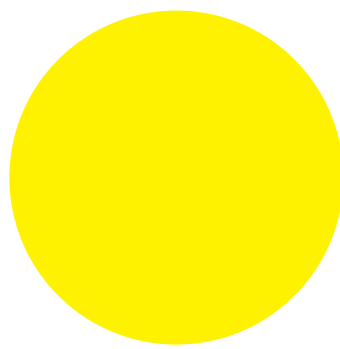


Culture minister hails Beyhaqi as model of truth, integrity



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Iran Daily

Vol. 8247 • Sunday, October 25, 2026 • Aban 03, 1405 • Jumada al-Awwal 14, 1448 • 100,000 rials • 8 pages



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President Masoud Pezeshkian addresses a ceremony to begin population census in Tehran, Iran, on October 24, 2026.

president.ir

Military superiority without political order

Why lasting security in Persian Gulf requires Iran's participation



By Ali Hassan
Middle East affairs analyst

O P I N I O N E X C L U S I V E

In international politics, there is a fundamental distinction between the ability to defeat a rival on the battlefield and the ability to establish a political order that can endure after the fighting ends. The United States possesses formidable military capabilities, advanced technology, and an extensive network of allies, enabling it to alter the military balance in the Middle East rapidly. Yet the region's historical experience has demonstrated that military superiority does not necessarily translate into the ability to determine political outcomes. This distinction lies at the heart of the US-Iranian relationship: Washington may be capable of inflicting substantial military and economic costs on Iran, but it cannot establish a durable regional security order through military force alone—particularly one that excludes Iran from its formation. From a realist perspective on international relations, power cannot be reduced to the number of fighter jets, aircraft carriers, or missile systems a state possesses. It also depends on a state's capacity to withstand pressure, maintain political cohesion, shape its adversaries' calculations, and prevent its opponents from achieving their strategic objectives. Consequently, even when one power enjoys a decisive technological or military advantage, the ultimate outcome of a conflict does not necessarily correspond to its initial objectives. The experiences of Afghanistan and Iraq, despite their significant differences from the Iranian case, illustrate how operational victories without a legitimate and sustainable political settlement can lead to the erosion of strategic power and credibility. [Page 3 >](#)



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Pezeshkian demands end to 'no war no peace' situation

President to meet Putin in Moscow on Tuesday

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Saturday reiterated the need to move beyond the current state of "no war no peace" so that the authorities can make plans in a "transparent and predictable environment" for the country.

"We need to move beyond ambiguity. For this reason, the martyred Leader ordered to go and get the job done" Pezeshkian said while addressing a ceremony to begin population census in the current Iranian year.

He was referring to the late Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, having agreed to negotiations with the United States aimed at ending the war against Iran. But the Americans betrayed the negotiations by launching strikes on Iran, the Iranian president said, however, "I still believe that we must go and get out of

the no war, no peace" situation.

Pezeshkian added that a way forward had to be found to improve conditions and bring the country out of its current situation.

Iran complains that it has entered negotiations twice in the past year, only to be attacked by Israel and the United States. In June, Iran signed a memorandum of understanding with the US in Pakistan to end the war. But the US violated the agreement by launching new attacks against Iranian cities.

Washington has also rejected a new seven-day proposal by Tehran to open the Strait of Hormuz which was closed by Iran since the beginning of the US-Israeli aggression against Iran in February.

Diplomatic efforts by regional mediators are also underway to bring the two countries back to the negotiating table. Pakistan's army chief Asim Munir, whose country mediated negotiations



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian addresses a ceremony to begin the population census in the current Iranian year in Tehran on October 24, 2026.
● president.ir

between Iran and the US, visited Tehran on Tuesday for talks with Iranian officials. Munir's visit followed one by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. Russian President Vladimir Putin has also expressed his country's readiness to mediate between Iran and the US. Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali said on Saturday that Pezeshkian will meet with Putin in Moscow on Tuesday. Jalali added that the Iranian president will also participate in the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) in Russia.

The meeting would continue a series of high-level diplomatic contacts between Tehran and Moscow, including recent



meetings between senior officials in Tehran and Dushanbe, Tajikistan, Jalali

told Russia's state-owned RIA Novosti news agency.

2,200 Palestinians displaced amid Israeli raids in Al-Khalil

International Desk

The Israeli military forced around 2,200 Palestinians to leave their homes in Al-Khalil in the occupied West Bank, a Palestinian official said on Saturday, a day after two Israeli soldiers killed in a shooting attack.

Al-Khalil's mayor Yousef al-Jabari told Al Jazeera that around 2,200 Palestinians have been forcibly displaced from their homes in the city's Al-Jaladah and Ein Deir Baha neighborhoods. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Friday had said the military would launch a large-scale operation after the soldiers were killed when two Palestinian gunmen opened fire at a military checkpoint near the city. The Israeli military said the gunmen were shot dead. The Israeli military also demolished Palestinian buildings in the city of



Israeli soldiers patrol at the northern checkpoint in Al-Khalil, in the occupied West Bank, on October 24, 2026.
● AFP

Al-Khalil.

The Palestinian Authority has criticized the operation as a "collective punishment". Yousef Zouhair Al-Jabari, the head of Al-Khalil's municipality, said around 1,300 faced losing their homes in addition to the 1,200 already displaced. He also said the Israeli operations were motivated by parliamentary elections on Tuesday when Netanyahu's right-wing coalition may lose his majority, opinion polls show.

"Netanyahu and the radical ministers in his government are trying to win as many votes as possible from the settlers," Al-Jabari said. The non-governmental organization the Palestinian Prisoners' Club said Israeli forces had arrested around 70 Palestinians on Friday and Saturday. Israeli officials have not commented on any arrests. Al-Jabari said the military had demolished shops, factories, homes, and roads in Al-Khalil and that the

response was disproportionate and unjustified. Residents in Al-Khalil said the military expelled many people with no connection to the Palestinian attackers. Netanyahu's cabinet has presided over a rapid expansion of settlements, deemed illegal by UN bodies and most countries.

Across the West Bank, Israel has blocked the entrances to most Palestinian cities and towns, severely curtailing Palestinians' freedom of movement.

Yousef Mur, a resident of the Palestinian town of Yatta, said the closures meant he was unable to reach Jerusalem with his daughter for her cancer treatment.

"The situation is bad, and we are suffering. When we tried to cross, they fired stun grenades towards us, and my girl got scared on the way. They fired stun grenades towards people. The situation is very difficult," Mur said.

US military ships will never be allowed to enter Persian Gulf: *Top general*

International Desk

Iran said on Saturday that US military ships would never be allowed to enter the Persian Gulf "under any circumstances" and President Donald Trump will "take that dream to his grave".

The remarks came amid mounting US and Israeli threats of renewed attacks on Iran, as US ambassador to Turkey Tom Barrack warned that Washington could "absolutely" strike Iran as soon as this weakened.

"We will not allow US military ships in the Persian Gulf under any circumstances and at any time," said Iran's Armed Forces Chief of Staff Major General Ali Abdollahi.

"The US president must dream of seeing the armed forces enter the Persian Gulf. He will take that dream to his grave."

He said Iran's Armed Forces have rendered the US Navy ineffective, despite

Washington's portrayal of the force as a symbol of American power and its use to threaten countries in the region and beyond.

The senior commander also questioned US President Donald Trump's repeated claims that Iran's nuclear facilities have been destroyed, while Washington continued to insist that Tehran must not possess nuclear weapons — a claim repeatedly rejected by the Islamic Republic.

"If you have destroyed everything, then what is the meaning of repeating this delusion?" Abdollahi said, describing the statements as meaningless and contradictory.

He argued that they were intended to mislead public opinion worldwide, particularly in the United States. He also challenged Washington's assertions that Iran's military capabilities have been eliminated, asking why US warships and military forces have



not dared to approach the Strait of Hormuz or Iran's maritime and land borders. Iranian forces have restricted traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, a vital energy conduit and gateway to the Persian Gulf, since the United States and Israel launched their aggression against Iran on February 28.

In retaliation, the United States has imposed a counterblockade on Iranian ports and ships.

Tehran has required vessels to seek permission to transit, and targeted ships attempting to pass through Hormuz via the unauthorized routes.

Several ships attempting to transit Hormuz through the route Tehran considers "illegal" were hit by mines in recent days.

No state can rewrite NPT to undermine Tehran's right to nuclear energy: *Iran*

International Desk

Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations defended his country's inalienable right to peaceful nuclear energy, accusing the United States and Israel of waging two "wars of aggression" against Iranian facilities and warning that no single nation can unilaterally rewrite the global Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Addressing the UN General Assembly, Ambassador Gholamhossein Darzi pushed back against Western pressure, asserting that Article IV of the NPT guarantees all state parties the right to develop peaceful nuclear energy, including the full nuclear fuel cycle, Press TV reported. "The United States seeks to deny Iran that right while claiming to uphold the Treaty," Darzi declared. "No State can unilaterally rewrite the Treaty or impose its own political veto."



Gholamhossein Darzi
● IRNA

The Iranian envoy leveled severe accusations against Washington and Tel Aviv, stating they had launched two distinct "wars of aggression" against Iran in 2025 and 2026.

Crucially, he noted that these military strikes specifically targeted nuclear facilities that were under the strict safeguards and monitoring of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Darzi condemned the silence of the

international community, pointing out that neither the IAEA's leadership nor the UN Security Council has formally condemned the attacks on safeguarded civilian infrastructure.

He denounced the "blatant" hypocrisy of the international system for pressuring the victim of military aggression while allowing the aggressors to escape accountability.

Regarding IAEA inspections, Darzi clarified that Tehran has neither abandoned nor formally suspended its safeguards obligations.

However, he stressed that the military attacks have fundamentally altered security conditions on the ground, making physical inspections unsafe without adequate security guarantees.

"Responsibility for those circumstances rests with the aggressors, not Iran," he asserted.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Iran, Kyrgyzstan target cooperation in digital technology, creative industries

Economy Desk

Iran and Kyrgyzstan have agreed to strengthen cooperation in digital technologies, creative industries and technology entrepreneurship, including through joint innovation projects, during a meeting on the sidelines of the fifth World Conference on Creative Economy in Indonesia, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Esfandiar Ekhtiari, deputy for policy and development at the Iranian presidential office for science, technology and the knowledge-based economy, met Benazir Nurlanova, Kyrgyzstan's deputy minister of economy and commerce, according to the Kyrgyz National News Agency, as reported by IRNA.

The two sides discussed ways

to expand trade and economic cooperation, focusing on innovation, digital technologies, creative industries and technology entrepreneurship.

Nurlanova outlined Kyrgyzstan's economic growth, ongoing reforms to improve the investment climate, and progress in developing technology parks and creative industry parks. She also described the country's potential in these areas.

Ekhtiari praised Kyrgyzstan's social and economic development and highlighted its progress in the creative economy. He expressed Tehran's interest in drawing on Bishkek's experience, particularly in the operation of creative industry parks. The Iranian official also emphasized the importance of the two

countries' fraternal relations and mutual respect.

The two sides stressed the need to establish direct cooperation among technology parks, scientific institutions and business communities in Iran and Kyrgyzstan. They also agreed to expand bilateral cooperation through experience-sharing, support for technology startups and joint innovation projects. Preliminary data from Kyrgyzstan's National Statistical Committee showed that bilateral trade with Iran rose 37% in 2025 to nearly \$80 million, including \$43.5 million in imports from Iran and \$36.3 million in exports to Iran. Both sides underscored the importance of deepening mutually beneficial cooperation in areas of common interest.



Gov't seeks to remove export barriers to Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan Baghdad warns against border closures



Economy Desk

Iran is seeking to remove barriers to exports to neighboring Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan, the foreign ministry's economic diplomacy deputy said, as transport disruptions and restrictions at some border crossings complicate trade with neighboring countries. Hamid Qanbari said on Saturday that proposals to address export barriers would be pursued through talks with foreign counterparts, with Iranian embassies and consulates tasked with following up.

The proposals were discussed at the 12th meeting of the Economic Relations Coordination Committee, hosted by the Foreign Ministry and attended by economic deputies from government agencies, IRNA reported.

Qanbari also said Iran would review procedures and regulations governing exporters unable

to meet their obligations because of transport and logistics disruptions caused by the war.

The arrangements cover exporters unable to fulfill their commitments because of transport problems, as well as those who received foreign currency to import raw materials but could not complete the imports because of disruptions along transport routes. The proposed regulatory changes had been accepted by the relevant agencies, he said.

Since late February, when a US-Israeli coalition launched a 40-day war, Iran has been operating under wartime conditions and facing a maritime blockade from the south. The United States has also imposed sanctions targeting Iran's aviation industry as part of its broader pressure campaign. The measures include secondary sanctions against foreign companies and intermediaries that provide Iranian airlines with fuel, airport services, spare parts or other support.

The sanctions have led to restrictions affecting some Iranian flights to other countries, including Iraq. Baghdad, however, secured a waiver from US sanctions after its government held talks with Washington to seek an exemption

from restrictions on Iran's aviation sector.

Qanbari said he hoped the measures would help preserve existing exports and make future shipments more targeted while improving their overall level.

The initiative comes as Iraq has closed some land crossings with Iran. The Al-Sheeb crossing, opposite Iran's Chazabeh crossing, was closed to passengers and cargo from October 21 until further notice. An Iraqi government official told Al Jazeera last week that the decision had been made by order of Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi and that several other crossings with Iran were expected to close gradually in the following days. The official reason for the directive has not been formally announced. Al Jazeera's correspondent in Baghdad, citing a government source, attributed the restrictions to administrative and logistical arrangements at certain crossings, without providing further details. Zaidi warned on Friday that closing Iraq's border with Iran would harm both countries' interests and risk economically isolating Iraq, Al-Iraqiya News reported.

"Closing the Iraqi-Iranian border is not in Iraq's interest or Iran's

interest. Closing the border with Iran means that we would economically besiege ourselves," Zaidi said in an interview.

Iraq has not closed its entire border with Iran but has shut specific crossings, including Al-Sheeb in Maysan province and parts of the Shalamcheh crossing.

Meanwhile, Jalal Mousavi, deputy head of Iran's truckers' association, said the Rimdan crossing remained closed to Iranian trucks and that some other crossings with Iraq had yet to reopen, ILNA reported.

Chazabeh was also closed, Mousavi said, while the status of some other Iraqi crossings remained unclear. Mehran and Khosravi appeared to be open, he said, but drivers lacked definite information about whether they had resumed operations.

Even if the government announced that Rimdan had reopened, drivers remained reluctant to use the crossing because of prevailing conditions and their concerns, he said. Mousavi added that cargo traffic through Rimdan had become more significant as maritime restrictions diverted some freight to alternative routes, increasing the volume passing through certain land crossings.

Iran's flag carrier begins maintenance on Boeing 747 freighter

Economy Desk

Iran's flag carrier, Iran Air, has begun heavy maintenance on its only Boeing 747 freighter, including a 20,000-flight-cycle inspection being carried out in Iran for the first time.

The project began on September 28 and includes a D-check, structural inspections, specialized repairs and an overhaul of the aircraft's landing gear. The initial estimate is that the work will take at least six months, although the final timeline will depend on inspection findings, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Among the project's main tasks is the first non-destructive testing inspection in Iran of the aircraft's Section 41, along with non-destructive testing of all riveted joints in the upper deck. The work also includes reinforcing the fuselage structure where the landing gear attaches.

Another major task is implementing a modification to the aircraft's horizontal stabilizer assembly, known as the THS. The specialized tools required for the modification have been



manufactured by Iran Air's own engineering and maintenance specialists, according to IRNA.

The landing gear overhaul will also involve replacing sensitive components with limited service lives in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

The work is being carried out with the participation of Iran Air's engineering, mechanical and avionics specialists, alongside its specialized workshops. The completion date could be pushed back if inspections reveal cracks, corrosion or damaged components requiring further assessment and corrective work.

Iran Air expects the Boeing 747 freighter to return to service after the D-check, the 20,000-flight-cycle inspection, the landing gear overhaul and the required THS modifications are completed.

Military superiority without...

The developments of 2026 in the military confrontation involving the United States, Israel, and Iran have once again highlighted the importance of this distinction. Analyses of the consequences of the war suggest that the use of military force, even on an extensive scale, does not necessarily resolve fundamental political and security disputes. Under such circumstances, the parties' ability to absorb costs, manage escalation, and reach a sustainable agreement becomes as important as the outcomes on the battlefield. (See analyses by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, April 20, 2026, and Chatham House, September 14, 2026.)

This reality is particularly significant in the Persian Gulf, where

regional security is closely intertwined with global energy markets, vital maritime shipping routes, and the economic stability of numerous countries. The Strait of Hormuz is not merely a geographical passage; it is part of a complex strategic equation in which the interests of Iran, the Persian Gulf Arab states, major Asian powers, and the global economy are deeply interconnected. Any military escalation in this region could generate consequences far beyond the immediate theater of conflict, ranging from heightened uncertainty in energy markets to disruptions in trade and declining investor confidence. Persian Gulf security, therefore, cannot be reduced to the military protection of maritime

routes or the deployment of foreign forces.

The US military presence may serve as a deterrent for some regional governments. However, if confrontation intensifies, that same presence could expose host countries to the consequences of a wider conflict. Reports concerning Arab states' reassessment of their security arrangements following the recent war suggest that reliance on external security guarantees is no substitute for regional dialogue. This does not mean that the Persian Gulf Arab states' defense relationships with Washington have become irrelevant. Rather, it underscores the limitations of any security framework that seeks to protect some actors'

interests while disregarding the concerns of other principal regional stakeholders.

In this context, Iran cannot be excluded from the Persian Gulf's security equation. Its geography, population, military capabilities, economic connections, and proximity to one of the world's most strategically sensitive energy chokepoints give it a position that cannot be ignored without considerable cost. What matters is the recognition of a principle of reciprocal security: no country can reasonably expect its own security concerns to be acknowledged while those of other states are consistently disregarded.

The way out of this impasse lies in establishing a regional mechanism for reducing tensions,

managing military incidents, safeguarding maritime security, and maintaining reliable channels of communication. Such a mechanism must be founded on the participation of Iran and the Persian Gulf Arab states and should draw on the potential mediating role of actors such as Pakistan. External powers can help facilitate agreements, but they cannot manufacture political legitimacy or mutual trust on behalf of the countries of the region.

Ultimately, the central question facing Washington is not whether it possesses the capability to strike Iran militarily. It is whether the United States can control the political and security consequences of such strikes and construct a stable order in

their aftermath. Military superiority may alter the balance of power, but a durable regional order requires mutual recognition of geopolitical realities. The future of Persian Gulf security will be shaped not by Iran's exclusion, but by the creation of a framework capable of accommodating strategic competition, managing disputes, and safeguarding shared interests.

If the United States genuinely seeks lasting stability in the region, it must recognize that military power alone is insufficient to build such an order. Iran's participation, with due consideration for reciprocal rights and legitimate security concerns, is an indispensable component of any sustainable solution.

Why Iran-US negotiations keep failing



By Mahjoob Zweiri
Academic and senior
political analyst

OPINION

Since the start of the war, there have been several negotiation initiatives between the United States and Iran. Only one — the memorandum of understanding signed in Islamabad on June 18 — was concluded, but it collapsed within days.

While prevailing analyses tend to explain this failure through the details of the provisions, this article proceeds from a different premise: that the diplomatic stalemate between the two sides is shaped by a syndrome that has governed US-Iranian relations for years.

In international relations, psychological syndromes can arise as a result of deep crises that leave their mark on political consciousness and memory, potentially obstructing efforts at rapprochement and negotiation between countries.

In the case of Iran and the US, the syndrome is comprised of two complexes: the complex Washington developed as a result of the 1979 siege of the US embassy in Tehran and the complex Tehran developed as a result of historical US hostility and its withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal in 2018.

The roots of the rupture between the two countries go as far back as August 1953 when US and British intelligence agencies helped overthrow the nationalist government of Mohammad Mosaddegh after it nationalised the oil industry in 1951. Since then, a perception has become entrenched in Iranian consciousness: that Washington does not accept an independent government in Tehran and it is prepared to sabotage it if it goes against its interests.

From this perspective, Washington's decision to host Shah Reza Pahlavi, who had just been overthrown by his people, for medical treatment in October 1979 was read in revolutionary Tehran as a prelude to a second coup.

Iranian students stormed the US embassy on November 4 that year and held 52 Americans for 444 days. Diplomatic relations between the two countries were severed and have not been restored to this day.

While the incident is portrayed in the Iranian narrative as a defence of the revolution, in American consciousness, it established the image of Iran as a state that does not respect international norms, whose word cannot be relied upon and whose behaviour should not be rewarded.

That is the embassy siege complex. It is not about the incident itself so much as the informal rule it produced in US decision-making: that Iran must concede first and its concession must be verified before it receives anything in return.

The Iranian complex was shaped by this history as well, but it reached its peak in May 2018 when US President Donald Trump withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) despite the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA's) confirmation that Tehran



The illustration shows Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (L) and his American counterpart, Donald Trump.
● BRENDAN LYNCH/AXIOS

was complying with it.

Just two weeks later, US secretary of state Mike Pompeo announced 12 demands for a new deal, only four of which were related to the nuclear file. Seven of them were related to Iran's regional behaviour in Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq, Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf. In other words, Washington did not merely revoke an existing agreement; it also raised the ceiling of its conditions for any future agreement.

The knot then deepened in June 2025 when the US took part in the Twelve-Day War and struck the nuclear facilities at Fordow, Natanz and Isfahan at a time when a new round of indirect negotiations was scheduled in Muscat. It then reached its furthest point with Washington's participation alongside Israel in the current war.

Accordingly, a conviction became entrenched in the Iranian consciousness that an American signature guarantees nothing, that any agreement can be overturned with a change of administration and indeed that negotiation itself may be a cover for war rather than an alternative to it. The informal rule this has pro-

duced in Iranian decision-making is that there will be no step taken before binding guarantees and no concession before pressure is lifted.

Thus, the two complexes stand at opposite ends: The first requires Iranian action before an American quid pro quo while the second requires an American guarantee before Iranian action.

A reading of the recent negotiation initiatives shows that every US initiative bears the imprint of the embassy siege complex. The 15-point plan put forward in March demanded the dismantling of the Natanz, Isfahan and Fordow facilities; an end to uranium enrichment; the suspension of Iran's missile programme; and the abandonment of its allies in exchange for promises to lift sanctions later. The May draft by White House envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner linked the release of Iran's frozen funds to the suspension of enrichment first. The American response in September also stipulated the freezing of enrichment and the entry of inspectors throughout the negotiation period.

What remains constant in the American initiatives is that Iranian action precedes the quid pro quo and verification precedes trust.

The imprint of the JCPOA withdrawal complex in the Iranian

initiatives is also a constant. The five-point response in late March demanded guarantees that war would not be repeated. The 10 points put forward in April demanded a binding UN Security Council resolution shielding any agreement from being overturned. And the 14 points in May demanded a non-aggression pledge that includes Israel.

Meanwhile, the seven-day plan proposed by Tehran last month stipulated the lifting of sanctions and the US naval blockade on Iran before the opening of the Strait of Hormuz on the sixth day and the start of nuclear negotiations on the seventh. What remains constant in the Iranian initiatives is that guarantees precede action and the lifting of pressure precedes Iranian concessions.

All these initiatives were dialogue between two complexes with each side drafting its text to protect itself from a repeti-



US Vice President JD Vance (back-R) looks on next to US President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner (back-C), as Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (front-L) shakes hands with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif before the start of a quadrilateral meeting between the US, Iran, Pakistan, and Qatar aimed at advancing a deal to end the aggression on Iran, at the Buergenstock resort near Lake Lucerne, Switzerland, on June 21, 2026.

● REUTERS



The two complexes in Washington and Tehran stand at opposite ends: The first requires Iranian action before an American quid pro quo while the second requires an American guarantee before Iranian action. A reading of the recent negotiation initiatives shows that every US initiative bears the imprint of the embassy siege complex. By late September, the dispute appeared to have shifted definitively from substance to sequencing. Informed sources indicated that it now revolves around the order of steps rather than their content and the stated goal has become a return to an enhanced version of the June memorandum.

tion of its historical experience with the other, rather than to meet the other halfway. This may explain why the gap in substance has narrowed, but the gap in trust has not.

The Islamabad memorandum represents the exception that proves the rule as it was the closest moment to a settlement because it was formulated to reassure both sides over their core concerns. To reassure Washington, it stipulated the dilution of Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium and made the lifting of sanctions and unfreezing of funds conditional on Iranian implementation.

To reassure Tehran, it provided for an end to hostilities, respect for mutual sovereignty, a mechanism to monitor implementation and UN Security Council approval of the final agreement. Ballistic missiles were also entirely absent from the text.

But this agreement did not hold. Tehran suspended its participation in the Geneva round of talks because of the absence of a cease-fire in Lebanon, which had been a consistent demand in every Iranian initiative since March. In the Iranian reading, Washington's inability to rein in Israel confirmed that an American signature was not enough. The JCPOA withdrawal complex immediately kicked in, and the two sides returned to square one. By late September, the dispute appeared to have shifted definitively from substance to sequencing. Informed sources indicated that it now revolves around the order of steps rather than their content and the stated goal has become a return to an enhanced version of the June memorandum.

Here, the two complexes appear in their clearest form: Washington wants the Strait of Hormuz opened and enrichment frozen first because it does not trust Iran while Tehran wants the naval blockade lifted first because it does not trust the US.

A comparison between Pompeo's 2018 conditions and the June 2026 memorandum shows that US demands have retreated from redefining Iran's regional role to focusing on the nuclear file and the Strait of Hormuz while Iranian demands have shifted from compensation to be paid by Washington to a conditional investment fund financed by other parties.

In other words, the substantive gap between the two sides has narrowed considerably — something that would have been unimaginable eight years ago.

However, the two complexes have not diminished; indeed, they may have deepened because of the war. Each complex feeds the other until together they have become a single syndrome, and diplomatic deadlock has turned from a passing condition into a stable structure.

Accordingly, any new formula for sequencing the steps, however precise, will remain unable to break this deadlock unless it addresses both complexes at once — something that requires a third party capable of guaranteeing both the action and the reciprocal action simultaneously.

The article first appeared on Al Jazeera.

Was MOU meant to be trashed?

By Ryan Costello
Policy Director
the National
Iranian-American
Council

OPINION

As President Trump appeared to accept an end to the Iran war by agreeing to the short-lived Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on June 17, many Republican senators were deeply alarmed. Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.) openly trashed the agreement, warning Ronald Reagan was “rolling over in his grave,” before getting into a war of words with President Donald Trump over the administration’s strategy. Yet opposition to the MOU with Iran abruptly softened. Cassidy received a briefing from Vice President JD Vance and Trump’s envoy Steve Witkoff that convinced him to flip his votes on future war powers resolutions on Iran. He suggested afterwards that the administration had a “plausible plan” to accomplish many of the war’s original goals to destroy or degrade Iran’s nuclear program, ballistic missiles and conventional warfare capabilities. While it is possible that Trump and his team whipped Cassidy and his colleagues into line, it is more likely that they let them in on the secret: this agreement wasn’t intended to last long. Public evidence strongly suggests Trump signed the MOU not to end the war but to erode Iran’s leverage over the Strait of Hormuz and better position the US for future rounds of the war. Outside of the administration’s maritime moves, there are other indications that the Trump administration never intended to follow through on the MOU. Far from supporting a Lebanon cease-fire, Secretary of State and National Security Adviser Marco Rubio moved immediately to undermine it by announcing a separate trilateral agreement that centered around the disarmament of Hezbollah. This side deal gave Israel a justification for continuing its occupation of southern Lebanon and destroying dozens of villages in the areas it controls. Moreover, while the MOU obligated the US to give Iran access to its foreign assets that had been frozen by US sanctions, administration officials quickly downplayed this commitment, stating, “None of this money is ever going to touch Iran,” and suggesting that it would be allowed for humanitarian purchases only, reflecting similar Biden-era commitments that were also reneged on. Yet it was events in the Strait of Hormuz that precipitated the collapse of the agreement. While Iran interpreted the MOU as solidifying its control of the Strait of Hormuz and its authority over future traffic flows through the vital energy chokepoint, Washington immediately moved to accelerate earlier efforts to establish a separate Omani transit corridor outside of Iran’s oversight and control. A June 18 advisory from the Combined Maritime Force’s Joint Maritime Information Center, released immediately after the MOU was signed,



US President Donald Trump (L) departs with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio (C) and US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent after delivering remarks at a press conference during the G7 Leaders’ Summit in Evian-les-Bains, France, on June 17, 2026.

● ANNA MONEYMAKER/AFP

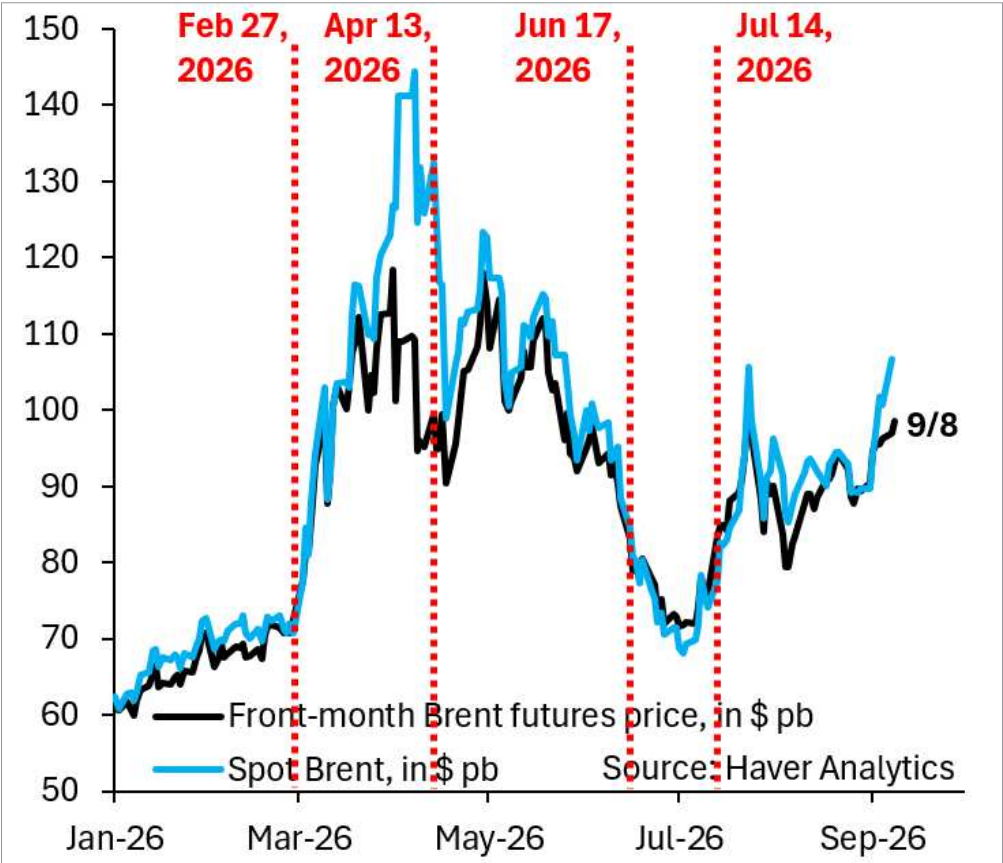
directed commercial ships to communicate with a US Navy contact on how to transit safely. Likewise, on June 23, the Financial Times reported “the US and some western insurers are advising ships to follow a route protected by US air cover on the Omani side of the strait, according to three shipping executives, leaving shipowners unsure of which path to take.” An administration official touting the apparent success of the corridor on August 19 told Axios, “We have been controlling the southern lane of the Strait of Hormuz for two months now,” corresponding almost exactly to the signing of the MOU on June 17.

Vance articulated just how central energy flows were to the administration’s thinking on the MOU in late June, saying “What the president has told us to do is use this MOU to sort of refill the world’s oil economy, to refill some stocks, and then to see where the hand is.” He continued, saying the president was “taking a lot of pressure off the world economy...while not giving up a single one of his gains and while preserving a lot of optionality.” On the Omani route, tankers have coordinated closely with the US Navy, following a path within a mile of the Omani coastline and running without lights, radio or phone. The role of US armed forces in trying to secure the route appears extensive; US aircraft are operating along the route with a mission of intercepting Iranian missiles and drones. Despite this, vessels are regularly struck in transit. One report from Trey Yingst of Fox News indicates that indi-

viduals aboard a US-contracted vessel near the Strait of Hormuz in mid-September sustained minor injuries when it was struck by projectiles, including a missile, and that “US personnel” were onboard. Iran appears to have viewed the operation as a plan to erode Iranian leverage over Hormuz. On June 25, the Singapore-flagged Ever Lovely came under fire off the coast of Oman. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Navy issued a statement warning that ships should coordinate with Iranian authorities and describing any routes announced without Iran’s approval as “unacceptable” and “extremely dangerous”. CENTCOM retaliated militarily against sites along the Iranian coast a day later, claiming Iran had

The graph shows the futures and spot price movement of Brent crude oil during the January–September 2026 period.

● X



While it is possible that Trump and his team whipped Senator Cassidy and his colleagues that opposed the Islamabad MoU into line, it is more likely that they let them in on the secret: this agreement wasn’t intended to last long. Public evidence strongly suggests Trump signed the MOU not to end the war but to erode Iran’s leverage over the Strait of Hormuz and better position the US for future rounds of the war.

violated the cease-fire with its initial strike on the Ever Lovely. The US strikes also violated the MOU’s first clause “to refrain from the threat or use of force against each other”. Neither the US nor Iran made use of the dispute resolution mechanism in the deal. In a letter to the United Nations, Iran said the MOU “explicitly affirms the Islamic Republic of Iran’s responsibility for determining the arrangements for the safe passage of vessels through the Strait of Hormuz. In clear contravention of this provision, the United States has unilaterally challenged this arrangement and has sought to impose a parallel maritime route.” The strikes and retaliation on June 25 would repeat in the days that followed. On July 7, the US accused Iran of attacking three commercial vessels in a period of 24 hours, and retaliated with strikes on 80 targets across southern Iran that coincided with the national funeral services for Iran’s late Leader Seyyed Ali Khamenei. The US launched an additional 90 strikes on July 8, causing 14 fatalities and 78 injuries across the two days per Iran’s Health Ministry. Iran retaliated as well with missile and drone attacks against US bases across the region. Afterwards, President Trump declared the memorandum “over,” calling the Iranians “scum” and “sick people”. On July 11, CENTCOM announced renewed strikes against Iran following a strike on another commercial vessel and claimed to have “helped facilitate the successful transit of more than 800 commercial vessels and 400 million barrels of crude oil through the Strait of Hormuz” since early May. US forces both reimposed the blockade of Iranian ports and engaged in 13 consecutive nights of attacks against Iran, sparking further Iranian strikes in response. While the MOU could have been a serious foundation for an end to the war, it has become yet another episode of US-Iran diplomacy that has eroded confidence in Tehran that Washington can ever be trusted. It is, of course, difficult to clearly establish Trump’s intent regarding the MOU. One might argue that, even if Trump didn’t intend to follow the MOU to the letter, he hoped that he could use it as a starting point to end the war through force of will. But that doesn’t explain why hawkish Republicans came around on the MOU, nor does it offer a satisfying rationale for Trump’s immediate rejection of key aspects of the deal. These facts suggest instead that the US saw the MOU as little more than a stalling mechanism to erode Iran’s position without a full-scale military assault. This gambit appears to have backfired. Now, the president is stuck with hollow boasts that he controls the Strait of Hormuz — a claim belied by accelerating Iranian attacks on shipping in Hormuz, looming risks of another major round of war and a major trust deficit fueled by apparent bad faith regarding the MOU.

The article first appeared on Responsible Statecraft.

Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games:

Iran finishes sixth with 26 golds

Sports Desk

Iran's 166-strong delegation collected 102 medals, including 26 golds, to finish sixth in the overall medal table at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games in Japan – the country's lowest finish since the multi-sport event was first held in 2010.

The gold medal tally also marked an all-time low for Iran across the five editions of the Games. Iran claimed 44 golds to finish runner-up in Hangzhou in 2022, having achieved its best result in Jakarta in 2018, where it won 51 golds to finish third. The previous low came at the inaugural edition in Guangzhou in 2010, when Iran won 27 golds.

The modest outcome, however, came against a backdrop of challenging circumstances, with Iran sending its second-smallest delegation in the Games' history after fielding more than 200 athletes in each of the previous three editions. Iranian athletes also had to contend with disrupt-



Iranian sprinter Alireza Zare' celebrates after winning the men's 200m T35 gold medal at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games in Japan on October 23, 2026. ● VARZESH3

ed preparations amid wartime conditions in the country ahead of the continental showpiece. Iranian swimmer Mohammad-Hossein Karimi won the country's final medal at the Games, taking bronze in the men's 100m butterfly S12 final on Friday. Earlier on the penultimate day of competition,

Alireza Zare' and Sadeq Beit-Sayyah rounded off Iran's medal-laden para athletics campaign, which proved to be the country's most productive sport at the Games, yielding 14 golds, 20 silvers and 16 bronzes. Zare' clocked an Asian record of 24.83 seconds to win gold in the men's 200m T35 final, taking his personal tally in Nagoya to two golds after also claiming the 100m title. Beit-Sayyah, meanwhile, won gold in the men's F40/F41 javelin throw with a best effort of 45.78m. It was his second

medal at Paloma Mizuho Stadium, following a bronze in the shot put on Wednesday. Elsewhere, Iran's men's wheelchair basketball team settled for silver after losing 55-47 to hosts Japan in the final, while the women's sitting volleyball team also finished runner-up, falling to China in straight sets (25-22, 25-20, 25-12). Abolfazl Zarifpour won Iran's fourth gold medal in para swimming – the delegation's second-most productive sport, with 16 medals – after clocking 1:04.26 in the men's

100m backstroke S9 final. He added the title to his silver in the 50m freestyle S9 and bronze in the 100m freestyle S9. Zarifpour's compatriot Sina Zeighaminejad was the delegation's most successful athlete, winning three gold medals in the men's 100m freestyle S10, 100m backstroke SB9 and 50m freestyle S10 events, as well as bronze in the 200m individual medley SM10. Elham Salehi, meanwhile, accounted for most gold medals among the 62 Iranian female athletes at the Games, claiming the top

prize in the javelin throw F52/F53/F54 and shot put F53/F54 contests. Iran's para taekwondo team also contributed to the medal haul, collecting four golds, one silver and six bronzes. Para powerlifting yielded eight medals, although the results fell short of expectations for one of the sport's global powerhouses. Iran managed just one gold, won by Ahmad Aminzadeh in the men's +107kg category, while reigning Paralympic champions Aliakbar Gharibshahi and Rouhollah Rostami settled for

silver in their respective divisions. China, as expected, dominated the overall standings with 435 medals, including 207 golds, followed by Japan with 64 golds and Uzbekistan with 45. India and South Korea also finished ahead of Iran, winning 30 and 29 gold medals, respectively.



Iran's Mahdi Abbasi (47) is seen in action against Japan in the men's wheelchair basketball final at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games in Japan on October 23, 2026.

● VARZESH3



Wrestling World Championships:

Qassempour faces grueling path to 86kg glory

Sports Desk

Iranian wrestler Kamran Qassempour faces a challenging path to gold when the freestyle 86kg competition gets underway at the World Championships on Friday in Astana, Kazakhstan, where a strong field includes four-time world champion Kyle Dake, Olympic champion Magomed Ramazanov and rising Russian star Ibragim Kadiev.

Qassempour will be one of Iran's leading contenders. He won back-to-back world titles at 92kg in 2021 and 2022 before claiming bronze at 86kg at last year's edition in Zagreb.

His return to the 86kg category presents a different challenge, particularly against opponents with extensive experience at the weight. However, his technical ability and record at the highest level make him a serious contender for the title. The Iranian will have to negotiate a demanding field featuring wrestlers with different strengths and ambitions, from established champions seeking further international success to younger competitors eager to translate their achievements at age-group level into senior medals. American veteran Dake is among the biggest names

in the division. He has won four senior world titles across the 74kg and 79kg categories and is now targeting a world championship crown at 86kg.



● LAWFIIR

Success in Astana would see Dake become a world champion in a third weight class, adding another significant achievement to an already decorated career. Moving up to a division featuring physically different opponents, however, presents a fresh challenge even for a wrestler with his experience. His ability to manage high-pressure bouts and his extensive experience in major international competitions nevertheless place him among the

leading contenders. Arsenii Dzhiyev of Azerbaijan is another major threat to Qassempour's ambitions. Dzhiyev won bronze at the 2025 senior World Champion-

closely contested bouts. Bulgaria's Ramazanov, meanwhile, arrives with the distinction of being the reigning Olympic champion at 86kg. He won gold at the Paris

the most anticipated potential matchups in the division. Kadiev is another wrestler to watch. The Russian won consecutive world junior titles in 2023 and 2024, at 79kg and 86kg, respectively. Although he has yet to win a senior world medal, his junior success underlines his technical potential.

The championships will provide a significant test of his ability to carry that form into the senior ranks against established competitors such as Qassempour, Dake and Ramazanov. The 86kg competition promises to be compelling not only because of the quality of its contenders but also because of their differing ambitions. Qassempour is seeking another world title after returning to 86kg, Dake is pursuing a championship in a third weight class, Dzhiyev will look to build on his recent international success, Ramazanov aims to add a world crown to his Olympic gold, and Kadiev hopes to make his mark among the senior elite. For Qassempour, the challenge will be to adapt to the demands of the weight class and overcome a formidable group of rivals in his bid to return to the top of the world podium.

Asian Table Tennis Championships:
Iranian pair secures
2027 World Ch'ships berth

Sports Desk

Iran secured a place at the 2027 World Table Tennis Championships after Benjamin Faraji and Arian Ghafari teamed up to defeat the Saudi pair 3-2 in the men's doubles at the Asian Table Tennis Championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The Iranian pair bounced back from a last-16 defeat to the Philippines to claim the victory needed to secure a place at next year's global event. Meanwhile, Noshad and Nima Alamiyan withdrew from the doubles competition after the former fell ill with a severe cold. The decision was made by the coaching staff to protect the health of the Iranian international.

Faraji also made progress in the men's singles, defeating Japan's Hiroto Shinozuka, the world No. 20, 3-1 to reach the round of 16, before falling in straight games to South Korea's Park Gang-hyeon on Saturday.

A bronze medalist at the Asian Games last month, Noshad Alamiyan had earlier reached the round of 32 in the men's singles, before suffering a 3-0 setback against Kuo Guan-Hong of the Chinese Taipei. In the women's competition, Mahshid Ashtari opened her campaign with a 3-0 win over Saudi Arabia's Nihal Al-Qahatani before recording another straight-games victory against Singapore's Ser Lin Qian. The two wins sent the Iranian through to the round of 32 without dropping a game, though she also had her campaign brought to an end with a 3-0 setback against Wang Yidi of China on Friday. Reports from the tournament indicated that several players had experienced respiratory illnesses. Japanese player Shunsuke Togami was among those reported to have withdrawn, although the medical reasons for other players' withdrawals had yet to be officially confirmed.



Arzan Fud Underground Complex eyes international recognition

Iranica Desk

The Arzan Fud Underground Complex, one of Hamedan Province's most distinctive historical sites, has significant potential for international recognition and tourism, according to Mohammadreza Akbari, head of the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization. Speaking during a visit to the complex, Akbari described it as one of Iran's most valuable examples of subterranean architecture, citing its interconnected spaces, water-supply system and archaeological evidence spanning several historical periods. Around 80 interconnected rooms, passageways and other architectural spaces have so far been identified at varying depths, he said. The complex's access routes, water-management system and spatial layout offer a remarkable example of underground engineering in ancient Iran and the Islamic era, according to chtn.ir. A qanat, or underground water channel, and a water-supply system are among the site's distinctive features, adding to its



● IRNA

architectural significance and archaeological research potential, Akbari said. Hamedan Province is home to several underground complexes, including those at Samen, Arzan Fud and Salehabad. Their concentration has helped establish the province as an important center of Iran's subterranean architectural heritage, he added. Situated on the northeastern slopes of the Alvand Mountains, Arzan Fud lies about 30 kilometers southeast of the city of Hamedan and two kilometers from the village of Arzan Fud.

The complex was discovered accidentally in 2010 and is estimated to cover approximately five hectares, although a substantial portion remains buried beneath soil and bedrock. The site was carved into natural schist formations, with rooms and other architectural spaces cut into the rock at different levels. Remains of stone architecture have also been identified in the upper section of the underground complex, Akbari said. Four seasons of archaeological excavation and emergency conservation work have been con-



● ISNA

ducted at the site. Researchers have identified artifacts and architectural remains associated with several historical periods, from the Parthian and Sassanid eras to the middle Islamic period, including the Buyid, Seljuk, Ilkhanid and Safavid periods. The findings indicate that the complex was used, or remained active, during different periods of Iran's history, according to Akbari. Despite its historical and architectural significance, the site has faced funding constraints that have delayed construction

work and the development of essential visitor infrastructure. Priorities include improving access routes, landscaping, installing lighting and constructing a site management facility. Efforts are underway to upgrade the complex and prepare it for public visits, Akbari said. With its interconnected underground spaces, water-management system and archaeological evidence spanning centuries, Arzan Fud offers considerable potential for further research and heritage tourism. Developing the site could also help

showcase Hamedan Province's rich history to domestic and international visitors. Hamedan is among Iran's oldest urban centers, with a history traditionally traced to the Median period, when Ecbatana served as the capital of the Median kingdom. The city later retained its importance under successive Iranian dynasties and became a prominent center of political, commercial and cultural life. Its location along historic routes connecting western Iran with other parts of the country helped shape its role as a meeting point for different peoples and traditions. Today, landmarks such as the ancient inscriptions at Ganjnameh, the tomb of the physician and philosopher Avicenna, and the mausoleum of the medieval poet Baba Taher reflect the province's diverse historical and intellectual heritage. Together with its archaeological sites and traditional settlements, these landmarks offer opportunities to develop broader cultural tourism routes linking Hamedan's ancient past with its later literary, scientific and architectural achievements.

Iranica Desk

Iran's handicrafts, rooted in the country's diverse climate, ancient civilization and generations of artistic expertise, have considerable potential to boost non-oil exports, create local jobs and strengthen cultural ties. Their value extends beyond the sale of carpets, pottery, metalwork and handwoven textiles to include promoting Iranian identity, supporting tourism and shaping a lasting image of Iran in international markets. Realizing this potential requires moving beyond traditional approaches to production and sales, identifying target markets, expanding international marketing and linking exports with tourism and cultural diplomacy. To gain a larger share of foreign trade, handicrafts must evolve from locally produced goods and tourist souvenirs into competitive products with consistent quality, distinctive designs and a clear cultural identity. Handwoven carpets, kilims, Gabbeh rugs, pottery, ceramics, woodwork, metalwork, enamelwork, marquetry, glassware, traditional textiles and handmade jewelry are among Iran's diverse handicraft products. Drawing on indigenous knowledge, small- and medium-scale production and regional cultural traditions, these crafts can contribute to local economic development. However, accurately assessing handicrafts' share of Iran's exports requires more detailed statistics. Official handicraft exports, handwoven carpets, purchases by travelers and e-commerce sales may be recorded under different categories. Figures can therefore be misleading if compared without accounting for differences in reporting periods, product coverage and calculation methods. According to remarks by an official responsible for handicraft commercialization, published in June 2026, Iran's official hand-

Iran's handicrafts carry culture beyond borders

craft exports reached approximately \$163 million in the first 10 months of the Iranian year 1404 (March 21, 2025-Jan. 21, 2026). As final figures for the remaining months had not yet been released, this should not be treated as the confirmed total for the year.

Neighboring countries, the Persian Gulf region, Central Asia, the Caucasus, East Asia and parts of Europe offer different opportunities for Iranian handicrafts. Geographic proximity and cultural ties can facilitate the marketing of carpets, tex-

use of e-commerce further hinder the effective marketing of Iranian crafts. A separate study on handicraft packaging in Isfahan also emphasized the importance of visual design, presentation quality and accessible information for foreign tourists.

Live craft demonstrations at international exhibitions, presentations about master artisans, partnerships with museums and cultural institutions, and multilingual product certificates could help realize this potential. Information about a product's origins,

national sales. Support for artisans, access to raw materials, improved design, better packaging, efficient transportation and sustained relationships with overseas buyers should form part of an integrated strategy. Priority measures include pub-



Meanwhile, an assessment of the implementation of Iran's Seventh Development Plan through late September 2025 put exports of handicrafts, handwoven carpets and related industries at €17.1 million, based on customs data, against a target of €30 million for the indicator under review. Differences in the scope and methodology of these figures highlight the need for transparent, comparable export statistics. The challenges facing handwoven carpets illustrate the difficulties of maintaining Iran's position in international markets. A Financial Times report published in December 2025 described a sharp decline in Iranian carpet exports amid sanctions, financial transaction difficulties, restricted access to foreign markets and changing consumer preferences. The experience demonstrates that even products with international reputations need reliable market access and effective distribution networks to maintain their export share.

tiles, decorative objects and artistic gifts in regional markets. In East Asia and Europe, distinctive, high-quality products may also attract specialized buyers, although success depends on understanding consumer preferences, setting competitive prices, meeting packaging standards and complying with import requirements. A 2025 study on barriers to Iran's handicraft exports identified 36 obstacles across seven categories: financial and economic, political, legal, marketing and sales, cultural and social, product-related, and transportation. Financial and economic difficulties, followed by political factors, were identified as major barriers. Banking sanctions, difficulties transferring money, exchange-rate fluctuations, rising material and shipping costs, and limited access to international sales networks complicate exporters' operations. Weak packaging, insufficient multilingual product information, a lack of strong brands and the limited



Addressing these challenges does not mean abandoning artistic authenticity or mass-producing identical goods. Instead, producers need to balance traditional identity with market requirements. Developing practical products alongside decorative pieces, using durable packaging, providing product certificates and identifying the artisans who make them can increase perceived value. Export cooperatives, international marketing training and direct sales to overseas customers could also help ensure that producers receive a larger share of the final price. Handicrafts tell stories about a society's history, geography, beliefs and way of life. The patterns of a kilim, the colors of traditional textiles, engraved metal designs and the forms of pottery offer insights into different aspects of Iranian culture. In this sense, handicraft exports can support cultural diplomacy and strengthen the country's soft power through tangible artistic experiences rather than formal promotional campaigns alone.

production methods and maker can build consumer confidence while deepening understanding of Iranian culture. Cultural tourism also offers an important opportunity to expand the market. Visits to pottery workshops, carpet-making centers, historic bazaars and handicraft villages allow tourists to observe production and meet artisans, making purchases part of the travel experience. If visitors can reorder products through reliable online stores after returning home, these economic and cultural connections can continue long after their trips. International recognition of handicraft cities and villages, alongside the development of craft-focused tourism routes, could also help establish regional brands, provided that recognition is supported by product quality, appropriate services and effective marketing. The future of Iran's handicraft exports depends on creating a coordinated supply chain that connects production with inter-



lishing detailed export statistics, identifying key markets and strengthening digital sales platforms, multilingual product information and international distribution networks. Cooperation with international designers and retailers, streamlined export regulations and sustainable, lawful solutions for financial transactions are also essential. Success should not be measured solely by export revenue. Artisans' incomes, the creation of sustainable jobs, diversification of destination markets and greater international awareness of Iranian culture should also be considered. Iran's handicrafts are a legacy of the past, but their economic and cultural value belongs to the present and the future. By combining this heritage with innovation, market knowledge and effective export policies, Iran can turn handicrafts into a stronger source of foreign-exchange earnings, local employment and international cultural engagement.



Culture minister hails Beyhaqi as model of truth, integrity

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister has cited 11th-century historian Abu'l-Fazl Beyhaqi as a model of integrity in documenting history. Abbas Salehi called Beyhaqi's approach relevant as information spreads rapidly and leaves less time for verification. In a message to a conference held to commemorate Bayhaqi in his hometown Sabzevar, in northeastern Iran on Saturday, the minister said 'The History of Beyhaqi' stood out for both its literary quality and its author's

commitment to truth. Salehi stressed the need to verify reports, assess narrators' accounts and keep personal motives out of historical narratives. "Such principles deserved greater attention at a time when the speed of information dissemination often limits opportunities for scrutiny and judgment," he added. Beyhaqi, an Iranian historian of the 11th century, chronicled events under the Ghaznavid dynasty (977-1186). His work remains an important source on the dynasty's history and is recognized for its careful narration, critical assessment of sources and

contribution to classical Persian prose. Salehi linked Beyhaqi's legacy to contemporary concerns about information credibility, emphasizing fairness and responsibility in reporting events. His message underscored the relevance of these principles to modern media as well as historical writing. Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel, head of Iran's Academy of Persian Language and Literature, and Mahmoud Shalouei, head of the Association for Cultural Works and Distinguished Figures attended the conference held at the Hakim Sabzevari University in Sabzevar.



● AHMAD MOEINI JAM/IRNA

Maternal mortality sharply down in Iran over four decades



Social Desk

Maternal mortality in Iran has fallen from more than 220 deaths to about 20 per 100,000 live births over the past four to five decades, the head of the country's Medical Council said on Saturday, IRNA reported. Mohammad Raeeszadeh, speaking at a ceremony marking the anniversary of the Iranian Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, said access to safe childbirth services in Iran now exceeds 95%. Worldwide, the

maternal mortality ratio stood at about 197 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2023, down from 328 in 2000, according to the World Health Organization. The global target for 2030 is to bring the ratio below 70 deaths per 100,000 live births. "Iran has 6,012 obstetrician-gynecologists along with nearly 280 perinatology specialists, about 300 fellowship-trained specialists in infertility and in vitro fertilization (IVF), and nearly 160 specialists with fellowships in gynecologic

oncology surgery," Raeeszadeh said. According to the official, the number of women specialists across clinical fields has also risen sharply, from about 770 in 1981 to more than 30,000 women specialists, subspecialists and fellowship holders across all fields today. "That represents an increase of more than 40 times, while Iran's population has grown about two-and-a-half times over the same period," he said. At the ceremony, Soudabeh Kazemi, head of the Iranian Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, called for maintaining the quality of medical training, expanding research, upholding professional ethics and protecting women's dignity and health. She said scientific associations should provide a forum for professionals to exchange experience, discuss workplace concerns and involve younger generations.

Tehran's Tabiat Bridge turn blue for United Nations Day

Social Desk

Tabiat Bridge, a landmark pedestrian bridge in northern Tehran, illuminated in blue on Saturday evening to mark United Nations Day. The bridge changed color to highlight messages of peace, solidarity and cooperation among nations, IRNA reported. United Nations Day is observed on October 24, the anniversary of the organization's official founding in 1945. The occasion highlights the UN's aims, including maintaining international peace and security, protecting human rights, promoting cooperation among countries and seeking peaceful solutions to disputes. Blue is the United Nations' signature color and a key part of its visual identity. The organization's flag features a white emblem depicting a world map surrounded



by olive branches against a blue background, symbolizing peace and the unity of nations. The blue lighting of Tabiat Bridge is intended to echo those themes in Tehran's public space, using one of the Iranian capital's best-known architectural landmarks to mark an international observance. Located in the Abbasabad area of northern Tehran, Tabiat Bridge is a two-level structure designed exclusively for pedestrians. It

crosses Modarres Highway and connects Taleghani Park to the east with Ab-o-Atash Park to the west. The bridge is among Tehran's prominent urban and tourism landmarks. Its design links two public parks across a major highway, making it a recognizable feature of the city's landscape. The event connected Tehran's urban architecture with the UN's annual message, emphasizing the role of international cooperation in efforts to promote peace and security.

Pakistani, Uzbek publishers seek rights to Iranian children's books

Arts & Culture Desk

Publishers from Pakistan and Uzbekistan have sought rights to publish Iranian children's books following talks at the 12th Baku International Book Fair in Azerbaijan. Pakistan's National Book Foundation (NBF), a government body under the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, has formally requested permission to publish five Iranian children's

titles, according to Iran's Book and Literature House. The titles are 'A New Friend', 'The Little Key', 'Look at This Way', 'The Rose on the Rug' and 'Once Upon a Time'. They were published by Iran's Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults and Beh-Nashr Publishing House. The NBF wants to publish the books in Urdu or English. It has offered to cover translation, printing, publication,

promotion and distribution costs. The Pakistani foundation also says the published editions will identify the Iranian publishers and include intellectual property information. An Uzbek publisher has separately expressed interest in acquiring rights to two Iranian books: 'The Golden Wheat Stalk' and 'The Ancient Promise of Tomorrow' published by Beh-Nashr. The requests followed

discussions between the manager of Iran's booth at the fair, a representative of Iran's Book and Literature House and participating publishers. Initial contacts have been established, and talks are continuing on the terms for transferring publication rights, the report said. The requests could help introduce Iranian children's and young adult literature to readers abroad through translation and international publishing partnerships.

