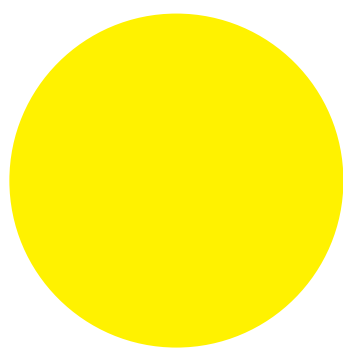


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urges support
for rural,
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culture



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Beijing's 'smart geoeconomics' doctrine



By Mahdi Zolfaghari
Associate professor at
Allameh Tabataba'i university

OPINION
EXCLUSIVE

The rapid transformations of the international system and the unprecedented escalation of geopolitical conflicts—from the Ukraine crisis to the intensifying tensions across West and East Asia—clearly signal the fracturing of the foundations of Western unipolar hegemony. In this volatile period of transition, China is not pursuing a path of hard, traditional confrontation; rather, by employing a doctrine of “smart geoeconomics,” it is redesigning global equations. Beijing has selected economic power, trade linkages, infrastructure investment, and corridor development as the primary levers of its foreign policy, aiming to shift the international balance of power in favor of the Global South and multilateral institutions without engaging in costly direct conflicts.

At the heart of this geoeconomic doctrine, most prominently manifested in the “Belt and Road Initiative” (BRI), Iran holds an irreplaceable position. The Islamic Republic's unique geopolitical and geo-energetic status connects three continents—Asia, Europe, and Africa—and serves as a transit crossroads linking the Persian Gulf to Central Asia and the Caucasus (via the North-South Corridor and East-West routes). For China, whose economic engine's survival depends on the security of energy supply lines and the diversification of trade routes independent of the chokepoints dominated by the US Navy, Iran is not merely a temporary partner, but a “secure strategic anchor” in West Asia.

On the other hand, the escalation of tensions between Washington and Beijing regarding technology, tariffs, and the Taiwan Strait has demonstrated that the policy of containing China is a bipartisan and permanent strategy in the White House. This stark reality has proven to Chinese leaders that the era of “playing the Western card” has ended, and strategic balance now requires genuine alliance-building with revisionist powers that value independence and refuse to submit to unilateral sanction regimes.

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President Masoud Pezeshkian (c. right) chairs a cabinet meeting in Tehran, Iran on October 7, 2026.
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President: Iran will negotiate from position of strength amid 'full-scale war'

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Wednesday that the country will negotiate from a position of strength and dignity to secure the rights of Iranians amid a "full-scale war".

Speaking at a government cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Pezeshkian said Iran is facing war "in all dimensions," while emphasizing that talks and negotiations are continuing alongside efforts to defend the country's rights.

"We are in a full-scale war in all dimensions," Pezeshkian said. "Of course, under these circumstances, while we are engaged in dialogue and negotiations, we speak from a position of dignity and strength to secure the rights of the Iranian people, while at the same time we are vigorously pursuing the plan of resistance and resilience, and we will certainly and without a doubt resist and make the enemy disappointed and frustrated."

Pezeshkian said the government must

not allow existing problems to damage people's livelihoods or disrupt the cycle of production, while calling for support for domestic production.

He described the preservation of national unity and internal cohesion as an essential prerequisite for defeating Iran's enemies and said, "I recommend avoiding, in any way, any issue that could create division and a rift in society".

Despite a hiatus in negotiations between Tehran and Washington due to the US violations of a Pakistan-mediated agreement to end the aggression against Iran, exchange of messages and proposals through regional mediators are underway to end the war and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a vital global energy shipping route.

Qatar's Foreign Ministry official Ibrahim Al-Hashmi whose country alongside Pakistan are mediating the negotiations, said on Tuesday that the US and Iran are still engaged in talks despite an apparent deadlock seven months into the conflict.

According to Iranian officials, Tehran



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (R) chairs a cabinet meeting in Tehran on October 7, 2026.
● [president.ir](https://www.president.ir)

is reviewing a Washington's response to its recent proposal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, which was delivered to US officials during the 81st session of the UN General Assembly in New York.

US Vice President JD Vance said in an exclusive interview with Reuters that Iran must make a "meaningful" reduction in its nuclear enrichment capacity to satisfy US demands and end the seven-month war.

Vance has taken a leading role in negotiating a settlement to the conflict and brokered a provisional peace agreement in June that quickly fell apart. The war has jolted global energy markets and become a political liability for President Donald Trump and fellow Republicans ahead of November mid-term elections.



Speaking on Monday after a campaign trip in Alaska, Vance said any agree-

ment would require Iran to reduce its nuclear enrichment capacity.

Speaker warns of enemy plots to foment domestic insecurity after failure on battlefield

International Desk

Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said on Wednesday that the enemy was seeking to create insecurity inside the country after it failed to achieve its goals in the battlefield.

Referring to the heavy and large-scale US military aggression against Iran during the 40-day war, Qalibaf said the Americans have realized that such military actions could not inflict damage on Iran and shifted their focus toward economic pressure and disrupting domestic security.

The top parliamentarian made the remarks in a meeting with Iran's police chief, Brigadier General Ahmad Reza Radan.

Qalibaf said the enemy's planning is centered on violent actions inside Iran, adding that this shows Iran's own priorities should focus on strengthening economic resilience and ensuring domestic security.

During the meeting, the parliament speaker also expressed his appreciation to commanders and all personnel of the Law Enforcement Command across the country for their efforts to serve the public and counter the enemy's plans. The US and Israel launched an unprovoked war on Iran on February 28, killing the Iran's Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, senior military com-



Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf (R) speaks in a meeting with Iran's police chief Brigadier General Ahmad Reza Radan in Tehran on October 7, 2026.
● [IRNA](https://www.irna.ir)

manders and thousands of civilians.

Iran responded with a series of retaliatory operations targeting US military assets and bases across the region.

The escalation ultimately forced the US and the Israeli regime to agree to a ceasefire on April 8.

However, Washington soon violated the agreement by failing to respect Iran's arrangements concerning 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.

Senior MP blasts UNSC silence over US, Israeli crimes against Iran

International Desk

Iranian lawmaker Shamseddin Hosseini criticized the United Nations Security Council for its silence over US and Israeli crimes against Iran, saying the council's failure to act has further exposed the gap between the principles of the UN Charter and realities on the ground.

Speaking at the 153rd session of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Tanzania, Hosseini said large numbers of innocent people had been killed and extensive infrastructure had been destroyed during the attacks, while the Security Council had neither adopted a resolution nor condemned any aggressor over blatant aggression and crimes against civilians.

"Double standards are the main root of the erosion of the credibility of the United Nations, and we, as representatives of nations, cannot remain indifferent to this situation," he said.

Hosseini, a member of Iran's parliamentary delegation, also referred to the US deadly airstrike on a school in Iran's southern city of Minab on the first day of its aggression on February 28,

saying the Security Council's silence over the deaths of 168 children would undermine confidence in the UN's commitment to maintaining international peace and security.

"If a school in Minab is destroyed by a missile and 168 children lose their lives in the classroom, and the Security Council remains silent in the face of this crime, then who will believe the promises of the UN Charter to maintain international peace and security?" he said.

Hosseini identified the use of force, violations of the fundamental principles of the UN Charter, continued occupation, genocide and unilateral coercive measures against independent states as among the most significant threats to international peace and security.

The Iranian lawmaker said the United Nations' existing mechanisms had lost their effectiveness and argued that shifting the organization's approach from addressing the consequences of conflicts toward tackling their root causes should be an important part of efforts to make it more effective.

"We are at a juncture where the



Iranian lawmaker Shamseddin Hosseini (1st R) takes part in the 153rd session of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Tanzania on October 7, 2026.
● [ISNA](https://www.isna.ir)

gap between the ideals of the UN Charter and realities on the ground is becoming increasingly apparent," Hosseini said.

He said the organization had repeatedly demonstrated its ineffectiveness, inaction and double standards, with its response in many cases being slow, selective and passive.

Hosseini also pointed to the Israel's onslaught in Gaza, saying that the Israeli crimes there had continued for months and that the Security Council had been unable to adopt even a ceasefire resolution because of repeated US vetoes.

Top commander vows unwavering support for Resistance until liberation of Al-Quds

International Desk

Iran will continue defending the Axis of Resistance unabated until the complete liberation of Al-Quds, said the chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic.

Major General Ali Abdollahi said on Wednesday that Operation Al-Aqsa Flood of October 7, 2023, has fundamentally shattered Israel's calculations and accelerated the inevitable decline of the regime, Press TV reported.

The Iranian general pointed out that the historic operation "exceeded the imagination of the fake Zionist regime."

"October 7 transformed the Resistance Front's strategy from defensive to offensive for the legitimate defense of the Palestinian people and their land," General Abdollahi stated.

Addressing the enemies of the Islamic Ummah, particularly the "stateless, criminal Zionists," General Abdollahi warned that the legacy of the martyrs of Resistance fuels the fire of liberation. He specifically invoked the towering figures of the Resistance who were martyred by the United States and Israel, including the legendary Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, Ismail Haniyeh, and Yahya Sinwar.

"The epic-making of the exalted martyrs of the Resistance Front will continue," General Abdollahi said their blood and sacrifice will ultimately "bring about the end of the occupying regime."

Reaffirming the Islamic Republic's strategic, ideological doctrine, General Abdollahi pledged absolute adherence to the directives of the leadership, hon-

oring both the martyred Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, and the current Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei.

"By the grace of God," the commander said, the policies and strategic directives of the Leaders in defending the "sacred cause of Palestine and the Resistance Front will continue until the liberation of Al-Quds."

The October 7 operation dismantled the myth of the Israeli military's invincibility, shifting the regional balance of power.

While the United States and Israel launched a broader war against Iran in an attempt to break the backbone of Resistance and make up for their strategic humiliation, the aggression has only solidified the alliance between Tehran and the regional Resistance factions.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Flag carrier Iran Air resumes Karachi flights from Tehran, Mashhad



Economy Desk

Iran's national flag carrier, Iran Air, has resumed flights to Karachi from Tehran and Mashhad, with one weekly flight from each city under a new schedule, the airline's deputy for commercial affairs and branch operations said. Mahmoud Ansari said the first Mashhad-Karachi-Mashhad flight after a suspension operated on Tuesday, with the return flight landing at Mashhad airport early Wednesday. The route will operate every Tuesday, while the Tehran-Karachi-Tehran route will operate every Monday, he said. With the resumption of Karachi flights from Tehran and Mashhad, the route has been added to Iran Air's international flight schedule, Ansari said. Iran Air currently also operates

international flights between Tehran and Istanbul, Mashhad and Istanbul, Tehran and Najaf, and Isfahan and Najaf, he added. Iraq had previously closed Baghdad and Najaf airports to Iranian airlines following a new wave of US sanctions on Iran's aviation sector. Iran's Civil Aviation Organization chief Abouzar Shiroudi on Monday said, "Extensive diplomatic measures were taken, consultations were held, and eventually they led to the resumption of flights." He added that talks were also under way with Oman and Azerbaijan. Iraq's national carrier had said on Monday that it would resume direct flights to Iran from Thursday, with daily flights from Najaf to Tehran, Mashhad and Isfahan. Iraq's Transport Ministry said

the decision by Iraqi Airways' management would restore direct flights by the country's national fleet to Iran. Under the new schedule, daily and regular flights would operate from Najaf International Airport to airports in Tehran, Mashhad and Isfahan, the ministry said. The ministry said the program was aimed at facilitating passenger travel and providing regular air transport options between Iraq and Iranian cities. It said the resumption of direct flights to Iran was part of Baghdad's efforts to reactivate air traffic and strengthen Iraq's air links with countries in the region. Last week, the Iraqi prime minister's office said that, following a series of contacts and follow-ups by Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi with relevant parties, an agree-

ment had been reached allowing Iranian airlines, except Mahan Air, to operate 40 daily flights to and from Najaf International Airport. Zaidi stressed that air travel was not merely movement between two airports but a bridge connecting peoples, noting that passengers include patients awaiting medical treatment, pilgrims traveling to holy sites and families seeking to reunite more easily. He also highlighted the importance of such travel for tourism, the economy and social ties. The prime minister's office said Zaidi would continue following up on cases directly affecting citizens and pilgrims and would work with all relevant parties to remove obstacles to transport and flights, serve Iraq's interests, protect passengers' interests and strengthen cooperation and human ties. Iraq joined several countries, including the United Arab Emirates, in enforcing US restrictions on Iranian airlines after Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said Iranian airlines would be "shut down" from Sept. 16. The head of Iran's Civil Aviation Organization has filed a formal complaint with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) over the restrictions and was pursuing diplomatic efforts to restore suspended flight routes. According to Shiroudi, Iran has sent letters to countries where flights had been suspended, seeking explanations for the cancellations. Preventing flights amounted to a violation of bilateral agreements under which countries allow each other's airlines to use their airports, he said.

Ex-minister rejects Trump claim over Iran oil output, sales

Economy Desk

Former Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad rejected US President Donald Trump's claim that he stepped down because Iran had "no economy" and "no oil," saying Iranian oil production and exports continued despite sanctions. "My resignation has nothing to do with Trump's claims last night," Paknejad said in a post on X on Wednesday, adding that he remains committed to Iran despite the pressure placed on the country's oil industry, Press TV reported. "I am a soldier of the homeland and one of the millions ready to sacrifice for beloved Iran," he said. Paknejad recounted that he was placed under US sanctions only

a few months after taking office but maintained that Iran's oil industry continued operating despite the restrictions. "Although I was sanctioned by the No. 1 enemy of the Iranian people only a few months after assuming the post of oil minister, by the grace of God, Iran's oil production and exports continued through the efforts of the dedicated employees of the oil industry, even under sanctions and siege," he said. 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. Paknejad also said Trump's

claims reflect the pressure facing those seeking to restrict Iran's oil sector. "They have suffered a hard blow; it is natural for them to resort to making such false claims," he said. His comments came after Trump told reporters outside the White House that Iran's economy is in very poor condition and in his typical delusional fabrication, claimed that Paknejad had said, "We have no economy. We have no oil. We have nothing." Trump also claimed that millions of barrels of oil had passed through the Strait of Hormuz in recent days. This is while other reports indicate that traffic through the strategic waterway remains well below pre-war levels. Paknejad led Iran's massive oil



and gas industry through two rounds of US and Israeli aggression and oversaw the reconstruction of some petrochemical plants damaged in Israeli aerial attacks. Pezeshkian accepted Paknejad's resignation on Sunday and appointed Hamid Bovard, chief executive of the state-run National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), as caretaker oil minister until Parliament approves a new minister.

Iran, China has extensive satellite cooperation: Space agency

Economy Desk

Iran's space agency chief said Tehran has several international satellite projects and extensive cooperation with China in its satellite program, the semi-official Iranian Students' News Agency (ISNA) reported. "We have several international satellite projects, and in the satellite program, we have detailed and good cooperation with China," Hassan Salarieh, head of the Iranian Space Agency, told ISNA. He said Iran has various projects

in the field of satellite procurement and that joint satellite construction projects are also underway, without providing further details. Salarieh said the Iranian Space Agency, as the country's space governance body, carries out its projects through private companies, government institutions and research centers. He said international cooperation in technology development takes shape through these entities, and that in some cases the agency directly enters projects, including for satellite procurement or launch services.

The country is preparing to take a major step toward developing satellite constellations, with three satellites set to be unveiled and launched as part of the country's expanding space program, the minister of information and communications technology said last week. Sattar Hashemi said three of the 24 satellites in the country's Shahid Soleimani constellation are ready, which will be unveiled during the Islamic Revolution celebrations in February 2027 and placed into orbit before March 20, marking a shift toward satellite

constellations, according to IRNA. Hashemi called for space policymaking to move from a supply-driven approach toward demand-driven development. He said technology is more valuable when users and societal needs are considered. Separately, Salarieh said Iran uses astronomical instruments to determine and update satellite orbits. He said such tools are used particularly for orbit determination and position updates, and can be used to locate a satellite if a launch is disrupted or its orbit is unclear.

ECONOMIC LENS

Cost of proximity: Turkey's economy in US-Israeli war on Iran

Why Ankara's strategic flexibility is insurance, not income



By Golzar Aghaei
Economic policy specialist

Turkey's position in the Iran-Israel/US war is that of a high-exposure non-belligerent. The conflict transmits through energy prices, trade routes, and regional instability into an economy already navigating a fragile disinflation program.

Macroeconomic frame

The IMF's February 2026 Article IV consultation confirmed that Turkey's disinflation program reduced inflation from 49.4 percent in September 2024 to 30.9 percent in December 2025, with growth forecast at 4.1 percent for 2025. However, the IMF warned that "external risks remain elevated due to persistent global trade uncertainty and regional conflicts," and that an adverse shock such as an energy price increase could extend the period of still-high inflation. The IMF's April 2026 World Economic Outlook revised Turkey's 2026 growth down to 3.4 percent from 4.2 percent in January, citing weaker momentum and higher energy prices. The current account deficit is projected at 2.8% of GDP in 2026, narrowing to 2.5% in 2027, with inflation averaging 28.6% in 2026. The World Bank's April 2026 regional report lowered Turkey's 2026 growth forecast to 2.8% from 3.7%, attributing the downgrade directly to energy and food price shocks linked to Middle East tensions. Input-cost inflation is eroding household purchasing power while high interest rates — the Central Bank held its policy rate at 37% in March 2026 — constrain domestic demand. Turkey's energy import bill reached \$62 billion in 2025, and every \$1 increase in oil prices adds approximately \$400 million to that burden. Net energy imports amounted to \$47.2 billion in 2025, underscoring the structural vulnerability. Defense exports, NATO alignment The clearest external gains accrue to Turkey's defense-industrial complex and its NATO client base. Defense and aerospace exports surged 47.1% year-on-year in the twelve months to May 2026, reaching \$10.9 billion, up from \$7.4 billion. NATO members accounted for \$6.2 billion, or 57.3% of total sales. The sector's export value per kilogram stood at \$65.16 — nearly forty times Turkey's overall average of \$1.62 — underscoring its high-value-added character.

Security institutions, government

Domestically, the most plausible beneficiary is the security and defense establishment. Heightened external threat tends to reinforce the central role of security institutions in state management, expanding their budgetary claims and policy influence. The government may also gain politically if it can present itself as a stabilizing mediator — a role Ankara has actively pursued, conveying messages between Iran and the United

ANALYSIS
EXCLUSIVE

States and participating in regional de-escalation formats. However, this diplomatic capital is fragile and conditional. Turkey's mediation is driven by strategic imperative: the assessment behind Ankara's push for de-escalation identifies direct threats to financial stability, including the prospect of trade collapse with Iran—bilateral trade reached \$5.68 billion in 2024 — and a refugee influx. Iran supplied approximately 7.7 billion cubic meters of gas to Turkey in 2025, about 13.2% of total gas imports, under a contract that expired in July 2026. Any disruption to these flows would overwhelm diplomatic or trade gains.

Sustained war: Conditional strategic gains

If the war continues, Turkey's potential gains remain indirect and conditional. The most significant is the acceleration of alternative trade corridors. Turkey is positioning itself as a relatively secure transit hub, turning connectivity into an instrument of strategic autonomy. Air connectivity reinforces this role: with northern routes over Russia restricted, Istanbul Airport has emerged as a key transit point linking Europe to Central and East Asia. A second conditional gain is the deepening of defense partnerships with Persian Gulf states. As Persian Gulf countries seek to diversify security partnerships away from over-dependence on the United States, Turkey has secured defense contracts with Qatar, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia, positioning itself as a reliable regional arms supplier.

Bottom line

The political economy of Turkey's position in this war is one of asymmetric exposure. The beneficiaries are narrow and sectoral: defense exporters, security institutions, and a government that may gain short-term political capital from crisis management. The costs are broad and macroeconomic: higher energy import bills, elevated inflation, a wider current account deficit, and constrained fiscal space. Turkey's strategic value as a NATO member with ties across competing blocs is real, but it is insurance, not income. The war exposes the structural vulnerabilities — energy dependence, import-reliant production, and unanchored inflation expectations — that make Turkey one of the most exposed emerging markets to this crisis. Turkey's genuine gains lie in de-escalation, cheaper energy, and regional integration.

This paper is the third in a series on the political economy of the US-Israeli war against Iran. In the following issues, we will examine in detail the role of each beneficiary country. The next report will focus on the Persian Gulf countries and their sovereign wealth fund dynamics.

Diesel warning

Trump's Iran war comes home!



By Saman Sofalgar
Political researcher

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

There are moments when foreign policy ceases to be an abstraction discussed in Washington and becomes a number that millions of people encounter in their daily lives. The United States has reached such a moment. On September 28, the national average retail price of diesel in the US stood at \$6.4531 a gallon, according to AAA. The figure is slightly below the all-time daily record of \$6.5276 set on September 22, but it remains extraordinarily high. A year ago, American motorists were paying an average of \$3.6856 for a gallon of diesel. The increase is therefore roughly 75 percent year over year.

That number matters far beyond the fuel pump. Diesel is the fuel of the American productive economy. Trucks move food, industrial equipment and consumer goods. Farmers depend on diesel-powered tractors and combines. Construction companies, mining operations and freight networks rely heavily on diesel. When diesel becomes dramatically more expensive, the shock does not stop at the filling station. It moves through freight rates, production costs, agricultural expenses and, eventually, consumer prices. The economic shock is therefore becoming a political one. And for President Donald Trump, the timing could hardly be more consequential. The administration entered its war with Iran promising strength, deterrence and a strategic transformation in the Middle East. Yet months into the conflict, the United States is confronting a different reality: record energy prices, rising transportation costs, growing frustration among rural Republicans and an increasingly visible effort by Republican candidates to distance themselves from the war before the November midterms.

The case for describing Trump's



Iran adventure as a failed gamble is consequently becoming harder to dismiss not because its ultimate military outcome has been settled, but because its economic and political costs are now directly challenging the assumptions on which the policy was sold.

The price of war

It would be misleading to attribute the entire increase in US diesel prices to the Iran war. The global energy market is being hit by several shocks simultaneously. Russian refining disruptions, restrictions on petroleum exports, reduced supplies from the Middle East and limited refining capacity have all contributed to the squeeze. Reuters has reported that diesel prices have surged since the outbreak of the Iran conflict, while US refiners are already operating at exceptionally high utilization rates. But Iran is central to the current crisis. The war has disrupted energy flows through the Strait of Hormuz, one of the most important arteries in the global petroleum system. Even when American oil production remains high, a major disruption in the Persian Gulf can raise prices across the international market. That exposes a fundamental weakness in the notion that greater domestic production alone can shield the United States from geopolitical energy shocks.



The AI-generated illustration shows US President Donald Trump facing higher gasoline and diesel prices at home.

● MASHREGH NEWS

America can produce more oil and still pay more for fuel. Oil is a global commodity. Refined products are embedded in international supply chains. A conflict in the Persian Gulf therefore does not remain geographically contained. Its economic consequences travel through markets until they reach a truck stop in Texas, a farm in Iowa or a warehouse in Michigan. The Administration's own response illustrates the problem. Republican lawmakers have pushed for measures including restrictions on US diesel exports in an attempt to increase domestic supply and reduce prices. But the fact that Washington is considering emergency interventions in the domestic fuel market is itself revealing. The war has created a problem that cannot simply be solved by producing more American oil.

From energy shock to inflation

Diesel occupies a particularly dangerous position in the economy because it is deeply connected to transportation and production. A rise in gasoline prices hurts household budgets directly. A rise in diesel prices

can do that indirectly and then continue spreading through the economy. A farmer pays more to operate machinery. A trucking company pays more to move cargo. A manufacturer pays more to receive inputs and ship finished products. Retailers pay more for transportation. Consumers eventually confront higher prices.

This makes diesel a potential inflation multiplier. Reuters has estimated that since the outbreak of the Iran war, diesel has accounted for a substantial share of the additional money Americans have spent at fuel stations. The same analysis warns that the transportation sector is particularly exposed because US refineries are already operating close to full capacity and the country has not added a new refinery in decades. That creates a difficult dilemma for the Federal Reserve. An energy shock can simultaneously weaken demand and keep inflation elevated. If businesses pass higher transportation costs to consumers, the central bank may face greater pressure to maintain tighter monetary conditions. In other words, a conflict thousands of miles away from most Americans can influence not only what they pay for fuel but also the broader financial conditions under which the US economy operates.



Record diesel prices are turning Trump's Iran war from a foreign-policy disaster into a domestic economic and political liability. When diesel becomes dramatically more expensive, the shock does not stop at the filling station. It moves through freight rates, production costs, agricultural expenses and, eventually, consumer prices.

Political bill reaches Trump's base

This is where the Iran war becomes especially problematic for Trump. His political appeal has long depended on a promise to defend the economic interests of working Americans. The "America First" framework was supposed to connect foreign policy with domestic prosperity. But the current energy crisis is creating precisely the kind of affordability problem that Trump has repeatedly blamed on previous administrations. The political consequences are already visible. The Washington Post reported on September 27 that soaring diesel prices are rattling Trump's rural and MAGA base, with Republican candidates in traditionally safe territory calling for an end to the Iran war and for restrictions on diesel exports.

Reuters similarly reported that Republican Senate candidates in competitive races have called for a swift end to the war, attempting to distance themselves from Trump as fuel prices rise. And ABC News reported on September 25 that at least 17 members of Congress had called on Trump to end the war. This is significant not because it proves that Republicans will lose Congress. It does not. Election outcomes remain uncertain.

It is significant because it demonstrates that the political coalition behind Trump is beginning to experience the war differently from the administration. For a Republican candidate in a farming state, the strategic language of the Middle East is less immediate than the price of diesel during harvest.

Contradiction of "America First"

Trump now faces a contradiction at the center of his political project. The president has argued that his administration is pursuing American interests more aggressively than its predecessors. Yet a conflict initiated in pursuit of those interests is imposing a growing economic burden on American businesses and households. The contradiction is particularly sharp because Trump has defended higher fuel prices as a relatively small price to pay for the objectives of the Iran war. That argument rests on a simple proposition: the strategic benefits of the war will ultimately outweigh its economic costs. But that proposition has to be demonstrated, not merely asserted. If the conflict produces a decisive strategic outcome, the administration will have a stronger case that the short-term economic pain was necessary. If the war remains prolonged, energy markets remain disrupted and no clear strategic settlement emerges, the political argument becomes considerably harder. This is the core of the "failed gamble" thesis. The question is not whether Trump has suffered an immediate military defeat. The question is whether the policy is producing the strategic return required to justify its economic and political costs. So far, that return remains contested.



Demonstrators hold signs in protest for US President Donald Trump's rally at the Choctaw Event Center in Durant, Oklahoma, on October 1, 2026.

● BRYAN TERRY/USA TODAY NETWORK



Midterm test

The November midterms provide the first major political test of this calculation. The conflict is already shaping the campaign environment. Time magazine reported that approval of Trump's handling of the Iran war among Republican voters had fallen sharply as the conflict dragged on and began affecting household finances.

The Washington Post has likewise documented Republican candidates breaking with Trump as the election approaches. The political signif-

icance is not simply that some Republicans disagree with the president. It is that the issue is beginning to divide the party along the most politically sensitive line of all: economic self-interest.

A senator can defend a distant strategic objective. It is much harder to explain to a farmer why diesel costs hundreds or thousands of dollars more during a critical production season. This is how foreign policy becomes domestic politics. The war enters the household through the fuel bill.

A gamble with an uncertain return

Judging Trump's policy towards Iran requires more than measuring military operations. It requires asking whether the defined objectives have been achieved at a cost proportionate to the benefits. By that measure, the warning signs are becoming difficult to ignore. Record diesel prices are squeezing transportation and agriculture. Republicans are demanding emergency measures. Candidates in competitive races are distancing themselves from the president's

war policy. And the conflict is increasingly becoming associated with the very affordability pressures that Trump built his political identity around addressing. That does not establish an electoral outcome. Nor does it prove that the war will ultimately fail on every strategic objective. But it does establish something politically important: the administration has not been able to keep the costs of its Iran policy separate from the economic concerns of American voters.

That may become the defining weakness of the strategy. A war

that was supposed to demonstrate American strength is now being measured, in part, by the price of diesel. A foreign policy decision designed to increase US leverage is producing pressure on the domestic economy. And a president who promised to put American workers first is asking many of those same workers to absorb a growing share of the conflict's economic cost.

The \$6.45 diesel price is therefore more than a market statistic. It is a political receipt. And as long as the war continues without a clear strategic resolution,

that receipt will keep arriving at the most politically sensitive address in America: "the household budget". For Trump, the central question is no longer whether his Iran gamble carries costs. It plainly does. The harder question is whether the United States is receiving enough strategic benefit to justify them.

Until the administration can answer that convincingly, the argument that Trump's Iran gamble has failed (not necessarily militarily, but strategically, economically and politically) will only become harder to dismiss.

Managing oil's decline

The coming petrostate reckoning



By Joseph Grosso
Author

OPINION

As the Ansarullah (Houthis) seize the Red Sea coast of Yemen, the price of oil briefly spiked again to over \$100 a barrel. Diesel fuel remains at record highs due to a lack of refinery capacity. This was in addition to a series of drone attacks, coming from Iraq, on the East-West Pipeline that has been increasingly used since the war began to take the pressure off the blocked Strait of Hormuz. Saudi Aramco was able to restart the pipeline after roughly 10 days but getting the pipeline back to normal capacity could take a couple of months. Meanwhile, getting oil through the Strait via shuttle escort is actually now the better option — though pricey given high insurance costs and the need to compensate the tanker crews for the risky trip.

On the other side of the world, the details of the Trump administration's oil deal with Venezuela remain murky. Something about "100-year concessions for 17 oil fields with proven reserves of approximately 65 billion barrels" that the Venezuelan government (supposedly an interim government) will grant a company called North American Blue Energy Partners (NABEP) that didn't even exist until two years ago. NABEP would have a joint venture with the US government where the government would take a 35 percent equity stake and buy 20 percent of production at cost (meaning at the cost of production, cheaper than market cost) and have the right of first refusal for the other 80 percent.

Questions abound. The US equity stake is to fall under the Pentagon's Office of Strategic Capital (established under the Biden administration) whose statute says it doesn't take equity stakes in companies (a Pentagon-written brief leaked to The Guardian refers to a work-around using "warrants" in NABEP: rights to purchase shares, rather than the shares themselves). The Venezuelan side lists a 25-year contract, nothing about concessions, and the Venezuelan constitution bars the government from signing over ownership of oil resources. The chief executive of NABEP is Alejandro Betancourt, who is under investigation by Swiss authorities for laundering money allegedly stolen from Venezuela's state oil company (not long ago the US government was investigating). NABEP will supposedly invest \$100 billion in Venezuela but



THE TELEGRAPH

hasn't disclosed a detailed financing structure. Needless to say, there was no competitive process at work here. About half of the fields listed are "greenfields," meaning not developed at all. According to recent analysis by Global Energy Monitor, it is now taking more than 15 years to get a field from discovery to production. Oil won't be flowing to the US strategic petroleum reserve any time soon. It is not at all clear that future US administrations or Venezuelan governments will have any interest in the arrangement. Of course, none of this stops Trump from proclaiming the "biggest oil deal in world history". Trump, living always in the

1980s Art of the Deal era, has long branded himself as a wannabe J.R. Ewing, still pushing an "energy dominance" based on declining energy sources. The US Energy Department is putting more effort into saving retiring coal plants than building out growing sources. Last year, the department cancelled nearly \$8 billion in clean energy grants (in court filings from July, the administration conceded that the cancellations are targeted in states represented by Democrats). Coal's share of the US electricity mix has fallen from 52% in 1990 to 17% in 2025, with production down 56% since 2008. Employment in the industry roughly halved over the same period. Meanwhile, crude oil is still the world's most traded commodity, but its power is declining. Last year, oil's share of global energy fell below 30 percent, from its peak of 46 percent half a century ago, according to the Interna-

tional Energy Agency (IEA). The IEA's latest World Energy Outlook forecasts that oil demand will peak around 2030 (the agency recently pushed its peak forecast past 2030). An interesting recent report by the climate change think tank E3G, titled "Playing the Oil Endgame," examines the effect of declining oil revenues on petrostates.

Hearing the words "decline" and "petrostate" together could definitely be music to the ears. Petrostates, defined as countries where oil revenue accounts for over \$1000 per capita or more than 10 percent of GDP, are more likely to be ruled by dictatorships — 50 percent more likely according to Michael Ross's book, "The Oil Curse". For all the justifiable scorn directed toward the likes of Exxon-Mobil and BP, 14 of the world's 20 largest oil companies are state-controlled, accounting for



About half of the fields listed in the US-Venezuela oil deal are "greenfields," meaning not developed at all. According to recent analysis by Global Energy Monitor, it is now taking more than 15 years to get a field from discovery to production. Oil won't be flowing to the US strategic petroleum reserve anytime soon. It is not at all clear that future US administrations or Venezuelan governments will have any interest in the arrangement. Of course, none of this stops Trump from proclaiming the "biggest oil deal in world history".

roughly 80 percent of oil reserves (Saudi Aramco is the largest and most profitable). Flowing oil revenue tends to make governments less dependent on taxes and thereby unaccountable to citizens. The economies of petrostates outside the oil sector tend to stagnate. As Emma Ashford explains in her book, "Oil, The State, and War," petrostates are also more likely to start wars. Oil wealth props up the global arms trade and provides petrostates with diplomatic leverage to start wars.

Of course, geology isn't completely destiny. Places like Canada and Norway exist. However, a list of the 17 countries where oil makes up at least 40 percent of state revenue shows many of the countries fit that analysis. And as "Playing the Oil Endgame" explores, as oil demand and revenue decline, petrostates can face quite a dilemma. The 2014 oil price collapse was a large part of Venezuela's economic crisis that sent almost 8 million people abroad. Add to a loss of revenue the local effects of climate change and debt payments — Angola already spends almost 30 percent of government revenue on servicing public debt, and it's a potentially combustible mix.

Transitions can be tricky, to say the least. The House of Saud government has spoken endlessly on the desire to diversify its economy, sinking over \$50 billion into its bizarre, narcissistic NEOM city project before winding it down, leaving mammoth-sized partially built structures to gather sand in the desert. Oil revenues still make up over half the state's revenue. The oil-rich Niger Delta region has long been a cauldron of violence and corruption, but over the past decade, oil has gone from 75 percent of government revenue to around 25 percent. However, poverty in Nigeria has increased, not decreased.

Managing these risks is symbiotic with accelerating the spread of cleaner energy and mitigating the effects of global warming. International cooperation will be critical for both the energy transition and developmental aid to blunt any downsides. The 2015 refugee crisis and its awful lingering political aftershocks (like Trump, Le Pen, the AfD) show what a lack of such cooperation can bring. With greater global challenges coming fast, a greater global response will be needed.

The full article first appeared on Common Dreams.

Activists use symbolic coffins labeled for coal, oil, and gas, to demand an end to fossil fuels during the COP30 United Nations climate talks in Belém, Brazil, in November 2025.

● ANDRE PENNER/AAP



Iran set for U23 Wrestling Worlds after US issues visas to delegation

Sports Desk

Iran is set to compete at the upcoming U23 Wrestling World Championships in Las Vegas after the United States issued entry visas to all but one member of the country's 38-strong delegation, Iranian sports news website Varzesh3, citing the national governing body of the sport, reported on Tuesday.

The ninth edition of the annual showpiece will kick off on Monday, with Iran – represented by 20 wrestlers – looking to repeat its 2024 freestyle team title, having finished runner-up to the United States last year, while chasing a fifth Greco-Roman crown – and third in a row – in seven years.

Alireza Dabir, the chairman of the Iranian Wrestling Federation, said last month that the country would withdraw from the event "if even one member of the delegation is denied a US visa."

One of the Iranian coaches is yet to be granted a visa "due to incomplete documents," but the host country is making efforts to issue his visa within the next 48 hours, Varzesh3 wrote.

Abolfazl Mohammadnejad will headline the Iranian freestyle



Iranian freestyle wrestler Abolfazl Mohammadnejad, pictured at the 2025 U23 World Championships, will defend his 125kg title in Las Vegas, Nevada, United States.
● UWW

squad in Las Vegas, entering the 125kg event as the defending champion and fresh off a gold medal at the U20 Worlds in Bratislava, Slovakia, in August.

Mobin Azimi, who won the 92kg gold at last year's edition as well as the Asian Senior Championships in April, will be among the favorites in the 97kg class.

Abolfazl Rahmani will compete

in the 92kg class, looking to improve on his U20 world silver in the Slovakian capital, while Reza Afshar will be part of the 86kg division.

Mahdi Yousefi will chase a third medal at the competition, having won gold in 2024 before settling for bronze last year, when he gets his campaign underway in the 79kg category.

Ali Karampour, a world U20

bronze medalist in 2024, will be the Iranian wrestler in the 74kg class, while Ebrahim Elahi (70kg) will vie for the third world age-group medal of his

career, having won U17 gold in 2022 plus U20 bronze last year. Ahoura Khateri will be among the wrestlers to watch in the 65kg class, following his two bronzes at the U20 Worlds and the Ranking Series event in Ulaanbaatar earlier this year.

Ebrahim Khari (61kg) – a bronze medalist at the 2024 edition – and Ali Yahyapour (57kg) complete the Iranian freestyle roster in Las Vegas.

In the Greco-Roman competition, Armin Shamsipour will be a hopeful in the 55kg class after he bagged an impressive gold medal in Bratislava, while Morad Ashiri will be an unheralded competitor in the 60kg class.

Erfan Jarkani (63kg) will go after his third medal of the international season to add to his Zagreb Open gold and the Asian Championships silver at senior level.

Mohammad Kamali will compete in the 67kg class, with Ahmadreza Mohsennejad entering the 72kg contest as the reigning senior Asian bronze medalist.

Former world U17 and U20 silver medalist Ahoura Boveiri will represent the Iranian squad in the 77kg class, while 17-year-old Abolfazl Mohmadi will take part in the 82kg division.

Yasin Yazdi will fancy his chances in the 87kg class after winning an impressive silver at last year's Asian Senior Championships, with Mohammad-Hadi Seydi looking to build on his bronze at February's Zagreb Open Ranking Series event.

Abolfazl Fat'hi – an U20 world bronze medalist last year – completes the Iranian GR squad in the 130kg class.

Iranian sport has struggled with entry visa complications for international tournaments in recent years, especially since a military conflict between Iran and a US-Israeli coalition began on February 28.

The Iranian wrestling squad missed out on the 2023 U23 Worlds in Tirana, Albania, due to the same issue, while members of the national team's support staff were prevented from entering the United States for the 2026 FIFA World Cup in June.

In the latest development, Iran's men's wheelchair basketball team had to withdraw from the IWBF World Championships in Ottawa earlier this month after host Canada refused to issue entry visas to head coach Behrouz Soltani and his assistant, Mohammadreza Dastyar.

Taekwondo Federation election annulled in preliminary court ruling

Sports Desk

The election of the Iranian Taekwondo Federation, which saw Hadi Saei voted in as chairman of the sport's national governing body for a second consecutive term in May, has been annulled in a preliminary ruling by the country's Administrative Justice Court, although the federation's current leadership remains in place pending an appeal.

The federation's electoral assembly was held on May 11, with Saei, the most decorated Iranian in the history of the Olympic Games with two golds and one bronze, securing enough votes from members to retain the presidency. However, candidates Fariborz Asgari and Majid Nayyeri subsequently filed complaints against the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, challenging aspects of the election process and, in particular, the approval of Saei's candidacy.

The 45th Branch of the Administrative Justice Court has now ruled to annul the election, according to Iranian media reports. The ruling, however, is not final and can be challenged through the appeals process.

Asgari and Nayyeri were among 10 final candidates for the presidency, alongside Asghar Rahimi, Yousef Karami, Ali Nouri, Hossein Hosseinzadeh, Ahmad Larjani, Sirous Rezaei, Seyyed Hossein Zahedi and Saei.

Sports Minister Ahmad Donyamali sought to play down the significance of the ruling, stressing that it was only an initial decision and that the ministry had a legal opportunity to defend the election process.

"This does not mean the election has been annulled. The court has issued an initial ruling and we have three weeks to pursue the matter," Donyamali told reporters on Tuesday. "There is no

cause for concern and, God willing, the issue will be resolved."

Donyamali added that he had personally reviewed the relevant documents and expressed confidence about the outcome of the appeals process.

Meanwhile, Hadi Afshar, secretary general of the Taekwondo Federation, also emphasized that the legal process had not yet been concluded and said the federation had not received an official notification of the election's annulment.

He said the Administrative Justice Court had its own legal procedures and that the Sports Ministry, as the body responsible for approving candidates' eligibility and overseeing the election, had the right to defend its decisions.

"If something is officially communicated to us, we have a duty to study it and, if necessary, prepare the relevant legal submission," Afshar told ANA. "The Ministry of Sport will also defend the actions it took as the responsible authority."

Afshar said the ministry had supporting documents regarding the approval process and could present them to the relevant authorities. He added that receiving requests for explanations or documents from bodies such as the Administrative Justice Court or the General Inspection Organization was not unusual in administrative matters. For now, Saei remains at the helm of the federation while the appeal is considered.

The court ruling comes at a

particularly important time for Iranian taekwondo. The national team recently returned from the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games with two gold medals, one silver and one bronze, while preparations for the Olympic qualification cycle are also getting underway. The uncertainty surrounding the federation's leadership could therefore add tension to an already busy period for Iranian taekwondo. The final outcome will depend on the appeals process and any subsequent ruling by the court.

Hadi Saei was elected as the Iranian Taekwondo Federation president for a second term in May.
● VARZESH3



Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games:

Iran facing reduced athletics gold prospects amid merged classes

Sports Desk

Iran's para-athletics team will compete at the upcoming Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games with 44 athletes, but the merging of classes and removal of some events by the host country are expected to reduce the country's gold-medal tally compared with the previous edition.

The Iranian athletics squad will be represented by 25 men and 19 women at the fifth edition of the multi-sport event, which will open at Nagoya's Paloma Mizuho Stadium on October 18. "The team is currently in very good condition and the athletes have posted impressive marks in training," Iranian coach Bahman Rezaei told ISNA. "If they can reproduce those results at the Games, we will certainly achieve satisfactory results."

However, he acknowledged that predicting Iran's medal haul would be difficult because of changes to the competition program in Nagoya. "Considering the merging of classes and the absence of some of the medalists from the previous edition, it is



Sprinter Hajar Safarzadeh, a silver medalist at the Paris 2024 Paralympics, will be among Iran's hopefuls at the upcoming Asian Para Games.
● GETTY IMAGES

difficult to predict the number of para-athletics medals," Rezaei said. "But it appears that our medal tally will be lower than in Hangzhou."

"We won 21 gold, 20 silver and 11 bronze medals in Hangzhou 2022 with 52 athletes, but this time, with 44 athletes and some of the previous medalists missing, the conditions will certainly be more difficult," he said. "Repeating the Hangzhou gold-medal tally will not be easy because some events have been removed by the host country and will not be held."

Asked about the prospects of record-breaking performances in Nagoya, he said the athletes could achieve sev-

eral new marks "if they reproduce the form they have shown in domestic competitions."

Iran's para-athletics team will be one of the largest components of the country's delegation to the Asian Para Games, placing considerable responsibility on the squad to contribute to the overall medal tally. Rezaei expressed hope that the team could once again play a significant role in Iran's campaign and help the delegation improve its position in the medal standings.

"I hope that in Nagoya, we can perform successfully as we did in Hangzhou and play a major role in improving Iran's position at the Asian Para Games," he said.

Biabank puts on display resilience of Iranian civilization

Iranica Desk

The senior adviser to the head of the Iranology Foundation has highlighted the cultural and historical potential of Biabank village, describing it as an example of the resilience of Iranian civilization and a repository of the country's intangible cultural heritage.

Speaking at a cultural night dedicated to Biabank, Iman Nezamzadeh said understanding Iran cannot be achieved by focusing solely on its best-known cities, adding that villages and lesser-known areas such as Biabank are also home to important aspects of Iran's identity, cultural diversity and civilizational resilience. He said the event demonstrated the considerable cultural potential of Iran's villages and showed that properly introducing these capacities could contribute to a better understanding of different parts of the country, according to ISNA. Nezamzadeh explained that the Iranology Foundation was established in 1997 with the efforts of the late Hassan Habibi. The state institution, which operates under the Of-



fice of the President, has two principal missions: studying Iran and introducing Iran to the world. It pursues these objectives through research, information and international activities. He stressed that understanding Iran should not be limited to a handful of well-known cities and destinations. While cities such as Shiraz, Isfahan and Tabriz are widely recognized, Iran is characterized by extensive cultural, ethnic, linguistic and dialect diversity, much of which is preserved in villages and less-

er-known regions.

According to Nezamzadeh, initiatives such as the Biabank Cultural Night can draw public attention to cultural capacities that have received less recognition and offer a more comprehensive and accurate picture of Iran. He called for similar programs to be expanded to other villages and counties across the country.

He also said the Iranology Foundation currently has branches in 23 provinces. Semnan Province is among the provinces with a branch of the founda-



● IRNA

tion, while the expansion of its branches to other provinces is also on the agenda in line with national policy documents. Nezamzadeh also identified the resilience of Iranian civilization as an important subject for research and public presentation. He said Semnan Province and its historic villages, particularly Biabank, contain valuable examples of how Iranians have adapted to challenging climatic and environmental conditions.

The senior adviser pointed to traditional infrastructure and

resource-management systems as examples of this resilience, including the construction of water reservoirs, the excavation of qanats and the development of various mechanisms for managing scarce resources and overcoming environmental challenges.

He said this historical experience remains relevant today, noting that Iranians have faced environmental, climatic and international challenges at different points in history but have repeatedly sought to overcome difficulties through knowledge,

ingenuity, planning and their own capabilities. He described this historical and cultural legacy as an important subject for introducing Iran to younger generations and the wider world.

Nezamzadeh also stressed the need to protect Iran's intangible cultural heritage. He said that just as previous generations passed down their culture, customs and traditions from one generation to another, the present generation has a responsibility to preserve and transmit this heritage to the future.

He warned that insufficient attention to the customs, traditions, cultures and dialects of different parts of Iran could result in some of this heritage being forgotten within the next one or two decades as generations change, potentially leading to the loss of part of the country's valuable cultural and linguistic diversity.

Nezamzadeh thanked the organizers of the Biabank Cultural Night and expressed hope that the initiative would continue and that similar cultural programs would be developed in other villages, counties and provinces across Iran.

Shams Tabrizi Mausoleum added to Iran's National Heritage List

Iranica Desk

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts has registered the Shams Tabrizi Mausoleum in Khoy on Iran's National Heritage List, ahead of its official opening. The cultural site was registered as a national heritage site, receiving registration number 34,594 on October 2, 2026. The registration marks a step toward protecting, promoting and developing the cultural and tourism potential of the site, IRNA wrote.

The site was identified based on historical documents and scholarly research. Archaeological excavations were subsequently

carried out to examine and establish the evidence associated with the site.

The site also highlights the broader cultural and historical significance of Khoy, a city with a long-standing connection to Persian literature, spirituality and regional heritage. Its preservation and development provide an opportunity to strengthen cultural tourism in the area while offering visitors a deeper understanding of the historical traditions, intellectual exchanges and spiritual heritage that have shaped Khoy and the surrounding region over the centuries.

The Shams complex covers an area of approximately 7,000 square meters and includes a



● alibaba.ir

domed chamber, a library and research facilities. Its library houses around 8,000 books, providing a potential center for research into Shams Tabrizi,

Rumi, Sufism and the cultural history of the region.

Officials and cultural experts hope the complex will evolve into a center for academic

studies, literary events and cultural exchanges focused on Persian mystical traditions. The research facilities are expected to host scholars and students interested in the intellectual heritage of Shams Tabrizi and his enduring influence on Persian literature and spirituality. With its historical and cultural heritage, the mausoleum could help establish Khoy as a destination for spiritual and cultural tourism in Iran. The development of tourism infrastructure and greater promotion of the region's historical and cultural attractions could further contribute to the growth of tourism in the county. Khoy, located in West Azarbaijan Province in northwestern

Iran, has long been known as an important historical crossroads linking different regions and cultures. Authorities believe that greater attention to the city's historical assets could enhance its role in domestic and international tourism.

Shams Tabrizi is regarded as one of the most influential figures in the life and thought of the celebrated Persian poet and mystic Rumi. Their spiritual companionship inspired many of Rumi's most famous works and left a lasting impact on Persian literature and Sufi thought. Shams' connection to Khoy has made the city a point of interest for those interested in Persian literature, Sufi thought and Iranian culture.

Gavadeh keeps alive legend of Kaveh the Blacksmith

Iranica Desk

Gavadeh, known also as Kaveh Deh, is a village in Poshtkuh Rural District, Tehran Province. Located approximately 40 to 45 kilometers southeast of Firuzkuh, the village lies in a mountainous landscape surrounded by natural scenery, where elements of traditional rural life and local culture remain part of everyday life.

For visitors, Gavadeh is more than simply a rural destination. The village brings together a range of natural and cultural attractions, including mountains, pastures, scenic landscapes and a relatively cool climate. Combined with its traditional rural way of life, these features offer visitors an opportunity to experience the area beyond simply observing its natural beauty — by engaging with elements of its local culture and oral traditions as well.

What makes Gavadeh particularly appealing to those interested in Iranian culture and mythology is the village's association with Kaveh the Blacksmith, a legendary figure in Iran's national epic, the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi. According to oral traditions and local beliefs, a connection exists between the village and the mythical Kaveh the Black-

smith. Over time, this story has become part of Gavadeh's cultural identity. The connection, however, is better understood as a local tradition and part of the area's oral history rather than as a firmly established historical fact. Passed down from generation to generation, the story nevertheless continues to hold cultural signifi-

cance for local residents. The relationship between geography and legend could also provide an opportunity for greater attention to the village's oral history, including the documentation of local memories, stories and beliefs.

Among Gavadeh's natural features, its ancient cypress tree holds a special place. According to local residents, the tree is believed to be around 2,000 years old and has long been regarded as one of the village's most historic landmarks. The ancient cypress can be considered part of Gavadeh's natural and visual identity — a tree that, in its silence, has witnessed generations of village life. If its age is confirmed through expert assessment and scientific studies, the tree could qualify as an important element of the region's natural heritage and become one of the symbols used to introduce Gavadeh to visitors.

The significance of Gavadeh extends beyond attractions within the village itself. The surrounding natural area is also important for biodiversity. The Gavadeh Wildlife Refuge is considered one of the important wildlife habitats in Firuzkuh, and reports in recent years have documented sightings of species including the Iranian leopard in the area. Such reports further highlight the ecological and conservation importance of the landscape. The village's location within such an environment creates opportunities for developing nature-based and rural tourism. Any expansion of tourism, however, should take into account environmental protection requirements, wildlife conservation and the traditional way of life of the local community. Gavadeh could also become a destination for visitors interested in cultural tourism, nature-based travel and experiencing rural

life. Alongside its mountainous scenery, travelers can discover elements of local traditions, indigenous culture and valuable natural features.

Today, Gavadeh can be seen as a village whose identity has been shaped by several overlapping narratives: the valuable natural environment and wildlife of Firuzkuh, the traditions and lifestyle of its rural community, and the stories that connect the village's name with one of the best-known mythical figures of Iran.

Gavadeh is, in essence, a living story of the relationship between people, nature and memory. Its ancient cypress, surrounding mountains and oral traditions each preserve a part of the story of this land — a story that, if properly documented, promoted and protected, could bring greater recognition to Gavadeh as a destination for cultural and nature tourism in Firuzkuh.



● MEHR

Minister urges support for rural, nomadic culture

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Culture Minister Abbas Salehi on Wednesday called for greater support for cultural and artistic activities in rural and nomadic areas, saying their traditions are central to the country's identity. In a message marking the National Day of Villages and Nomads, Salehi said his ministry was committed to supporting cultural and artistic activities in these areas, identifying local talent and creating more opportunities for them to participate in the country's cultural life, IRIBNEWS reported. "Iran cannot be reduced to its cities, historical monuments and cultural centers," Salehi said.

He said much of Iran's identity had been shaped in villages, tribal communities and along nomadic migration routes. "Generations have preserved the country's culture, languages, arts, rituals and traditions through everyday life," he said. Salehi also pointed to the role of rural and nomadic communities in production and development. He credited them with helping preserve Iran's cultural and civilizational heritage and defend the country's territory and borders. He said their ties to Iran had again been evident during sensitive periods in recent years, particularly during the 40-day war launched by the US and Israel in late February. The minister said younger gen-

erations increasingly needed a living connection with Iran's history and culture to understand their roots. Rural and nomadic traditions, dialects, music, handicrafts and indigenous ways of life, he said, are not simply remnants of the past but part of Iran's cultural capital for the present and future. Art, Salehi said, can bring this living heritage closer to younger generations and bring lesser-seen stories of rural and nomadic life into the broader culture. He ended the message by congratulating Iran's rural and nomadic communities and praising those whose cultural work and presence help keep "a part of Iran's soul" alive.



Iranian documentary 'Throne of Wood' heads to Africa festival

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian documentary 'Throne of Wood', directed by Sadeh Kazemi and produced by Documentary House, has been selected for the Africa International Film Festival (AFRIFF), which will run from November 1 to 7, 2026, in Lagos, southwestern Nigeria, adding another international screening to the film's festival run, IRNA reported on Wednesday. The documentary tells the story of a woman of about 100 who is determined to preserve her independence and way of life in a rural village. Known locally as "Soghra Rais", chief Soghra in Persian, meaning for her strong and authoritative character, she continues to live alone despite having more than 50 grandchil-



dren and great-grandchildren. The film focuses on her conflict with villagers over collecting firewood for cooking. The dispute intensified after a fire at a neighbor's home raised concerns about the practice. Through that struggle, the documen-

tary examines the tension between personal autonomy and the fear of becoming a burden on others. 'Throne of Wood' previously won the Best Documentary Award at the seventh Kobani International Film Festival, strengthening its profile on the international

festival circuit. Before its selection for AFRIFF, the film had also been screened or selected at several festivals, including the Cinema Verité International Documentary Film Festival in Tehran, northern Iran; the Göttingen International Ethnographic Film Festival in the central German city of Göttingen; and the Portobello Film Festival in London, southeastern England. The latest selection extends the international reach of a documentary that uses a deeply local story to explore broader themes of aging, self-reliance and the right to make one's own choices. The film's central character remains committed to living independently, even as those around her urge her to change long-standing habits.

Iranian photographer wins Jack Schrader Award at US art exhibit

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian photographer and filmmaker Armin Amirian has won the Jack Schrader Award at the 13th annual FL3TCH3R International Exhibit in the United States for his photograph 'Constitutional Revolution of Iran'. The exhibition ran from August 7 to September 27, at Fischman Gallery in Tennessee, in the southeastern United States, ILNA reported on Wednesday. The award-winning photograph was created in 2020 as a part of Amirian's 'hICEstory' series, which shows figures from Iran's Constitutional Revolution



emerging through layers of ice. The revolution marked its 120th anniversary in August 2026. The 2026 show had no specific theme. It allowed artists to explore contemporary issues affect-

ing society and culture through diverse media and approaches. More than \$2,000 in awards were presented. The awards ceremony was held on September 4. Part of the exhibition pro-

ceeds supports the Fletcher Hancock Dyer Memorial Scholarship for an art and design student. Amirian has participated in more than 100 international exhibitions and festivals. He has also received awards from the Fletcher Dyer Foundation, including an award for artistic excellence. Works from 'hICEstory' have been shown in solo exhibitions in Iran, Italy and France. The series has also appeared at international exhibitions at London's Saatchi Gallery and venues in the United States, Germany and Spain.

Tehran to form 300-scooter fleet for traffic police

Social Desk

Tehran is forming a 300-scooter fleet for its traffic police as the capital expands plans to promote scooters for short trips and clean transport. Pouria Alimardani, head of the Tehran Municipality's Transportation and Traffic Organization, said on Wednesday the fleet was being formed at the request of Tehran's traffic police. It is now being equipped. "The lightweight scooters can be used for short missions and to help officers reach locations quickly," he said, according to ISNA. The municipality is also developing "vitality routes" with dedicated, safe paths for bicycles, electric bicycles, pedestrians and scooters. Alimardani said scooters should not be used on highways or roadways. They should instead be ridden on designated routes and in line with safety rules. In the first phase, the municipality will provide financial support for the purchase of 2,000 scooters by students and young people. The subsidy for each purchase is 1.5 billion rials (nearly



\$570). "The municipality is acting as a facilitator by developing infrastructure for scooter use," Alimardani said. Rental shared scooters are also available on the city's vitality routes. The plan aims to encourage residents to replace cars with scooters for short trips to universities, schools, gyms and metro stations. The official noted that electric scooters could be more suitable than bicycles on Tehran's hilly terrain. He said scooters could account for about 1% to 2% of transportation in other countries, particularly for trips of less than five kilometers.

Beijing's 'smart geoeconomics' ...

Within this framework, Iran is the most resilient actor, having successfully neutralized Western sanction structures, and it possesses the capacity to provide stable energy for China—particularly crude oil, gas, and a high-value chain of petrochemical derivatives like methanol and gas-based products—with the highest level of reliability.

Nevertheless, current realities indicate that the deep potential of the two countries' 25-year comprehensive agreement and their joint membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and BRICS still requires a leap from the stage of "theoretical understandings" to "organic and operational linkages." The need for effective, continuous, and multi-layered communication between Tehran and Beijing demands that coopera-

tion be rapidly deepened across three key axes: first, strengthening bilateral monetary agreements to neutralize Western currency coercion; second, immediately operationalizing Iran's rail and port infrastructure projects along China's corridor arterial routes; and third, joint investment in upstream and downstream energy and petrochemical industries aimed at intertwining the vital interests of the two economies. Finally, it must be emphasized that in today's volatile world, passivity or optimism regarding short-term compromises with the Western international system is a strategic error. The convergence of Tehran and Beijing is not a tactical choice; it is a historical and inevitable necessity to ensure national security, sustainable economic growth, and the formation of new global blocs centered on multilateralism.