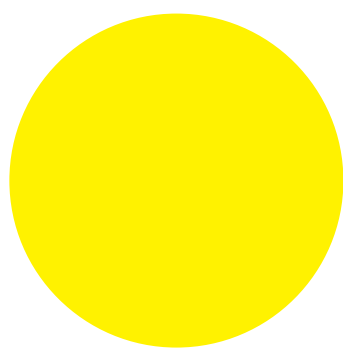


Wartime experience remains key to Iran's air defense, veteran pilot says

No pilot emerged unscathed from eight-year war

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Trump's push to link Hormuz to nuclear issue hinders talks

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Javad Heiran-Nia, an international affairs expert, told Iran Daily that Washington's effort to link the Strait of Hormuz to the nuclear issue is a major obstacle to reviving negotiations with Iran. He said Tehran wants the main principles of the previous understanding between Iran and the United States to be restored first, including the release of frozen Iranian funds, an end to the war on all fronts and the lifting of the naval blockade.

Heiran-Nia said Iran wants the Strait of Hormuz to be addressed separately through a mechanism involving Oman and does not want the issue to become a US instrument of pressure in nuclear negotiations. He said Tehran's preferred sequence is to resolve the Hormuz issue and the conditions for ending the war first and then enter nuclear negotiations without the economic leverage created by the blockade being used to extract concessions.

IRAN DAILY: Iran has stressed ending the war on all fronts, releasing frozen assets and lifting the naval blockade as conditions for resuming talks, while Trump has spoken about possibly restarting major attacks. Do these positions still leave room for negotiations?

HEIRAN-NIA: Iran's position is that the previous understanding between Iran and the United States should serve as the basis for further work, or at least that its main principles should be restored. These include releasing frozen funds, lifting the naval blockade and ending the war on all fronts. These are the main conditions Iran has presented for ending the war.

Iran is willing to discuss the nuclear issue, but wants such discussions to take place in a later phase, in line with what was emphasized in the understanding.

At the same time, Iran does not want the Strait of Hormuz or a mechanism for shipping and transit through the strait to become a US instrument of pressure. Tehran therefore wants a mechanism involving Iran and Oman to be established first. The planned meeting in Salalah with the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council and Iraq was based on this approach. Iran has also stated that the issue of the strait is not connected to the United States.

However, Washington has shown little willingness to revive the understanding. Following the breakdown of the understanding, which Iran says was violated by the United States through the southern corridor, three ships were attacked, with both sides accusing the other of violating the agreement. Washington subsequently set the understanding aside and intensified the naval blockade.

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New school year begins

Pezeshkian urges teamwork, skills to shape Iran's future

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President Masoud Pezeshkian pays tribute to the children killed after a US missile strike on an elementary school in Minab, southern Iran in late February, as he goes to a school in Tehran to mark the beginning of the new academic year.

president.ir



Iran, Uzbekistan to boost farm investment, technology ties

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Diplomatic efforts underway to bring Iran, US back to negotiating table

International Desk

Mediators are doing their utmost to bring Iran and the US back to the negotiating table as tensions between the two countries are again running high in the wake of Washington's threats against Tehran.

Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesperson Majed Al-Ansari, whose country along with Pakistan has been mediating between Tehran and Washington, said on Sunday that Qatar is working with the United States and Iran to resume talks, noting that US officials have indicated that Washington wants a deal.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Qatar Economic Forum in New York, Al-Ansari said Qatar had been exchanging ideas with Washington and Tehran over the past few weeks in an effort to restart negotiations.

"We have been working together through our mediator team with both

Tehran and the United States to see if we can get it restarted again. A lot of ideas have been thrown back and forth," Al-Ansari said, adding that Qatar was trying to "bridge the gap and find the right moment to move forward."

"We have heard statements on the record from various administration officials who have confirmed that the United States wants a deal, and the United States wants a solution to this war," he said.

Al-Ansari said any settlement should provide regional stability while establishing an international understanding to protect strategic waterways, including the Strait of Hormuz.

"Open the strait, stop the war. These are the two main objectives of everything that we're doing right now," he added.

Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi also arrived in Tehran for talks

with Iranian authorities.

According to IRNA, the visit will focus on "expanding ties and coordinating ongoing matters between the two neighboring countries".

Naqvi has made several trips to Tehran since Pakistan began its mediation efforts between Iran and the US.

The US and Iran signed a memorandum of understanding in Islamabad in June to end the US-Israeli aggression against Iran and launched negotiations toward a final agreement. However, the talks later collapsed over the US violations of the agreement.

The aggression against Iran began on February 28 with US-Israeli strikes on different Iranian cities.

Iran retaliated with attacks on the US military bases in regional countries and Israel's positions in the occupied territories as the conflict continued to spread.

An April ceasefire put an end to the



Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi (L) meets his Iranian counterpart Eskandar Momeni upon his arrival in Tehran, Iran, on September 21, 2026.
● IRNA

most intense fighting after Tehran and Washington signed the 14-point Islamabad agreement.

However, the US began attacking Iran in July after it violated the terms of the agreement under the pretext of Iranian

strikes on vessels in the Strait of Hormuz.

The US also recently shifted toward a campaign of what it calls "economic asphyxiation" of Iran, imposing sanctions on various sectors in Iran.

Pezeshkian to travel to New York today to address UNGA

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian will leave Tehran for New York on Tuesday to attend the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The director general of public relations at the president's office Habibollah Abbasi said in a statement on Monday that Pezeshkian is scheduled to address the General Assembly on Wednesday, adding that during the visit, he will also meet and hold talks with some heads of state and officials from countries participating in the assembly.

According to the official, the president's schedule in New York also includes a meeting with prominent Iranians residing in the United States, as well as discussions with American intellectuals and



think tanks.

A high-ranking Iranian delegation will accompany President Pezeshkian. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, part of the delegation to the UN, left Iran on Sunday evening for a stopover in Qatar.

Abbasi, meanwhile, described US refusal to issue visas to some members of the delegation, including members of the president's media team, as "an unprecedented hostile move by the US admin-

istration."

The 81st General Assembly session is to begin on Tuesday at the UN headquarters in New York under the general theme of restoration of trust among nations.

President Pezeshkian's visit comes nearly eight months following the launch of the latest round of the United States' and the Israeli regime's unprovoked aggression against Iran.

US President Donald Trump has signaled he is open to meeting Pezeshkian in New York.

The potential encounter would come at a striking moment as Iran has sent Washington a list of conditions for renewed negotiations while Iranian military leaders warn that any new US attack would trigger retaliation against American bases and interests across the region.

IRGC threatens to hit new targets if US attacks



International Desk

Iran's Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) on Monday warned it would attack new targets and deploy new weapons if the US launches further attacks on the country, adding that, "We will definitely change the geography of the war."

Almost seven months into their war, Tehran and Washington remain locked in a stalemate, though neither side appears willing to return to full-scale war.

The IRGC's spokesman Second Brigadier General Hossein Mohebbi said in a statement that, "There will certainly be significant changes in our defense and our counteroffensive" in the event of a new US attack.

"We will introduce new weapons with new capabilities into the battlefield, and the world will be surprised," he said.

"Our targets will not necessarily be the same as before either. We have new targets that have not yet been attacked."

Mohebbi also identified several areas in which the United States has suffered

strategic defeats in its unprovoked war on Iran.

"The United States has been defeated in this war, and its defeat is also a historic and humiliating defeat, but it does not have the courage to admit and accept this defeat," he said.

The US and the Israeli regime waged their first criminal war against Iran, which lasted 12 days, in June 2025. Their second aggression began on February 28, 2026, and came to a halt in early April after 40 days.

In both wars, Iran's resistance and successful retaliatory operations forced the aggressors to accept a ceasefire.

Mohebbi said Washington has failed to reopen the Strait of Hormuz despite possessing the world's largest navy and having defined one of the main reasons for its regional and global presence as ensuring energy security and freedom of navigation.

His remarks came days after the central command of Iran's military said the US is planning new action against Tehran.

Israel's atrocities against Palestinians have dealt most devastating blows to UN's credibility: *Tehran*

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry said that Israel's decades-long occupation, terrorism, violations of international law and "unprecedented crimes" in the occupied Palestinian territories have dealt severe blows to the credibility and standing of the United Nations and international law.

In a statement on Monday ahead of the annual session of the United Nations General Assembly, the ministry expressed deep concern over the continued Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people, particularly genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza and the occupied West

Bank, Press TV reported.

The ministry said the international community has a responsibility to take serious and decisive action to halt the genocide of Palestinians.

"Occupation, terrorism, lawlessness and the unprecedented crimes of the Zionist regime in occupied Palestine, as well as its aggression and crimes against countries in the region over the past eight decades, have undoubtedly dealt the most severe blows to the credibility and standing of the United Nations and international law," the statement said.

The ministry also strongly condemned the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's

hu's "shameless insult" against Al-Aqsa Mosque and the desecration of the Burqa Wall.

It said the Israeli regime, with comprehensive military, financial, and political-media support from the United States and some countries that claim to uphold human rights, has committed one of the largest genocides in modern history in Gaza over the past three years.

The statement further slammed Israel for resorting to systematic and widespread killings and torture of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza in pursuit of an "evil plan" to "erase Palestine through colonialism."

Grand Ayatollah Shobeiri Zanjani passes away at age of 98

National Desk

Ayatollah Seyyed Mousa Shobeiri Zanjani, a prominent Shia scholar and senior source of emulation, passed away at the age of 98, his office said on Monday.

He had been admitted to a hospital in the holy city of Qom on Friday evening after a pulmonary complication and remained under intensive care for two days before his passing. Funeral and burial arrangements will be announced later, his office said. The statement said early on Monday that the respected cleric devoted his



life to deep scholarship, sustained academic efforts, and the preservation and advancement of authentic Islamic jurisprudence, according to IRNA. It also highlighted his endeavors to promote Islamic teachings, safeguard

the foundations of Shiism, and serve the Iranian nation with sincerity and concern.

Grand Ayatollah Shobeiri Zanjani was born on March 2, 1928, in Qom, three months after his father, the late Ayatollah Sayyid Ahmad Shobeiri Zanjani, settled beside the shrine of Hazrat Fatima Masoumeh (peace be upon her). His passing is a heavy loss for the seminaries of Qom and Najaf, for the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt, and for the Islamic Republic, which has always regarded its great jurists as guardians of the faith and of the nation's spiritual identity.



Iran, Uzbekistan to boost farm investment, technology ties

Economy Desk

Uzbekistan and Iran on Monday agreed to foster agricultural cooperation after trade in farm products soared 46% in 2025. Iranian Agriculture Minister Gholamreza Nouri Ghezeljeh said Iranian companies were ready to invest in Uzbekistan's agricultural sector during talks with Uzbek counterpart Ibrokhim Abdurakhmonov in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, IRIBNEWS reported. According to Nouri, agricultural mechanization, machinery manufacturing, livestock breeding, fisheries and veterinary medicines are potential areas for cooperation. He said Iran could offer expertise in poultry and

egg production, improved cattle embryos, smart irrigation systems and agricultural drones, adding that Tehran wanted to share its experience and new technologies with Uzbekistan. Nouri also called for completing animal and plant quarantine protocols to facilitate trade. "Iran seeks to increase both agricultural exports to and imports from Uzbekistan," he said. Abdurakhmonov said Uzbekistan was prioritizing next-generation agricultural equipment, modern technologies and artificial intelligence to improve farm productivity. "Joint fisheries projects, including the production of red and black caviar with Iranian companies, are under way," he said, adding

that Uzbekistan wanted to streamline health and veterinary approvals to speed up their implementation. Abdurakhmonov noted that Uzbekistan was reducing the area under cotton cultivation and moving toward developing 400,000 hectares of orchards. "The shift could create more opportunities for Iranian products and technologies in the Uzbek market," he said. The Uzbek minister added that Tashkent also wanted to work with Iran on seed and sapling production, orchard management and potato cultivation technology. Agricultural trade between the two countries reached around \$140 million in 2025. Iran exported \$80 million worth of agricul-

tural products to Uzbekistan and imported \$60 million. An Iranian business delegation led by Hosein Pir-Moazen, deputy head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), has travelled to Tashkent. The delegation will attend an Iran-Uzbekistan economic and agricultural forum and hold business meetings with companies



from both countries. The two countries' chambers of commerce are also expected to sign a cooperation memorandum, while Iranian and Uzbek companies will discuss new contracts and memorandums of understanding.

Oil income exceeds \$16b despite US naval blockade



Economy Desk

Iran's oil revenue surpassed \$16 billion in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year, marking the highest six-month figure in years despite a US naval blockade of Iranian ports, Fars News Agency reported on September 21. The semi-official media

outlet said the figure was based on information it had obtained, adding that oil sales in the first six months of the Iranian year, which began on March 21, had surpassed the amount predicted in the annual budget. Over the weekend, Fars had reported said Iran's oil sales in the past 30 days

had reached their highest monthly level in two years, surpassing \$3 billion. The agency did not provide an average daily sales volume for that period. Iran's national budget had projected around \$25.4 billion in revenue from crude oil and condensate exports, based on shipments of approximately 1.045 million barrels per day (bpd) at a benchmark price of \$54 a barrel. The reported increase in sales comes as the US military has imposed a second naval blockade on southern Iranian ports and Iran-linked vessels and tankers since mid-July in the wake of a war it waged with help of Israel against the country in late July. Iran's crude oil production has meanwhile nose-

dived since the war began. OPEC's latest monthly report put Iranian output at 2.1 million barrels per day in August, down 34% from 3.2 million bpd before the conflict. An Iranian senior lawmaker said last month that higher oil prices had helped increase revenues despite difficulties in exporting crude. Oil prices had traded above \$70 a barrel before the war but surged past \$100 after Iran restricted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz in early March. The vital waterway handles around 20% of global oil and gas shipments. Prices have remained above \$90 since early September, briefly crossing \$100 and currently fluctuating around \$101 a barrel.

Liquidity growth hits 19% in five months, CBI governor says

Economy Desk

Iran's liquidity growth surged to 19% in the five months to Aug. 22, Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati told IRNA on Monday. The growth rate was 1 percentage point higher than the 18% recorded during the same period last year, Hemmati added. He said the CBI had sought to rein in liquidity growth through monetary policy tools and "serious control over the amount of liquidity creation by banks". Hemmati expressed hope that efforts to control liquidity would help sustain the slowdown in inflation which stands



at 69.9%. According to figures based on CBI data, liquidity hovered around IRR157.81 quadrillion (\$68.61bn) at the end of the previous Iranian year, which ended on March 20. The CBI has not yet released precise monthly liquidity figures for the current year. As a result, the es-

timated figure of IRR187.4 quadrillion (\$81.48bn) for the end of August is calculated from Hemmati's statement that liquidity grew 19% during the first five months compared with the end of the previous year. On that basis, around IRR29.59 quadrillion (\$12.87bn) was added to liquidity during the five-month period.

Trump's push to ...

Washington now believes the economic pressure created by the blockade could put Iran in a weaker position and enable it to obtain greater nuclear concessions. From this perspective, simply reopening the Strait of Hormuz in exchange for lifting the blockade would amount to a return to the prewar situation and could expose Trump to criticism that he had failed to achieve additional nuclear concessions. That is why the US approach is to combine lifting the blockade and reopening the strait with nuclear negotiations. Iran, however, wants the Hormuz issue, the lifting of the blockade, the release of frozen funds and an end to the war on all fronts to be addressed first, followed by separate nuclear negotiations without the blockade being used as leverage.

Trump told Axios that he is approaching a major decision on whether to resume massive attacks and will consult Persian Gulf Arab leaders. Could this be an effort to increase pressure before presenting a new proposal to Tehran?

Trump's overall approach is "peace through strength." He keeps military pressure and coercion alongside diplomacy and conducts diplomacy under that pressure, seeking to make Iran provide the concessions he wants. His statement about approaching an important decision can therefore serve as an instrument of pressure. Trump's approach after the US congressional midterm elections will also become clearer. If the results lead to a defeat, he may adopt a tougher approach. Even if he wins, he would have greater room to pursue a more coercive policy. Therefore, the assessment that the current situation could continue until the US elections, followed by a Trump defeat and his return to negotiations with less leverage, is not necessarily correct. After the election results, Trump could prepare for broader military action against Iran unless Tehran offers significant nuclear concessions. One issue on which the United States has placed considerable emphasis is Iran's stockpile of 400 kilograms of uranium enriched to 60%. Trump could seek this concession and present it to the American public

as evidence that he had achieved an important result in the war. The United States is also seeking to shape the regional order after the war. Its approach includes advancing the Abraham Accords and normalization between Saudi Arabia and Israel. Washington has so far not accepted a formal mutual-defense commitment with any Persian Gulf Arab country and instead views regional security within a broader framework. The recent meeting between CENTCOM commanders and some Arab and Israeli military commanders can also be viewed in this context. In the event of further escalation, Washington seeks greater coordination, intelligence cooperation and work toward an integrated regional defense system as part of the regional order it wants to establish. **Trump has said the naval blockade has restricted Iran's oil exports, while Iran considers lifting the blockade one of its conditions. Could resolving the Strait of Hormuz be a first step toward reducing tensions and reopening negotiations?** The United States currently wants to

address the nuclear issue alongside the Strait of Hormuz. It does not view lifting the naval blockade as a first step. Instead, it wants the two issues to be considered simultaneously as one package. Iran's preference is different. Tehran wants the Strait of Hormuz, the lifting of the blockade and its other conditions to be addressed first, followed by nuclear negotiations. The US approach allows Washington to use the economic leverage created by the blockade to obtain nuclear concessions. Iran had expected that it could withstand the economic pressure over time and that the impact of higher energy prices on the global economy, the US and its allies would eventually increase Washington's incentive to compromise. However, the United States now says it can export some oil through the southern corridor without causing a major increase in energy prices. If that assessment holds, Washington could have greater economic resilience and retain the blockade as leverage in nuclear negotiations.

If Washington sends a new proposal through Pakistan that combines the

Strait of Hormuz and the nuclear issue in one package, what would be Iran's main obstacles to accepting it? The first obstacle is Iran's opposition to direct US involvement in a mechanism for the Strait of Hormuz. Tehran has repeatedly said the issue is not connected to the United States and should be resolved through a bilateral mechanism with Oman or through a broader regional arrangement. The second obstacle is that Iran does not want the naval blockade to be used as leverage in nuclear negotiations. Tehran wants the two issues separated. It wants the Strait of Hormuz to be handled through its own mechanism, without direct US involvement, while the nuclear issue should be discussed separately on the basis of nuclear provisions and without the pressure of the blockade. Iran is therefore unlikely to agree to the US formula. At the same time, Washington believes the blockade can put significant pressure on Iran's economy and place Tehran in a weaker position. Its assessment is therefore that it will not enter negotiations until Iran is prepared to make nuclear concessions.

Iran's exports to Russia can reach \$10b this year: *Businessman*

Yet our share of Russia's \$270b market negligible



Kambiz Mirkarimi

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Economic relations between Iran and Russia, in recent years, simultaneously with the expansion of political ties between the two countries, have entered a new phase. The implementation of the free trade agreement with the Eurasian

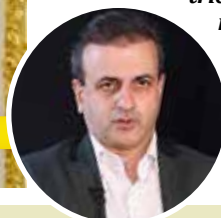
Economic Union, the development of transportation corridors, and the endeavor to strengthen financial and banking mechanisms have provided the groundwork for an increase in commercial exchanges between the two countries.

In the meantime, Iran's exports to Russia have also experienced an ascending trajectory and, from approximately \$270 million in the year 1397 (March 21, 2018–March 20, 2019), after several stages of growth, surpassed \$1 billion in the past year for the first time; a figure that is estimated to reach approximately \$1.4 billion this year with so much more room for improvement. Despite this growth, economic actors maintain that the current figure of Iran's exports has a considerable distance from the actual capacity of the Russian market. Russia annually has approximately \$270 billion in imports, and Iran's share of this market remains extremely limited. For this reason, targeting an increase in exports to several billion dollars and even reaching the figure of \$10 billion, in the event of the removal of existing obstacles, has been placed on the agenda of economic actors.

Nevertheless, the path to reaching such a goal does not depend solely on political relations and trade agreements between the two countries. Currency problems, the costly nature of transportation, limitations of rail and maritime capacities, bureaucratic complexities, the multiplicity of systems, frequent changes of directives, and the instability of domestic regulations are among the obstacles that, according to private sector actors, have reduced the competitive power of Iranian exporters. These problems can even propel Russian trade counterparts toward the use of indirect and intermediary routes.

On the other hand, the limitations that have been created in recent years for some of Iran's competitors in the Russian market, alongside Iran's possession of land and maritime routes with its neighboring country, have created a new opportunity for the development of the presence of Iranian goods in this market; an opportunity that, according to economic actors, in the event of long-term planning and precise understanding of the Russian consumer's taste, can lead to the stabilization of Iranian brands in this market.

Kambiz Mirkarimi, vice president of the Iran-Russia Joint Chamber of Commerce, in the following exclusive interview with Iran Daily, delineated the trajectory of export growth to Russia and examined the most important obstacles to the development of trade between the two countries in the domains of currency, banking, logistics, and domestic regulations. He maintains that with the rectification of these obstacles, the attainment of \$10 billion in exports to Russia is not a remote goal. Mirkarimi, at the same time, emphasizes the necessity of changing the approach of economic policymaking, reducing bureaucracy, and creating stability for exporters.



IRAN DAILY: Considering the recent trip of Iran's minister of Economy to Russia and the importance of relations between the two countries, how do you assess the current state of economic relations between Iran and Russia?

MIRKARIMI: Relations between the two countries in the domain of exports have had an ascending trajectory from the Persian calendar year of 1398 (March 21, 2018–March 20, 2019) until now, and this trajectory continues. For years, we faced a serious problem, and our ratio of exports to imports was approximately one to four; that is, against every single unit that we exported to Russia, we had approximately four times that in imports.

One of the important occurrences was the implementation of the free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union, which rendered considerable assistance to Iran's exports. We are now moving toward a more balanced equilibrium in



Russian President Vladimir Putin (front-R) guides his Iranian counterpart, Masoud Pezeshkian (front-L), at the Kremlin in Moscow on January 17, 2025.

● VYACHESLAV PROKOFEYEV/AFP

trade, and the ratio of exports to imports is gradually moving toward becoming 50-50. Of course, we have not yet reached this point, and it must be noted that we are at the beginning of the implementation of this mechanism.

Iran's exports to Russia, in the past year, surpassed \$1 billion for the first time, and my estimation is that this year we can reach approximately \$1.4 billion.

How has the trajectory of the growth of Iran's exports to Russia been in past years?

If we look at past figures, we have had considerable growth. In the year 1397, Iran's exports to Russia were approximately

\$270 million. In the first year of the implementation of the trade agreement with Eurasia, our exports increased by approximately 61%.

Even at the peak of the coronavirus era, when trade in the world had encountered limitations by virtue of this disease, the ascending trajectory of Iran's exports to Russia continued and surpassed the \$500 million threshold. Thereafter, the increase continued and exports reached approximately \$750 million, and in the past year, surpassed the \$1 billion threshold for the first time.

Our prediction is that this year this figure



Iran's Economy Minister Ali Madanizadeh (2nd-R) meets with Dmitry Zverev (2nd-L), Russia's deputy minister of Transport, in Moscow, Russia, on September 9, 2026.

● IRNA

will reach higher numbers. Therefore, the overall trajectory demonstrates that if existing obstacles are reduced, the capacity for export increase is far greater than current figures.

Has only the value of exports increased, or has the composition of exported goods also changed?

The composition of exports is an extremely important matter. Today, a considerable portion of our exports to Russia no longer merely includes oil, minerals, or raw goods. Manufactured goods, products possessing added value, and the food industry have a considerable share in exports, and the diversity of exported goods has also increased.

This matter is of great importance because the export of goods possessing added value both assists domestic production and can create employment and foreign currency revenue. Therefore, we must endeavor for this trajectory to continue and for Iranian products to be present in the Russian market with greater brand and added value.

What capacity does the Russian market have for Iran's exports?

Russia has an extremely large market; the imports of this country are approximately \$270 billion, while Iran's exports to this country are still slightly more than \$1 billion. That is, our share of this market is extremely small, and this very matter demonstrates that an extremely great capacity for growth exists.

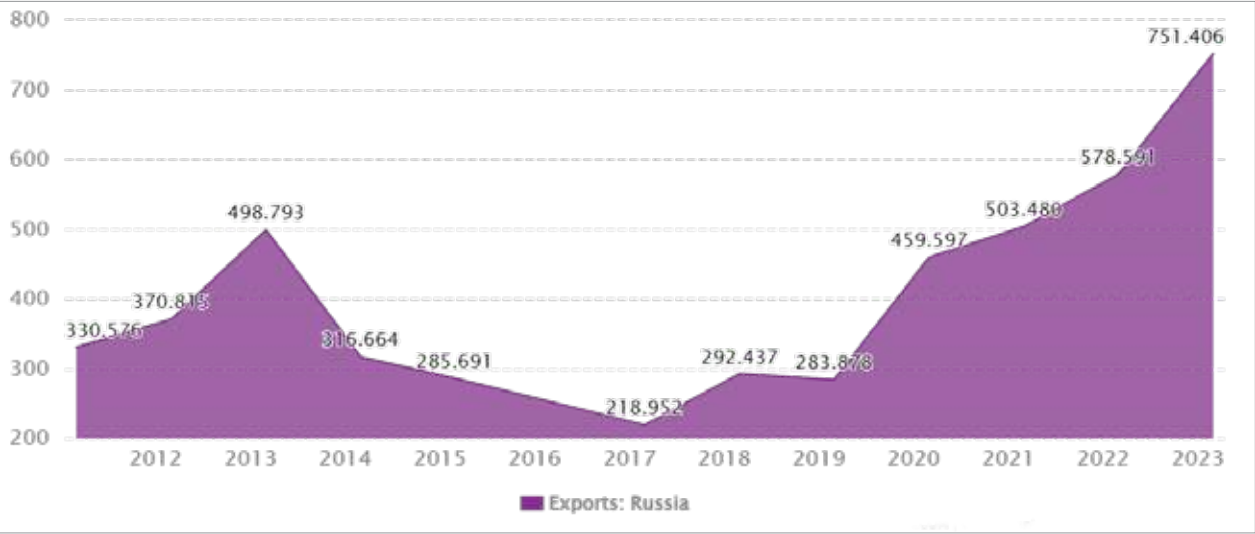
In my belief, reaching \$10 billion in exports to Russia is not an ambitious and remote goal. If the current trajectory continues and some principal obstacles are removed, one can approach this figure in an appropriate time period. Of course, for this task, we must amend the transportation infrastructure, banking relations, and domestic regulations.

At present, what is the most important obstacle to the development of exports to Russia?



Today, a considerable portion of our exports to Russia no longer merely includes oil, minerals, or raw goods. Manufactured goods, products possessing added value, and the food industry have a considerable share in exports, and the diversity of exported goods has also increased. This matter is of great importance because the export of goods possessing added value both assists domestic production and can create employment and foreign currency revenue.





We have two fundamental matters; one is the issue of currency and the other is logistics. In the domain of logistics, the cost of transportation between Iran and Russia is extremely high. We use trucks for the transfer of goods, and various types of trucks, from ordinary trucks to refrigerated trucks, traverse this route, but the existing capacity does not respond to the volume of trade that we can have with Russia. The railway has good capacity and can play an important role in the trade of the two countries, but its capacity is also limited and cannot alone respond to the need. In the maritime domain, we also have capacities in the Caspian Sea, but this capacity has not yet been utilized sufficiently. In the east of the Caspian Sea, there are also five countries, and the bureaucracies existing in these routes have caused a portion of the logistical capacity of the region to remain unused.

Do these limitations also have a political aspect?

No. We do not have a serious political problem in relations with our northern neighbors. On the contrary, by virtue of the good relations that exist between the countries, in many instances efforts are made for obstacles to be removed. The principal problem is that our logistical capacity is insufficient for the volume of trade that can take shape. Greater investment must be undertaken in the development of transportation infrastructure, particularly maritime and rail transportation.

If these obstacles are removed, to what extent will it affect the capacity of Iran's exports to Russia?

As I stated, \$10 billion in exports is attainable and is not an unrealistic figure. Of course, to reach it, serious measures must be undertaken. One of the most important measures is the development of maritime transportation. Although, in future years, we can increase exports, with the current infrastructure we will encounter ceilings.



A man shops at a supermarket in Moscow, Russia, on January 30, 2023.
● NATALIA KOLESNIKOVA/GETTY IMAGES



Therefore, the development of the fleet and transportation capacities must be pursued simultaneously with the increase in exports.

Alongside logistical problems, what role do domestic regulations play in limiting trade with Russia?

An important portion of our problems is domestic. Between Iran and Russia, good understandings have been reached, and the parties have also endeavored for the development of economic relations. However, within our country, we face regulations disruptive to business, parallel systems, the multi-tiered nature of the currency, and numerous directives. An economic actor cannot have long-term planning under such conditions. Suppose an Iranian exporter wishes to conclude a long-term contract with a Russian merchant. When the Iranian producer faces daily changes in price, a new directive, or a change in regulations, how can he guarantee the price and conditions of a long-term contract? This instability causes the exporter and even the foreign counterpart to lack the necessary confidence for long-term contracts.

Do such instabilities also cause the formation of informal routes in trade?

Yes. When regulations and prices are not appropriately adjusted, informal routes take shape. Even Russian counterparts have seen these problems. For example, a Russian company may undertake the purchase of Iranian goods through informal routes or by way of intermediary companies, and the goods end up cheaper and less troublesome for it than purchasing directly from the official representative of that very company. These deviations arise from incorrect policies and price controls. At a juncture, the use of single-use cards increased so that certain laws might be circumvented. A single-use commercial card is, in reality, the commercial card of an individual that, temporarily and in exchange for a specified amount, is placed at the disposal of third parties. In other words, the principal holder of the card, for various reasons, leases it to other individuals and, in exchange, receives an amount. This method causes individuals,



The chart shows the trajectory of Iran's exports to Russia from 1995 to 2023.
● CBI/CEICDATA

without undergoing the complicated and time-consuming procedures of obtaining an official commercial card, to be able to engage in international trade. But this task, from a legal standpoint, possesses serious problems and risks. Later, efforts were made for these routes to be closed, but when we only close the route and do not rectify the root of the problem, a portion of exports may also be damaged.

What is the current state of banking relations between Iran and Russia?

At present, the possibility of conducting banking exchanges between the two countries exists, and companies can work with rubles and rials. But the principal problem is the distrust arising from past experiences. For example, there has been a precedent where an Iranian company concluded an export contract with a Russian company, announced its rial account, and the Russian counterpart was ready to pay. But at the time of transferring the currency, the conversion of currency was performed at a different rate, and afterward it became clear that this matter was by order of the Central Bank. These types of occurrences cause the economic actor to not possess complete confidence in the banking system. Consequently, the Russian counterpart or the Iranian exporter may prefer to conduct a portion of the exchanges through intermediary companies and accounts in Dubai or Turkey. This matter both increases the risk of transactions and causes financial resources to exit from the official banking route.

What countries are Iran's competitors in the Russian market?

We have serious competitors in the Russian market. China, India, and Turkey have an extremely extensive presence in this market. Of course, some European countries, due to limitations arising from existing conditions, have encountered prob-

lems for trade with Russia. In the banking domain, they also have limitations. Iran, due to its neighboring status with Russia, its possession of several land and maritime routes, and favorable political relations, has advantages that we must utilize. These conditions are an important opportunity for the development of trade.

Can the current conditions assist Iran in capturing the Russian market for the long term?

Yes, but our perspective must not be merely short-term. The goal must not be that we export goods only under conditions in which some competitors face limitations. We must understand the taste of the Russian market and produce our products based on the needs of that market. Some Iranian producers have undertaken measures in this domain; they have produced their products in accordance with the Russian market, changed the packaging, and endeavored to stabilize their brand there. This task must be undertaken on a broader scale so that even if international conditions change, the Russian consumer still chooses the Iranian good and brand.

For the realization of this goal, what measures must be undertaken?

The chambers of commerce and the Trade Promotion Organization must strengthen the presence of Iranian companies in Russian exhibitions. This presence must not be only in Moscow; exhibitions and trade events are also held in various cities of Russia. Since the cost of presence in international exhibitions is high, the provision of exhibition subsidies and facilities to Iranian companies can assist their greater presence. On the other hand, the Iranian producer must not constantly have the concern of the currency rate and changes in directives. When the manager of a company is supposed to participate in a foreign exhibition, but, at the same time, his mind is occupied with what the currency rate will become tomorrow or what directive will be issued, he cannot enter the international market with focus.

Is the free trade agreement with Eurasia alone sufficient?

No. The free trade agreement is a great and important step, but the necessary conditions for its utilization must also be provided within the country. We cannot, on one hand, have a free trade agreement with a country or economic bloc and, on the other hand, limit commercial activity with domestic regulations. For neighboring countries, mechanisms for trade facilitation must be taken more seriously. The chambers of commerce, also, due to their connection with the parliament and decision-making bodies, must endeavor more for the rectification of disruptive laws and regulations.

Ultimately, for the utilization of Russia's capacity, what change in Iran's economic policy is necessary?

We require a change of approach. In many domains, the same past approaches continue, while the economic conditions of the country have changed. Foreign trade must be facilitated for the private sector. The producer and exporter of the private sector, if supported, both creates employment and generates foreign currency. The decision-making authorities of trade are multiple, and sometimes even the economic bodies know what task must be undertaken, but existing laws and regulations have bound their hands. This very polyphony and intense bureaucracy cause decisions to not reach the desired outcome. We must first resolve our own domestic obstacles and then expect the trade counterpart countries to remove other problems. The Russian market is an important opportunity for Iran, but the utilization of this opportunity requires stability of regulations, rectification of currency policies, development of logistics, facilitation of banking relations, and reduction of bureaucracy. If these amendments are undertaken, the increase of exports to Russia from the current level and movement toward multi-billion-dollar figures will be entirely imaginable.



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Kiani misses out on taolu podium, Golshadnejad crashes out in women's kumite

Sports Desk

The second day of action at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games in Japan was one to forget for Iranian hopefuls Zahra Kiani and Atousa Golshadnejad.

Kiani, who made history by securing Iran's first-ever women's taolu gold at last year's World Wushu Championships, finished empty-handed in a closely contested changquan event at the Aichi Prefectural Martial Arts Hall, missing out on the podium by narrow margins.

Kiani, who also won gold at the 2024 Asian Championships, tallied 9.703 points in Monday's final. Hong Kong's Lydia Sham delivered a 9.713-point performance to grab the top prize, with Macau's Sou Cho Man settling for silver on 9.710, while Indonesia's Eugenia Diva Widodo took the bronze with 9.706 points.

In karate, reigning world champion Golshadnejad entered the women's kumite -68kg contest – featuring eight participants – as a



Iran's Zahra Kiani performs in the women's taolu event at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games at the Aichi Prefectural Martial Arts Hall, Nagoya, Japan, on Sept. 21, 2026. **VARZESH3**

clear favorite for the gold, but was stunned by Japan's Kama Tsubasa 2-0 to crash out in the first round.

Kabaddi victory

The Iranian women's team got off to an emphatic start in Group A by hammering the host team 63-20 at the Tokai Citizen Gymnasium.

Iran, which won the Asian Games gold in 2018 before settling for bronze in Hangzhou 2022, will be back in action against Bangladesh on Tuesday, before taking on India in a highly anticipated meeting the following day.

There was also a victorious start for the Iranian pair in men's beach volleyball, as Abbas Pourasgari and Alireza Aqajani defeated Joninho Fernandes Xavier and Joel Savio Valente of Timor-Leste 2-0 (21-12, 21-4) in their Pool F opener.

"Thank God, we took a strong first step. Everything went according to our coach's plan, and we carried out everything he had told us and everything we had practiced on the court," Aqajani said after the match.

Looking ahead to Iran's next match against Oman's Ahmed Al-Housni and Khalfan Al-Mamari on Wednesday, Aqajani said: "The Omanis are a tough opponent. We have played against them two or three times. They are a good

team, but we are focused on winning and reaching the top of the standings in our final match against Thailand."

Aqajani added that finishing first in the group would give Iran a strong chance of progressing further in the competition. "We want to finish first in the group so that we have a better chance of advancing to the later stages," he said.

Beaten by Bahrain

Iran's losing run in the men's handball event con-

tinued on Sunday, after the country fell to a 34-20 defeat against reigning Asian champion Bahrain in Group B.

Four finalists

Four Iranian men enjoyed an impressive run of results in artistic gymnastics on Sunday, booking places in their respective apparatus finals.

In the still rings, Siavash Siahi scored 13.866 to finish seventh, while Mahdi Ahmadkohani placed 11th with 13.663, with both securing spots in the final.

Arman Khodaei also reached the final on the pommel horse after scoring 14.400 to finish fourth in the qualifiers.

Mahdi Olfati qualified third in the vault with a final score of 14.083, based on two attempts of 14.966 and 13.200.

Mohammadreza Hamidi finished ninth in the horizontal bar with 12.833 and was named the first reserve for the final.

The pommel horse and still rings finals will be held on Thursday, while the vault final is scheduled for Friday.



Iranian karateka Atousa Golshadnejad walks off the tatami after her first-round defeat in the women's kumite -68kg event at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games at the Toyohashi City General Gymnasium, Toyohashi, Japan, on Sept. 21, 2026. **MNA**

Iran water polo captain looking to overcome China, Kazakhstan hurdles to reach final

Sports Desk

Iran's men's water polo captain Mahdi Yazdankhah says the team's main objective at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games is to defeat China and Kazakhstan and reach the final.

Iran will open its Group B campaign against Singapore on Saturday before taking on China the following day at Nagoya's Nippon Gaishi Hall – a repeat of the two sides' meetings, including the final, at last year's Asian Aquatics Championships in Ahmedabad, India.

Reflecting on Iran's final setback against China, Yazdank-

hah said: "China had analyzed us very well ahead of the final. The circumstances were different when we beat them in the group stage, but in the final they had a better understanding of our style of play."

"In such matches, the teams' performances, mistakes and the details of the game can change the result and make the difference between the two sides smaller or bigger," added the Iranian captain, who was part of the squad when Iran defeated China in a shootout to win the 2018 Asian Games bronze in Jakarta.

Chasing a third water polo

medal in the history of the multi-sport event, Iran will conclude the group stage against South Korea on Monday.

All four teams in the group are already guaranteed a place in the quarterfinals, with the final standings in the two groups determining the last-eight fixtures. The captain identified China and Kazakhstan as Iran's main rivals, while acknowledging Japan's strength.

"Our main opponents in these competitions are China and Kazakhstan. Japan is also a very strong team," he said. "Our main goal is to beat China and Kazakh-

stan and reach the final." However, Yazdankhah stressed that small details can have a major impact on water polo matches.

"Water polo is a sport in which the result can change with one goal, one pass, one shot or one defensive move. There are many fluctuations during a game, and details have a very significant impact on the course of a match," he said.

Iran missed out on the podium at the previous edition in Hangzhou 2022 after suffering a shootout defeat to Kazakhstan in the bronze-medal contest, having also fallen to China in the group phase.



IRNA

Manolopoulos praises collective effort behind basketball bronze

Sports Desk

Iran men's basketball head coach Sotiris Manolopoulos said his team's bronze medal at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games was the result of a collective effort by everyone involved with the national team. Knocked out in the quarterfinals in Hangzhou 2022, Iran overcame a half-time deficit to defeat China 79-70 in Sunday's third-place playoff to secure a fifth men's basketball medal in six editions of the Asian Games, having settled for silver in 2014 and 2018.

"Before the semifinals, it seemed China were the strongest team in this competition and could win the gold medal. It was a very dif-

icult game for us, but in the end we managed to win. We have great respect for China," he said.

"All the players who accept to play for the national team, the president and members of the federation, and the members of the team played a role in this victory and helped us," he said. "Even my two assistants and the team physiotherapist, who stayed in Tehran. Many people helped our team, and I want to thank all of them."

Reflecting on Iran's semifinal defeat by South Korea, Manolopoulos said he remained proud of his players despite their disappointing performance.

"I'm proud of my players. We played a bad game against

Korea. They are a good team and forced us to play badly," he said. "That defeat was a big disappointment for us, but I knew my team would never give up."

The coach said the players had shown the same resilience during last summer's FIBA Asia Cup and needed to put the semifinal loss behind them. "This is not only because I'm their coach; they also showed it last summer at the Asia Cup in a similar situation. We had to do the same in this competition and forget the game against Korea," he said.

"The only solution was to give everything we had in today's game. Most of the players did that, and we managed to win. I'm proud

of my players."

Manolopoulos also addressed Iran's ongoing generational transition, saying balancing the introduction of new players with the need to achieve results is particularly challenging.

"I have been involved in basketball for 45 years and experienced this process before in Greece. Changing generations and achieving results at the same time is difficult, and perhaps this has happened less often in the past," he said.

"After two and a half years, we finished third at the Asia Cup and the Asian Games. It is not easy to achieve results while changing generations at the same time. My players deserve a lot of credit."



IRIBF

Iranica Desk

For many travelers, visiting Khuzestan Province during the hot months is synonymous with extreme heat. But in Andimeshk, the Dez River and its surrounding cliffs have given rise to a destination that offers a distinctly different vision of summer tourism in the province.

Known locally as Cham Sabz, or Cham Sooz in the local dialect, the natural area lies downstream from the Dez Dam and offers visitors a combination of boating, nature tourism, water-based activities and the chance to float in the cool waters of the river, according to chtn.ir.

Iman Molaeinejad, a tourism expert, described the area's potential, saying Cham Sabz could be considered one of Khuzestan's distinctive nature-tourism destinations. The location of the Dez River between high, rocky walls creates a landscape quite different from the image of Khuzestan's natural environment that people commonly have in mind.

He added that the area is located downstream from the Dez Dam in Andimeshk, one of Iran's major hydroelectric structures. After leaving the dam, the river flows through sections that become narrow, winding and rocky, creating suitable conditions for a range of tourism experiences.

Referring to the area's geological features, Molaeinejad said the rocky walls and conglomerate

Cham Sabz offers different face of summer tourism in Khuzestan



● bamatour.pro

erate formations on both sides of the river form an important part of Cham Sabz's natural landscape. Cave-like and man-made spaces can also be found among the rocks.

According to him, these spaces were used in the past and are still sometimes used during the hot months for resting and occasionally staying overnight. In addition to their natural value, they reflect some of the area's local characteristics and traditions. Molaeinejad said one of the main routes into Cham Sabz is through the boating dock at the Qaleh Mokhtar Tourism Complex. After reaching the complex, visitors continue their journey by boat and enter the

rocky and aquatic sections of Cham Sabz.

The Qaleh Mokhtar Complex also provides a range of facilities, including parking, round-the-clock security, suites and accommodation, platforms for camping and setting up tents, a shop, a waterfront platform and sanitary facilities. The complex can accommodate individual visitors as well as groups, tours and travel agencies.

He said the experience becomes particularly appealing once the boat moves away from the coastal area and enters the narrower, rocky sections of the river. The combination of summer heat and the cool waters of the Dez creates a distinctive

experience that could change travelers' perceptions of visiting Khuzestan during the summer.

The tourism guide identified river trekking as one of Cham Sabz's more exciting activities. Participants wear life jackets and use safety equipment while traveling through part of the river, accompanied by local guides and people familiar with the route. An escort boat also accompanies the group to enhance safety.

Floating in the cool, clear waters of the Dez, with high rocky walls rising on both sides, is particularly exciting during the hot months, he said. After completing the activity, visitors return to the Qaleh Mokhtar

coastal area, where they can stop to rest, eat and enjoy the natural surroundings.

Molaeinejad also pointed to the variety of recreational activities available in the area, saying Cham Sabz's tourism potential is not limited to river trekking and boating. Activities such as jet skiing, paddleboarding, ziplining and water slides are also available or being developed at the complex and in the surrounding tourism area.

He said some of the area's potential is linked to programs designed and operated by local tourism guides. The introduction of new experiences and activities could pave the way for tourism events and festivals

focused on water-based recreation at Cham Sabz.

Regarding the best time to visit, Molaeinejad said travelers whose primary goal is to enjoy water activities and float in the river can generally include the destination in their itineraries from late spring through early autumn.

However, he stressed that the area's tourism potential is not limited to summer. As temperatures fall during the second half of the year, the surrounding landscape changes. Under suitable weather conditions, the slopes and cliffs around Tang-e Van Mountain become greener, while nature excursions, camping and boating can also be arranged depending on local conditions.

"For this reason, Cham Sabz cannot be considered solely a summer destination," he said. "The area's natural conditions change throughout the seasons, and each season can offer visitors a different experience."

He also highlighted Andimeshk's historical and industrial attractions, saying visitors traveling to the area during Nowruz or other times of the year can include a visit to the Dez Dam in their itinerary.

The Dez Dam, considered one of Iran's earliest major dams, was added to Iran's National Heritage List in December 2019. As an example of Iran's industrial heritage, the dam can complement the area's natural attractions and form part of visitors' itineraries in Andimeshk.

Reading Room

Book on Esmail Yaghmaei's life, legacy unveiled

Iranica Desk

A ceremony marking the unveiling of the book entitled "Guardian of Iran's National Identity (3): In Memory of Professor Esmail Yaghmaei" was held in tribute to the renowned archaeologist and cultural heritage researcher. The event brought together veteran scholars and prominent experts in cultural heritage, archaeology, and museology, who spoke about Yaghmaei's scientific, professional, and personal contributions, as well as his role in documenting and preserving aspects of Iran's archaeological heritage.

Mohammad Ebrahim Zarei, head of the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, said Yaghmaei was among those who loved Iran, its archaeological remains and cultural heritage with sincerity and dedication, and who worked to introduce and protect this heritage, according to IBNA.

He said Iran's cultural and historical heritage reflects different aspects of Iranian identity through architecture, art, pottery, tilework and miniature painting. Preserving this cultural character and identity, he added, requires cooperation and solidarity.

Zarei also stressed the need to avoid confrontation among cultural heritage professionals. "If there is competition, it should be competition to do better, not hostility or attempts to eliminate one another," he said, emphasizing that at a time when cultural heritage is under threat, everyone should work together to protect it.



He further stressed the importance of safeguarding cultural heritage, saying that today, more than ever, there is a need for unity and solidarity to protect the heritage passed down from previous generations.

Zarei also announced the publication of a collection containing 32 articles in honor of Esmail Yaghmaei and thanked the authors and those involved in preparing and publishing the volume.

Seyyed Mohammad Beheshti, a distinguished figure in Iran's cultural heritage field, highlighted Yaghmaei's personal and professional qualities and described him as an example of an "archaeologist in love with his profession."

Beheshti said that love, unlike many human choices, is not an act of will and that one cannot simply decide to fall in love. He noted that among

archaeologists, there are individuals whose passion for the field runs throughout their professional lives, and said Yaghmaei was one of them.

Referring to the place of love in Persian literature and the concept of the "lover" in Iranian culture, Beheshti said the value and standing of such individuals should be assessed through the "measure of love," because devotion to a field can become the source of years of effort, perseverance and service.

Seyyed Ahmad Mohit-Tabatabaei, head of the Iranian Museums Association, stressed the importance of documenting the lives and activities of prominent figures in cultural heritage.

He said the stories and experiences of influential figures in the field should be preserved for future generations and

presented in various forms, including books and museums. Referring to the role of museums in introducing cultural works and achievements, he emphasized the importance of paying attention to the people behind those works and activities. The history of cultural heritage, he said, is not merely a collection of buildings, objects and artifacts; it also encompasses the experiences, knowledge and lives of the people who contributed to the creation and preservation of that heritage.

Nasser Norouz-Zadeh Chegini, an archaeologist and distinguished figure in Iran's cultural heritage field, also spoke about Yaghmaei's scientific and administrative career, describing him as a scholar, researcher and capable manager.

Reviewing part of Yaghmaei's professional career, he referred to his studies at the University of Tehran, his work as a specialist and his involvement in the country's archaeological and cultural heritage institutions. Yaghmaei, he said, played an effective role at different stages in fieldwork, professional and technical activities, management and research.

Norouz-Zadeh also identified one of Yaghmaei's most important legacies as the documentation and compilation of a vast body of information and experience relating to archaeology and cultural heritage. He referred to Yaghmaei's efforts to collect and prepare material for numerous books.



Esmail Yaghmaei

According to him, Yaghmaei's written works are not simply books about history and archaeology. In many cases, they can also be regarded as valuable documents for understanding the formation and development of Iran's archaeological and cultural heritage institutions. Alongside information about archaeological sites and finds, these works record the names of individuals and places, events, and some of the oral and professional experiences of people active in the field.

The event concluded with the unveiling of Guardian of Iran's National Identity (3): In Memory of Professor Esmail Yaghmaei.

Esmail Yaghmaei was born in Tehran on September 18, 1941. He devoted nearly six decades of his life to research, archaeological excavation and the preservation of Iran's cultural heritage. Yaghmaei was admitted to a hospital in Tehran on July 6, 2026, following a stroke and died on the morning of July 19 at the age of 85. He was among the last sur-

viving members of a generation of Iranian archaeologists who entered the field of archaeological excavation during the 1960s and 1970s and, through years of work, brought to light valuable aspects of Iran's ancient history and civilization.

Passionate about Iranian civilization and culture, Yaghmaei spent his life studying, protecting and introducing Iran's historical heritage.

Yaghmaei completed his higher education at the Faculty of Archaeology and Art of the University of Tehran. In May 1967, he joined the Archaeology Department, after which he served as a supervisor on numerous archaeological excavations across Iran.

Over the course of his career, he took part in archaeological survey and excavation teams at sites including Haft Tappeh in Khuzestan, Chogha Gavanah in Islamabad-e Gharb, Susa and Shahr-e Sukhteh, Marvdasht and Kermanshah, northwestern Iran, Gorgan, the Qazvin Plain, Kerman and Kangavar.



New school year begins

Pezeshkian urges teamwork, skills to shape Iran's future

Social Desk

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian rang in Iran's 2026-27 academic year on Monday, telling students they could achieve their ambitions through perseverance, cooperation and practical skills.

"You are more valuable than gold," Pezeshkian told the pupils, urging them to develop their talents, work together and learn how to tackle problems in their families, communities and beyond, president.ir reported. Drawing on his own journey from an ordinary family to the presidency, he said determination and hard work could help people advance and encouraged students to focus their minds on becoming the best they could be. The ceremony was held at Hazrat Fati-meh Zahra Girls' Elementary School in Tehran's District 11. The president stressed that academ-

ic achievement should go hand in hand with practical training, saying students needed to apply what they learned in the classroom to real-life challenges.

"If you study well and acquire the necessary skills, you can solve the problems of your family, neighborhood, city, country and even the world," he said.

He also called on students to cultivate friendship and mutual support, warning that disputes and infighting could undermine their collective efforts. Working in groups, he said, would help them achieve goals that might remain beyond their reach individually.

Pezeshkian urged teachers to adopt classroom methods centered on teamwork and problem-solving, identify students' individual abilities and provide opportunities for hands-on learning. He said the government would work to improve educational condi-

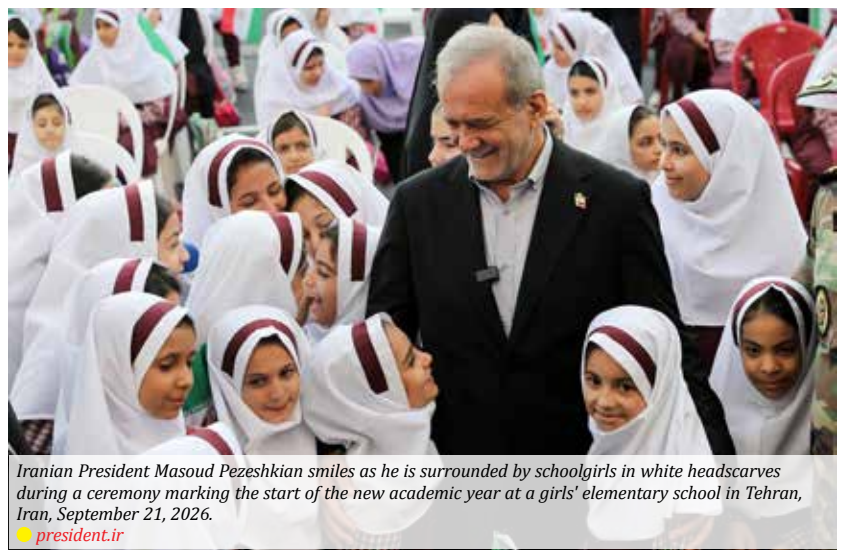
tions and expand the use of modern teaching technologies.

Addressing the students, he posed the question, "How do we identify a problem, and then how do we solve it?" He said developing the ability to think critically, communicate effectively and explore different solutions was essential to addressing challenges.

The president also encouraged pupils to practice energy conservation at school and at home, linking responsible consumption to maintaining production, supporting employment and helping create better opportunities for younger generations.

Meeting with teachers, Pezeshkian emphasized that values such as fairness, empathy and public service should be demonstrated through educators' own conduct, saying practical example could leave a deeper impression than words alone.

He also urged teachers to encourage



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian smiles as he is surrounded by schoolgirls in white headscarves during a ceremony marking the start of the new academic year at a girls' elementary school in Tehran, Iran, September 21, 2026.

● president.ir

creativity and help students move beyond conventional ways of thinking, arguing that fresh approaches and

sound reasoning were necessary to improve education and address the country's challenges.

Wartime experience remains key to Iran's air defense, veteran pilot says

No pilot emerged unscathed from eight-year war

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Sacred Defense Week offers an opportunity to revisit the eight-year war and hear from those who experienced it firsthand. For these men, defending their country was not an abstract concept but a reality they confronted every day on the battlefield. Among them were Air Force pilots, who carried out reconnaissance, bombing and air support missions from the earliest days of the war until its end.

Their accounts are not simply stories of military operations and victories. They recount years in which intense flight demands, constant danger and split-second decisions became part of everyday life. Brigadier General Pilot Valiollah Oveisi is one of the pilots who experienced all eight years of the Sacred

Defense from the cockpit of a fighter jet. Oveisi is among the few pilots to have flown both the F-5 and F-14 fighter jets in combat. His record includes cross-border bombing missions, shooting down two enemy fighter jets, including an Iraqi Mirage, conducting the first combat test of the Sejil missile using a Tomcat, and setting an F-14 flight record. He was also among the first pilots to carry out air-to-ground bombing missions with the F-14.

Ahead of Sacred Defense Week, Iran Daily spoke with Brigadier General Pilot Valiollah Oveisi about his eight years of

wartime service, the Air Force's role in military operations, the physical and human toll of the conflict, the transfer of wartime pilots' experience to new personnel, and the differences between today's wars and those of the 1980s.

IRAN DAILY: You experienced all eight years of the war from inside a fighter jet's cockpit. To begin with the very concept of war and the Sacred Defense, how do you view that period?

OVEISI: War is not something anyone likes. War is not good at all. But when a country comes under attack, the question of defense arises. If you are at home and someone tries to break in and steal from you, you will not allow it. God forbid, if someone tries to violate the honor of your family or harm your loved ones, you will not allow that either. During that period, we saw Baathist forces invade our country and commit atrocities in areas such as Susangerd. Under those circumstances, it was natural for a sense of patriotism and responsibility to take shape among military personnel. We had been trained for this very purpose, and we were paid to do this job. The people, too, had every right to expect the military, from soldiers and pilots to personnel in other branches, to defend the country.

We did our duty to the best of our abilities. When parts of our territory were occupied, we tried to reclaim them. As a result, almost no pilot emerged from the war without being harmed. Some attained martyrdom, and I can say with confidence that those who survived the war and were not martyred also became disabled veterans in one way or another. Even so, I want to make one thing clear: We did not do

anything extraordinary. We had a duty, and we carried it out.

You mentioned that almost no pilot emerged from the war without being harmed. To what extent were these injuries the result of the specific conditions of combat flights?

Yes, almost all our pilots are disabled veterans in one way or another. The Army selects the healthiest members of society for pilot training. Anyone with even the slightest medical deficiency cannot pass the medical screening process. Yet today, we see that many of those same people, who were among the healthiest when they were young, now suffer from various physical problems. Long flights and the particular conditions of flying take a toll on the body. Our pilots were, and still are, among the elite personnel of our armed forces. Throughout the eight-year imposed war, they took part in all operations and spent many hours in fighter jets under difficult flying conditions. As a result, many pilots have suffered injuries to their spines and knees. I am one of them.

We were young at the time, and the strength of youth often kept us from noticing many of these injuries. It is like a young person who falls and does not realize the severity of an injury at the time, only to understand the strain placed on the body as they grow older. Today, many of the war's ace pilots have lost some of their mobility because of the severe physical strain caused by the demanding flight conditions they endured during that period.

It seems you also sustained injuries during those missions, and your disability is related to one of those flight incidents.

Is that correct?

Yes. During an F-14 flight, while we were going to refuel, the aircraft caught fire. The situation was such that we could have followed the aircraft's emergency procedures and ejected, abandoning the plane. However, we decided to preserve the aircraft for as long as we could.

In the end, we managed to land the F-14 safely despite the fire. That incident was also one of the factors that caused my injuries. I still feel the effects of the accident and the physical strain of those years of flying. Even my lungs were damaged, and I continue to have problems with them.

You mentioned that the Air Force took part in every operation during the war. Could you explain the precise role it played in a military operation, from beginning to end?

The Air Force was involved in almost every operation conducted during the Sacred Defense, from before an operation began until after it ended. Its work was not limited to bombing. Usually, reconnaissance aircraft would first enter the area and take photographs to gather the necessary intelligence. Bombing and air support missions would then be carried out. Afterward, reconnaissance and aerial photography would resume, while air cover continued.

So you can hardly name an operation in which the Air Force had no role. It was involved in the preparatory stages, throughout the execution of the operation and after it had concluded.

Having experienced the entire eight-year war, what do you see as the main differences between the war we experienced in the 1980s and modern conflicts, particularly the

recent war?

Technology plays a much more prominent role in warfare today. Technology and equipment were important back then, too, but today we are dealing with drones, precision-guided missiles, electronic warfare and artificial intelligence. However, we must not overlook the human element. Human personnel still come first in warfare around the world. Those operating the equipment must be trained, experienced and well-informed, and they must be able to make decisions in emergencies. We made good use of our brave and experienced personnel both during the eight-year war and in the recent conflict. In fact, our advantage over the enemy lay precisely in these dedicated, courageous and highly skilled personnel who were ready to sacrifice their lives.

To what extent can the experience of pilots and commanders from the Sacred Defense help our military personnel today?

It can be of tremendous help. It is true that military equipment has been modernized and aircraft and systems have changed, but human experience has not disappeared. We must pass that experience on to the new generation.

We experienced eight years of war with the resources available to us at the time. This is the kind of experience that cannot easily be taught at a university. Teaching a subject is different from passing on practical experience. I teach myself. Teaching is straightforward, but transferring experience is a more difficult task.

The most important experience that has been properly passed on to our personnel and the new

generation is the spirit of sacrifice, selflessness and self-confidence. These are qualities that give military personnel an advantage when confronting the enemy.

In addition to your operational experience, you have spent years training pilots. In your view, what is the most important quality a pilot should possess? And what is the most important lesson you learned during the eight years of the Sacred Defense that you now teach your students?

Passion and love for the job. I always told my students that if they were not passionate about being pilots, they should give it up. When someone loves their work, many of its hardships become easier to bear.

I experienced this myself during my flying years. I would fly, and fatigue meant very little to me because I loved what I was doing. When you love your profession, difficulties that others find overwhelming become manageable.

The most important lesson I learned during the eight years of the Sacred Defense was how to build inner strength and become self-reliant. I learned that if a person is determined, they can accomplish great things. We should never consider ourselves defeated from the outset.

If we approach a task believing we will not succeed, we undermine ourselves before we even begin. But with determination, hard work, training and confidence in our abilities, many things that initially seem impossible become achievable.

We saw this during the recent war as well. Our forces stood up to the world's largest armies with the resources at their disposal and made them taste disappointment and defeat.