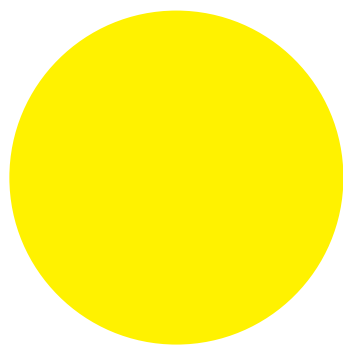


Zanjan's metalworking heritage looks for new markets

FEATURE REPORT



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Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref (c) speaks at meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Council of Heads of Government in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on October 20, 2026. fvpresident.ir

US may return to talks, but accepting Iran's terms unlikely

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has recently said that Iran's seven-point plan for resolving the conflict with the United States remains on the table, with the waterway set to reopen on the sixth day and



negotiations to begin on the seventh if Iran's conditions are accepted. However, given that Washington had previously rejected the proposal, whether it would accept it at this stage remains an open question. Mani Mehrabi, an international affairs analyst, told Iran Daily that the possibility of the US returning to negotiations should be taken seriously, but that full acceptance of Iran's

seven-point plan cannot currently be regarded as a foregone conclusion.

IRAN DAILY: What factors could prompt Washington to reconsider its position regarding Iran's proposal? How do you assess the prospects for its acceptance under current circumstances?

MEHRABI: In my view, the most important factor in Washington's calculations is the shifting balance between the costs and benefits of allowing the crisis to continue. Disruption in the Strait of Hormuz is not merely a bilateral issue between Iran and the United States. It affects global energy markets and shipping costs, while its economic repercussions spill over into other countries. The longer the crisis persists, the greater the pressure on the US government to find a way to contain it. This pressure also has a significant domestic dimension. The

United States is heading into midterm elections, and rising energy costs, coupled with concerns about a prolonged war, could carry a political price for Donald Trump's administration. Containing the crisis may therefore become an important consideration in Washington's decision-making. However, rising costs do not automatically translate into acceptance of Iran's conditions. Rather than fully accepting Tehran's proposal, Washington may seek a more limited agreement that restores maritime traffic while offering fewer concessions on issues such as the naval blockade, oil sanctions and Iran's nuclear program. The US administration must also consider domestic political concerns and the implications of any agreement for its deterrence credibility. Therefore, the possibility of the United States returning to negotiations should be taken seriously, but full acceptance of

Iran's seven-point plan cannot currently be regarded as a foregone conclusion. If diplomacy makes progress, the more likely scenario is that the two sides will haggle over the sequencing of steps, guarantees for the implementation of commitments and the design of a phased framework. The main obstacle is disagreement over the order in which commitments should be implemented. Tehran insists on easing pressure before reopening the Strait, while Washington also prioritizes resolving nuclear issues.

To what extent could visits to Tehran by Pakistani Army Chief Asim Munir and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov be seen as part of diplomatic efforts to relay messages between Tehran and Washington? Can they be regarded as a sign of renewed momentum toward negotiations?

These developments should be assessed by distinguishing between active diplomatic channels and tangible progress in negotiations. Given its relations with Iran and its ties to the United States, Pakistan has the capacity to relay messages, reduce misunderstandings and facilitate indirect contacts. Russia, too, can play a role in consultations related to the crisis and efforts to bring the two sides' positions closer, owing to its strategic relations with Tehran and its diplomatic standing. However, the roles of the two countries are not identical. Pakistan's importance stems primarily from its mediation capacity and its links with both sides. Russia, by contrast, has independent interests and positions in regional security dynamics and Iran's nuclear file, in addition to its diplomatic capabilities. Moscow can therefore help facilitate an agreement, but its approach will be shaped by its own strategic cal-

culations and priorities. Neither country, on its own, can resolve the fundamental differences between Tehran and Washington. Pakistan's diplomatic engagement should be understood in the context of Islamabad's efforts to preserve strategic flexibility and prevent its national interests and foreign policy future from becoming tied to the outcome of the confrontation between Tehran and Washington. On the one hand, Pakistan is seeking to keep the mediation channel open. On the other, it does not want the continuation of the crisis to further jeopardize its energy security, regional relations and economic interests. From this perspective, mediation is not simply an effort to bring the two sides' positions closer together. It is also a means of managing the costs of the crisis, reducing vulnerability and preserving Islamabad's room for maneuver under different future scenarios.

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First VP says aggression against Iran threatens foundations of Int'l legal order

International Desk

Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref said on Tuesday that the 40-day military aggression against Iran was not merely an attack on the Islamic Republic but a direct assault on the foundations of the international legal order and the principle of sovereign equality of states. Speaking at a meeting of prime ministers of member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Tajikistan, Aref said the international system was facing unprecedented threats in a turbulent period marked by unilateralism and the pursuit of dominance by a handful of countries. Over the past two years, the region and the wider world had witnessed major challenges, including unprecedented, overt and brazen violations

of fundamental human values, international law and the UN Charter by the United States and Israel, he said. These actions had placed peace, security and the achievements of the international community over recent decades at serious risk of destruction, Aref added.

Iran had again come under a military aggression by the United States and Israel in February, in a move that directly violated the UN Charter, Aref said. He said Iran had chosen dialogue and diplomacy, with negotiations to resolve outstanding disputes already under way, but came under "illegal and unjust" military attack. The 40-day military assault went beyond an attack on Iran itself, Aref said, arguing that it had directly challenged the foundations of international law and the sovereign equality



Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref speaks during a meeting of prime ministers of member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on October 20, 2026.

● IRNA

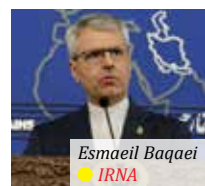
of states.

Strikes on civilian infrastructure, educational and university facilities, medical centers, economic installations and peaceful nuclear facilities under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency are setting an extremely dangerous precedent, he said.

If such actions were allowed to go uncondemned by the international community, no country would be immune from their consequences, Aref warned.



Baqaei: No talks on uranium enrichment during Lavrov's visit to Tehran



Esmail Baqaei
● IRNA

International Desk

Iran and Russia did not discuss uranium enrichment during Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's visit to Tehran on Monday, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman said, stressing that

Tehran has not backed down from its fundamental positions.

Speaking at his weekly press conference on Tuesday, Esmail Baqaei also dismissed speculation that the trip had focused on negotiations between Tehran and Washington.

"No, we have absolutely not deviated from our principled positions, because our positions are in line with Iran's national interests," he said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin recently told his Iranian counterpart Masoud Pezeshkian in a phone call that Moscow was ready to help efforts to mediate between Tehran and Washington, with the months-long conflict locked in a stalemate.

Putin also recently offered to transfer enriched uranium from Iran to Russia to help resolve dispute between Iran and the United States.

"We proposed transferring some of the enriched uranium to Russia. This offer remains on the table. I should note that everyone initially agreed," Putin said at a plenary session of the 23rd meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club.

"Our offer remains on the table," he reiterated.

Baqaei said Lavrov's visit was part of ongoing consultations between the two countries and had been on the agenda for some time.

During the meeting, discussions focused on a range of issues serving the national interests of both countries, he added. Regional matters, including Ukraine and the Persian Gulf, were also naturally discussed, alongside the broader nuclear issue. Russia has consistently said it would do whatever it could to help ease tensions, the spokesman said, adding that Tehran had expressed appreciation for Moscow's positive and constructive approach to the issue.

Pakistan's army chief in Tehran for talks on 'strengthening interactions, cooperation'

International Desk

Pakistan's army chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir, whose country has attempted to mediate a peace deal in between Iran and Washington, arrived in Tehran on Tuesday for talks with Iranian officials amid the possibility of new conflict between Iran and the US.

"General Asim Munir, the Commander of the Pakistani Army, arrived in Tehran along with a delegation of officials from his country," Iran's state television said in a statement. Earlier, the spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, Esmail Baqaei, confirmed the visit during his weekly press conference, saying talks would "relate to issues concerning the negotiations, but they are mainly focused on bilateral relations and strengthening interactions and cooperation".

The visit comes with diplomatic efforts between Iran and the United States stalled over issues including the future of the Strait of Hormuz.

On Monday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Washington



Asim Munir
● IRNA

was responsible for insecurity in the strait, usually a key transport route for oil and gas but which Iran has sought to blockade during the war launched by the US and Israel in February.

Pakistan has played a key mediating role in the so far unsuccessful attempts to end the war. In June, it helped broker a short-lived memorandum of understanding, which Tehran insists should still form the basis of any peace deal.

The trip is the fifth by Munir since the June agreement.

The US has not launched strikes on Iran since September, but the possibility of a return to fighting looms over the country.

"We live with this possibility day and night, and we cannot rule it out, even as we speak," Baghaei told reporters on Tuesday.

Munir's visit follows one by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Monday.

IRGC: Two violating tankers on fire after hitting mines in Hormuz

International Desk

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said two oil tankers were set ablaze and halted after hitting mines planted along an unauthorized passage south of the Strait of Hormuz.

In a statement on Tuesday, the IRGC said its navy forces reported that two oil tankers were set ablaze and stopped after mines laid by the naval forces exploded along an unauthorized passage south of the strait.

"The IRGC Navy once again warns that passage through the mined route is illegal and will result in violators' assets being set ablaze. If the US regime continues its provocations, oil companies will have to pay a heavier price," it noted. It added that IRGC air defense forces detected and struck a US military MQ-9 drone overnight as it monitored the airspace over the Strait of Hormuz, destroying the aircraft.

The statement said the IRGC's naval and aerospace forces continued to monitor regional developments and uphold their commitment to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution and the Iranian people, while exercising control over the Strait of Hormuz.

The statement praised the Iranian people's continued resilience and presence in public gatherings for more than 230 consecutive nights, describing their steadfastness as a major victory that



has inspired oppressed nations around the world.

Since the onset of the unprovoked US-Israeli war of aggression against the Islamic Republic, Iranian naval forces have exercised control over the Strait of Hormuz to safeguard regional security and ensure orderly transit for vessels that coordinate with Iranian authorities. Iranian officials have repeatedly made clear that the only safe passage through the strait is via routes designated and authorized by the IRGC Navy.

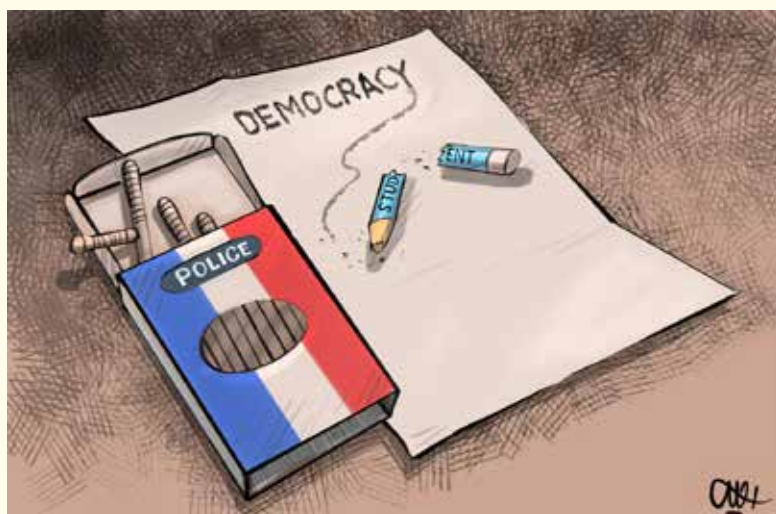
Ships that attempt to evade detection by silencing their systems or that venture into unauthorized corridors do so at their own peril and expose themselves to the defensive measures in place to protect the Islamic Republic's sovereign rights and the security of the Persian Gulf.

The IRGC Navy has consistently warned commercial operators and shipping companies against heeding false assurances from external actors and against endangering crews by flouting established rules.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



ESCO
Esfahan Steel Company

Brief Notice of International Tender No.1116404 Second Announcement

It is hereby notified that **Esfahan Steel Company (ESCO)** intends to purchase 1,800 Ton Granulated Graphite as per the required conditions and technical specifications through two-stage international Tender. Accordingly, all the prospective bidders are kindly requested to visit ESCO's website www.esfahansteel.ir so as to obtain the tender document and upload their techno-commercial offer to ESCO's website (through Sourcing Field) no later than 09.November.2026.

It is evident that this letter is only for notification purpose.

Yours Respectfully, M.Shateri,
Goods & Equipment Purchasing Management
Esfahan Steel Company

Food self-sufficiency improved despite sanctions, war: *Minister*



Agriculture Minister Gholamreza Nouri-Quezeljeh (2nd L) attends the 54th Session of the Committee on World Food Security at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome, Italy, on October 20, 2026.
● IRNA

Economy Desk

Iran has increased self-sufficiency in most agricultural and food products and boosted output of major staples despite sanctions, two wars and an economic blockade, Agriculture Minister Gholamreza Nouri-Quezeljeh said at a global food security meeting in Rome. Speaking at the 54th Session of

the Committee on World Food Security at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Nouri-Quezeljeh said Iran had made significant progress in food security and sustainable agriculture, according to a report by IRNA on Tuesday. He said the country had relied on domestic capabilities and expertise to increase self-sufficiency

in essential commodities. "Despite two imposed wars, sanctions and a blockade, Iran's agricultural sector was a leading sector of the economy in the past year (2025-2026)," Nouri-Quezeljeh said, adding that the country had achieved self-sufficiency in most agricultural and food products and increased production across all major staples. The minister did not provide

overall production figures. However, Deputy Agriculture Minister for Crop Production Majid Anjafi said in August that agricultural output had risen to 137 million tons over the previous year from 130 million tons, despite severe drought, water shortages, sanctions and energy imbalances. Separately, a report by the Agricultural Research, Education and Extension Organization cited 5.5% growth in the sector and a 9-million-ton increase in production over the same period, despite drought and other difficulties. It also said financial discipline had generated savings of about \$1 billion in the agricultural sector over the past year. Iran faces mounting external pressure, including a US naval

blockade imposed in mid-April aimed at pushing Tehran toward a peace agreement following the 40-day US-Israeli war that began in late February. Israel also launched a 12-day war against Iran in June 2024. Western sanctions over Iran's nuclear program have been in place for decades, raising costs even in humanitarian areas such as access to medicines, although food and agricultural goods are formally exempt from sanctions regimes. At the FAO meeting, Nouri-Quezeljeh identified technological development, the role of local communities and indigenous knowledge, the preservation of globally significant agricultural heritage, the development of agricultural value chains, and prioritizing food security in national development plans as key features of Iran's agricultural and food production system. He also highlighted the country's focus on rural-based agricultural development. Criticizing "contradictions between the conduct of certain

countries and FAO principles," he said using food, unilateral sanctions and economic blockades as tools of political pressure, or using hunger as a weapon in conflicts, ran counter to humanitarian principles and the spirit behind the organization's founding. He added that economic sanctions had disrupted the transfer of modern agricultural technologies, food trade and investment in infrastructure. Despite these constraints, Nouri-Quezeljeh said Iran remained fully prepared to expand cooperation with FAO, its member states and other interested countries. He said global challenges could be resolved only through regional and international cooperation, adding that Iran welcomed joint projects, technical knowledge exchanges and the transfer of modern technologies with FAO and member states. Iran was also ready to share its experience in water resource management, climate-resilient agriculture and improving food security, he said.

Azadegan oil well output rises 293% after pump installation

Economy Desk

Daily oil output from a well in the shared Azadegan oil field has risen by 293% to 1,710 barrels following the installation of the field's first electric submersible pump (ESP), Tasnim news agency reported. Esmaeil Gholampour Ahangar, the field's development project manager, said production from well AZNS-156 had increased from 435 barrels per day to 1,710 bpd after the pump was installed and commissioned. The 130-horsepower pump was installed over 20 days, from September 26 to October 15, in line with the approved schedule, bringing the well into production, he said. The project added 1,275 bpd to the well's output.



Downhole pumps help move fluids from reservoirs to the surface, reducing limitations caused by declining natural reservoir pressure and supporting higher, more stable production. Well No. 141, located on Pad 54 of the Azadegan field, has been designated as the next priority for installation and commissioning of a downhole pump. Iran has also signed a 24-month contract to raise production from 55 wells at the Azadegan field to 550,000 barrels per day

(bpd), from around 230,000 bpd. The Integrated Production Services contract was signed by Dasht Azadegan Arvand Oil & Gas Development Co. and Oil Exploration Operations Co. (OEOC) as part of a broader integrated development project for the field. Azadegan, Iran's largest shared oil field, lies in the oil-rich southwestern province of Khuzestan near the border with Iraq. Its North and South sections together form a field known as Majnoon on the Iraqi side of the border. The field is considered the world's 10th-largest oil field and is estimated to contain 33 billion barrels of oil in place, of which around 5.2 billion barrels are considered recoverable for Iran.

US may return ...

Nevertheless, the key measure of genuine progress is not simply the holding of high-level meetings, but a shift in the parties' positions, agreement on the sequencing of commitments or the establishment of specific implementation arrangements. Until such evidence emerges, it is more accurate to speak of an expanded capacity for mediation and efforts to manage the costs of the crisis than to suggest that negotiations are firmly on track.

Statements have emerged about the possibility of the United States using extremely powerful bunker-buster bombs, including the weapon known as the "mother of all bombs," to target Iran's nuclear facilities. How should these threats be assessed?

These threats should be assessed both in the context of psychological and diplomatic pressure and in terms of the possibility of military escalation. Raising military options can be intended to increase the perceived cost of Iran's resistance and strengthen Washington's position in negotiations. However, considering a military option should not be equated with a definitive decision to carry it out.

There is an important technical distinction in this regard. The GBU-43/B, known as the "mother of all bombs," is a munition with an extremely high explosive yield, but it differs from the specialized penetrator designed to strike hardened, deeply buried targets, known as the GBU-57. Therefore, the possibility of using the GBU-43/B does not, in itself, mean that it would be capable of reliably destroying Iran's hardened underground nuclear facilities. From this perspective, talk of using this weapon against Iran's nuclear sites may be more of a propaganda or psychological warfare tactic. Strategically, the central issue is not simply a weapon's destructive

power, but the relationship between the military objective and its political consequences. An attack on sensitive infrastructure could cause significant damage, but it would not necessarily lead to a lasting resolution of the disputes or eliminate Iran's strategic capabilities. Conversely, such an attack could trigger retaliation, widen the conflict and sharply increase risks to shipping and regional infrastructure. Military threats can also have a dual effect on diplomacy. On the one hand, they may be used to extract concessions in negotiations. On the other, they can erode the trust necessary for an agreement and lead the other side to conclude that the threat of another attack would remain even after a deal was reached. This is particularly important when the core dispute is not merely about a temporary halt to hostilities, but also about guarantees that commitments will be honored and that the crisis will not return in the future.

How could the US midterm elections and the domestic political considerations facing the administration affect Washington's decisions regarding Iran's proposal and its approach to Tehran?

The November 3 midterm elections could affect the timing and form of the US administration's decisions, but they will not necessarily determine the direction of its policy. Under current circumstances, the Trump administration faces a clear political challenge: how to contain the economic costs of the war without being accused at home of backing down in the face of Iran. Rising energy prices, pressure on households and concerns about a prolonged war increase the administration's incentive to ease the crisis before the election. Donald Trump has also explicitly stated that the United States would not attack Iran before the election and

has referred to ongoing talks. This position suggests that electoral considerations can influence the timing of military action, although they do not, in themselves, guarantee an agreement. At the same time, his emphasis on maintaining the blockade shows that refraining from a military attack does not necessarily mean abandoning instruments of pressure.

Another important factor is the distinction between reaching an agreement before the election and making decisions afterward. The US administration may seek to secure a temporary period of calm before voters go to the polls, while postponing the resolution of fundamental disputes to later stages. Conversely, if it judges the political cost of an agreement to be greater than that of continuing the confrontation, it may prolong negotiations or rely more heavily on pressure tactics. Electoral considerations could therefore both strengthen the incentive to contain the crisis and limit the concessions the Trump administration is willing to accept. From Iran's perspective, US foreign policy should not be interpreted solely through the lens of electoral competition. A change in the composition of Congress does not, by itself, mean an immediate shift in Washington's policy toward Tehran, although it can affect congressional oversight, budgetary decisions and the political environment in which the administration makes decisions. Overall, the election could create an opportunity to contain the crisis temporarily, but it offers no guarantee of a lasting agreement. Turning this opportunity into a tangible outcome requires a framework that phases the implementation of commitments and makes them verifiable. Otherwise, electoral considerations may merely change the timing and form of the next confrontation rather than bring the underlying disputes to an end.

Afghanistan-Iran-Turkey freight train set to launch soon, official says

Economy Desk

Preparations are complete for the launch of the first commercial and transit train linking Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey, with all necessary approvals secured in the three countries, the head of the Afghanistan Railway Development Consortium said. Mostafa Rezaei told IRNA on Tuesday that the train would run once a week without stops, departing from Herat and traveling via the Khaf railway and Iran's rail network to the Razi border terminal in West Azerbaijan Province. It



would then enter Turkey and travel through the city of Van to the Mediterranean port of Mersin. The locomotive will be Iranian and the wagons European, Rezaei said, adding that the consortium's Iranian operations would manage the train's movements. He said the service was expected to officially begin in the near future.

About 100,000 metric tons of goods are currently shipped to Afghanistan each month via the Khaf-Herat railway, Rezaei said. According to IRNA, more than 1 million metric tons of export and transit goods were transported to Afghanistan along the route between the start of its official operations in February-March 2024 and the end of May 2026. The Khaf-Herat railway connects Iran's rail network to western Afghanistan and forms part of an east-west rail corridor linking China, Central Asia, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey and Europe.

Learning without bleeding

China's lessons from Russia-Ukraine drone war



By Lilly Min-Chen Lee

Doctoral fellow at The Fletcher School at Tufts University

By Kateryna Bondar

Senior fellow in the Wadhvani AI Center at CSIS



ANALYSIS

At a People's Liberation Army (PLA) center that runs trials pitting drone swarms against counter-drone defenses, one participant explained the logic to state media: "The errors we make in trials are detours the troops will not have to take." China is running the most systematic effort by any outside power to convert the Ukraine war's lessons into military advantage, absorbing the errors of both sides. Chinese analysts are explicit about the value of Russia's war against Ukraine. They describe the conflict as a living textbook and call 2024 "year one of world drone war," when the two sides fielded enough drones to show the contours of the new mechanized battlefield.

Examination of how this learning works finds three things:

1. Chinese analysts pick up new battlefield techniques within an average of four months, but turning them into hardware, training, and force structure takes a year or more.

2. The learning is distributed, with each defense industrial system feeding lessons into its own requirements and procurement channels.

3. China studies the war mainly from the perspective of the target. The deepest work comes from the designers of its air and harbor defenses, who treat Ukraine's sea drones and airfield raids as previews of attacks on China. The database for this analysis consists of more than 90 verified Chinese-language sources published between July 2022 and August 2026 across 45 outlets, including the Central Military Commission's newspaper and peer-reviewed journals of China's missile, shipbuilding, and aviation conglomerates. The database tracks two bodies of evidence: the literature itself and the implementation record that measures the speed of China's learning.

The authors of the papers analyzed here are participants in the military learning system. They include researchers at the PLA's universities and academies, engineers at the defense industri-



SWAT officers are using drones to conduct reconnaissance during a tactical drill in a mountain forest in Liuzhou, Guangxi Province, China, on March 26, 2024.

● COSTFOTO

al design institutes, civilian academics working alongside numbered military units, and military acquisition organizations that turn battlefield lessons into requirements and procurement.

As shown in Figure 1, for five signature techniques of the drone war, this analysis records three milestones: first battlefield appearance, first Chinese analysis, and first evidence of PLA training or hardware manufacturing.

The intervals show a consistent pattern. Chinese analysts register new battlefield techniques quickly, with average of four months from front line to print. Absorption takes longer: organizational and system-level lessons surface only after a year or more of internal digestion.

Figure 2 maps each outlet to its sponsoring institution: the learning effort feeds directly into military requirements and procurement channels. Nearly half of the sources appear in

venues run by the defense industrial institutions — shipbuilding institutes that study naval countermeasures, missile academies that track strike and air-defense lessons, the aviation conglomerate whose own unmanned systems journal is the single deepest analytical platform, and the ordnance ecosystem serving the ground forces. China's study of the drone war runs through distributed channels. Each military structure feeds lessons from its journals through its design institutes and into its own service's requirements, while the Central Military Commission's press carries the doctrinal debate and state media broadcasts the conclusions.

This analysis sorts the lessons the way China does — offense, defense, organization, industry, and what the war failed to prove — because each category moves through a different channel at a different speed. Offensive technique is copied from Russia, whose army resembles the PLA's and whose fixes have been tested in combat. Defensive requirements are derived from Ukraine's attacks and built into hardware. Organizational conclusions are debated in the military press



Every missile the defender fires costs more than the drone cost the attacker, so the conclusion in the Chinese press is that the best weapon against a drone is another drone. Chinese analysts draw a second conclusion from the same numbers: any enemy China fights will have cheap drones in mass, so China must learn to shoot them down.

while institutions change around the debate. Industrial lessons flow into a manufacturing base that already leads the world, and unproven concepts stay open as a research agenda rather than purchases.

Lessons in offense

The first offensive lesson is economic. In March 2025, the PLA Daily treated as settled fact the claim that a single reconnaissance-strike drone costs less than one percent of a modern fighter while achieving more than 90 percent of its battlefield coverage. While these are rough figures, the Central Military Commission's newspaper states them without qualification. The professional literature provides supporting evidence. More than one million small drones were purchased by Ukraine and Russia in 2024 alone, which a Chinese naval academy analyst depicted as an average of two drones hanging over every frontline soldier's head. For Chinese planners, mass is not an ad hoc wartime improvisation but the economic structure of drone war itself. The second lesson is speed. According to the National Defense University's Joint Operations College, Russian forces can strike a detected target within three to five minutes — compared to hours in earlier wars. A survey by researchers at a PLA unit attributes this to Russia's reconnaissance-strike complex, in which a low-cost reconnaissance drone pushed deep into the enemy rear serves as the observer and guides another drone's strike, with Orlan-10s cueing Kub and Lancet loitering munitions. The copying target is not any single platform but rather the connection between them: drones wired directly into artillery and command networks.

The third lesson is overcommunication and connectivity. Chinese analysts treat electronic warfare as the deciding factor of the drone war, recording heavy losses on both sides to jamming and countermeasures. They registered Russia's answer — the fiber-optic first-person-view (FPV) drone steered through a thin cable that jamming cannot touch — almost immediately. The PLA Daily flagged the shift in May 2024 within weeks of the technique's operational debut, and by April 2025, state media were weighing its trade-offs in detail. That April, China Central Television (CCTV) showed a People's Armed Police unit in Yunnan training with FPV drones and researching fiber-optic models. PLA training footage of strikes and evasion released in 2024 was framed by Chinese outlets as drawing on Russia-Ukraine battlefield experience, down to the use of capture nets and jamming guns. About a year separated first battlefield use in Russia from Chinese unit training. The lesson pipeline worked at speed.

Lessons in defense

The analytical corpus runs deepest on defense, organizing lessons around two Ukrainian methods that Chinese analysts consider previews of potential attacks on China. The first is the

Figure 1: How Fast China Absorbs the Drone Warfare Innovations

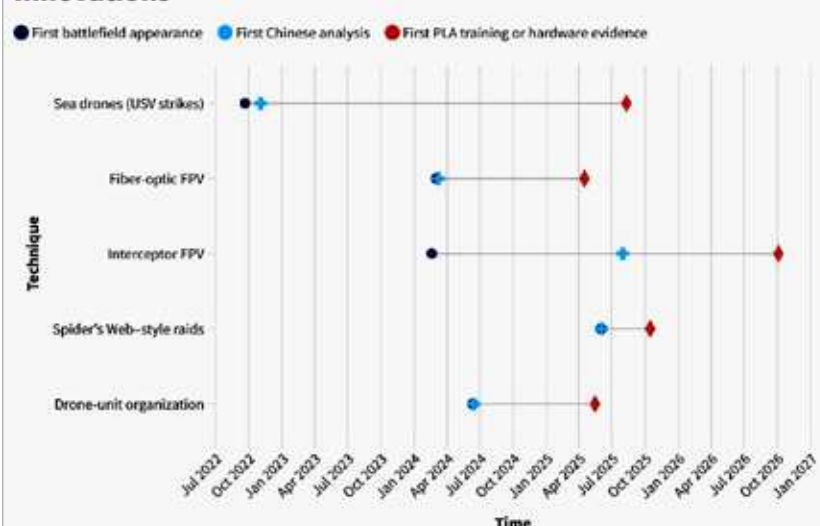
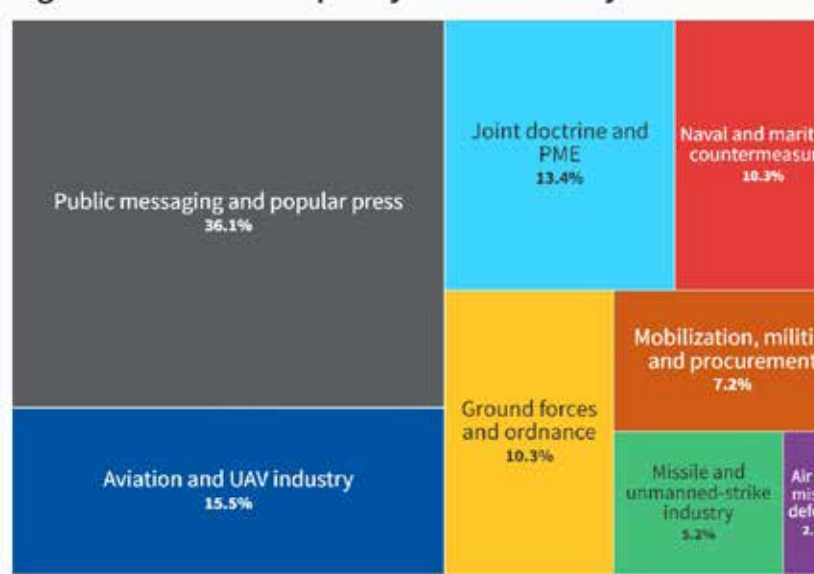


Figure 2: Research Corpus by End-User Ecosystem



Share of corpus = entries in the ecosystem divided by all entries, in percent, rounded to one decimal place. Shares may not add to exactly 100 because of rounding.

● CSIS

sea drone. In the journal of the state shipbuilder's underwater-warfare institute, a team from the Naval University of Engineering tallied repeated Ukrainian strikes on Russian ships, ports, and the Kerch Bridge and found more than 10 large naval vessels damaged. They concluded that a systematized sea drone offensive must be met by counter-sea drone equipment that also fights as a system. A researcher at a sister combat-systems institute proposed countering suicide boats with interceptor swarms, in skirmishes devoid of humans entirely.

The second preview is the airfield raid. After Ukraine's Operation Spider's Web reached Russian bomber bases on June 1, 2025, the Chinese foreign ministry's magazine estimated Russian losses at 11 strategic bombers and identified the raid's novelty in being launched from inside Russia, at close range. The PLA's training system answered within four and a half months. In an October 2025 exercise, a brigade defended against a drone attack team of more than 20 operators, using detection gear that locates drones by their radio emissions and matches them against a catalog of more than 800 commercial models, paving a path for Chinese response to a Spider's Web-style drone infiltration.

The economics of defense received the same treatment as the economics of attack. According to a Global Times analysis of Ukraine's interceptor drones, "the cost of procuring one man-portable air-defense missile buys several hundred air-defense FPV drones." Every missile the defender fires costs more than the drone cost the attacker, so the conclusion in the Chinese press is that the best weapon against a drone is another drone. Chinese analysts draw a second conclusion from the same numbers: any enemy China fights will have cheap drones in mass, so China must learn to shoot them down.

China is taking its cues on this issue from Russia, which has been forced to make fixes under fire. A 2026 review from a Chinese state aerospace design institute recorded that Russia "has built in combat a counter-drone equipment system of electronic jamming first, firepower interception as the backstop, and self-defense interception as the supplement." Chinese state radio commentary has cataloged Russia's protective adjustments in the same spirit, from strategic bombers pulled back some 6,000 kilometers to the Chukotka Peninsula to retractable protective nets developed from the improvised cages on tanks in Ukraine. The PLA expects to defend the same kinds of targets, so it wants to copy a tested defense.

These studies have moved into hardware faster than any other category. At the Zhuhai air show in November 2024, the counter-drone systems of the state electronics, ordnance, and aerospace groups dominated Chinese coverage, led by CETC's Tianqiong, NORINCO's Hurricane 3000 microwave weapon, and CASIC's LW-60 laser. The September 2025 military parade put counter-drone missile-gun systems, high-energy lasers, and high-power microwave weapons on state display. In late July 2026, CCTV aired footage of an army drone crew putting a missile into a fast boat maneuvering at sea, and in August, the army flew armed KVD002 drones against sea drone targets in exercises. The navy had begun training against unmanned boats a year earlier. In August 2025, the PLA Daily reported a missile-boat drill with an "enemy unmanned boats closing" inject, 35 months after the first Ukrainian sea drone washed ashore near Sevastopol. In April 2026, an Eastern Theater frigate flotilla ran a live-fire drill against unmanned boats.

Organizational lessons
The war's organizational lessons reached China through similar channels. When Russia created an independent unmanned systems branch in



The Chinese People's Armed Police (PAP) is conducting an intensive training in Yunnan, focused on the use of First-Person View (FPV) drones.
● CCTV

2025, the PLA Daily noted it alongside Ukraine's Unmanned Systems Forces, established in 2024, and Poland's drone force of January 2025. A November 2025 analysis in the same newspaper praised Ukraine's embedding of drone battalions and companies within traditional brigades to shorten the kill chain and cut duplicate strikes, weighed embedding against a separate drone service, and judged the two arrangements complementary. Institutional change ran ahead of the published debate. The Central Military Commission had formed three new military universities out of existing academies six months beforehand, in May 2025. One of them, the Army's new combat arms university in Hefei, merged the Army's armored forces academy with its artillery and air defense academy. A Chongqing government enrollment notice lists unmanned systems command and control among its undergraduate majors, and unmanned equipment engineering among those of the new Joint Logistics Support Force Engineering University in Chongqing. Militia drone detachments organized in Xinjiang and elsewhere extend the effort beyond the regular army under the party's label for emerging capabilities it wants built into the force. By August 2026, CCTV was presenting the air force's drones as a cross-service system feeding targeting data to

the rocket force, situational awareness to the navy, and long-range strike support to the army. These actions show that China is adapting institutionally, during peacetime via schools, state industry, and the militia, what Ukraine and Russia improvised in war. Despite the Chinese system's advantages, there are limits to Chinese adaptation, centering on the frontline feedback loop. A military built on centralized approval, however, cannot create decentralized improvisation by command. This is the open question at the heart of China's learning efforts: whether it can find a suitable substitute that facilitates improvisation within its centralized command structure.

Industrial lessons
The first industrial lesson Chinese analysts drew is that production wins. As early as November 2023, the youth press was explaining to its readers why Russia had overcome its early disadvantage in drones. The answer was the sheer scale of Russia's defense industry, which gradually reversed the situation. For Chinese analysts, a drone war is won by the side that can build more, and no country builds more drones than China. This advantage extends to upstream components. Fiber-optic drones fly on spools of ordinary optical fiber, and a report carried by People's Daily Online put China's

The ship-based LY-1 laser weapon is unveiled during a military parade in Beijing, China, on September 3, 2025.
● XINHUA



The war also generated new infrastructure requirements. The fullest Chinese study of Starlink's battlefield role — written jointly by the state rocket academy, a satellite launch center, and a PLA unit in 2022 — traced how Ukrainian firing units depended on intelligence moving through the constellation and concluded that China must develop and build its own low-orbit constellation. It also explains why Chinese writing on drone command keeps returning to satellite constellations, including how to cut an enemy off from them.

share of global fiber and cable shipments at 60 percent for 2025. The war also generated new infrastructure requirements. The fullest Chinese study of Starlink's battlefield role — written jointly by the state rocket academy, a satellite launch center, and a PLA unit in 2022 — traced how Ukrainian firing units depended on intelligence moving through the constellation and concluded that China must develop and build its own low-orbit constellation. It also explains why Chinese writing on drone command keeps returning to satellite constellations, including how to cut an enemy off from them.

One industrial lesson China has learned but will not state officially concerns civilian drones. Beijing's official position, restated in its 2023 drone export controls, is to oppose the use of civilian drones for military purposes. The PLA's own procurement website, meanwhile, carries a military unit's tender for docks and Matrice airframes made by DJI, the Shenzhen-based manufacturer that dominates the global commercial drone market. The Matrice is DJI's enterprise-grade line of multi-rotor drones, built for industrial inspection, surveying, and public safety work rather than for military use, and the docks are automated ground stations that let the drones launch, land, and recharge without an operator present. The Ukraine war shows that commercial drones can survey or fight, and Chinese buyers act on that lesson, whatever the official ministry position.

What the war failed to prove
Chinese literature also records what the Ukraine war did not settle. Drone swarms are the leading example. In October 2024, China National Defense News asked why swarm warfare had produced "all thunder and little rain". Both sides committed huge numbers of drones, but a swarm mode of operations never appeared on the battlefield. The piece lists the reasons, including flight control, communications, onboard intelligence, energy, and payload. Publication in an official paper lays out how Chinese military commanders approach the issue — exploring each obstacle through a domestic research agenda, with the PLA running swarm experiments to provide information the war did not. This reveals China's pragmatic approach: it buys what the war proved but experiments on what it left open. Because the defensive lessons provided the most robust evidence, they have made it the furthest and fastest into hardware.

The Russia-Ukraine battlefield has become a "live test site" for China's military learning. The evidence shows a systematic process through which the PLA and the Chinese defense industry identify battlefield innovations and translate selected lessons into training, procurement, and force structure. The analysis phase, with an average of four months from battlefield appearance to Chinese print, is considerably faster than the institutional absorption that follows, but the process gives China a way to learn from a war without fighting one.

For the United States, the process also opens a window into emerging PLA priorities. Military journals, training footage, procurement activity, and new institutional programs can reveal which battlefield lessons China considers significant enough to test and institutionalize, often before they appear in doctrine.

But while China can observe combat, reproduce technologies, and institutionalize lessons, it cannot replicate the frontline feedback loop through which wartime forces adapt under pressure. Chinese analysts themselves acknowledge that many theoretical lessons have yet to be translated into mature combat guidance or regulations.

The article was first published by the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Sports Desk

Iranian athletes enjoyed a prolific run on the first two days of action at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games in Japan, tasting glory across athletics, swimming, taekwondo, shooting, cycling, judo, and table tennis.

The medal-laden campaign has seen the Iranian delegation engaged in a tight race for the runner-up spot in the overall standings alongside the host country, South Korea and Uzbekistan, while China has already pulled clear of the chasing pack at the top of the table.

Para athletics

The para-athletics contests accounted for the biggest share of success for the Iranians, producing 10 medals, including five golds. Erfan Bondori claimed the top prize in the men's javelin throw F53 event on Tuesday, setting a new Games record of 30.24m in the process.

Amirhossein Alipour and Mahdi Olad secured an all-Iranian one-two in the men's shot put F11, with the former posting 14.99m with his final attempt to shatter his own Asian record on his way to the gold medal.

There were further shot put golds for the Iranians in the men's events, as Saman Pakbaz triumphed in the F12 class with a best throw of 13.52m, while Mohammad Saber won the F33 final with a new Games record of 10.95m. Elham Salehi had opened Iran's gold account in para athletics on Monday, registering 16.44m for the top spot in the women's javelin throw F54, with her compatriot Masoumeh Tourani settling for silver with 14.99m.

Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games: Athletics glory headlines Iran's medal-laden start



Iran's Saman Pakbaz competes in the men's shot put F12 event at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games in Japan on October 20, 2026.

● VARZESH3

Ali Olfatinia (men's long jump T37/T38) contributed a silver to Iran's medal haul, while Parastoo Habibi and Farzaneh Sohrabi took silver and bronze, respectively, in the women's club throw F32/F51 event.

Shooting one-two

Elsewhere at the multi-sport event on Tuesday, Faezeh Ahmadi and shooting sensation Sareh Javanmardi were involved in a closely contested final in the women's 10m air pistol SH1 event, with Ah-



Iran's Faezeh Ahmadi celebrates after winning gold in the women's 10m air pistol SH1 event at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games in Japan on October 20, 2026.

● VARZESH3

madi – a gold medalist at September's World Championships – ultimately grabbing gold with a score of 237.3.

Four-time Paralympic champion Javanmardi, meanwhile, posted 237.0 for silver – the fourth Asian Para Games medal of her illustrious career.

In para taekwondo, Ailar Jami claimed the gold medal in the women's K44

-47kg category on Monday, thanks to an impressive 2-0 victory (6-0, 6-2) over two-time Paralympic bronze medalist Khwansuda Phuangkitcha of Thailand, who failed to defend her title.

Mohammad-Taha Hassanpour, meanwhile, finished with a consolation



Iran's Amirhossein Alipour (L) and Mahdi Olad celebrate with the national flag after winning gold and silver, respectively, in the men's shot put F11 event at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games in Japan on October 20, 2026.

● VARZESH3

bronze in the men's K44 -58kg division. Having suffered a last-four setback against Chinese Taipei's Xiao Xiang-wen, the Iranian fought back to defeat South Korea's Lee Pyeong-gang 2-1 (4-10, 14-10, 18-8) in the third-place bout.

In para swimming, Sina Zeighaminejad clocked 56.68 seconds in the final to win gold in the men's 100m freestyle S10 event, with fellow Iranian Shahin Izadyar sharing silver with Kazakhstan's Dias Kenzhe-

bek after both swimmers finished in 59.10 seconds. There were more medals for Iran in men's para cycling, as Behrouz Farzad settled for silver in the C4 4000m individual pursuit and Mohammad Dalir won bronze in the B 1000m time trial.

Iranian judokas Mahdi Borchlou (men's J1 -81kg) and Mousa Gholami (men's J1 -95kg), meanwhile, added two bronze medals to Iran's tally.

Hassan Janfeshan, 60, was Iran's medalist in para table tennis, collecting bronze in the men's singles class 2 after falling to a 3-2 defeat against South Korea's Kim Kyung-hyun in the semifinals.

In team sports, Iran's men's sitting volleyball team opened its bid for a fifth gold medal in as many editions with a straight-set victory (25-15, 25-17, 25-13) over Thailand in Pool B.

In blind football, Iran's men's team hammered India 5-0 for its third successive victory in the single round-robin group.

Sadeh Rahimqasr opened the scoring for Iran in the 10th minute, and the team went into halftime with a 1-0 lead. Mohammadamin Rahimzadeh doubled the advantage in the 27th minute before Morteza Karimi stole the show in the closing stages with a remarkable hat-trick in the space of three minutes at the Terraspo Tsuruma venue. The top two teams in the six-team group will meet again in the final, while the next two will face off for the bronze medal.

Iran also celebrated a second consecutive win in its third outing in the men's goalball, defeating Thailand 12-9 in the preliminary round.

World Cadet, Junior & U21 Karate Championships:

Iran women's coach Torkaman rues bad luck in modest campaign

Sports Desk

Iran's women's U21 karate head coach, Faezeh Torkaman, said her team deserved more than the two bronze medals it won at the World Cadet, Junior & U21 Championships, blaming bad luck for missed opportunities. The recently concluded event in Bielsko-Biala, Poland, was hardly a prolific one for Iranian karate, as the country had to settle for just three bronze medals across the three age groups. Fatemeh Jafarnejad took bronze in the women's U21 kumite -55kg class, thanks to a 2-0 victory over Ukraine's Veronika Hudym in the third-place bout, while Ghazal Fat'hi outclassed Polish karateka Adela Sawicka 9-0 to replicate her compatriot's success in the -50kg division. Hamidreza Rezayati was the only Iranian



Iranian bronze medalists Ghazal Fat'hi (R) and Fatemeh Jafarnejad (L) pose for photo with head coach Faezeh Torkaman at the World Cadet, Junior & U21 Karate Championships in Bielsko-Biala, Poland.

● IKF

male medalist across the three age categories, winning bronze in the cadet -70kg class after a 2-0 victory over Spain's Pablo Perez Iniesta. Speaking to IRNA on Monday, Torkaman said the tournament had placed considerable pressure on her athletes, who lacked experience at the international level. "We tried hard to reduce their stress, but ultimately, it had an impact, and naturally, it affected their

performance," she said. "We knew our team had the ability to win more prestigious medals, and everyone saw that we lost some decisive bouts on hantei [a judges' decision

following a tie]. Rest assured that if our athletes had competed more frequently in major events and were better known to the judges, it would have had a direct impact on those decisions." Torkaman added that winning bronze could be more difficult than reaching a final, as athletes contesting the repechage or classification bouts also risk leaving the competition without a medal.

"After winning the Asian title, I was very hopeful about my athletes' chances at the World Championships, and I believed in their abilities. Their efforts were outstanding, but we were very unlucky. Perhaps it has never happened before that so many hantei decisions went against an Iranian team," she said. The coach said the competition had provided valuable lessons and experience for the team, adding that every athlete had the potential to contribute to the future of Iranian women's karate if given sufficient support and opportunities to compete.

Torkaman also praised her athletes' technical performances, saying she was pleased with their displays and confident they had bright futures ahead of them. "At a young age, they are highly motivated, hard-working and well-mannered. Every competition brings important lessons, and from now on, we are already looking ahead to our next events," she said.

Rezaei backs Iran women's tennis to make strides with greater ambition

Sports Desk

Iran women's national tennis team head coach Arghavan Rezaei believes a bright future awaits her players, urging them to train with greater commitment and set clear goals despite her short time in charge.



● IRNA

Speaking to IRNA on Monday, Rezaei reflected on her brief stint in Iran and the team's experience at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games, where she said competing against some of the continent's leading players had posed a major challenge for the Iranian representatives. "It was difficult for our players because some of the prominent names in Asian tennis were competing and demonstrated a much higher level," she said. Rezaei added that Iran's players had faced opponents ranked among the world's top 100, describing the experience as beneficial for the development of

tennis in the country.

"Success in elite sport is a continuous process that requires steady progress. However, we have already conveyed to the players that they need to work harder and set clear, specific goals for themselves.

"From what I have seen of wom-

en's tennis in Iran, I believe the players can succeed if they work harder. Another important point is that Iranian women's tennis players need to compete abroad and face Asian and international opponents," she added.

Turning her attention to the upcoming Billie Jean King Cup competition in Islamabad, Pakistan, Rezaei said Iran would be aiming to win the title.

Iran are currently the top seeds in their group and will face Pakistan, the Maldives, Guam, Qatar, Macau, Bahrain, Jordan, Bhutan and Kuwait in Group II, with matches scheduled to take place in Islamabad from October 19 to 24.

Iranica Desk

At the southernmost tip of Ilam Province, nestled on the verdant slopes of Kabir Kuh, lies a village that seems to have been entrusted with all of nature's beauty. Fazelabad, a village in the Central District of Darreh Shahr, Zarrin Dasht Rural District, rests on a flat plain near historic gorges and the Zagros Mountains, easily accessible via an asphalted road. Home to people of Lor descent, Fazelabad is a land where history and nature are interwoven, and every corner whispers a tale of life, patience, and beauty to travelers.

According to archaeological evidence, the area where Fazelabad is located was, in the not-so-distant past, part of an important historical corridor during the Sassanid era. The discovery of rock-cut tombs and pottery dating back to the Sassanid period near the village indicates the region's special place in the ancient history of western Iran. Additionally, "Tappeh Kahriz 4" to the west of Fazelabad is an ancient site belonging to the Sassanid period and the early Islamic centuries, which has been registered on Iran's National Heritage List. These artifacts have turned Fazelabad into a treasure trove for history and archaeology enthusiasts according to ISNA.

Fazelabad village blends ancient history with pristine nature



The main attraction of Fazelabad is its pristine, untouched nature. Seasonal rains bring temporary waterfalls to the area, lending it a special beauty. One of the most famous of these attractions is a waterfall located four kilometers southeast of the village. With a height of nearly 25 meters, it cascades down from the rocks in two tiers. The waterfall can be reached via the Fazelabad road and the village of Marzban. Nearby, the

remains of a water mill dating back more than 150 years bear witness to a time not long ago when water was the axis of life for the people of this land. Farzad Sharifi, Director-General of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization of Ilam Province, told ISNA about the village's features: "On the slopes of the hills near Fazelabad, there are two ancient qanats that locals call 'Kariz Bala' (Upper Kariz) and 'Kariz Pain' (Lower Kariz). These qanats are a masterpiece



● ISNA

of water engineering from the past, showing that the people of this land have long been familiar with the art of water management. These historical structures not only served as sources of agricultural and drinking water but are also considered today as attractions for tourists and researchers." He noted, "In recent years, Fazelabad has become one of the most popular destinations for ecotourism in Ilam Province. Numerous eco-lodges have

been established in the village and surrounding areas, offering travelers the chance to experience life in the heart of nature. The lodges are situated in a quiet corner of the village, adjacent to pristine forests, and maintain their silence and tranquility even on the busiest days." Sharifi stated, "Ecotourism accommodations in the fields connected to the forest and river provide a calm and pleasant atmosphere in a mountainous region. These lodges experience

cool air in summer and a blanket of snow in winter, hosting travelers seeking peace in the heart of nature."

Omid Esmaili, an expert from Ilam General Governorate, also spoke about the natural features of this beautiful village: "With its moderate mountainous climate, Fazelabad has a unique beauty in every season of the year."

The expert stated, "Spring with blossoming trees and flowing waterfalls, summer with cool weather suitable for mountaineering and hiking, autumn with colorful trees, and winter with snow cover — each offers a different experience for travelers."

He added, "With its eco-lodges, this village provides an opportunity to spend quiet nights in the heart of nature and to experience local cuisine and the hospitality of the Lor people."

Fazelabad village, with its blend of ancient history and pristine nature, is one of the most valuable tourism treasures of Ilam Province. It is an ideal destination for history enthusiasts, nature lovers, and travelers seeking a different and peaceful experience in the heart of the Zagros Mountains. Fazelabad awaits those who wish to discover the hidden beauties of Iran.

Iran's textile heritage inspires new fashion trend

Iranica Desk

From ancient Persian horsemen to contemporary luxury collections, the fabric belt is making a comeback — bringing with it a history that stretches back centuries.

Imagine stepping into the atelier of a fashion designer in Paris. Strips of fabric adorned with geometric patterns lie across a worktable beside leather samples. One of the industry's best-known designers picks up a woven fabric belt and smiles. "These fabric belts are a modern trend," they say. Yet the fashion world may be rediscovering something Iranians understood centuries ago: strength does not always lie in rigidity, but in flexibility, according to IRNA.

This accessory, now taking pride of place in the windows of contemporary fashion boutiques around the world, has deep historical connections to Iran. From the days when Persian horsemen relied on flexible fabric bands rather than heavy bronze and metal fittings for greater freedom of movement to the Safavid era, when silk waist sashes became an integral part of the attire of aristocrats and artists, the fabric belt has long held a place in Iranian dress.

In Iranian culture, the belt has always been more than a simple means of holding up trousers. Today, as the fashion world grows weary of the rigid conventions of the past and searches for ways to combine comfort with identity, it is returning — perhaps unwittingly — to a tradition that once travelled from Iran to the wider world along the Silk Road. The history of clothing in Iran is a story of ingenuity, reflecting a people who have long sought to balance beauty with practicality. For Iranians, clothing was never merely a way to cover the body; it was an expression of culture, identity and lifestyle. From garments designed for ancient horsemen to silk fabrics and the elaborate attire of royal courts, each reflects Iranians' expertise in working with raw materials, colours and textile craftsmanship.

In earlier times, climate and lifestyle played a significant role in shaping what people wore. Persian horsemen, for example, needed garments that allowed them greater freedom of movement in the saddle and on the battlefield.



Trousers, boots and other riding-friendly clothing consequently became widespread among many Iranian peoples. The use of wool, cotton and silk also illustrates how Iranians made use of the natural resources available to them. Over time, this practical knowledge merged with weaving traditions and a sophisticated aesthetic sensibility, transforming Iranian clothing into a valuable part of the country's cultural heritage.

Iran's position along major trade routes has also ensured centuries of contact with diverse cultures. Textiles, motifs and tailoring techniques travelled along these routes to other lands, sometimes acquiring new names as they spread. Part of Iran's sartorial legacy, therefore, can be traced

through designs that remain visible in other cultures today. Many items now considered commonplace — or even iconic — in Western fashion have connections to Iranian aesthetic traditions, although their origins have not always been widely acknowledged. From woolen shawls to the Boteh Jegheh motif, known in the West as paisley, these designs travelled from Iran to India and eventually to Europe, evolving along the way. Today, numerous global luxury

brands continue to turn to Iran's artistic heritage as a seemingly inexhaustible source of inspiration, although the origins of such influences are not always explicitly acknowledged.

Fashion designer Riccardo Tisci, for example, incorporated motifs inspired by Iranian textiles into luxurious velvet garments for Givenchy's 2015 collection. Maison Margiela, meanwhile, presented designs combining traditional Persian carpets

imagery associated with the Sassanid period. Over the centuries, the design has travelled far beyond its original cultural setting, becoming a familiar feature of expensive European scarves and a recognized motif in international fashion.

The return of wide fabric belts to the latest collections of international fashion houses offers another example of historical influences re-emerging in contemporary design. According to British Vogue, the cummerbund has taken

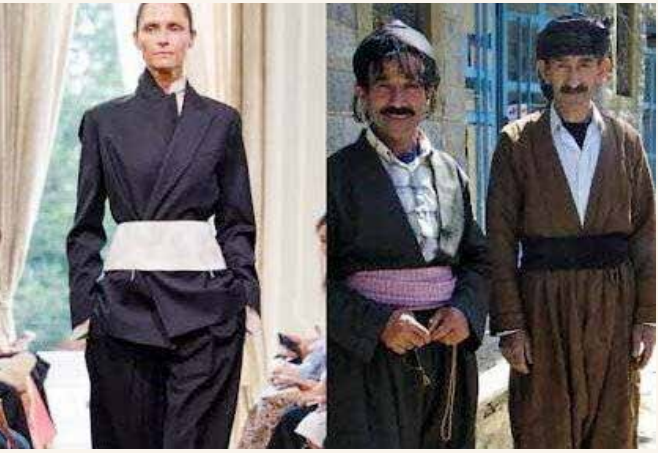


● ISNA

on a prominent role in recent designs by labels including Ralph Lauren, Kallmeyer and Ahluwalia. Once associated primarily with formalwear, the accessory is now appearing in more casual combinations with skirts, dresses and wide-leg trousers.

The word cummerbund is generally traced to Hindi and Urdu, with its linguistic roots linked to the Persian word Kamarband, meaning a waist belt or sash. This connection, alongside historical evidence of the use of wide belts and waist sashes in Iran, points to a long tradition of similar garments in the region.

That tradition remains alive in Iranian dress today, particularly in Kurdish, Lori and Bakhtiari clothing, where waist sashes continue to form



brands draw inspiration from Persian carpets and miniature paintings for their collections, revisiting an aesthetic tradition associated with historic centers such as Persepolis and Isfahan.

with transparent plastic. Even the celebrated Boteh Jegheh pattern, popularized internationally by the Italian fashion house Etro, is often linked to the cypress-like motif found in Persian art, including

part of traditional attire. Their survival demonstrates how elements of Iranian dress can continue to inform contemporary fashion and shape global design sensibilities.

The sudden resurgence of fabric belts on the international market is no coincidence. It reflects a broader shift towards more relaxed dressing in recent years, as consumers increasingly move away from rigid formalwear.

Many people no longer want to be constrained by stiff, uncomfortable leather belts that limit movement. Lightweight, easily adjustable and versatile, fabric belts work with a wide range of casual and informal outfits. They have consequently become part of a broader vision of effortless, understated style.

Environmental concerns are also influencing the shift. A new generation of consumers is seeking vegan and recycled alternatives — options that conventional leather production cannot always readily provide. By using organic cotton or recycled polyester, brands are presenting fabric accessories as products more compatible with contemporary lifestyles and sustainability-conscious values.

The trend is also opening up opportunities for manufacturers able to experiment with textures, woven structures and colour combinations, giving everyday clothing a distinctive new identity.

When someone on the other side of the world ties a fabric belt or waist sash around their waist today, they may know little about its long and complex history. Yet the gesture represents more than a passing fashion trend: it is part of the continuing journey of Persian aesthetics beyond national borders, where traditions rooted in the past find new expression in the fashion of the present.



Zanjan's metalworking heritage looks for new markets

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

FEATURE REPORT

From copperware and knife-making to silver filigree, traditional crafts remain an important part of production in Zanjan province, northwestern Iran.

For generations, the Iranian city of Zanjan has been known for its metalworking traditions. Its knives have earned a place in the country's cutlery trade, while its



copperware and delicate silver filigree reflect the skills of artisans whose crafts have deep historical roots.

Today, these traditions remain part of the province's economic life, extending beyond cultural heritage into workshops and production businesses.

Yet maintaining that role presents a challenge: Zanjan's artisans must find ways to compete in modern markets while preserving the skills and techniques that distinguish their work. Mikaeil Mousavi, head of the Zanjan Province Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, says the province has considerable capacity in metal-based handicrafts, particularly copper products, knives and filigree jewelry. "Zanjan ranks fifth among Iran's provinces in overall handicraft production. Its combination of specialized skills, established production traditions and diverse craft industries makes it a significant center for traditional metalwork," he said.

Traditional craftsmanship meets modern market challenges

Copperworking is one of the province's major craft industries. Mousavi says Zanjan produces about 5,000 metric tons of copper products annually, spanning more than 1,400 varieties.

"Although Isfahan is one of Iran's main sources of copper raw materials, Zanjan surpasses the province in the volume of copper products it produces," Mousavi said.

The figures, however, cover copper products broadly and do not establish how much of that output qualifies specifically as handicrafts rather than industrial or workshop production.

That distinction matters when assessing the scale of traditional craftsmanship in the province.

Knife-making is another of Zanjan's best-known metalworking traditions, with a history that Mousavi says stretches back thousands of years.

The industry continues on a substantial scale. Zanjan produces around six million knives each year, including fruit knives, pocketknives and butcher knives, Mousavi says.

The province supplies nearly 10% of Iran's domestic demand for knives, he adds.

Despite that production capacity, local manufacturers face growing pressure from imported alternatives, particularly Chinese knives. Mousavi says some imported products imitate designs developed by Iranian manufacturers, creating additional difficulties for domestic producers.

He argues that Zanjan's

knife-making industry has the technical and artisanal expertise to increase production, supply a larger share of the domestic market and expand exports.

The challenge is turning that potential into sustainable business growth. Production capacity alone does not guarantee access to customers, particularly when local manufacturers must compete with imported goods and establish a stronger presence in overseas markets.

Filigree gives city distinctive identity

If copperworking and knife-making demonstrate the production scale of Zanjan's metal crafts, filigree showcases their more intricate artistic side.

The technique is used to create silver jewelry and other silver products and is among the province's most prominent handicraft traditions.

"Zanjan holds the leading position in Iran's filigree production as World City of Filigree," he said. In 2019, this city was registered on World Crafts Council (wcc) list as the World City for Filigree.

According to Mousavi, the province produces almost four metric tons of filigree products and silver jewelry annually.

Filigree is more than a specialized craft in Zanjan. It is also part of the city's cultural identity, linking the skills of individual artisans with a tradition that has become a defining feature of the region.

But recognition does not necessarily translate into financial security for the people who practice the craft. The long-term viability of filigree depends not only



on preserving its techniques and reputation, but also on whether artisans can continue producing their work, reach customers and sell their products in wider markets.

Thousands of artisans, dozens of crafts

Zanjan's handicraft sector extends well beyond its three best-known metalworking traditions.

"More than 12,000 handicraft artists and artisans work in Zanjan and of the 299 handicraft disciplines identified nationwide, 55 are practiced in the province," he says.

That breadth provides a foundation for production and employment across a range of traditional skills. It also extends activity beyond the province's urban centers.

Some villages have workshops specializing in handicrafts, particularly knife-making, Mousavi says.

In certain areas, these businesses

have developed into local centers of entrepreneurship, creating opportunities for economic activity outside larger cities.

Provincial officials are also pursuing efforts to promote and register other distinctive local crafts, Mousavi says, building on the recognition already associated with Zanjan's filigree tradition.

Exports remain largely informal

Despite Zanjan's range of products and established craft industries, reaching foreign customers remains a challenge.

A substantial share of Zanjan's handicrafts is not exported through formal channels, Mousavi says.

"Instead, products are often transported through suitcase trade or carried as part of other shipments," he said.

Zanjan-made knives have reached markets including Iraq, while locally produced givah, a traditional handwoven footwear,

is exported to Arab countries, according to Mousavi.

These trade routes indicate that some of the province's products have buyers abroad. But without figures on export volumes, sales values and destination markets, the overall scale of that international business remains unclear. For Zanjan, the task is to turn an established metalworking heritage into a more sustainable economic asset. Its copper products, knives and filigree demonstrate that traditional craftsmanship remains part of the province's productive life.

The next challenge is ensuring that these skills can continue to support the people who practice them.

That will depend not simply on how much the province produces, but also on whether workshops can remain viable, artisans can pass their knowledge to future generations, and local products can compete effectively at home and abroad

Iran demonstrates biodiversity at UN conference in Armenia

Social Desk

Iran is showcasing the biodiversity and conservation experience of Semnan province at the 17th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (COP17) in Yerevan, Armenia, as President Masoud Pezeshkian calls for stronger protection of nature during wartime.

In a speech to the summit on Monday, Pezeshkian said biodiversity conservation was no longer solely a scientific or environmental issue, but was directly linked to peace, security, public health, food and water security, and justice between generations.

He called for effective, transparent and enforceable mechanisms to protect natural heritage and biodiversity during war, arguing that countries facing

military aggression or sanctions should not bear the environmental costs alone. Iran has been waged by the United States and Israel in two major military campaigns in recent years. The first was the 12-day war in June 2025, and the second 40-days war happened in late February 2026. COP17 runs from October 19 to 30 in Yerevan, where governments and international stakeholders are discussing biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. The Iranian pavilion was established by the Semnan Department of Environmental Protection with support from the province's Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture. Semnan Province, in north-central Iran, is home to diverse ecosystems, protected areas and endangered wildlife, including the Asiatic cheetah.

Saeed Yousefpour, head of the provincial environmental protection department, said the conference offered an opportunity to present Semnan's natural assets, share conservation experience and expand international cooperation. He highlighted the province's work in wildlife protection and the management of the Touran and Kavir biosphere reserves. Yousefpour also stressed the importance of involving local communities in conservation programs, saying cooperation could help facilitate the exchange of knowledge and access to international scientific, technical and financial resources. Semnan ranks first among Iran's provinces in biodiversity, according to Yousefpour. Despite its reputation as a dry, desert region, the province supports a wide range of plant and animal species.

TENDER NO.: 08-21-0440060

First Announcement

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OIL COMPANY
AHVAZ-IRAN

The National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC) is seeking to procure the specified goods listed in the table below through a Qualitative Evaluation Call for conducting a public tender via the Government Electronic Procurement System (SETAD). All stages of the tender process including the receipt of tender documents, submission of bidders' proposals, and the opening of bid envelopes, shall be carried out exclusively through the Government Electronic Procurement System (SETAD) portal at www.setadiran.ir. Bidders who have not previously registered must complete the registration process on the aforementioned portal and obtain an Electronic Signature certificate to participate in the tender.

Item	Material Description	Quantity
1	CASING, API GRADE L-80, SEAMLESS "VAM", "N.VAM", THREAD, RANGE 3, (MAX LEN: 40.5 FT), MARKING: COLD DIE STAMPED IN ACCORDANCE SIZE (OD), WEIGHT (PPF), AS SPECIFIED NOTE: LEVEL OF INSPECTION: 1 (L.O.I:1) "QCP/MPS DOCUMENTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO REVIEW & CONFIRM " "ITP DOCUMENTS IS ESSENTIAL FOR TECHNICAL EVALUATION" REF. VALLOUREC MANNESMANN OIL & GAS, 9-5/8 IN., 53.5 PPF, SPECIAL DRIFT: 8 IN.	5,000LE
2	NIPPLES, CROSSOVER SUB, CASING, API GRADE L-80 SEAMLESS, ACCORDING TO API SCT SIZE (OD), WEIGHT (PPF), THREAD AS SPECIFIED REF. NIOC OR NISOC APPROVED VENDOR LIST 9-5/8 IN., 53.5 PPF, VAM TOP PIN X 9-5 NEW VAM BOX, 8-1/2 IN., DRIFT, PSL:2	100NO
3	9-5/8 IN., 53.5 PPF, NEW VAM PIN X 9-5 VAM TOP BOX, 8-1/2 IN., DRIFT, PSL:2	100NO

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: www.setadiran.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 85,587/24 EURO or 161,243,275.547 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS CFR, BANDAR IMAM KHOMEINI, IRAN. PAYMENT TERM IS C.A.D. INCLUDING AN ADVANCE PAYMENT, SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL.

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex, Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran

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PUBLIC RELATIONS

www.shana.ir www.nisoc.ir <http://iets.mporg.ir> www.setadiran.ir

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