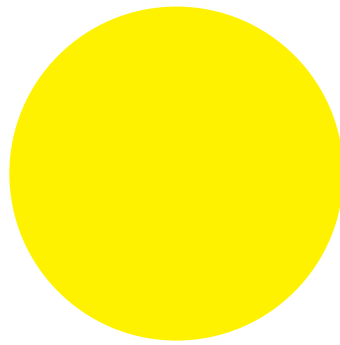


Culture can bridge political divides, says ECO institute chief

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The photo shows Iranian officials, including President Masoud Pezeshkian (center R), hosting defense and security officials from Pakistan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia in Tehran, Iran on October 26, 2026.

president.ir

Iran's wartime experience can contribute to China's global governance initiative

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Iranian analyst Seyyed Mohammad Marandi says Tehran and Beijing could deepen cooperation on governance, drawing on China's development achievements and Iran's experience of maintaining its sovereignty and resilience during the war.

The Global Governance Forum, hosted by the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs (CPIFA), concluded on October 25 after completing its scheduled agenda and activities.

Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a letter to the Forum, while Foreign Minister Wang Yi delivered a keynote address at the opening ceremony titled Pooling Wisdom and Efforts for Global Governance to Build Stability and Capacity in a Volatile and Changing World.

Chinese and international participants held in-depth and lively discussions on the Forum's theme, Rebuilding Confidence and Cooperation: Reforming and Improving Global Governance in a Transforming World. They put forward proposals and recommendations and reported fruitful outcomes.

At the closing press conference, CPIFA President Wu Ken said preliminary estimates showed that Chinese and international representatives had put forward more than 450 proposals on reforming and improving global governance during the Forum.

According to Wu, several institutions also released research reports, established dialogue mechanisms and launched cooperation projects.

He highlighted several key outcomes of the Forum. These included consolidating international consensus and public support for reforming and improving global governance, as well as accelerating efforts to translate the core concepts of the Global Governance Initiative into action.

He also noted that the Forum promoted mutual learning between China's governance practices and global governance, while laying a solid foundation for a high-level platform for dialogue and exchange on global governance.

Iran's potential to contribute

Representing Iran at the event was Seyyed Mohammad Marandi, a university professor and senior political analyst.

Speaking to Iran Daily, Marandi said China's extraordinary achievements in development and governance had made it a model from which countries and policymakers around the world could learn.

"This country decade ago was deeply impoverished, yet it has now become the world's number one industrial country definitely, but technologically speaking as well." In his assessment, China is already ahead of the United States in most areas and is likely to surpass it rapidly in many others, particularly in advanced technology.

He said these achievements were closely linked to the quality of governance and institutional competence.

OPINION



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Pezeshkian: Iran hopes to help create unity, bring back security to region

Iranian, Saudi, Pakistani, Turkish officials discuss regional security

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Monday that the Islamic Republic hopes to help create unity and bring back security to the region after hosting a quadrilateral meeting in Tehran. Pezeshkian made the remarks in a meeting with delegations from Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkey in Tehran.

During the meeting, the Iranian president said Iran is firmly ready to deepen ties with regional countries, resolve differences and draw on the shared capabilities of Islamic nations.

He noted that the region had witnessed years of violent acts and widespread crimes by Israel, which he accused of relying on state terrorism and US support to commit repeated crimes while accusing others of terrorism.

Condemning Israeli actions in Gaza, Lebanon and other regional countries, Pezeshkian said the aggression had also extended to Iran.

Such actions, he said, had no legal, humanitarian or rational justification and underscored the urgent need for Muslim countries to adopt a common approach to confronting aggression and insecurity.

"I hope the presence of representatives of important and influential Islamic countries at this meeting will pave the way for further strengthening regional unity and cohesion," the Iranian president said.

The Iranian president also urged Muslim nations to remain vigilant against interventionist and divisive policies, saying one of the objectives pursued by the United States and Israel was to weaken regional countries, drive a wedge

between Muslim nations and gradually undermine major Islamic states.

Saudi Defense Minister Khalid bin Salman, Pakistani Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir and Ibrahim Kalin, the head of Turkey's intelligence service represented their countries in the meeting, which recently signed a security pact.

Earlier on the day, the delegations also held a separate meeting with Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Major General Mohsen Rezaei and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said the meeting was proposed during Asim Munir's recent visit to Tehran and was welcomed by Iran.

Exploring mechanisms for regional security

Responding to a question from

IRNA about the purpose and format of the gathering, Baqaei said the participation of senior officials from Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan reflected efforts to explore mechanisms for regional security.

"This meeting could serve as a prelude to further steps toward shaping endogenous security, an issue we have insisted on for decades. We have consistently emphasized that regional security can only be ensured by relying on the will and security considerations of the countries of the region," Baqaei said.

Qatari mediators in Tehran

Qatari mediators also traveled to Tehran on Sunday, working in coordination with the US, as part of efforts to de-escalate regional tensions, according to a regional official speaking on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity



Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Major General Mohsen Rezaei (R) and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (L) host a meeting with delegations from Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan in Tehran, Iran, on October 26, 2026.

of the talks.

Following the US-Israeli aggression against Iran on February 28, Iranian Armed Forces launched retaliatory attacks on US bases in the regional countries, inflicting

heavy blows on the US military.

After Iran's strong response to the US aggression, regional countries have increasingly concluded that the US security umbrella has failed to guarantee their security.

President congratulates Brazil's Lula on election victory

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian congratulated Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on his victory in Brazil's presidential election, expressing hope for stronger bilateral relations and expanded cooperation.

In a congratulatory message to Lula da Silva on Monday, Pezeshkian expressed hope that friendly ties between Iran and Brazil would further expand during the new presidential term.

He also called for enhanced cooperation between Tehran and Brasilia in areas of common interest, saying such efforts would help serve the interests of both nations and strengthen multilateralism, development and international peace.

The Iranian president wished Lula success in carrying out his responsibilities. The leftist President Lula was re-elected against all expectations on Sunday, but his conservative rival Flavio Bolsonaro refused to accept the loss and said he would seek to have the vote annulled.



Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva celebrates following his victory in general election in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on October 25, 2026.

● REUTERS

Lula's dramatic comeback meant Brazil had not followed Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Peru, all backed by US President Donald Trump, in swinging to the right.

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen hailed Lula's re-election as a triumph for "democracy and multilateralism," joining a slew of world leaders who welcomed the leftist figurehead's return for an unprecedented fourth term.

Lula, who turns 81 on Tuesday, defied projections to defeat Bolsonaro, a senator and the son of jailed former far-right president Jair Bolsonaro, and win an unprecedented fourth term.

According to official results, he won 51.8

percent of the votes to 48.2 percent for Flavio Bolsonaro, with Lula pulling around 4.4 million more votes.

Lula was warmly congratulated by the leaders of left-wing governments across Central America, including Mexico, Cuba and Venezuela.

"Long live democracy, the people of Brazil won," Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said on X.

Right-wing governments in Chile, Ecuador and Peru said they wanted to work towards common goals with the region's economic powerhouse.

China echoed that sentiment, while Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi also offered his friend Lula his "heartiest congratulations."

Iran's wartime experience ...

Marandi expressed hope that Iran would draw more extensively on China's governance experience, enabling the country to accelerate its development in the years ahead, once the US-Israeli war against Iran comes to an end.

"After this war comes to an end, and it will come to an end with our victory, no doubt, we should strengthen our relationship with China not on just in the fields of technology and industry, but also to work more closely with one another at the intellectual level and perhaps we would be able to have a joint project together with regards to governance and one of their programs would perhaps be held in Iran."

Marandi also argued that Iran could contribute to the global governance initiative by drawing on its experience of managing the country and maintaining its resilience during the war waged by the United States and Israel.

He said Iran would become by far the most influential actor in West Asia in the coming years, adding that perceptions of the country's regional importance and influence had already begun to change. "Since yesterday literally everyone who I've spoken to has been absolutely

stunned by Iran's competence and performance in this existential war and they look at the Iranian experience with great respect."

According to Marandi, Iran's ability to preserve its sovereignty, strength and dignity while facing immense pressure from a sinister adversary was itself an important example of governance.

"So hopefully with the experience that Iran has had on the battlefield and off battlefield, the Iranians and the Chinese can work together more closely intellectually with regards to the issues of global governance and building a better future."

Importance of global perspective on governance

Marandi said one of the biggest mistakes in discussions on governance was to approach the subject exclusively through a traditional Eurocentric perspective.

He argued that Western countries had long presented their own systems as the ideal model of governance, even as they faced serious challenges at the intellectual, economic and social levels. He also criticized the harm the West had inflicted on other countries, including

Iran, through nearly 48 years of antagonism and, to put it bluntly, criminal behavior; simply because Iran sought to preserve its sovereignty.

"Any decent intellectual and thinker, any independent-minded educated person first of all would contemplate looking at governance from alternative perspectives to learn from the different models," he said.

China, Marandi argued, offers an important example of a country whose development achievements warrant closer examination. By understanding the factors behind its success, other countries could identify lessons relevant to their own governance systems and development paths.

He added that studying different governance models was valuable in itself, while dialogue among friendly countries and intellectuals from around the world could further deepen mutual understanding and create conditions for more effective collective decision-making and, ultimately, better global governance. Marandi described the Forum as an important platform for bringing people together, exchanging perspectives and building a shared understanding of how to shape a better future.

'Iranian nuclear bomb' lie used to justify military aggression: Spox



International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said on Monday that US officials, under the influence of Israel, have spent decades to instill "a big lie called Iran's nuclear bomb" into their public opinion and then used it as a pretext for military aggression against Iran. Iran has never possessed nuclear weapons and has never sought to acquire them, the spokesman said, describing this as part of the reality of the past two decades.

Another part of that reality, he said, was that Iran had engaged in negotiations in good faith and signed an agreement in 2015, only for the United States to withdraw from it three years later without any reason or justification and subsequently impose sweeping measures against Iran.

"We hope the American public becomes aware of these realities," he said.

Baqaei also questioned Washington's repeated claims that it had completely destroyed Iran's nuclear program, saying the United States had

launched another military attack against Iran just eight months after making that assertion. "What is interesting is that they continue to repeat the same claim," he said.

Washington, he added, had fabricated a lie from the outset and spent the past 30 years repeatedly promoting it.

"Repeating a lie does not turn it into the truth," he said.

Baqaei was responding to a question about recent remarks by the former US president Barack Obama who has said Iran didn't have nuclear weapons.

The US, alongside Israel, started launching strikes against Iran in late February, with Trump claiming that Americans were in imminent danger over Iran's nuclear ambitions. But Obama argued that the issue had already been dealt with under his administration — until Trump unraveled it.

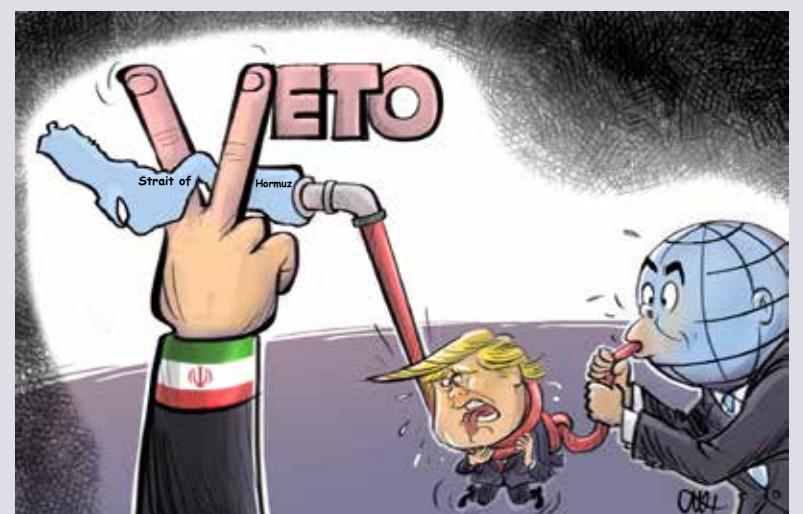
"Let's think about this Iran war. The original rationale was, we're going to go in there and get them to give up their nuclear program, their nuclear weapons," Obama said. "Now, the thing was, Iran didn't have nuclear weapons, because I put a deal in place that everybody acknowledged — kept them from getting nukes. And I didn't have to fire a missile to do it; I just had to engage in diplomacy."

Iran has always underlined that it has never sought to build nuclear weapons and its nuclear program is solely for civilian purposes. Iran has long insisted it has never sought to build nuclear weapons and its nuclear program is solely for civilian purposes.

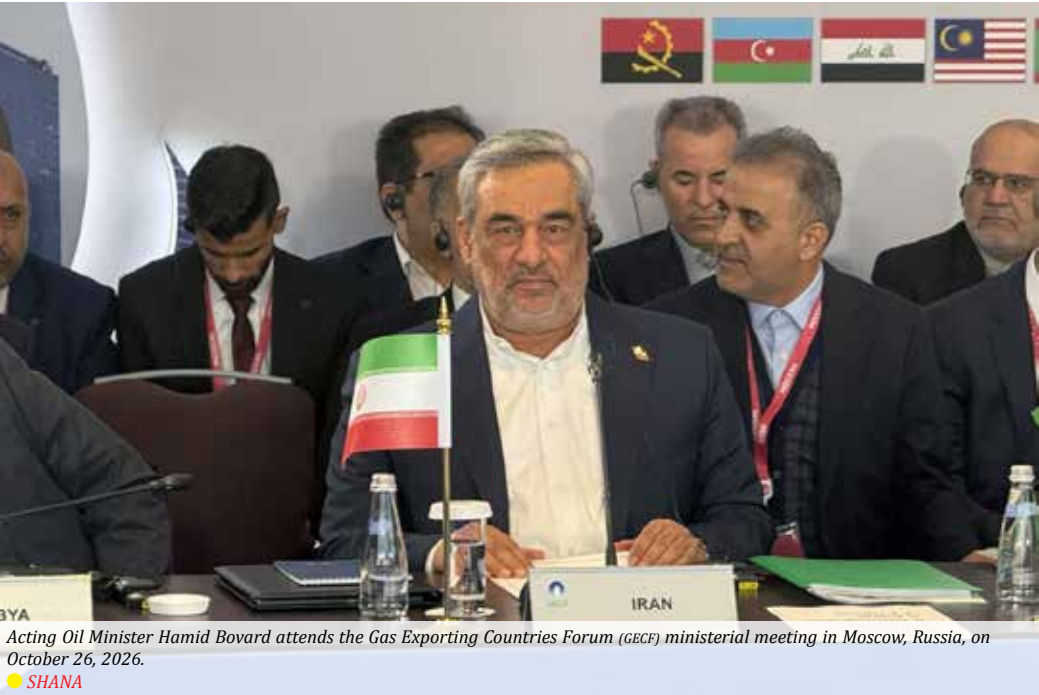


Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Iran calls on GECF states to increase gas share in global energy mix



Acting Oil Minister Hamid Bovard attends the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) ministerial meeting in Moscow, Russia, on October 26, 2026. ● SHANA

Economy Desk

Acting Oil Minister Hamid Bovard on Monday urged the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) to work towards boosting natural gas's share of the global energy mix to 30% over the next

three decades. Bovard told the 28th GECF ministerial meeting in Moscow on October 26 that achieving the target by 2055 would require about \$12 trillion in upstream and downstream investment in the gas industry, according to

the forum's Global Gas Outlook. Addressing his counterparts, Bovard said the outlook projected global natural gas demand would surge by 31% to more than 5.4 trillion cubic meters by 2055, increasing gas's share of the global energy mix from 23%

to 26%, IRNA reported. Bovard said the forum could consider the "ambitious target" of a 30% share "by drawing up a roadmap". He said GECF member states could cooperate in three areas to achieve the goal: establishing joint financing and investment mechanisms for gas projects; expanding technological cooperation, transferring technical know-how and training skilled workers to carry out joint projects; and encouraging dialogue between gas producers and consumers to reduce investment risks and create a lasting balance between suppliers' and consumers' interests. Elsewhere in his speech, Bovard referred to the US-Israeli war against Iran earlier this year, saying the conflict had shown how the consequences of such aggression could affect global energy security and economic growth. Days after the war broke out in late February, Iran shut the Strait of Hormuz, a vital global energy chokepoint through which about 20% of the world's

crude oil and liquefied natural gas had passed daily. Disruptions to traffic through the waterway pushed oil prices from about \$70 a barrel to above \$100. Brent crude was trading at \$114 a barrel on Monday. Liquefied natural gas (LNG) prices also skyrocketed following disruptions to energy supplies from the Persian Gulf. In Asia, the benchmark LNG price climbed from about \$11 per million British thermal units before the war to above \$30 on October 22, a surge of nearly 180%. In Europe, the Dutch TTF benchmark gas price tipped from about €32 per megawatt-hour before the war to more than €96 on Monday. The 28th GECF ministerial meeting is discussing trends in global gas markets and ways to deepen cooperation among gas-exporting countries. Energy ministers are also coordinating efforts to finalize documents for the forum's eighth summit, scheduled for October 27. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian is due to attend the summit and meet Russian

President Vladimir Putin. The GECF was set up in Tehran in 2001, when representatives of 10 gas-exporting countries agreed to form the forum at their first ministerial meeting. It became a formal intergovernmental organization at a ministerial meeting in Moscow in 2008, with its secretariat based in Doha, Qatar. Unlike the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the GECF does not set production quotas. Its focus is on cooperation, information exchange and coordination among gas-producing countries. The forum has 12 full members and eight observer members. Its full members are Algeria, Bolivia, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Iran, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Russia, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Arab Emirates and Venezuela. Angola, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mozambique, Peru and Senegal hold observer status. GECF member countries together account for about 70% of the world's proven natural gas reserves.

Iran oil output at three western fields exceeds Russian contractor's target

Economy Desk

Oil production at three fields in western Iran has exceeded the Russian contractor's target, the head of the Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC) said on Monday. Nasrollah Zarei said daily output from the Paydar East, Cheshmeh Khosh and Dalpari fields had reached 127,000 barrels, above the contractor's commitment of 120,000 barrels per day, according to IRNA. Zarei said the fields' combined daily output stood at about 41,000 barrels when the current administration took office in August 2024. Speaking on Monday about oilfield development projects being carried out in cooperation with Russian companies, Zarei said the Aban and Paydar West project was nearing completion, with about one year remaining before it is finished. The second, larger



project covers the Cheshmeh Khosh, Dalpari and Paydar East fields and is proceeding according to schedule, with about two more years of work expected, he said. Zarei described the Russian company's performance on the projects as satisfactory. He added that once the contractual production targets are met, plans call for increasing output beyond the agreed commitments while also maintaining production levels. He also stressed that PEDEC's projects comply with environmental requirements, saying each project includes an environmental assessment and that no work begins before the necessary permits are obtained.

Zarei said meetings on environmental issues were intended to provide transparency and raise awareness about measures already taken and plans for the future. The company was committed to meeting environmental requirements, he said, adding that support from officials at the Oil Ministry had played an effective role. The Cheshmeh Khosh, Dalpari and Paydar East oilfields are located in western Iran within the operating area of the West Oil and Gas Production Company. They entered production in 2011. A development contract for the three fields was signed in February 2020 involving Russian and Iranian companies. The project moved into the implementation phase in 2020 after the necessary permits were obtained. The project aims to increase and sustain crude oil production and improve the use of reservoir capacity.

Iraqi province threatens disobedience over border shutdown

Economy Desk

The head of Iraq's Maysan provincial council has threatened civil disobedience and road blockades if a key border crossing with Iran is not reopened by Thursday. "We will declare civil disobedience, close all roads and separate the province from the body of Iraq if our demand is not met," Mustafa Adair Mohammadawi said at a protest rally by truck drivers near the Al-Sheeb crossing, Iraqi media reported. Mohammadawi said about 4,000 people depended on the crossing for their livelihoods. His threat to separate Maysan from the rest of Iraq was framed as a protest campaign involving civil disobedience and the blocking of roads linking the province to other parts of the country. The Iraqi government ordered the closure of the Al-Sheeb crossing on October 20 until further notice, prompting protests from truck drivers and businesspeople in Maysan, southern Iraq. The crossing is known as Chazabeh on the Iranian side, in southwestern Khuzestan Province. Truck drivers say the closure has damaged employment, trade and the local economy.



Maysan Governor Habib Zahir al-Fartousi has also urged the Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi to reopen the crossing, warning that a prolonged shutdown would affect prices, commerce and the movement of patients travelling for medical treatment. An adviser to Zaidi had blamed the closure on alleged drug smuggling and the entry of counterfeit banknotes from Iran. Iran's Embassy in Baghdad vehemently rejected the accusations, warning that they could harm relations between the two neighbors. On Friday, Zaidi said closing border crossings with Iran would hurt both countries' economies and could leave Iraq effectively "under an economic siege". Land crossings including Chazabeh and Shalamchah are key routes for Iranian goods entering Iraq, handling millions of tons of cargo.

Iranian media reported on Sunday that most border crossings between the two countries remained operational, with Chazabeh the only crossing that was closed. The secretary of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce said on Monday that trade between the two countries was continuing and that the closure of Chazabeh would not halt Iranian exports. Any restrictions on Iranian goods entering Iraq would hurt Iraqis before affecting Iran, Jahanbakhsh Sanjabi Shirazi said. There are about 18 border crossings between Iran and Iraq, seven of them official, while the rest are unofficial or semi-official, Sanjabi Shirazi said. Commercial activity was proceeding at an acceptable level at 15 of the crossings, he added. The closure of a single crossing, whether temporary or permanent, could disrupt trade for several days as traders and shippers arranged alternative routes for Iranian goods bound for Iraq. But such restrictions would not stop trade between the two countries, he said. Trade between Iran and Iraq exceeded \$10bn in 2025, according to official data, with Iranian exports accounting for most of the total.

Iran-EU trade totals 1.4b euros in first eight months of 2026

Economy Desk

Trade between Iran and the European Union totaled 1.414 billion euros in the first eight months of 2026, down 27% from a year earlier, while trade between Iran and Germany, the bloc's largest trading partner for Tehran, fell 18% to 461 million euros, Eurostat data showed. According to Eurostat data cited by Eqtesad-e Moaser, total trade between Iran and the EU's 27 member states amounted to 1.414 billion euros from January to August 2026, compared with 1.939 billion euros in the same period a

year earlier. EU exports to Iran fell 25% year-on-year to 1.147 billion euros from 1.544 billion euros, while imports from Iran declined 32% to 267 million euros from 395 million euros.

Germany remains Iran's largest EU trading partner

Trade between Iran and Germany totaled 461 million euros in the first eight months of 2026, down 18% from the same period a year earlier, according to Eurostat. German exports to Iran amounted to 347 million euros, down 20% year-on-year,

while imports from Iran totaled 114 million euros, a decline of 13%. Despite the downturn, Germany remained Iran's largest trading partner among EU member states.

EU trade with Iran falls further in August

In August, the European Union exported 166 million euros worth of goods to Iran and imported 33 million euros worth of Iranian goods. EU exports to Iran fell 35% from August 2025, when they totaled 258 million euros, while imports from Iran declined

41% from 56 million euros. Despite tensions stemming from the US-Israeli war against Iran, the decline in trade does not appear to have been significantly linked to the conflict. Eurostat data show that trade between Iran and the EU fell 27% following the US-Israeli attack on Iran in late February, totaling 574 million euros from March to June 2026, compared with 786 million euros in the same period a year earlier. However, bilateral trade had already declined by around 24% in the first two months of 2026, before the conflict began. This suggests that the escalation



of tensions, including those surrounding the Strait of Hormuz, did not significantly alter the existing trade trend. Economic sanctions have been the main factor behind the decline, gradually weakening trade relations between Iran and the EU.



Toxic impact of war on Iran

One of planet's most unique seas in danger



By Paula Hancocks
Award-winning
correspondent for CNN

OPINION

The war of aggression in the Middle East is shaping up to be yet another US war with a toxic legacy. Bombs and missiles have released heavy metals and harmful chemicals into the atmosphere. US-Israeli and Iranian strikes have hit oil facilities, igniting fires that covered Tehran in thick black smoke and oil-saturated rain, exposing millions to pollution which could have long-lasting health impacts. And these strikes are also affecting the Persian Gulf. Attacks on ships and oil infrastructure in the waterway have produced oil spills visible from space. A spill from a tanker has temporarily closed beaches in the Emirate of Umm Al Quwain with authorities working to contain the environmental impacts, according to an announcement on October 22 by the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Climate Change and Environment. It's not been confirmed whether the spill is linked to Iranian attacks but it's yet another sign of the huge risks faced by the Persian Gulf, one of the world's most delicate and unique marine systems. As the war continues, experts are warning of a broader contamination crisis.

A surge in oil pollution

For months, cargo ships and oil tankers have been targeted in the Strait of Hormuz, the vital shipping route for oil and gas between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. The progression from vessel impact to environmental damage is clear to see in many cases, said Brian Barnes, who is part of a

group of satellite oceanographers at the University of South Florida analyzing the effects of this war from afar.

"Some of the major ships that have been targeted, we see prolonged plumes, stretching for hundreds of kilometers away from the impact site," Barnes said.

The Persian Gulf has long suffered from oil pollution, but research by Barnes and other scientists comparing March 2026, when fighting was intense, with the same period last year shows a sharp increase.

"What we're seeing is twice the amount of surface oil in the Persian Gulf area relative to what we would expect in the absence



A satellite image shows oil in the Persian Gulf on April 2, 2026.

● SENTINEL-2/
EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY



of a major [war]," Barnes said. Although, he noted, satellite imagery can only show what is on the surface of the water and not the thickness of the oil, which would give a more accurate picture of the extent of the contamination.

What is harder to assess with limited physical access to the war-riddled waterway is the impact on marine wildlife.

One of the planet's most unique ecosystems

The Persian Gulf hosts an ecosystem teeming with life. It is home to several species of sea turtles, hundreds of species of fish and the world's second-largest population of dugongs, or sea cows.

"One of the world's largest whale shark congregations occurs close to the South Pars oil field where Qatar and Iran meet," said Bernhard Riegl, a professor at Nova Southeastern



The photo shows an oil slick along the southern coast of Iran's Qeshm Island, Persian Gulf, on August 13, 2026.

● AMIRHOSSEIN KHORGOOI/ISNA

University who has studied the Persian Gulf for decades. Sandy offshore islands and expansive seagrass beds make the Persian Gulf an ideal habitat for nesting and breeding. Extensive mangrove forests and coral reef structures create protected nurseries for dolphins, seabirds, and whale sharks. Yet in springtime, traditionally the season for breeding, the war was raging.

Only the hardiest marine life survives in these waters. Not only is the Persian Gulf one of the world's hottest seas, but it also experiences sharp temperature changes throughout the year.

The water near Kuwait City, for

example, goes from highs of around 36 degrees Celsius (97 Fahrenheit) in the height of summer to lows of around 16 degrees Celsius (60 Fahrenheit).

Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak, the UAE's special envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Nature, called for an end to attacks on the Persian Gulf in an editorial earlier this year.

"While the financial costs of damage can be calculated, the loss of ecosystems and species cannot. Once degraded, these systems may not recover," she wrote.

A looming catastrophe

Contamination in the Persian Gulf brings unique challenges as the body of water is relatively shallow — the deepest areas are only around 360 feet — and it is small, at 93,000 square miles. It also has only one entry and exit point connecting it to the open ocean: the Strait of Hormuz, which leads into the Gulf of Oman and the Indian Ocean beyond. This all means pollutants tend not to disperse or dilute easily.

No matter which country or vessel may be a target during this war, the repercussions will have wide impacts, Riegl said: "If we take a drop of oil and put it into the water on the Iranian side of the inflow into the [Persian] Gulf, a year later it will be in Kuwait, two years later it will be on the Omani side of the [Persian] Gulf and float out there."

The 1991 Persian Gulf War should be a cautionary tale, Riegl said. Retreating Iraqi forces set fire to hundreds of oil wells in Kuwait creating an environmental catastrophe felt throughout the Persian Gulf.

"The shorelines were devastatingly affected," Riegl said. "In fact, in many areas of Saudi (Arabia), if you go and dig in the sand, there's still old oil in there. It's just very hard to get rid of."

An additional concern is the fact that tens of millions of Persian Gulf residents rely on desalination plants, which convert seawater into drinking water.

The six countries which form the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council produce around a third of the world's desalinated water. Bahrain and Kuwait are almost entirely dependent on desalination for all drinking water. Oil pollution in the Persian Gulf could damage these facilities, imperiling water supply. When hundreds of millions of gallons were intentionally released into the Persian Gulf during the Iraq war, Kuwait had to rely on Saudi Arabia, Turkey and others to provide hundreds of water tankers and trucks to deliver bottled water.

A natural laboratory

One perhaps unexpected repercussion of environmental damage in the Persian Gulf is that it could undermine scientists' understanding of the impacts climate change will have on the world's seas.

The Persian Gulf's high temperatures are roughly where marine tropics are expected to be around the year 2100, Riegl said.

The Persian Gulf has "some of the most... valuable genetics of any sea on Earth because a lot of the adaptation that will need to be done has already been achieved in the [Persian] Gulf."

"If we want to know what the ocean at large will look like at the end of the century," he added, "the [Persian] Gulf is the area to look at."

The article first appeared on CNN.



Contamination in the Persian Gulf brings unique challenges as the body of water is relatively shallow — the deepest areas are only around 360 feet — and it is small, at 93,000 square miles. It also has only one entry and exit point connecting it to the open ocean: the Strait of Hormuz, which leads into the Gulf of Oman and the Indian Ocean beyond. This all means pollutants tend not to disperse or dilute easily.

War on Iran

A war with lasting environmental, health consequences



By Anne S  n  quier
Research Fellow
at Institute for
International and
Strategic Affairs

OPINION

Wars no longer destroy only territories or infrastructure. They now disrupt the ecological systems upon which the stability of societies depends. The war on Iran illustrates this evolution. Strikes targeting oil facilities, industrial fires and damage to energy infrastructure have caused significant air and water pollution, exposing populations to immediate and long-term health risks.

In a world already subject to strong environmental pressures, these conflict-related ecological destructions can durably weaken ecosystems, natural resources and the living conditions of civilian populations.

Industrial fires with major atmospheric effects

Strikes that hit several oil depots located near Tehran generated large plumes of black smoke above an urban area of nearly 10 million inhabitants.

The atmospheric impacts of such events was observed and documented by satellite. Instruments on board the Sentinel-5P satellite of the European Copernicus programme make it possible to measure several atmospheric pollutants, such as nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide or carbon monoxide, and to map the plumes generated by industrial fires or damaged energy infrastructure. Contemporary wars are thus becoming increasingly observable in their environmental dimensions from space, helping to document the ecological damage associated with military operations.

These plumes contain, in particular, benzene, formaldehyde, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and other fine particulate matter. The latter can penetrate deep into the respiratory tract and aggravate pre-existing conditions, particularly respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. When exposure is prolonged, these impacts become long-lasting and may be accompanied by an increased risk of cancers, as well as certain neurological disorders.

In a context where air quality already constitutes one of the main environmental problems in Iran, these industrial fires further increase the exposure of millions of inhabitants to high levels of air pollution.

Soil pollution and toxic debris: the invisible legacy of wars

Beyond fires or other spectacular destruction, the explosion of munitions and military debris can also lead to long-term soil contamination. Analyses conducted in several conflict zones have highlighted the presence of heavy metals such as lead, cadmium, nickel or chromium in bombed areas. These contam-



Residents of Tehran watch the sky turn black over the Iranian capital on the evening of March 8, 2026, after Israeli strikes on oil storage facilities the day before.

● ANADOLU

inants can persist in soils and gradually enter food chains.

Urban destruction constitutes a major source of contamination, through debris that may contain asbestos, industrial chemicals and/or remnants of unexploded ordnance. The management of these materials often represents one of the main environmental challenges in the post-conflict period.

Recent conflicts illustrate the scale of these phenomena. In Ukraine, the bombing of industrial infrastructure and urban areas has led to the dispersion of numerous pollutants into the environment. In the Gaza Strip, the massive destruction of buildings and infrastructure has generated millions of tonnes of rubble, which will significantly complicate decontamination and reconstruction operations.

These forms of contamination, often less visible than immediate destruction, can prolong the environmental and health impacts of a conflict for decades, long after the fighting has ended.

A water crisis exacerbated by the war

The environmental risks linked to the war on Iran also concern water resources.

Explosions and fires have caused hydrocarbons to flow into urban drainage systems and certain waterways, potentially contaminating soils and groundwater. Such pollution is likely to durably affect water quality.

This deterioration is occurring in a country already facing a particularly severe water crisis. Iran has for several years experienced a combination of more frequent droughts, agricultural overexploitation and contested water management policies. The overexploitation of groundwater constitutes another major vulnerability. In this context of extreme water stress, water-related infrastructure becomes particularly sensitive. Allegations of attacks against a desalination plant on Qeshm Island also emerged during the war, revealing the growing vulnerability of water infrastructure in contemporary

wars.

In a context of extreme water stress, these attacks on water infrastructure illustrate how wars can transform pre-existing environmental vulnerabilities into factors of health and social destabilisation.

Environmental infrastructure as strategic targets

The war on Iran reveals a gradual transformation in the nature of contemporary warfare. Environmental infrastructure is becoming a strategic target.

Energy installations, water systems, sanitation networks and maritime routes now constitute critical nodes whose destruction can trigger systemic disruptions within societies.

Incidents involving several oil tankers in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman illustrate this vulnerability. Each attack raises the risk of oil spills in a region

that concentrates major energy routes and sensitive marine ecosystems.

Farmworkers harvest crops as smoke billows after US-Israeli air strikes in Iran in March 2026.

● MAJID SAEEDI/GETTY IMAGES



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In societies that are highly dependent on complex infrastructure for access to water, energy or food, the environmental installations become major strategic levers. Their destruction is not only intended to weaken the adversary's military capabilities, but also to exert pressure on the living conditions of populations and on the stability of states.

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In societies that are highly dependent on complex infrastructure for access to water, energy or food, these installations become major strategic levers. Their destruction is not only intended to weaken the adversary's military capabilities, but also to exert pressure on the living conditions of populations and on the stability of states.

The targeting of environmental infrastructure is thus increasingly part of contemporary logics of coercion and indirect deterrence. By threatening access to essential resources such as water or energy, belligerents may seek to durably undermine the economic, health and social balances of their adversary.

However, damage to ecosystems in warzones does not produce only local effects. In a world already confronted with planetary boundaries, these destructions can weaken ecological systems upon which global stability depends, turning certain conflicts into environmental disruptions that may extend far beyond the areas of combat.

Recent conflicts: a global trend

Wars no longer take place in isolated spaces, far from infrastructure and populations. Fighting now occurs at the heart of densely urbanised and industrialised territories, which amplifies their environmental and health impacts. The ecological dimension of conflict is not new. During the Persian Gulf War in 1991, Iraqi forces set fire to more than six hundred oil wells in Kuwait, generating immense plumes of smoke for several months, darkening the skies over the region and causing one of the largest environmental disasters associated with a conflict.

More recently, Russia's attack on Ukraine in 2022 led to multiple forms of industrial pollution. The bombing of energy infrastructure and industrial facilities contaminated air, soils and water resources. The destruction of the

Kakhovka dam in 2023 caused massive flooding in the lower Dnieper basin, submerging vast natural and agricultural areas. The draining of the reservoir disrupted aquatic ecosystems and dispersed industrial pollutants as well as contaminated sediments, with environmental impacts likely to persist for many years.

These examples show that contemporary conflicts do not only destroy infrastructure or territories: they can also generate long-lasting environmental disruptions.

Wars, pollution and planetary boundaries

The war on Iran takes place within a geopolitical context marked by increasing environmental pressures. Several planetary boundaries identified by the Stockholm Resilience Centre have now been exceeded or are severely disrupted, particularly those relating to climate, pollution, biodiversity and biogeochemical cycles.

In this context, armed conflicts can act as accelerators of environmental degradation: industrial fires, soil contamination, maritime pollution or damage to water resources add to already existing ecological pressures.

Armed conflicts also constitute a direct source of greenhouse gas emissions. In 2022, armed forces and their supply chains accounted for 5.5 % of global emissions. A level comparable to, or even higher than, that of certain highly publicised civilian sectors such as aviation. In a context of accelerated rearmament and the multiplication of conflicts, this carbon footprint is likely even higher today.

Yet these dimensions remain largely absent from public debates on environmental responsibility. The stability of societies increasingly depends on the proper functioning of the ecological systems that sustain human life. When these systems are degraded, the consequences are multiple: health crises, water shortages, food insecurity, population displacement... all of which threaten post-conflict resilience.

In a world already constrained by planetary boundaries, environmental destruction linked to conflicts thus constitutes an additional factor of global instability. It highlights that human security does not depend solely on the balance of power or military capabilities, but also on the preservation of the ecological systems upon which societies depend.

In this context, war increasingly appears as a driver of ecological crisis in its own right.

At a time when the environmental and health responsibilities of the aviation, agricultural or road sectors are widely debated, the environmental cost of conflicts and the persistent inability of our societies to resolve their differences other than through violence remain largely underestimated.

The article was first published by the Institute for International and Strategic Affairs.

Wrestling World Championships:

Farrokhi defends 82kg title
as Iran sweeps four Greco-Roman medals

Sports Desk

Gholamreza Farrokhi spearheaded Iran's four-medal haul by defending his 82kg title on Sunday, as the country made an early statement in its bid for a second successive Greco-Roman team crown at the Wrestling World Championships in Astana, Kazakhstan.

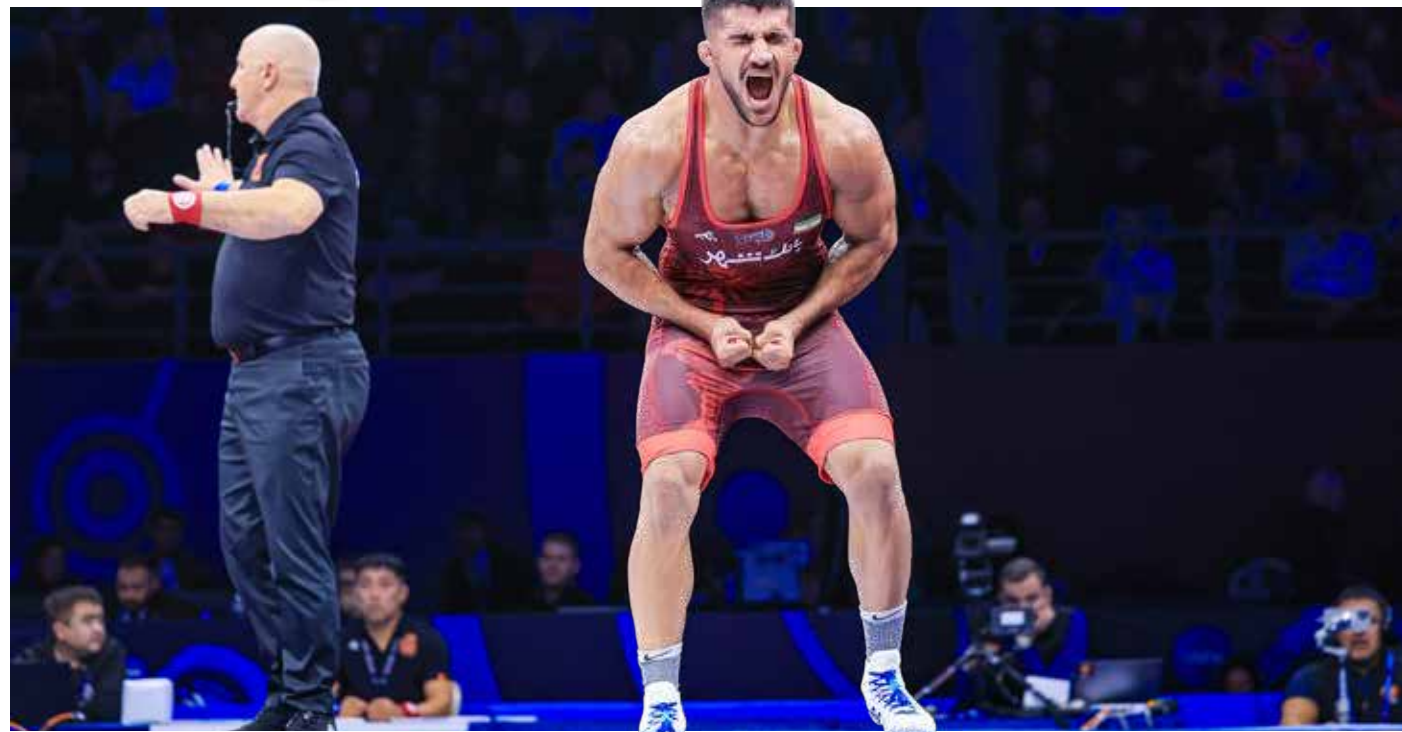
Payam Ahmadi and Ali Ahmadi-Vafa, meanwhile, added two silver medals to Iran's haul, while Ali Oskou won a consolation bronze, lifting the Iranian team to the top of the standings with 80 points – 20 clear of second-placed Azerbaijan – by the end of the second day of competition.

After a series of below-par performances in the 87kg category on the continental stage in recent months, Farrokhi was back to his best on returning to familiar territory, capping his campaign with a 7-1 victory over Turkey's Yuksel Saricicek, who had already pulled off a major upset by defeating Kyrgyzstan's Akzhol Makhmudov – a two-time world champion and Olympic bronze medalist – in the semifinals.

After seeing two compatriots lose their finals earlier in the evening session, Farrokhi stayed patient and kept his composure before scoring the decisive points in the second period to open Iran's gold account in Astana.

With the score tied at 1-1 on criteria after the two wrestlers traded passivity points, Farrokhi was on the verge of being forced out when he suddenly reached underneath his opponent and unleashed a counter body lift for four points with 1:50 remaining, leaving a stunned Saricicek slapping the mat in frustration.

As the clock ticked down and his efforts were repeatedly repelled, Saricicek gave up the fight with several seconds remaining, conceding a two-point penalty that further extended Farrokhi's winning margin.



Iran's Gholamreza Farrokhi celebrates after winning the Greco-Roman 82kg title at the Wrestling World Championships in Astana, Kazakhstan, on Oct. 25, 2026.

● UWW

Saravi stunned in semis

Earlier in the day, Iran had secured two more places in the finals through Danial Sohrabi and Fardin Hedayati before reigning world and Olympic champion Mohammad-Hadi Saravi suffered a shock 5-1 defeat to Russia's Artur Sargsian in a controversial 97kg semifinal. The result prompted protests from the Iranian camp over the officiating decisions at mat side.

The defeat marked Saravi's first international loss since the 2023 World Championships semifinals, ending a 30-match winning streak for the two-time world champion. He had beaten Sargsian in their previous two meetings, including last year's final.

In the 72kg category, Sohrabi, a bronze medalist last year, hit a four-point suplex after a takedown and turned Kyrgyz opponent Amantur Ismailov for a quick victory. A failed challenge brought the final score to 9-0, setting up a final encounter with Hungary's Krisztian Istvan Vancza.

Hedayati, who has three age-group titles in the superheavyweight category, marked his senior World Championships debut in style by powering his way into the 130kg final.

The young Iranian, who stunned reigning world champion Amin Mirzazadeh in the national team trials to earn his place in Astana, opened his campaign with a fall victory over Lithuania's Romas Fridrikas before claiming three technical superiority wins without conceding a single point. He will face reigning silver medalist Darius Attila Vitek of Hungary in the final.

In a battle between youth and experience in the 55kg category, Ahmadi, a day after his 20th birthday, suffered a defeat in the final against veteran Azerbaijani wrestler Eldaniz Azizli, settling for a second consecutive silver medal at the Senior World Championships.

Beaten by the Iranian prodigy in last year's semifinals, Azizli, 34, made the most of the slightest opening presented by his tough opponent in a cagey affair. Azizli scored a perfectly timed counter from the bottom position in par terre to secure a 3-1 victory and claim his fifth world gold medal before announcing his retirement after the bout.

Azizli failed to score from the top position in par terre in the first period. The Iranian got his chance in the second and, needing to score while trailing on criteria, started with a reverse cross-body hold before moving to a front headlock.

But that was where the young Iranian made a fatal mistake. As he tried to twist Azizli over, the Azerbaijani pulled down on Ahmadi's shoulders, sending both wrestlers temporarily to the mat and scoring a two-point exposure to take a 3-1 lead that he never relinquished.

"When I secured the first passivity call, I told myself right there on the mat that I had effectively won 70 to 80 percent of the match," Azizli said. "My tactic was to ensure, no matter what, that I would be the one to get the first 'active' status and score the first point."

"In the worst-case scenario, I would win 1-1. In the final moments, I knew that even if we wrestled for another whole day, I would never have conceded a point to him on that mat."

Lack of experience also cost Ahmadi-Vafa a chance at his first senior world title, as the 21-year-old surrendered a commanding first-period lead to suffer a fall defeat against world U23 champion Koto Gomi of Japan in the 60kg final.

Gomi capped a run to gold that included victories over Paris Olympic silver medalist Liguao Cao of China and defending champion Aidos Sultangali of Kazakhstan – in front of the latter's home crowd, no less – with the most improbable of wins.

Gomi fell into a 7-1 hole in the first period after Ahmadi-Vafa scored a stepout, a takedown and two two-point throws. The Iranian then maintained the gap by squirming his way out of two well-executed arm-throw attempts by Gomi.

But Gomi noticed that his efforts had taken a toll on Ahmadi-Vafa. "There were parts of the first period that were a bit rough, but I had trained and the opponent had started to get winded," Gomi said. "Somehow I was able to turn it around."

In the second period, the Japanese wrestler waited for the precise moment to strike, hitting the Iranian with an inner arm throw that sent him directly onto his back before clamping down for the fall in 4:13 to cap his impressive run in Astana.

The final heartbreak prevented Ahmadi-Vafa, a senior Asian bronze medalist this year, from joining the so-called "Grand Slam" club, having already won world gold medals at the U17, U20 and U23 levels.

Oskou, meanwhile, recovered from a 2-0 defeat to Azerbaijan's Sanan Suleymanov in Saturday's semifinal to edge Uzbekistan's Doniyorxon Nakibov in the 77kg bronze-medal bout.

Sports Desk

Iranian weightlifters will look to make their mark on the global stage following a demanding campaign at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games when the IWF World Championships get underway in Ningbo, China, on Monday. Super-heavyweight duo Ali Davoudi and Alireza Yousefi will headline the eight-man men's roster, with both expected to contend in the +110kg category.

Former world champion and Olympic silver medalist Davoudi will enter the competition on the back of a morale-boosting gold medal at the Asian Games last month, while Yousefi will also fancy his chances after making a strong return to action at the Asian Championships in May following an 18-month injury layoff. He set a world record to win clean and jerk gold, adding a snatch bronze and a silver medal in the total. Former world champion Mirmostafa Javadi and Abdollah Beiranvand will compete in the 85kg category, while Ali A'alipour – also an Asian Games gold medalist – and Hamidreza Zarei will feature in the 95kg division.

Weightlifting World Championships:

Iranians aiming to make their mark on global stage

In the 110kg category, Alireza Moeini will look to build on his impressive performance at last year's World Championships, where he claimed snatch gold and total silver. Joining Moeini in the category is Alireza Nasiri. The young Iranian set two world junior records on his way to winning clean and jerk gold and total silver last year but endured a disappointing Asian Games campaign, missing out on the podium.

Javadi and Beiranvand will be Iran's first lifters in action, competing in Group A of the 85kg category with declared entry totals of 375kg. Colombia's Yeison López leads the entry list with 390kg. Javadi will be making his



Iran's Alireza Yousefi will compete in the men's +110kg category at the Weightlifting World Championships.

● IWF

fifth appearance at the World Championships. His previous outing, in Manama, Bahrain, in 2024, ended in disappointment after he failed to register a successful clean and jerk, leaving him without a total.

In the 95kg category, A'alipour will compete in Group A with an entry total of 400kg, the highest among the participants in the division, while Zarei is scheduled to lift in Group B with a declared total of 380kg. A'alipour finished fourth overall at the World Championships in Norway, recording 176kg in the snatch and 211kg in the clean and jerk for a total of 387kg. He claimed snatch silver and placed fourth in the clean and jerk.

Zarei, meanwhile, won clean and jerk gold in the 96kg category at the World Junior Championships in Lima, Peru, after lifting 209kg. In the 110kg division, Nasiri will compete in Group

A with an entry total of 420kg, while Moeini is scheduled to lift in Group B with 397kg. The category features 46 competitors, with Uzbekistan's Akbar Djuraev leading the entry list at 425kg.

Nasiri enjoyed a successful outing at the World Championships in Norway, winning silver medals in both the clean and jerk and the total. His 231kg clean and jerk also set a world junior record.

Moeini also made his mark in Norway, winning snatch gold and total silver in the 94kg category after lifting 182kg in the snatch to establish a world record.

Davoudi and Yousefi will round off Iran's men's campaign in the +110kg division, both carrying declared entry totals of 455kg. Armenia's Varazdat Lalayan tops the entry list at 460kg. Davoudi won snatch bronze at the previous World Championships with a

196kg lift but failed to register a successful clean and jerk. Yousefi, meanwhile, claimed clean and jerk gold with 262kg and total bronze with 456kg at the 2024 World Championships in Manama.

In the women's competition, Reyhaneh Karimi will compete in Group A of the 69kg category with an entry total of 247kg. The young Iranian will look to build on her historic Asian Games campaign, where she won bronze to secure Iran's first-ever women's weightlifting medal at the multi-sport event.

North Korea's Hyang Kuk Song leads the entry list in the category at 270kg. Karimi finished ninth at the World Junior Championships last year.

Nasim Qassemi will make her World Championships debut in the 77kg division, competing in Group C with an entry total of 237kg. The category features 38 competitors, with China's Peng Cuiting and Yang Qixia leading the entry list at 270kg.

Tabriz's historic mansion preserves legacy of Iran's Constitutional Revolution

Iranica Desk

Walking through the old streets and historic quarters of Tabriz can feel like stepping back into the past. Among the city's historic buildings are landmarks that preserve more than stone and brick; they bear witness to pivotal moments in Iran's history. The Constitution House of Tabriz is one such landmark, keeping alive the memory of a defining period in the country's modern history.

Located near Tabriz's historic bazaar, the Constitution House, also known as the Kuzeh Kanani House, is a Qajar-era mansion closely associated with Iran's Constitutional Revolution. During the movement, it became a gathering place for several prominent constitutionalists. Today, the building serves as a museum dedicated to the revolution and Tabriz's role in the struggle for constitutional government, according to IRNA. The house stands in an area that has long been one of the city's principal economic and social centers. Its proximity to the historic bazaar and the Jaame Mosque of Tabriz places it within a wider network of landmarks reflecting the city's commercial, religious and political life. Visitors can explore the house while also experiencing the historic urban fabric surrounding it.

The mansion was built around 1868, during the second half of the Qajar period, and belonged to Haji Mehdi Kuzeh Kanani, a prominent merchant in Tabriz. Its historical significance grew during the Constitutional Revolution, when Kuzeh Kanani made the house available to constitutionalists. It subsequently became a venue for meetings and discussions about the political changes sweeping the country.

In Tabriz, the Constitutional Revolution was more than a political movement; it also transformed social life across the city. The bazaar, civic as-

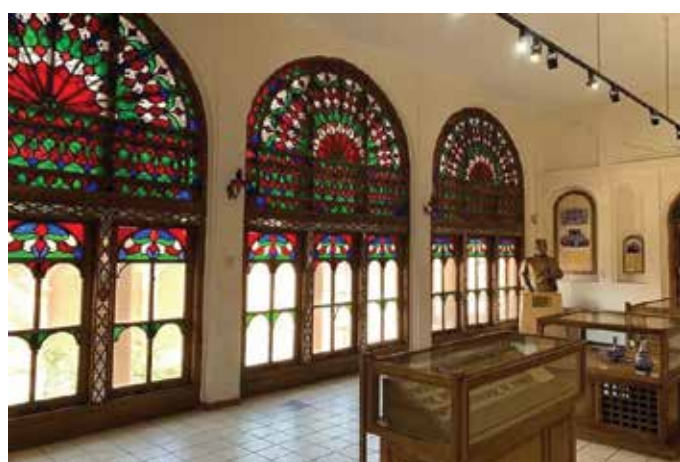


sociations, mosques and the homes of influential merchants all became important spaces for political activity. The Kuzeh Kanani House was part of this environment, hosting gatherings where supporters of the movement exchanged views, consulted one another and discussed developments.

Following the bombardment of Iran's parliament by order of Mohammad Ali Shah Qajar in 1908, the country entered a new phase of political turmoil. Tabriz emerged as a major center of resistance by constitutionalists. During this period, Kuzeh Kanani's house was used for meetings and other activities associated with the movement.

The building's historical importance led to its registration on Iran's National Heritage List in 1975. It was subsequently protected and restored, and in 1996, it was converted into the Constitution Museum. Documents, photographs and other historical objects relating to the Constitutional Revolution are now displayed there. A private residence that once hosted political activists has thus become a public space where later generations can learn about a pivotal chapter in Iran's history.

The Constitution House is also notable for its architecture. Built on a plot of approximately 1,300 square meters, the



two-story mansion is attributed to Vali, an architect from Tabriz. Its use of brick, stone and mud-brick reflects the construction methods associated with residential buildings of the Qajar period. The arrangement of its rooms and their relationship with the courtyard are characteristic features of traditional urban houses in Tabriz.

One of the first features to catch visitors' attention is the building's Orsi windows, fitted with colored glass. These traditional wooden windows were valued both for their decorative appeal and for their role in filtering daylight and connecting interior spaces with the outdoors. As sunlight passes through the colored panes, it casts changing patterns of light across the interior, highlighting the interplay



● booking.ir

tution House retains a courtyard with garden plots and a pool, offering visitors a glimpse into the domestic life of urban Tabriz during the Qajar period. The courtyard also establishes a direct connection between the interior rooms and the outdoors. Rooms and verandas are arranged around this central space, illustrating how traditional house design combined practical needs with architectural considerations.

The Constitution House is closely associated with figures who played important roles in the Constitutional Revolution in Tabriz. Among the best-known are Sattar Khan and Baqer Khan, whose names became synonymous with the constitutionalists' resistance in the city. Other figures mentioned in historical accounts associated with the house include Saqeh al-Eslam Tabrizi and Haji Mirza Aqa Farshi.

Yet the significance of the house extends beyond its association with prominent individuals. It recalls a period when sections of Iranian society debated constitutional government, parliamentary representation, the rule of law and limits on royal authority. For visitors unfamiliar with the details of the revolution, the museum provides an accessible introduction to these debates and the people who shaped them.

The building's political history did not end with the Constitutional Revolution. During the political upheavals in Iranian Azarbaijan in 1945 and 1946, the house reportedly served once again as a venue for political meetings. Some historical accounts describe it as a gathering place for leaders of the Azerbaijan Democratic Party during that period.

These successive chapters illustrate how the mansion became associated with different phases of Tabriz's political and social history. Its significance, therefore, lies not only in its architectural features but also in the events and gatherings connected with its past.

Today, the Constitution Museum displays documents, photographs and memorabilia related to the Constitutional Revolution. The exhibits introduce visitors to prominent figures of the period and provide historical material that helps place the movement in context. By presenting these objects within the historic building itself, the museum connects documentary evidence with the setting in which political discussions once took place.

Sculptures of Sattar Khan and Baqer Khan, along with historical cannons displayed in the grounds, further evoke the struggles associated with the revolution. Together with the archival material and architectural features, these exhibits offer visitors a tangible link to the events that helped shape Iran's modern political history.

For Tabriz, the Constitution House is both an architectural landmark and a repository of collective memory. Its rooms, windows and courtyard reflect the domestic architecture of the Qajar era, while its historical associations recall a period of political mobilization and debate. Preserving the mansion allows these different dimensions of the city's heritage to remain accessible to future generations.

Reading Room

Book documents ten centuries of medical history in Semnan

Iranica Desk

Medicine is more than the treatment of illness; it is also an integral part of a society's history. In Semnan, generations of physicians have contributed to public health, leaving a legacy that The History of Medicine and Physicians in Semnan seeks to preserve.

The book chronicles ten centuries of medical practice in the Iranian city, documenting the lives of more than 100 physicians and tracing the development of healthcare facilities across different historical periods, according to IRNA.

From early forms of treatment carried out with limited resources to the establishment of hospitals, clinics, pharmacies and specialized medical services, healthcare has long been intertwined with everyday life.

Physicians, too, have played a role beyond treating individual patients, becoming part of the social and cultural history of the communities they served. Much of Semnan's medical history has remained scattered across written records, personal recollections and surviving documents. Without systematic efforts to collect and preserve these accounts, significant parts of this heritage risk being lost.

The book brings together the biographies of more than 100 physicians who lived and worked from the 10th century to the 1980s. It also examines the history of eight hospitals, from the Qajar era to the present day, as well as 16 clinics and eight pharmacies.

The research extended beyond written sources, drawing on the memories and firsthand ac-

counts of people familiar with the city's medical past.

Mohammad (Amir) Azizoddin, one of the book's authors, said the scarcity of written records, the deaths of several physicians and difficulties contacting doctors who had emigrated, as well as their families, posed major challenges for the research. These obstacles, he said, underscored the importance of oral history and interviews with people familiar with the subject.

According to Azizoddin, the researchers conducted approximately 150 hours of oral-history interviews with 70 people. They also consulted more than 150 pages of historical documents, over 100 photographs and 80 books and articles.

The book additionally records the names of more than 1,050 healthcare professionals, in-

cluding general practitioners, specialists and subspecialists, dentists, pharmacists, laboratory professionals, nurses and midwives.

Abdoljavad Rahimpour, a veteran figure in Iran's dentistry sector, described the publication as a valuable contribution to preserving Semnan's medical and scientific heritage for future generations.

He emphasized that collecting historical documents, written sources and oral accounts is essential to reconstructing the history of medicine. Preserving such works, he added, also helps safeguard a region's cultural identity while highlighting the contributions of physicians and other healthcare professionals across generations.

Saeed Dehghanlou, director-general of Semnan Prov-

ince's public libraries, also highlighted the role of libraries in promoting a culture of reading and connecting research publications with the wider public. He praised the authors for documenting an important part of the province's scientific and social history and stressed the need to support writers and valuable cultural works. Published in Semnan by Abrokh Publications, The History of Medicine and Physicians in Semnan was written by Mohammad (Amir) Azizoddin and Hamidreza Nazari (Hekmat), with an introduction by Shahrokh Mousavi and editing by Majid Kasaei.

The 359-page illustrated volume includes photographs and tables and is the fifth instalment in the Contemporary History of Semnan Province series.





Culture can bridge political divides, says ECO institute chief

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

In a region whose peoples share deep historical, cultural and civilizational ties, culture can transcend political borders and provide a foundation for dialogue, mutual understanding and lasting cooperation. The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), established to promote economic cooperation and regional development, also seeks to strengthen the historical and cultural bonds among its member states. Based in Tehran, the ECO Cultural Institute works to build on this shared heritage by promoting literary and artistic exchanges, cooperation among universities and cultural institutions, and greater awareness of member countries' cultures. Cultural diplomacy can play a significant role in this effort by deepening mutual understanding, reducing misunderstandings and creating opportunities for dialogue, even when political differences strain relations between countries. Muhammad Hassan, the institute's head, believes cultural exchanges can bring people and governments closer together because, as he puts it, culture knows no borders. Hassan, a senior Pakistani diplomat with more than three decades of experience in foreign policy, international cooperation and regional diplomacy, has led the institute for about 10 months. In an interview with Iran Daily, he discussed the institute's efforts to expand cooperation among universities, artists, writers and cultural institutions across member states, promote translations between regional languages and deepen public understanding of the region's shared heritage. He also highlighted the long-standing historical and linguistic ties between Iran and Pakistan, while identifying limited funding, staff shortages and the participation of only some ECO member states in the institute as obstacles to achieving its goals.

IRAN DAILY: You have spent many years in Pakistani diplomacy and have also served at Pakistan's embassy in Tehran. Could you tell us about your diplomatic career?

HASSAN: I was posted to Iran from 1995 to the end of 1997. It was not an easy period in several respects, but I completed my assignment in Tehran successfully. I also served as a diplomat in several other countries and locations, including the United Arab Emirates, China, Washington and New York in the United States, Tunisia, Jakarta in Indonesia, and Sri Lanka. After retiring, I was given the opportunity to take on the role of head of the ECO Cultural Institute.

How does cultural diplomacy differ from political diplomacy, and why has it attracted greater attention in recent years?

Cultural diplomacy is closely linked to political diplomacy. Relations between countries are shaped by many factors, and foreign policy, trade, the economy and even cultural affairs cannot be entirely separated from political diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy is one of the important foundations for improving relations between countries and making those ties stronger and more durable. Culture is part of political diplomacy. Some believe its role in advancing relations between countries has become more important than ever and that, in some cases, it can even move ahead of political diplomacy.

How can cultural ties help reduce political misunderstandings and build trust among ECO member states?

Cultural diplomacy can help address some challenges, but its greatest benefit is bringing people from different countries closer together and strengthening connections between governments and their populations. It creates more opportunities for mutual understanding. One of the main problems in relations between countries, particularly neighboring states, is misunderstanding, which can arise when communication is insufficient or ineffective. The beauty of cultural diplomacy is that culture knows no borders. When a literary conference is held,



ECO Cultural Institute president
Muhammad Hassan
● IRAN DAILY

for example, writers, intellectuals and experts from different countries can take part and exchange ideas without political borders standing in their way. Such contact and closer interaction can help reduce misunderstandings. In short, cultural diplomacy is a means of bringing people and governments closer together and fostering greater understanding. It can also help ease tensions and manage existing challenges. Afghanistan is one example. As you know, we have political difficulties with Afghanistan in some areas. Nevertheless, the ECO Cultural Institute organizes programs and invites the Afghan ambassador and experts to discuss cultural issues. We continue dialogue and cooperation on the basis of our shared cultural ties. Culture knows no borders, and this allows us to build better understanding and stronger connections despite political differences.

Iran and Pakistan share deep historical, cultural and linguistic ties. What joint cultural initiatives could help strengthen relations between the two countries?

Our focus is not limited to bilateral relations between Iran and Pakistan. We also want to expand cultural ties among all countries in the region. The two countries' embassies carry out extensive cultural activities, and Iranian cultural centers in Pakistan and Pakistani cultural centers in Iran also work to strengthen these ties. But we should not be satisfied with what has been achieved so far. There is still much more to do. Iran and Pakistan share a rich cultural heritage, including linguistic ties. A substantial part of Urdu vocabulary, for example, has Persian roots. We should build on these connections and give people in both countries more opportunities to learn about each other's cultural heritage. Muhammad Iqbal is a prominent figure in this shared heritage. His ideas and works are important to both countries. In Pakistan, poets such as Hafez and Saadi are also



well known.

Ali Hamadani, a prominent scholar and mystic who lived in the eighth century of the Islamic calendar and is known in Pakistan as Shah-e-Hamadan, holds a special place in the country's cultural heritage. This shared legacy offers valuable opportunities for cultural cooperation. By introducing these figures to wider audiences, exchanging literary works and organizing joint programs, we can strengthen the cultural ties between our peoples.

What has the ECO Cultural Institute done to advance this agenda? Are new projects planned, or are there areas that deserve greater attention?

One of the institute's main goals is to strengthen cultural connections among member countries and turn those ties into practical activities and projects. Cultural programs have been part of the institute's work for years, but we have sought to expand them. One initiative has been to build networks among universities in ECO member states. We have also worked to strengthen links among artists, cultural producers, writers and filmmakers across the region. Another area is literary translation, including translating Persian works into Urdu and Urdu works

into Persian.

The aim is to foster greater mutual understanding among academics, artists and cultural professionals in ECO countries. We believe direct contact among these groups can deepen their understanding of one another and open the door to broader cooperation.

How successful has the institute been in meeting its objectives, and what obstacles remain?

We still have a long way to go to achieve the institute's full objectives. One reason is that only five of the Economic Cooperation Organization's 10 member states belong to the ECO Cultural Institute. The institute operates under ECO, and implementing joint regional projects requires broader participation from member countries. We also face financial constraints and staff shortages. The resources and facilities available to us are not sufficient to achieve all our goals or carry out every project we would like to undertake. Despite the work done so far, much remains to be accomplished. We hope that stronger cooperation among member states, greater cultural participation and additional resources will allow us to expand our programs and increase their impact.

The institute regularly hosts cultural programs and exhibitions showcasing different member countries. What role do these events play in its work?

We have a program called 'Introducing Member Countries', which brings together a series of cultural meetings and events. We have held programs featuring countries such as Afghanistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan, and recently hosted an event introducing Pakistan at the institute. The exhibition 'Pakistan Through the Ages' was part of this effort. It aimed to give audiences a broader understanding of Pakistan's culture and civilization and to create more opportunities for cultural exchange between Iran, Pakistan and other ECO member states. The purpose of these events is to introduce member countries' cultures, histories and civilizations to one another. They are not based on the assumption that people in the region know nothing about their neighbors. Rather, they aim to deepen existing knowledge, strengthen mutual understanding and create more opportunities for people to discover one another's cultural heritage. I hope this cooperation will continue in the years ahead.



● NAZANIN BABAKHANI/IRNA

Iran, China launch 48,000-hectare dust control project

Social Desk

Iran and China have launched a joint project to restore the Salehiyeh-Alahabad Wetland in Qazvin and Alborz provinces, southwest of Tehran to tackle dust hotspots across an area of more than 48,000 hectares. The project's implementation plans were discussed at an online technical meeting over the weekend, Mehr News Agency reported on Monday.

The project focuses on water management, wetland restoration and improving local livelihoods. The initiative involves the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the University of Tehran and Iran's Plan and Budget Organization. It is coordinated by the secretariat of Iran's National Headquarters for Policy Making and Coordination of Dust Storm Management. The Salehiyeh-Alahabad Wetland degradation and the loss of

vegetation can contribute to the spread of dust hotspots, affecting residents' health and economic activities in surrounding areas. The project's first phase includes modifying drainage networks, reopening water transfer routes, establishing natural and artificial windbreaks, carrying out biological measures and using environmentally compatible mulches. Supporting and empowering local communities is also among the project's priorities.

Behzad Raygani, secretary of the national headquarters on dust storm management, stressed the need for integrated water management, wetland restoration, conservation agriculture and the stabilization of critical dust hotspots. The initiative is part of broader environmental cooperation between Iran and China and aims to improve coordination among the institutions responsible for addressing dust storms.