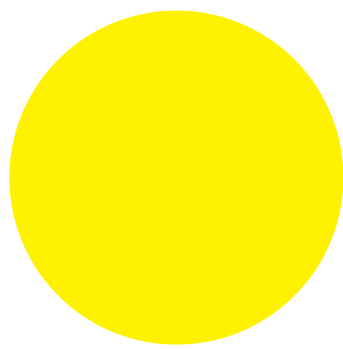


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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (Front 4th L) poses for family photo at the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) summit in Moscow, Russia on October 27, 2026.

president.ir

Quartet meeting in Tehran signals push for a new regional order

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

On Monday, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkey held a four-way meeting in Tehran attended by senior security and military officials from the four countries. The talks focused on regional security and stability, recent developments in the region, and joint co-operation. The meeting came amid growing concerns over the possibility of a renewed war against Iran. Speaking to Iran Daily, international affairs expert Hassan Beheshtipour said that, given the current climate of heightened threats and the possibility of conflict, the talks could send a positive message that regional countries are working together to establish a new regional order. Such cooperation, he added, could make it more difficult for outside powers to exploit the prevailing regional climate to pursue warmongering policies.

IRAN DAILY: What were the objectives of the Tehran quartet meeting, and what were the main issues discussed by Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkey?

BEHESHTIPOUR: The meeting's main objective was to help establish stability and security at a time when all the news and reports were pointing toward war. The overall atmosphere was being shaped in a

way that suggested a new war was about to break out.

Then, seemingly, an initiative emerged. According to Reuters, Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff Asim Munir proposed during his visit to Tehran that a four-way meeting be held there to help find new solutions. In my view, the initial objective was to initiate a dialogue through which these four countries, all of which play a significant role in regional security, could help normalize the situation. The second objective was to continue the talks with a view to potentially establishing joint security cooperation. Naturally, this kind of cooperation does not come about overnight. Significant steps must be taken beforehand to lay the groundwork.

Under the current circumstances, marked by threats and the risk of conflict, these talks can send a positive message that regional countries are seeking to establish a new regional order through cooperation. They are working to strengthen ties among themselves in order to consolidate peace and security in the Persian Gulf and West Asia.

Can this meeting pave the way for the establishment of structured and lasting regional security arrangements, or is it a temporary initiative to manage the current crisis?

These two objectives are not mutually exclusive. To establish a new regional order, stability and security must first be created. A new order cannot take shape amid insecurity and conflict.

The process must begin with certain measures, the most basic of which are meetings like this one. These involve direct dialogue among influential regional countries and the development of solutions that safeguard the

interests of all countries in the region. This, in turn, can help establish common interests. Once these shared interests have taken shape, the groundwork can be laid for a new regional order.

Given the continuation of the conflict in Yemen, to what extent can this meeting help ease tensions between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis?

Threats against Saudi Arabia have increased recently, but Riyadh is unwilling to change its policy toward Yemen. Ultimately, Saudi Arabia itself holds the key to improving its security situation. The country shares a border of around 1,300 kilometers with Yemen, and its interventions there have contributed to a conflict that has continued since 2015, for more than 11 years. The Saudi government has yet to reconsider its policy on Yemen.

Pakistan and Turkey have aligned themselves in an effort to help Saudi Arabia ensure its security. But when can they make an effective contribution? They can do so when Saudi Arabia has stopped intervening in Yemen. Saudi Arabia claims that its presence in Yemen is intended to safeguard its own security. However, its involvement has extended beyond its borders, reaching as far as Sanaa and areas in the south. This has inevitably created problems.

The fact that the parties have come to Tehran to discuss the issue with Iran, and that the Iranian side may also help resolve the problems between Saudi Arabia and Yemen, suggests that this issue was certainly among the items on the agenda.

However, it is important to understand that Ansarullah in Yemen do not simply wait to see what Iran says to act accordingly. An

examination of their conduct from the beginning of the conflict to the present shows that their actions have been based on the conduct of the Saudi side.

When Saudi Arabia recognized their independence and territorial integrity, they agreed to sit down with them at the negotiating table and adjusted their behavior. When it did not do so and instead launched attacks, they fought back.

The Houthis are not a group that takes orders from Iran. They are Iran's allies and maintain very close relations with Tehran, much like Hezbollah in Lebanon. But this does not mean that they follow Iran in everything. They also pursue their own particular interests.

This is similar to the relationship between allied countries: they can cooperate very closely on many issues while still having differences of opinion in certain areas.

Was the Tehran meeting linked to US and Israeli threats against Iran, and can these consultations help ease tensions and prevent a war?

The likelihood of a military confrontation between the United States and Iran after November 3, following the US congressional elections, is very high. Unfortunately, the Trump administration has still not learned the lessons of the two previous wars and continues to beat the drums of war.

Two factors are particularly important. The first is the outcome of the October 27 elections in Israel and whether Benjamin Netanyahu will remain prime minister. Netanyahu's government is a driving force behind the tensions, and if it loses, one of the factors pushing for a new war in the region would effectively be removed.



White House at dead end

Trump's diesel deal won't work

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Leader meets top security chief; urges realization of Iran's conditions to end war



International Desk

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei stressed the importance of ensuring that the conditions laid down by Iranian officials in negotiations with the United States are met, with the aim of bringing the war to an end and putting an end to the state of

"neither war nor peace."

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in a meeting with Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Major General Mohsen Rezaei, the Leader's office said. The Leader described the enemy's desperation as one of the achievements of national resistance, emphasizing the need

for proactive and timely communication to sustain the public's continued participation in defending the country and the political system.

He also stressed the importance of pursuing the rights and interests of the Iranian people and the resistance front by securing the fulfillment of the conditions set forth by the country's officials, with the aim of bringing the war to an end and resolving the state of "neither war nor peace."

According to the Leader's office, they also discussed "strengthening bilateral relations with neighboring countries" and "safeguarding national and regional security through the management of the Strait of Hormuz."

Islamabad MoU

Tehran and Washington signed

a Pakistan-mediated 14-point memorandum of understanding in June to end an aggression by the US and Israel against Iran, which had begun on February 28.

They have also set a 60-day period to discuss further issues including sanctions imposed on Iran as well as the country's nuclear program in order to reach a comprehensive agreement between the two countries. Under the understanding, Iran agreed to allow fee-free maritime transit through the Strait of Hormuz which was closed by the Iranian Armed Forces following the aggression.

In compliance with the MoU, the Islamic Republic devised a special maritime route for vessels to cross the chokepoint, warning vessels against using illegal routes.

The US has, however, been trying to escort transit through the strait along an illegal passageway, prompting the Islamic Republic to confront every instance of Washington-instigated transit through the chokepoint and shut the corridor until Washington ended its interference in regional maritime movement.

Iran has repeatedly said that it will open the strait when the US fulfils its commitments under the Islamabad agreement.

Iran has also proposed a seven-day initiative to reopen the strait and continue negotiations with the US. But the White House has rejected the proposal.

Tehran quadrilateral meeting

The meeting between Rezaei and Ayatollah Khamenei was

announced a day after Rezaei held talks with senior officials from Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan – countries which recently signed a mutual defense pact.

Rezaei said the discussions in the capital Tehran were "very good", according to state television.

"I feel that a new atmosphere is emerging in the region... I sensed a very positive atmosphere in the discussions among the gentlemen," said the head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council.

He said they agreed that security in the region "should be achieved by the countries themselves, and that we must prevent any kind of foreign intervention", saying emphasis was put on the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, southern Syria, Gaza and the West Bank.

Oman calls for security framework, non-aggression pact among Persian Gulf states

'Excluding Iran would undermine any regional security arrangement'

International Desk

Oman's Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi called for the formation of a non-aggression security pact involving six Persian Gulf Arab states plus Iran and Iraq, stressing that the United States would no longer be the region's primary security provider. Speaking at Girton College at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom on Monday, Albusaidi stressed that Washington has promoted for almost half a century the false image of Tehran as a threat to the Persian Gulf states, holding back West Asia's ability to solve its own problems. The Omani foreign minister, speaking to break the deadlock over the region's future, stressed that the US would no longer be the region's primary security provider.

"Issues such as the Strait of Hormuz have become impossible to resolve because external powers continue to define the terms of engagement, while regional powers are unable to take collective responsibility for making their own security arrangements and reach a consensus on them," Albusaidi noted. Iran has so far refused to ease its restrictions on transit through the strategic Strait of Hormuz, saying the key international energy waterway will be fully reopened once the US permanently ends its aggression and lifts its maritime blockade and sanctions against Iran.

Iranian authorities have also indicated that the country would not back down from its conditions and would



respond decisively to any new act of aggression against its territory.

"What holds us back is that issues which ought to be handled at a regional level by the states of the [Persian] Gulf themselves, are made more complex, more intractable and sometimes simply impossible to resolve because the region's security arrangements are insufficiently developed," Albusaidi further stressed.

Reliance of external powers

"And they are insufficiently developed because they have relied for too long on the involvement of external powers," he added.

Oman's top diplomat noted that Iran "had been systematically excluded from playing any meaningful role in the security arrangements of the region. Albusaidi also stressed that such exclusion had led to "profoundly negative consequences, not just for Iran, but for the region as a whole", including the imposition of priorities on the region by external powers

such as "the entirely false perception that there is a fundamental regional antagonism between Iran and the Arab states of the [Persian] Gulf."

According to the Omani foreign minister, the most "damaging" of the priorities imposed on the Persian Gulf region from the outside has been the requirement that the Islamic Republic be excluded.

"Not just excluded. Worse. Positioned as the threat against which regional security had to be organized," Albusaidi stressed. He said excluding Iran would undermine any regional security arrangement, describing a framework without Tehran as "inherently unstable" and "structurally unsound". "It's not a matter of whether you're friendly or hostile to Iran," Albusaidi said.

"A non-aggression pact between all eight states should be the goal," he added, referring to the six Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) members, Iraq and Iran.

Ansarullah: Egypt's military support for Saudi tantamount to declaration of war

International Desk

A member of Yemen's Ansarullah movement said on Tuesday that the Egyptian parliament's decision to authorize military support for Saudi Arabia was a declaration of war.

Egypt's parliament on Monday authorized President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi to "undertake necessary" measures to support Saudi Arabia in defending itself, should Riyadh request assistance.

The move raises the possibility of Egypt becoming more directly involved in a conflict which has consumed the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea in recent weeks. It follows Ansarullah's attacks on Riyadh's international airport and facilities belonging to Saudi Arabia's state oil company, Aramco, disrupting flights and oil exports.

El-Sisi had said on Wednesday that any Egyptian military action would be limited to protecting Saudi territory and borders, rather than launching attacks on Yemen. The comments by Ansarullah's member was part of a long statement reacting to a Monday visit to Tehran by the Saudi defense minister, alongside Pakistan's army chief and Turkey's intelligence chief, in a bid to de-escalate tensions in the Middle East war. "It is truly remarkable that while these people go to discuss what they call 'peace in the region', Egypt and its parliament declare support for the so-called defense of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and in doing so, declare war against the Republic of Yemen," said Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, a member



of the Ansarullah's political bureau, in a Telegram post.

Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkey recently signed a defense pact in Mecca that says an attack on one country is to be considered an attack on all three.

But since the Ansarullah ramped up attacks on Saudi Arabia earlier this month, the two other countries have not announced any strikes on the group.

Al-Houthi said the pact was "a clear and blatant act of aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran", adding that the group was "not afraid of any alliance that may be formed".

In July, Yemen's conflict flared up again as a fragile 2022 truce fell apart after the Ansarullah allowed an Iranian plane to land in Yemen's capital Sana'a, in defiance of Saudi control over Yemeni airspace, setting off a spate of attacks.

The Ansarullah then declared a maritime blockade of Saudi Arabia and began hitting its ships, territory and oil facilities.

Quartet meeting in ...

I am not suggesting that every other Israeli government would necessarily behave differently from Netanyahu's.

However, his track record shows that he differs from his rivals and has consistently beat the drums of war, as he has viewed and continues to view the continuation of conflict as essential to his political survival. The second factor is the outcome of the US elections on November 3. It is true that neither the Congress, the House of Representatives nor the Senate, can have a decisive influence on Trump's conduct, given the extremely broad powers vested in the US president. Nevertheless, the election results will show

him that, after January, he will be dealing with a Congress in which the Democrats hold the majority. They will be able to exert greater pressure on him.

Meanwhile, the American public is facing serious difficulties because of rising fuel prices. The public is struggling to understand why the US government should start a war in the first place.

Despite all these circumstances, however, the possibility of war after November 3 remains high.

At the same time, any effort that can help ease tensions should be welcomed. The four-way meeting cannot work miracles, but it is

a positive step toward promoting peace, stability and security, and it should therefore be welcomed.

Any dialogue, negotiation or meeting that can contribute to peace and security and reduce the likelihood of war deserves support. Pakistan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia do not have a decisive influence over the decisions of the United States. Nevertheless, all the available indications and evidence suggest that when regional countries stand together and cooperate, the Israelis will find it more difficult to exploit the situation to pursue warmongering policies and push for the continuation of the war.



Pezeshkian warns US military intervention threatens global energy markets

Iran offers to expand gas investment, cooperation through GECF

Economy Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Tuesday that US military intervention in the Persian Gulf region threatens energy markets and global economic growth, while offering to expand Iran's role in multilateral diplomacy, technical cooperation and investment in gas infrastructure through the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF).

Speaking at the eighth GECF summit in Moscow, Pezeshkian said US military interventions affected not only regional players but also disrupted energy pricing, supply and transportation through major shocks, threatening global economic growth, IRNA reported.

Days after the US-Israeli war on Iran 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. Last week, Brent crude surged to more than \$117 a barrel, its highest level since April. On Tuesday, Brent futures rose 45 cents, or 0.39%, to \$116.26

a barrel by 0918 GMT, while US West Texas Intermediate crude gained 40 cents, or 0.39%, to \$102.16.

Liquefied natural gas (LNG) prices also surged following disruptions to energy supplies from the Persian Gulf. In Asia, the benchmark LNG price rose from about \$11 per million British thermal units before the war to more than \$30 on October 22, an increase of nearly 180%.

Pezeshkian also called for closer cooperation among GECF members, saying they should focus on two areas: strategic governance and management, and technical and engineering operations.

At the strategic level, he said, priorities should include stabilizing markets and increasing natural gas trade regionally and globally.

Pezeshkian expressed Iran's readiness to play a more active role in multilateral diplomacy, the exchange of knowledge and experience, and the development of investment opportunities in gas infrastructure through the forum.

Iran is a founding member of the GECF and holds the world's second-largest proven natural gas reserves. The country has an estimated 34 trillion cubic meters of natural gas reserves,

second only to Russia.

Pezeshkian said Iran's strategic position at the heart of major global energy corridors gave it the potential to significantly strengthen global energy resilience.

He added that the country's gas industry offered opportunities for private-sector cooperation among GECF members in upstream and downstream natural gas activities, as well as gas trading.

He also invited foreign investors to take advantage of incentives and facilities available in Iran's oil, gas and petrochemical industries, saying they could benefit from the country's resources on the basis of mutual interests.

The GECF summit is taking place alongside the forum's 28th ministerial meeting, which is discussing trends in global gas markets and ways to deepen cooperation among gas-exporting countries.

The forum was established in Tehran in 2001, when representatives of 10 gas-exporting



countries agreed to form it 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. It focuses 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.

Pezeshkian meets Qatar's emir

On the sidelines of the summit, Pezeshkian met Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Ale-Thani to discuss ways to develop bilateral relations and strengthen cooperation in the energy sector.

The two leaders reviewed the state of relations between Tehran and Doha and stressed

the importance of expanding political and economic ties and making greater use of existing opportunities for bilateral cooperation.

Energy cooperation, expanded economic and trade ties, and closer coordination among gas-exporting countries were among the issues discussed at the meeting.

During his visit, Pezeshkian is also due to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin and other participating leaders to discuss ways to expand trade and economic cooperation.

AEOI urges end to nuclear tech restrictions, calls for protection of plants



Economy Desk

Iran has called for an end to discriminatory restrictions on nuclear technology and stronger international protection for peaceful nuclear facilities, proposing four priorities for nuclear power development, a senior Iranian nuclear official said on Tuesday.

Hossein Derakhshandeh, deputy head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) and chief executive of the Iran Nuclear Power Production and Development Co., outlined the proposals at the International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power in Incheon, South Korea, IRNA reported.

Access to advanced nuclear technology should not be used to create monopolies or impose political restrictions, Derakhshandeh said, calling for equal access to technology, knowledge transfer and technical cooperation for countries

meeting their international obligations.

Referring to US and Israeli attacks on Iranian nuclear facilities during the 40-day war began in late February, he said the facilities were under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards and that protecting peaceful nuclear infrastructure was a shared international responsibility.

He criticized the agency's response to the attacks, saying it had fallen short of Iran's expectations.

Derakhshandeh said political pressure from the United States and some Western countries had halted nuclear power projects contracted with international companies, causing Iran substantial financial losses.

He added that a nuclear plant under construction by Iranian companies had been struck during recent US attacks.

Iran's four proposed priorities are technical cooperation and

workforce training; removing discriminatory barriers to technology and financing; cooperation on assessing advanced technologies while meeting safety, security and safeguards requirements; and stronger international measures to prevent threats or attacks against peaceful nuclear facilities.

Iran aims to expand its nuclear power generation capacity to 20,000 megawatts over the next 20 years, Derakhshandeh said.

AEOI chief Mohammad Eslami said in mid-October that Iran would continue pursuing the target, describing attacks on sensitive nuclear and industrial facilities as war crimes.

Iran has faced Western sanctions for decades over its nuclear program. The Bushehr nuclear power plant in southern Iran is the country's only operating nuclear power plant. The AEOI says it has ranked among the world's top 10 facilities for three consecutive years, scoring 100 out of 100 for safety and efficiency. With a net capacity of 915 megawatts, it accounts for about 1% of Iran's total electricity generation capacity and produces around 6 to 7 terawatt-hours of electricity annually.

Iran seeks to expand electricity links with regional nations

Economy Desk

Iran is seeking to expand electricity connections with neighboring countries and establish new links, including with Russia, as it continues to develop its power generation capacity, Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi said on Tuesday.

Speaking at the 30th Belarusian Energy and Ecology Forum in Minsk on Tuesday, Aliabadi said Iran's power industry was developing along the right path and that the country was making effective use of its advantages in cooperation with neighboring states.

Iran has established electricity connections with its western neighbors as well as Pakistan and Afghanistan to the east, Aliabadi said, according to IRNA.

"After sustained efforts, an electricity connection with Turkmenistan is now in place, and links exist with Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkey and Iraq," he said. "Efforts to connect with other countries are continuing, and we are seeking to establish a connection with Russia through one of our neighboring countries."

Aliabadi also highlighted Iran's growth in electricity generation capacity. Around the time of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the country's



installed capacity stood at just 7,000 megawatts. It has since risen to nearly 97,000 megawatts, he said, adding that more than 105,000 power generation units were ready to produce electricity.

Iranian engineers manufacture the country's power plant equipment, and Iran has become an exporter of such equipment to regional markets, Aliabadi said. The country is committed to increasing its production capacity to more than 130,000 megawatts, he added.

Investment in the power sector has helped Iran move toward self-sufficiency, Aliabadi said, adding that the country was pursuing electricity development alongside technological advances despite sanctions and war.

Iranian specialists now manufacture gas turbines, steam turbines and equipment for solar and wind power plants, he said. Tehran is ready to cooperate with other countries, establish electricity connections and make use of

their capabilities, he added.

Iran, which has been under Western sanctions for decades, was experiencing energy shortages before US-Israeli attacks began in late February. Since then, the country has been operating under wartime conditions and facing a maritime blockade from the south.

To address electricity shortages and improve the long-term stability of supply, the government has set a target of installing 30,000 megawatts of renewable energy capacity over the next two years.

Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) said on October 13 that the country's renewable power capacity had exceeded 6,200 megawatts.

White House at dead end

Trump's diesel deal won't work



By Saman Sofalgar
Political researcher

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The Trump administration's agreement with Russia to resume diesel supplies to American and global markets is being presented as a pragmatic response to soaring fuel prices. Yet the deal exposes a deeper contradiction in Washington's policy: the administration is seeking emergency relief from a crisis that its own military decisions have helped intensify.

The US-Israeli war against Iran has shaken energy markets, heightened uncertainty over maritime transport, and increased the economic risks associated with the Persian Gulf. The consequences have reached American consumers, businesses, farmers, and truckers. Rather than resolving the war and reducing the risks driving fuel prices upward, President Donald Trump has turned to Vladimir Putin for additional supplies.

The irony is unmistakable. An administration that has repeatedly promised energy security and economic strength now finds itself negotiating with Moscow to mitigate the domestic consequences of a major military confrontation. The agreement may generate favorable headlines for the White House, but it does not resolve the strategic problem behind the price shock.

The central question is not whether Russian diesel can reach American ports. It is whether the promised deliveries can meaningfully reduce prices while the geopolitical conditions contributing to the crisis remain unresolved. Available evidence suggests that they cannot.

Too little, too late

On October 9, Trump announced that Russia would immediately supply more than 300,000 metric tons of diesel to American and global markets, followed by another 500,000 tons in November and an additional million tons thereafter. His administration subsequently eased certain sanctions to facilitate the transactions. Reuters reported on October 23 that the first shipment destined for the United States, carrying approximately 40,000 metric tons, had departed Russia's Baltic port of Primorsk and was expected to reach New York on November 7.

The shipment is real, but its economic significance should not be confused with its political presentation. The initial 300,000-ton commitment amounts to approximately 2.25 million barrels of diesel. That is a substantial quantity in commercial terms, but relatively small against the scale of American fuel consumption and the disruption affecting international markets. Reuters reported on October 21 that analysts expected diesel prices to remain elevated because the promised volumes were insufficient to ease the global supply squeeze materially.

The distinction between additional supply and meaningful price relief is crucial. Energy prices depend not only on how much



The illustration shows Russian President Vladimir Putin (L), US President Donald Trump (R) and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.
● SARAH GRILLO/AXIOS

fuel is available, but also on transportation costs, refinery capacity, inventories, regional demand, and expectations about future supply. A new shipment cannot automatically compensate for wider market disruptions. Nor does the agreement guarantee that every promised delivery will arrive on schedule or that the benefits will be passed on to American consumers. Russia's own refining difficulties and domestic fuel requirements complicate its ability to expand exports consistently. Trump can announce millions of tons, but announcements do not determine prices. Market conditions do.

Iran war remains the problem

The agreement's fundamental weakness is that it does not address the geopolitical risks driving the energy crisis. The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most important energy transit routes. Any threat to shipping through the strait can affect oil supplies, freight costs, insurance premiums, and expectations across international markets. These effects

can extend well beyond the immediate area of the war.

The war against Iran has therefore created a problem that cannot be solved simply by redirecting a limited quantity of diesel from one supplier to another. Even if Russian deliveries increase the volume of fuel available to certain buyers, they cannot independently restore confidence in maritime security or eliminate the risks associated with continued military escalation.

The White House is treating an international security crisis as though it were primarily a supply-chain problem. That approach mistakes a partial commercial remedy for a strategic solution. There are, of course, several factors behind rising fuel prices. Disruptions to Russian refining capacity, including Ukrainian attacks on Russian energy infrastructure, have also constrained diesel availability. The relative contribution of these factors varies over time. But this complexity strengthens the case for a comprehensive response rather than a narrow deal whose success depends on shifting fuel between markets. If the administration wants lasting price relief, it must address the instability affecting energy markets rather than rely on emergency purchases to compensate for it.

Putin gains leverage

The diplomatic consequences are equally troubling for Washington. For years, the United States and its European allies have used sanctions to restrict Russian energy revenues and increase the economic costs of Ukraine War for Moscow. Trump's decision to relax restrictions on Russian diesel reverses part of that policy at a moment when the promised economic benefits remain uncertain. Moscow, meanwhile, has every reason to present the arrangement as evidence that energy cooperation can produce concessions from Washington. Kremlin representatives have described the deal as an opportunity for broader economic cooperation between the two countries. This creates an unfavorable strategic calculation for the United States. If Russian fuel does little to lower American prices, Washington will have weakened its sanctions policy without securing a proportionate benefit for consumers.

The arrangement also risks damaging confidence among European allies and Ukraine. Ukrainian officials have criticized the deal,



Each bar is the 2026 figure as a share of the 2022 peak (100% = 2022 level). 2026 figures run to September/October and the shock is ongoing.

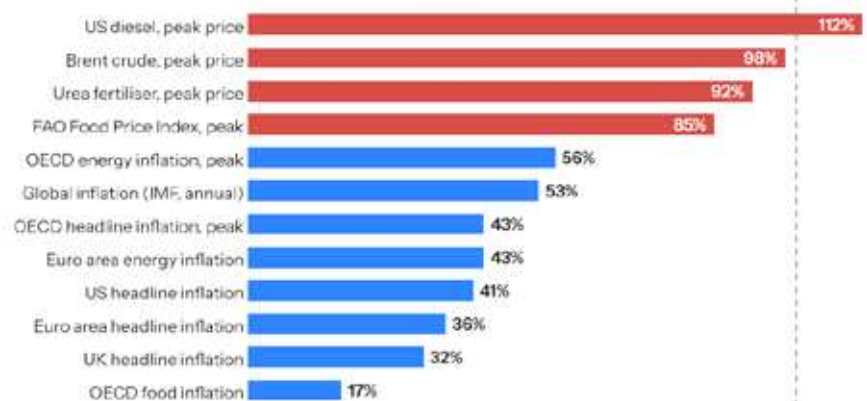
● SOCIAL MEDIA

Fuel is back at 2022 levels. Inflation is not.

The 2026 Iran war shock so far, as a share of the 2022 Ukraine war shock.

Prices at or near 2022 levels

Inflation well below 2022 levels



Sources: EIA, World Bank, FAO, OECD, IMF, Eurostat, BEA, ONS. 2026 figures to Sep/Oct 2026

arguing that easing restrictions provides Moscow with additional commercial opportunities while Russia is at war with Ukraine. The concern is not simply that Russia may earn more money. It is that Washington is demonstrating a willingness to relax economic pressure without securing a clearly defined concession from the Kremlin.

The Trump administration may argue that practical cooperation with Moscow is justified by the need to lower fuel costs. But practical diplomacy should be measured by results. If prices remain high while Russia gains greater access to international markets, the agreement will have delivered a strategic benefit to Russia without resolving Trump's immediate problem.

Energy security is not a presidential announcement

The diesel deal also exposes the limitations of Trump's broader approach to energy security. The United States is a major energy producer, but domestic production does not insulate American consumers from international price shocks. Petroleum products move through interconnected markets, and disruptions in one region can affect prices elsewhere. Refining capacity, transportation infrastructure, inventories, and the composition of available supplies all influence what consumers ultimately pay.

Diesel is particularly important because it powers much of the freight, agricultural, and industrial economy. Higher prices increase operating costs for truckers, farmers, construction companies, and manufacturers. Those costs can eventually be passed on to consumers through higher prices for food and other goods. The administration's agreement addresses only one part of this chain: the availability of additional fuel.

It does not guarantee that refineries and distributors will be able to deliver it efficiently, that transport costs will fall, or that retailers will reduce prices substantially. The White House could pursue a broader strategy that combines diplomatic efforts to reduce regional tensions, contingency planning for supply disruptions, and measures to strengthen domestic refining and distribution. Instead, it has placed considerable political emphasis on a deal whose impact depends on market forces beyond the president's direct control.

This is the difference between managing a temporary shortage and building durable energy security. The former may buy time. The latter requires planning, investment, and a foreign policy that accounts for the economic consequences of military action.

A political fix for an economic crisis

Timing matters. The agreement was announced less than a month before the November 3 congressional midterm elections, when rising living costs have become a political concern for Trump and his Republican allies. Reuters reported that the administration was seeking to bring down diesel prices ahead of the vote. That context helps explain the appeal of a highly



The distinction between additional supply and meaningful price relief is crucial. Energy prices depend not only on how much fuel is available, but also on transportation costs, refinery capacity, inventories, regional demand, and expectations about future supply. A new shipment cannot automatically compensate for wider market disruptions. Nor does the agreement guarantee that every promised delivery will arrive on schedule or that the benefits will be passed on to American consumers.

visible agreement with Moscow. It allows Trump to demonstrate activity and promise relief without immediately resolving the underlying conflict. But the political logic is also a weakness. Consumers do not experience energy policy through presidential statements. They experience it through the cost of filling a tank, transporting goods, heating a home, or operating a farm.

If diesel prices remain elevated, the White House will face an uncomfortable question: why did an agreement presented as a solution fail to produce a meaningful improvement? If prices fall, the administration will still need to demonstrate how much of that decline resulted from Russian deliveries rather than changes in demand, inventories, or other market conditions. The deal therefore

creates expectations that its limited scale may not justify. It offers Trump a short-term communications opportunity, but no guarantee of lasting economic relief.

A deal without a solution
Trump's agreement with Russia may increase the availability of diesel and provide some relief to particular buyers. But it cannot reverse the wider con-

sequences of the war on Iran, eliminate geopolitical risks, or guarantee lower prices for American consumers. Its limitations are economic and strategic. The promised volumes are small relative to the scale of the disruption; Russia's export capacity remains uncertain; and the relaxation of sanctions risks benefiting Moscow without producing a comparable return for Washington.

The deeper failure is the administration's apparent belief that a limited commercial agreement can compensate for the consequences of military escalation. It cannot. As long as the war continues to threaten energy security, emergency imports will remain an incomplete response to a much larger problem. The agreement may give Trump a headline and Russia a commercial opportunity. But it

does not give the White House a reliable path out of the fuel crisis. The decisive test will not be how many tons of Russian diesel Trump announces, but whether his administration can reduce the geopolitical risks driving prices higher. Until it does, the deal will remain a temporary measure that treats the symptoms of the crisis while leaving its underlying causes unresolved.

Will United States attack Iran after midterms?

By James M. Lindsay
Former director for global issues at the US National Security Council

OPINION

Will the United States escalate its war with Iran after the US midterms end on November 3? President Donald Trump has been suggesting as much for several weeks. Earlier this month, he said that the United States will win the war "right after the election" or "maybe before the election". When the Atlantic magazine reported that he was considering attacking Iran before the midterms, Trump announced that "we will not be attacking Iran any time prior to the Midterm Elections to be held in the United States on November 3rd." Meanwhile, the Pentagon continues to build up its forces in the Middle East. By the end of next week, three of the United States' 11 aircraft carrier groups will be in the region. The Pentagon has also directed US Central Command to finish preparations to resume major combat operations against Iran. And on October 21, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that Trump had told him that the United States was "ready to finish the job" in Iran.

Trump's declaration that the United States will not attack Iran before November 3 solved an immediate political problem. The war on Iran is deeply unpopular with the US public, with just one in three Americans supporting it. The fighting has caused gasoline and diesel prices to spike, leading many Americans to ask why Trump is not doing more to address the country's affordability crisis. Renewing the war with Iran just as voters go to the polls would intensify the political headwinds that Republican congressional candidates face and increase the odds of a blue wave for Democrats on Election Day.

After November 3, the political constraints on Trump will ease. However, his strategic challenge will remain the same: Is there a set of military and economic options he can implement that will deliver the victory he has promised at a cost acceptable to the American public? The US military inflicted massive damage on Iran's military and economic infrastructure in the opening phase of Operation Epic Fury. However, the United States has been unable to translate those battlefield successes into a diplomatic victory. Instead, it is locked in a stalemate with Iran, with each side waiting for the other to blink. The stakes for the United States



A US Air Force KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft refuels an F-35A Lightning II aircraft during the Operation Epic Fury attack on Iran at an undisclosed location on April 5, 2026.
● US AIR FORCE

are immense. Renewed fighting could bring victory or deepen the current stalemate, send energy prices soaring, and push the global economy into a tailspin. But maintaining the status quo or finding an acceptable negotiated settlement may be just as challenging. To better understand the prospects for US escalation against Iran and what that might look like in practice, I sat down with Cole Bucy and Nate Swanson, authors of a recent article in Foreign Policy titled "Trump Unleashed: How the US President Might Escalate Against Iran After the Midterm Elections," for the latest episode of The President's Inbox. Cole is a former CIA analyst who served as director for Iran on the staff of the US National Security Council

from 2015 to 2016. Nate is the director of the Iran Strategy Project at the Atlantic Council. He also has served as director for Iran on the staff of the National Security Council and was a member of the Trump administration's Iran negotiating team last year. We spoke before the news broke about Netanyahu's comments on his conversation with Trump. Here are my three main takeaways from my conversation with Cole and Nate:

1. Trump has three basic options in Iran: escalate, negotiate, or wait. First, he could order the US military to renew attacks on Iran and ratchet up economic pressure on the regime. The goal could be to force the regime's collapse or compel it to accept US terms for a peace deal. Second, Trump could double down on negotiating efforts, perhaps using the threat of renewed US military attacks as a lever to force Iranian concessions. Third, Trump could maintain the status quo in the hope that, in time, the Iranian regime will yield

to US demands or perhaps collapse because of an Iranian public unrest.

2. All three options have substantial downsides and a questionable likelihood of succeeding. Calls for renewed fighting raise two immediate questions. First, why would another round of attacks succeed where Operation Epic Fury failed to topple the Iranian regime or force it to capitulate? Second, can the United States prevent Iran from attacking its Persian Gulf neighbors, particularly their energy infrastructure? The risk Trump faces is that Iran's leadership will survive the attacks as disruptions to oil and gas production in the Persian Gulf send energy prices soaring and potentially trigger a global recession. Calls for in-

Iranians participate in a massive civilian-military march called "The 313,000-Member Exercise of Iran's Jan-Fadayan" (lit. Life-Sacrificers of Iran), in Tehran on September 18, 2026.
● AMIR KHOLOUSI/ISNA



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The war on Iran is deeply unpopular with the US public, with just one in three Americans supporting it. The fighting has caused gasoline and diesel prices to spike, leading many Americans to ask why Trump is not doing more to address the country's affordability crisis. Renewing the war with Iran just as voters go to the polls would intensify the political headwinds that Republican congressional candidates face and increase the odds of a blue wave for Democrats on Election Day.

creasing the economic pressure on Tehran by sanctioning China for extending Iran an economic lifeline run a similar risk. US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said in August that targeting Chinese firms could "blow up the global financial system". At a minimum, China could retaliate by cutting off US access to the critical minerals essential for the US economy.

Iran has shown no interest in negotiating on terms that would be acceptable to the United States, and its intransigence may be growing. Tehran may even believe that a blue wave in the midterm elections will weaken Trump and strengthen its own negotiating hand. At the same time, Iran will use the time provided by negotiations to rebuild its military and hone its capacity to retaliate against US partners in the region. Standing pat may be the most attractive option, but it could be difficult to sustain. Operation Economic Outcast has intensified US pressure on the Iranian economy, but there are no signs that it is spurring a popular movement to unseat the hardliners. As Cole noted, "the Iranian people seem to be hunkering down. They're not rising up."

Likewise, the US naval blockade has allegedly shut down Iranian oil exports through the Strait of Hormuz while enabling exports from Arab countries of Persian Gulf to surge. But that success has not translated into substantially lower global energy prices, in part because of the high insurance costs for oil tankers transiting the strait. And the blockade is taking a toll on the US military. Cole noted that "we've already seen complaints from [US Indo-Pacific Command] PACOM and [US European Command] EUCOM that it's not sustainable for all the military resources to go to this one operation." And as with negotiations, Iran will use the respite from fighting to rebuild its military.

3. Which option makes the most sense depends on the answer to a fundamental question: Can the United States coexist with the Islamic Republic? If Iran poses an existential threat to the United States, Trump may be willing to take risks and pay a high price to either topple the regime or compel it to accept US demands. If, however, as Cole pointed out, the Iranian threat falls short of being existential, "then we're not willing to pay the costs to get rid of the Islamic Republic; then at that point, let's figure out how we can get what we need and want and make them stop shooting at ships."

The article was first published by the Council on Foreign Relations.

Wrestling World Championships:

Hedayati, Sohrabi strike gold as Iran clinches Greco-Roman crown



Iranian wrestler Fardin Hedayati celebrates after his victory over Hungary's Darius Vitek in the Greco-Roman 130kg final at the UWW World Championships in Astana, Kazakhstan, on Oct. 26, 2026.
● UWW

Sports Desk

Fardin Hedayati and Danial Sohrabi added two more gold medals to Iran's haul to help the country claim a second successive Greco-Roman team title at the Wrestling World Championships in Astana, Kazakhstan, on Monday.

Mohammad-Hadi Saravi, meanwhile, secured a consolation bronze in the 97kg class, while Saeid Esmaili and Alireza Mohammadi reached the finals in their respective weight classes. Head coach Hassan Rangraz's squad secured nine medals across 10 weight classes to defend its crown with one day to spare in the Greco-Roman competition.

Superheavyweight dominance

Perhaps the toughest test Hedayati faced on his path to the 130kg gold medal in his senior World Championships debut came four months earlier and more than 2,600 kilometers away. That was when he defeated reigning world champion and compatriot Amin Mirzazadeh in a domestic trial to secure his place on Iran's team

for the global showpiece. With Mirzazadeh absent, Hedayati ensured Iran maintained its dominance in the superheavyweight division with a quicksilver 8-0 rout of Hungary's Darius Vitek in the final at Astana's Barys Arena. "To win the most precious medal, the gold, in my very first senior World Championships is incredible, and it brings me such joy to make my fellow countrymen happy,"

Hedayati said. "Seeing my dear compatriots happy means the world to me. It's worth even more than a world or Olympic gold medal." Nothing better illustrated Iran's dominance than the emphatic fashion in which Hedayati swept aside his opponents en route to adding senior world gold to his world U20 title in 2023 and world U23 crowns in 2024 and 2025. Hedayati won four of his five matches by technical superiority, while the other ended in an injury default after just 11 seconds. He did not concede a single point and finished all five bouts in the first period. His total time on the mat was 7:09, barely more than the length of a single match.

In the final, Hedayati kept the pressure on Vitek, rapidly stringing together a series of point-scoring moves. A stepout was followed by a takedown, a two-point tilt and a gut wrench to give him a 7-0 lead before either

wrestler could break a sweat. The stepout that clinched the gold came just 42 seconds into the bout.

To reach the top in Astana, Hedayati first had to overcome two-time world champion and Paris Olympic bronze medalist Mirzazadeh, who defeated Vitek 7-2 to win world gold last year.

"Hedayati is more explosive," Vitek said when asked to compare the two Iranian champions. "I tried to prepare for this, but he was better."

In the team-selection playoff in June in Kerman, Iran, Hedayati got the better of Mirzazadeh with a 5-1 victory in the first bout of what was supposed to be a best-of-three series. Mirzazadeh opted to forgo the remaining matches, symbolically handing the baton to Hedayati.

Whether he can ever reclaim his place remains to be seen. Emboldened by his triumph, Hedayati is determined to put in the hard work required to achieve even greater success.

"Wrestling is a sport where there are no fixed limits or records," He-

dayati said. "My task has become harder today compared to yesterday."

"I didn't have a senior world championships gold medal, but now I've secured one. It's going to require a tremendous amount of effort. From this point forward, I am fully committed to continuing on this path, with the aim of winning multiple world and Olympic medals, all through hard work and dedication."

Relief for Sohrabi

Sohrabi ground out a 4-0 victory over Hungary's Krisztian Vancza in the final to add the world title to his Asian gold from 2025.

Monday's triumph also came as a relief for the Iranian, who had to settle for bronze at last year's edition after a controversial quarterfinal defeat to France's Ibrahim Ghanem. Sohrabi, who suffered multiple bleeding stoppages against the Frenchman, was timed out when the four minutes allotted for medical treatment expired. Ghanem, who was leading 4-2, was then declared the winner.

"Over the past year, the only thing on my mind

was winning the world gold medal," Sohrabi said. "Every single day, I would write down: 'I must win the world gold medal.' I wrote it down every single day."

"Thankfully, through the kind prayers of the people, I was able to win the gold and bring happiness to my dear fellow countrymen."

Sohrabi had the first and only par terre opportunity of the match but was unable to turn Vancza. He did, however, force a stepout to take a 2-0 lead into the break.

In the second period, Sohrabi charged in for a bear hug before maneuvering Vancza onto the mat for a takedown that completed the scoring.

In the 97kg class, defending champion Saravi bounced back from a semifinal defeat to Russia's Artur Sargsian — his first international loss since the 2023 World Championships semifinals, ending a 30-match winning streak for the two-time Olympic medalist — to beat Sweden's Alex Kessidis 3-0 for the fifth world medal of his career.

The decorated Iranian

combined a passivity point in the first period with a go-behind takedown in the second to overcome the veteran Swede and add to his world gold medals from 2021 and 2025 and bronze from 2023.

Earlier in the day, Saeid Esmaili, also a gold medalist at the Paris Olympics, remained on course for a second consecutive world title by reaching the 67kg final.

Esmaili got the better of Hasrat Jafarov in the semifinals, winning 1-1 on criteria to record his third victory over the familiar Azerbaijani rival in as many meetings over the past 12 months. Esmaili was awarded the par terre position in the first period but failed to break through Jafarov's defense, taking a 1-0 lead into the break. Jafarov was awarded the par terre position in the second period but also failed to score.

At 87kg, Mohammadi, a silver medalist last year, dominated Armenia's Gevorg Tadevosyan 10-1 in the semifinals to set up a rematch of the 2024 Paris Olympic final against Ukraine's Semen Novikov, who won that bout.



Iranian wrestler Danial Sohrabi celebrates with the national flag after winning the Greco-Roman 72kg gold medal at the UWW World Championships in Astana, Kazakhstan, on Oct. 26, 2026.
● UWW

AFC Champions League Elite:

Tractor beaten by Al Ain, remains winless in league stage

Sports Desk

Persian Gulf Pro League club Tractor remained in search of its first victory in the new AFC Champions League Elite season after suffering a 2-1 away defeat to the UAE's Al Ain on Monday.

Moroccan striker Houssine Rahimi scored the winner with 20 minutes remaining to help the home side maintain its perfect record and reach nine points in the league stage. Tractor, meanwhile, languished in 13th place in the 16-team West Zone table with a single point, having lost 1-0 to Shabab Al Ahli in its opener before drawing 0-0 with Al Shamal a fortnight ago.

Al Ain started on the front foot at Hazza bin Zayed Stadium, with Rahimi,

Georgios Giakoumakis and Dorde Skoko ensuring that Tractor's second-choice goalkeeper, Parsa Jafari, had a busy night. Jafari was filling in for injured Iranian international Alireza Beiranvand.

The home side broke the deadlock in the 21st minute through an unlikely source. Centre-back Ramy Rabia strode forward and unleashed a swerving left-footed shot from 30 yards that caught Jafari off guard and found the bottom corner.

Jafari was called into action again nine minutes later, coming quickly off his line to deny Rahimi before reacting to the Moroccan forward's low strike from outside the box moments later.

The momentum Al Ain had built in the first half was

nowhere to be seen at the start of the second period as Tractor came roaring back.

Fullback Danial Esmailifar rattled the post with a thunderous shot in the 55th minute. The rebound fell to Tibor Halilovic on the edge of the box, and the Croatian midfielder curled a spectacular effort past Eisa to equalize.

A stung Al Ain raised its game again and restored its lead through the prolific Rahimi, who escaped his marker at the back post to steer home Yahya Benkhaleq's pinpoint cross from the right flank in the 70th minute.

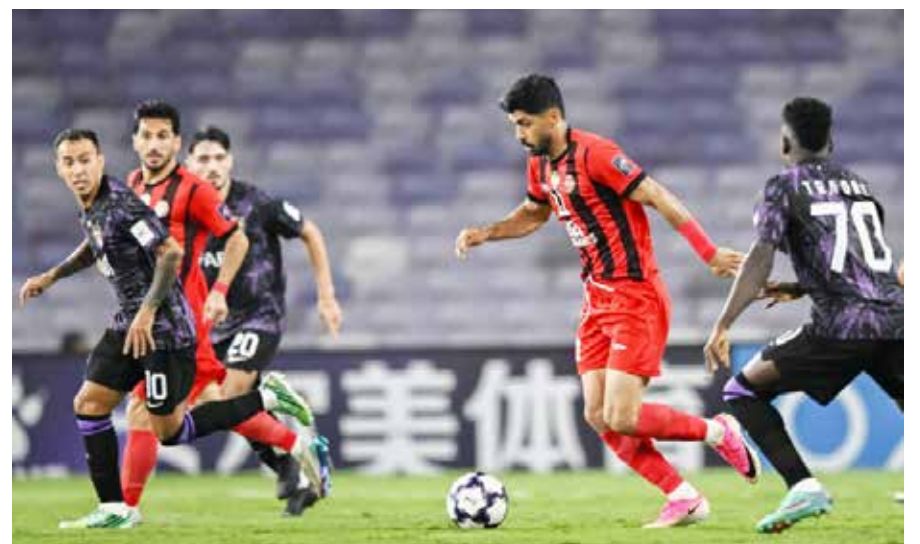
The home side had opportunities to extend its lead, with substitute Erik twice finding himself in promising positions. However, Tractor captain Shoja

Khalilzadeh used his experience to snuff out both threats as Al Ain settled for a narrow victory. Despite the defeat, Tractor head coach Javad Nekounam believed his side deserved more from the game.

"We had watched Al Ain's matches and knew their strengths. For around 70 minutes, we played better and forced them to defend. We created several chances, but Al Ain was professional and clever, and took its chances," Nekounam said.

"We lost three key players before this match, while two others are injured. We also face travel difficulties and do not have enough players to compete under these conditions."

Tractor will look to get off the mark when it takes on



Uzbekistan's PFC Neftchi in Muscat, Oman, on November 2.

Nekounam also expressed frustration at having to play home matches at

neutral venues, saying: "If we were playing at home, 80,000 people would come to support us. We can beat any team on our own ground."

Tractor fullback Danial Esmailifar (c) is seen in action against Al Ain in the AFC Champions League Elite at Hazza bin Zayed Stadium, Al Ain, UAE, on Oct. 26, 2026.
● AFC

Iranica Desk

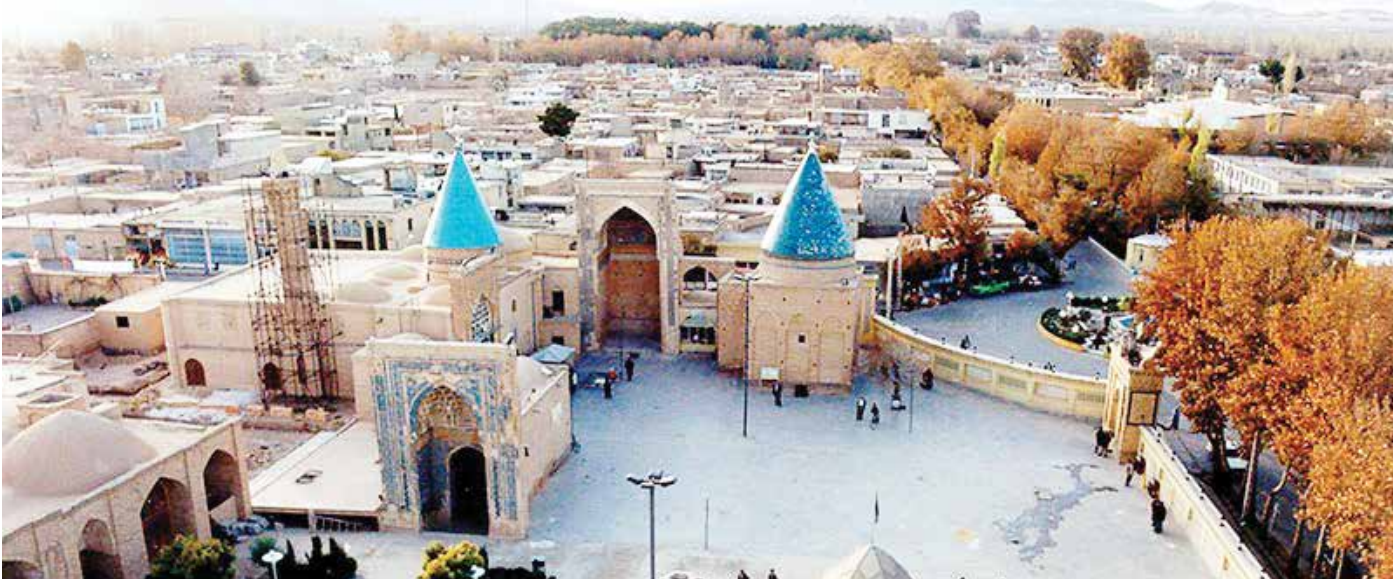
The long-standing bid to secure UNESCO world heritage status for the historic Bastam Complex in Shahrud, Semnan Province, may be entering a more active phase, as local heritage officials call for stronger provincial coordination and high-level decisions to overcome obstacles to its inscription.

Seyyed Mohammad Sadegh Razavian, head of the Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of Shahrud, described the bid as an 18-year-old demand, stressing that the removal of barriers requires coordinated efforts among provincial authorities and relevant government agencies.

Talking to ISNA, Razavian said the site's world heritage inscription was of considerable importance and should be placed among the region's top priorities.

He noted that the Cultural Heritage Department had pursued parts of the process, but said further progress would depend on broader provincial support, cooperation among relevant institutions and strategic deci-

Bastam heritage bid seeks breakthrough after 18 years



sion-making. Razavian also referred to efforts to appoint a manager for Bastam's World Heritage nomination dossier, expressing hope that the appointment would pave the way for more serious follow-up and help resolve outstanding issues after nearly two decades.

He emphasized that advancing the nomination would require

a firm commitment at the provincial level and coordination meetings among the agencies involved.

According to Razavian, efforts are continuing through various channels to remove obstacles and move the nomination forward.

Bastam is one of the prominent historical complexes in Shahrud, with structures dating from the pre-Seljuk period through the Qajar era.

The complex includes the shrine of Imamzadeh Mohammad ibn Ja'far al-Sadeq, the mausoleum of Bayazid Bastami, Bayazid's monastery and mosque, the Ol-jaitu, the mausoleum of Ghazan Khan, a Seljuk-era mosque and minaret, the Jaame Mosque, the Kashaneh Tower and the Shahrokiyeh School.

Razavian highlighted the architectural significance and distinctive beauty of the site's historic buildings, underscoring the importance of securing international recognition for the complex.

Whether the latest efforts will finally overcome the longstanding obstacles to Bastam's World Heritage inscription remains to be seen.

Iranica Desk

A cultural heritage expert in Bushehr Province has highlighted the historical significance of the Persian Gulf, describing the province's specialized and historical museums as valuable resources for showcasing Iran's maritime history, trade, culture and civilization in the region.

Mojtaba Mohammadi, referring to the long-standing presence and influential role of Iranians in the Persian Gulf, said protecting the tangible and intangible heritage of the region

Bushehr's museums show Persian Gulf's rich history, culture

was essential to preserving its historical and cultural identity.

He stressed the importance of introducing historical monuments, archaeological sites, maritime traditions and cultural heritage associated with the lives of coastal communities.

Pointing to the province's museums, Mohammadi identified the Persian Gulf Regional Museum, the Persian Gulf Medical History

Museum, the Maritime Trade Museum, the Anthropology Museum, the Rais Ali Delvari Museum and the Siraf Pars Museum as important venues for presenting different aspects of the region's history and civilization.

He said these museums, through the collection, preservation and presentation of historical artefacts and accounts, help younger generations and tourists gain a deeper understanding of the

region's maritime heritage, seaborne trade, indigenous culture and the role of Iranians in the Persian Gulf.

Mohammadi also emphasized the need to continue protecting and restoring the region's historical monuments and safeguarding its intangible heritage. He called for greater use of the province's cultural and museum resources to pass this valuable legacy on to future generations.



West Azarbaijan emerges as key region for Paleolithic research

Iranica Desk

West Azarbaijan Province is an important region for studying the history of human presence in Iran during the Paleolithic period. Its numerous caves and archaeological sites have yielded stone tools, animal remains and evidence of ancient toolmaking technologies, offering valuable insights into the lives of prehistoric human groups and their adaptation to different environments.

Behrouz Khanmohammadi, an archaeologist with the West Azarbaijan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, has highlighted the province's key Paleolithic sites and their significance for understanding the history of early human settlement in northwestern Iran.

One of the earliest archaeological investigations into Iran's Middle Paleolithic period was conducted by Carlton Coon at Tamtaman Cave, approximately 20 kilometers north of Urmia.

Coon, who had excavated several caves across the Iranian Plateau, investigated the site and uncovered animal remains alongside a number of stone artefacts.

The animal remains consisted mainly of deer and gazelle, although remains

of zebra, wild horse, wild boar and vulture were also identified. These discoveries provide evidence of the fauna present in the area and contribute to understanding the environmental context of human activity during the Middle Paleolithic.

Fragments of a femur found at the cave initially led Coon to suggest that the bones might belong to Neanderthals. Subsequent examinations, however, established that they belonged to deer. Based on the available evidence, the assemblage is tentatively attributed to the Middle Paleolithic and dates back at least around 40,000 years.

The Shiwatoo site near Mahabad is among the significant Lower Paleolithic sites in West Azarbaijan Province and the southern Lake Urmia region. Located approximately seven kilometres southwest of Mahabad on a terrace of the Mahabad River, the site covers an estimated area of one hectare.

Shiwatoo was identified and investigated through archaeological surveys, including work by a joint Iranian-French team and research conducted by Rahmat Naderi and Ali-pour. A considerable number of stone artefacts were

collected and transferred to the National Museum of Iran.

Analysis of the artefacts' technological and typological characteristics has raised the possibility that the site contains evidence of an Acheulean industry. Associated with the Lower Paleolithic, this stone-tool tradition spans an approximate period from 700,000 to 300,000 years ago.



Tamtaman Cave
● IRNA

The site could help researchers better understand the distribution of early human groups and investigate possible routes through which they moved from western regions into the interior of the Iranian Plateau.

The Shahrkand site was discovered in 2006 in southern West Azarbaijan. It is situated on a terrace of the Simineh River, which forms part of the Lake Urmia drainage basin.

Although only a limited number of stone artefacts have been recovered at Shahrkand, their technological and typological characteristics can be compared with finds from Shiwatoo near Mahabad.

Researchers have therefore raised the possibility that the site dates to the Lower Paleolithic. Further investigation could help clarify the distribution of sites

to the identification of stone artefacts in Milan site. The assemblage consists of four separate concentrations containing approximately 100 stone tools and other stone artefacts.

Based on their technological characteristics, the finds have been attributed to the Middle Paleolithic. Their study could provide additional information about stone-tool production and the distribution of human groups in northern West Azarbaijan.

Another site, Kasehgaran village in Piranshahr, has yielded stone tools attributed to the Middle Paleolithic. The artefacts were recovered during rescue excavations associated with the Kani Sib Dam project.

The discoveries highlight



A stone from Shiwatoo site
● tarikhema.org

from this period around the southern shores of Lake Urmia.

In Maku, recent surveys led

the importance of archaeological investigations across the province, particularly in areas at risk

of disturbance from infrastructure and development projects.

The Takab and the surroundings of Takht-e Soleyman are also important for Paleolithic research in West Azarbaijan. Surveys by Saman Heydari Guran and Elham Qasidian led to the identification of two open-air sites containing evidence of Middle Paleolithic activity near the historic Takht-e Soleyman complex.

Stone artefacts recovered from the sites display characteristics of the Mousterian industry, a tradition associated with Neanderthal toolmaking and other human populations of the Middle Paleolithic. The assemblages also contain flakes produced using the Levallois technique, a specialized method of preparing stone cores to produce flakes of controlled shapes and dimensions.

The sites' elevation is another notable feature: both lie at more than 2,300 metres above sea level, placing them among Iran's high-altitude Paleolithic sites. Their investigation could help researchers understand how prehistoric human groups occupied and adapted to mountainous environments.

Evidence from caves and

open-air sites across West Azarbaijan underscores the province's importance for studying human presence and activity during the Paleolithic. The geographical diversity of these locations, from plains and river terraces to high mountain areas, provides opportunities to examine how early human groups adapted to different landscapes.

Further analysis of stone artefacts, animal remains and the geographical settings of the sites could shed light on ancient toolmaking technologies, subsistence strategies and patterns of human movement during different prehistoric periods. Comparisons with archaeological evidence from neighboring regions could also help researchers investigate possible connections between human populations in West Asia and the interior of the Iranian Plateau.

Continued fieldwork, more precise dating of archaeological finds and the protection of prehistoric sites remain essential to advancing research into the region's early human history. The evidence uncovered in West Azarbaijan Province could contribute significantly to a broader understanding of the earliest stages of human settlement in Iran.

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Tehran exhibition examines Iran's place in modern art

Arts & Culture Desk

More than 100 works by Iranian modern artists will go on display at Tehran's Museum of Contemporary Art on Saturday in an exhibition examining how Iran is represented through art, memory and personal experience. Titled 'In Search of Iran: From the Collection of the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art', the exhibition features artworks by prominent artists including Sohrab Sepehri, Parviz Kalantari, Parviz Tanavoli, Charles Hossein Zenderoudi, Farah Osouli, Reza Mafi, Mohammad Ehsai and Bahman Mohasses.

The exhibition explores how Iran appears in artists' work without seeking to determine which pieces are more distinctly Iranian, according to a statement from the museum. "We do not ask which work is more Iranian; we ask how Iran has become a subject of seeing and representation, and how it has remained present in ways of seeing and making," the statement said. The works reflect different experiences of Iran, including memories of places, everyday life, migration and loss. These connections sometimes appear as the direct subject of a work and sometimes emerge through its form and materials.

The exhibition is arranged in seven sections, each organized around a question. The sections do not follow a chronological account of art history. Instead, they draw links between works through their visual and conceptual connections, offering visitors different ways to interpret them. Familiar symbols do not determine a work's meaning in advance. Their absence does not necessarily mean a break with Iranian experience, either. No single landscape, face or motif can represent that experience on its own. The exhibition will open to the public on November 1, and run until mid-December.



Iran joins global campaign to protect endangered species



● MOHAMMADREZA ALIMADADI/IRNA

Social Desk

Iran has formally joined an international campaign in Armenia working to safeguard endangered species, opening the door to greater cooperation on wildlife conservation and restoration. The country has developed action plans to protect 40 wildlife species, IRNA reported. Hamid Zohrabian, head of Iran's delegation, signed the country's membership

document on Monday in Yerevan, Armenia, on the sidelines of the 17th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP17). The campaign was launched at the initiative of Armenia during COP17, with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan attending the event. Its secretariat is run by Reverse the Red, an international initiative that works with countries to accelerate

efforts to protect and restore endangered species. Speaking at a meeting on Iran's accession, Zohrabian stressed the need for an equitable distribution of resources and technology to help save threatened species. The event also agreed that Iran would be listed on the campaign's website as a country with action plans for 40 wildlife species. The listing is intended to help Iran access

technical, scientific and financial support for its conservation work. Several global funds had previously pledged financial backing for the initiative, with total announced support reaching \$500 million. Iran had also received the Reverse the Red Award at the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) congress in 2025 for its programs to protect and restore species. Iran's accession brings the campaign's membership to 18 countries. The move creates an opportunity to expand international cooperation on wildlife conservation. 17th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP17) runs from October 19 to 30 in Yerevan, where governments and international stakeholders are discussing biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

Milan march honors children killed in Gorla, Minab and Gaza



Social Desk

Artists and marchers in Milan, northern Italy, marked the 82nd anniversary of the Italy's Gorla school massacre by honoring children killed in wars, including those who lost their lives in Minab, southern Iran, and Gaza. The Shajareh Tayyebah school in Minab was hit by a US missile strike on February 28, the first day of the US-Israeli war against Iran, killing 168 people, most of them children. According to a UNICEF tally, at least 21,700 children had been killed in the Gaza Strip as of June 30, 2026, following the full-fledged war by Israel on the Palestinian territory in October 2023. Media activist Zio Filippo accompanied participants from Piazza della Repubblica to Piazza Venezia, using music videos to draw public attention to the event. Italian artists also released a song titled 'Gorla, Minab, Gaza' to pay tribute to the young victims.



The screenshot shows a scene from the music video 'Gorla, Minab, Gaza', released by Italian artists in memory of children killed in war.
● IRNA

Italy's parliament recognized October 20 as a National Day of Remembrance for child victims of war for the first time in 2026, under a law adopted in May. The day honors children killed in the Gorla massacre and in conflicts worldwide. On October 20, 1944, an Allied bombing struck the Francesco Crispi elementary school in Milan's Gorla district, killing 184 children and 19 school staff, according to Italian parliamentary records. The incident became known as the Gorla massacre. The commemorations connected a World War Two tragedy in Milan with more recent losses in the Middle East, using public gatherings and music to highlight the toll of war on children.



Iranian film 'Jamil' wins award at Colombia festival

Arts & Culture Desk

The short film 'Jamil' from Iran, about the suffering of Iranian and Palestinian children, has received an honorary diploma and a special certificate of recognition at the 22nd Pasto International Film Festival (FICPA) in southwestern Colombia.

Written, produced and directed by Nasim Asadpour, the film placed second in the international short film category, 'Sun of the Pastos: Echoes of the World', ILNA reported. Made using a combination of live action and animation, 'Jamil' centers on a child who sees all of their dreams in a drawing, only to have those

hopes destroyed by war. It focuses on children affected by recent wars in Iran. The first was the 12-day war in June 2025, and the second 40-days war happened in late February 2026. The film is dedicated to the 168 children killed in the attack on Shajareh Tayyebah School in Minab, southern Iran, which

was hit by a US missile strike on February 28, the first day of the US-Israeli war against Iran. The Pasto International Film Festival is one of South America's longest-running film events. Held annually in Pasto, it brings together filmmakers, audiences and professionals from the cinema and audiovisual industries.

Its international short film competition showcases productions from outside Colombia, giving filmmakers an opportunity to present their work to audiences beyond their home countries. The festival ran from Oct. 13 to 17, 2026, in Pasto, the capital of Nariño province in southwestern Colombia.