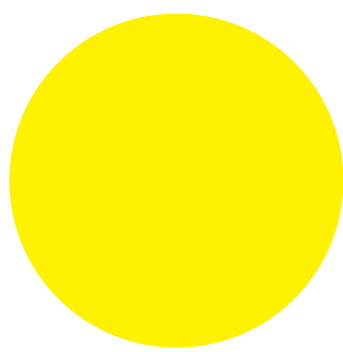


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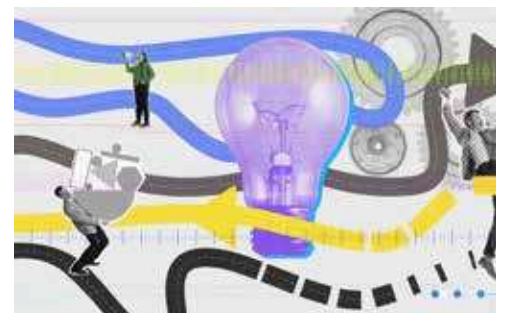


President Masoud Pezeshkian delivers a speech at the 21st Shahid Rajaei Festival in Tehran on August 26, 2026.
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Sanctions, economic warfare and need to manage consumption



By **Mohammad Eslami**
Head of the Atomic Energy
Organization of Iran

OPINION
EXCLUSIVE

The US objective behind all sanctions is more specifically to force Iran to surrender and seize control of the country. Their ultimate goal, after taking control of and subjugating the country, is to break Iran up. They are pursuing the same "Greater Middle East" plan that they set in motion nearly two decades ago. The Americans sought to turn the territory stretching from Israel's borders to the Indian Ocean into small countries locked in conflict with one another, with rulers of their own choosing. Because in the American mindset, democracy means following American dictates. Likewise, peace and freedom, in their view, mean safeguarding US security and interests. The new economic sanctions do not pursue any objective beyond what they have sought to achieve over the past 30 to 40 years. However, the key point is that these measures have psychological and lo-

calized effects within Iran. One example is the value of the rial against the dollar. The value of a country's national currency is linked to the wealth of a nation, its achievements, political stability, social stability and a productive economy that expands the country's gross domestic product. Yet perhaps Iran is the only country where the value of its national currency has no connection whatsoever with its wealth and achievements. As can be seen, through a psychological operation, the dollar exchange rate is being set via Telegram channels from rooms in other countries. If all these rooms are traced, the trail leads back to the same rooms in Israel and foreign intelligence services — the very people seeking to put additional pressure on the Iranian people. Therefore, the way to deal with this new situation is to manage conditions properly. In 2018, the United States said it had concluded that military and cyber measures were not the appropriate means of confronting Iran and instead opted for economic warfare, an approach it had already tested. Through measures accompanied by psychological opera-

tions, they reduced the value of the national currency by 30% overnight. The US calculated that repeating the move several more times would cause the rial to collapse, prompting people to take to the streets and ultimately overthrow the government. Now they have gone back to the same option and want to target the Islamic Republic's legitimacy and popular acceptance. The depreciation of the rial in these conditions is a psychological issue and has absolutely no mathematical or economic basis. Under these circumstances, consumption must be managed effectively. Doing so would eliminate much of the artificial demand in the market. As artificial and emotional demand subsides, market fluctuations and instability will also ease. Today, everyone must stand united and manage consumption so that, by making use of what is available and within our current capabilities, without increasing demand, the upward trend in the dollar exchange rate can be contained on its own. Sanctions remain the most important tool the United States has used to undermine the Islamic Republic's pop-

ular acceptance. When sanctions are imposed, official channels for financial transactions and exchanges are disrupted, forcing activity into unofficial channels. These channels are vulnerable to abuse and carry a greater risk of corruption. The aim is to push transactions into such channels and then use allegations of corruption to undermine the government's legitimacy and popular acceptance. The tools employed by Iran's adversaries go beyond missiles and bombs. Their broader objective is to destabilize and ultimately bring down society. When the United States fails to achieve its objectives through military means, the US president resorts to insults against the Iranian people, their history and their civilization. Economic warfare is also intended to further increase pressure on the Iranian people and push those under economic strain toward protests and impulsive, unlawful actions. Such methods have already been tested and failed to produce the desired results. Today, as well, the vigilance of the Iranian people and measures taken by officials would ensure that they fail again.

Iran approach is to resolve issues through negotiations: *Pezeshkian*

'US will achieve nothing via economic pressure'



President Masoud Pezeshkian delivers a speech at the 21st Shahid Rajaei Festival in Tehran on August 26, 2026.
● president.ir

at the same time, we have stood firm against economic pressure as we have done so far, and we will continue to stand firm," Pezeshkian said during a meeting at the Central Bank of Iran. The Tuesday night meeting came after the US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent laid out plans for the "economic asphyxiation" of Iran, warning of dire consequences for countries that do not join the campaign. During the meeting, the president reviewed the latest monetary, foreign-exchange and financial indicators with Economy Minister Ali Madanizadeh,

Central Bank Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati and a group of prominent university economists.

He underlined that the United States would achieve nothing with its new round of sanctions. "With the measures that the government's economic sectors have foreseen, America will not achieve anything with economic pressure at this stage, just as it was unable to achieve anything in the war," Pezeshkian said.

"Just as America was unable to accomplish anything during the war, despite the bravery of the armed forces and the support and backing of the people, it will not be able to accomplish anything through economic pressure at this stage either," he said.

Economists at the meeting pre-

sented their views and proposals on how to confront trade barriers and manage the new economic conditions, as well as on financial and budgetary policies, monetary and foreign-exchange policies, trade and economic exchanges, management of enterprises and other related issues.

During a separate meeting on Wednesday, the Iranian president said that Iran has demonstrated its readiness and ability to fight when necessary, but stressed that war is not always the answer and that the country could overcome challenges through "prudence and thought."

"The people showed that if necessary, they will fight, they can and they will not back down; but war is not always the solution. We can get through

this path with prudence and thought," Pezeshkian said.

Pezeshkian described the recent memorandum of understanding signed with the US in Pakistan as a source of pride for the Islamic Republic of Iran, saying global assessments had identified Iran as the winner of the confrontation.

"In all global analyses, Iran has been recognized as the winner of this field," he said.

He said assessments around the world had predicted that Iran should have collapsed several times, but that the country had remained standing.

"All the analyses in the world were that Iran should have fallen several times, but we have stood firm with strength and, through solidarity, empathy and authority, we will continue on the path," he said.

International Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian said the government's approach is to reach understanding and resolve issues through inter-

action and negotiations, while maintaining a firm position against economic pressure.

"Our approach is understanding and resolving issues through interaction and negotiation, but

Deputy FM details temporary Hormuz arrangement with Oman

International Desk

Iran's deputy foreign minister for legal and international affairs detailed a temporary arrangement between the Islamic Republic and Oman concerning the Strait of Hormuz, while asserting that reopening of the waterway hinges on realization of Tehran's demands.

Remarking on Tuesday, Kazem Gharibabadi detailed the arrangement that he identified as tentative pending establishment of a "permanent route" during further negotiations between the two sides that are expected to take between 30 and 60 days.

Iran closed the chokepoint following the launch of the latest bout of unprovoked American-Israeli aggression against the country on February 28.

The Islamic Republic and the United States agreed on a 60-day reopening period as part of a Pakistan-mediated memorandum of understanding in June, but American violations forced Tehran to reestablish the closure.



● ISNA

Tehran has conditioned reopening of the waterway on realization of a number of prerequisites, including cessation of American interference in regional maritime traffic.

According to Gharibabadi, under the arrangement involving Iran and Oman, the southern route of the Strait of Hormuz will be closed. As part of its violations of the MoU, the US would try to illegally escort vessels through the southern route that runs along the Omani coastline.

Oman has accepted the closure, the official said, adding that the move would be communicated to the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

Under the arrangement, "vessels

entering the Persian Gulf will use Iranian waters, while vessels leaving the Persian Gulf will use Omani territorial waters," the senior diplomat stated. "Vessels would pass through Iranian waters in both directions," he added.

He described the arrangement as functioning "like a two-way highway," with a total width of approximately seven nautical miles.

Gharibabadi stressed that the arrangement agreed with Oman does not mean that the Strait of Hormuz will be reopened immediately. He said the issue of the arrangement and the question of reopening the strait were separate matters.

The official underlined that the waterway will remain closed if Iran's requirements for its reopening are not met.

He said the demands include the complete lifting of the illegal economic blockade targeting the Islamic Republic, durable cessation of aggression on all fronts, including Lebanon, and clarification of the situation concerning the blockade of Yemen.

Envoy calls on countries to condemn US 'unilateral coercive measures'



Gholamhossein Darzi
● IRNA

International Desk

Iran called on governments to reject and condemn the extraterritorial application of US unilateral coercive measures, warning that Washington is seeking to force other states to subordinate their sovereign rights and lawful policies to its demands.

Gholamhossein Darzi, Iran's deputy UN ambassador, made the appeal at a Security Council session on conflict and food security, a day after the US Treasury announced a new campaign of "economic terrorism" against Iran.

Darzi said the latest measures, together with US actions against Iranian commercial shipping, amount to an effort to impose an economic blockade on Iran and sharply condemned Washington for using trade, food and energy as instruments of pressure, Press TV reported.

"We call on all states to reject and de-

nounce the extraterritorial application of unilateral coercive measures by the United States regime," Darzi said.

He referred to the measures announced on Aug. 24 by the US Treasury secretary as the "so-called Operation Economic Outcast," saying the "unlawful measures ... are seeking to impose an economic blockade on brave Iranian people".

He hit out at Washington for "weaponizing food, energy, trade and access to essential goods as instruments of pressure and warfare," and said they cannot be justified under the pretext of security or freedom of navigation.

The Iranian envoy said the US measures violate fundamental principles including sovereign equality, non-intervention and freedom of navigation, while also seeking to circumvent responsibilities entrusted to the Security Council under the UN Charter.

Darzi linked the economic campaign to a wider US maritime confrontation with Iran, saying Washington has demonstrated an "utter disregard for international law."

"The US maritime blockade of Iran, and attacks on Iranian commercial vessels in international waters constitute grave violations of Iran's sovereignty, freedom of navigation and international law of the sea," he said.

He cited a US Central Command statement from Aug. 12 saying American forces had redirected 59 commercial vessels, disabled three and boarded two.

Iranian strikes inflicted billions in damage to US intel assets

International Desk

Iranian missile and drone attacks have inflicted damage on US intelligence posts and surveillance hardware in the Middle East that is more extensive than any destruction America's spy agencies have endured and will cost billions of dollars to repair, according to four people with knowledge of the matter.

Since CIA was established in 1947, it has never experienced attacks on its facilities and equipment on a similar scale, the officials told NBC News, Iranian missiles and drones hit intelligence sites as well as conventional military targets, including a CIA office in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and an intelligence center in Iraq's Sulaymaniyah Province.

Radar systems and other surveillance equipment were also struck, along with fixed electronic intelligence stations, satellite communications



The photo shows a US army radar of THAAD system destroyed in an Iranian attack in Jordan.
● militarywatchmagazine.com

The financial toll is enormous, with the American Enterprise Institute estimating that infrastructure repairs alone could exceed \$5 billion, excluding damaged equipment and weapons.

The US Department of War requested \$67 billion in emergency funding in late July, including \$18.2 billion to replenish Patriot, Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD), Standard Missile-6 (SM-6) and other advanced missiles.

The cost of the wider war has also been staggering, with Bloomberg reporting that the US fired 13,629 munitions at Iranian targets between February and April.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Steel capacity expanded as Gilan plant opens new development phase

Economy Desk

Iran inaugurated a major expansion at the Gilan Steel Complex on Wednesday, adding 1 million tons to its annual production capacity, as the government moves to bolster domestic industrial output amid ongoing disruptions to the country's metals sector.

Mohammad Jafar Qaempanah, executive deputy to the president, officially launched the third steel production furnace at the Gilan facility, which is designed to produce a range of hot-rolled and cold-rolled steel sheets. The complex now has a nominal capacity of 2.5 million tons per year, with the new development raising that figure to 3.5 million tons.

The expansion is also expected to create 150 new jobs, adding to the plant's existing workforce of 1,200 employees. Speaking at the ceremony, Qaempanah emphasized the administration's commitment to supporting industrial growth. "Supporting investment and strengthening production capacities are key priorities for the government in achieving economic growth and creating sustainable employment opportunities," he said.

"The implementation of development projects in basic and leading industries, in addition to increasing production capacity, will pave the way for activating a chain of economic and industrial units and strengthening employment in different parts of the country, and the government supports this process," he said.

At the ceremony, Hadi Hagshenas, governor of Gilan Province, highlighted the private sector's role in the project, stating that the expansion reflects the province's industrial potential. He affirmed that provincial authorities would fully support productive investments and initiatives that contribute to output growth, job creation, and the strengthening of Gilan's economy.

According to ISNA, the development includes a preheating furnace for hot-rolled sheet production and a revamp of the hot-rolling line.

The expansion comes at a critical time for Iran's steel sector. Iran, which has long ranked among the world's leading steel producers with annual production capacity exceeding 30 million tons, dropped out of the June top-10 rankings after Vietnam increased output by 27.5% year on year to 2.6 million tons, according to Steel Radar.



Mohammad Jafar Qaempanah, executive deputy to the president, inaugurates the third steel production furnace at the Gilan Steel Complex in the Rasht Industrial Zone, Gilan Province, on August 26, 2026.

● ISNA

Recent conflicts, risks to steel plants and infrastructure, as well as logistics and energy constraints, have caused major disruptions to Iran's steel industry. Iran's two largest steelmakers, Mobarakeh Steel Company and Khuzestan Steel Company, sustained damage during the US-Israeli war that began in late February. Parliamentary officials said in June that reconstruction work at Mobarakeh was progressing much faster than initially expected.

Iran's installed steelmaking capacity currently stands at about 55 million tons per year. Actual annual production had been around 32 million tons over the past two years, but with an estimated 10 million tons of capacity temporarily out of service, output is now projected to reach about 25 million tons by the end of the current Iranian year (March 21, 2027).



Pharma expansion inaugurated

In a separate development, a pharmaceutical expansion was also inaugurated at the Behvazan Pharmaceutical Company, including a new production line for injectable diabetes medications. The plant's nominal capacity for various drugs stands at 125 million units annually, while the new injectable pen

line adds 8 million units per year.

Teymour Pourheidari, head of Gilan's Industry, Mining and Trade Organization, said the company produces respiratory sprays, semi-solid products, blood sugar and weight management items, and disinfectants. He put the company's annual production capacity at 150 million units, with 520 direct jobs created.

Tehran, Berlin explore practical ways to revive economic ties



Head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce Sammad Hassanzadeh (r) meets German Ambassador Axel Dittmann in Tehran, on August 26, 2026.

● IRIB

Economy Desk

Iran's Chamber of Commerce called for preserving channels between the private sectors of Iran and Germany on Wednesday, while Germany's ambassador to Tehran said he was ready to pursue practical ways to expand economic relations between the two countries.

Sammad Hassanzadeh, head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, made the remarks during a meeting with German Ambassador Axel Dittmann in Tehran, highlighting trade development, technology transfer and stronger private-sector ties as key areas of focus in the chamber's international relations, according to IRIB.

Hassanzadeh expressed hope that the arrival of Germany's new ambassador would provide an opportunity to plan for stronger economic ties, pointing to Iran's economic potential and Germany's industrial capabilities.

He said Iran-Germany relations, particularly in the industrial sector, had a significant history but had weakened in recent years. In previous periods, he said, Iranian

companies had maintained a strong presence at specialized trade fairs in Germany and bilateral interactions had developed.

Hassanzadeh also pointed to the two countries' history of educational cooperation, saying a technical school established in Tabriz with German cooperation remained active and had produced many Iranian engineers.

The head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce said the chamber was working to expand foreign economic relations through trade development and technology transfer and sought to increase Iran's international economic ties by using the capacity of joint chambers of commerce.

"Even under the most difficult circumstances, we should not destroy the bridges of communication, and we need to make coordinated plans to strengthen ties between the private sectors of Iran and Germany," he said.

According to Eurostat data, total trade between Iran and the 27-member EU fell 26% year-on-year to €952 million in January-June 2026, from €1.287 billion in the same period of 2025. Germany remained Iran's largest trading

partner among EU members, accounting for 32% of total Iran-EU trade.

Bilateral trade between Iran and Germany dropped 36% to €304 million in the first half of 2026, with German exports to Iran plunging 41% to €212 million and German imports from Iran declining 18% to €92 million.

Germany ready for practical solutions

Ambassador Dittmann, speaking at the meeting, referred to expert-level discussions in Germany on various industries, including pharmaceuticals and automotive, and noted that reliable capacity exists in many sectors of Iran's domestic market.

Dittmann also highlighted the importance of travel and exchanges between Iranian and German citizens for developing relations, describing Iran as a country with vast resources and a large market, which makes it significant for Germany.

"We must reach appropriate solutions through dialogue and create the conditions for expanding relations. We are ready to find practical solutions to develop economic relations between Iran and Germany," Dittmann said.

Iran's Chamber of Commerce called for preserving channels between the private sectors of Iran and Germany on Wednesday, while Germany's ambassador to Tehran said he was ready to pursue practical ways to expand economic relations between the two countries.

Iran Air to resume direct flights to Kuala Lumpur after more than decade

Economy Desk

Iran's flag carrier, Iran Air, announced plans to launch direct passenger flights to Kuala Lumpur starting November 1, marking the airline's return to Southeast Asia after more than a decade of absence from the route. Captain Taher Abdolhay, CEO of Iran Air, said on Wednesday that the airline has been shifting its focus toward East Asia over the past ten years and has now finalized preparations for entry into the Malaysian market.

"Barring any unforeseen circumstances, we have planned to operate the first flight to East Asia, including Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, after more



● IRNA

than a decade starting on November 1," Abdolhay said. He noted that Iran Air has conducted cargo flights to China and Macau over the past two weeks, adding that passenger services would

soon follow.

"Passenger flights will begin shortly, and we will also try to resume services to other previous destinations such as Beijing and Bangkok," he said.

Iran, Gazprom discuss strategic gas cooperation



Economy Desk

Iran's Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali and National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) CEO Saeed Tavakoli met Gazprom CEO Alexey Miller to discuss implementation of a strategic memorandum of understanding on natural gas cooperation, as Tehran and Moscow move to advance a 30-year gas supply agreement signed last year. "The parties discussed potential cooperation in the gas sector," TASS reported.

Jalali met Miller at Gazprom's headquarters in St. Petersburg during a visit to attend international industry and energy events, the official IRNA news agency reported. The meeting followed multiple rounds of technical talks between representatives of the two countries' gas industries aimed at putting the strategic cooperation framework into practice, with the two sides reporting positive results.

The National Iranian Gas Company and Gazprom

signed a 30-year deal last June to transfer Russian gas to Iran. Under the agreement, Iran will receive up to 55 billion cubic meters of gas a year through a new pipeline that Moscow plans to build across the Caspian Sea.

Iranian officials have said the Russian supply would help address domestic gas shortages, strengthen Iran's gas export capacity on a sustainable basis and turn the country into a regional gas hub. Iran holds the world's second-largest natural gas reserves after Russia, with around 34 trillion cubic meters.

Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad said in July, after meeting Russian Energy Minister Sergei Tsivilev in Tehran, that negotiations on a gas trade agreement between Iran and Russia had advanced, with the two sides reaching agreement on the main provisions of the final contract.

In uncertain world, power to choose is competitive advantage



By Ehsan Mohebbi Nazar
Economist and strategy consultant

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Corporate forecasting is a strange business. Companies spend vast sums predicting markets, demand, technology and the broader economy, yet many of the shifts that have reshaped entire industries over the past two decades appeared nowhere in anyone's five-year plan in a clear fashion. New technology platforms, supply-chain disruptions and sudden changes in consumer behaviour were rarely anticipated with much precision.

This is not simply a story about bad forecasting. It is a story about the limits of forecasting itself. Beyond a certain horizon, the future cannot be known in advance, regardless of how sophisticated the model or how extensive the data. Once that is accepted, the traditional model of strategy — predict, plan, commit — begins to look less like discipline and more like a comforting assumption.

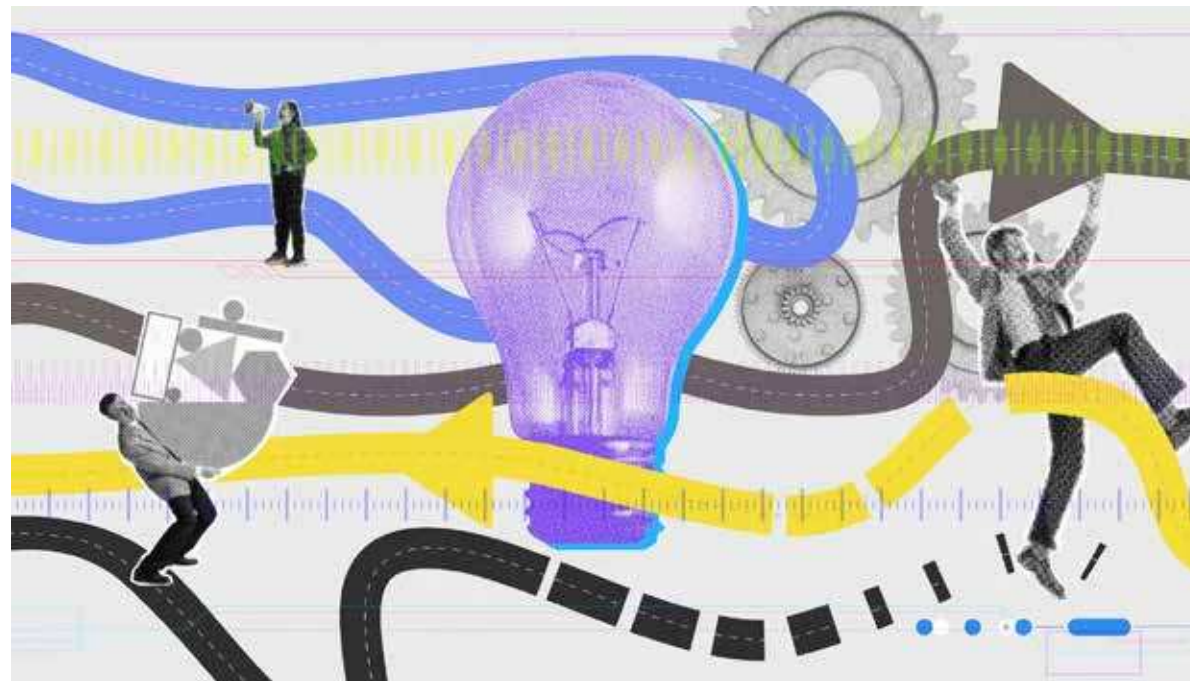
The more useful response is not to abandon planning, but to change its purpose. In an increasingly uncertain world, strategy should not be about predicting the future with greater precision. It should be about building the capabilities, financial flexibility and decision-making systems that allow an organisation to benefit from several possible futures.

Consider two companies facing uncertainty over which of several emerging technologies will dominate their industry. One attempts to identify the winner and commits heavily to it. The other makes smaller investments across several alternatives, develops the necessary capabilities and waits for evidence before making a larger commitment.

The second company has not necessarily predicted the future better. It has simply preserved more choices. In a genuinely uncertain environment, that ability can be more valuable than being right at the outset.

Capital should create options

This principle has important implications for capital allocation. Most investment committees assess projects through expected cash flows, net present value, internal rates of return and payback periods. These measures re-



main essential, but they can overlook another source of value: the future opportunities created by an investment. A modest investment in an emerging technology may generate little immediate financial return. Yet it could provide access to knowledge, talent, intellectual property, customers or infrastructure that becomes highly valuable if the technology succeeds.

The investment is therefore more than a project. It can be an option on a future market.

This suggests a question that should sit alongside the conventional investment case: What choices will this investment allow us to make later?

That does not justify funding every speculative idea. It requires discipline in identifying investments that create meaningful future choices rather than simply consuming capital.

Companies that evaluate every investment exclusively through near-term returns may, almost by design, underinvest in the experiments and capabilities that create tomorrow's opportunities. The cost of that mistake often becomes visible only when a competitor is better positioned to act.

Harder problem of leadership

Capital discipline is only part of the challenge. The harder problem is deciding how to lead when there is no clear answer. Uncertainty creates two familiar failures. Some organisations commit too early, investing heavily

before they understand the underlying economics. Others wait for certainty that never arrives, allowing competitors to learn and move ahead.

Neither response is satisfactory. The more valuable leadership capability is the ability to act without requiring certainty. A limited experiment, pilot project or small market entry can generate information while keeping exposure manageable. If the evidence is encouraging, the organisation can scale. If it is not, it can withdraw before the consequences become material.

This also requires distinguishing between reversible and irreversible decisions. A decision that can easily be reversed should generally require less evidence and can be made quickly. A decision that commits substantial capital or fundamentally changes the organisation deserves considerably more scrutiny.

The amount of certainty a decision requires should therefore depend not simply on its importance, but on the cost of being wrong and the ability to recover.

From prediction to choice

Taken together, these ideas suggest a different approach to strategy. Organisations can use experimentation to generate information, use that information to narrow their strategic choices, and commit capital when the evidence becomes stronger.

Strategy, capital allocation and leader-

ship must move together. An organisation cannot claim to value optionality while its investment processes reward only immediate returns. Nor can it create valuable options if its leaders are unwilling to act until uncertainty disappears.

The objective is not to remain flexible indefinitely. Optionality has value because it allows an organisation to delay irreversible commitment until it has better information, while still moving quickly enough to learn and capture opportunities.

This changes the meaning of long-term strategy. A five-year plan need not be a confident prediction of where a company will be. It can instead identify the capabilities, relationships and financial flexibility that will allow the company to succeed across several plausible futures.

Uncertainty, in this sense, is not merely a risk to be reduced. For organisations capable of responding when the picture becomes clearer, it can become a source of competitive advantage.

The strongest strategists of the next decade may not be those who can see furthest into the future. They may be those who understand which decisions to make now, which to postpone, and which capabilities to build while the future remains unclear.

When the future cannot be predicted, the smartest strategy may not be to make a better forecast. It may be to preserve the power to choose.



Consider two companies facing uncertainty over which of several emerging technologies will dominate their industry. One attempts to identify the winner and commits heavily to it. The other makes smaller investments across several alternatives, develops the necessary capabilities and waits for evidence before making a larger commitment. The second company has not necessarily predicted the future better. It has simply preserved more choices. In a genuinely uncertain environment, that ability can be more valuable than being right at the outset.



Emperor's wardrobe malfunction



The illustration shows US President Donald Trump beside a picture of a taco — a food item that mirrors the catching acronym that stands for “Trump Always Chickens Out.”

● THE TIMES



Countries targeted by Trump's tariffs, for the most part, have begun to understand his tactics: Threats are usually designed to create leverage by intimidating the other party, and they are not necessarily intended to be carried out. Often, these threats have been made without serious consideration of collateral damage or the full range of responses in the other country's tool kit. The best recent example of that is Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz. A close second is China's export controls on critical minerals in response to Trump's tariffs. Both Iran and China pushed back in ways Trump apparently did not expect, which has forced him to recalculate.



A protester holds a sign in November 2025 as the US Supreme Court hears arguments on President Donald Trump's tariffs.

● BILL CLARK/CQ ROLL CALL



By William Alan Reinsch
Former president of the
US' National Foreign Trade
Council

OPINION

We are 18 months into the administration, and it is now possible to draw some conclusions about how Trump's trade policies are faring with other nations. The short answer is not as bad as you might think, but the important part of the story is the learning curve that has occurred and how Trump's targets have adapted as they have begun to better understand his tactics. Other countries have learned that while the emperor may still have some clothes, he is experiencing serious wardrobe malfunctions.

There was a joke going around during the 2016 presidential campaign that Democrats take Trump literally but not seriously, while Republicans take him seriously but not literally. Of course, now everyone has to take him seriously, but experience suggests the Republicans turned out to be more right than the Democrats. Other countries are learning that lesson as well. What he says matters, but his threats are not always translated into reality. His tendency to back off his threats or scale down his actions has led to the joke of his second term: the TACO — Trump Always Chickens Out. That doesn't happen every time, but it has occurred often enough that other countries have stopped panicking, as they did when the Liberation Day tariffs were announced in April 2025, and have instead developed more refined responses. Similarly, the financial markets have begun to take his comments in stride, and reaction to some of his latest announcements, like the 50 percent tariff on Canadian imports, has been restrained.

Targeted countries, for the most part, have begun to understand his tactics: Threats are usually designed to create leverage by intimidating the other party, and they are not necessarily intended to be carried out. Often, these threats have been made without serious consideration of collateral damage or the full range of responses in the other country's tool kit. It is a bit like using GPS to plot a route for your travel, and then when you make a wrong turn, waiting while “recalculating” flashes on your screen and the system recommends a different path. The best recent example of that is Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz. A close second is China's

export controls on critical minerals in response to Trump's tariffs. Both Iran and China pushed back in ways Trump apparently did not expect, which has forced him to recalculate. Countries that have not openly pushed back have usually adopted a two-level strategy of surface acquiescence coupled with under-the-table subterfuge or delay. They sign agreements, allowing for Trump victory statements, but the actual text is more often an unenforceable framework than a binding legal document. That leaves plenty of room for reinterpretation and questionable compliance. Countries have sometimes been explicit about that, announcing after the agreement that they had not agreed to what Trump claimed or that they would not be able to comply. Others have conveniently forgotten their commitments and gone about their usual business. A CSIS analysis last year by Victor Cha and Andy Lim explored the loose ends of the agreement with South Korea. Since the agreements, signed or not, are not legally binding or enforceable — and after the Supreme Court's decision last February invalidating the Liberation Day tariffs, new signings have slowed down — the administration's main response to failure or delay is more tariff threats, which simply starts the cycle over again.

This has happened with China, India, and most recently Brazil and Canada. When Trump is unhappy with the other country's response or thinks the negotiations are taking too long, he threatens more tariffs or launches new investigations that lead to more tariffs. In the case of Brazil, he carried out his threats, although with so many exceptions, the impact will be small. With Canada, he just backed off from his latest threat of 50 percent tariffs. CSIS scholars Christopher Gundermann, Hugh Grant-Chapman, and Diego Marroquín Bitar have published an excellent analysis of those tariffs.

Adding to the confusion are the tariff threats that were not credible from the beginning and were quickly forgotten — the most recent two being his threat against Canada for allowing smoke from its wildfires to drift across the US East Coast and his threatening Spain with tariffs over its lack of cooperation with his war with Iran — and actions that end up amounting to much less than they initially appeared. The paused 50 percent Canada tariffs, for example, affect less than 5 percent of Canada's imports, and one reliable estimate of the current actual average tariff rate is 11 percent, far less than threatened. Incidents like these have taught other countries that Trump

generally uses only one of the tools in his diplomatic toolbox — tariff threats — whether or not they are appropriate or the best choice in each case, and also that he does not often follow through on his more extreme threats.

None of this is particularly surprising. Trump is trying to reorient the trading system to suit his concept of what is good for the United States, and his abrupt changes have created a predictable path: initial panic, followed by whining and complaining, negotiations, and then work-arounds designed to mitigate the effects of his threats and what has been negotiated. The result is a new equilibrium that accommodates some changes, pays lip service to other demands, and attempts to maintain as much of the status quo ante as possible. Trump, meanwhile, seems to tolerate the TACO joke in the belief that even when he backs off, he still ends up better than where he started. Saying the emperor has no clothes goes too far. There clearly have been wardrobe malfunctions along the way, but, as in the fable, other countries are growing adept at pretending while the parade passes by.

The article was first published by the Center for Strategic and International Studies.



World champions to headline Iran's wrestling charge at Asian Games

Sports Desk

Reigning world super-heavyweight champions Amirhossein Zare' and Amin Mirzazadeh will spearhead Iran's freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling squads, respectively, at the upcoming Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games. With the wrestling competition at the multi-sport event, which will kick off on Sept. 30, and the following World Championships – starting Oct. 24 in Astana, Kazakhstan – separated by less than a month, the Iranian Wrestling Federation has opted for different lineups at the two major tournaments. Despite global stars Hassan Yazdani, Kamran Qasempour, Rahman Amouzad, Saeid Esmaeili and Mohammad-Hadi Saravi all being left out of the equation, the two rosters will still be rich in

international pedigree for the four-day continental showpiece at Nagoya's Inae Sports Center. Zare', who will chase a second successive 125kg gold at the Asian Games, is one of three Iranian wrestlers across the two disciplines who will also compete at the World Championships. Joining Zare' in the freestyle squad is three-time world silver medalist Mohammad Nokhodi, who will be among the favorites in the 86kg contest in Nagoya before dropping to 79kg for the Senior Worlds. Former world U23 bronze medalist Ali Momeni will compete in the 57kg category, while Abbas Ebrahimzadeh will aim for a second continental medal of his career after winning bronze at last year's Asian Championships. Two-time world bronze medalist Younes Ema-



World champion Amirhossein Zare', pictured during a training session in Tehran on Aug. 16, will compete in the freestyle wrestling 125kg event at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games.

● IAWFIR

titles. Gholamreza Farrokhi is the third Iranian wrestler set to feature at both the Asian Games and the World Championships. The 23-year-old will be the wrestler to watch in the 87kg contest in Nagoya before putting his world 82kg title on the line in Astana. A glorious 2025 season saw Farrokhi post an impressive 17-0 record, including 11 technical-superiority wins, across different tournaments, collecting gold at the Senior and U23 World Championships as well as the Islamic Solidarity Games. His performances earned him United World

Wrestling's recognition as the Greco-Roman Breakout Performer of the Year.

However, Farrokhi will still need a surge in form at the Asian Games after suffering a shock 11-4 loss to Kyrgyzstan's Asan Zhanyshov in the 87kg final at the Asian Championships. Three-time Asian champion Mahdi Bali completes the Iranian six-man Greco-Roman squad, eyeing glory in the 97kg category in his first international appearance in three years. Yielding a record 155 medals, wrestling has been Iran's most prolific sport in Asian Games history, accounting for 74 of the country's 192 gold medals across all sports and editions. Iran bagged five golds, four silvers and one bronze across 12 freestyle and Greco-Roman categories in Hangzhou 2022.

mi will also go after back-to-back Asian Games titles in the 74kg category, while Olympic bronze medalist and world silver winner Amirali Azarpira, who fell short against Yazdani in the battle for a Senior Worlds spot, will be the wrestler to

beat in the 97kg event.

Aiming for solace

Unlike Zare', Mirzazadeh was denied a chance to defend his world title after being stunned by world U23 champion Fardin Heydari in the domestic 130kg trials, and noth-

ing short of a second Asian Games triumph would provide some consolation for the Olympic bronze medalist. Elsewhere in the Greco-Roman contests, Mohammad-Javad Rezaei will look to improve on his silver-winning run

at June's Asian Championships when he gets his 72kg campaign underway in Nagoya. Alireza Abdevali will compete in the 77kg event, where the 22-year-old will go after his maiden senior international gold after winning two world U20

FIVB Volleyball Boys' U17 World Championship: Pakistan rivalry renewed as Iran eyes last-four spot



Iranian middle-blocker Mohammadreza Zibaei (6) hits a spike during a last-16 win against Chinese Taipei at the FIVB Volleyball Boys' U17 World Championship in Doha, Qatar, on Aug. 25, 2026.

● VOLLEYBALL WORLD

Sports Desk

Iran and Pakistan are set for a fourth encounter in a year – their second in seven days – when they square off in an all-Asian quarterfinal at the FIVB Volleyball Boys' U17 World Championship in Doha today. Iran defeated Chinese Taipei in straight sets (25-18, 25-19, 25-21), while Pakistan pulled off a remarkable fightback to beat Egypt in a five-set thriller (17-25, 21-25, 25-18, 25-15, 15-12) in the round of 16 on Tuesday. Captain and opposite spiker Sina Hazrati topped the scoring for Iran with 20 points, with outside hitter Arash Ashrafi adding 10, as Iran came out on top against the East Asian side – a semifinalist in the previous edition – for a second time in Doha, having also emerged victorious in straight sets in the pool phase. Having beaten Iran twice at

the Asian U16 Championship last year, Pakistan will chase a third win in four outings against its western neighbor, looking to make up for its comprehensive loss in Pool E on Friday. Pakistan came out on top against Iran in four sets in a second-round pool game at the Asian U16 event before rallying from two sets down to stun Arash Sadeqian's boys in the final in Nakhon Pathom, Thailand, last summer. Iran, however, avenged the two setbacks in style, with Hazrati and Ashrafi stealing the show with a game-high 16 points apiece to steer their team to a commanding 3-0 (25-23, 25-22, 25-18) triumph at the world showpiece. A global powerhouse in age-group volleyball, Iran will look to improve on its fifth-place finish at the inaugural world U17 event in 2024, where it defeated Belgium 3-2 in its fi-

nal classification match. The winner of today's game will face Argentina or Poland in the semifinals on Friday. In a repeat of the 2024 final in Sofia, Argentina defeated holders Italy 3-1 (25-20, 25-23, 20-25, 25-16) to advance, while Poland rallied from two sets down to edge Turkey 3-2 (22-25, 23-25, 25-20, 25-22, 15-9). Elsewhere in the round of 16, France came from behind to beat Spain 3-2 (23-25, 25-19, 25-16, 23-25, 15-10), setting up a quarterfinal clash against Romania, which overcame Tunisia 3-1 (25-16, 25-11, 23-25, 25-19). The stage is also set for an all-South American battle between Brazil and Venezuela for a place in the semifinals. Brazil made quick work of India, winning 25-17, 25-13 and 25-14, while Venezuela knocked out Bulgaria after delivering a stunning fightback to win 3-2 (28-30, 17-25, 25-19, 25-18, 15-12).

FIBA World Cup Asian qualifiers: Amini back in time for Iran's crunch doubleheader

Sports Desk

Mohammad Amini is all set for a comeback on the international stage after the young star rejoined Iran just days before Window 4 of the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2027 Asian qualifiers. Iran will resume its World Cup qualifying campaign against New Zealand in the second-round Group E opener in Pasay, Philippines, on Friday before taking on the Philippines two days later. The 21-year-old is expected to suit up for the continental powerhouse for the first time since the 2025 FIBA Asia Cup in Saudi Arabia, where Iran gave the country its first medal in the event in eight years by claiming bronze. He was unable to play in Iran's 79-73 victory over New Zealand in the third-place game due to a knee injury sustained in the semifinal against Australia, but there was no denying the impact he had through-

out the tournament. Amini averaged 14.6 points and 5.8 rebounds, with his best showing coming in the quarterfinals, when he posted a double-double with 30 points and 11 rebounds to lead his side to a 78-75 win over Chinese Taipei in a remarkable comeback. He was expected to carry over his fine



form into Window 1 of the World Cup qualifiers last November but did not play due to personal reasons. The former youth standout is now back in the fold. This time, he is bringing even more experience with him. A member of French club SLUC Nancy Basket for four years, Amini played for the Boston Celtics in the 2026 NBA Summer League last July. His return will make Team Iran even stronger despite the absence of Sina Vahedi, who continues his road to recovery after suffering an anterior cruciate ligament injury in the club scene last March. Amini is set to provide another mismatch in the backcourt given his 2.01-meter (6-foot-7) frame, adding more dynamism to a rotation that already features Sarem Jafari, Mobin Shekhi and Piter Girgoorian, among others. Iran is hoping to sustain its fine form after topping Group D with a 5-1 record in the first round.

Iran targets 17 athletics golds at Asian Para Games

Sports Desk

Iran is targeting 17 gold medals in athletics at the upcoming Aichi-Nagoya Asian Para Games, despite sending a smaller squad than at the previous edition due to the merger of classification classes, according to the

country's chief de mission. Ali-Asghar Hadizadeh said Iran will send 45 athletes to the multi-sport event, which will open on Oct. 18, including 20 women, with the number of competitors reduced compared with the previous edition fol-

lowing the consolidation of classes. "Despite this, we are predicting 17 gold medals at this edition," Hadizadeh told ISNA. He also highlighted the increased representation of women in Iran's athletics delegation, saying the team had sought to

combine medal ambitions with the development of women's athletics. "Although the National Paralympic Committee's policy for this edition is to focus on quality and achieve the best possible results, we have also prioritized the development of the sport among women alongside winning medals," he said. Iran bagged 51 athletics medals, including 17 golds, at the previous edition of the Games in Hangzhou, China.

National Handicrafts Exhibition opens in Ardabil



● IRNA

Iranica Desk

The 16th National Handicrafts Exhibition opened in Ardabil on Tuesday to mark Government Week (Aug. 24-30), featuring artists from 30 provinces at the Ardabil International Exhibition Center, located next to Shorabil Lake. The opening ceremony included cultural and artistic programs. Mohammad Afshar, deputy director of handicrafts at the Ardabil Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department, said at the opening ceremony that handicraft products from 50 fields are being showcased in 140 booths. He said the exhibition will run for four days through Friday, August 28, and visitors can tour the booths daily from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. Afshar said cultural programs

organized by the Mostazafin Foundation's cultural affairs department, as well as the participation of Basalam, which is holding educational workshops on marketing and promoting handicraft products online, are among the exhibition's side programs. He added that introducing and offering products made by handicraft artists and drawing public attention to the handicrafts sector are among the exhibition's main objectives. With a population of more than 1.3 million, Ardabil Province comprises 12 cities and is located in northwestern Iran, bordering East Azarbaijan, Zanjan and Gilan provinces as well as the Republic of Azerbaijan. Ardabil is considered one of Iran's prominent handicrafts centers. For generations, artists in different parts of the

province have created valuable handicrafts. More than 350 handicraft fields exist around the world, half of which are practiced in Iran. A total of 62 handicraft fields are practiced in Ardabil Province, making it one of the country's leading handicrafts centers. More than 30,000 handicraft artists officially work in 62 different fields across Ardabil Province. The province has exceptional potential among its artisans, while their national and international achievements demonstrate their considerable talent and capabilities. The handicrafts of every country represent an important part of its cultural, historical and social identity. Each form of handicraft is regarded not merely as a skill but also as part of a country's character and civilization.

Iranica Desk

The Fourth National Festival of Iran's Ethnic Groups and Nomadic Tribes opened Tuesday evening at Ghalamestan Park in Farsan, featuring dozens of booths offering handicrafts, souvenirs and local foods, along with artistic performances showcasing the culture, arts and traditions of Iran's ethnic communities to residents and tourists. The opening ceremony was attended by the minister of information and communications technology, representatives of Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province in the

Parliament, provincial officials and a number of enthusiasts of local culture, according to Shabestan News Agency. The director-general of the Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization said the festival began on August 25 and will continue through August 31 at Ghalamestan Park in Farsan. Heydar Sadeghi added that the participation of artists and cultural groups from different parts of the country provides an opportunity to showcase Iran's diverse cultural and artistic capabilities and strengthen

ties among its ethnic communities. He said the festival, in addition to introducing the customs, traditions and achievements of Iran's ethnic groups and nomadic tribes, can help raise awareness of the tourism and cultural potential of Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province at the national level and beyond the country's borders. Masoud Agashteh, executive secretary of the Fourth National Festival of Iran's Ethnic Groups and Nomadic Tribes, said a total of 170 booths have been set up for the event, offering handicrafts, traditional arts, souvenirs

and local foods to visitors. He added that 150 booths are dedicated to introducing and selling handicrafts and traditional artworks, while 20 booths feature local dishes and foods from different regions of the country. Referring to the participation of artistic groups in the cultural event, Agashteh said artists from Khuzestan, Lorestan and Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari provinces, along with other participants, will perform and introduce music, rituals and other cultural traditions from their respective regions

Farsan hosts colorful showcase of Iran's ethnic cultures



● IRNA

Ayneh Varzan village preserves rich legacy of history, craftsmanship

Iranica Desk

Located about 60 kilometers east of Tehran on the Firuzkuh Road, beyond the city of Damavand, Ayneh Varzan is a scenic village with a history stretching back around 2,000 years. The villagers speak Tati, and the village is known as "Ein Varzan" in the Tati language. Ayneh Varzan lies on the heights of the mountains to the north and extends toward the foothills to the south. The village has long benefited from its abundant, ever-flowing water, which has supported agriculture and turned the area into a lush and fertile region. Among the village's historic structures is Imamzadeh Abdullah, an octagonal mausoleum crowned with a conical dome and listed as a National Heritage Site of Iran. Built of stone, mortar and plaster, the structure dates to the late Mongol period. Its interior features square and star-shaped tilework dating to the eighth century AH and reflecting the



● mihmansho.com

architectural style of the Mongol era, according to chn.ir. A carved wooden cenotaph stands over the imamzadeh's grave. An inscription in Nastaliq script on its exterior indicates that it was made and installed during the Safavid period. The valuable old wooden door of the shrine is now preserved at the National Museum of Iran's Islamic-era

collection, providing another example of the village's long tradition of woodcarving. The shrine is oriented north to south, with its mihrab on the southern side. To its east is a footwear area and prayer hall dating to the Safavid period. Its decoration features turquoise tiles arranged in the Mongol style. A centuries-old plane tree

also stands in the courtyard of Imamzadeh Abdullah. Estimated to be between 600 and 700 years old, the tree has long been part of village life, providing shade for residents during the hot summer months and evoking memories for the village's older inhabitants. Beyond its historical attractions, Ayneh Varzan offers

opportunities for nature tourism. Ayneh Varzan Waterfall, located on the slopes of Zarrin Kuh, attracts visitors willing to hike through the mountains to reach the sound of rushing water. The trail itself is part of the attraction, leading away from the village and into scenic mountain landscapes. The surrounding geography divides Ayneh Varzan into two sections, known locally as Bala Deh and Pain Deh. Mountains rise above the village, while a waterfall lies in a gorge in the heart of the mountains, overlooking a broad plain dotted with fruit trees and beehives. On the peaks surrounding the village, known as Zarrin Kuh or Zarineh Kuh, stands an old fortress called Nowzar Shah Castle. Local legends identify the plain below the area as the battlefield of the legendary heroes Rostam and Esfandiar. Agriculture is another important part of Ayneh Varzan's identity. Its gardens and farmlands produce grains, potatoes, beans and various legumes, reflecting the impor-

ance of water and fertile soil to the local economy. Traditional woodcarving is another distinctive feature of the village. Here, woodcarving is more than a handicraft produced for sale; it is an art deeply connected with local life. Traces of the craft can be seen in the village's historic wooden works. In the hands of local artisans, a simple piece of wood is transformed into intricate patterns and designs, giving a new form to an element of the surrounding nature. Ayneh Varzan, therefore, cannot be defined by a single waterfall or historic monument. Its identity has been shaped by the combination of mountains, water, agriculture, history and traditional craftsmanship. A visit to the village offers the opportunity to experience all of these elements in one place — from the shade of a centuries-old plane tree to a mountain trail leading to a waterfall, with an enduring tradition of woodcarving connecting the village's past with its present.



US sanctions hurt ordinary Iranians

Self-proclaimed human rights defender acts against human rights in Iran

EDITORIAL

After failing in its military aggression on Iran, the United States has now reverted to its old playbook and announced plans for a new round of sanctions against Iran. The US Treasury secretary has claimed that the Islamic Republic will be brought down through a blockade and the toughest economic sanctions the world has ever seen.

Washington's latest push to exert economic pressure on Iran and impose sanctions is hardly new. What appears to be new, however, is the psychological warfare and extensive media campaign being waged through claims and statements by White House officials. Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the Islamic Republic has faced various forms of US pressure and, at times, some of the most severe US-led sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council. The stated aim of the new sanctions is the collapse of the Islamic Republic. Previously, however, the stated purpose of the sanctions imposed over the past decades had been to change Iran's behavior and policies. The reality was much more straightforward: even US officials have acknowledged that sanctions had failed to bring about the desired results. Had sanctions been effective in forcing Iran to change its behavior, there would presumably have been no need for war and the enormous costs that came with it.

Many experts, including Americans, have likewise predicted no significantly different outcome for the new sanctions. Nate Swanson, the former Iran director at the US National Security Council, wrote in the Atlantic Council: "At what cost? And even if the economic pressure campaign succeeds, what will it accomplish? China is easily

Iran's most important trading partner and if those trade ties were severed, the Islamic Republic would have no replacement. But China has also skirted American sanctions for years and has given little indication that it will stop now. Is President Donald Trump really willing to risk the trade détente with China to take the necessary actions against Chinese banks, refiners, and ports to curtail trade with Iran? Is the US economy prepared for retaliation from China? These would be very difficult steps to take—especially right before Chinese President Xi Jinping is scheduled to visit."

Emadeddin Baghi's letter to UN human rights commissioner

Trump's decision to announce renewed pressure on Iran is driven by clear political objectives: changing Iran's policies and behavior or, ultimately, bringing about the fall of the system. But sanctions are not solely a security or political issue. As the experience of the past several decades has shown, their most visible effects have often been felt in areas far removed from politics and security. Above all, sanctions are a clear confrontation with human rights and may lead to the erosion of the rights of Iranian citizens, as has happened in the past. In effect, if the military aggression and the widespread damage to infrastructure and killing of more than 3,000 Iranian citizens were Trump's form of "help" to the Iranian people through military action, sanctions, with their economic, social, cultural and livelihood-related consequences, are now set to become America's new form of "help" for the people of Iran.

It is against this backdrop that Emadeddin Baghi, an Iranian human rights activist, has written to the



People walk past shops and browse for goods at the Grand Bazaar in Tehran on August 24, 2026.

● AFP

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, stressing that the primary victims of US sanctions are the people of Iran.

Addressing Volker Türk and condemning the US action to ratchet up sanctions against the Iranian people, Baghi wrote:

"I am fully aware that, in the highly polarized and increasingly militarized political climate created by the policies of the United States Government, appeals for the protection of human rights may struggle to receive the attention they deserve. Nevertheless, I expect you, to the fullest extent possible within your mandate, to make clear to the international community that the principal victims of what the United States describes as its 'crushing and unprecedented sanctions' are the people of Iran. Unlike governments and state institutions, ordinary citizens do not have privileged access to financial reserves, alternative economic channels, or other means of insulating themselves from the consequences of such measures."

The letter goes on to stress that ordinary citizens have no "privileged access" to financial reserves, alternative economic channels or other means of shielding themselves from the consequences of such measures. It also recalls explicit statements by US officials that one of the purposes of sanctions is to impose severe pressure and suffering on the Iranian people in pursuit of Washington's political objective. Baghi writes:

"If civilians are deliberately subjected to economic deprivation and unbearable hardship in the hope that they will become



instruments of political change, then the distinction between political pressure and the collective punishment of a population becomes deeply troubling from a human rights perspective. Ordinary people should never be treated as leverage in the pursuit of geopolitical objectives. No political disagreement, however serious, can justify policies that knowingly transfer the burden of confrontation onto an entire civilian population."

Baghi describes the imposition of the new sanctions as among the most morally indefensible and ugliest forms of political conduct in the contemporary international order. He therefore urges the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights:

"I, therefore, urge your office to address this issue not merely as a matter of geopolitical confrontation, but as a question of fundamental human rights, human dignity, and the protection of civilians."

UN officially acknowledges impact of sanctions on human rights in Iran

The United Nations has previously acknowledged in an official report that sanctions have undermined the rights of Iranians. Alena Douhan, the UN Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of hu-

man rights, traveled to Iran for 11 days in May 2022 and prepared a report on the impact of sanctions. According to the report, since 1979 the United States has imposed economic, trade and financial sanctions on Iran, including a comprehensive trade embargo introduced in 1995 and significant measures aimed at isolating Iran from the international trade and financial system through secondary sanctions on non-US entities and financial institutions. The United States has also established, through a series of executive orders and specific laws, a broad and complex framework of prohibitions and barriers, which was tightened after 2010 and extended to the energy, medical and other key sectors.

The report found that numerous human rights in Iran have been affected and violated as a result of unilateral sanctions. Asked which section of Iranian society had been most affected by such measures, Douhan said: "The entire population of the embargoed countries has been affected in various ways, and a large number of cases and examples of human rights are damaged in this process. It noted that the US sanctions have had the most obvious impact on the 'right to health and the right to life' and explained that the authorized trade of medicines, medical products and equipment as well as spare parts often face many problems and obstacles due to 'excessive compliance' with sanctions by manufactur-

ers and shippers." She also pointed to a specific case: "Reliable sources and interlocutors confirmed the absence of medical supply sustainability since 2011 due to sanctions. Of particular concern is the significant challenges faced in the procurement and delivery of life-saving medicines and medical equipment, produced by foreign companies and destined for the treatment of rare diseases, including certain types of cancer, thalassemia, haemophilia, leukaemia, ichthyosis, multiple sclerosis, epidermolysis bullosa (EB), autism and certain forms of diabetes" as well as people affected by illnesses resulting from chemical weapons and many others.

Adverse impact of sanctions on social, cultural life

Sanctions have also taken a heavy toll on Iran's economy, adversely affecting people's livelihoods, household finances and incomes. Hossein Salahvarzi, former head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, has said: "Between 2011 and 2022, a 12-year period, sanctions caused around \$1.2 trillion in damage to the country. The estimated loss in per capita income for each Iranian because of sanctions over the period under review was around \$14,000. In other words, during this period, each Iranian lost an average of \$1,202 a year because of sanctions."

This form of pressure, however, has not been confined to the economy, healthcare and medicine.

It has also had direct and indirect effects on social and cultural life. A research paper titled "The Effects of US Sanctions on Iran's Social and Political Capital (2016-2020)," published in the Spring 2025 issue of the journal Strategic Political Research, shows that "sanctions have had a negative impact on the country's economic situation, while the deterioration of economic indicators such as economic growth, exchange rates, inflation, poverty and inequality has increasingly focused society's attention on hardship and survival. As a result, the dominance of livelihood concerns over social action and thought has had damaging consequences in the social sphere, including higher rates of crime, divorce and migration; in the cultural sphere, including declining attention to non-governmental organizations and artistic and cultural activities, as well as the production and consumption of cultural goods; and in the political sphere, including lower political participation, indifference towards political action, collective violence and lawlessness."

Against this backdrop, as Baghi reminded the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in his letter, the Iranian people will bear the brunt of US pressure, just as their lives have already been affected by sanctions.

Is this anything other than the violation of human rights in Iran through the policies of a country that claims to champion human rights?



An 8-year-old boy suffering from liver cancer, plays cards at Mahak Children's Hospital, in Tehran, Iran.

● AP