part of a society's collective memory and social capital," Darabi said. "Even in the most difficult circumstances, it can preserve unity, strengthen resilience and renew hope."

He said the ministry's responsibility was to expand specialized knowledge, develop practical protection frameworks and record Iran's experience in managing heritage during emergencies. The first pre-event is part of a broader program of 12 academic gatherings planned throughout the year with the participation of cultural institutions, research bodies and scientific organizations to create a coordinated national approach to heritage protection. Darabi said recent conflicts had underscored the need to examine the two-way relationship between war and heritage. "The question is whether heritage influences war and its dynamics, or whether war shapes heritage," he said, adding that Iran's experience showed cultural activity continued even under severe pressure. He pointed to historical examples, including the establishment of heritage institutions during the Iran-Iraq War and the registration of the ancient Khorramabad archaeological site on the UNESCO World Heritage List during the recent 12-day conflict, alongside the approval of Iran's national cultural heritage strategy.

Darabi criticized the international protection system for failing to provide effective safeguards for heritage during conflicts and called for reforms to strengthen preventive and deterrent mechanisms.

"When some states disregard their obligations under international conventions and institutions remain only observers, Iran must take an active role in improving global heritage protection frameworks," he said. Drawing lessons from South Korea's post-war reconstruction, Darabi said rebuilding heritage required more than restoring damaged structures. He highlighted five key lessons: Preserving historical records before reconstruction, conducting detailed assessments before restoration, engaging younger generations through new technologies, transforming damaged sites into cultural and economic opportunities, and preserving selected war scars as historical evidence. He said tools such as three-dimensional scanning, drones, photogrammetry, digital twins, artificial intelligence and virtual reality could help safeguard and document heritage for future generations. "Real reconstruction is not only about building new structures," Darabi said. "Nations recover when they rebuild their cities while also restoring confidence in the future, respect for the past and their historical memory"

Indonesia seeks broader cultural exchanges with Iran



Arts & Culture Desk

Indonesia's Culture Minister Fadli Zon called for expanded cultural exchanges with Tehran during a meeting with Iran's representative at the 11th BRICS Culture Ministers' Meeting in Bhopal, India, on Saturday, urging a renewed push to deepen ties in literature, cinema and heritage cooperation. Zon said his understanding of Iran's rich civilization was shaped by a previous visit to the country, praising the hospitality of the Iranian people and describing cultural relations between the two nations as "always at a good level." "Today, we need to rebuild, strengthen and expand these relations with a new outlook suited to current circumstances," Zon said, IRNA wrote. The Indonesian minister expressed interest in increasing his country's participation in cultural programs with Iran, particularly the Tehran International Book Fair, which he described as an opportunity to further connect the two countries through publishing and literature.



Indonesia's Culture Minister Fadli Zon (R) gives a gift to Iran's Deputy Culture Minister Mohsen Javadi during a meeting in Bhopal, India, on August 8, 2026.

● IRNA

During the meeting with Mohsen Javadi, Iran's deputy culture minister for cultural affairs and the country's representative at the BRICS gathering, officials also discussed joint film productions, cooperation on preserving and restoring historical heritage, and expanding collaboration in tangible and intangible cultural industries. The two-day BRICS Culture Ministers' Meeting opened in Bhopal on August 8 under the theme "Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability." The event brings together culture officials from BRICS member states to discuss cultural cooperation frameworks. The BRICS cultural meeting runs through August 9, ahead of the group's 18th leaders' summit scheduled for mid-September in New Delhi.