Culture remains overlooked in development plans, senior official says
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Iran Daily

Vol. 8256 ● Wednesday, November 04, 2026 ● Aban 13, 1405 ● Jumada al-Awwal 23, 1448 ● 100,000 rials ● 8 pages

irandaily.ir | newspaper.irandaily.ir | IranDailyWeb

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Iran's Economy Minister Ali Madanizadeh (L) meets with Turkish Trade Minister Omer Bolat on the sidelines of the 42nd session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC) in Istanbul, Turkey on November 3, 2026.
mefa.ir

China's chances of mediating Iran war remain slim but should not be ruled out

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE

With the prospect of renewed hostilities between Iran, exchanges and planned visits involving Iranian and Chinese officials could signal Beijing's first attempt to step in as a mediator. In an interview with Iran Daily, international affairs analyst Mehdi Rahimi said the prospects for China, or any other country, to successfully intervene remain slim, as Washington's underlying assumptions about the war have not changed. Nevertheless, he argued that all potential mediators should continue to pursue diplomatic initiatives actively, as a breakthrough that could bring the war to an end might emerge from these interactions, however unlikely that may be.



Mehdi Rahimi

IRAN DAILY: **Do recent developments indicate that China is taking a more serious role in efforts to address regional issues?**

RAHIMI: These strong signals of China's willingness to play an active role certainly cannot be ignored. China has taken sound positions on the international stage in line with its explicitly stated principles and has exercised its veto power over draft UN Security Council resolutions in accordance with its foreign policy principles.

The fundamental point, however, is that China's architecture for engagement on the international stage has been designed for situations characterized by a low degree of uncertainty. In other words, China's model of engagement works highly effectively under peaceful conditions. Its effectiveness was evident, for instance, in the Beijing Agreement, which helped resolve differences between Iran and Saudi Arabia. However, that model is not effective in situations marked by high uncertainty and crisis conditions.

My view is that China is in the process of changing the architecture of its engagement in response to regional crises with far-reaching international implications, as well as international crises themselves.

Given its share of the international market and the international institutions and instruments it has developed across the fields of economic governance, finance, technology, politics, security and social affairs — alongside the institutions and instruments underpinning the existing international order led by the United States — China needs to move beyond a passive approach and experiment with more active engagement in times of crisis.

In light of these points, China is testing different components of a new model of engagement under crisis conditions so that, based on the lessons it learns in practice, it can build its own architecture for resolving international issues. From this perspective, it is important for Iran to share its initiatives for resolving the international crisis with the Chinese side so that, through mutual learning, the two countries can arrive at a common framework for crisis resolution.

Is China seeking to assume the role of guarantor for any potential understanding or agreement? To what extent does its overt involvement in this matter stand a chance of success?

On the other hand, I do not think this is the right time for China to assume such a role, for several reasons.

First, I believe China will not risk its international credibility until it has completed the architecture of its model for engaging in international crises. It is currently in the process of identifying its model of engagement, putting it into practice on the international stage, assessing its performance and, ultimately, moving towards more serious involvement in the form of a guarantor or through another arrangement.

Second, under its own calculation model, China steps in to help resolve a crisis when the parties involved ask it to play a role. Iran may now be making such a request to China, but the key question is whether the other parties involved — namely, the United States and Israel — have made a similar request. It appears that neither has there been a request from their side nor is there any willingness to see China become involved in this matter.

Third, China's calculations tell it that effective engagement is not possible at just any given time. Every initiative has its own moment, and that moment must arrive before China steps onto the scene. My assessment is that China has not identified the current situation as that moment for intervention.

Of course, this does not mean China will stay out of the picture. It will remain present, continuing to issue similar and recurring statements along the following lines: "Dialogue and negotiation are the only solution to the Middle East crisis. All parties should act responsibly towards their people and history, move towards one another and, instead of resorting to force once again, focus on a political solution in a rational and pragmatic spirit."

There are several reasons for this.

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Iran ready for both war, diplomacy: *FM*

'Relations with neighbors Iran's top priority'


Abbas Araghchi
IRNA

International Desk

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi reiterated that just as Iran is fully prepared to defend itself decisively, it is also ready to engage in diplomacy and achieve a fair negotiated solution to end tensions between Tehran and Washington.

In an interview with IRNA in Turkmenistan's capital on Monday, the Iranian foreign minister underlined that Iran will not back down from its conditions for ending the current standoff, saying the outcome will depend entirely on the rationality of Washington.

He said the only way for Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz is for the US to accept Iran's conditions, which include a permanent end to the aggression and the lifting of the blockade and sanctions against the country.

Iran has restricted cargo transit through the strategic waterway since early March, days after it was attacked by the US and Israel.

"We have presented our conditions and proposal, and everything depends on Washington's political wisdom. If they choose genuine diplomacy, we are ready to engage. But if they intend to deceive us and launch military operations, they will face a response more bitter and more severe than before," the minister said.

Araghchi said Iran has been holding "extremely intensive" consultations with representatives of Qatar and Pakistan as part of a regional mediation effort to end the war with the US.

Mediators continue pushing for a deal between Iran and the US to end the eight-month war between the two countries amid fears the conflict could reignite after midterm elections in the US.

In recent days, Iranian and Qatari officials have held several rounds of talks aimed at bringing the US and Iran back to the negotiating table.

'Ball in US court'

Iran's Parliament speaker also said on Tuesday that, "The ball is now in America's court to prevent a war".

Addressing an open session of the Parliament on Tuesday, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf warned that any potential enemy attack will trigger an "unpredictable" military and strategic response, saying Iran is prepared to confront any new aggression and will not limit its response to geographical boundaries.

The United States and its regional allies have learned from the two recent unprovoked wars against Iran that the era of excessive demands is over, the top legislator stated.

At the same time, Iran has delivered "a strong and rational" response to the US, Qalibaf noted, referring to the conditions the country has outlined through mediators for reopening the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

"The ball is now in America's court to prevent a war," he stated.

Relations with neighbors

Iranian foreign minister in his interview with IRNA also referred to the relations with neighboring countries, stressing that the main priority in the foreign policy of Iran is its neighbors, and in the context of recent developments, the importance of these relations has become more apparent than ever.

Iran's top diplomat also in a post on his X account emphasized that Iran has no animosity towards the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council member states.

"Our goal is to achieve new regional security arrangements that are formed by the countries of the region themselves and without the military presence of foreigners."

During the recent aggression by the US and Israel, Iran repeatedly targeted the US military bases in the Arab countries. The attacks caused tensions between Tehran and the Arab countries. However, Iran defended its attacks, saying that its neighboring Arab countries should not have permitted the US to launch attacks from their territories.

Tehran says has right to self-defense after US strikes on Qeshm Island

International Desk

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi said on Tuesday that Tehran reserved the right to self-defense following US attacks on Iran's Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran retains the right to legitimate self-defense until the military aggression has been completely and permanently brought to an end," Gharibabadi said according to ISNA.

The US strikes were reported by The Wall Street Journal, CNN, The New York Times and other outlets.

According to Tasnim News Agency, several powerful explosions were heard in the area of Bandar Lengeh in Qeshm Island.

Unnamed US officials cited by the outlets described the attacks as defensive in nature. They claimed that the strikes were in response to targeting a US drone by Iranian forces.

Asked if Israel was involved in the latest reported strikes, an Israeli military spokesperson told AFP, "No".

In another incident, three oil tankers


MEHR

caught fire after striking naval mines while navigating unauthorized routes in the Strait of Hormuz.

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC)'s Navy said on Tuesday that the vessels had been rocked by explosions resulting in "massive fires" since the early hours of the day after switching off their navigation and identification systems and attempting to transit unauthorized routes through the strategic waterway. The IRGC forces also captured two more American MQM-170 reconnaissance drones in the skies south of Qeshm Island, bringing the total number of this type seized by its forces to four.

Major General Ali Abdollahi, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, also outlined a strategic framework for establishing sustainable peace and security in the Middle East, proposing a 'Hormuz mechanism' to replace the 'worn-out' US security architecture in the region.

In a message issued on the occasion of November 4 — the National Day of Fight against Global Arrogance — General Abdollahi emphasized that Iran is no longer merely managing crises, but is actively "architecting a new order" in the region.

"For us, military power is not the goal; it is a tool," Gen. Abdollahi stated. "Based on the realities and requirements of our time, our doctrine has transitioned from 'defense' to 'offensive initiative,' and from 'crisis management' to 'order-making.'" The reported Qeshm attack came just hours after US President Donald Trump signaled a deal with Iran "could happen", as US voters cast their ballots in midterms dominated by public dissatisfaction with the war and the inflation it has brought.

"Iran wants a settlement, as soon as possible," Trump claimed in a post on his Truth Social platform.

In case of nuclear strike, Iran's 'hands not tied': *Deputy FM*

International Desk

Iran's deputy foreign minister warned that in the event of a nuclear strike against Iran, the country's "hands are not tied," saying Tehran would naturally take the necessary measures in accordance with such circumstances.

"Iran would not simply stand by and limit itself to pursuing legal measures at the international level if nuclear weapons were used against the country," Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs, Kazem Gharibabadi told reporters on Tuesday, Press TV reported.

The diplomat cautioned that any official threat by a nuclear-armed entity to use nuclear weapons against Iran would undermine the credibility of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).


Kazem Gharibabadi
IRNA

"If the head of state or a military or political official of a nuclear-armed country that is party to the treaty threatened to use such weapons, the NPT regime would no longer retain credibility," he stated.

According to Gharibabadi, this could encourage countries to take the necessary decisions to defend themselves by any means available, warning of the regional and global consequences of such threats.

He, however, noted that Tehran had so far received no official position from US officials regarding threats reported by some Western media outlets about the possible use of nuclear weapons against Iran.

Separately, he said Iran had activated available legal mechanisms to pursue the American-Israeli attacks that had targeted its nuclear facilities.

TENDER NO.: 08-21-0340018
First Announcement
N.I.S.O.C
NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY
AHVAZ-IRAN

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

Item	Material Description	Quantity
1	CASING 4-1/2 IN., 13.5 PPF, API GRADE L-80, SEAMLESS VAM , N.VAM, THREAD, RANGE 3, DRIFT LENGTH: 42 IN	30,000LE

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their" Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: www.setadiran.ir, not later than14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 158,619/75 EURO or 298,833,893,010 RIAL, in favor of NISOC

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

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
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Ahvaz, Iran
Tel. No.: 061 34 12 4644
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Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Iran pushes for smoother trade, transit with Turkey, Pakistan



Iran's Economy Minister Ali Madanizadeh (L) meets with Pakistani Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan on the sidelines of the 42nd session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC) in Istanbul, Turkey on November 3, 2026.
mefa.ir

Economy Desk

Iran's economy minister met separately with Turkish and Pakistani trade minsters on Tuesday to push for faster cross-border commerce, focusing on truck movement, customs coordination and transit bottlenecks, according to the Economy Ministry's website.

Ali Madanizadeh held the talks with Turkish Trade Minister Omer Bolat and Pakistani Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan on the sidelines of the 42nd session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC) in Istanbul.

In his meeting with Bolat, Madanizadeh called for stronger customs and border cooperation. The two sides agreed to form a joint working group and hold regular meetings between border customs officials to resolve operational problems.

They also discussed facilitating truck movements, drawing up a timetable for the transit of goods and services, and keeping border customs offices open around the clock to increase trade capacity, cut truck waiting times and speed up commercial procedures.

The Bazargan border crossing, a major trade gateway between the two countries, was a particular focus. The officials also discussed Turkey's plans to modernize its customs facilities and the impact of those upgrades on cross-border traffic and cargo transit.

Other issues included making better use of alternative border crossings for trucks and passengers, coordinating the movement of sensitive cargo, and establishing a joint working group on the two countries' free trade and industrial zones. They also discussed obstacles facing Turkish companies operating in Iran and the need to resolve them to support continued business and investment.

Transport bottlenecks with Pakistan

In talks with Khan, Madanizadeh called for stronger economic and trade ties and more efficient transport and cargo transit between the neighboring countries.

The discussions focused on practical measures to remove trade and transport barriers, including truck movement problems at the Rimdan border crossing and making better use of the Mirjaveh crossing.

The talks come as thousands of Iranian shipping containers remain stranded in Pakistan and Oman amid transit restrictions and disruptions following the 40-day US-Israeli war against Iran, which began in late February.

Masoud Daneshmand, a board member of Iran's Association of Transport Companies, told ILNA on Tuesday that an estimated 15,000 to 18,000 Iranian containers were stuck in Karachi, while the total number at three locations could reach 25,000.

He identified the three accumulation points as Karachi, Sohar Port and Khor Fakkan, saying Iranian containers had been redirected to Pakistan and Oman after the United Arab Emirates stopped accepting them. The containers had been sent along alternative routes after encountering difficulties in the UAE amid the conflict and subsequent restrictions, but their transfer into Iran had also proved difficult, Daneshmand said.

Against that backdrop, the Iranian and Pakistani ministers discussed strengthening border infrastructure and expanding the capacity of free trade zones and border regions to facilitate commerce.

They stressed the importance of better coordination between customs authorities and more efficient procedures at border entry and exit points to reduce the time and cost of clearing and transporting goods.

The two sides also called for expanding trade, particularly in agricultural products, food and other goods needed by both countries, and highlighted the potential for greater economic activity in border regions to create jobs, strengthen bilateral economic ties and support development in border cities.

Both ministers agreed to continue consultations and follow up on the issues discussed to translate their agreements into practical measures to expand economic, trade and transit cooperation.

Trade shift drives 76% increase in imports through northern ports

Economy Desk

Iran has shifted much of its foreign trade to northern ports and land and rail crossings following a US naval blockade of its southern ports, with imports through northern ports rising 76% in the first six months of the Iranian year, Transport Minister Farzaneh Sadeq told Parliament on Tuesday.

Sadeq said more than 85% of the cargo previously handled through southern ports had been redirected to other border crossings under special instructions from the president. "Not even an hour of goods movement was halted," she said, IRNA reported.

During the same period, imports through road crossings increased by 41%, while imports by rail also recorded a significant rise. Exports through northern ports grew 10%, while exports through road crossings and rail networks increased by 9% and 53%, respectively.

The United States imposed the naval blockade after a 40-day war that began in late February, as part of efforts to pressure Tehran into accepting Washington's terms for an agreement. The restrictions have targeted Iran's oil exports and maritime trade.

Sadeq said the transport ministry was working on plans to improve procedures, upgrade infrastructure and strengthen transport diplomacy.

Restrictions at neighboring borders

The minister also identified restrictions on the other side of border crossings as a major obstacle to the movement of goods.

She said assessments showed that Iran's customs services were operating around the clock at many border terminals, but Iranian trucks faced restrictions on admission in neighboring countries.

Truck entry at northern, western and southern border crossings remained subject to limitations, Sadeq said, adding that despite the full operation of Iran's road and rail terminals, the restrictions had led to long queues.

The Foreign Ministry was holding ongoing talks to resolve the problem, she said, adding that most of the queues were caused by admission restrictions and quotas imposed by countries on the other side of the borders.

The border restrictions highlighted by Sadeq come as Iraq has said trade with Iran continues through other crossings despite the closure of al-Shaib crossing.

The Iraqi government has no plans to close additional border crossings with Iran, government spokesman Haider al-Aboudi said on Monday night, according to the Fars news agency.

Al-Aboudi said the al-Shaib crossing had been closed for technical and logistical reasons and that the government was working to resolve the problems.

Speaking to Iraq's Dijlah TV, he said no decision had been made to close any other border crossings.

Al-Aboudi had previously said that trade between Iraq and Iran continued smoothly through several other crossings.

The closure followed an earlier suspension of activity at the al-Shaib, Shalamcheh and Mandali crossings on September 12, after a drone attack on Saudi oil infrastructure was alleged to have originated from Iraqi territory.

Trade resumed at most crossings following security reviews, including at



Farzaneh Sadeq
mrud.ir

al-Shaib on September 17, but Iraq ordered the crossing closed again on October 20, with the closure taking effect the following day.

Al-Shaib, known as Chazabeh on the Iranian side, is an important land trade route between Iran and Iraq. Local officials in Iraq's Maysan province say about 4,000 people depend on the crossing directly or indirectly for their livelihoods.

China's chances of ...

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First, the strategic intentions of the United States and Israel are centered on the systematic destruction of Iran's missile and drone networks, the seizure of its nuclear materials, and applying sufficient pressure to bring about Iran's collapse or surrender. Assessments indicate that these intentions have not changed. We are witnessing changes in their behavior and rhetoric, but their strategic intentions remain intact.

(It should be noted that changes in behavior and rhetoric can happen relatively easily, whereas changes in intentions are much more difficult, because it takes a considerable amount of time for an intention to take shape and eventually become a strategic objective.)

Second, the United States and the Israeli regime view Iran's current situation as a "window of opportunity." From their perspective, the Gaza war, Iran's inability to maintain the balance of the Axis of Resistance, the 12-day war and the developments that followed have led to the successive breaking of red lines, creating what they see as a historic opportunity — or, in their own words, a window of opportunity — to alter the regional balance of power. Abandoning this window of opportunity is something they would never accept.

Third, historical patterns show that conflicts of this magnitude, both in terms of the geography involved and their consequences, are highly unlikely to end without a tangible outcome. A confrontation of this nature must produce a concrete result.

Given the absence of any signs that these three underlying assumptions among American policymakers are changing, I do not see much chance of China, or any other country, succeeding in intervening. This is also one of the reasons previous mediation efforts have failed. It is not that the mediators lack the necessary power, but rather that the underlying assumptions shaping the Americans' approach to the war have not changed.

Nevertheless, taking all these factors into account, I believe that diplomatic engagement by all potential mediators should be actively pursued, because a surprise that could bring the war to an end might emerge from these interactions. The likelihood of such an outcome is very low, but if it does materialize, its impact will be far-reaching.

There is a fourth point, which may be more important than all the preceding ones. There are two ways to analyze the war waged by the United States and Israel against the Islamic Republic of Iran:

1. From a narrow perspective, we can view this war simply as a confrontation between the United States and Iran over the nuclear issue.

2. From a broader strategic perspective, we can interpret this war as part of a grand game in which China is the ultimate target.

The United States backed down in the tariff war with China because Beijing held a stronger bargaining card in the form of rare earth minerals. However, in an energy war, if Washington manages to gain control of energy chokepoints, China will have no stronger card to play against the United States.

This is why American strategists believe that, following Venezuela and the establishment of control over energy resources in South America, Iran is the only remaining obstacle to using the energy card against China. If they manage to defeat Iran, the energy lifeline will fall into American hands, making the United States the undisputed dominant power in this domain. In such circumstances, China would be forced to concede the game to its rival in their strategic competition.

Now, if we look at the issue from this second perspective, why should the United States have any interest in allowing its rival to enter the final round of the war? My assessment is that Chinese strategists and policymakers understand this perspective and are designing the various components of their engagement strategy accordingly.

How would you assess the current state of our foreign policy in terms of cooperation with China?

Another important point is that our foreign policy needs to be redesigned in terms of its model of engagement. I believe that this type of engagement, in which a representative of the Supreme National Security Council, the Foreign Ministry or another institution travels to China on a particular occasion and expects to secure major achievements through one or two visits within a short period, falls somewhat short of what should be the desired model of engagement for the Islamic Revolution.

If we were to give this approach a name, we could call it "hurry-up diplomacy." It is a type of diplomacy that the Chinese simply do not understand.

The point is that we have not yet reached an agreement on the issues at hand, yet we already want to reap the benefits of our visit. Well, that is simply not how things work.

We will only succeed in our diplomacy, at least in our relations with China, when we devote a considerable amount of time to building networks and holding discussions on issues of mutual concern to the two countries.

Unless these discussions take place at a strategic level and are characterized by continuity and sustainability, the outcome we are seeking will not materialize. Sensitive issues require a great deal of time and investment. We have to put in the hard work before we can achieve the desired results.

Therefore, in our diplomacy with other countries, we need a paradigm shift from "hurry-up diplomacy" to "commitment-based diplomacy."

Oligarchs, elections; the endgame



By Rob Urie
Political economist

OPINION



The illustration shows the richest man on earth, Elon Musk, bursting out of a poster that used to read: "Make America Great Again".
MOTHER JONES

With current polling suggesting that the Democrats will win the House and possibly the Senate in the upcoming midterms, the longer trajectory of American politics is brought into focus. With the US currently engaged in two wars and one genocide, the wholesale destruction of the institutions that make life livable in the US, and the economic empowerment of a predatory oligarch class, most of what Americans call politics isn't on the ballot.

As has been the practice for more than a few decades, Donald Trump ran as a political outsider, threatening to blow the system up if elected. Ordinary DC chair warmers, as the collectors of political donations to support oligarchic control over the rest of us, represent the institutionally-mandated mode of 'governing' in the US. Trump came to the job with a list of long-discredited ideas that less intrepid souls would have understood to be both idiotic and self-destructive.

One possible way to consider this contest is as between the political parties. One party supports one flavor of policies and the other party favors another. As should be evident at this point in history, that system put in place a tiny group of oligarchs making really bad decisions for the rest of us. Crypto grifts and AI? This is what happens when a 'heads, they win, tails we lose,' power dynamic is in place. The good news for the few is bad news for the rest of us.

Should the pollsters have the election predictions right, the first order of business will be securing the results. Up through about Bush v. Gore this impulse would have been bipartisan. At the time, the myth of American democracy had been well sold. That the US was founded as a Constitutional Republic explains quite a bit about why it is today an oligarchy. Giving power to those pursuing their own interests leads to power being used in pursuit of those interests.

That the representatives of both parties appear in public surrounded by 'their' oligarchs should provide a clue as to who wields power in the US. That the fortunes of these oligarchs came through inheritance and / or dubious business endeavors should provide a clue as well. One unifying factor has been CIA venture capital funding through In-Q-Tel. We, the people, have the CIA to thank for Oracle, Palantir, and a host of AI startups.

In 1925, US president Calvin Coolidge gave us "the chief business of the American people is business." He was referring to the industry that built the heartland. While it is a mistake to romanticize the brutal labor relations of US industry, post-War prosperity made it possible to perceive a crude unity in a national interest. That war profiteering and the seizure of foreign economic resources became the point of US foreign policy required decades to re-instantiate.

'Business' hasn't been the business of the American people for at least the last half a century. Just getting by has been. The question now is whether to blame politicians or economics for the shift? On the one hand, politicians make economic policies. On the other hand, the special circumstance of the US having the only intact industrial infrastructure following WWII was temporary. The 'American Century' was an artifact of history. That Americans were told that the advantage was permanent explains some fair portion of the political rage of today.

By the 1970s, the writing was on the wall. The American infrastructure advantage began to wane. Imports from Japan were climbing the value chain from trinkets to consumer goods. American industrialists shifted from labor hoarding to searching abroad for poor, desperate workers who wouldn't contest poverty wages with no benefits. The claim that brutal labor relations were the key to American prosperity led to the passage of NAFTA (1994) and the elevation of finance as a disciplining factor for labor.

The brutality towards labor emerges from the capitalist theory of capital accumulation. Capitalist economics posits that the social savings that fund capitalist investment produce a benefit for both capital and labor. But US economic evolution since the 1970s tells a different story. Capital understood that the post-War infrastructure advantage was over early on. The temporary truce between capital and labor was turned back into a zero-sum game where capital saw its future in treating labor as prey.

The wisdom of this move is a matter of perspective. The fast money crowd turned the US into a casino. Fortunes are made or lost making 'bets' on the direction of financial markets. That US markets have been openly manipulated since the 1987 stock market crash ('Greenspan put') is a matter of public record. That billionaires are minting their own currencies ('crypto') gives the power of the state to unaccountable individuals and institutions. This shift of state power to oligarchs is why political resolution in the US won't be found anytime soon. The likely 2028 candidates are differentiable in rhetoric but not in policy. The wars to be fought are the same. The genocides are the same. State violence against anti-genocide protesters began in 2023, not 2025. Within the current configuration of power, 'give 'em enough rope' is the alternative to direct confrontation.

The current impediment to rebuilding a functioning economy is that China and other economic competitors have already built the 'factories of the world'. In order to compete, the US needs a new entry point. The new factories that could have been located in the US and employed American workers were built by other nations. The ineffectiveness of recent US efforts to re-industrialize is a function of decades of underinvestment. As China learned decades ago, building roads that run from factories to export facilities is how they get built.

That the Americans perceived a 'unipolar moment' (1991) as the US economy was being systematically dismantled demonstrates the power of delusional thinking. Many of us at the time were incredulous that US military production was shifted to geopolitical rivals just as US belligerence and poorly considered militarism were rising. Surely, no one was so stupid as to expect that geopolitical rivals would export arms to the US as they were being attacked by it.

On this last point, I was wrong. Market ideology that had little to no explanatory power with respect to US economic success up to that point was put forward as uncontested fact. Having accepted a project in college where I traced the reach of the Western imperial powers into Africa, the neoliberal 'free-market' trade routes followed the old imperial trade routes quite closely. What this means is that US 'free-market' economics is imperialist dogma.

Donald Trump's homicidal / suicidal resistance to regulating AI is a function of this ideology. Recall the neoliberal theory that corporate-friendly regulation is the secret to unleashing the animal spirits of capitalism? Today, it means handing state-level destructive capacity to any psychopath with a computer that decides that s/he has had enough of this world. Why would would-be school shooters put themselves at risk when they can send AI agents to cut off the town's water supply?

The US had the same opportunity as China and other economic competitors to invest and it chose to give the money to the oligarchs instead. While China was building an export-led economy the people running the US were arguing over the size of tax cuts for billionaires and how to 'shrink the size of government'. Lest this shock, this is the very same 'abundance' theory recently being touted by self-styled centrists in the US. That it is recycled Right-wing dogma from the 1980s locates it on the ideological spectrum.

That Reagan represented the hard-Right when he was in office but his policies are considered 'the pragmatic center' in the present illustrates the conundrum. Why would those of us who opposed these policies in the 1980s vote for them in 2026 unless we changed our minds about them? As both legacy parties bleed voters, the evidence has it that lots of people haven't changed their minds. The question then is why self-styled centrists don't just vote for the party that represents their politics? The answer back is that they do. It just doesn't fit neatly into any coherent notion of a political center.

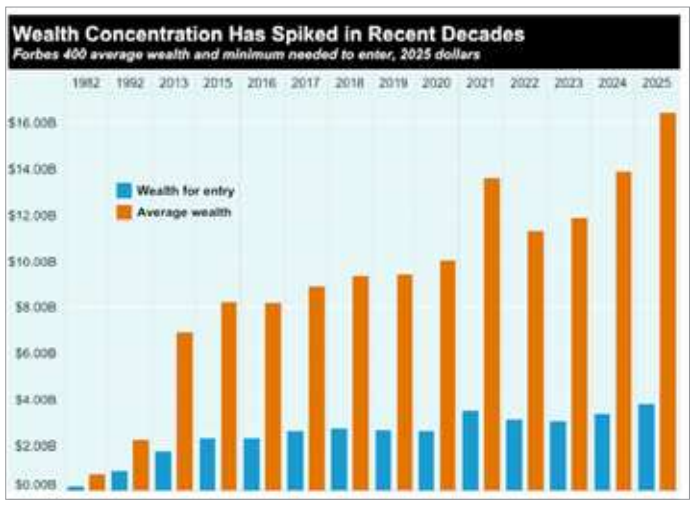
> Part of what is perpetually odd about American politics is that we are constantly told what we care about but never asked. Iran having nuclear weapons? Israel is the state that never should have been allowed to have them. Iran is ruled by a rational government. Israel is populated by genocidal and apocalyptic religious zealots. To the 'Israel controls the US crowd,' Trump just forbade Netanyahu to attack Iran to save his (Netanyahu's) election campaign. And the Israeli cabinet then stepped in to prevent Netanyahu from doing so.

Part of what is perpetually odd about American politics is that we are constantly told what we care about but never asked. Iran having nuclear weapons? Israel is the state that never should have been allowed to have them. Iran is ruled by a rational government. Israel is populated by genocidal and apocalyptic religious zealots. To the 'Israel controls the US crowd,' Trump just forbade Netanyahu to attack Iran to save his (Netanyahu's) election campaign. And the Israeli cabinet then stepped in to prevent Netanyahu from doing so.

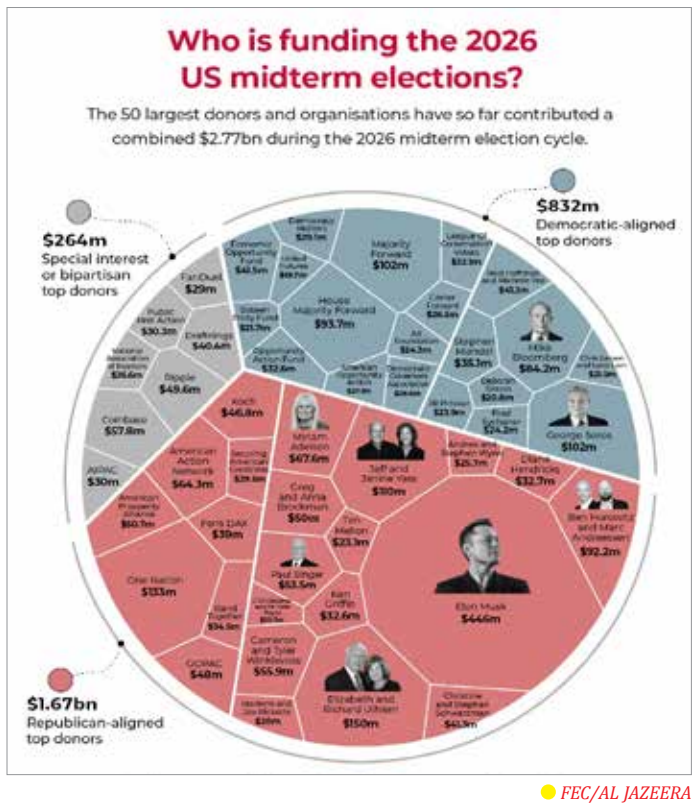
Regarding what Americans want from politicians and the state, this is always posed in terms of new costs rather than net benefit. Current ads claim that Medicare for All (an inadequate solution) would 'cost taxpayers $400 billion' when those who have looked into the matter offer that it would save $1 trillion per year. Equitable public schools would likely require Federal funding. But we would get in return an educated populace that possesses the tools needed to thrive in the world. And again, it is oligarchic welfare recipients upset that their looting might be hindered by public investment who object to these policies.

More broadly, Americans seem to expect absolutely nothing from the politicians that they vote for. This leaves us complaining about half-baked and wholly inadequate campaign promises that go unfulfilled instead of insisting that we get the policies that we need and have already paid for. The suggestion here is that a barely negotiable set of policies be proposed to get us out of this cycle of reacting to inadequate proposals.

- **Education:** state-funded pre-K through post-Doc for all comers. End the Charter schools and redistribute the money to public schools. And use Federal money to raise and equalize the quality of education through equalizing the funding.
- **Healthcare:** a public system where healthcare is fully state funded for all humans living within the US. All healthcare will be free at the point of provision. End the health insurance industry and create jobs for the workers displaced.
- **Childcare:** create a childcare authority to manage a national network of free at the point of service childcare facilities whose purpose is to free parents to work. Hire local workers at a living wage with benefits. Put child safety and wellbeing first.
- **National defense:** end the network of 800+ US military bases handing the land back to the nations in which they are located.



Statistical averages (in orange) are prone to over-representing extreme concentrations (kurtosis) of wealth relative to what most people experience. In the graph, this explains why the orange bars keep rising higher relative to the blue bars. Interpretation is that the concentration of wealth in the US has risen relative to what most people experience since the early 1980s. This is evidence that the US is an oligarchy.
inequality.org



FEC/AL JAZEERA

Dissolve the US standing army and cut the Pentagon budget by 85%–95%. If a military emergency arises, draft people in order of their family wealth with the richest being drafted first. This isn't punitive. It is to prevent the rich from starting wars from which they benefit economically.

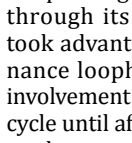
The usual pushback at this stage is panic-mongering about the Federal budget deficit. How can 'we' possibly afford these luxuries when we have pointless and murderous wars to fight, banks and bankers to bail out, and tax cuts for billionaires to pay for?

What is missing in the budget hawk panic is that it was private debt that caused the GFC (Global Financial Crisis), not public (Federal). Non-financial private debt (to prevent double counting) is currently $45 trillion versus $40 trillion for the public debt. And the Federal government of the US issues its debt in USD, which it can create at will. Private companies get charged with counterfeiting if they do this. The tales of sovereign defaults under these conditions are far and few between. The best-known, Russia in 1998, involved a pegged currency. The point is that it was the peg that was the problem, not the debt. The US has a floating rate currency. It isn't pegged and hasn't been since the US left the Gold Standard under Nixon.

For what it's worth, my Democrat friends are motivated in the current election and my Republican friends aren't. This jibes with news reports on early voting. More Democrats than Republicans are showing up at the polls. But Trump has already put down legal markers for contesting the election results. He had his chance to govern pretty much unimpeded and he made a mess of it. The problem of ICE at polling places so far hasn't materialized to my knowledge. I voted without incident. The larger challenge at present will be to get past Trump's legal impediments.

The immediate problem of an AI-induced financial crisis has been averted for now with the announcement that AI company Anthropic will IPO (Initial Public Offering) in late November. This should provide some breathing room until the next AI-induced crisis appears. If we can get Trump out of the way a tiny vacation from the existential dread that he has been causing may be possible. But recall that he is delivering 40,000 2,000lb bombs to Israel of the sort that flattened Gaza. This won't be over until it is over.

The article first appeared on CounterPunch.



By Akela Lacy
Senior politics reporter

PERSPECTIVE

AIPAC isn't retreating

Here's how it's shaping next Congress



GRACE HIE YOON/ANADOLU

In the words of the biggest name in the outside elections-spending game in the US, "Being pro-Israel is good policy and good politics." This midterms cycle, however, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's strategy seems to suggest the opposite. Contrary to its signature slogan, AIPAC's name has become anathema to voters across the political spectrum repulsed by Israel's genocide in Gaza and frustrated by Washington's outpouring of military aid for a foreign cabinet while domestic costs soar.

So, it's going underground. As The Intercept reported in December, AIPAC entered the 2026 midterms by returning to its strategic roots — funding other groups and uniting donors, rather than focusing on direct-to-candidate spending. Now, AIPAC has announced that it will no longer officially endorse or contribute directly to candidates.

Though progressives welcomed the announcement as evidence of AIPAC's retreat, it's far from a sign that AIPAC is backing down. The group is expected to continue spending heavily on elections through its super PAC, which took advantage of campaign finance loopholes to conceal its involvement in several races this cycle until after elections had already passed. To Lara Friedman, president of the Foundation for Middle East Peace, AIPAC's opting for obscurity shows that "its brand has become politically radioactive."

But how much has really changed? As AIPAC shifts strategy, a new project by The Intercept reveals the hundreds of candidates still taking its cash, plus how the money paid off for them. The data suggests that though the pro-Israel lobbying giant may be weakened, it's still dominant.

The Intercept tracked how much the group and its super PAC spent on elections to put pro-Israel candidates on the ballot in this year's midterms — including the money it tried to keep out of the public eye. While AIPAC makes use of a series of new pop-ups and pass-throughs, it still poured millions directly into 2026 midterm races. Its candidates usually still win.

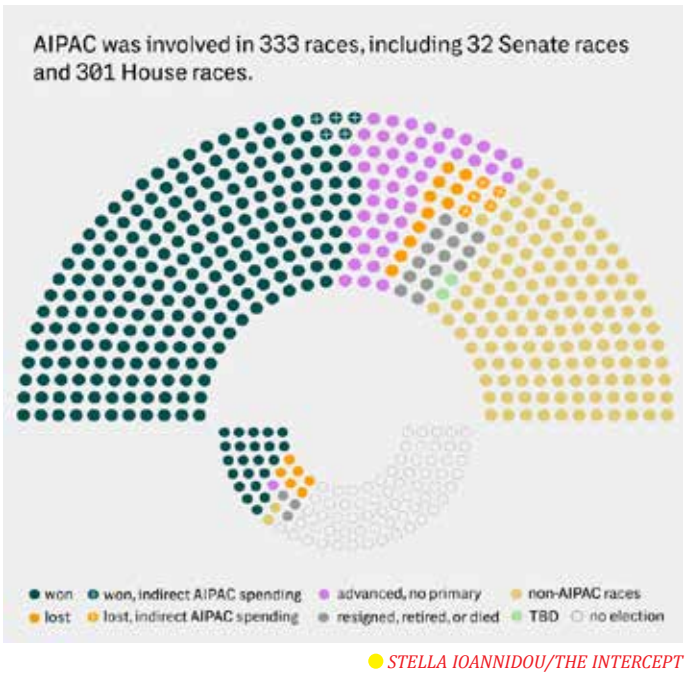
The new data builds on a 2024 project in which The Intercept documented just how AIPAC shaped the last congressional class. At the time, Donald Trump was preparing for his return to the presidency as Kamala Harris ran a campaign hamstrung by public disillusionment over the Biden administration's unflinching support for Israel's genocide in Gaza. To critics of Israel desperate to stop the violence, the two parties looked equally bleak, and the pro-Israel lobby's grip on Congress appeared unshakeable. It's been different this cycle. Primaries across the country saw candidates win after vowing to cut off or restrict military aid to Israel, and incumbents signed on to legislation blocking weapons transfers in an attempt to keep their seats. But the shift should not be overstated: AIPAC still waded into nearly three-quarters of races, and its candidates still won far more often than they lost.

In total, AIPAC or its super PAC, United Democracy Project, spent on 333 of the 473 seats up for election this year.

These are the dollars AIPAC and UDP spent directly in races. The former makes contributions to candidates, while the latter, as AIPAC's leading super PAC, makes independent expenditures, like buying ads. They made up the bulk of the pro-Israel lobby's known elections spending — $53.3 million from AIPAC and $66.7 million from UDP, compared to $53.7 million and $41.4 million last cycle. Simultaneously, the groups took up another tack: making it harder to tell which races they were actually involved in. The group's donors poured money into races where AIPAC didn't officially endorse a candidate. AIPAC's board president hosted a fundraiser for a candidate who swore the group wasn't backing her. And in a series of races, no one knew for certain that AIPAC had spent on the election until after it was over.

The group tested different strategies in different states, spending directly in the Michigan Senate race, for example, while concealing its spending in several other primaries. In those races, UDP gave money to other committees, including a series of "pop-up PACs," groups that registered just before primaries, allowing them to delay disclosing their donors until after the election passed. Several of those groups took money from AIPAC's super PAC, spent on ads against candidates critical of Israel, and then disappeared.

The pop-ups and pass-throughs represent AIPAC's most talked-about new tactic, but the lobbying group and its flagship super PAC still sunk the bulk of their spending into key races and high-priority states. The Intercept analyzed where AIPAC employed which strategy, how UDP dollars flowed through pop-up PACs, and which candidates received the most AIPAC and UDP cash in their primaries.



STELLA IOANNIDOU/THE INTERCEPT

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Direct spending

The pro-Israel lobby's biggest investment in the primaries turned out to be a disappointment. UDP spent more than $30 million on ads attacking Democratic candidate Abdul El-Sayed in the Michigan Senate race or backing his opponent, Rep. Haley Stevens. Now that El-Sayed is the Democratic nominee, UDP is also battling El-Sayed in his general election contest with Republican Mike Rogers, spending just over $500,000 so far.

Thanks in part to the deluge of spending, the El-Sayed–Stevens contest was one of the marquee primaries of 2026, pitting a vocal critic of the pro-Israel lobby who could become the first Muslim US senator against an enthusiastic AIPAC cash recipient who famously said: "Israel comes to me in my dreams." It's one of the key races where we're breaking down the money AIPAC and UDP spent in favor of one candidate and against a clear opponent. We're skipping Democratic House candidate Adrian Boafo, who benefited from $5.7 million in UDP spending, because his Maryland primary included 23 other candidates.

After Stevens and Boafo, the top AIPAC and UDP recipient from this year's primaries was Rep. Wesley Bell, a moderate Democrat from Missouri who fended off a challenge from former Rep. Cori Bush to return to the House (AIPAC spent millions to oust her last cycle). When UDP spending is excluded, Bell received more AIPAC funding in the primaries than any other Democrat.

On the Republican side, the top beneficiary was Ed Gallrein, the Trump-backed challenger who unseated Rep. Thomas Massie in Kentucky. Massie, a libertarian critic of all foreign aid — including to Israel — was the relatively rare Republican incumbent AIPAC and UDP opposed.

Often, the pro-Israel groups backed Republican incumbents. Two more top recipients were Sen. Tom Cotton, who easily won his primary in Arkansas, and John Cornyn, who lost to state attorney general Ken Paxton in Texas.

But the greatest Republican recipient of AIPAC largesse — ahead of Gallrein, when UDP is excluded — did not face a primary opponent.

Republican Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, now facing a tight general election contest against Democratic candidate Troy Jackson, has been a longtime beneficiary of campaign cash aligned with the pro-Israel lobby. Asked by Zeteo last year for her comment on Americans killed by the Israeli military, Collins shook her head and said only: "I am pro-Israel."

Pop-ups

On top of the $53.6 million it spent directly on races this cycle, United Democracy Project poured another $13.1 million into Democratic primaries by giving money to other committees whose names or stated agendas indicated no connection to Israel policy. That $13.1 million, more than triple the $3.5 million United Democracy gave through other groups last cycle, helped fund at least three pop-up PACs that formed this year.

The groups' names offered little insight into their political agendas, as The Lever recently highlighted. UDP spent the most on popup PACs in a series of Democratic primaries around Chicago, where groups with names like Elect Chicago Women, Chicago Progressive Partnership, and Affordable Chicago Now! used their funds to attack candidates running on rejecting AIPAC money or ending US military support for Israel. Several of the groups also received funding from major United Democracy Project donors, and three of them shut down after the primaries and gave their money back to United Democracy Project.

If last cycle AIPAC proved that it could leverage its financial advantage to target critics of Israel, its performance this cycle suggests that its money has become a faltering superpower.

New pro-Palestine groups have sprung up to spend against AIPAC — though their pockets aren't nearly as deep. When candidates went head-to-head this cycle in primaries defined by US military support for Israel's genocide in Gaza, pro-Palestine candidates often came out on top.

For decades before it started spending directly on elections, "AIPAC operated in the shadows," Friedman, of Foundation for Middle East Peace, said. Its endorsements were once "clear but unofficial," she added, and its funding operated through "informal understandings with big donors and allied but ostensibly independent PACs."

Today, "AIPAC is trying out a sort of middle road," Friedman said. "It will return in part to the shadows — no direct endorsements, no direct donations — but it will also continue to flex its power directly in elections, via tactics it has been testing and honing these past four years."

If anything, next cycle could see an expansion of the recent pop-up PAC strategy, making it harder to tell when AIPAC is involved — until it's too late.

The full article first appeared on The Intercept.

Asian Cup postponed until December 2027, AFC confirms



AFC

ESPN – The Asian Football Confederation has confirmed that the 2027 AFC Asian Cup, which was scheduled to be held from Jan. 7 to Feb. 5 in Saudi Arabia, will be postponed until December next year due to regional security concerns.

The quadrennial tournament will now take place from next Dec. 23 to Jan. 21, 2028.

In a press release issued on Tuesday afternoon, it was announced: "The Organizing Committee for AFC Asian Cup approved to reschedule the flagship national team tournament in light of the current exceptional circumstances arising from developments in the region, including substantial logistical complexities and travel disruptions. The new dates of the tournament will be presented to FIFA for approval.

"Exceptional circumstances have been created for the organization and delivery of the competition as originally scheduled, making the postponement necessary in the interest of all participating teams, officials, spectators and other stakeholders."

Just last month, AFC president Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa had stated that preparations were still going ahead for the continent's premier international tournament to be held as originally planned. This came in spite of an escalation in conflict between a Saudi Arabia-led coalition and Yemen's Ansarullah.

Multiple sites in Saudi Arabia came under Ansarullah's missile and drone attacks, with King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh sustaining at least 20 strikes over an 11-day period which reportedly led to 17 dead and more than 300 injured.

Just last week, 2015 Asian Cup champions Australia confirmed they were still committed to their upcoming friendlies in the region, where they will face Qatar in Doha on Nov. 11 before taking on Jordan in Amman six days later, while stressing that they were "closely monitoring the situation."

On Monday, Cristiano Ronaldo was a notable absentee in Saudi Pro League giants Al Nassr's 6-2 away win over Uzbekistan's Pakhtakor in the AFC Champions League Elite – although the official stance was that he was rested. It came a week after their previous AFC Champions League Elite match had to be postponed after Emirati opponents Al Wasl declined to travel to Riyadh for the game.

Riyadh, which boasts five of the eight stadiums to be used for the Asian Cup, is set to host 30 of the tournament's 51 matches – including the final at King Fahd Sports City Stadium.

Saudi Arabia is hosting the Asian Cup for the first time ever, and will also be the venue for the FIFA World Cup in 2034.

AFC Champions League Elite:

10-man Tractor leaves it late to salvage point against Neftchi

Sports Desk

Persian Gulf Pro League club Tractor came from behind twice to share the spoils with Uzbekistan's PFC Neftchi in a 2-2 draw in the AFC Champions League Elite in Muscat, Oman, on Monday.

Both sides scored dramatically in second-half stoppage time as the Iranian top-flight side extended its winless start to the league stage to four games, leaving it 13th in the 16-team West Zone table with two points.

Neftchi started on the front foot at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex, which served as the Iranian side's home venue, and went close to finding the net as early as the fifth minute, only to see Tractor goalkeeper Parsa Jafari pull off a heroic double save to deny Asilbek Jumaev and Markus Forss.

Neftchi kept knocking on the door to no avail as the first half ended goalless, before the Uzbek club found a deserved breakthrough 10 minutes after the break, when substitute Stipe Perica tapped home Abrorbek Ismoilov's low cross from close range.

Things went from bad to worse for Tractor six minutes later, with Farshad Faraji sent off for a high-foot challenge that struck Bojan Ciger in the face.

Neftchi went looking for a second goal to kill off the contest, but it was the Iranian club that found an equalizer against the run of play with eight minutes remaining, as Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh broke away from two markers before laying the ball off for Tomislav Strkalj to dink over goalkeeper Botirali Ergashev.

Neftchi retook the lead in the fourth minute of stoppage time through a Vladimir Jovovic screamer from range, but Tractor refused to concede defeat, with Masoud Zaerkazemayn restoring parity five minutes later to bring a dramatic end to an absorbing contest.

"We didn't have a good start to the match, so we quickly changed our system and managed to take control of the game," said Tractor head coach Javad Nekounam. "We finished the first half in a good position, and we knew that our team would definitely improve in the second half, and we did.

"Unfortunately, just as we were playing better, we conceded a rather bizarre goal. It was really difficult for us and for the team to deal with. We had been playing well, but unfortunately, we conceded. Shortly afterwards, we also lost one of our players to a sending-off.

"Nevertheless, both the players and I believed that we could achieve a positive result today. We came back into the game twice, despite playing with 10 men under difficult circumstances. It was a tough match, and we had fallen behind, but we managed to fight our way back," added the Iranian coach.

Tractor will look to end its winless run when it takes on the UAE's Al Wasl in Muscat on November 23.



Tomislav Strkalj (19) scores Tractor's first equalizer during a 2-2 draw against PFC Neftchi in the AFC Champions League Elite in Muscat, Oman, on November 2, 2026.
AFC

Dakar 2026 Youth Olympics:

Iran's Hakimi settles for silver in men's judo

Sports Desk

Iranian judoka Sobhan Hakimi settled for a silver medal in the men's -81kg category at the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympics on Monday.

A gold medalist at July's Asian Cadet Judo Championships, the young Iranian opened his campaign with a victory over Shaku Kargbo of Sierra Leone, followed by a semifinal win against Egypt's Aly Ealramly, before being denied gold by Slovenia's Maks Cebulj in the final.



ISNA

This was Iran's second medal at the multi-sport event, after Parsa Shahshahani had also claimed silver in swimming on the preceding day.

The 17-year-old Iranian clocked 2:02.74 to finish runner-up in the men's 200m backstroke. New Zealand's Ariel Muchirahondo won the gold medal in 1:59.15, with Greece's Nikolaos Papatheodorou taking bronze in 2:03.23.

The Summer Youth Olympics, staged in Africa for the first time, kicked off with the opening ceremony at the 55,000-seat Abdoulaye Wade Stadium in Diamniadio, 30km from the Senegalese capital, on Saturday.

Iran is represented by 29 athletes across two team events – men's beach volleyball and women's futsal – and 12 individual sports at this year's edition.

The girls' futsal team makes up the largest contingent, with 10 athletes. Beach wrestling features four Iranian competitors, while taekwondo has two participants – one girl and one boy. Badminton also has two representatives, one of each gender.

The showpiece in the Senegalese capital marks Iran's fourth participation in as many editions since the event was first introduced at Singapore 2010, where the country secured two gold, two silver and one bronze medal.

At Nanjing 2014, Iran collected three gold and three bronze medals before achieving its best performance to date with seven gold, three silver and four bronze medals at Buenos Aires 2018.

World Weightlifting Championships:

Iranian duo finishes empty-handed in men's 85kg

Sports Desk

Iran's campaign at the IWF World Weightlifting Championships in Ningbo, China, got off to a disappointing start after former world champion Mirmostafa Javadi and Abdollah Beiranvand missed out on the podium in the men's 85kg division on Monday.

Beiranvand posted a combined total of 363kg, finishing fifth in the snatch with 170kg and 18th in the clean and jerk with 193kg.

The Iranian successfully lifted 164kg on his opening snatch attempt before missing 169kg on his second. He recovered to clear 170kg in his final attempt.

In the clean and jerk, Beiranvand successfully lifted 193kg but failed to register 199kg and 200kg in his remaining attempts, finishing ninth in the overall standings.



IWFIR

Javadi, meanwhile, finished 13th overall with a total of 360kg. He lifted 160kg in the snatch to place 15th and managed 200kg in the clean and jerk for 10th place.

Javadi successfully lifted 155kg and 160kg in his first two snatch attempts but failed to clear 164kg in his third.

In the clean and jerk, he opened with a successful 200kg lift before missing his attempts at 203kg and 204kg.

Kermanshah exhibition showcases Iran's handicrafts diversity

Iranica Desk

The 16th National Handicrafts Exhibition of Kermanshah Province has opened in the city of Kermanshah, bringing together representatives from all 31 provinces of Iran, with more than 200 booths and 250 artists and craftspeople participating.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Kiumars Azami, head of the Kermanshah Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, said the event aims to showcase the potential of the handicrafts sector, support artists and craftspeople, expand sales markets, and create opportunities for the exchange of experience among industry professionals, according to chtn.ir.

He said the participation of artists and craftspeople from all 31 provinces provides an opportunity to highlight Iran's cultural, artistic and ethnic diversity in Kermanshah.

Azami added that the exhibition also features cities and villages designated as national and international handicrafts hubs, showcasing some of their most notable products and capabilities across various crafts.

He noted that a range of provincial institutions and organizations are taking part in the event, including the Technical and Vocational Training Department, prison inmates participating in rehabilitation programs, the Welfare Department, the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee, the Science and Technology Park, knowledge-based companies, the Artists' Basij, the provincial post office and the Department of Sports and Youth.

The Department of Sports and Youth is also introducing traditional and local games, highlighting aspects of Iran's intangible cultural heritage and the cultural traditions of different communities. Meanwhile, works and achievements from the "Shirindokht" festival are also on display.

Azami emphasized that specialized handicrafts exhibitions can help boost production, strengthen artists' livelihoods, showcase the capabilities of different provinces and promote cultural tourism.

The exhibition also provides an opportunity to showcase Kermanshah's rich handicraft traditions, which reflect the province's cultural diversity and artistic heritage. Traditional crafts associated with the region include Giveh, a lightweight, handwoven footwear, as well as traditional weaving, woodwork and other forms of local craftsmanship. These products represent both the skills passed down through generations and the cultural identity of communities across the province.



IRNA

Ilam's Chamar ritual faces uncertain future

Iranica Desk

The sound of the Sorna and Dohol (traditional wind and percussion instruments), mourning chants by women and men, elegiac poetry, Kotal, a symbolic structure bearing the belongings of the deceased, have made Chamar one of the most distinctive mourning rituals in the cultural traditions of Iran's Ilam Province. Despite its inscription on Iran's National Intangible Cultural Heritage List, the centuries-old ceremony now faces serious questions over its continuity, transmission to younger generations and the financial capacity of tribal communities to organize it.

Chamar is more than a ceremony marking the farewell to a deceased person. It is a collection of oral narratives, indigenous music, poetry, lamentations, symbols and collective practices that have evolved over generations and reflect the cultural memory of the people of Ilam. Through this tradition, mourning extends beyond personal grief, becoming a communal ceremony to honor the deceased and support the bereaved family, according to ISNA.

Today, however, the significance of Chamar lies not only in the ceremony's grandeur and historical roots, but also in the future of the elements that define its identity. The traditional lament poets, women who have passed down ancient mourning chants from generation to generation, and musicians familiar with the distinctive melodies of the Sorna and Dohol are among the main custodians of this oral heritage. Unless their knowledge and skills are documented and passed on to younger generations, parts of this tradition could disappear forever with the passing of the last masters and storytellers in each locality.



tabnak.ir



faryad.ir

Farzad Sharifi, director general of Ilam Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, told ISNA that the Chamar ritual was inscribed on Iran's National Intangible Cultural Heritage List in 2011.

Sharifi said Chamar was a special traditional ceremony and a tangible expression of local mourning and elegiac traditions. He added that examples of the ceremony had been staged at the Barakat Border Terminal in Mehran for Arbaeen pilgrims, as well as during ceremonies commemorating the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, and the late president Ebrahim Raeisi, to introduce the culture and traditions of the people of Ilam.

The provincial cultural heritage official described Chamar as one of the region's important and ancient ceremonies, emphasizing that the province's cultural and musical potential made it necessary to preserve its values and pass them on to future generations.

These remarks reflect the attention given to Chamar by cultural heritage authorities. However, a key question remains: to what extent has this recognition translated into sustained programs to preserve the ritual's details, identify its cultural custodians and transfer their skills to younger generations?



faryad.ir

Sajjad Nazari, an expert in intangible cultural heritage registration in Ilam Province, said that Chamar was a structured ceremony involving various groups, including women who perform mourning chants, Sorna and Dohol musicians, and local poets.

Nazari said that during the ceremony, groups of Rokers, or traditional lament poets, perform elegiac verses alongside musicians, praising the deceased and recalling his personal qualities. Women also perform mourning chants, contributing another important element to the ritual's atmosphere of grief.

The Kotal also holds a special place in the ceremony. It is a symbolic structure on which the deceased's clothing, rifle and photograph are displayed. In some ceremonies, the deceased's horse is also decorated with ornamental fabrics.

The formation of ceremonial lines, the presence of banners, musical performances and improvised elegiac poetry each form part of Chamar's structure. The ceremony may vary from one locality to another, making the accurate documentation of local narratives and performance practices particularly important.

Academic research has also examined dimensions of the ritual beyond mourning. In their paper, titled "An Analysis of the Artistic, Literary, Ritual and Mythological Dimensions of Chamar," Ahmad Kanjoori and Hassan Zolfaqari examine the ceremony as a symbolic and performative ritual in which music, singing, mourning chants, collective movements and elegiac poetry play important roles.

The researchers classify Chamar as a rite of passage that helps the community and bereaved family adjust to the new circumstances following a loss. They also point to similarities between certain elements of the ceremony and ancient mourning traditions, including the lamentation for Siavash, a legendary Iranian figure.

Alongside its cultural and academic significance, concerns about the future of Chamar are also being raised by some people familiar with the tradition. They believe changes in lifestyles, the growing distance between younger generations and older customs, the passing of elders and experienced practitioners, and rising organizational costs could make it increasingly difficult to sustain the ceremony.

The financial burden of organizing Chamar is another issue that cannot be overlooked. If holding the ritual in its traditional form depends on resources and expenses that some families and tribes can no longer afford, measures should be considered to provide cultural support, document the tradition and facilitate public participation. Such support, however, should not alter the ritual's essential character or turn it into a purely staged performance.

Sharifi also emphasized the importance of intangible cultural heritage and its transmission to future generations. Keeping Chamar alive could serve as the basis for a clear demand from provincial cultural authorities: turning general commitments into a specific, scheduled and measurable preservation program. Identifying the tradition's custodians, creating a comprehensive archive of Chamar poetry and music, organizing knowledge-transfer workshops with local masters, and documenting regional variations are among the measures that could help safeguard the ritual.

Chamar is part of the collective memory of Ilam. Its value is not limited to ceremonies held on special occasions; it also lies in the stories and traditions passed down from one generation to another.

Unless these narratives are documented, the voices of traditional lament poets and mourning singers are recorded, and younger generations are given opportunities to learn about and practice the ritual, its inclusion on a national heritage list alone will not prevent its gradual disappearance. Preserving Chamar requires serious action to listen to its remaining practitioners, document their knowledge and pass this cultural legacy on to future generations before its last custodians are gone.

License Holder: Islamic Republic News Agency
Publisher: Iran Cultural & Press Institute
Chair of ICPI Board of Directors: Sadegh Hossein Jaberi Ansari
ICPI CEO: Ali Motaghian
Senior Editor-in-chief: Hadi Khosroshahin
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Website: www.irandaily.ir/newspaper.irandaily.ir
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Iran Daily

irandaily.ir | newspaper.irandaily.ir | IranDailyWeb

Vol. 8256 ● Wednesday, November 04, 2026 ● 100,000 rials ● 8 pages

Culture remains overlooked in development plans, senior official says

Arts & Culture Desk

Culture accounts for 3.39% of global economic output and 3.55% of employment but remains overlooked in development strategies, Iran's deputy cultural heritage minister said on Monday, urging governments to give it a greater role in plans for sustainable development.

Ali Darabi made the remarks at a conference on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in Iranian architecture at Pars University of Architecture and Art in Tehran.

He cited the 2022 MONDIACULT declaration, adopted by 150 countries in Mexico City, which called for culture to become a standalone goal in the development agenda beyond 2030.

"Despite its growing role in building inclusive and sustainable societies, culture remains underrepresented in development strategies," Darabi said, citing a UNESCO report on cultural policies.

He said 46% of countries in the Global North and 58% in the Global South had included culture in their development strategies.

Darabi also pointed to wide disparities in cultural spending. Average per capita spending in Europe and North America is $418.56, nearly 13 times the combined figure for other regions.

"The equivalent figures are $3.09 in Central and South Asia and $1.10 in sub-Saharan Africa," he said.

War, conflict, insecurity, natural disasters and climate change threaten communities and their living heritage, Darabi said.



Iran's deputy cultural heritage minister Ali Darabi addresses a conference in Tehran on November 2, 2026.
IRNA

Culture, he added, can foster dialogue and understanding across national and political borders.

Describing Iran as an "open-air museum," he cited the country's more than one million historical works, 23,000 historic sites and mounds, 14,000 historic buildings and sites, and 833 museums.

He also noted its six main languages, 17 ethnic groups and 40 dialects and regional varieties.

Darabi said Iran has 30 tangible and natural heritage properties on UNESCO's World Heritage List and 27 intangible heritage elements inscribed internationally, placing it fourth worldwide in the latter category.

Tehran to host Asia-Pacific National Library Chiefs' Meeting



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran will host the annual meeting of Asia-Pacific national library chiefs for the first time on November 17.

Representatives from 15 countries set to discuss how artificial intelligence can help preserve written heritage and expand regional cooperation during the meeting, Mehr News Agency reported.

The 32nd Conference of Directors of National Libraries in Asia and Oceania (CDNLAO) will be held both in person and online at the National Library and Archives of Iran in Tehran, said Reza Shahabi, the library's deputy director.

Qatar, Australia, China, Kazakhstan, Armenia and Pakistan are among the countries that have confirmed participation.

The secretary-general of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) will deliver a special video address.

National library directors will report on their institutions and share recent experience under the meeting's theme: "National Libraries in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Preserving Written Heritage, Transferring Knowledge and Expanding Regional Cooperation."

First held in Australia in 1979, CDNLAO was established to promote information-sharing, exchange expertise in library organization and publishing, strengthen cooperation and help libraries in developing countries improve their infrastructure.

The 31st meeting was held in Kuwait in 2025. Shahabi said Iran secured the 2026 gathering after consulting the conference's board and obtaining agreement from its members.

He said the National Library of Iran had taken on the hosting role as part of a broader effort to strengthen cultural diplomacy and build closer ties among national libraries.

Iran's tech olympics attracts applicants from 118 countries



Social Desk

More than 13,000 people have registered for Iran's third Tech Olympics, including 3,631 applicants from 118 countries, as the four-day competition brings together technology talents in fields ranging from artificial intelligence to robot battles.

The finals run from November 2 to 5 at Pardis Technology Park, northeast of Tehran.

International registrations rose 98.2% from 1,832 in the previous edition, while the number of countries represented increased 11.3%, from 106 to 118. About 10,000 applicants registered from Iran.

Twenty-two finalists from 11 countries, including India, Turkmenistan, the Czech Republic, Pakistan, Belarus, Vietnam, Russia, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Lebanon and Syria, are competing in programming, artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things.

The contests are held both in person and online. About 1,200 finalists are taking part in the four-day event.

The competition covers six fields: programming, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, drones, the Internet of Things and robot battles.

Sajjad Abbasi Fashami, secretary of Tech Olympics 2026, said international participation had grown significantly, with foreign registrations nearly doubling from the previous edition.

Organizers say the event aims to identify talent and connect participants with knowledge-based and technology companies, using real business and technical challenges to assess their skills.

An academy and a club have been set up to maintain contact with selected participants and support their professional development. A job station also links competitors with potential employers.

The international outreach program includes 13 ambassadors from nine countries, who promote the event, share information and help foreign teams communicate with organizers.

Foreign guests are also scheduled to visit Pardis Technology Park and technology companies, learn about Iran's innovation ecosystem, attend other competitions, explore job opportunities and take a tour of Tehran.

Organizers hope the visits will encourage scientific, technological and business ties beyond the competition itself.

Iranian director wins award at Barcelona festival

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Mohammad Reza Ardalan has won the Best Director Award in the Other Narratives section of the 14th Asian Film Festival Barcelona for "Poultry Farm", a film that has earned recognition at several international festivals.

Written and directed by Ardalan, the film follows Hawar, a homeless, undocumented Kurdish teenager who crosses from Iraq into Iran in search of work.

He finds a job at a remote poultry farm on the outskirts of Tehran. When the only worker he has befriended disappears, Hawar sets out to find him and uncovers exploitation, fear and violence. The film blends mystery and social drama to explore the vulnerability of undocumented migrants.

Madakto Pictures began distributing the film internationally in 2025. It was previously titled "Faryad".

"Poultry Farm" has already won two awards at Russia's Mary Ann International Ethnic Film Festival: best screenplay for Ardalan and a special jury award for best music for composer Navid Hejazi.

It has also been selected for the 17th Puerto Rico International Film Festival, the second Kathmandu Horror Film Festival in Nepal and the 57th International Film Festival of India in Goa, western India.

The Barcelona prize recognizes Ardalan's work in the Other Narratives category, not the festival's overall competition.

