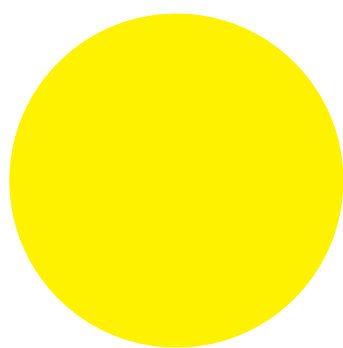


Oman's exports  
to Iran surge amid  
trade restrictions

3 >



# Iran Daily

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## Judiciary chief urges BRICS to seek legal action against Iran's aggressors

2 >

### Iran needs to adapt to Latin America's political shifts

By Delaram Ahmadi  
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

As the United States seeks to isolate Iran, Peru has announced that it will sever diplomatic relations with Tehran, accusing Iran of creating insecurity in the region and disrupting maritime traffic. Chile had earlier closed its embassy in Tehran on security grounds, although the move did not amount to a break in diplomatic relations. This comes as South America is one of the regions where Iran has sought to build close ties. , an expert on Latin America affairs, says that while the scaling back of relations by the two countries will have little economic impact, it carries a significant symbolic message. He says Iran needs to have a plan for maintaining ties with political factions in Latin America so that its relations do not suffer when power changes hands.



Hadi Aalami Fariman

**IRAN DAILY:** To what extent can Peru and Chile's decision be attributed to US pressure and policies, and to what extent are these decisions driven by the countries' own considerations and interests?

**FARIMAN:** Chile and Peru, which have now scaled down their diplomatic relations [with Iran], have both shown a shift toward the right in their recent 2025 elections. In Chile, Gabriel Boric had governed with a left-wing administration for nearly four years. He was essentially a modern, reform-oriented socialist, for whom support for Palestine and opposition to Israel were particularly prominent positions. His successor, José Antonio Kast, who won the election, has shifted toward the United States because he is a far-right politician. On this basis, his foreign policy approach is also based on a commitment to cooperation with the United States and, more recently, Israel.

We see a similar situation in Peru. For years, elections there have essentially revolved around a major contest between conservative right-wing forces, liberals, supporters of the United States, labor unions, anti-socialists, and radical left-wing forces. There is also the main body of the Fujimori family, whose head was president of Peru, and whose daughter has now come to power and wants to establish close relations with the United States.

When it comes to Chile and Peru, it appears that US pressure has had an influence on them.

Page 3 >

## Pezeshkian calls students Iran's main national asset

Modern education set to focus on 'practical skills, creativity, problem-solving'

8 >



President Masoud Pezeshkian (C), flanked by Police chief Ahmadreza Radan (R) and Acting Defense Minister Majid Ebn-ol-Reza, inspects a guard of honor as he opens Iran's first police boarding high school in Tehran on September 5, 2026.

● [president.ir](http://president.ir)



Bishkek declaration omits naming US, Israel as aggressors in Iran

4 >



World Taekwondo Grand Prix Series: Zandi, Razmian crash out in second round

6 >



Anbaran seeks global recognition for its distinctive kilim tradition

7 >



# Judiciary chief urges BRICS to seek legal action against Iran's aggressors

## International Desk

Iran's judiciary chief called on fellow BRICS members to condemn attacks on Tehran's sovereignty and pursue legal action against those responsible for carrying out war crimes against Iran. "Today, more than ever, we need justice; justice that is not selective, does not sacrifice the rule of law for political considerations, and does not measure the rights of nations according to their level of power," Gholam-Hossein Mohseni-Ejei said while addressing the BRICS meeting of heads of judicial systems in New Delhi on Saturday, IRNA reported.

Referring to the "brutal aggression" by the United States and Israel against Iran during the past two years, he stressed that Iranians had paid a heavy price to ensure the country's independence.

He said the attacks constitute an unlawful war in violation of international norms and are not merely a limited military confrontation.

"Many infrastructures and facilities,



including hospitals, educational and cultural centers, and residential areas, were targeted, resulting in the deaths

of large numbers of civilians, including women and children," he noted. The judiciary chief described the ac-

Iran's Judiciary Chief Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejei (R) attends the BRICS meeting of heads of judicial systems in New Delhi, India, on September 5, 2026.  
● MIZAN

tions of the US and Israel as "clear instances of war crimes," while criticizing the international community's failure to respond to the violations.

Mohseni-Ejei said the issue extended beyond Iran, warning BRICS members that other countries could face similar violations in the future.

"Today, this may be Iran's voice, but tomorrow it may be the voice of any one of the countries represented in this hall," he said.

The US and Israel launched another round of aggression against Iran on February 28, some eight months after carrying out unprovoked attacks on the country.

Iran swiftly retaliated by launching barrages of missiles and drones at the Israeli-occupied territories, as well as US bases and interests across the region.

A ceasefire took effect on April 7, and

on June 18, the presidents of Iran and the United States signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to end the war and begin a 60-day diplomatic process to resolve the differences.

However, the US violated the agreement and launched new strikes on Iran under the pretext of Iran's attacks on vessels in the Persian Gulf.

Mohseni-Ejei urged BRICS members to take concrete legal and political measures in response to violations of Iran's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

"First, BRICS members should condemn the violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iran in accordance with international law, particularly the UN Charter, and take the necessary measures to prevent the aggressors from carrying out illegal actions," he said.

"Second, by applying the principle of universal jurisdiction, they should prosecute those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the two wars of aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran," he added.

## Iranian tanker hit by US attack near Kharg Island

### International Desk

The US targeted an Iranian oil tanker near Kharg Island with projectiles amid escalating Washington's aggression against Iran. According to sources in the island, several explosions were heard on Saturday from the direction of the Persian Gulf in the area around Kharg Island which is Iran's key oil export hub, Tasnim News Agency reported.

Sources said an Iranian tanker was struck about six nautical miles from the island after being targeted by four projectiles fired by US forces.

The attack caused no casualties, while the tanker's crew was evacuated from the vessel.

Authorities are investigating the extent of the damage and the precise circumstances of the attack, with further details expected to be released later.

The attack comes as the US has intensified its aggression against Iran in recent days, carrying out



Smoke billows after an Iranian oil tanker is targeted by four US projectiles in the Persian Gulf on September 5, 2026.  
● TASNIM

strikes on several locations across the country. On Monday, US military attacked Iran's Larak Island in the Strait of Hormuz, killing three people. A day later, US launched missile attacks on different locations in southern cities, killing at least 12 people and wounding scores others. In response to the attacks, Iran's Armed Forces launched a series of retaliatory missile and drone strikes against US military positions in Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait and Bahrain.

Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters warned that any continua-

tion of US military aggression would trigger "heavier, broader and more devastating responses," while cautioning countries cooperating with the US military that they would face the consequences.

The latest round of aggression against Iran began on February 28, when US and Israeli forces launched large-scale strikes on Iranian territory.

Iran's Armed Forces responded with daily waves of missiles and drones targeting US and Israeli assets across the region, and closed the Strait of Hormuz to US and allied

vessels.

The Commander of the Khatam al-Anbiya Joint Air Defense Headquarters said on Friday that Iran's Armed Forces had prepared themselves for "any kind of confrontation".

"The confrontation between the front of truth and the front of falsehood will continue, and ... we have prepared ourselves for any kind of confrontation, both today and in the future," Alireza Elhami said.

US President Donald Trump said on August 31 in a one-line social media post accompanied by an AI-generated video that Kharg Island was being "blown to smithereens". Iranian authorities have vowed a strong response if Kharg is attacked.

Iran is the third-largest producer in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and exported 90% of its crude via Kharg Island before the war, but flows have been disrupted since a US blockade of Iranian oil exports began in mid-April.

## Spox to Americans:

## Do not let anyone turn you into cannon fodder for war you never chose

### International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman highlighted an Israeli daily's proposing the use of debt forgiveness as an incentive for young Americans to enlist in a potential ground war against the Islamic Republic.

"Americans, ask yourselves one question: Why should your sons and daughters be offered debt forgiveness in exchange for fighting and dying in a war Israel wants continued & expanded?" Esmail Baqaei wrote in a post on X on Friday after the idea appeared in an article on The Jerusalem Post. The article, penned by AJ Jaff, a retired Canadian armed forces officer and security analyst, that was published by the paper on August 30, discussed possible ways of generating a larger US military force for such a war and proposed a federally administered debt-forgiveness program



Esmail Baqaei  
● IRNA

as one option, Press TV reported.

Jaff wrote that a ground war against Iran would require substantially more US troops than the current number in the active army. He then proposed debt relief as an alternative to conscription.

"Based on American history, however, there is a path forward. Not conscription or a draft in a world war era sense, but enlistment through a 'debt forgiveness program'."

Jaff specifically suggested a federally administered program under which student loans, credit-card balances,

and other loans would be discharged following 24 or 36 months of deployment, alongside an extension of GI Bill benefits. The bill provides educational and training support for qualifying veterans, troops, and their family members

"This is not theoretical," Jaff wrote. "The economics of the indebted American 20- and 30-something make this the most efficient conversion mechanism available" to the US Department of War and the Trump administration, he added.

Baqaei, however, noted how the idea amounted to trifling with ordinary Americans' lives. "Your lives. Your taxes. Someone else's war," he wrote.

"Do not let anyone turn you into the cannon fodder - and the bill - for a war you never chose," the official went on. "Do not let anyone turn your children into mercenaries for their illegal 'war of choice'."

## Hezbollah: Israeli attacks show failure of direct talks

### International Desk

Lebanon's resistance movement Hezbollah on Saturday condemned continued Israeli attacks on the country, saying the ongoing "occupation, assaults, killings and destruction" shows that the path of direct negotiations and a framework agreement with the regime has failed.

Hezbollah in a statement that Israel is continuing to escalate its actions against Lebanon through killings, bombardment, the systematic demolition and blowing up of homes and villages, the removal of signs identifying them and the destruction of basic

infrastructure needed for life in those areas, according to IRNA.

The group said the attacks continuing without any deterrence and under "baseless pretexts".

Hezbollah said the latest Israeli attacks on Friday killed at least four people and wounded dozens more. Hezbollah said the attacks are taking place amid the complete silence of the international community and overt US complicity, while Lebanese officials are entirely absent from their responsibilities.

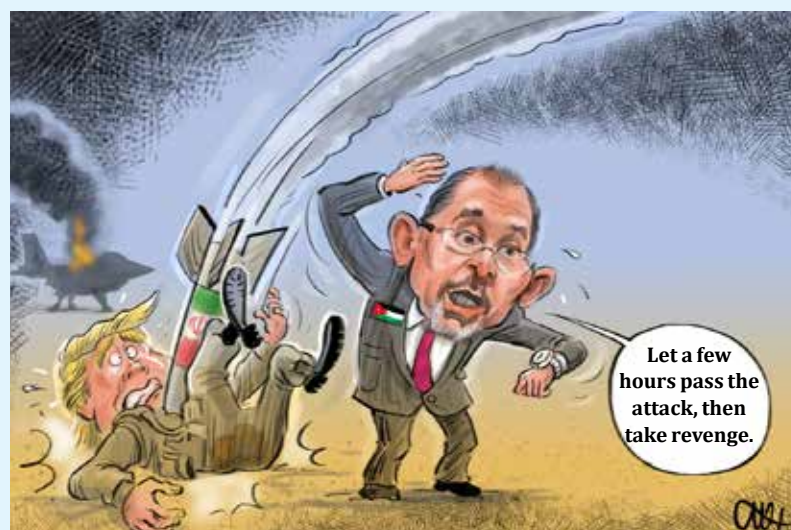
It accused Lebanese officials of stubbornly sticking to the wrong choices, a concession-making and submissive

approach, and a framework that Israel violates every day.

That approach, Hezbollah said, had brought Lebanon nothing but "shame and humiliation" and has served only to entrench the "occupation" and allow Israel's attacks and actions against the Lebanese people to continue. "This condemned and ongoing aggression, which is carried out with the full participation, cover and planning of the United States, has no justification other than putting pressure on Lebanese officials and blackmailing them to force them to implement agendas whose objectives are known to everyone," Hezbollah said.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

CARTOON



# Oman’s exports to Iran surge amid trade restrictions

Economy Desk

Oman’s direct exports to Iran more than tripled and re-exports nearly doubled in the first half of 2026, according to Oman’s National Centre for Statistics and Information, as Tehran pivots trade flows toward alternative regional hubs amid mounting restrictions on its southern maritime access. According to Oman’s National Centre for Statistics and Information, total trade between Oman and Iran reached \$832 million in the January-to-June period, a 17% increase compared with the same stretch in 2025, Eqtesad-e Moaser reported.

Direct Omani exports to Iran amounted to \$13 million in the first half of the year, placing Iran 64th among destinations for Omani-made goods. That figure represented a 225% rise from a year earlier.



At the same time, Omani re-exports to Iran surged 96% to \$666 million, up from \$338 million in the first half of 2025. Iran, which in recent years had ranked as Oman’s second-largest re-export destination after the United Arab Emirates, moved into first place during the period. By contrast, Oman’s re-exports to the UAE fell 36% to \$580 million.

The sharp uptick in Omani trade with Iran comes as US naval restrictions continue to affect Iran’s southern ports. Washington imposed the blockade as part of a pressure campaign following a 40-day US-Israeli conflict that began in late February. The naval siege has constrained Tehran’s trade options. In response, Iran has been

working to diversify its logistics corridors, redirecting cargo flows toward northern ports as well as to hubs in Pakistan, India, and Oman. Against that backdrop, Iranian exports to Oman dropped 58% in the first half of 2026 to \$153 million, down from \$365 million in the same period a year earlier, as hostilities and disruptions through the Strait of Hormuz weighed on regional shipping. Despite that decline in Iranian outbound trade to Oman, the notable rise in Oman’s direct and re-export shipments to Iran underscores the Sultanate’s growing role as a transit and intermediary hub for goods destined for the Iranian market. The trend suggests that Omani trade channels are helping alleviate some of the logistical pressure created by the maritime restrictions on Iran’s southern coastline.

## From barrel to qubit: How center of global power is shifting

By Saman Sarsar  
Technology and Policy Researcher  
O P I N I O N

For more than a century, the geography of global power largely overlapped with the geography of energy. Oil-rich countries became arenas for competition among powerful states, while oil and gas were not only the fuel of industrial civilization but also among the most important forces shaping the global economy, politics and geopolitics. The oil barrel became a symbol of wealth, authority and bargaining power. But a major transformation is underway. The center of power is gradually shifting from ownership of resources to the ability to turn those resources into technology. This does not mean energy is becoming less important. Future civilization will need more energy than ever, as data centers, artificial intelligence, robotics, electric vehicles, communications networks, advanced industries and computing infrastructure all depend on it. What is changing is the relationship between energy and power. Energy remains a necessary condition for civilization, but technology is becoming the multiplier that determines how much wealth, knowledge, productivity and influence each unit of energy can generate. The evolution can be summed up in three words: barrel, bit and qubit. The barrel represents the industrial age, when matter and energy were the foundation of production. The bit represents the information revolution, when data and processing power became an increasingly important component of power. The qubit may represent the next frontier of computational civilization, where quantum mechanics challenges our understanding of information processing and computing capacity. In the industrial economy, competitive advantage depended largely on natural resources, physical capital and production capacity. The digital economy, however, revealed a fundamental truth: value does not necessarily scale with physical mass or energy consumption. A small semiconductor chip, a quantum computer capable of solving complex algorithms, an AI model or a database can create value with no linear relationship to its physical size. This is where the bit stands alongside the barrel. The barrel represents an economy deriving much of its power from matter and energy; the bit represents one drawing an increasing share of its power from information and processing capability. Now the bit itself is approaching a new frontier: the qubit. A qubit should not be viewed simply as a faster bit. That interpretation is fundamentally misleading. Classical bits exist in one of two states, 0 or 1, while qubits use superposition, entanglement and interference to create a different space for processing information. In some problems, the significance of quantum computing lies not simply in greater speed but in changing how problems are formulated and solved. Quantum computing remains under development and is not about to replace classical computers. Nor should the technology’s potential be exaggerated. But strategically, a technology’s importance cannot be measured only by its current maturity. Strategic technologies can reshape the architecture of competition before reaching commercial

maturity, as countries and companies must position themselves early across their value chains — from education and fundamental research to chips, algorithms, advanced materials, computing infrastructure, energy and human capital. Artificial intelligence is a clear example. It will be a massive consumer of energy, but it can also optimize power grids, industrial processes, transportation, buildings, supply chains and energy production and distribution systems. Technology is therefore not merely an energy consumer; it can increase the efficiency with which energy is converted into products and value. The relationship is not simple substitution but synergy and feedback. Technology needs energy, while more advanced technology can make energy use more efficient. More energy can expand computing and production capacity, while better technology can increase the value extracted from the same amount of energy. In the 20th century, access to abundant and cheap natural resources could provide a major advantage. In the 21st century, the more important question is what a country does with its resources. Two countries may have similar energy reserves, but the one with strong universities, human capital, semiconductors, AI, robotics, advanced materials, storage technology and computing infrastructure can generate far greater economic and strategic value from the same unit of energy. This is the distinction between a source of power and a multiplier of power. Energy is a source; technology is a multiplier. For countries with vast energy reserves, the distinction is particularly important. Oil and gas remain strategic assets, but if they are merely extracted and exported, much of the value added is created beyond their borders. The question is no longer simply how much oil and gas a country possesses, but how much knowledge, technology and advanced industry it can apply to those resources. The recent conflict involving Iran offered a clear illustration. It was not the country’s oil reserves that sustained its resilience under pressure, but its reliance on domestic technology. Despite extensive damage, repairs in the country’s industries were carried out rapidly, highlighting the role of technology as a power multiplier. That is the quiet but profound shift taking place. A country with oil has a natural advantage; a country with technology can redefine its natural advantages. Future competition will not necessarily be about who has more energy, but who can convert energy more efficiently into computing, computing into knowledge, knowledge into human capital, human capital into technology, and technology into power. The barrel was a symbol of power in the industrial age; the bit represents power in the information age; and the qubit points toward the frontier of computational civilization. The great question of the new century is no longer simply who controls more energy. It is who will command the highest conversion ratio of energy into technology, and technology into power. The answer will shape much of the global geography of power in the decades ahead.

The article first appeared in Persian on IRNA.

## Tehran-Tunis flights resumed after months-long hiatus

Economy Desk

Iran has resumed direct flights between Tehran and Tunis after a months-long halt, as part of efforts to expand its international air network and boost tourism and economic ties with Tunisia, the managing director of Imam Khomeini International Airport City said on Saturday. Ramin Kashef-Azar announced on Saturday that the Tehran-Tunis route has been placed back into operational planning, with flights now operating from Imam Khomeini International Airport City, IRNA reported. The first flight departed for Tunis at 8 a.m. on Saturday, and the service is currently scheduled weekly on Saturdays. “Expanding flight destinations and strengthening air connectivity with various



countries is among the airport city’s priorities,” he said. “The resumption of this route can facilitate passenger travel and enhance tourism and economic exchanges between Iran and Tunisia.” “Imam Khomeini International Airport City, leveraging its existing capacities and infrastructure, is pursuing the expansion of its

international flight network and increasing passengers’ access to various destinations worldwide,” he added. In a related development, Kashef-Azar announced on Tuesday that Mahan Air, Iran’s first private airline, had also launched new direct flights to Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam, as the country continues to rebuild and expand its international air connectivity following the April 8 ceasefire that halted a 40-day conflict with the United States. Iran Air resumed domestic flights on April 25 after a 55-day suspension, with its first service between Tehran and Mashhad. International operations restarted later that month, beginning with a Hajj flight to Medina, with flights to three destinations available on the first day.

## Iran needs to ...

A brief look at US President Donald Trump’s 2025 National Security Strategy, shows that much of its provisions concern the Western Hemisphere. The Americans have made a very clear shift in their approach toward Latin America, which many say is perhaps rooted in the convictions of Marco Rubio. They have made a very fundamental shift gears in their approach to the region, and began their first project with Venezuela. During Trump’s first administration, the view was that this region was an area that exported crime, drugs and terrorism, and his border wall became well known in this context. In his second term, the cabinet was put together on the basis of being able to fully control the region and bring it back to the Monroe Doctrine. This was because the Americans felt a very serious threat from Chinese and Russian influence, as well as from the Islamic Republic’s influence in the region. The Americans are now carrying out an economic isolation campaign. Under an announcement issued by the Treasury Department, the highest level of warning has been issued to all countries to immediately and systematically cut off trade with

Iran. On this basis, some countries have responded positively to the call, and countries that are aligned with US policy have taken up the call. **What message do these developments send about the trajectory of Iran’s relations with Latin American countries?** Peru and Chile have not had particularly extensive economic relations with Iran in terms of exports and imports, so the impact is not particularly significant. What is important, however, is the symbolic aspect of the issue. In other words, the more countries that join in reducing their relations with Iran, the more the Americans will regard it as a kind of victory, because they believe they have further isolated the Islamic Republic. In reality, the message behind this move is directed at all countries. The Americans view the issue from the perspective of influencing all countries in one way or another so that they essentially reduce and cut their use of the US dollar system in dealings with Iran, thereby placing comprehensive economic pressure on the Islamic Republic. **Given the importance of Iran’s relations with Latin American**

**countries in the Islamic Republic’s foreign policy, what political and diplomatic measures could Tehran put on the agenda to prevent this trend from spreading and preserve its relations with countries in that region? Could consultations with independent governments and those opposed to US unilateralism be effective in this regard?** The countries that remain close to Iran do not have much influence. Cuba is currently in a very unfavorable economic situation and facing severe economic problems. Nicaragua also does not have much economic capacity. As for Mexico, given its participation in the former NAFTA and the current USMCA with the United States and Canada, it is unlikely to have much room for maneuver. Venezuela, too, has now reportedly entered into a very important oil agreement with the United States, described as a 100-year agreement involving 17 oil fields. That leaves Brazil, but because it operates within the dollar-based system, it is also unlikely to have that much room for maneuver. Some of these countries may nevertheless be willing to work out barter arrangements. Overall, however, given Iran’s current confrontation on multiple fronts, there is little scope for it to tap into the

region’s full potential. At certain points Iran pursued its relations with Latin America and reached the highest level of relations. There were even efforts to establish a joint bank, extraterritorial cultivation projects, and cooperation in universities and oil facilities. However, apart from some areas of cooperation with Venezuela in the refinery sector, many of these initiatives did not produce results. One of the advantages of the longstanding democracies in Latin America is precisely their electoral system. They have a highly cyclical electoral system in which a shift toward the right and the left is repeatedly played out, with the exception of certain countries such as Cuba or Venezuela. Iran, however, has not made the right calculations in this regard. For example, when countries such as Chile, Bolivia or Peru had left-wing governments at certain points, Iran welcomed them very warmly and entered into discussions that even involved investment. Then, in the next elections, those governments handed over power, and the investments failed to bear fruit. Iran needs to have a proper understanding of Latin American governments so that its relations do not suffer when power changes hands.

# Bishkek declaration omits naming US, Israel as aggressors in Iran



By P. K. Balachandran  
Senior Indian journalist

## PERSPECTIVE

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's 2026 Bishkek summit resolution is markedly less supportive of Iran than the one adopted at the 2025 Tianjin summit.

The Tianjin document explicitly identified the United States and Israel as the aggressors and condemned their actions. The Bishkek text makes no such mention.

Observers speculate that India's close economic links with the US and strong defence ties with Israel, together with Pakistan's current role as a broker in US-Iran contacts, contributed to the diluted language.

### Bishkek resolution

The Bishkek resolution states:

"The Member States express deep concern over developments in the Middle East and around Iran. They reaffirm the SCO's previously stated position condemning military strikes on the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which have resulted in numerous civilian casualties and significant damage to the country's economy."

"Such actions violate the principles and norms of international law and the UN Charter and also pose serious risks to international peace, security, and stability."

"Member States express their sincere condolences to the people and government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in connection with the tragic death of the Supreme Leader of Iran Seyyed Ali Khamenei, as well as the families of the victims."

"Member States, reaffirming their support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran, are in favour of resolving the conflict exclusively by political and diplomatic means. In this regard, they welcome all efforts aimed at de-escalating the situation in the region."

There is no reference to the United States or Israel.

### Tianjin resolution

By contrast, the Tianjin resolution declared:

"Member states strongly condemn the



military aggression against Iran by Israel and the United States in June 2025. Such acts of aggression against civilian facilities, including nuclear infrastructure, resulting in civilian casualties, seriously violate the norms of international law and the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, infringe on Iran's sovereignty and territorial integrity, undermine regional and international security, and have serious consequences for global peace and stability."

It further stressed mutual respect for sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, the principle of non-use or threat of force, the need to protect nuclear facilities even during conflict, and the importance of resuming constructive dialogue.

### Terrorism and Afghanistan

On terrorism, the Bishkek resolution contains no reference to India or Pakistan. The focus is on Afghanistan as a source of the problem.

It reaffirms the fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism, rejects the use of such groups for "selfish purposes," and condemns "double standards."

It calls for the UN to play a central role and notes the value of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS).

The Tianjin resolution, while also general in its language, specifically condemned the Pahalgam attack in India (April 22, 2025) and the Jaffar Express and Khuzdar attacks in Pakistan (March and May 2025), without naming any state as responsible. It expressed condolences and demanded that perpetrators, organisers and financiers be held accountable. Both summits identified Afghanistan as a breeding ground of terrorism and intolerance. Bishkek stressed that an inclusive government representing all ethno-political groups is the only path to lasting peace and stability — language that Pakistani officials say strengthens Islamabad's position on cross-border threats from Afghan soil. Tianjin's formulation was milder, calling for an independent, neutral and peaceful Afghanistan free of terrorism, war and drugs.

### India stays out of Central Asia plan

India declined to join a China-Rus-

sia-led development plan for Central Asia that was endorsed by Belarus, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The plan includes support for China's Belt and Road Initiative. New Delhi has long opposed the BRI, citing debt risks for recipient countries and the fact that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor runs through territory claimed by India.

### National currencies

On reducing dependence on the US dollar, the Bishkek resolution notes "the importance of further implementation by interested SCO member states of the roadmap for a gradual increase in the share of national currencies in mutual settlements". The phrase "interested" member states signals that countries such as India are not prepared to abandon the dollar, especially after US President Donald Trump threatened sanctions against those that do.

The article first appeared on Eurasia Review.



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (L) watches as Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (front) makes a note during the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on September 1, 2026.

president.ir



The Tianjin document explicitly identified the United States and Israel as the aggressors and condemned their actions. The Bishkek text makes no such mention. Observers speculate that India's close economic links with the US and strong defence ties with Israel, together with Pakistan's current role as a broker in US-Iran contacts, contributed to the diluted language.



People gather at the scene of a suicide bombing at a Shia Mosque in Islamabad, Pakistan, on February 6, 2026. The terrorist group Daesh (Islamic State) in Pakistan claimed responsibility for the assault.

X



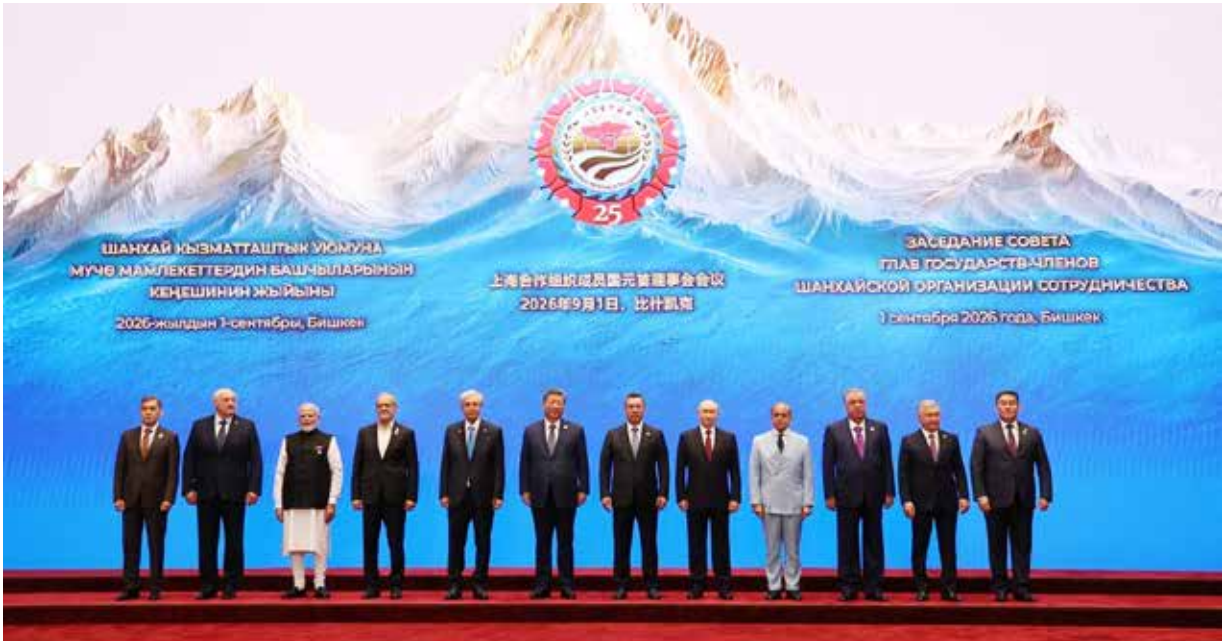
# Economic cooperation, autonomy in SCO Bishkek Summit

## PERSPECTIVE

The Bishkek SCO summit signals the member states' effort to strengthen the organisation as an alternative centre of political and economic coordination in response to current international security and geopolitical pressures, including those associated with the West. Leaders endorsed agreements and initiatives covering transport connectivity, energy security, economic cooperation, artificial intelligence and climate policy, indicating an attempt to expand the SCO's role beyond security cooperation into wider economic and technological coordination. However, divergent foreign-policy priorities, security interests and economic objectives among member states remain the main constraints on implementation and could limit the organisation's ability to translate political commitments into effective collective mechanisms.

### Context

On September 1, 2026, in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan chaired and organised the 26th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) with the participation of all 10 member states: Belarus, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan; the summit adopted the Bishkek Declaration and a package of 28 documents before transferring the SCO presidency to Pakistan for 2026–27. The summit marked the organisation's 25th anniversary. Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov said SCO had developed from a mechanism for confidence-building among neighbouring states into a major international organisation. Kyrgyzstan had conducted around 200 SCO-related events during its year as chair and placed particular emphasis on security, transport connectivity, digitalisation and access to technology. Economic cooperation formed a major part of the summit agenda. Belarus supported the creation of an SCO Development Bank, expanded settlements in national currencies and a SCO scientific fund. Russia also proposed the development bank and said trade with SCO states had exceeded \$400 billion, with national currencies accounting for more than 98% of Russian settlements with SCO partners. Kazakhstan offered to host the bank's headquarters in Astana and proposed a trade and investment area, industrial consortia, cross-border trading zones, a unified digital transit platform and an SCO transport connectivity strategy to 2035. Uzbekistan supported rapid progress towards the bank and proposed a map of industrial cooperation and a digital platform for businesses and investors. Iran proposed joint payment mechanisms, wider national-currency settlements, trade and investment insurance and an SCO energy consortium. China proposed 100 scientific and technological cooperation projects over three years, an international AI cooperation centre and further solar and wind energy projects. Kyrgyzstan identified the China–Kyrgyzstan–Uzbekistan railway as a key transport project linked with Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and capable of increasing regional connectivity and logistics opportunities. Tajikistan supported economic growth zones, digital agricultural cooperation and the development bank. Security remained closely connected to the economic agenda. India called for the elimination of terrorist financing, recruitment, radicalisation and safe havens, elements capable of increasing regional geopolitical risk, while stressing



that connectivity projects must respect sovereignty and territorial integrity. Modi also linked regional conflict to energy security, maritime trade and global supply chains. China called for greater SCO coordination on Ukraine, the Middle East and Afghanistan and supported stronger cooperation against terrorism, extremism, organised crime and narcotics. The summit also approved new SCO mechanisms dealing with security threats and narcotics, alongside agreements covering AI, information cooperation, energy efficiency, climate change and logistics.

### Why does it matter?

The summit's economic agenda shows that members want to increase practical cooperation in finance, trade, infrastructure, energy and technology. The proposed Development Bank is the clearest institutional initiative considering the huge challenges that Russia and Iran are facing because of the Western economic sanctions and their necessity to develop alternative payment arrangements, while Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan seek mechanisms that can finance infrastructure and increase their participation in regional production and trade. China's proposals provide a substantial technology and industrial component to this agenda. The main constraint is the absence of a single strategic position among members. India and Pakistan retain competing security priorities, while New Delhi also insists that connectivity must respect national sovereignty and territorial integrity. This limits the scope for the SCO to operate as a unified economic or security bloc. The presence of competing proposals for the Development Bank's location also indicates that institutional arrangements remain subject to

negotiation. China's economic position is strengthened by the emphasis on transport, technology, energy and industrial cooperation. The China–Kyrgyzstan–Uzbekistan railway is particularly relevant to Central Asian connectivity, while Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are seeking greater domestic industrial participation to capture economic activity generated by regional trade rather than rely solely on transit revenues. The financial proposals have greater strategic relevance for Moscow and Tehran. Expanded national-currency settlements and joint payment mechanisms could facilitate trade where members face restrictions on access to established financial channels. The summit documents, however, do not establish that a common SCO financial system or Development Bank is already operational. The immediate significance lies in political agreement to pursue these mechanisms rather than in an existing alternative financial system. The security agenda creates additional economic exposure. India linked regional conflict directly to energy security, maritime trade and supply chains, while the SCO addressed the Middle East and Iran. The organisation's members thus recognise that security disruptions can transmit into trade and energy markets. The summit provides political mechanisms for cooperation, but the sources do not indicate agreement on a common operational response to future disruptions. The SCO's wider diplomatic reach also merits monitoring considering that Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said on September 2, 2026, that Turkey would consider full SCO membership while maintaining its NATO and Western relationships. This indicates that some states view closer SCO engagement as

compatible with maintaining existing Western relationships rather than as an automatic strategic realignment.

### Outlook

The immediate priority for the 2026–27 Pakistani presidency will be converting the summit's economic proposals into functioning institutions and funded projects. The most important indicators are progress on the SCO Development Bank, agreement on its headquarters and operating structure, expansion of national-currency payment mechanisms, financing for transport and industrial projects, and implementation of the proposed digital and energy initiatives. • The higher-integration scenario would see the Development Bank established, payment mechanisms expanded and major transport and industrial projects funded. This would increase intra-SCO economic integration and strengthen members' capacity to conduct trade and investment through institutions established within the organisation. • The lower-integration scenario would leave most initiatives at the proposal or political-agreement stage because of the divergent interests among India, China, Pakistan, Russia, Iran and the Central Asian members could restrict implementation. The strongest near-term assessment is that the Bishkek summit increased political support for SCO economic cooperation but did not yet demonstrate the creation of a unified economic system. The distinction between agreed objectives and operational mechanisms will be critical when assessing the organisation's economic significance during Pakistan's 2026–27 presidency.

The article first appeared on *SpecialEurasia*.



From 2nd left to right: Leaders, namely Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Iran President Masoud Pezeshkian, Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, China President Xi Jinping, Kyrgyzstan President Sadyr Japarov, Russia President Vladimir Putin, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Tajikistan President Emomali Rakhmon and Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, pose for a photo prior to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on September 1, 2026. ● VYACHESLAV PROKOFYEV/AFP

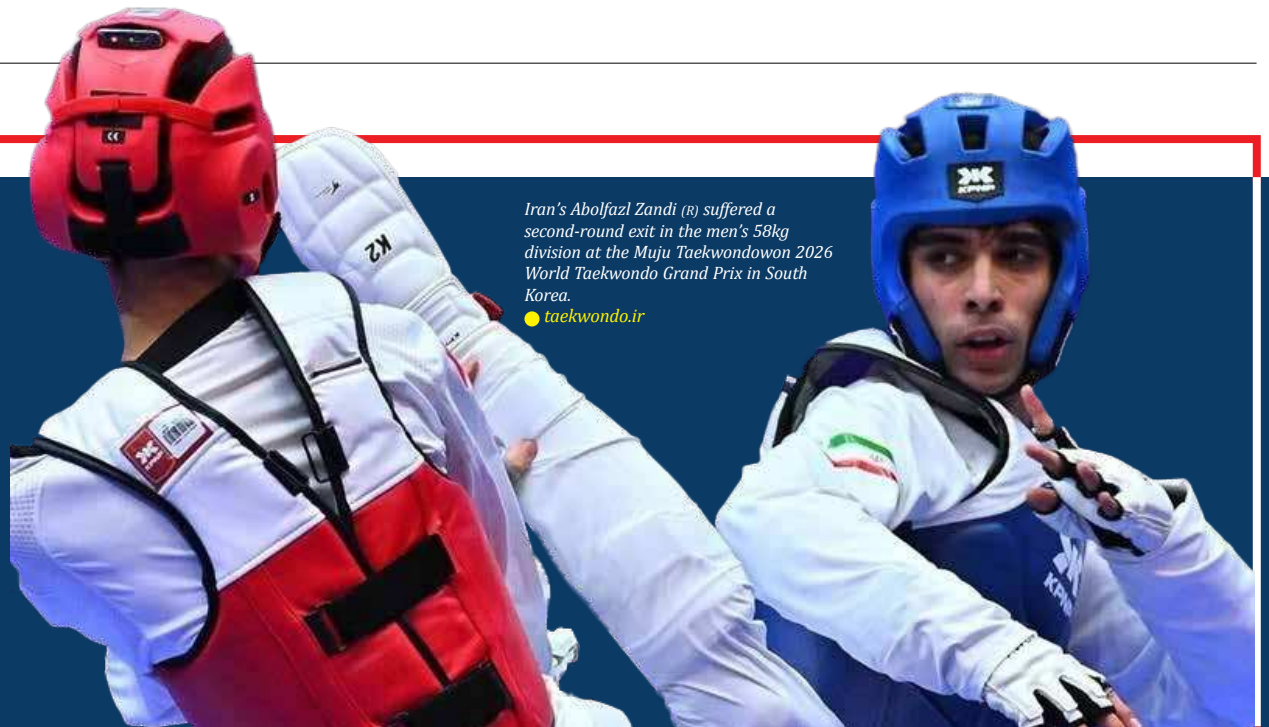


The summit's economic agenda shows that members want to increase practical cooperation in finance, trade, infrastructure, energy and technology. The proposed Development Bank is the clearest institutional initiative considering the huge challenges that Russia and Iran are facing because of the Western economic sanctions and their necessity to develop alternative payment arrangements.



Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian (L) is greeted by his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, before holding a bilateral talk on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on September 1, 2026. ● IRNA

# World Taekwondo Grand Prix Series: Zandi, Razmian crash out in second round



Iran's Abolfazl Zandi (R) suffered a second-round exit in the men's 58kg division at the Muju Taekwondowon 2026 World Taekwondo Grand Prix in South Korea.  
● taekwondo.ir

## Sports Desk

Iran's Abolfazl Zandi and Mahdi Razmian suffered second-round exits in the men's -58kg category on the opening day of the World Taekwondo Grand Prix Series event at Taekwondowon in Muju, South Korea, on Saturday. Reigning world and Olympic champion Zandi opened his campaign with a straight-round victory over Saudi Arabia's Riad Nasser Hamdi before suffering a 2-1 defeat to two-time world champion Bae Jun-seo of South Korea. Razmian, meanwhile, defeated Chinese Taipei's Pan Kuei-en 2-1 in his first outing but was undone by Croatia's Josip Teskera by the same scoreline.

Mehran Barkhordari and Asian champion Amirsina Bakhtiari are the other Iranians in the men's competition in Muju and will get their campaigns underway on Sunday. Olympic silver medalist Nahid Kiani will also be in action on Day 2, looking to bounce back from a shock first-round defeat at the WT Women's Open Championships last week in Taiyuan, China. She will compete in the women's -57kg event. Saturday's results came after Iranians had bagged one gold and two bronze medals at the World Para Taekwondo Grand Prix Series on the preceding day in the South Korean city. Five-time world champion and former Paralympic silver

medalist Mahdi Pourrahnama rounded out his men's K44 -80kg campaign with a final victory over Kazakhstan's Nurlan Dombayev, while Alireza Bakht - beaten by Pourrahnama in an all-Iranian semifinal - settled for bronze. Amirmohammad Haqiqatsheenas also finished with a consolation bronze in the men's competition after losing to Italian fourth seed Antonino Bossolo in the K44 -70kg class. The women's competition, however, was one to forget for Iran as Roza Ebrahimi (-52kg), Paralympic silver medalist Zahra Rahimi (-57kg), Parimah Tourani (-65kg) and Marziyeh Nasrollahi (+65kg) all missed out on the podium in their respective divisions.

## Ranking gains

Iranians have made significant gains in the latest World Taekwondo rankings following strong performances at the Chuncheon Korea Open, WT President's Cup and Women's World Open Championships. The latest rankings, released by World Taekwondo, cover the Olympic standings in four men's and three women's weight classes, as well as the world rankings across eight men's and seven women's divisions. Teenage prodigy Hana Zarrinkamar tops the Olympic women's +67kg rankings with 116 points. Zarrinkamar won gold at both the Korea Open and President's Cup before claiming silver at the Women's World Open Championships in Taiyuan. She is also

ranked No. 1 in the world in the +73kg division. Elsewhere in the women's rankings, Saghar Moradi climbed an impressive 58 places to fourth in the Olympic -67kg rankings with 58 points. Her bronze medal at the President's Cup and gold at the Women's World Open Championships were key to her rise. Nastaran Valizadeh is 11th in the Olympic -57kg standings and sixth in the world in the -62kg division, while Kiani is 29th in the Olympic -57kg rankings and 17th in the world in the same category. In the men's Olympic rankings, Zandi climbed 18 places to fourth in the -58kg division with 50 points, while Mahdi Hajimousaei also moved up 18

places to third in the Olympic -68kg rankings with 50 points after winning gold at the Chuncheon Open and President's Cup. He is ranked No. 1 in the world in the -63kg category. Danial Bozorgi made one of the biggest jumps in the latest rankings, soaring 256 places to 20th in the Olympic -68kg standings with 30 points after winning the President's Cup. He is also ranked 10th in the world in the -68kg division. Olympic champion Arian Salimi, meanwhile, climbed 12 places to third in the Olympic +80kg rankings with 50 points, while his compatriot Mohammad-Hossein Yazdani is 13th with 30 points. Yazdani is fifth in the world in the -87kg category.

## AVC Beach Volleyball Continental Championships: Iranian pairs bow out in knockouts

### Sports Desk

The AVC Beach Volleyball Continental Championships in Shangluo, China, was an event to forget for Iran after the country's two pairs suffered knockout-stage defeats in the men's competition. Abolhassan Khakizadeh and Amirali Ghalehovi saw their campaign end in the quarterfinals after falling in straight sets (24-22, 21-13) to hosts Wu Jiaxin and Zhou Chaowei on Saturday. The Iranian duo, which claimed an impressive silver medal at April's Asian Beach Games, began with a 2-0 victory over Sergey Bogatu and Kirill Gurin in Pool D, avenging their semifinal defeat to the Kazakh pair at the CAVA Championships in July. They then lost to pairs from Australia and Oman but still managed to progress to the round of 16 as runners-up in the group. The pair then defeated Japan's Kai Kurokawa and Ryuichi Adachi 2-0 (21-17, 23-21) to advance to the last eight. Saturday's setback came after Alireza Aqajani and Abbas Pourasgari, who won the Fans' Choice award at the inaugu-



● VOLLEYBALL WORLD

ral AVC Gala Awards last month, lost to Thailand's Tipjan Pithak and Muadpha Wachirawit 2-1 (21-17, 20-22, 15-11) in the first knockout round. Bronze medalists in the 2024 edition, the Iranian pair had beaten Australian and Uzbek duos either side of a 2-0 loss to Wu

Jiaxin and Zhou Chaowei to finish second behind the Chinese pair in Pool A. The event serves as a qualification pathway for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics, with the champions in each gender category securing a berth at the sporting extravaganza.

## Najafi wins Iran's third gold at World Nomad Games

### Sports Desk

Iran's Mostafa Najafi won the country's third gold medal at the 2026 World Nomad Games in Kyrgyzstan by claiming the top prize in the men's +100kg Güleş event. Najafi faced Azerbaijan's representative in the title bout and secured a convincing 6-1 victory to claim the gold medal. Güleş is a traditional Azerbaijani/Turkic form of belt wrestling. Najafi's gold came after Sajjad Soltaninejad and Reza Qeitasi had also triumphed in their respective events. Soltaninejad claimed the Strongman title, finishing atop the standings after three days of grueling competition and successfully negotiating a series of demanding and heavy events. Meanwhile, Qeitasi, Iran's flag bearer at the opening ceremony, won gold in the men's Tayak Tartysh on Wednesday, securing the first gold medal for the country's 130-athlete delegation. Tayak Tartysh, also known as mas-wrestling, is a strength contest originating from the Sakha, or Yakut, tradition. Two athletes sit facing each other with their feet braced against a board and compete by pulling on opposite ends of a short wooden stick. The aim is to pull the opponent across the board or take the stick away. Qeitasi also represented Iran at the 2024 World Nomad Games in Kazakhstan, finishing runner-up in the Strongman competition behind the representative of the host country. Sadeq Azarang got Iran off the mark on the opening day of the showpiece on Tuesday, settling for silver in the men's +90kg kurash class, which featured 22 contestants, after suffering defeat to Uz-

bekistan's Nomonjon Radjabov in the final.

An Asian Games gold medalist at Hangzhou 2022, the Iranian defeated opponents from the host country, Russia and Georgia before beating his Turkmen opponent to reach the final.

Mohsen Mirzaei, meanwhile, won silver in right-arm wrestling, while Iran's four-man team, comprising Nader Kazemi, Sajjad Jafari Gohari, Abbas Azimi and Hamidreza Saeed, also finished runner-up in the tug-of-war event.

Maryam Farahaninia won bronze in Tayak Tartysh, while Abolfazl Heydarimehr took bronze in Alysh. Mohaddeseh Tabarok also claimed two bronze medals in right- and left-arm wrestling, with Amirreza Sahraei earning bronze in Sarym wrestling and Hassan Pooladi finishing third in the men's 64kg sambo competition.



● IRNA

## IWBF Wheelchair Basketball World Championships:

## Iran's participation in doubt over visa denial

### Sports Desk

Iran's men's team may withdraw from the upcoming IWBF Wheelchair Basketball World Championships, which will kick off Wednesday in Ottawa, Canada, after the host country failed to issue entry visas to Iranian head coach Behrouz Soltani and his assistant. Iran is to begin its Group D campaign against Germany on the opening day of the competition before facing Morocco two days later, followed by a final group game against hosts Canada on Saturday. The top two teams from each of the two groups will progress to the quarterfinals.

"We still hope the issue will be resolved and that we can travel to Canada before the competition gets underway," Soltani's assistant, Mo-



● MNA

hammadreza Dastyar, who has also been denied a Canadian visa, told Mehr News Agency on Saturday, as the Iranian squad remains in Istanbul. Asked whether the national team would compete at the World Championships without the two main members of the coaching staff, Dastyar said the decision rests with the Iranian Ministry of Sports and the Sports Federation for the Enabled. With the World Championships serving as part of the Paralympic qualification pathway, a possible withdrawal could deal a major blow to the Iranian team, bronze medalists at the previous edition, in its bid to secure a berth at the LA 2028 Paralympics.

## Iranica Desk

The city of Anbaran in north-western Iran is seeking international recognition for its distinctive kilim-weaving tradition, following its designation in 2020 as Iran's "National City of Kilim." With around 3,500 kilim weavers, the city is now being considered for international recognition.

Most of Anbaran's residents are Sunni Muslims of the Shafi'i school. The city's neighborhoods developed from three former villages: Upper Anbaran, Lower Anbaran and Amin Jan.

Kilim weaving remains a thriving activity in Anbaran, with many families engaged in the craft. The city has gained considerable recognition as Iran's National City of Kilim and is considered to have strong potential for international recognition.

The delicate and skilled hands of Anbaran's kilim weavers bring vibrant colors to their looms, interlacing the weft to create patterns rich in memories and local traditions. Each kilim evokes a world of images, dreams and memories.

According to Yaser Ranaei, public relations director of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department of Ardabil Province, the National City of Kilim is one of the province's major centers for handicraft production. Around 5,000 handicraft artists in the city are engaged in producing kilims and other handmade products.

Anbaran's kilim weavers work both in workshops and individually, Ranaei said, adding that their products represent a major capacity for the handicraft sector in Ardabil Province.

"Given the existing potential, efforts are underway to turn Anbaran into a World Craft City, and its application is nearing completion," he said. "Some infrastructure needs to be developed and facilities provided, and support from senior provincial and national officials could help pave the way."

Ranaei said around 30,000 handicraft artists work in 60



● talartozi.com

fields across Ardabil Province. Anbaran kilims, he added, have much to offer in terms of form, design, color, quality, marketing and consumer appeal, and have earned a distinctive reputation. In addition to kilim weaving, Ardabil is known for a range of handicrafts, including leatherwork, filigree, Namin marquetry, jeweled and stone marquetry from Khalkhal, Jajim weaving, carpet weaving, Palaz weaving, Verni weaving, glass cutting, Masnad weaving, pottery, knife making, engraving and mosaic tilework.

Jalil Jabbari, director general of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department of Ardabil Province, has announced plans to revive Anbaran's handicrafts building and establish the secretariat of the National City of Kilim there.

"The handicrafts sector and artists of the National City of Kilim need support," Jabbari said. "Plans are underway to facilitate the activities of handicraft artists, particularly in cities designated as national handicraft cities."

He added that every available opportunity and facility would be used to improve working conditions for artisans. Training programs on kilim weaving and its motifs are also planned to preserve the authenticity of the craft. "However, if handicraft artists are not active and cooperative, our efforts in this field will be meaningless," he said.

Jabbari said plans are also in place to hold various exhibitions, particularly the National Handicrafts Exhibition of Ardabil, where Anbaran's artisans



● IRNA

will be invited to showcase their work and further promote the region's kilims.

Experts describe Anbaran kilim as one of the most distinctive handwoven crafts of Ardabil Province. Rooted in local traditions, it is known for the authenticity of its raw materials and its distinctive motifs.

The kilims are made from high-quality wool obtained from local sheep and dyed with natural plant-based colors, including madder, walnut husks and indigo. These materials give the textiles durability, softness and strong colorfastness.

Anbaran kilims are produced using a flat-weaving technique with a dense arrangement of warp and weft threads, giving them strength and a long service life for everyday use. Their

motifs are geometric and improvised, with designs inspired by nomadic culture and local symbolism and created without predetermined patterns.

The combination of natural materials, dense weaving and improvised geometric designs has made Anbaran kilim one of the most authentic and distinctive handwoven traditions in the region.

Ebrahim Sepidkar, head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department of Namin, said plans are underway to seek international recognition for Anbaran kilim. Around 3,500 kilim weavers with individual or workshop production licenses are currently active in the city.

He said the application for international recognition of Anbaran kilim is being prepared and finalized, adding that UNESCO

— the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization — has identified several criteria and indicators that Anbaran must meet for international recognition.

Some of these requirements, he said, involve naming the city's streets and parks after kilim-related designs, colors, names, terms and motifs. These measures are currently being pursued and implemented.

Other requirements concern the authenticity of the designs and motifs used in Anbaran kilims, he added.

Now, fragrant and colorful Anbaran is preparing for its bid for international recognition, hoping to showcase its authentic and historic art and culture and bring greater global attention to Ardabil Province and Iran.

## Izgam Dasht reveals centuries of human settlement in western Mazandaran

## Iranica Desk

Izgam Dasht, an archaeological site in western Mazandaran Province, has once again become a focus of specialized research into the region's historical and cultural past during the third season of archaeological excavations. Evidence dating from the Bronze Age to the Islamic period has been uncovered at the site, while the latest research, including absolute dating, genetic studies and the identification of part of the cemetery, is paving the way for broader excavations and the development of a site museum.

Mohammadreza Khal'atbari, head of the archaeological excavation team at Izgam Dasht, said the site is considered one of the key archaeological sites in western Mazandaran and that evidence from excavations conducted in 2017 and 2023 provides a picture of the continued presence and settlement of human communities there across different historical periods.

He added that, based on carbon-14 dating, communities associated with the Middle Bronze Age, dating to between 1600 and 2000 BCE, as well as the Iron Age, dating to between 500 and 1500 BCE, and later historical and Islamic periods have been



identified at Izgam Dasht.

"These findings further underscore the importance of the site in reconstructing the cultural and historical developments of western Mazandaran," he said. Khal'atbari noted that the findings from the first excavation season were published in a book titled Ramsar in the Context of History. He said the archaeological discoveries are valuable not only for understanding the region's settlement cultures but also for reconstructing aspects of the social and cultural history of communities that lived in western Mazandaran.

Referring to plans for protecting

and introducing the archaeological site, Khal'atbari said Izgam Dasht has been designated as a site museum since 2023 in view of the significant remains and evidence uncovered there. Measures including defining the site boundaries, proposing a protected zone and preparing its registration dossier have been completed, paving the way for its inclusion on Iran's national heritage list.

He emphasized that designating Izgam Dasht as a site museum is intended to link the protection of the archaeological site with continued research and the presentation of its cultural



● FARS NEWS AGENCY

achievements to the public. The initiative could transform the site from a purely research-oriented area into an active cultural and tourism asset in western Mazandaran.

Khal'atbari said the third season of excavations is aimed at completing previous studies and developing a more comprehensive picture of the human communities that inhabited the site. One of the main objectives is to conduct absolute dating on human remains discovered at Izgam Dasht.

Genetic studies of the human remains are also being conducted to shed new light, using modern

scientific methods, on the biological and population history of the communities associated with the site.

The excavation team has also located part of the site's cemetery, Khal'atbari said, adding that identifying and mapping sections of the cemetery will provide a basis for designing broader excavations and making more precise plans for the construction and development of the site museum.

He said the current research program is being conducted through an interdisciplinary approach, involving specialists in archaeology, physical anthro-

pology, biological anthropology, architecture and design. This approach will allow researchers to study the findings more comprehensively and reconstruct various aspects of the lives, social structure and biological characteristics of the communities that inhabited Izgam Dasht.

Khal'atbari said the studies and research carried out during the latest excavation season seek to go beyond identifying and documenting archaeological remains and reconstruct aspects of the culture and civilization of the human communities associated with the site.

The archaeological significance of western Mazandaran is rooted in a long history of human settlement along the southern shores of the Caspian Sea. The region's fertile valleys, forests, rivers and proximity to the Alborz Mountains created favorable conditions for human communities from prehistoric times onward. Archaeological research has documented settlements and cultural remains from the prehistoric periods through the Bronze and Iron ages and into the historical and Islamic periods, although the archaeological record of western Mazandaran remains less extensively studied than that of some other parts of the Caspian region.



# Pezeshkian calls students Iran's main national asset

## Modern education set to focus on 'practical skills, creativity, problem-solving'

### Social Desk

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian on Saturday described students as Iran's "main reserves" and the country's future builders as he inaugurated the country's first smart police boarding high school in Tehran, calling education the most vital issue for Iran's future. Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Sepahbod Shahid Mohammad Bagheri Educational and Cultural Complex, Pezeshkian said Iran's education system must move beyond conventional schooling and equip students to turn scientific knowledge into practical capabilities, president.ir reported.

"Our students and children are our main assets," Pezeshkian said. "If their talents are allowed to flourish, we will never bow before our enemies." The president said natural resources such as oil, gas and mineral deposits were discoveries and achievements of humanity, while Iran's true reserves were its students. A transformed education system, he argued, could help young people become problem-solvers and contributors across every field. "We must educate students in a way that enables them to turn their scientific abilities into action," he said. Pezeshkian stressed that quali-



ty education should encompass teamwork, problem-solving, effective communication and man-

agement, alongside academic instruction. Developing such skills, he said, would foster dynamic and



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks during the inauguration of the country's first smart police boarding high school, in Tehran, Iran, September 5, 2026. ● president.ir

creative minds capable of moving beyond routine approaches. He also called for closer coordination among government bodies and greater cross-sector cooperation to support Iran's development. "For building Iran and achieving progress, our thoughts and ideas must be aligned," he said, urging institutions to pool their expertise and make fuller use of the country's intellectual capacity.

Pezeshkian said the newly opened complex should not be viewed simply as a school building, but as part of a broader effort to modernize education and maximize the use of educational infrastructure. Referring to the recent war, the president condemned what he described as an "inhumane and anti-human" assault by the United States and Israel, saying no words could fully convey the gravity of the actions. He stressed that Iran's future depended on cultivating a generation with knowledge, skills, creativity and a commitment to serving the country. "Our children are the builders of tomorrow," Pezeshkian said.

## Soltaniyeh Dome restoration begins as 14-hectare site set for revival



By Sadeq Dehqan  
Staff writer

### INTERVIEW

The Director General of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts for Zanjan Province has announced the launch of a restoration and revitalization program for the Soltaniyeh Dome, the world's largest brick dome, saying funding has been earmarked for restoring the dome itself and rehabilitating and revitalizing the 14-hectare grounds surrounding the World Heritage site.

Mikaeil Mousavi, speaking to Iran Daily, said funds were set aside for the restoration and revitalization of the Soltaniyeh complex during last year's visit



Mikaeil Mousavi

by the president to Zanjan Province, as well as during the visit by the minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts. Implementation of the project began this year. He added that provincial funding will also be used to restore the Soltaniyeh Dome. The provincial governor's office has also contributed to the project, allocating funding from its urban regeneration budget to revitalize, upgrade and prepare the grounds surrounding the World Heritage site. Mousavi said the Soltaniyeh Dome occupies a site of about 14 hectares and that the restoration plan covers both the monument itself and its surrounding grounds. "Our plan is not limited to restoring the structure itself. We also intend to rehabilitate and revitalize the grounds so they can better serve both tourists and local residents," he said.

As part of the restoration plan, the dome itself will undergo conservation work, while a large wooden door will be installed on the eastern side of the structure to serve as an entrance for visitors. Measuring approximately 3 by 9 meters, the door is intended to help organize visitor access and the circulation route through the site.

Mousavi also referred to archaeological excavations carried out on the eastern side of the Soltaniyeh Dome, saying the areas uncovered during those excavations will be restored and organized so that the archaeological features identified there can be preserved, revitalized and prepared for public viewing. "The eastern wall of the complex will also be restored," he said, adding that efforts are being made to organize these sections in a way that allows visitors to make better use of the complex.

### Restoration of large inscription beneath the dome

Mousavi identified the large inscription beneath the dome as another important component of the restoration project. "There is a large inscription beneath the Soltaniyeh Dome that requires restoration, and this section has also been included in the conservation plan," he said. The dome stands approximately 48 meters high, presenting particular challenges for restoration work on the inscription and other elevated sections of the interior. Scaffolding is currently installed inside the dome. Mousavi said one of the priorities emphasized by the minister of Cultural Heritage is to accelerate restoration work and remove the scaffolding as soon as possible in order to improve the appearance and visual quality of the complex's interior.



### Revitalizing 14-hectare Soltaniyeh grounds

Mousavi also outlined plans to revitalize the 14-hectare grounds surrounding the Soltaniyeh Dome, saying the work will be carried out in cooperation with the provincial governor's office and Soltaniyeh Municipality. The governor's office has allocated funding for the project from its urban regeneration budget. In cooperation with the municipality, officials are working to rehabilitate the 14-hectare site and prepare it for public use. Mousavi said part of the grounds could eventually be converted into an urban park, noting that the Soltaniyeh Dome complex is located within the city. "Rehabilitating these grounds will not only contribute to tourism but also have a significant impact on the city's appearance and urban landscape," he said. He described the revitalization of the grounds as a demand of both Soltaniyeh residents and visitors to the site. "Our goal is to turn this historic space, in addition to preserving its heritage value, into an appropriate environment for residents and tourists," Mousavi said. He added that visitors should not come to the complex solely to see the dome itself. The surrounding grounds should also offer an attractive setting for recreation, walking and sightseeing.

### Restoration work gets under way

Mousavi said the groundwork

for implementing the project has already been completed.

"Preparatory work has begun, and implementation of the plans to restore the dome itself and rehabilitate the grounds is also being pursued," he said. He added that the necessary coordination with the municipality had been completed regarding the grounds and that officials are now awaiting the release of the funding earmarked by the provincial governor's office. Once those funds are provided, he said, work to revitalize the grounds can move forward more quickly.

Mousavi expressed hope that, with the remaining funding secured and continued cooperation among the relevant agencies, restoration of the dome and revitalization of the 14-hectare grounds would proceed satisfactorily and be completed and opened to the public by next year.

### Soltaniyeh Dome: Zanjan's world heritage landmark

Mousavi concluded by underscoring the significance of the Soltaniyeh Dome, describing it as one of Zanjan Province's most prominent historic monuments and one of Iran's most important architectural landmarks. "As a site inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, it belongs to all the people of Iran as well as the global community," he said. He stressed that the Cultural Heritage authorities are seeking, through restoration work and the rehabilitation of the surrounding grounds, to create conditions in which the Soltaniyeh Dome can be visited and experienced more fully and in a manner befitting its historic and global significance.

## Iran broadens UNESCO bid for Persian mosque heritage ahead of 2027 submission

### Arts & Culture Desk

Iran has expanded its proposed UNESCO World Heritage nomination for the country's historic mosques, with 17 provinces now seeking to put forward sites and the submission targeted for 2027, Alireza Izadi, director general of the Office for Registration and Protection of Historic and Natural Heritage, said.

UNESCO added the "Persian Mosque" serial nomination to Iran's Tentative List in December 2024, ILNA reported. The nomination initially began with 26 candidate mosques but has since grown as provinces put forward additional historic sites. Izadi said the delay would allow the Cultural Heritage Ministry to broaden and strengthen the dossier before sending it to UNESCO. "Competition" among provinces has intensified, he said, with Semnan and Borujerd among the areas seeking to include prominent historic mosques in the national nomination.

The expanded approach could turn the dossier into a more comprehensive account of Iranian mosque architecture rather than a limited selection of individual monuments. Izadi said the ministry wants to identify the strongest examples from across the country and present the architectural tradition as a connected historical development. More than 1,000 mosques nationwide have reportedly been reviewed during the preparation process, with successive rounds of screening narrowing the field. Recent ministry reports have identified 52 mosques across 17 provinces as candidates for consideration.

Semnan's Jameh Mosque is among the newer proposals, alongside Tarikhaneh of



Damghan and the Jameh Mosque of Forumad. In Borujerd, the more than 1,200-year-old Jameh Mosque is also being considered, offering a distinctive example of the architectural transition that followed the advent of Islam in Iran.

The existing UNESCO tentative nomination comprises at least 17 historic mosques, including the Jameh mosques of Fahraj, Saveh, Neyriz, Natanz, Isfahan, Ardestan, Zavareh, Yazd, Gonabad and Nain, as well as Tarikhaneh in Damghan and several major Safavid and Qajar-era mosques. UNESCO describes it as a serial nomination illustrating the development of Persian mosque architecture over centuries.

Izadi said the objective is not simply to secure recognition for a handful of monuments but to showcase the depth of Iranian architectural heritage and its evolution across the Islamic era. "If a mosque meets the necessary criteria," it can be considered for inclusion, he said, stressing that the nomination could ultimately encompass sites from across Iran. The ministry now plans to complete its expanded review and prepare the "Persian Mosque" dossier for submission in 2027, potentially giving UNESCO a broader picture of the country's distinctive mosque-building tradition.