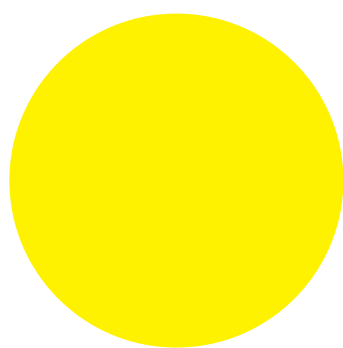


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The photo shows a general view of the 63rd session of United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council in Geneva, on September 7, 2026.

AFP

OPINION



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US push to refer Iran's nuclear case to UN signals strategic confusion

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

The United States, along with Britain, France and Germany, is seeking to have the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors adopt a resolution next week referring Iran's nuclear case to the UN Security Council for the first time in 20 years. Following two aggressions against Iran in 2025 and 2026, the US has claimed that the country's nuclear facilities were completely destroyed. Against this backdrop, it is unclear what Washington hopes to achieve by pushing ahead with such moves at international bodies. Omid Khazani, an international affairs analyst, told Iran Daily that the moves reflect strategic confusion within the Trump



Omid Khazani

administration, driven by flawed assumptions, and that even if they go ahead, they are unlikely to have any tangible impact on Iran's current situation.

IRAN DAILY: How feasible is this course of action by the US and the three European states? If it goes ahead, what would be the most important consequences of each of these two measures for the Islamic Republic of Iran?
KHAZANI: There is a very high possibility that the Board of Governors, which is under the influence of the United States and European countries, will adopt the resolution and send it on to the Security Council. But the chances of the Security Council imposing specific sanctions on Iran are very low, given that Russia and China are highly likely to veto any such measure. Even assuming that the Board of Governors adopts the resolution and a new measure is also adopted at the UN, there will be no sanctions different from what the snapback mechanism could have imposed. The snapback itself

did not bring about any tangible change, because when a country is already under severe US sanctions, nothing fundamentally new is going to happen. The snapback proved this. In fact, once something has been sanctioned, it cannot be sanctioned again. As for why Europe is going along with the United States, it is because European countries see these measures as the least costly way to portray themselves as aligned with Washington. If they had wanted to provide serious support to the United States, they would have joined the war against Iran, which they did not.

If Iran's case is referred to the Security Council, can Russia and China be expected to use their veto power to block a resolution against Iran?
Thirteen years ago, China was not as powerful as it is today, and Russia was not facing a crisis it is facing today due to the Ukraine war. At that time, their interests dictated that they go along with the international community, even

against Iran. Therefore, there is roughly a more than 95% chance that Russia and China will veto the Europeans' new move against Iran, because Russia is now at odds with Europe and the United States. Iran's isolation and defeat would, in a sense, also amount to Russia's defeat in the Ukraine war. China's interests also make it unlikely to align with the United States on this issue, because China's interests lie in a multipolar world. The Chinese certainly view a unipolar world led by the United States as being against their interests. Moreover, in 2026, after and with the United States' unvarnished image in today's world, where wars and sanctions have thrown the international system into turmoil, the Global South is pursuing the dismantling of the unipolar order much more seriously. These countries are seeking to challenge this unipolar world, which is a world of lawlessness and bullying. As a result, Russia and China are guided primarily by their own national interests, which leave

little room for cooperation with the United States on this issue. At the same time, their efforts to strengthen the Global South and promote a multipolar world would make it harder for this new US strategy to succeed.

The United States claims that its recent attacks severely damaged Iran's nuclear facilities. What, then, is Washington seeking to achieve by pursuing this issue through the IAEA and the UN Security Council?
This contradiction is precisely the result of the strategic confusion surrounding Donald Trump and his administration. In June 2025, and even in January 2026, an agreement similar to the JCPOA (2015 nuclear deal), and perhaps even better, was completely within reach. The United States and President Trump fell into [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu's trap. With the narcissistic personality he had, he was seeking a quick and short victory in Iran, and this was based on false assumptions. Those false assumptions were that

the Iranian military and the Iranian government would collapse after a four- or five-day war and as a result of several missiles being fired at Tehran. None of the previous US presidents had fallen into Netanyahu's trap. But Trump did, and that became a turning point that paved the way for subsequent mistakes. The nuclear case, which could have been resolved in February 2026 and even in June 2025 through an agreement similar to the JCPOA, instead turned into an escalating crisis because of these false assumptions. An "escalation ladder," so to speak, was created, and the United States became trapped in it. Not only were Trump and his administration unable to resolve Iran's nuclear issue, but a new crisis at the Strait of Hormuz was also added to the equation. Such moves at the UN Security Council will not produce any new outcome, because if you pursue 10 different approaches based on the same false assumption, they will simply produce the same result.

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Iran urges accountability for perpetrators of aggression against country

International Desk

Iran's mission to the United Nations in Geneva called for those responsible for the US and Israeli aggression against Iran to be held accountable, as the UN Human Rights Council opened its 63rd session.

The Iranian mission in a message on X said the council had a responsibility to address attacks against civilians and pursue the rights of victims and survivors of the US-Israeli acts of aggression which began on February 28.

The mission said that with the opening of the 63rd session, Iran is once again reaffirming its commitment to bringing the voices of victims and survivors of US and Israeli actions to the fore.

It said the Human Rights Council has a mandate to address violations of human rights and humanitarian law arising from conflicts, including "indiscriminate and deliberate attacks on infrastructure and civilian targets in Iran".

It specifically referred to US's military attacks on Iran's southern cities

of Minab and Lamerd on the first day of its aggression, saying such attacks in both cases constituted clear war crimes.

At least 168 civilians, mostly children, were killed following the US missile attack on Shajareh Tayyebbeh Elementary School in Minab during the opening hours of the US-Israeli aggression against Iran. The US also targeted a civilian sports hall in the city of Lamerd in Fars Province, killing 24 innocent Iranians and injuring over 130 others.

Attacks on Iran's tankers

Separately, Iran's High Council for Human Rights said in a statement condemned recent attacks by the US against Iranian vessels in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, saying that the strikes are contrary to fundamental principles of international law, human rights standards and obligations relating to the preservation of international peace and security.

The statement said that under international humanitarian law, any military operation against civilian vessels,



UN High commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk (3rd L) delivers his speech during the 63rd session of United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council, in Geneva, on September 7, 2026.

● AFP

including oil tankers, while they were travelling through international shipping routes and the region's strategic waterways constitutes a clear violation of the principle of distinction and is incompatible with human rights standards and obligations to maintain international peace and security.

The statement came days after the US Central Command (CENTCOM), which oversees American military operations in the region, launched attacks on three Iranian tankers in the Persian Gulf and in the Gulf of Oman.

In response, Iran said on Sunday that it attacked a US naval drone trying to enter the Strait of Hormuz, hours after targeting ships in retaliation for American strikes on three oil tankers.

The tit-for-tat attacks came as the US



has intensified its aggression against Iran in recent days, carrying out strikes on several locations across the country. last week, US military bombed 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 warns of retaliation over European move at IAEA

International Desk

Iran will take countermeasures if a new draft resolution by European countries and the United States at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is adopted, potentially paving the way for the country's nuclear file to be referred to the UN Security Council, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei said.

Reacting to the draft, Baqaei said the European countries appeared to turn to Iran's nuclear issue whenever they fall short in other areas, or that the IAEA director general himself is making the agency available for political pressure on Iran.

"It seems that whenever the European countries fall short in other areas, they turn to the nuclear file, or conversely, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency himself offers himself up for exploitation so that they can exert political pressure on Iran," Baqaei said during his weekly press conference.

He said the move would reinforce the legal position of Iran, China and Russia that the so-called "snapback" mechanism was illegal and could not be "applied".

Baqaei described the preparation of the draft as "a repetition of a harmful path" and said the three European countries (France, Germany,



Britain) had been "sidelined" in relation to Iran's nuclear file.

He added that Tehran had repeatedly advised the three European countries to learn from an Iranian lesson: "Trying what has already been tried is a mistake."

He also stressed that inspections by the IAEA were no longer possible because US and Israeli attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities had blocked the way forward.

"The reason the IAEA cannot access Iran's nuclear centers and facilities is the crime committed by the United States and the Israeli regime by attacking Iran's nuclear facilities. They themselves blocked this path and are now blaming Iran for the IAEA's inability to access its nuclear facilities. This defeats the purpose," Baqaei said.

The US, Britain, France and Germany are seeking a resolution by

the UN nuclear watchdog's board reporting Iran to the UN Security Council for the first time in 20 years, according to diplomats and the proposed text seen by Reuters. If passed, the resolution would follow up on one adopted on June 12 of last year declaring Iran in breach of its non-proliferation obligations for not fully cooperating with an investigation into uranium traces found at undeclared sites. Israel started bombing Iran's nuclear facilities the next day, soon joined by the US Iran's uranium-enrichment plants were destroyed or badly damaged.

Iran has not let IAEA inspectors return to the bombed sites since then due to safety issues.

A resolution by the IAEA's 35-nation board reporting Iran to the Security Council would also be the culmination of a standoff over IAEA access to those sites, since the board has passed two resolutions in the past year demanding Iran declare its enriched uranium stocks and grant the IAEA full access to verify them.

"(The board) requests the (IAEA) Director General to transmit this resolution and the previously adopted resolutions ... to all Members of the Agency and to the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations," said the latest resolution draft seen by Reuters.

US push to ...

What options does Iran have to manage the issue of IAEA inspections while preventing it from becoming a new source of pressure on the country?

Given the developments of the past year and a half, during which the United States illegally attacked Iranian facilities that were under the supervision of the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency, the question is how much Iran can continue cooperating with an agency that has not

even condemned the unilateral and illegal attacks by the United States and Israel. The IAEA has called its own legitimacy into question. Iran's level of cooperation with the IAEA will certainly not return to what it was before June 2025.

If the United States seeks to turn up the pressure on Iran, for example by using tactical nuclear weapons against underground nuclear facilities, a country facing such discussions cannot simply ignore them. How extensive this cooperation will

be, how far US pressure will go, and whether Iran will remain in the NPT will all depend on developments in the coming days and weeks. But given the confusion the United States is experiencing, there does not appear to be much of a positive outcome ahead.

Iran's level of official and safeguards cooperation will certainly become much, much lower, and this will not impose significant additional pressure on Iran in the absence of cooperation from Russia and China.

'Strike our assets and you will get struck,' Qalibaf warns US

Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf warned the United States that any attack on Iran's oil and gas assets will draw retaliation against American energy interests across the region. Qalibaf issued the stark warning in a post on X on Monday in response to recent threats by US War Secretary Pete Hegseth, who had claimed that Iran's oil tanker fleet is "defenseless" and that American planes, ships and submarines can strike them all, Press TV reported.

The top Iranian parliamentarian said US oil and gas companies operating across the region and at related facilities are accessible, warning, "Strike our assets and you get struck."

"It's simple: the oil and gas production chain here is sprawling, accessible, and exposed."

Qalibaf said Iran had already demonstrated its ability to respond in kind, emphasizing, "Ask the bases that are no longer viable."

His remarks came amid escalating tensions between Tehran and Washington over the Strait of Hormuz. Iran has restricted transit through the Strait of Hormuz since the early days of the US-Israeli war of aggression that began on February 28 and came to a halt under a ceasefire in early April amid the Islamic Republic's brave resistance and



successful retaliatory operations.

On June 17, Tehran and Washington signed the Pakistan-brokered Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), whose Article 5 places responsibility for reopening and managing the strait squarely in Iran's hands.

However, the US attempted to undermine Iran's sovereignty over the vital global energy chokepoint by establishing an unsafe corridor near the Omani shores. The US also resumed its aerial assaults on Iran and imposed a naval blockade of the country in violation of the war-ending deal.

The unlawful US measures prompted Iran to declare the Strait of Hormuz closed to all traffic.

The Islamic Republic has stressed that the reopening of the critical waterway depends on US compliance with its obligations under the MoU.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Tehran stocks hit record 6.9m points on strong buying

Economy Desk

Tehran's main stock index closed at a record high on Monday, breaking through the 6.9-million-point level for the first time as the market extended its recent rally. Trading was marked by successive records from the opening minutes, with the index jumping 2.5% to enter the 6.8-million-point range. Buying queues remained strong through the session, keeping the market firmly in positive territory. By the close, the benchmark index had gained 184,000 points, or 2.7%, to reach 6,907,000 points, according to IRNA. The equal-weighted index also rose 48,000 points to about 1.9 million. Shares of Mobarakeh Steel Company (FMLY) and Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (FARS)



contributed 34,000 and 15,000 points, respectively, to the benchmark's rise, while Amin Investment Bank (AKO) and Bank Melat (VBMELAT) were among the most actively traded stocks.

Total trading value reached 2 quadrillion rials, equivalent to approximately \$895 million, while retail trading stood at 378 trillion rials, or roughly \$169 million. The over-the-counter in-

dex also advanced 1,302 points, reaching 5,366 points for the first time. The strong performance follows a 20.4% monthly gain in Tehran's price index in June, placing the exchange second among

75 major stock markets worldwide, according to the World Federation of Exchanges. Tehran's price index rose 20.4% from the previous month to 884,239 points in June, the federation's latest report showed. The gains came after months of heavy pressure on the Tehran bourse from wartime conditions, political uncertainty and a prolonged suspension of trading, which had prompted many investors to take a cautious approach. Trading on the Tehran Stock Exchange resumed on May 19 after an 80-day suspension. Iranian equities ended the first session higher than expected, showing early signs of stability after the prolonged halt caused by the war. The stock market had been closed since Feb. 28 following US and Israeli aggression against Iran.

Kazakhstan deepens trade, transit links through Iran

Economy Desk

PERSPECTIVE

For Kazakhstan, one of the world's largest landlocked countries, access to secure and efficient transit routes to southern ports is strategically important. Iran has long been a key link between Central Asia and the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean, and in recent years Kazakhstan has moved beyond simply using Iranian transit routes to pursuing dedicated infrastructure and a longer-term port presence.

Rail links anchor southern trade

Transit and logistics cooperation between Kazakhstan and Iran has developed steadily since the formal opening in December 2014 of the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran railway. The international rail link connected Kazakhstan's railway network with Iran's and provided an overland route to Persian Gulf ports. The route has since become an important part of Kazakhstan's trade links to southern markets. Official figures show that cargo transit through the International North-South Transport Corridor rose 12% in 2025 to 3.5 million metric tons. Direct rail traffic between Kazakhstan and Iran increased 69% over the same period. The growth continued in 2026. In the first five months of the year, rail freight between Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan exceeded 1 million metric tons, up 46% from a year earlier. The China-Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran route has also expanded the reach of the broader transit network. Kazakhstan has also taken steps to establish a dedicated logistics presence in Iran. In June 2026, the two countries signed an agreement allowing Kazakhstan to build a dedicated transit and logistics terminal at Shahid Rajaei port near Bandar Abbas in southern Hormozgan Province. The project will be developed under a build-operate-transfer (BOT) model. A 15-hectare site has been allocated for the terminal, with the contract covering 27 years, including two years of construction and 25 years of operation by Kazakh companies. Commercial operations are expected to begin in the third year. The terminal will allow Kazakhstan to store, handle, process and distribute transit cargo for markets in the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia and East Africa. The arrangement does not constitute sovereign ownership of the port.

Caspian routes provide another option

Kazakhstan is also seeking to make greater use of the Caspian Sea. The proposed network would link the Kazakh ports of Aktau and Kuryk with Iran's northern Caspian ports, including Amirabad and Anzali. The multimodal route is particularly relevant to Kazakhstan's agricultural exports, including grain and food products. Cargo could move across the Caspian to northern Iran before continuing toward southern ports such as Bandar Abbas. Chabahar is another potential gateway. Kazakhstan's participation in the development of the Iranian port remains at an earlier, study-stage phase than the Shahid Rajaei project. Located on Iran's Gulf of Oman coast, outside the Strait of Hormuz, Chabahar provides direct access to the Indian Ocean. The completion of the Chabahar-Zahedan railway project by mid-2026 has further advanced the port's connection to Iran's national rail network. Once fully connected, the route will provide Central Asian landlocked countries, including Kazakhstan, with another link to markets in India and the wider subcontinent. Shahid Rajaei and Chabahar would thus provide complementary routes, linking Kazakhstan to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean respectively.

Growing transit capacity

The expansion of transit cooperation comes as bilateral trade continues to grow. Official statistics show that trade between Kazakhstan and Iran rose 26.4% in 2025 to \$430.2 million, although that remains below the \$3 billion target set by the two countries. Meeting that target will require further development of rail, customs and logistics infrastructure. The two sides have agreed to increase annual transit capacity on the eastern branch of the North-South corridor to 15 million metric tons by 2027 and 20 million metric tons by 2030. Achieving those targets will require continued investment, preferential tariffs and shorter border-clearance times. The expansion of rail links, Caspian routes and access to Iran's southern ports reflects Kazakhstan's efforts to diversify its trade routes and strengthen connections with markets beyond Central Asia.

This article first appeared in Persian on Tasnim.

Iran expects 3m liter daily drop in gasoline use after price change

Economy Desk

Iran expects gasoline consumption to fall by at least 3 million liters a day and CNG use to increase after raising the price of gasoline sold through emergency fuel cards at service stations, the head of the National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company said on Monday. Karamat Veys-Karami, speaking on live television, said the price of gasoline sold through emergency fuel cards, which account for most sales through station cards, would rise from 50,000 rials to 100,000 rials starting at midnight on Tuesday. "The first and second rates and their corresponding quotas will remain unchanged," he said, according to Mehr news agency. After years of challenges in the energy sector, Iran introduced a three-tier gasoline pricing system in December. Under the scheme, gasoline dispensed

through emergency fuel cards at service stations was priced at 50,000 rials (\$0.022) per liter, up from 30,000 rials (\$0.0135). Gasoline has since been sold at three rates based on monthly consumption: 15,000 rials (\$0.0067) per liter for the first 60 liters, 30,000 rials (\$0.0135) for the next 100 liters and 50,000 rials (\$0.022) for consumption above 160 liters. Veys-Karami said the aim of the latest adjustment was to reduce reliance on emergency fuel cards at service stations, according to ISNA. "Since December 2025, following implementation of the Cabinet resolution, the use of free fuel cards at service stations has fallen from 43% to 26%," he said. Turning to the country's CNG capacity, Veys-Karami said Iran had substantial capacity to supply vehicles with compressed natural gas. "We have 2,500 CNG stations

across the country and can supply 40 million cubic meters of CNG to vehicles," he said. He added that Iran has 4.3 million dual-fuel gasoline and CNG vehicles and said greater use of CNG by those vehicles could help reduce gasoline consumption. On gasoline production and consumption, he said, "There is a 10-million-liter gap between gasoline production and consumption; in other words, we are 10-million liters short every day." "Since the beginning of this year, which started on March 21, gasoline production averaged 122 million liters and consumption 132 million liters in the first five months, leaving a 10-million-liter gap," he said. In the sixth month of the year, the average daily distribution of gasoline reached 145 million liters, Veys-Karami said, adding that the gap between production and consumption remained substantial during the month.

President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Friday that his government would seek to curb gasoline consumption gradually, mainly through "non-price measures," and would avoid abrupt decisions that could shock the public. Pezeshkian made the remarks at a meeting on the country's energy shortage, where officials reviewed gasoline production, reserves and distribution, as well as pilot projects in several provinces and measures to strengthen the resilience of the energy sector. Already under Western sanctions over its nuclear program, Iran also faces restrictions on trade through its southern ports amid a US naval blockade imposed as part of Washington's pressure campaign following a 40-day US-Israeli war that began in late February. The blockade has constrained Tehran's trade options, including in the energy sector.

Dayyer port prepares for first vehicle shipment from Qatar

Economy Desk

Iran's Dayyer port has prepared the necessary facilities to receive its first shipment of imported cars from Qatar, with the cargo set to undergo customs clearance or transit procedures after arrival, the head of the port and maritime affairs office said on Monday. "Imported vehicles, after entering Dayyer port, will undergo procedures for final customs clearance or transit," Kiamars Jokar said, ISNA reported. Speaking to reporters on Monday, Jokar said activity at Dayyer port in southern Bushehr Province remained strong, describing it as one of Iran's most active and dynamic ports and highlighting its role in supporting supply chains, expanding maritime trade and meeting the country's

needs. "Imported vehicles, after entering Dayyer port, will undergo procedures for final customs clearance as well as transit, which is a turning point in the development of the port's commercial activities and could create new and sustainable trade capacity in vehicle imports and clearance," he said. Exports from Dayyer have also returned to a regular daily schedule following a months-long interruption, Jokar said, adding that shipments were proceeding without interruption. "Major export commodities include various fruits and vegetables, seafood and other goods. Maintaining this trend will help preserve target markets while playing an important role in expanding non-oil exports, supporting domestic producers and generating

foreign exchange for the country," he said. Jokar also pointed to the ongoing unloading of commercial and essential goods at the port. "Imported goods from various origins, a significant portion of which are essential commodities and goods needed by the country, are being unloaded at the port without interruption, in compliance with requirements and with the necessary speed and precision," he said. Iran restored exports to Qatar in July after a wartime suspension, following the reopening of Qatar's Al Ruwais customs terminal, which allowed shipments from Iran to restart. The conflict had disrupted shipping and logistics operations across the Persian Gulf. The expansion of Dayyer's role comes as Iran seeks



to diversify its logistics routes amid restrictions on trade corridors, redirecting cargo operations toward northern ports as well as ports in Pakistan, India and Oman after activity at Jebel Ali was disrupted during the conflict. Iran had relied heavily on trade routes through the United Arab Emirates. When the UAE barred Iranian vessels from loading

or unloading cargo at Jebel Ali, a significant portion of trade effectively ground to a halt. The continuing US naval blockade of Iran's southern ports has further narrowed Tehran's trade options as part of broader efforts to force an agreement following the 40-day war with US and Israeli forces that began in late February.

GETTY

Reverse Kindleberger Trap

Reasons to worry about next financial crisis



By David Lubin

Former head of emerging markets economics at Citi

OPINION

A worrying feature of the next big financial crisis is that we may lack a dominant power able and willing to stabilise the international economic order. That would certainly have been the view of the late economic historian Charles Kindleberger, who argued that the length and depth of the 1930s Depression was due to the failure of either Great Britain or the US to act as a responsible hegemon in the global economy.

Kindleberger's view was that an impoverished Great Britain, the declining hegemon, was unable to provide leadership; and that an isolationist US, the rising hegemon, was unwilling. Hence, the eponymous trap.

And so, the world lacked an open trading system, any credible coordination of economic policies, or a reliable international lender of last resort.

"When every country turned to protect its national private interest, the world public interest went down the drain, and with it, the private interests of all." These days, though, the new Kindleberger Trap is a bit different to the original.

Now, risk stems not so much from the unwillingness of the rising hegemon in Beijing to help stabilise the system; but rather from the unwillingness of the incumbent hegemon in Washington. A "reverse Kindleberger Trap," if you like.

The 2008 crisis

That will be new since unwillingness certainly didn't feature in the way the US managed the fallout of the Lehman crisis in 2008.

Back then, huge amounts of dollar liquidity were provided through a network of collateralised lending facilities to global banks, especially in Europe, which had built up very large reliance on dollar funding.

In addition, the Fed's QE programme itself provided huge direct support to the international financial system: more than half the Fed's purchases of mortgage-backed securities were sold to it by foreign firms.

And 14 central banks had access to substantial amounts of dollar liquidity

from the Fed's currency swap lines. By the summer of 2010, the Fed had supplied \$10 trillion at various maturities. Of course, the US acted in its own self-interest. If the Fed hadn't provided this liquidity, European banks and global asset managers would have been forced to sell off their dollar portfolios at fire-sale prices. But the effectiveness of US crisis management was firmly on display.

And US credibility was rewarded by a substantial inflow into the US bond market as a "safe haven": foreigners bought nearly a trillion dollars of US Treasury securities in the 12 months after the Lehman crisis.

A Trump-era crisis

A Trump-era financial crisis, should it happen, will take place under very different circumstances. Three problems stand out.

The first is that a Trump administration noted for its transactional behaviour could end up being highly selective about who it offers liquidity to.

We've already seen this selectivity in action. In October last year, the US adminis-

tration supplied a \$20 billion swap facility to the Argentine central bank, in an effort to stabilise the peso in the run up to mid-term elections that might have posed a risk to President Milei's authority.

Earlier this year there was discussion about a proposed swap line for the central bank of the United Arab Emirates, a bizarre possibility, less for the fact that the UAE is a key US ally, but more for the fact that it is a country rather flush with dollar liquidity, notwithstanding the war with Iran.

The second is the market's growing ability to question the safe-haven status of US treasury bonds.

In the past few weeks, Scott Bessent, the US treasury secretary, has twice revealed his unwillingness to let the market decide what the price of US debt should be.

The first was his effort to support the Japanese yen in a way that was clearly aimed at discouraging Japan from selling any of the \$1 trillion of US Treasury bonds that it owns, in effect directing Japan instead to use its bonds as collateral to borrow the money it needed to

fund its intervention in the foreign exchange market.

And Bessent's more recent announcement to increase Treasury buybacks of its own debt were also motivated by fear that, left to its own devices, the market might charge Washington rates of interest on US public debt that could embarrass the administration. Interventions like these are not at all consistent with the full price discovery that should be the hallmark of a credible US Treasury market.

Elevated dollar

A third, related, problem has to do with the elevated level of the dollar.

The last 15 years have seen huge capital inflows into the US, for reasons both good (global technology leadership) and bad (absurdly high-budget deficits).

During that period, the stock of foreign-owned US securities has risen from around \$12 trillion to over \$37 trillion.

As a result of all these capital inflows, the dollar is, in inflation-adjusted, trade-weighted terms, nearly as



Now, risk stems not so much from the unwillingness of the rising hegemon in Beijing to help stabilise the system; but rather from the unwillingness of the incumbent hegemon in Washington. A "reverse Kindleberger Trap," if you like. That will be new since unwillingness certainly didn't feature in the way the US managed the fallout of the Lehman crisis in 2008.



Argentina's President Javier Milei (L) reaches to shake hands with US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent at a press conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in April 2025.

● BUENOS AIRES TIMES

expensive as it has been at any time in the last 30 years. What all this means is that a US crisis is very likely to be associated with a capital outflow, rather than a capital inflow, with the result that the dollar could weaken substantially against other currencies. That will be quite unlike the aftermath of the 2008 crisis, when the dollar strengthened. That might suit President Trump, who

has often expressed a preference for a weaker rather than a stronger exchange rate. As he put it in July 2025, a strong dollar means “you can’t sell tractors, you can’t sell trucks, you can’t sell anything.” A crisis environment might well reinforce that view. Just as Great Britain created the Exchange Equalisation Account in 1932 to keep sterling cheap after it left the gold standard the previous September, it is conceivable that the

Trump administration might be more concerned to keep the dollar weak rather than promote its role as a global anchor of stability.

China rising

And what about the rising hegemon, China? Beijing’s latest proposals for global governance, published in June, do indicate a growing willingness to shape

international order. China may be willing but remains unable to act as a financial stabiliser: the renminbi remains a relatively insignificant currency in the international monetary system. All in all, then, the risk that the world faces in the next financial crisis is a “reverse Kindleberger Trap,” where the dominant power is the one that’s unwilling to play a responsible cri-

sis-management role; and where the rising power is the one that is unable. No one should wish to hasten the next financial crisis, given the economic dislocation and immiseration that will inevitably be associated with it. But the prospect of a “reverse Kindleberger Trap” should make us all fear that crisis even more.

The article was first published by Chatham House.

US national debt hit \$40 trillion

But it’s not an issue in midterms

By James M. Lindsay
Former director for global issues at the US National Security Council

O P I N I O N

How much debt is too much debt? That used to be a question at the forefront of congressional elections. It was only 16 years ago that the so-called Tea Party took the country by storm pledging to tame the federal deficit. With the national debt then standing at \$14 trillion, “sequestration” suddenly became Washington’s hottest buzz word as President Barack Obama and the Republican-controlled Congress temporarily slowed the growth of discretionary federal spending. That was then. Today, the sequestration caps are a distant memory and government red ink barely gets a mention in a public debate dominated by gas prices, data centers, artificial intelligence, and claims that the Democratic Party has gone communist. But the debt and deficit numbers are staggering. Earlier last month, the national debt hit \$40 trillion. That amounts to roughly \$117,000 for everyone living in the United States. The US debt-to-GDP ratio now stands at 125 percent. To put that number in perspective, the massive federal borrowing needed to finance the US effort in World War II only pushed the debt-to-GDP ratio to 106 percent. The numbers get worse. The Congressional Budget Office projects that the federal budget deficit for the fiscal year, which ends on September 30, will hit \$2.1 trillion. Yes, trillion with a “T”. That is a six percent deficit relative to GDP. This is all happening at a time of near-full employment when the government balance sheet should be improving and not deteriorating. Large and persistent federal govern-



ment deficits are why the national debt has doubled over the last decade and quadrupled in less than two. Put differently, 50 percent of the US national debt has been accrued since Donald Trump was first elected, and 75 percent of it has been accrued since Barack Obama was first elected. The harm caused by the government’s profligacy is becoming increasingly clear. The US government will spend a hair over \$1 trillion this fiscal year paying interest on the debt. That’s equal to what the United States will spend on national defense. Money spent paying back what has been borrowed obviously cannot be used to address the problems the country faces today. The competition for federal dollars will only get worse in the years to come as the cost of servicing the federal debt increases. The Peterson Foundation proj-

ects that total interest payments will more than double over the next decade. That prediction could be, if anything, optimistic. Interest rates on long-term US bonds have risen in recent months, suggesting that the growing red ink is making investors nervous. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent moved earlier last month to dampen long-term interest rates by ramping up the department’s bond-buyback program. Interest rates dipped briefly on the news before heading higher again. Bessent’s maneuver prompted his former boss and financial legend Stanley Druckenmiller to argue that “a credible fiscal package would do more for the long end of the curve than a buyback program 1,000 times this size.” But a credible fiscal package seems unlikely to emerge anytime soon. Few candidates running for office are talking

about the country’s debt problem and how they would solve it. Voters do not appear to be demanding answers. Gallup recently found that just two percent of Americans see the national debt and federal deficit as the most important problem facing the country. Today’s zeitgeist is instead to assume that government spending, whether for domestic programs or national defense, can continue to grow. The increasing debt burden either won’t matter or that robust economic growth will solve the problem by generating epic government revenues sometime in the future. Ignoring the country’s mounting debt no doubt will be fine — up to the moment it isn’t. That moment could come much sooner than we think.

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

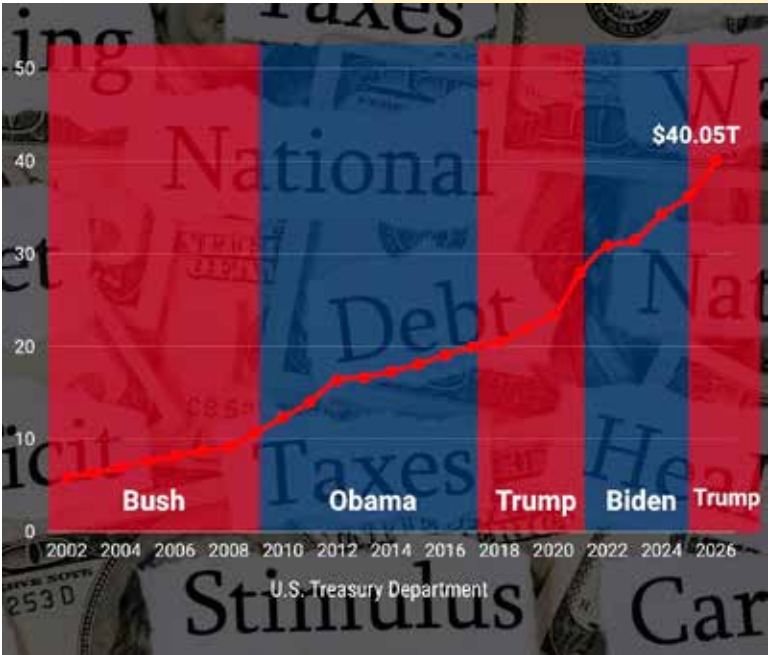


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The chart shows how much the US national debt has increased since 2002.
● FOX NEWS

A sign displays the national debt on a bus stop in Foggy Bottom, Washington, DC, on August 20, 2026. Similar signs have been put up across the country by the nonpartisan Peter G. Peterson Foundation.
● ANNA MONEYMAKER/GETTY



AFC U20 Asian Cup qualifiers:

Iran into finals after comeback win against Vietnam

Sports Desk

Iran came from behind to defeat hosts Vietnam 3-1 in the AFC U20 Asian Cup qualifiers in Viet Tri on Sunday, securing a place in next year's finals in China. The victory saw Qassem Haddadifar's side finish second in Group C with six points and qualify as one of the seven best runners-up across the eight groups. Three goals inside six second-half minutes helped North Korea defeat Palestine 4-0 earlier in the day to complete a clean sweep of three wins and secure top spot in the group. Having been stunned by two stoppage-time goals in a 2-1 loss to North Korea last time out, Iran looked destined to miss out on the finals when Vietnam took the lead in the 41st minute. Nguyen Quoc Khanh was played in on goal by Dau Hong Phong and beat Iranian goalkeeper Amirmahdi Maqsoudi with a shot at the near post. Arian Maali drew Iran level five

minutes after the break, finishing off Amirmohammad Karimi's long throw deep into the penalty area, before two spot kicks from Mahan Beheshti and Abolfazl Zadeh-Attar in the 63rd and 95th minutes completed Iran's fight-back. "From the first day we entered the competition, our goal was to get the job done in the first two matches, and we would have done so had it not been for the referee's mistake in ruling out our second goal against North Korea," said Haddadifar, whose team had opened its campaign with a 2-1 victory over Palestine. "Vietnam are a very good team with fast and technically gifted players, and they caused us problems with long balls and aerial play, but our substitutions helped us deal with the issue in the second half," added the Iranian. Haddadifar also pointed to his team's limited preparation amid the wartime conditions in the country in recent months. "Given the circumstances in our



country, the Iran U20 team was formed only about two months ago, and I feel many good players were left out of the squad. We had to quickly put together a team for the competition, while we also had fewer training camps

than our rivals.

"Thankfully, we were able to bring these quality players together and develop a good understanding and harmony within the team. I am truly grateful to my players and coaching staff

for their efforts over the past two months.

"The players behaved very professionally and worked incredibly hard. They have a bright future ahead of them, and I hope they go on to achieve what they



Iranian players celebrate a goal during a 3-1 victory over Vietnam in the AFC U20 Asian Cup qualifiers in Viet Tri, Vietnam, on September 6, 2026.

● AFC

deserve."

Iran are four-time champions of the U20 Asian Cup, with all four titles coming in the 1970s. The team's best result in the more recent history of the competition, however, came in 2016, when it reached the semifinals before being eliminated by Saudi Arabia. Iran and North Korea will be joined by hosts China, as well as South Korea, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Japan, Indonesia, Lebanon, Oman, Jordan, India, Thailand and Malaysia in next March's finals.

The tournament will also serve as the qualification pathway for the 2027 FIFA U20 World Cup, with the four semifinalists securing places in the global showpiece in Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan.

Iran names men's volleyball roster for Asian Games



Looking to secure a fourth successive men's volleyball gold at the showpiece, Iran has been drawn alongside Indonesia, Thailand and Kyrgyzstan in Pool B of the 16-team event.

The Iranian team is currently in Fukuoka, Japan, for the crunch AVC Men's Continental Championship, where the champion will qualify for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics.

Piazza's side has enjoyed a flying start to the competition, beating New Zealand and India in straight sets to sit atop Pool B ahead of Wednesday's final group game against China. Veteran libero Mohammadreza Hazratpour, Esmail Hajikalateh, Arshia Behnejad, Ilshan Davoudipour, Ali Hajipour, Morteza Sharifi, Ali Haqparast, Mobin Nasari, Mohammad Valizadeh, Seyyed Issa Nasser and Yousef Kazemi in the Iranian roster.

will open at Paloma Mizuho Stadium on September 19, with the indoor volleyball competition getting underway three days before the opening ceremony. Star opposite and captain Amin Esmailnejad is joined by Pouria Hosseinkhanzadeh, Hossein Hajikalateh, Arshia Behnejad, Ilshan Davoudipour, Ali Hajipour, Morteza Sharifi, Ali Haqparast, Mobin Nasari, Mohammad Valizadeh, Seyyed Issa Nasser and Yousef Kazemi in the Iranian roster.

Sports Desk

Iran's men's volleyball head coach Roberto Piazza has named a 12-man squad for the upcoming Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games. The 20th edition of the continental multi-sport event

will open at Paloma Mizuho Stadium on September 19, with the indoor volleyball competition getting underway three days before the opening ceremony. Star opposite and captain Amin Esmailnejad is joined by Pouria Hosseinkhanzadeh, Hossein Hajikalateh, Arshia Behnejad, Ilshan Davoudipour, Ali Hajipour, Morteza Sharifi, Ali Haqparast, Mobin Nasari, Mohammad Valizadeh, Seyyed Issa Nasser and Yousef Kazemi in the Iranian roster.

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Iran extends Youth Olympics delegation to 29 athletes

Sports Desk

Iran will send a 29-strong delegation of athletes competing in 14 sports to the 2026 Summer Youth Olympic Games in Dakar, with no further quotas expected to be added to the country's roster ahead of the multi-sport event, which will open on Oct. 31 in the Senegalese capital. Iranian chief de mission Hamid Azizi said the 29 athletes include two recently allocated quotas

in judo and fencing. Iran's delegation will feature two team events and 12 individual sports. The girls' futsal team will make up the largest contingent, with 10 athletes, while two athletes will represent Iran in the boys' beach volleyball competition. Beach wrestling will have four Iranian competitors, while taekwondo will feature two participants – one girl and one boy. Badminton will also have two

representatives, with one athlete of each gender. Iran's remaining athletes will compete in swimming, wushu taolu, triathlon, table tennis, boxing, road cycling, athletics, judo and fencing. The individual quota breakdown is as follows: one boy in swimming, one boy in wushu taolu, one boy in triathlon, one boy in table tennis, one girl in boxing, one boy in road cycling, one boy in athletics, one boy in judo and one girl in fencing.

The Dakar Youth Olympic Games will mark Iran's fourth participation in as many editions since the event was first introduced at Singapore 2010, where the country secured two gold, two silver, and one bronze medal. At Nanjing 2014, Iran collected three gold and three bronze medals, before achieving its best performance to date with seven gold, three silver, and four bronze medals at Buenos Aires 2018.

IWBF Wheelchair Basketball World Championships:

Iran withdraws after coaches denied Canadian visas



Sports Desk

Iran's men's team has withdrawn from the upcoming IWBF Wheelchair Basketball World Championships after host Canada refused to issue entry visas to head coach Behrouz Soltani and his assistant, Mohammadreza Dastyar. The tournament gets underway on Wednesday in Ottawa, where the Iranian team had been drawn alongside hosts Canada, Germany and Morocco in Group D. "We had decided to send the national team and participate in the World Championships in Canada, but this is not possible without the coaching staff," Jalal Kouhpayehzadeh, president of the Iranian Sports Federation for the Disabled, told ISNA. "The competition starts on Wednesday, and there is no longer enough time for the visas to be issued. The visa process takes at least several days, and we may not have

enough time to arrive in Canada and take part in the competition."

Kouhpayehzadeh said the Iranian federation had been in regular contact with the International Wheelchair Basketball Federation (IWBF) over the visa issue, adding that the governing body and the tournament organizers had made efforts to accelerate the process.

"We are in contact with the secretary-general of the world federation every day. They, together with the organizing body, have made considerable efforts to find different ways to speed up the visa process," he said. He also expressed confidence that Iran, bronze medalists at the previous edition, would not face sanctions for withdrawing from the tournament under the circumstances.

"It is unlikely that the rules regarding fines or suspension will apply to Iran in

such a situation. We made every effort to send the team and followed the legal process for obtaining the visas. Certainly, they understand the situation."

The withdrawal is a major blow to Iran's bid to secure a berth at the LA 2028 Paralympic Games, with the World Championships forming part of the qualification pathway.

Kouhpayehzadeh highlighted the importance of the World Championships in determining the number of qualification places allocated to each continent for the 2028 Paralympics.

"The World Championships determine the number of qualification spots allocated to each continent," Kouhpayehzadeh said.

"Given the situation that has arisen, we will have to defeat all the Asian teams in the future in order to secure the Asian quota for the Paralympics."

Bavanat's natural, cultural treasures await discovery

Iranica Desk

Bavanat is one of the scenic and culturally significant areas of Fars Province, known not only for its picturesque natural landscapes but also for its rich historical and cultural heritage, diverse handicrafts and traditional local foods. Highlighting these assets can play an important role in introducing Bavanat to tourists and helping preserve the region's valuable heritage. September 6 has been designated as Bavanat Day.

One of Bavanat's natural attractions is Pir Kadoo Spring. The spring lies west of Mazayjan village, about 40 kilometers from the city of Surian. Several springs gush from the ground in the area, covering a considerable part of the surrounding landscape. Large, mature trees near the spring add to the area's scenic appeal. These features have made Pir Kadoo a popular destination, attracting many visitors from neighboring areas each year seeking to enjoy nature and spend their leisure time.

Pir Kadoo Spring is also significant from a historical and cultural perspective. In the past, the spring's water was considered sacred by local nomadic communities and livestock herders. During the seasonal migration of nomads from warmer regions to



the pastures of Bavanat, a ritual known as "Gooshvaran" or "Gos-fandshooran" was performed. Local people believed that carrying out the ritual would protect their livestock from disease and misfortune. The spring has therefore become part of the traditions and cultural heritage of the local population.

Mohammad Hanafi Recreational Area is another important attraction in Bavanat. Located south of Surian at the foot of Mount Khatun, the site contains the remains of a pre-Islamic ritual structure and is locally known as the Qadamgah-e Mohammad Hanafi. Lush trees and a beautiful spring emerging from beneath a large

boulder have turned the area into a peaceful and scenic retreat.

Other tourist attractions in Bavanat include Qanat-e Ebrahim village and the historic village of Shahzadeh Abu'l-Qasem. The historic cemetery of Qanat-e Ebrahim is located alongside the main road in Sarchehan and is listed as a national heritage site. Shahzadeh Abu'l-Qasem, with its lush natural surroundings, historical background, attractive Imamzadeh building, historic cemetery and ancient trees, is another popular destination in the Sarchehan area. The availability of suitable accommodation for travelers near the Imamzadeh has also created favorable conditions for



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tourists to visit the village.

Located in Surian, the administrative center of Bavanat, the Jaame Mosque of Bavanat dates back to the Ilkhanid period. The building is not particularly significant from an artistic perspective. Its most important feature was a large carved wooden pulpit, commissioned by Mozaffar al-Molk and made in 771 AH from the endowment of Khwaja Sa'd ibn Mohammad. The pulpit has since been transferred to the National Museum of Iran.

Because of its location along the north-south route through Iran and its distinctive climate, Bavanat is home to numerous historic villages. One of them is

Monj, which contains a Sassanid Chahar-Taqi, or four-arched structure.

The Sassanid Chahar-Taqi stands on top of a hill beside a river. It was once a substantial structure, but today only four columns and their connecting arches remain. Some experts believe that the building served a ritual or religious purpose and dates to the Sassanid period. A pool in the center of the structure may have been used for purification. Local residents today refer to the site as Heydar Beyg Castle. The Sassanid Chahar-Taqi was deemed eligible for registration on Iran's National Heritage List in 2001 because of its historical value.

The culture and artistry of people are also reflected in the Bavanat's handicrafts. Carpets, kilims, pictorial carpets and woodturning are among the area's most important traditional crafts. Beyond their economic value, these arts form an important part of the cultural identity and heritage of the local community.

Bavanat is also known for its agricultural products and traditional foods. Raisins, walnuts, and dried grapes are among the best-known local souvenirs. Traditional dishes also form an important part of Bavanat's culinary culture. Bavanat Day provides an opportunity to highlight the area's valuable assets and draw attention to the importance of preserving its natural and cultural heritage. Its springs, recreational areas, historic villages, handicrafts, local products and traditional foods each represent a part of Bavanat's identity. Protecting these assets, promoting the area's tourist attractions, and supporting local artisans and producers could help boost tourism and contribute to regional economic development. Bavanat Day is a celebration of a land where natural beauty, ancient history and authentic culture come together — a region worthy of greater recognition, protection and pride.

Reading Room

History of money in Iran from Safavids to Qajars

Iranica Desk

Money, and for much of history its predominant form, the coin, has been one of the most important achievements of human civilization. For thousands of years, it has served not only as a medium of exchange but also as a means of organizing economies, exercising political power and regulating relations between governments and society. Iran was among the lands that, following the conquest of Lydia, traditionally regarded as the birthplace of coinage, entered a new stage in its monetary history roughly 2,500 years ago, when coins and official currency began to play a decisive role.

The book *A History of Money in Iran from the Safavids to the End of the Qajar Period* examines money not simply as coins and a medium of exchange, but as an economic, political, social and international phenomenon.

Its authors are Rudi Matthee, professor of Middle Eastern history at the University of Delaware; Willem Floor, an independent scholar specializing in the social and economic history of Iran; and Patrick Clawson, deputy director of research at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

The book examines the distinctive features of Iran's monetary system from the Safavid period through the end of the Qajar era, including the circulation of cash, the bimetallic — or more precisely, trimetallic — system

based on gold, silver and copper, the operation of mints and the role of the state in managing the currency. The authors show how governments influenced the monetary system through coinage and, at times, by reducing the weight or precious-metal content of coins as a way of generating revenue. One of the book's major strengths is its placement of Iran within a broader regional and global economic system. Because of chronic shortages of money and the absence of significant domestic supplies of gold and silver, Iran remained dependent on the inflow of precious metals from abroad until the discovery of oil. Iran's monetary history therefore cannot be examined separately from global trade networks. The authors trace the movement of bullion and precious metals between Europe, the Ottoman Empire, Iran and the Indian subcontinent, as well as government efforts to control these flows through restrictions and taxation.

The book's significance lies in the fact that it goes beyond technical descriptions of coins, their designs and inscriptions to examine money as part of the economic and social life of society. Earlier works had addressed coins and monetary history in different periods of Iranian history, but many focused primarily on identifying coins and describing their physical characteristics or touched on monetary issues

only within the broader framework of economic history. This book, by contrast, explores the role of money in the economy, politics, government, everyday life, domestic and international trade, and Iran's relations with the outside world.

Javad Abbasi, a historian and the book's Persian translator, says the idea of translating the work emerged in 2014, after he became acquainted with its authors when the book received the Houshang Pourshariati Award on the sidelines of the 14th Middle East Studies Association conference in Washington. In his view, the book can be considered a pioneering work that uses coins and other material evidence as research sources to provide a broader picture of Iran's monetary and financial history.

From this perspective, the

monetary system was one of the threads linking the roughly five-century period from the Safavids to the Qajars. Money played a role in determining government revenues, paying state employees and soldiers, collecting taxes from subjects and conducting transactions among domestic and foreign merchants. Although the ways in which money functioned and was used changed over time, many features of the monetary system remained in place.

The relationship between money and politics is another major theme of the book. Iranian governments, which generally had centralized and interventionist economic structures, played a significant role in managing money. At the same time, the value and effectiveness of currency were closely connected to political stability and authority. Changes in the monetary system could also have a direct impact on people's lives. Because communications were limited in the premodern period, however, monetary conditions were not always uniform across Iran. In some cases, the value and metal content of currency differed significantly between the capital and the provinces, particularly in border regions.

The book also shows that Iran's monetary developments cannot be explained solely by domestic government policies. The country's geographic position



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and its increasingly close ties to the global economy from the Safavid period onward gave external factors a greater role. Trade relations with the Ottoman Empire, Europe and India, the movement of precious metals and changes in the global economy all affected Iran's monetary conditions. The study also draws on a wide range of sources. In addition to Persian sources, travel accounts, documents from the Dutch and English East India companies, and coin collections held by museums and private collectors have played an important role in the research.

Ultimately, the importance of the book lies in its argument that monetary history cannot be reduced to the history of coins and transactions. Money is intertwined with Iran's political, social and economic history, as well as its culture, foreign relations and even the ways in which governments exercised power. From this perspective,

examining Iranian history through the evolution of its monetary and financial system could lead to a reassessment of aspects of the country's past and reveal relationships that have received less attention in conventional historical narratives.

The second edition of *A History of Money in Iran from the Safavids to the End of the Qajar Period* was published by Naamak Publications roughly a decade after the first edition. In addition to offering a new perspective on Iran's economy during the premodern period and its transition toward modernity, the book highlights the importance of interdisciplinary research in economic history. Such research can bring together history, economics, foreign relations, archaeology, and the study of documentary and material evidence to provide a more accurate picture of Iran's economic and social mechanisms in the past.





Pezeshkian calls for greater support for nation's scientists, innovators

Social Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Monday called for greater reliance on science, knowledge and skilled professionals to address social challenges and advance Iran's development, as he attended the inauguration of thousands of communications and information technology projects in Tehran. Pezeshkian praised specialists working in information technology, saying the human capital behind Iran's communications infrastructure and advanced technologies was more valuable than thousands of physical projects, president.ir reported. "A country can be built through science, awareness, belief and faith," the president said, stressing that Iran's scientists, innovators, entrepreneurs and other skilled professionals should be given the support and conditions needed to flourish. He argued that better use of data could help improve decision-making and address problems ranging from administrative misconduct to healthcare, agriculture, industry and trade. "Data" should guide decisions rather than personal assumptions, Pezeshkian said, describing evidence-based decision-making as a principle applicable across society. "If we have the data and can manage it properly, theft, misconduct and bribery

will not occur," he said, linking effective data management to greater transparency and more informed public administration. Pezeshkian also urged officials to avoid a narrow reliance on personal judgment, saying expertise and collective knowledge should guide decisions. "I am here to find the right path," he said, adding that knowledge does not belong to any one individual and that teams of specialists can find solutions to complex problems. The president also called for a balanced approach to technology, saying potential misuse should not prevent society from benefiting from technological advances. Technology, he said, can be used to save lives, improve living standards, expand education and facilitate people's daily lives. He pointed to healthcare as one area where information technology could improve diagnosis, treatment, access to services and behavioral outcomes, while noting its broad potential in other fields. Pezeshkian urged talented young people to reject the notion that progress is impossible and called for greater confidence in Iran's ability to overcome obstacles through science and collective effort. "We must work with people who believe that it is possible," he said. The president also stressed the importance of choosing qualified experts for specialized positions, drawing a distinc-

tion between theoretical knowledge and practical skills. He concluded by pledging comprehensive support for scientists, academics, innovators and entrepreneurs, saying Iran had a large pool of capable people whose potential could be unlocked by creating the right conditions. More than 7,947 projects were inaugurated during the ceremony, covering areas including space development, smart government, the digital economy and the National Information Network.

VP: Future wars will be fought through science, technology

First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref, who also attended the ceremony, stressed the importance of nurturing scientific talent from the earliest years of education, describing future conflicts as increasingly centered on science and technology. He called for a stronger national effort to identify and develop talented students across the country, saying the process should begin in primary school. "The best teachers should teach first grade," Aref said, emphasizing the importance of selecting highly qualified educators and raising the status of the teaching profession. Aref also stressed the need to retain Iranian scientists and specialists, saying the



country should create conditions that encourage talented academics and researchers to remain engaged with Iran's scientific development. He called for reforms in teacher selection and education policy, arguing that scientific and cultural development could not be achieved through administrative directives alone. "Science and culture do not need a stick

or a policeman," he said, urging a focus on nurturing young people who view serving society as a responsibility. Aref also called for efforts to place Iran among the world's leading countries in artificial intelligence and strengthen its position in science and technology, while urging the National Elites Foundation and the Education Ministry to expand talent identification nationwide.

Iran launches cultural initiative in memory of Minab schoolchildren



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri said Monday that his ministry was converting institutional challenges into clearly defined projects to accelerate development, as officials in Tehran unveiled a nationwide cultural package honoring children killed in Minab. Speaking at the ministry's 41st Strategic Council meeting, Salehi-Amiri said each project must have a designated manager, funding and timetable to produce measurable results, while greater

authority was being delegated to provincial governors, CHTN reported. The project-based approach has become a central plank of the ministry's drive to bring cultural heritage closer to public life, expand tourism infrastructure and tap private-sector investment and corporate social responsibility programs. "An issue must be turned into a project," Salehi-Amiri said. "Its manager, resources and implementation timetable must be clear so that we can assess what has been achieved." He said Iran's provinces held

80 percent of the ministry's potential, compared with 20 percent in Tehran, underscoring the need to give provincial authorities a stronger role in policymaking and implementation. The ministry has also stepped up efforts to make cultural heritage a living part of daily life rather than simply an object of preservation. Salehi Amiri pointed to the long-awaited liberation of the historic Falak-ol-Aflak Castle in Khorramabad, saying the monument should become a recreational and cultural space for the public. On tourism, he said 3,080 projects worth 1,300 trillion rials were under construction, including more than 550 hotels, accommodation facilities and eco-lodges. Iran, which previously had 60 five-star hotels, now has 65 more under construction, he said. The meeting also featured the unveiling of the "Together for Iran" cultural package, produced in memory of the children killed at Minab's

Shajareh Tayebbeh School. The initiative, backed through Bank Melli Iran's corporate social responsibility program, includes notebooks containing 168 pages dedicated to the memory of the Minab victims and will be distributed nationwide. Salehi-Amiri called for broader participation by banks and economic institutions, saying the initiative should help preserve the memory of the Minab children while supporting the development of the southern county's infrastructure. He said Minab's tourism potential could not be fully realized without stronger transport, accommodation and other facilities, urging economic institutions to help fund projects ranging from tourism infrastructure to schools, health centers, roads and employment. This is the beginning of a path," Salehi-Amiri said, calling for the participation of the country's wider economic sector.

Persian historical artifacts in China safe, secure

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian historical artifacts currently in China are being kept in complete safety and will return to the country under binding exhibition agreements, National Museum of Iran Director Jebrael Nokandeh said Monday, addressing concerns over more than 150 objects whose return was delayed by the suspension of flights during the war. Nokandeh said the artifacts belong to an exhibition titled 'From the Land of Mehr', organized with several Iranian museums and Chinese cultural institutions. The exhibition featured more than 150 objects and was scheduled to return the collection to Iran after completing one stage of its tour. The planned return was disrupted in March, when flights were suspended shortly before the outbreak of the war. Necessary government coordination and permits were subsequently secured for the artifacts to be transferred to a secure storage facility until conditions allowed their return. "The artifacts have not yet returned, but I assure you that they are facing no threat," Nokandeh said in an interview with ISNA. "They are being kept in complete security and will 100 percent return to our country." He said the exhibition contracts contain specific provisions governing the handling of loaned artifacts during crises. The agreements oblige the host side to protect the objects and return them to Iran when conditions permit. Iran's embassy in China is also monitoring the situation, Nokandeh said. He dismissed concerns that the artifacts could be copied, damaged or otherwise mishandled while abroad, describing such concerns



as inconsistent with international museum practice. The objects leave Iran under seals and the supervision of the lending institution's custodians and remain sealed during storage, transport and installation. Security cameras and controlled access are also used throughout the process, he said, while representatives of the lending museum oversee the opening and resealing of cases. Nokandeh said the objects are also covered by judicial-immunity arrangements that protect them from seizure in the host country. Such safeguards are part of international museum-loan protocols, he added. A separate exhibition, The Glory of Ancient Iran, featuring more than 216 artifacts spanning roughly 3,000 years of Iranian history through the Qajar era, has already returned to Iran after touring Beijing, Shanghai and Urumqi. Nokandeh said Chinese museum professionals involved in the exhibitions had demonstrated a high level of expertise and commitment. "Chinese colleagues are truly professional in exhibitions, museum presentation and exhibition management," he said, describing the cooperation as highly organized and responsible. Iran is also prepared to host an exhibition of Chinese art and culture in Tehran once security conditions permit, with the National Museum of Iran ready to provide a venue, Nokandeh said.

Iranian illustrator named finalist in Shanghai children's book competition

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian illustrator Maryam Mahmoudi-Moqaddam was selected among the 50 finalists of the 11th Golden Pinwheel Young Illustrators Competition, with the shortlist announced by the China Shanghai International Children's Book Fair (CCBF). The competition drew 2,100 entries, with works by 50 illustrators from 19 countries and regions advancing to the final

round. Mahmoudi-Moqaddam is the only Iranian illustrator on the shortlist, IRNA reported. An international five-member jury reviewed the submissions online throughout the summer before making its final selection during a virtual meeting. The panel comprised Emily Gravett of Britain, Lee Ji-eun of South Korea, Charlotte Mondlic of France, and China's Ruan Yunting and Sun Zhaozhi. Chinese illustrators account for

19 of the finalists, or 38 percent of the shortlist. Russia has five finalists, South Korea four, and Italy and Spain three each. Mexico and France have two representatives apiece, while Iran is among 12 countries and regions represented by a single illustrator. The Golden Pinwheel competition seeks to identify and promote emerging talent in children's book illustration. Selected works are showcased through exhibitions, the competition's annual publica-

tion and promotional programs, giving them visibility among publishers and creative-industry professionals. The finalists' works will go on display at the Golden Pinwheel Exhibition from November 13 to 15, alongside the China Shanghai International Children's Book Fair. They will also appear in the 2026 Golden Pinwheel Annual, scheduled for publication in November and distribution to fair exhibitors and partners.