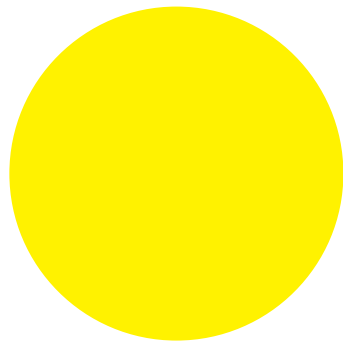


Tourism minister says global narrative key to reshaping Iran's image



Iran Daily

Vol. 8231 • Tuesday, October 06, 2026 • Mehr 14, 1405 • Rabi' al-Thani 24, 1448 • 100,000 rials • 8 pages



irandaily.ir

newspaper.irandaily.ir

IranDailyWeb

Top commander warns new war will 'engulf everyone in its flames' in region

Military power holds key to Yemen's balance of power

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Recent developments in Yemen mark a significant escalation in the country's long-running civil war. Following a swift Houthi offensive that resulted in major territorial gains along Yemen's Red Sea coast and around the strategic Bab al-Mandab Strait, the Saudi-backed government has launched a broad military campaign aimed at retaking lost territory.



Mohammad Hossein Baghi

Government forces have reported more than 1,000 attacks on Houthi military positions, while Houthi fighters continue to advance on key fronts, including around the city of Taiz. Journalist Mohammad Hossein Baghi told Iran Daily that the current situation suggests the window for a ceasefire has been missed and that military power is now the only factor capable of determining the balance of power between the sides in Yemen.

IRAN DAILY: How do you assess the balance of power in Yemen at present? Is there a possibility that the conflict could turn into a broad and protracted war?

BAGHI: Based on assessments by Western media outlets, including Reuters, there has been speculation that the offensive could be launched sometime between the coming week and after the US midterm elections in early November. Reuters has estimated that Saudi Arabia is seeking to organize 100,000 Yemeni troops who would serve as ground forces, while Saudi Arabia would provide air support. The United States would provide intelligence support, while Turkey and Pakistan have also moved to send military equipment in recent weeks.

Pezeshkian calls for practical measures, national unity to improve livelihoods, economy



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (2nd L) meets with a group of lawmakers to discuss proposals and solutions on economic and social issues in Tehran on October 5, 2026.



Trump's Greenland deal
A triumph of optics?

OPINION



Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games:

Iran's campaign summed up by historic highs, reality checks



'One City, One Museum' initiative to safeguard local heritage



Top commander warns new war will 'engulf everyone in its flames' in region

International Desk

Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Ali Abdollahi warned US allies in the region that any new war against Iran will have dire consequences for all regional countries and will "engulf everyone in its flames."

"Be aware that if a new war against Iran begins, its flames will engulf everyone," Abdollahi said in a statement on Monday. He also pointed to the US military presence in the region as a source of insecurity and economic problems, warning countries hosting US forces that regional instability would persist as long as the American military remains in the region.

He also rejected recent claims that Iran's nuclear program has entered a military phase, describing such allegations as "delusional" and an attempt to portray Iran as a threat.

'Big lie'

Based on reports and information, the US and the Israeli regime are once again trying to use the "big lie" of Iran seeking nuclear weapons as a pretext for launching another war against the country, Abdollahi

said.

Referring to the Israeli regime, he said claims about Iran's nuclear activities by a party possessing "several hundred nuclear warheads" were unacceptable and amounted to mocking international law.

The top commander said Iran is confident that the "malicious Zionist regime" neither now nor at any other time will have the ability to confront the powerful Iran.

He also warned international organizations, particularly the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), against baseless statements concerning Iran's nuclear facilities.

"We warn international organizations, particularly the IAEA, to refrain from continuing to play the role of a wolf in sheep's clothing and from making baseless statements about Iran's nuclear facilities," he said.

Addressing US President Donald Trump, Abdollahi warned that regardless of the outcome of the midterm elections in the US, any action against Iran would trigger an immediate response from Iran's Armed Forces.

The US and Israel 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 retaliatory operations forced the aggressors to accept a ceasefire.

In July, the US conducted waves of deadly air raids on Iran and imposed a naval blockade of the country in violation of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Islamic Republic, signed on June 17, to end the war.

In response, the Iranian Armed Forces launched devastating strikes against strategic American targets across West Asia and declared the Strait of Hormuz closed to all traffic.

Fighting between the two countries have died down in recent weeks. But new reports of the dispatch of US military aircraft to the region are raising speculation about new conflict.

Crushing response to any hostile action

Meanwhile, Iran's Army chief Major General Amir Hatami on Monday warned that the Iranian Armed Forces will deliver a crushing response to any renewed hostile action.

He maintained that the war has



Ali Abdollahi
IRNA

not yet ended, saying the enemy has turned to other methods after failing on the military battlefield.

"After failing on the military battlefield, the enemy has resorted to other methods and, through

sanctions and economic pressure, is trying to put the people under pressure, while at the same time pursuing many measures to create insecurity and unrest," Hatami said during a visit to Army units in Fars Province.

"The Armed Forces, while maintaining readiness and vigilance, will deliver a crushing response to the enemy's threats if it makes another mistake," he added.

Ansarullah warns Saudi airspace dangerous for flights after airstrikes on Yemen's capital



A Yemeni man inspects melted foam inside a factory after a Saudi strike in the Shamlan neighborhood of Yemen's capital Sana'a on October 4, 2026.
AFP

International Desk

Yemen's Ansarullah resistance movement warned airlines on Monday that Saudi airspace was unsafe for civilian flights following deadly Saudi air-

strikes on Yemen's capital, Sana'a.

Saudi Arabia continued its military operations in Yemen on Monday, killing at least one person and wounding two others as tensions between the

two sides continue to escalate. Ansarullah movement said that Saudi airstrikes killed a woman student and wounded two others in the Bani Hashish area in Sana'a governorate. The group said the strikes also hit the Saada region.

The resistance movement warned airlines that Saudi airspace "is not safe" and "will be the theatre of operations of our armed forces" after the Saudi-led coalition said it had joined a counteroffen-

sive announced by Yemen's Saudi-backed government in south.

Ansarullah's maritime coordination body said the kingdom's airspace would not be safe as long as Saudi's "aggression" continued.

Also on Monday, Yemen's Saudi-backed forces supported by Saudi jets attacked Ansarullah's targets as they launched an ambitious campaign to recapture all territory from the resistance group after its recent lightning gains.

The Saudi-backed military said it carried out more than 1,000 strikes, while 100 warplanes attacked at dawn, according to the Saudi-led coalition.

Yemen's Saudi-backed government on Sunday announced the goal of retaking all terri-

tory captured by Ansarullah's resistance group for more than a decade.

Last month Ansarullah seized swathes of coastline along the Red Sea and Bab al-Mandab strait, a chokepoint for oil and cargo shipping.

As the offensive began, a source in the Saudi energy sector told AFP that an attack on Sunday had again halted pumping in the East-West pipeline to the Red Sea, a key conduit since Iran blockaded the Strait of Hormuz.

The long-running conflict in Yemen, one of the world's poorest countries and neighbor of Saudi Arabia, has flared anew months into the Middle East war that has sent crude prices soaring.

Saudi Aramco chief executive Amin Nasser warned on Monday that global oil stockpiles are "scarily thin" owing to the US-Iran war, days after G7 nations agreed to release more of their inventories to ease supply concerns.

The Ansarullah's forces have targeted Saudi oil infrastructure and tankers in the Red Sea since a ceasefire in Yemen's war unraveled in July. The group has accused the Saudi-led coalition of carrying out hundreds of strikes.

Ansarullah controls most of northwest Yemen including capital Sana'a.

The Saudi-backed forces, based in the city of Aden, controls much of the country's south and east – a region that is larger but less populated.

Norwegian envoy summoned over unauthorized Starlink operations in Iran

International Desk

Iran summoned the Norwegian ambassador in Tehran to lodge a formal diplomatic protest over Oslo's continued inaction regarding unauthorized Starlink satellite internet operations within Iranian territory, a network that the US and Israel used during anti-government protests in Iran in January. Mohammad Hassannejad Pirkoohi, Director General for International Peace and Security at the Iranian Foreign Ministry, summoned Paul Beijer Nestad, the Norwegian Ambassador to Tehran, on Sunday to deliver an official note of protest. During the meeting, Pirkoohi outlined the systematic abuse of the Starlink satellite network by the United States and the Israeli regime to advance interventionist agendas against the Islamic Republic. He sharply criticized Norway for failing to

fulfill its legal obligations as the registering state for the Starlink network at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

"Based on the decisions of the ITU's Radio Regulations Board (RRB) in recent years, the Norwegian government is obligated to take the necessary measures to prevent unauthorized Starlink transmissions within Iran's territory," Pirkoohi emphasized. He noted that despite repeated follow-ups by the Islamic Republic, Norway has taken no effective action to halt these sovereignty-violating broadcasts.

The Iranian official demanded the immediate reflection of Tehran's demands to the Norwegian government, urging Oslo to take swift action to stop the activities that compromise Iran's national security and territorial sovereignty. When Washington and Tel Aviv attempted to exploit economic grievances by

deploying CIA and Mossad operatives to turn peaceful demonstrations in Iran into violent clashes, Starlink served as the primary command-and-control network for the rioters and terrorists.

During the unrest, Starlink terminals allowed foreign agents and armed insurgents to coordinate attacks on Iranian infrastructure, evade law enforcement communication blackouts, and livestream fabricated propaganda to Western media outlets.

A senior Iranian official said on Monday that Iran managed to disable terminals used for Starlink satellite internet service during anti-government protests.

"Iran managed to disable Starlink terminals for the first time" in this unrest, Mohammad Amin Aghamiri, head of the National Cyberspace Center, a state body overseeing the internet, told national television.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Pezeshkian calls for practical measures, national unity to improve livelihoods, economy

Economy Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Monday that improving people's livelihoods and the economic situation was the government's top priority, calling for practical measures, cooperation among government bodies and national unity to address economic and social problems amid war and sanctions.

"Under conditions arising from war and sanctions, resolving the country's problems requires operational plans, cooperation and synergy among all institutions and segments of society, and we must act to address economic and social problems by maintaining national unity," Pezeshkian said at a meeting with a number of lawmakers, according to his website, president.ir.

Since late February, Iran has been operating under wartime conditions and a maritime blockade from the south following a 40-day US-Israeli war. Already under decades of Western sanctions, Iran also faces a new wave of US sanctions targeting its aviation sector.

Pezeshkian said bringing about change and transformation in society was not easy and would take time, adding that capable and informed people who believed in practical plans and teamwork should take action to help bring



about change. He also called for greater conservation and more efficient consumption under current conditions.

"By observing energy consumption patterns and improving efficiency, we can allocate the resulting revenue to people's livelihoods and improve incomes and wages," he said.

"Parliament members can also work with the government to review unnecessary organizations and sectors

in the budgeting system."

Pezeshkian said the government was working to ensure that electricity and energy supplies to production units and businesses were not cut, allowing production to continue and preventing people from becoming unemployed.

"My top priority is solving people's livelihood problems and improving the economic situation," he said.

Pezeshkian stressed that problems

could be addressed by maintaining unity and cohesion, calling stronger interaction and cooperation among all institutions an essential requirement.

All relevant parties must work to address problems and develop operational plans, he said, adding "Although issues may be raised at the theoretical level, all these plans must be capable of being implemented."

Oil ministry caretaker says production, development plans to continue after minister's resignation

Economy Desk

Iran's newly appointed caretaker of the Oil Ministry said on Monday that the country's oil production and development programs would continue, a day after President Masoud Pezeshkian accepted the resignation of Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad.

"Production and development programs in the oil industry will continue with strength, as before, with the solidarity and cohesion that is the slogan of the Pezeshkian administration," Hamid Bovard told a meeting of the oil minister's deputies, according to the state news agency IRNA.

Pezeshkian accepted Paknejad's resignation on Sunday and appointed Bovard, who heads the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), as caretaker of the ministry.

Bovard said the ministry was pursuing an extensive program to rebuild facilities damaged during the 40-day war with the United States and Israel, as well as measures in the oil sales sector, to overcome the difficult challenges ahead.

Iran's oil and energy sectors have been under Western sanctions for decades over Tehran's nuclear programs. During the 40-day war that began in late February, Washington issued a



temporary sanctions waiver for Iranian oil trade aimed at driving down prices.

Iran's Oil Ministry sold \$18 billion worth of oil during the war and the ceasefire that followed, according to the ministry's media outlet Shana in August. Shana said the figure accounted for more than 60% of the oil revenue forecast in the current fiscal year's budget.

Bovard said the country's current circumstances required collective action to overcome the difficulties, adding that efforts should be made with a national outlook.

He stressed the role of both former and current managers in the Oil Ministry's achievements, saying valuable work had been carried out in the industry.

"If today we are in a position to say that the

current team has been successful, an important part of it is due to the performance of the former oil minister, and we are also pursuing the same path with greater intensity and seriousness," he said.

Bovard said there could be differences in implementation methods or management approaches, but these would not affect the industry's work and its main path should continue.

He also highlighted the importance of securing winter fuel supplies this year, given the damage caused to gas industry infrastructure during the war.

"Production stability and winter fuel supplies must be pursued as a special priority through the cooperation and coordination of all parts of the oil industry," he said.

Meanwhile, Saeed Tavakoli, managing director of the National Iranian Gas Company, said on Sunday that the return of three South Pars phases to production had restored 100 million cubic meters of capacity.

Tavakoli said attacks on South Pars gas facilities on March 17 damaged the third, fourth, fifth and sixth refineries, taking about 230 million cubic meters per day of gas processing capacity — equivalent to about one-third of the country's gas production at the time — out of operation.

Iran seeks deeper FAO cooperation to boost farm productivity, food security

Economy Desk

Iran is seeking deeper scientific and technical cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to boost agricultural productivity and achieve sustainable food security amid water shortages, climate change and limited scope for expanding cultivated land, a senior agricultural official said.

Gholamreza Golmohammadi, deputy agriculture minister and head of Iran's Agricultural Research, Education and Extension Organization (AREEO), made the remarks at a ceremony to sign a memorandum of understanding with the FAO, according to IRNA.

He thanked the FAO for its cooperation with Iran and said AREEO, as the Agriculture Ministry's scientific and intellectual arm, had extensive capacity in scientists, researchers and specialists whose expertise should be transferred more effectively to the production sector.

Golmohammadi stressed the need to expand two-way cooperation with the FAO, saying AREEO was ready to provide technical, educational and specialized services to neighboring countries, Central Asian countries and other countries where the FAO runs development and training programs.

He said the international affairs offices of AREEO and the Agriculture Ministry could help create greater opportunities for Iranian specialists to par-

ticipate in international programs and facilitate the transfer of agricultural knowledge and technology.

Iran has valuable scientific, research and practical experience in various agricultural fields, Golmohammadi said, adding that cooperation with the FAO could allow Iran to benefit from international knowledge and experience while also providing a channel for Iranian specialists to share their scientific capabilities and achievements with other countries.

He said the ultimate goal of the cooperation was to improve productivity, strengthen sustainable food security and use joint scientific capacities to address challenges facing the agricultural sector in Iran and other countries.

ECONOMIC LENS

How did China go from 'World's Factory' to global competitor?



By Mohammadreza Hosseini Aliabad
Researcher in int'l economics

OPINION
EXCLUSIVE

There was a time when China was expected to simply produce for the world. Today, however, the world is increasingly concerned about what China will produce next. That single sentence may capture one of the biggest shifts in global economic power in recent decades.

China was once seen by many Western countries as a source of cheap goods: clothing, toys, electronics, and thousands of other products carrying the familiar "Made in China" label. The prevailing assumption was that the West possessed the technology while China merely provided factories and labor. But something important was happening quietly: China was learning.

Beijing did not simply fulfill orders. It absorbed manufacturing know-how, built supply chains, invested in infrastructure, and developed its workforce. Factories that initially produced goods for foreign companies gradually became a vast school for learning technology and manufacturing. China understood that producing cheaply was not the end of the road; it was only the beginning.

Then came scale. With its enormous population and vast domestic market, China was able to build something many competitors lacked: production capacity on an extraordinary scale. When a country can produce simultaneously for its own market and hundreds of foreign markets, costs fall, experience grows, and competitiveness rises.

This was the point at which the "world's factory" gradually became an industrial powerhouse.

But China did not remain satisfied with cheap manufacturing. It changed direction. It moved from shoes and toys to smartphones, from smartphones to telecommunications equipment, and then into electric vehicles, batteries, renewable energy, and advanced technologies. Beijing's question was no longer, "How can we produce more cheaply?"

The new question was, "How can we produce better and more technologically advanced products?"

This was where China's rise became a serious challenge for its competitors.

Economic competition becomes far more consequential when a country can simultaneously control manufacturing, technology, capital, markets, and supply chains. China moved precisely in this direction. It built ports and railways, created major corporations, invested in different countries, and opened new trade routes. For Beijing, the economy was no longer simply about manufacturing goods; it was about building a network of mutual dependencies.

Of course, this rise has not come without costs. China is now facing demographic challenges, problems in its property sector, high debt, slower growth, and growing trade and technology pressure from the United States and its allies. Therefore, the idea of an "unstoppable rise" is hardly realistic.

Yet one fact cannot be ignored: a country that once depended heavily on foreign capital and technology to participate in the global economy has become, in many areas, one of the powers shaping the rules of the game.

Perhaps the West's greatest mistake was to see China for too long as merely a "low-cost factory"—a factory expected to manufacture Western products more cheaply. Eventually, however, that factory built its own brands, developed its own technologies, and created its own markets.

Perhaps this is the real secret behind China's rise: China sought what many developing countries seek—capital, markets, and technology. But the difference was that China did not simply consume these resources; it transformed them into domestic capabilities.

China no longer wants merely to produce for the world. It wants a role in determining what the world produces, how it produces it, and who produces it. And that is the difference between a factory and an economic power.

Trump's Greenland deal

A triumph of optics?



The illustration shows a smartphone displaying a post by President Donald Trump on Truth Social that claimed Greenland as US territory while a map in the background cites Denmark as the sovereign of the strategically important arctic island.
● CHENG XIN/GETTY IMAGES



Much of this was already possible under the existing 1951 defence agreement, which was updated in 2004 with Greenland's Home Rule Government as a party. It gave the US extensive military rights, which Washington made considerable use of during the Cold War, when it maintained 17 military installations and more than 10,000 personnel in Greenland. Today, only Pituffik Space Base remains, with about 150 US military personnel.



By Marc Jacobsen
Head of Research
at the Danish
Centre for Arctic
Security Studies

OPINION

The new agreement between the United States, Denmark and Greenland on the security of the Danish autonomous territory appears to be good news. It may finally put an end to nearly two years of repeated intimidation of Greenlanders by Washington and ensure that the stated red lines on territorial integrity and sovereignty are not crossed.

We still do not know exactly what the agreement contains, but the emerging picture is close to a best-case scenario for Denmark and Greenland. The dispute appears to have been moved back onto the diplomatic playing field, where questions of international law, investment and security policy can be handled.

At the same time, US President Donald Trump can present himself as a winner to his supporters, which was necessary to de-escalate tensions. His political allies and aligned media outlets are already praising his negotiating strategy, arguing that sustained pressure worked and left the US better placed to expand its military presence in Greenland — an area that is, admittedly, vital to US national security.

But there is a catch: much of this was already possible under the existing 1951 defence agreement, which was updated

in 2004 with Greenland's Home Rule Government as a party. It gave the US extensive military rights, which Washington made considerable use of during the Cold War, when it maintained 17 military installations and more than 10,000 personnel in Greenland. Today, only Pituffik Space Base remains, with about 150 US military personnel.

There may be at least two changes introduced by the new agreement, if we are to take at face value Trump's statement posted on Truth Social on September 19.

First, the US president wrote that the deal is an "Infinite Life Agreement, there is no end!" By comparison, the original

agreement stated that it "shall remain in effect for the duration of the North Atlantic Treaty". In other words, it was tied to NATO's continued existence.

The new agreement may not be, which could be seen as a consequence of Trump's limited commitment to NATO and his persistent insistence on "America First".

Second, the US president wrote: "No U.S. adversary can EVER have a base in Greenland, have a military presence in Greenland, or make sensitive investments in Greenland without our express written approval." In other words, the US would appear to have gained a formal veto power that could block adversarial countries — such

as Russia and China — from seeking to establish a foothold in Greenland. Examples from recent years suggest, however, that this was already largely the case in practice.

The Danish government has intervened at least twice in cases involving Chinese interests in Greenland, where US security concerns were also at stake: in 2016, when a Chinese company showed interest in buying a decommissioned naval station at Kangilinnuit in southern Greenland, and two years later, when a Chinese construction company sought to take part in Greenland's major airport project. Both were prevented. With the new agreement in place, it appears that Danish

intervention may no longer be formally necessary.

If this interpretation holds, the US has indeed increased its control over Greenland — on paper. In practice, the change appears to be relatively limited, which would be a testament to the negotiating skills of the Danish and Greenlandic representatives in the high-level working group. They have given Trump the opportunity to claim the victory he needed, while preserving sovereignty. It is perhaps a triumph of optics.

One sentence in Trump's statement, however, should give us pause: "There will be NO COST to the United States", he wrote. That is a rather remarkable piece of arithmetic, and one unlikely to reassure Danish taxpayers if it turns out to be true.

Still, we should remember that Mexico did not end up paying for the wall along its border with the US, and it remains to be seen whether Americans will receive the \$5,000 Trump has promised if Republicans retain control of Congress in the midterm elections. We should also consider that Greenland could derive greater economic benefit from an expanded US military presence. We can make a final pronouncement on the agreement only when we know in full what it actually says. Until then, there is at least some reason for cautious optimism and relief in both Nuuk and Copenhagen.

The article first appeared on Al Jazeera.



World War II-vintage trucks abandoned at a US airfield in east Greenland are still there decades later.
● POSNOV

Greenland, Trump, and new arctic security bargain



By Harsh V. Pant
Vice president at
Observer Research
Foundation

OPINION

The new US-Denmark-Greenland security agreement marks an important, if uneasy, adjustment in the strategic balance in the Arctic. It expands the American military and investment-screening role in Greenland without altering the island's formal constitutional status or transferring sovereignty. Announced by President Donald Trump, with formal signing the following week at the UN General Assembly in New York, subject to parliamentary ratification, the agreement brings an end — at least for now — to months of extraordinary tension triggered by Trump's repeated suggestions that Washington should acquire or even seize Greenland.

The significance of the agreement lies less in any change in sovereignty than in the expansion of the United States' strategic access. Trump has described the arrangement as providing Washington "permanent control over security, and all other needs" through an "Infinite Life Agreement," while insisting that it would come at no cost to the United States. The reported provisions point towards a substantial strengthening of the existing American military position on the island. Washington would gain expanded rights to develop additional bases, maintain permanent access, and exercise broader basing and overflight privileges.

This is, however, an extension of an existing architecture rather than a wholly new American presence. The United States already operates Pituffik Space Base under the 1951 Defense of Greenland Agreement, which provides Washington with broad and open-ended rights. What the new arrangement does is institutionalise and potentially widen that strategic footprint at a time when the Arctic is becoming an increasingly important theatre of great-power competition.

The agreement is equally significant for what it seeks to prevent. Non-NATO states — most obviously Russia and China — would be barred from establishing military bases or maintaining a military presence in Greenland, while sensitive investments would require US approval. The investment-screening provisions are particularly revealing. The emerging contest in the Arctic is not simply about military geography; it is also about control over infrastructure, critical minerals and technological supply chains. Greenland's mineral wealth, including rare earth elements, has acquired added importance as Western governments seek to reduce dependence on China, which dominates global rare-earth processing.

Yet the agreement carefully preserves the political red lines that Copenhagen and Nuuk had insisted upon. Danish sovereignty



BEN HICKEY/THE NEW YORK TIMES

and the territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Denmark are reaffirmed, while Greenlanders' right to self-determination remains intact. There is no transfer of territory or ownership. Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and Greenlandic leaders have therefore presented the arrangement as a strengthening of Arctic and North Atlantic security rather than a surrender of sovereignty.

For Denmark, this distinction is critical. Copenhagen has avoided the far more destabilising possibility of a confrontation with its principal NATO ally over the territorial integrity of the kingdom. Danish leaders had warned that the use of force by one NATO member against another would strike at the foundations of the alliance itself. The new agreement therefore represents an attempt to separate the security relationship from the sovereignty question.

There are tangible advantages for Denmark. Greater American military engagement could strengthen the defence of the Arctic at a moment when Copenhagen itself has been increasing defence spending and regional capabilities. Expanded US activi-

ty could also generate economic opportunities. But the arrangement comes with costs. Copenhagen and Nuuk will have less room for manoeuvre over certain categories of foreign investment, particularly where Washington determines that Chinese or Russian involvement poses a strategic risk. More importantly, months of political pressure have left behind a degree of distrust that an agreement alone cannot easily remove.

Greenland's position remains particularly delicate. The island, with a population of roughly 56,000, possesses an extraordinary strategic geography but limited political and economic capacity. Its location makes it important for missile warning, North Atlantic sea lanes and emerging Arctic shipping routes, while its mineral resources add an economic dimension to its strategic value. Greenlandic reactions to the agreement have consequently combined relief at the de-escalation with continuing apprehension about the long-term consequences of a much larger American role.

The European implications are broader still. The Greenland episode exposed a fundamental

vulnerability within NATO: the possibility that an alliance built around territorial integrity and collective defence could be destabilised by a dispute between its own members. American pressure on Denmark forced European governments to contemplate an extraordinary scenario in which the territory of a NATO ally became the subject of coercive bargaining by the alliance's leading power.

The agreement provides a diplomatic off-ramp from that crisis. NATO can now focus on the more conventional objective of strengthening the defence of the High North and North Atlantic. But the episode is unlikely to disappear from European strategic calculations. The damage to transatlantic trust may prove more durable than the immediate dispute. European governments have already been moving towards greater defence capabilities and strategic autonomy, and the Greenland crisis reinforces the logic behind those efforts.

There is therefore an important paradox at the heart of the agreement. It strengthens NATO's northern flank while simultaneously highlighting the political vulnerabilities within

the alliance. It demonstrates that expanded American access can become a mechanism for de-escalation, but it also shows the risks created when the territorial interests of allies become bargaining instruments in a broader strategic negotiation.

For the wider Arctic, the agreement further consolidates a Western security perimeter around one of the region's most strategically important locations. It limits the space available for Chinese and Russian military or economic penetration while supporting American objectives in missile defence and critical-mineral supply chains. At the same time, it is important not to exaggerate the immediate military threat posed by either Beijing or Moscow to Greenland itself. Before the crisis, many American and European officials regarded direct military threats to the island as limited. The more consequential competition has been over economic access, infrastructure, technology and political influence.

Climate change makes this competition more consequential. As the Arctic becomes more accessible, its sea routes, resources and military geography are acquiring greater strategic significance. Greenland sits at the intersection of these trends. Its importance is therefore unlikely to diminish regardless of which government is in power in Washington, Copenhagen or Nuuk.

The agreement should consequently be understood not as a settlement of the Greenland question but as a reconfiguration of its strategic context. Trump obtains substantially greater American leverage and a durable security role. Denmark retains sovereignty and Greenland retains its constitutional and self-determination framework. Washington, Copenhagen and Nuuk have found a formula that allows them to step back from an extraordinarily dangerous intra-alliance confrontation.

But the underlying lesson is more complicated. Great-power competition is increasingly spilling into spaces once regarded as peripheral to mainstream geopolitics. The Arctic is no longer merely a geographical frontier; it is becoming a central arena in the contest over military access, critical minerals, infrastructure and strategic influence.

Greenland will consequently remain a test of the resilience of the transatlantic order. The agreement stabilises the immediate crisis, but its longer-term significance will depend on how the new military access and investment-screening mechanisms are implemented — and on whether Denmark and Greenland conclude that their sovereignty is being strengthened by the arrangement or gradually constrained by it. The formal status of Greenland may be unchanged, but the strategic balance around the island has clearly shifted.



Greater American military engagement could strengthen the defence of the Arctic at a moment when Copenhagen itself has been increasing defence spending and regional capabilities. Expanded US activity could also generate economic opportunities. But the arrangement comes with costs. Copenhagen and Nuuk will have less room for manoeuvre over certain categories of foreign investment, particularly where Washington determines that Chinese or Russian involvement poses a strategic risk. More importantly, months of political pressure have left behind a degree of distrust that an agreement alone cannot easily remove.



The article first appeared in *Financial Express*.

US President Donald Trump (L) shakes hands with Greenland's Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen (R) as Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen watches at a security agreement signing ceremony at the UN headquarters during the United Nations General Assembly on September 22, 2026.
JULIA DEMAREE NIKHINSON/AP



Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games:

Iran's campaign summed up by historic highs, reality checks

Sports Desk

As the curtain was brought down on the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games at the Paloma Mizuho Stadium on Sunday, Iranian sports authorities were left with much to take away from an action-packed fortnight at the 20th edition of the multi-sport event.

While for many countries, the continental showpiece serves as part of a broader pathway towards success at the grandest stage of all, the Olympic Games, a somewhat disproportionate significance is attached to the ultimate position in the medal table within Iran's sporting landscape.

For all the preparatory setbacks amid wartime conditions in the country for the best part of the past 15 months, the 304-strong Iranian delegation deserves credit for collecting 19 golds, 18 silvers and 15 bronze medals to claim sixth place in the overall standings, as well as securing several historic podium finishes and breakthroughs.

The gold tally marked a significant improvement over Iran's appearance at Hangzhou 2022, where the country, represented by 289 athletes, tallied 13 golds to finish seventh despite bagging two more medals in total. Guangzhou 2010, which yielded 20 golds, delivered the highest position, fourth, for the delegation in the recent history of the Games, before Iran bagged a national high of 21 golds – apart from the 1974 edition on home soil – four years later to stand fifth in Incheon 2014. In terms of the total haul, meanwhile, Jakarta-Palembang 2018 remains the most prolific Games for Iran since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, with 62 medals.

A significant achievement for the Iranian delegation at this year's event was winning medals in 21 sports, setting a new Iranian record for the number of sports in which the country has reached the podium at an Asian Games, surpassing the previous figure of 20 sports.



The closing ceremony of the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games takes place at Paloma Mizuho Stadium in Nagoya, Japan, on October 4, 2026. **ISSEI KATO/REUTERS**

The wrestling competitions, as expected, proved to be Iran's most productive campaign across the two weeks, with six golds and one bronze across 12 freestyle and Greco-Roman weight classes.

Iranian squads in karate, taekwondo and weightlifting also had their fair share of success, winning two golds apiece, though the country's most impressive performances perhaps came in rowing, where Iran also won two golds to go with three silvers and one bronze, with Fatemeh Mojallal, as well as Kimia Zarei and Zeinab Norouzi, the only multiple medalists in the delegation.

Mojallal became the first Iranian woman to win a rowing gold in the history of the Asian Games after she

clocked 7:24.57 in the lightweight single sculls final, before settling for bronze in the single sculls event.

Norouzi and Zarei, meanwhile, teamed up for a gold and silver in the double sculls events, with the former becoming the most decorated Iranian female athlete in the history of the continental extravaganza, with one gold and three silvers to her name.

History-making women

There were further historic achievements and milestones for Iranian female athletes, who accounted for three golds, seven silvers and five bronzes to mark a best-ever women's haul for the country in Asian Games history.

Reihaneh Karimi, 20, won Iran's first weightlifting medal in the women's competition, taking bronze in the -77kg class, before her 17-year-old compatriot Mahsa Beheshti matched her success in the women's -86kg division.

Iran also celebrated a first-ever wom-

en's kyorugi gold medal in taekwondo through 19-year-old Saghar Moradi, who picked up where she had left off at last month's WT Women's Open Championships to triumph in the -67kg class.

Zahra Zarei ran the 400m final in 52.38 seconds to win silver, becoming the first Iranian woman to win an Asian Games medal in athletics.

Iranian heptathlete Fatemeh Mohitizadeh was denied a chance to win a historic medal after being disqualified in one of the most bizarre incidents involving the country's athletics team. Mohitizadeh, who had emerged as one of Iran's leading athletics prospects after winning gold at last year's Islamic Solidarity Games, was sitting second in the heptathlon standings after six events and was within touching distance of a gold or silver medal. However, only hours before the final 800m race, the 23-year-old was disqualified for an equipment violation involving her shoes.

Twenty-year-old Hengameh Hadiyani

made history simply by competing, becoming the first Iranian woman to take part in artistic gymnastics at the Asian Games since the Islamic Revolution.

She competed in the vault event, placing 13th in qualification, but her appearance in a unique outfit would definitely pave the way for her fellow Iranian girls on the global stage of the sport in the coming years.

Mandegar Farzami and Meshkatolzahra Safi also secured first victories for the country in women's tennis since 1979, though neither went beyond the second round in the singles and doubles competitions. The Iranian 3x3 basketball team perhaps would have added to the women's haul had it not been for injury blows for two members of the four-player roster.

The Iranian team won its pool in emphatic fashion, completing a clean sweep of three victories, though it came at the expense of Farnaz Khodamardi, who was forced out with injury during the win against the host in the second group outing. Mahla Abedi then suffered the same setback midway through the quarterfinal clash against Thailand, as Iran virtually kept playing with two players before being undone by a last-ditch layout to lose 12-11.

Low points

While Iranian athletes did a great job of defying disrupted camps and damaged training facilities on their way to glory, alarm bells were rung in certain sports.

The men's football competition was again one to forget for the Iranian U23 side, which was routed 4-1 by North Korea in its final game to crash out in the group stage.

There were also disappointing results in handball, beach volleyball, water polo and archery, where the Iranian teams entered the Games with high hopes but eventually finished empty-handed, while the country managed just two bronze medals in total in fencing and shooting.

AFC to introduce Nations League in shake-up of World Cup qualification

Asia's qualification path for the FIFA World Cup and AFC Asian Cup would experience a major shake-up under draft Asian Football Confederation's plans, seen by ESPN, for a new Nations League competition.

After initially announcing its intent to introduce such a competition last December, the AFC will – in a briefing to be presented to associations on Tuesday and seen by ESPN – detail a proposal to introduce a biennial Nations League from 2030. The new tournament would see the confederation's participants split into three tiers, with 18 nations each in the first two and eleven nations sorted into three groups in tier three.

In World Cup-aligned editions – the first of which would take place in 2032-33 – nations would play six home and six away

fixtures, with the top six finishers in the first tier automatically qualifying. Those ranked seventh through tenth in the top tier would then enter a round-robin playoff for the confederation's remaining two qualification slots, with the best two performing sides punching their tickets and the third-placed finisher moving into an intercontinental playoff.

Under the previous format utilized for the 2026 World Cup, the 18 nations that progressed to the third phase of qualifying were divided into three groups of six, with the top-two finishers in each automatically advancing to the World Cup and the next two-best sides advancing to a fourth-phase playoff.

In Asian Cup-aligned iterations of the proposed Nations League – the first of which would take place in 2030 and feature three



home and three away fixtures under the plans, alongside a shift in the Asian Cup itself from 2031 to 2032 – every tier-one nation and the six highest-placed finishers in the second tier would qualify. Regardless of the tourna-

ment it's associated with, each edition of this new format would see the top-eight nations from the first tier advance into a knockout stage to determine an overall winner, with a home-and-away quarterfinal stage then

followed by semifinals and a final staged in a central venue.

Automatic promotion and relegation between the tiers would occur for their top and bottom-two finishers at the conclusion of each biennial tourna-

ment, with further movement to be delivered via a playoff between the next four worst finishers in the higher tier and the next four best finishers in the lower tier.

There would be no regional or zonal split under the proposal, with the AFC citing the uneven number of nations per region/zone and a disparity in the level of competition as part of its reasoning, with teams divided into pots at the draw to aid in the creation of a balanced, algorithmically created fixture.

A standalone tournament not tied to Asian and World Cup qualifying, meanwhile, was rejected due to concerns surrounding costs and a lack of available matchdays.

To aid in the transition, the AFC has proposed a pilot tournament to be staged across 2028-29, with the results from preliminary joint qualifiers

to divide the tiers, rather than FIFA rankings, to ensure equitable access for the first official iteration.

Under the pilot, the current World Cup qualification format of three groups of six in the top tier would be maintained, with the top two finishers in each group advancing to the 2030 tournament. However, the next four best-finishing sides – as opposed to the third- and fourth-placed finishers from the 2026 format – would then advance to a playoff mimicking the proposed final model, with the two best-performing sides qualifying for the World Cup and the third-best moving into an intercontinental playoff.

Automatic promotion and relegation and playoffs would also be staged in this pilot to help determine the make-up of the tiers for the first official Nations League in 2030.

Iranica Desk

The “One City, One Museum” initiative will be implemented in cooperation between the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, a deputy minister of the interior said. According to IRNA, Masoud Nosrati, deputy minister of the interior for urban and rural development, said in a directive to deputy governors general in charge of urban and rural development affairs across the country that cities with particular historical, social, cultural and natural significance will be identified jointly by the two ministries and supported in establishing specialized museums. He said the initiative aims to advance the broader “One City, One Museum” strategy while safeguarding oral history and the tangible and intangible historical and cultural heritage of cities and villages across Iran.

The establishment of urban museums, he added, would not only provide a systematic record of the historical and cultural identity of different regions but could also help preserve local identities, promote sustainable tourism and create jobs in tourism and related services. Nosrati, who also heads the Organization of Municipalities and Rural Administrations of Iran, said that under the initiative’s proposed framework, interested city councils and municipalities must first identify the existing potential and opportunities for establishing a specialized museum in their cities and declare their readiness to launch one. Completion of the relevant ap-



plication form, along with the submission of a report and feasibility study, will serve as the basis for the initial assessment

of applications, he added. Nosrati said that following an evaluation by a joint specialized committee of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, priority cities will be identified. The necessary support will then be provided for establishing specialized museums, organizing related events, pursuing legal procedures and obtaining the required permits. The deputy minister said that, where conditions allow, selected cities could also benefit from certain financial and legal support under the initiative. Among the criteria that could influence the selection of pri-

ority cities, he cited the potential for public participation, the presence of investors and philanthropists, cooperation from provincial executive bodies in providing the required facilities and equipment, and the presence of influential and prominent figures associated with the city’s history and culture.

According to Nosrati, priority for establishing museums in metropolises and provincial capitals will be pursued through the respective municipalities, while in other cities the initiative will be led by the relevant governorates.

He said the initiative, with an emphasis on preserving and passing on Iran’s historical and cultural heritage, seeks to turn urban museums into platforms for documenting local identity, strengthening public participation and making greater use of cities’ cultural and tourism potential.

Lorestan speeds up projects around Falak-ol-Aflak Castle

Iranica Desk

The Director General of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization of Lorestan Province has announced efforts to complete and inaugurate several projects surrounding Falak-ol-Aflak Castle before Nowruz, including Aflak Street, the castle’s perimeter wall, nearby intersections and the Qazi Bridge. Speaking to ISNA, Ata Hassanpour said the Ministry of Cultural Heritage has placed particular emphasis on completing and improving these projects,

while senior provincial officials are also closely following their progress. “We are also fully committed to bringing these projects to completion and are pursuing them seriously,” he said. Referring to the construction of the Qazi Bridge, Hassanpour said work on the project is underway and progressing rapidly in cooperation with the mayor of Khorramabad and the municipal authorities. He added that projects in the upper part of the area are also progressing rapidly, stressing that efforts

are being made to avoid any unnecessary delays. Hassanpour also announced that Lorestan will host a conference on “Artificial Intelligence and the Digitalization of Tourism” on October 14, in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce. He said the event, which will be held for the first time in the province, will focus on the growing role of artificial intelligence in the tourism sector. “Artificial intelligence has become an important part of everyday life and business,” Hassanpour said, adding that this

transformation is particularly significant for tourism. He stressed the need to redesign tourism models, processes and practices in line with the capabilities of artificial intelligence. He said experts and tourism professionals need to come together to help redefine the industry and develop new approaches, including new platforms, innovative business models, revenue-generation methods and new tourism routes. The Lorestan cultural heritage chief said the conference is being orga-

nized by the Iran Chamber of Commerce and the Lorestan Chamber of Commerce, with the participation of chambers of commerce from across the country. Hassanpour said plans are also underway to make the event a recurring gathering. “We hope Khorramabad will be selected as the permanent secretariat of the conference and that, in the coming years, the event will continue to be held during Tourism Week, hosted by the Lorestan Chamber of Commerce,” he said.



Reading Room

Persian Language in Austria; a book on language, education



Iranica Desk

The book “Persian Language in Austria” examines the status of Persian from the perspective of language education, exploring the language in connection with the history of Iranian studies in Austria, demographic and cultural developments within the Persian-speaking community, mother-tongue education, technological advances and the future of Iranian studies.

Persian Language in Austria, compiled by Taliyeh Ahmadi, has been published in Vienna. The bilingual Persian-German volume provides a comprehensive examination of the status of the Persian language in the Republic of Austria from historical, educational, cultural, social, legal and technological perspectives, according to IRNA.

The book was published in 2026 by UniDialogue Publishing in Vienna, with the support of the Cultural Counsellor’s Office of Iran in Austria (Iranian House of Wisdom in Vienna). It seeks to provide a documented picture of the position of Persian within Austrian society, as well as at the country’s universities and academic and cultural institutions.

Persian Language in Austria is among the studies that examine the status of Persian through the lens of language education. It places the language within the broader context of the history of Iranian studies in Austria, demographic and cultural changes in the Persian-speaking community, mother-tongue education, technological developments and the future of Iranian studies.

The opening sections of the book trace the history of the Persian language and the formation and development of Iranian studies in Austria. They also examine the position of Persian at Austrian universities, research institutions and cultural organizations. In addition, the book addresses the legal framework governing mother-tongue education in Austria, as well as the opportunities and challenges facing Persian-language education. One of the book’s practical sections examines the Persian-speaking community in Austria, with particular attention to the identity-related challenges faced by second-generation

immigrants. The author considers the relationship between preserving the mother tongue, maintaining cultural identity and achieving social integration.

Chapter Five introduces Persian-language education centers and courses in Vienna, providing information on universities, schools, educational institutions, and public and private educational programs. The section is intended to serve Persian-speaking families, language learners, researchers and others interested in learning Persian.

Chapter Six reviews Persian-language textbooks and educational materials published in Iran and German-speaking countries, assessing their strengths and weaknesses from the perspective of second-language education. Chapter Seven focuses on Persian-German and German-Persian dictionaries and introduces the principal lexical resources currently available.

One of the book’s innovative sections is Chapter Eight, titled “Software and Artificial Intelligence.” It examines the potential of language-learning platforms, interactive software and artificial intelligence-based tools for teaching Persian, while also considering the challenges accompanying these emerging technologies.

The book also highlights an important issue in this field: the shortage of standardized corpora and digital language data for Persian. Ac-

cording to the author, developing digital infrastructure for Persian and producing standardized linguistic resources are among the key requirements for the future of Persian-language education and research in academic settings and emerging technological environments.

Chapter Nine examines the activities and potential of the S’adi Foundation, the specialized institution responsible for promoting and teaching Persian outside Iran. Drawing on the Austrian experience, the chapter offers recommendations for improving Persian-language education policies abroad and strengthening international cooperation.

A central feature of the book is its forward-looking approach. In addition to describing the current situation, it draws on research findings, field experience and practical experience in cultural activities to examine a number of successful international models.

It also puts forward recommendations for strengthening Persian-language education in Europe, including the standardization of educational programs, teacher training, the production of multimedia resources, the development of educational technologies, the use of artificial intelligence and greater cooperation between universities and cultural institutions.

The decision to publish the book



in both Persian and German is also intended to provide simultaneous access to Persian-speaking readers and the German-speaking academic and cultural community. In this respect, the book may be of interest to Iranologists, linguists, language professors and instructors, students, researchers, cultural policymakers, and educational and cultural institutions in Austria and other European countries.

Overall, Persian Language in Austria seeks to demonstrate that the future of Persian in Europe is not limited to preserving its literary and cultural heritage. Rather, the language’s future also depends on its ability to maintain an effective presence in educational and academic systems, cultural institutions and emerging technologies.



Tourism minister says global narrative key to reshaping Iran's image



The photo shows a view of a meeting, attend by Iran's Tourism Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri, where international tourism content producers come together in Tehran, Iran on October 5, 2026.
● IRNA

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran must turn its vast cultural and historical heritage into a global tourism story rather than simply promoting it at home, Tourism Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri said on Monday, arguing that the country's problem was not a lack of attractions but an inability to present them to the world.

"Our first priority is the narrative of a beautiful Iran," Salehi-Amiri said at the first specialist gathering of international tourism content producers, titled "Majestic Iran: Reimagining the Narrative in the Digital Age".

"Iran has about one million identified historical sites, including 43,000 nationally registered sites and 58 on UNESCO's tentative list," he said, according to IRNA. "The issue is not a lack of capacity," Salehi-Amiri said. "Let us allow others to speak about Iran."

He said Iran needed to move from domestic image-making to global storytelling, noting that unofficial voices often shaped perceptions of the country more strongly than its own cultural and tourism institutions. Building trust should come first, he said. Travelers need to feel secure before setting out and physically safe once they arrive. The experience of travelling in Iran can then reshape perceptions formed before a trip, Salehi-Amiri said, because what visitors encounter on the ground may differ from the image they were initially given. "The behavior of Iranians is also part of the country's tourism brand," the minister said, making the way visitors are treated an important part of how Iran is

perceived abroad. Salehi-Amiri called for a new tourism narrative for southern Iran, highlighting Hormuz, Bandar Abbas, Bushehr, Khuzestan, Chabahar and Makran. "Where is Hormuz, where is Bandar Abbas, where is Bushehr, where is Khuzestan, and where are Chabahar and Makran?" he said. Iran's heritage should not remain confined to protected sites, the minister said. It should relate to society and everyday life, turning historical assets into a source of social dynamism and economic activity. He also proposed a mystical tourism route linking Kharagani, Bayazid Bastami and Shams Tabrizi with Konya in Turkey, connecting sites and figures associated with Iranian and wider Persianate spiritual traditions. Salehi-Amiri said the focus on war and conflict in international coverage could overshadow Iran's cultural story.

"Today's war goes beyond the battlefield; it is a war of minds," he said, underscoring the need for content that can reach international audiences. Content producers, travel agencies, tour guides, restaurants and local tourism operators can connect Iran's attractions with the global public, he said. The ministry plans to establish a comprehensive Iran tourism content bank in five languages, Salehi-Amiri said, to make material about the country's heritage and attractions more accessible internationally. He also proposed creating a formal professional or trade association for tourism content producers, or a strategic council to coordinate their activities. The proposals aim to turn Iran's extensive cultural and historical resources into a coherent international tourism narrative, rather than leaving individual sites and destinations to speak for themselves.

Iran sweeps five golds to retain world astronomy title

Social Desk

Iran won five gold medals at the 19th International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics (IOAA) in Vietnam, retaining the world title for a third consecutive year, the Education Ministry said. The competition ran from Sept. 25 to Oct. 5 in Hanoi, drawing more than 320 students from more than 66

countries, IRNA reported. The five Iranian gold medalists were Sarina Alampour, Mohammad-Hossein Hosseini, Hirbod Foudazi, Hossein Masoumi and Arshia Mirshamsi Kakhaki, the ministry said. The team's performance again demonstrated the scientific capabilities of Iranian students, it said. President Masoud Pezeshkian congratulated the team, calling the victory a source of "pride and satisfaction".

"Our responsibility towards these valuable assets is to provide greater support for talented people and equal opportunities for their growth and development," Pezeshkian said. He said such support should allow young scientists to build on their international success while putting their knowledge and abilities towards scientific development, national progress and improving people's lives. The president said the achievement was a clear sign of the scientific potential and talent of Iran's younger generation, who compete on the world stage through knowledge and perseverance and demonstrate their scientific abilities and those of their country.



Military power holds ...

At least in theory and on paper, the possibility of a major Saudi offensive has been raised. However, it remains to be seen how the realities on the ground will play out.

Could Houthis' recent advances in western Yemen and their approach toward routes leading to Taiz and Aden strengthen the group's position in any future political negotiations and alter the country's internal equation? Or will divisions among the various anti-Houthi forces prevent the formation of a cohesive military front? There is no doubt that Ansarullah's advances could give the group a strong bargaining chip in any future negotiations. An important point that should be highlighted is Ansarullah's smart and diplomatic approach. After capturing "Mocha" and areas overlooking Bab al-Mandab and the Red Sea, the group entered negotiations with the United States in Oman and assured Washington that international shipping would remain free to pass, while making clear that its firm stance

was directed only at Saudi Arabia and aimed at breaking the blockade. This shows that, alongside its military capabilities, Ansarullah also possesses diplomatic acumen, which could serve as a model for other actors as well. As for the second part of the question, there is already no unified front. To explain this more clearly, there are currently three factions in Yemen, apart from areas under Ansarullah's control. A) Saudi-backed groups, including the "Islah Party," the "National Resistance Forces" led by Tareq Saleh, the nephew of former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, and the "Yemeni National Army," made up of remnants of the former army. B) The UAE-backed group known as the "Southern Transitional Council" (STC). C) Other militant groups, including "Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula" (AQAP) and possibly Daesh affiliates. Each of these groups also contains its own factions and internal groupings. Saudi Arabia is therefore seeking to organize these disparate groups and bring them together for a major battle against Ansarullah. In this regard, the Saudi kingdom is pursuing "de-escalation" with the UAE so that it can also mobilize UAE-backed forces against Ansarullah.

Given the importance of Taiz and Bab al-Mandab, what military and political advantages would control of these areas give the Houthis, and what impact would losing them have on the Yemeni government? Naturally, Bab al-Mandab and the Red Sea are a vital "chokepoint" or "lifeline" for the Saudis. If Ansarullah manages to consolidate its control over these areas and beat back a potential Saudi offensive, it would have the upper hand in the geopolitical chess game with Saudi Arabia. This would allow Ansarullah to enter into a bargaining process with its larger neighbor: lifting the blockade in exchange for easing pressure on Saudi Arabia. If this becomes consolidated, Ansarullah would be recognized as a player and a negotiating party.

Given the escalation in fighting and the worsening humanitarian situation, could the current circumstances once again push Yemen toward a war of attrition? Or is there still a possibility of returning to a ceasefire and a political process? The reality is that since 2014, when the Saudi-led coalition began its offensive against Yemen, the country has entered a new phase of humanitarian crisis and, of course, a war of attrition. Therefore, Yemen has not just entered a war of attrition now. This process began in 2014 and has now reached its peak. This war of attrition has had several consequences. First, it has left 18 million people facing acute food insecurity, meaning they do not have reliable access to sufficient food. Families are unable to afford even one kilogram of flour, sugar or rice. Second, it has dealt a heavy blow to Yemen's economy and disrupted businesses. A recent example of this is the 10-percent increase in fuel prices, which has led to "intensified hunger." The rise in fuel prices has undoubtedly affected food prices as well and worsened hunger among families.

As for whether there is still an opportunity to return to a ceasefire, that depends on several other factors. First, there is a perception among Saudi leaders and other regional actors that the Houthis are an Iranian proxy force. On that basis, negotiations should first be held with Iran and then with the Houthis. Given the interconnectedness of regional crises — the linkage between the fronts in Yemen, Iran, Lebanon and elsewhere — and in light of US pressure on Iran, regional actors believe that Iran is under pressure and may be unable to come to the Houthis' aid. Saudi Arabia has therefore seized the opportunity to put Ansarullah on the back foot in Yemen. With this perception prevailing, despite the Houthis' advances and in light of recent Saudi attacks and those carried out by its proxies, it appears that the window for a ceasefire has been missed. Military power is now the only factor capable of determining the balance of power between the two sides.

Given that Saudi Arabia, the UAE and other regional actors have had different experiences with developments in Yemen, could an escalation of the war further widen differences among them over Yemen's future? These two countries became embroiled in a dispute after the Houthis began advancing. According to some analysts, one of the reasons for the UAE's withdrawal from OPEC and its increased activity in Africa is the intensification of competition between the UAE and Saudi Arabia in Yemen. Saudi forces pinned down UAE-backed forces in a major air campaign, which in turn heightened tensions between the two countries. However, it appears that relations between the two countries have now moved onto a path of de-escalation, following a visit by Mansour bin Zayed, Vice President of the UAE, to Saudi Arabia and his meeting with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, as fears over the Houthis' advance have prompted both countries to step up their efforts. Therefore, the prospect of convergence between the two countries is considerable.