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Pezeshkian: Iran facing 'full-scale economic war'

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Iranian businesses eye market opportunities at China's import expo

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

FEATURE REPORT
EXCLUSIVE



IRAN DAILY

The ninth China International Import Expo (CIIE) opened in Shanghai on Thursday, bringing together a record number of participating companies and international exhibitors as China seeks to further open its market to global businesses.

Held at the National Exhibition and Convention Center under the theme "New Era, Shared Future," the six-day event provides a platform for countries and regions to explore opportunities arising from Chinese-style modernization and promote mutually beneficial cooperation.

A total of 162 countries, regions and international organizations are taking part in this year's expo. The Country Exhibition features 65 countries and four international organizations, while more than 4,100 exhibitors are participating in the Business Exhibition.

The event has set new records in the overall number of participating companies, the number of Fortune Global 500 companies and industry-leading enterprises, as well as exhibition space.

Addressing the opening ceremony, Chinese Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang said hosting the CIIE was a major initiative by China to uphold trade liberalization and economic globalization and proactively open its market to the world.

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Putin calls for immediate end to 'cruel aggression' against Iran: *Rezaei*

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Russia's President Vladimir Putin (L) shakes hands with Mohsen Rezaei, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, ahead of their talks in Moscow on November 5, 2026.
SPUTNIK



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Putin calls for immediate end to 'cruel aggression' against Iran *Rezaei*



Russian President Vladimir Putin (3rd R) meets Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Mohsen Rezaei (3rd L) in Moscow, Russia, on November 5, 2026.
SPUTNIK

International Desk

Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Secretary Major General Mohsen Rezaei held a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow on Thursday, where the Russian leader called for immediate end to the US "cruel aggression" against Iran.

Mohsen Rezaei made the remarks after his meeting with Putin, during which a message from the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei was delivered to Putin.

"In the meeting, the Russian president strongly condemned the US and Zionist regime's military attack on Iran, as well as the bombing of our country's nuclear sites," Rezaei said, adding that the Russian president clearly stated that the military aggression against Iran is a cruel war and must end as soon as possible.

Rezaei said the discussions covered regional security arrangements in the aftermath of the US-Israeli war on Iran, Moscow's support for ending the aggression, and plans to expand energy and transit cooperation, including the construction of gas pipelines from Russia to Iran.

He emphasized that strategic cooperation between Iran and Russia plays a significant role in promoting regional stability and countering unilateralism in international affairs.

A substantial part of the meeting was devoted to examining the latest developments in West Asia and the Persian Gulf.

Rezaei said Tehran would not hold talks with the US on ending the war and reopening the Strait of Hormuz until Washington meets its seven demands.

"On the issue of diplomacy, we have announced seven conditions to the Americans. As long as they do not execute our seven conditions, we will neither open the Strait of Hormuz nor have negotiations," he said.

Referring to the shared positions of Tehran and Moscow on numerous regional and international issues, the Russian president reaffirmed Moscow's determination to expand relations with Iran and called for continued consultations between the two countries' security and political officials.

Rezaei also said discussions with Putin focused on major regional developments, particularly the future security architecture of West Asia following the war.

"Important issues concerning the region were discussed with Mr. Putin, including significant discussions on the postwar period and regional security arrangements," he said.

The meeting comes amid intensified diplomatic and strategic engagement between Tehran and Moscow as Iran seeks to address the consequences of the war and establish arrangements for regional security and postwar reconstruction.

Pezeshkian: Iran facing 'full-scale economic war'

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said the country is facing a "full-scale economic war" despite not being engaged in a military conflict.

"Today, the country is in a situation where, although it is not involved in a military war, it is facing extensive economic pressure. Waterways and air routes have been restricted, while obstacles are also being created along land routes," Pezeshkian said during a virtual meeting with authorities in the northern province of Gilan on Thursday.

Referring to rising government expenditure amid wartime conditions and external pressure, the president said the efforts and resilience of government managers and officials had enabled the country to withstand mounting challenges and manage a substantial part of its difficulties.

Pezeshkian also stressed the need to preserve national unity and cohesion, warning that Iran's adversaries are seeking to sow discord within the country.

"The enemy is seeking to create divisions within the country, and we must strengthen solidarity and cohesion to prevent internal differences from becoming a tool for the enemy to achieve its objectives," he said. Since the joint aggression by the United States and Israel against Iran in February, Washington has intensified its economic pressure on Iran to force authorities in Tehran to accept its demands to end the aggression.



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks during a virtual meeting with authorities in the northern province of Gilan on November 5, 2026.
president.ir

The United States has imposed a naval blockade on Iran since April and following the failure of an agreement reached between the two countries, which was mediated by Pakistan. The blockade has stopped Iran's oil exports, with only about 200,000 to 300,000 barrels a day of Iranian oil still reaching the market via Iraq, according to Bloomberg. The US has also imposed new sanctions on the country. Washington has announced it would put sanctions on any global companies doing business with Iranian airlines.

US sanctions on Iranian airlines came into force on September 23. The measures have not grounded Iranian aviation altogether.

The US has also forced Iran's neighbors to close their land routes with Iran, through which Iran imports and exports goods.

Tehran rejects EU claim of Iran's interference in Yemen-Saudi war

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei strongly rejected as "baseless" the European Union's (EU) allegation of Iran's interference in the ongoing conflict between Yemen and Saudi Arabia, slamming the bloc for its complicity in human rights violations in Yemen through the imposition of sanctions on the impoverished Arab country.

Baqaei's remarks on Thursday were made in direct response to EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas, who claimed in a formal statement that Iran militarily supports the Yemeni armed forces in what she called a "violation of several United Nations Security Council resolutions."

Baqaei stressed that the European bloc is complicit in flagrant human rights violations in Yemen through the imposition of sanctions and an economic siege against the impoverished Arab nation.

The EU cannot escape responsibility by making deflective statements, Baqaei stressed.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman also strongly rejected allegations concerning the presence of Iranian military experts in Yemen, emphasizing that such "fabricated" reports are aimed at concealing the facts and diverting public attention.

He also noted that the Yemeni people have demonstrated their ability, experience, courage and determination to defend their national sovereignty and human dignity, stressing that they do not need any foreign intervention to achieve this goal.

He also condemned military strikes on various parts of Yemen, particularly attacks on civilian facilities, vital infrastructure and residential areas, which have killed more than 270 people, including 130 women and children, injured more than 650 others, and destroyed homes and infrastructure.



While hundreds of thousands of Yemenis have lost their lives, Saudi Arabia has not succeeded in its main objective of reinstating a puppet government in Yemen that aligns with its interests.
AFP

Baqaei called for an end to violations of Yemen's national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

"The establishment of peace in the Arabian Peninsula requires an end to military attacks, respect for the Yemeni people's right to self-determination, an end to the country's naval and air blockade, and dialogue based on a roadmap agreed upon by Yemenis and Saudis," he stressed, adding that Iran is ready to provide any assistance toward achieving peace.

In March 2015, Saudi Arabia and its allies enforced a blockade on Yemen, launching a wide-ranging military campaign that received military, political, and logistical backing from the United States and various Western nations.

TENDER NO.: 08-21-0340018
Second 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
Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex,Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site)
Ahvaz, Iran
Tel. No.: 061 34 12 4644
Fax No.: 061 34 45 74 37

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Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



SNSC official says gas swap, North-South Corridor to shatter 'US illusion of pressuring Iran'



Ali Bagheri
ISNA

Economy Desk

The transfer of Russian gas to Iran and the North-South Corridor are strategic projects that dispel the illusion held by some powers, including the United States, that they can put the Islamic Republic under pressure, Ali Bagheri, deputy secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), said, according to ISNA.

He described the two projects as economic assets that Iran could use to promote development at home and across the region, as well as enhance security.

"Iran made proper use of the potential of the Strait of Hormuz to advance its national interests in the period following the Third Imposed War. These two projects are geoeconomic assets that can be effectively used to strengthen security and develop the country," Bagheri said.

The US and Israel launched a 40-day war against Iran in late February. Days after the war began, 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 passed daily. Disruptions to traffic through the waterway pushed oil prices from about $70 a barrel to above $100. Iran remains in a state of war, with its southern ports also under a US blockade. The restrictions have targeted Iran's oil exports and maritime trade.

One of the two projects cited by Bagheri is the International North-South Transport Corridor, whose western section includes the Rasht-Astara railway. Iran and Russia signed an agreement on May 18, 2023, to jointly build the 162-km railway, the missing rail link in the corridor's western section.

On Wednesday, the two sides signed an agreement to hand over a further 37 km of the railway project to Russia's Caspian Service, bringing the total length of the route assigned to the company to 162 km.

The handover is part of ongoing efforts to complete the railway, a key component of the North-South corridor.

The two countries are also nearing a final agreement on gas swaps.

Under a 30-year agreement signed by the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) and Russian energy giant Gazprom in 2024, Iran is expected to receive up to 55 billion cubic meters of gas annually through a planned pipeline that Russia intends to build across the Caspian Sea.

Iranian officials have said the supplies would help address domestic gas shortages, support sustainable growth in export capacity and strengthen the country's position as a regional gas hub.

Iran holds the world's second-largest natural gas reserves after Russia, estimated at about 34 trillion cubic meters.

Iran-India trade rises 46% in first eight months, driven by surge in Indian imports

Economy Desk

Trade between Iran and India rose 46% year-on-year to $1.83 billion in the first eight months of 2026, driven mainly by a sharp increase in Indian imports from Iran, according to figures from India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry cited by Eqtesad-e Moaser.

Bilateral trade totaled $1.25 billion in the same period last year, the ministry's figures showed.

Indian exports to Iran fell 16% to $730 million in January-August 2026, down from $870 million a year earlier. In contrast, India's imports from Iran surged 291% to $1.1 billion, compared with $380 million in the same period of 2025.

Iran imports $560 million in rice from India in eight months

Official Indian data show that rice imports from India continued despite tensions in the Strait of Hormuz and transport restrictions in the Persian Gulf since the 40-day US-Israeli war began in late February.

Iran imported $560 million worth of rice from India in



IRNA

January-August 2026, a figure broadly unchanged from the same period last year. More than $170 million of those imports came in July and August.

Iran imported a total of $747 million worth of rice from India in 2025. Based on the import trend in recent months, the value of rice imports from India is expected to exceed last year's total in 2026.

Oil was also India's largest import from Iran in the first eight months of 2026. India bought $707 million worth of Iranian oil during the period, with the shipments recorded in April and May. No further oil shipments from Iran to India were recorded in the following months.

TPO official urges higher-value exports, stronger corridors in China ties

Economy Desk

Iran and China should prioritize expanding exports of higher value-added goods and strengthening trade corridors as two strategic areas for deepening bilateral economic and trade cooperation, a senior Iranian trade official said on Thursday.

Abdolsadeh Neisy, director general of the East Asia, Subcontinent and Oceania Office at the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, made the remarks at the Iran-China Trade and Investment Conference in China, calling for a sustainable and balanced partnership based on mutual interests.

"Iran's approach to cooperation with China is not simply about increasing the volume of trade, but about building a partnership that leads to expanded trade, investment development and an effective presence of businesses from both countries in regional and international markets," he said.

The conference was held on the sidelines of the ninth China International Import Expo (CIIE) and organized by the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran in cooperation with Iranian commercial counselors based in Shanghai and Beijing, IRNA reported.

It brought together officials, senior executives, investors, traders, entrepreneurs and business representatives from both countries to discuss opportunities for economic, trade and investment cooperation.

Neisy said Iran's abundant natural resources, diverse production capabilities, large domestic market, access to neighboring countries and strategic geographical position offered considerable potential for expanding bilateral trade and joint investment.

He identified higher value-added exports as the first strategic priority, saying Iran aimed to move away from exporting raw and semi-processed materials toward goods that generate greater added value, export earnings and employment.

He pointed to opportunities for cooperation with Chinese partners in food industries, processed agricultural products, petrochemicals, mining, construction materials, industrial



Abdolsadeh Neisy, director general of the East Asia, Subcontinent and Oceania Office at the TPO, addresses the Iran-China Trade and Investment Conference in China on November 5, 2026.
IRNA

goods and other manufactured products. Such cooperation could help complete supply chains, expand export-oriented production and increase the presence of Iranian goods in China and other regional markets, while improving product quality, strengthening domestic production and enhancing economic competitiveness, he said.

Turning to the second priority, Neisy called for stronger trade corridors linking Iran and China, highlighting the role of international transport routes in shaping global commerce.

Iran's geographical position enables it to serve as an effective link connecting East and West, as well as North and South, he said.

He described trade corridors as more than routes for transporting goods, saying they could also support trade expansion, logistics services, regional distribution centers and lasting economic partnerships.

Neisy also highlighted the potential of existing regional transport links, including trade connections between Iran, China and third countries, to expand regional commerce and strengthen international supply chains.

Iranian businesses eye ...

"China is opening its door ever wider, and Chinese-style modernization bears an even more distinct hallmark of openness," he said.

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Gabonese President Nguema, Austrian Prime Minister Stocker and a representative of the United Nations Development Programme, Administrator Decroix, also attended the opening ceremony and delivered speeches.

More than 50 ministerial-level and senior officials from over 30 countries, regions and international organizations were also present, alongside diplomatic envoys, representatives of international organizations in China, officials from Chinese provincial-level administrations and central government ministries, and representatives of multinational companies, think tanks and chambers of commerce.

Iran seeks to expand exports to China

Iran is participating in the expo through the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), with at least six pavilions showcasing the country's petrochemical, food and agricultural products, and handicrafts.

Amir Hashemi, CEO of Iran Trade Development Center in China, told Iran Daily that the CIIE provides countries with an opportunity to showcase their export capabilities and establish business connections with the Chinese market.

"Each country has the opportunity to set up a pavilion to showcase its export capabilities through targeted marketing and B2B and C2C engagement, with the aim of expanding its access to the Chinese market," he said.

Iranian businesspeople are using the event to explore opportunities to enter both China's online and physical markets, as well as pursue investment and joint projects, Hashemi said.

He added that participants from Iran represent a range of sectors, including petrochemicals, handicrafts, creative and cultural industries, science and technology.

According to Hashemi, Iran's participation in the expo over the years has helped businesses improve the country's export performance in the Chinese market through initiatives coordinated by the TPO and create more favorable conditions for non-oil exports.

Launched in 2018, the CIIE is the world's first national-level expo dedicated to imports. Its main components include the Country Exhibition, the Enterprise and Business Exhibition, and the Hongqiao International Economic Forum, as well as a range of supporting events and



IRAN DAILY

people-to-people exchanges.

Proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping, the expo is part of China's efforts to advance high-standard opening-up and provide greater access to its domestic market for international businesses.

For the first time, the Report on Capacity for Exporting to China will be released during this year's expo, with the aim of helping countries turn opportunities in the Chinese market into tangible development gains.

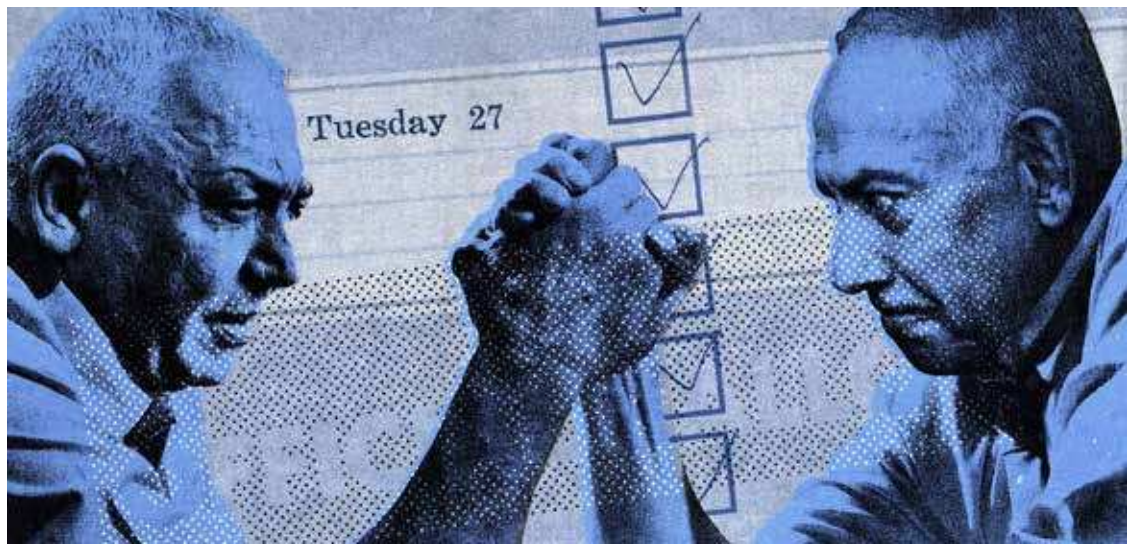
The event will also feature 23 themed forums, including the launch and international seminar of the World Openness Report 2026, along with 80 supporting events.

The ninth CIIE will run through November 10.

> Iran takes part in the ninth China International Import Expo (CIIE) with pavilions showcasing its petrochemical, agricultural, food and handicraft industries, seeking to expand exports and explore investment opportunities

Israel's election had no clear winner

What comes next for region?



The illustration shows Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (R) and Gadi Eisenkot, the head of the most successful opposition bloc in Israel's October 27 elections, engaged in an arm wrestling match.
JULIA WYTRAZEK/GETTY IMAGES

Israel



By Nathan J. Brown
Professor of political science at GWU

By Charlotte Ritz-Jack
Junior fellow in the Carnegie Middle East Program



OPINION

On October 27, individual Israelis picked their next leaders, but Israel as an entity has not. The eleven elected parties are divided between pro-Netanyahu and anti-Netanyahu blocs. Neither has a clear path toward a majority without significant — and perhaps futile — compromise. Assembling a 61-seat coalition will be long and arduous, with parties categorized by pollsters as "Arab" not so much holding the balance but segregated into political purgatory. The electoral system has never awarded Palestinian citizens more seats, yet political society has never been more hostile to counting them as full participants.

In the meantime, the prime minister who lost a majority will remain in office as caretaker. It may pay to watch that "meantime": A figure as deeply mistrusted as Netanyahu is likely to be seen as using his position to skew coalition formation. To replace him, Eisenkot must either reach out to pariah Arab parties — a step the right-wing treats as close to treason — or appeal to the ultra-Orthodox and fold on universal conscription. Either way, he will break campaign promises to "unite Israel".

Coalition arithmetic is not the only obstacle to "unity". For the sixth time since 2019, the election was a referendum on Netanyahu, and this time around, even more so about his vision for the entity: In his words, a "super-Sparta," armed with the most advanced military technology, evading sanctions, and defending the Jewish people. Even those who favor his harsh policies toward Palestinians worry about the diplomatic cost, the alienation of US public opinion, and the populist assault on democratic norms.

For his critics, that vision, combined with his refusal of an inquiry into October 7 and personal venality, make the polarization seem more profound than a set of policy differences. But even if they cobble together an alternative cabinet, they have not shown how their differing commitments could ever become a coherent governing program or how they would bridge the divisions they promise to overcome.

Occupied Palestinian Territories



By Mona Jebril
Senior research fellow at the Centre for Business Research

OPINION

If Netanyahu manages to stay in power, Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) fear serious military escalations, as well as severe political, economic, and humanitarian consequences. With no clear winner so far, Netanyahu's cabinet is likely to seize the opportunity during a caretaker period to rapidly advance its far-right and racial vision, continuing to facilitate Palestinian ethnic cleansing and expulsion under the guise of "voluntary migration".

Palestinians also urgently want to see Netanyahu go because of what it would mean morally and symbolically — particularly if the end to his political career is driven by increased voter turnout among Palestinians who remained after Al-Nakba in 1948 (the so-called Arab Israelis).

As prime minister, Eisenkot may prefer to take a strategic approach, prioritizing the Israeli economy and the repair of Israel's reputation on the international stage, particularly regarding trust in governance, democracy, and accountability to Israeli law and institutions. This would make him, in principle, more willing to make compromises that would facilitate those objectives, yet without changing the fundamental direction of the Israeli entity toward Palestinians. Eisenkot is against a Palestinian state and Israel's full withdrawal from Gaza, and within the Israel Defense Forces, he championed use of maximum force against civilian infrastructure.

Eisenkot may be able to make some progress with the Board of Peace cease-fire plans and collaborations with international actors. He may also be more willing to sanction some settler violence and dismantle some illegal Israeli settlements, as well as release billions of dollars of tax revenues that have been withheld from the Palestinian Authority. But overall, the cycle of violence and suffering in the OPT caused by the occupation over more than seven decades continues — with no actual partner for peace on the Israeli side, regardless of which party ultimately forms the cabinet.

Iran



By Eric Lob
Associate professor of politics at FIU

OPINION

As the Iran war enters its eighth month, Israel and Iran have refrained from striking each other since June 8, when US President Donald Trump demanded an immediate cease-fire. As Netanyahu narrowly trailed in the polls days before the election, he unsuccessfully pressured Trump and the Israeli military to resume attacking Iran to prolong the conflict and postpone the election.

Netanyahu's motivations for doing so were to disrupt the corruption trial against him and to delay a national inquiry into the October 7 attacks — the largest security and intelligence failure in Israeli history since the Yom Kippur War in 1973. As such, if Netanyahu somehow manages to win the election, he will probably continue pushing the military to strike Iran. His chances of successfully doing so will significantly increase if Trump, who recently sent a third aircraft carrier to the region, follows through on his threat to attack Iran after the US midterm elections.

An Eisenkot victory would not necessarily preclude Israel from following the United States into renewed escalation with Iran or from striking it unilaterally. Like a majority of the Israeli public, Eisenkot and his alliance consider Iran and its backed groups, such as Hamas and Hezbollah, serious threats to national security that should be dealt with militarily. After all, as a commander in the 2006 Lebanon War between Israel and Hezbollah, Eisenkot conceived of the Dahiyeh doctrine, which was named after the Hezbollah stronghold of Beirut's southern suburbs. It controversially called for the indiscriminate and disproportionate destruction of civilian infrastructure to deter the adversary and assert popular pressure against it — tactics Israel has continued using in Gaza, Lebanon, and Iran to deadly and devastating effect. That said, as the election approached, Eisenkot did not rule out the possibility of an American-led diplomatic solution to Iran's nuclear program.

In the end, if Eisenkot and his bloc bring about substantive change, it will likely be less about showing military restraint against Israel's enemies and more about safeguarding its domestic democracy and salvaging its international image. Such issues include maintaining the institutional independence of the judicial branch, mandating military service for the ultra-Orthodox community, and mitigating settler violence in the West Bank. For this reason and regardless of who wins the election and forms the next cabinet, resumed confrontation between Israel and Iran remains a real possibility.

Board of Peace



By Zaha Hassan
Human rights attorney, policy analyst

OPINION

Whatever the final outcome of the Israeli election, Israel's foot-dragging on implementation of Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Conflict in Gaza (also known as the Trump Plan) will not change significantly.

Neither Netanyahu nor Eisenkot wants to see the Board of Peace — the transitional governing authority for Gaza created under the Trump Plan — rebuild Palestinian communities or create conditions in Gaza that would enable Palestinian life to return to some normalcy. Eisenkot, the Israeli military leader responsible for the Dahiyeh doctrine, is not going to be a kinder, gentler Israeli leader toward Palestinians and allow the rebuilding of Gaza for its population.

Across Jewish Israeli society, expulsion of Palestinians is overwhelmingly favored. Any Board of Peace plan that does not prioritize finishing what was started in Gaza after October 7 is not one any successor Israeli cabinet will be entertaining.

Netanyahu cooperated with Trump and the UN Security Council–endorsed Board of Peace to a degree, by allowing the International Gaza Support Center, the civil-military coordination center responsible for directing relief efforts in Gaza, to operate inside Israel (while Israel maintained veto power over its activities). But he did so mainly to undermine the 2024 International Court of Justice ruling that found Israel's presence in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, illegal and its regime over Palestinians one of apartheid. That's as far as any Israeli leader will go.

United States



By Sarah Yerkes
Acting co-director of the Middle East Program at the CEIP

OPINION

The real possibility that Netanyahu may be on his way out of office could be trouble for the United States and its agenda in the Middle East.

Trump has only ever worked with Netanyahu, so Eisenkot represents a relative unknown. And for Trump, whose diplomacy is almost entirely done on a personal level, that lack of a longstanding connection like he shares with Netanyahu could create further fissures in the US-Israel relationship.

Netanyahu and Trump have butted heads in the past, but Trump endorsed Netanyahu on October 26, and with speculation that Netanyahu could follow Trump's "Stop the Steal" playbook from 2020, we could see the United States further insert itself into Israeli domestic politics.

But beyond Trump, whoever manages to form a coalition in the Knesset will likely face a very different US Congress come 2027. The Democratic caucus in Congress has already begun questioning the utility of US military assistance to Israel. Either Netanyahu or Eisenkot will likely face attempts from the US legislature to decrease US military assistance to Israel and to wind down the US involvement in the Iran war.

Whether Netanyahu, who was educated in the United States and trained in the PR side of US politics, will be a better match for an emboldened US Congress than Eisenkot, who is trusted by the US defense establishment, is something to watch.

Persian Gulf states



By Andrew Leber
Nonresident scholar in the Carnegie Middle East Program

OPINION

October 27's outcome offers little prospect for major changes in Persian Gulf-Israeli ties.

Bilateral Saudi-Israel normalization, as part of a broader deal with the United States, has been under vague discussion for nearly a decade, especially since the signing of the 2020 Abraham Accords between Israel, Bahrain, and the UAE. Saudi Arabia's Mohammed bin Salman initially signaled openness to closer ties with Israel, though since October 7, he has returned to voicing clear support for Palestinian statehood as a condition for a deal.

There was little chance of a post-election prime minister offering an immediate grand bargain of Saudi normalization in exchange for (irreversible steps toward) an independent Palestine. During the campaign, Eisenkot vowed that "there will be no Palestinian state," while many liberal Israelis (and Americans) believe that mere "talks" would satisfy Saudi concerns. Now, a minority Eisenkot cabinet would avoid clear concessions on Palestine out of fear of losing support in the Knesset. Netanyahu, in turn, believes that MBS is not serious in supporting Palestine and can be worn down by presenting Israel as Saudi Arabia's only path to security in an unstable region — the instability of which Netanyahu is happy to contribute to.

This election outcome will make Saudi Arabia's balancing act even harder, maybe impossible. On the one hand, Saudi Arabia will continue to deal with the fallout of US and Israeli actions in the region and face charges of aiding and abetting these efforts by acquiescing to Israel's regional role. On the other, it could redouble engagement with European countries to push for Palestinian statehood (perhaps by lobbying the Trump administration), but at a risk of backlash from within the United States.

Regardless, there is no hope of an Israeli cabinet offering concessions up-front to make Saudi-Israel normalization possible.

As for the UAE, the election shows the staying power of "King Bibi". Much as Emirati leaders might have preferred a more flexible or less inflammatory Israeli counterpart, the election outcome will validate the decision to acknowledge Netanyahu's September visit rather than trying to keep it under wraps. Even if Netanyahu is locked out of this governing coalition, he is increasingly likely to stay around in a caretaker cabinet or return in subsequent elections.

Regional security



By Frederic Wehrey
Senior fellow in the Carnegie Middle East Program

OPINION

On the key issues that matter to the region, there is a broad security consensus among most major candidates — including on the rejection of Palestinian statehood, the demilitarization of Gaza and southern Lebanon, and the use of military force to prevent Tehran from acquiring a bomb. Where differences emerge between the opposition and the Netanyahu cabinet, they are usually over strategy and tactics, rather than goals: targeting Iran's malign capabilities rather than its regime, as Eisenkot prefers; curtailing settler violence and settlement expansion in lieu of a carte blanche.

An opposition win might ease tensions around Gaza and in the West Bank for Egypt and Jordan, but it would do little to lower the risk of renewed war in Lebanon or with Iran. An inconclusive result and Netanyahu remaining in a caretaker role could delay progress on Gaza and Lebanon, even as Israel and the US consider new strikes on Iran. And regardless of the coalition that emerges, the Trump administration's much inflated benchmark for Middle East peace, Saudi-Israel normalization, is unlikely to happen without a path to Palestinian sovereignty.

More fundamentally, the election outcome cannot reverse the strategic shifts caused or accelerated by the Iran war — an emboldened, more confrontational regime in Tehran; the perception of a diminished, unreliable America, especially in the Persian Gulf; and regional states pursuing hedging, security diversification, and competing blocs of mutual defense and deterrence.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (R) pins Gadi Eizenkot (C) as the IDF chief of staff at a ceremony in Jerusalem, on February 16, 2015. Both "mowing the lawn" and the "Dahiyeh Doctrine" are infamous Israeli military strategies developed by Eisenkot during his time as the army's chief of staff.
GETTY IMAGES

Lebanon



By Maha Yahya
Director of the Malcolm H. Kerr Carnegie Middle East Center

OPINION

Irrespective of who wins the election, Israel's posture toward Lebanon will not change — Israel's insistence on military means to end Hezbollah and secure its northern borders remains. This posture reflects a broad consensus within Israel's political and security establishment and one that both contenders agree on.

Netanyahu insists on maintaining a "buffer" zone occupied by the Israeli army that today comprises around 6 percent of Lebanese territory. Most of its inhabitants have been forcibly displaced and some 48 towns and villages have been eradicated, according to the New York Times. (The Israeli defense minister claimed that 60 villages had been leveled.) The boundaries of the zone are not fixed, and the Israeli Army is expanding its occupation into adjacent areas. Should the Iran war be relaunched, Lebanon will likely witness even greater destruction and distress.

Eisenkot does not present an alternate approach. In June, he attacked Netanyahu for agreeing to Trump's request that fighting remain limited to south Lebanon. As the author of the Dahiyeh doctrine, Eisenkot has argued for Israel's freedom of military action over Lebanon, including Beirut's southern suburbs, and expressed support for maintaining the military occupation. Unlike Netanyahu, he may accept a narrower occupied zone.

Ultimately, the underlying premise is structural. Since October 7, Israel's security posture has changed in fundamental ways, and whoever leads Israel will inherit this consensus. A new cabinet with different partners may bring about a change in tone. But for Lebanon, occupation and military action will remain policy.

Egypt



By Amr Hamzawy
Former associate professor of political science at Cairo University

OPINION

The Egyptian government is expected to stay its course in opposing the policies of Netanyahu and his far-right allies. Ongoing attacks, forced displacement practices, blocking humanitarian aid, and derailing the implementation of the peace plan have been at the core of Israeli policies in Gaza. Egypt has played a major role in thwarting the displacement of the Gazan population in the past few years and in mediation efforts to end the war, so it will remain on high alert in this regard.

Opposing settler violence in the occupied West Bank, the Egyptian government has worked with regional and international partners to sanction the Israeli far-right cabinet for sponsoring it and for increasing settlement activities in all zones of the West Bank. Participation in regional and international efforts to protect the Palestinian population in the West Bank, especially with the uptick in hate speech against Palestinians and the propagation during the election campaigning of dystopian scenarios of forced displacement, is expected to be at the core of Egyptian policies toward Israel, regardless of who the next prime minister is.

Finally, given Netanyahu's and the far-right's appetite for warmongering in the Middle East and the high likelihood of renewed attacks in different regional spaces, including in Iran, in a Netanyahu-led caretaker or new cabinet, Egypt is bound, on the one hand, to double down on its mediation efforts and initiatives for collective security arrangements with other regional middle powers such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Qatar. On the other hand, Egypt in a volatile Middle East is expected to push forward with the modernization of its military arsenal for deterrence purposes.

Jordan



By Marwan Muasher
Former foreign minister of Jordan

OPINION

The biggest surprise of the Israeli elections is the performance of Arab parties. Previously, many Palestinian citizens of the entity did not vote, under the conviction that casting ballots would be legitimizing a system that discriminates against them. This time, the Palestinian public viewed this election as almost existential, and they voted in record numbers, almost doubling their seats from the 2022 election.

That is significant. They will be the third-largest bloc in the Knesset, after Netanyahu's Likud party and Eisenkot's Yashar party. The Arab parties will not back a Netanyahu-led coalition, and Eisenkot is unlikely to form a cabinet without tacit support from the Arab parties — even if they do not officially join the cabinet, particularly as neither Eisenkot nor the largest of the two Arab parties wishes to do so.

The bottom line is that where Arab parties have won a crucial battle, and where Netanyahu has lost so far, the biggest loser remains an elusive peace that none of the Israeli political parties want to work for.

This is significant for Jordan. An Eisenkot cabinet that reins in the settlers in the West Bank might be seen by the international community as having successfully addressed the issue. But for Jordan, the larger question is whether Israel will accept a settlement that would establish a Palestinian state on Palestinian soil and do away with what Jordan sees as an expansionist policy that might still attempt to solve the problem at its expense. Given both Netanyahu's and Eisenkot's opposition to a Palestinian state, the Israeli elections have done little to address Jordan's concerns.

Turkey



By Alper Coşkun
Former Turkish ambassador to Baku

OPINION

Israel's elections are unlikely to produce a breakthrough in its deeply troubled relationship with Turkey, regardless of who ultimately forms the next cabinet. The bad blood between the two runs deep and will not be easy to overcome, despite a largely eclipsed legacy of goodwill. Years of political acrimony, the war in Gaza, and an intensifying sense of regional competition have added up, causing deep suspicion among the political leaderships, security, defense, and intelligence establishments, as well as the publics on both sides.

Ankara would welcome the end of Netanyahu's tenure, and a new political constellation in which the surprisingly successful Arab parties wield influence may reduce the inflammatory rhetoric in relations. While he has given no indication of a desire to seek a reset with Turkey, Eisenkot may even opt for a less confrontational posture.

The deeper problem, however, lies in the two's competing visions of regional order. Turkey prioritizes a consolidated region of sovereign actors, while Israel prefers a fragmented landscape where it retains freedom of action. This division is compounded by disagreement over Gaza and the future of the Palestinians.

A change in cabinet in Israel may open some space for mutual goodwill. But the differences between the two sides have broadened and deepened to such an extent that meaningful change will only be possible through a shared determination for a reset, based on a compatible vision for the region.

The full article was first published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Persian Gulf states



By Andrew Leber
Nonresident scholar in the Carnegie Middle East Program

OPINION

October 27's outcome offers little prospect for major changes in Persian Gulf-Israeli ties.

Bilateral Saudi-Israel normalization, as part of a broader deal with the United States, has been under vague discussion for nearly a decade, especially since the signing of the 2020 Abraham Accords between Israel, Bahrain, and the UAE. Saudi Arabia's Mohammed bin Salman initially signaled openness to closer ties with Israel, though since October 7, he has returned to voicing clear support for Palestinian statehood as a condition for a deal.

There was little chance of a post-election prime minister offering an immediate grand bargain of Saudi normalization in exchange for (irreversible steps toward) an independent Palestine. During the campaign, Eisenkot vowed that "there will be no Palestinian state," while many liberal Israelis (and Americans) believe that mere "talks" would satisfy Saudi concerns. Now, a minority Eisenkot cabinet would avoid clear concessions on Palestine out of fear of losing support in the Knesset. Netanyahu, in turn, believes that MBS is not serious in supporting Palestine and can be worn down by presenting Israel as Saudi Arabia's only path to security in an unstable region — the instability of which Netanyahu is happy to contribute to.

This election outcome will make Saudi Arabia's balancing act even harder, maybe impossible. On the one hand, Saudi Arabia will continue to deal with the fallout of US and Israeli actions in the region and face charges of aiding and abetting these efforts by acquiescing to Israel's regional role. On the other, it could redouble engagement with European countries to push for Palestinian statehood (perhaps by lobbying the Trump administration), but at a risk of backlash from within the United States.

Regardless, there is no hope of an Israeli cabinet offering concessions up-front to make Saudi-Israel normalization possible.

As for the UAE, the election shows the staying power of "King Bibi". Much as Emirati leaders might have preferred a more flexible or less inflammatory Israeli counterpart, the election outcome will validate the decision to acknowledge Netanyahu's September visit rather than trying to keep it under wraps. Even if Netanyahu is locked out of this governing coalition, he is increasingly likely to stay around in a caretaker cabinet or return in subsequent elections.

Regional security



By Frederic Wehrey
Senior fellow in the Carnegie Middle East Program

OPINION

On the key issues that matter to the region, there is a broad security consensus among most major candidates — including on the rejection of Palestinian statehood, the demilitarization of Gaza and southern Lebanon, and the use of military force to prevent Tehran from acquiring a bomb. Where differences emerge between the opposition and the Netanyahu cabinet, they are usually over strategy and tactics, rather than goals: targeting Iran's malign capabilities rather than its regime, as Eisenkot prefers; curtailing settler violence and settlement expansion in lieu of a carte blanche.

An opposition win might ease tensions around Gaza and in the West Bank for Egypt and Jordan, but it would do little to lower the risk of renewed war in Lebanon or with Iran. An inconclusive result and Netanyahu remaining in a caretaker role could delay progress on Gaza and Lebanon, even as Israel and the US consider new strikes on Iran. And regardless of the coalition that emerges, the Trump administration's much inflated benchmark for Middle East peace, Saudi-Israel normalization, is unlikely to happen without a path to Palestinian sovereignty.

More fundamentally, the election outcome cannot reverse the strategic shifts caused or accelerated by the Iran war — an emboldened, more confrontational regime in Tehran; the perception of a diminished, unreliable America, especially in the Persian Gulf; and regional states pursuing hedging, security diversification, and competing blocs of mutual defense and deterrence.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (R) pins Gadi Eizenkot (C) as the IDF chief of staff at a ceremony in Jerusalem, on February 16, 2015. Both "mowing the lawn" and the "Dahiyeh Doctrine" are infamous Israeli military strategies developed by Eisenkot during his time as the army's chief of staff.
GETTY IMAGES

Lebanon



By Maha Yahya
Director of the Malcolm H. Kerr Carnegie Middle East Center

OPINION

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The full article was first published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Iran's freestyle wrestling needs a rethink ahead of Olympics, Akbarnejad insists



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Iran's freestyle campaign at the recently concluded Wrestling World Championships was marked by mixed results across the 10 weight classes, as the country settled for third place behind the United States and Russia in the team standings, relinquishing its title defense in Astana.
While Ahmad Mohammadnejad-Javan, against the odds, claimed the 61kg crown at the expense of defending champion Zaur Uguev of Russia in the final, and Amirhossein Zare' maintained his dominance in the 125kg division, the results in the other categories were hardly impressive by Iranian wrestling standards.
Rahman Amouzad was far from his ruthless best in the 65kg division, while Hassan Yazdani, making his debut at 97kg, received a reality check ahead of his bid for a second Olympic gold. Both wrestlers had to settle for consolation bronzes.
Mohammad Nokhodi (79kg) suffered another defeat in the final, settling for the fourth world silver medal of his career, while Amir-Mohammad Yazdani (74kg) bounced back from a quarterfinal setback to claim bronze. Meanwhile, two-time world champion Kamran Qassempour (86kg), Amirhossein Firouzpour (92kg), Sina Khalili (70kg), and Milad Valizadeh (57kg) all finished empty-handed.
Although two years remain until the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games, an assessment of Iran's performance across the different weight classes in Astana can offer a clearer picture of the team's potential, strengths, and challenges ahead.
Against this backdrop, Taqi Akbarnejad spoke to Iran Daily about the prospects in each weight class, the medal chances of Iran's leading wrestlers, and the need for long-term planning to build a team capable of challenging for Olympic honors.



Taqi Akbarnejad

IRAN DAILY: Looking ahead to the next Olympics, which weight classes currently offer Iran the best prospects of winning medals?

AKBARNEJAD: I believe we have more promising prospects in the 125kg category, with Amirhossein Zare, but we should not assume that our chances in the other weight classes are over.

We also have considerable potential at 65kg. If Rahman Amouzad receives the right planning and his weight, physical condition and other requirements are properly managed, we can expect him to contend for an Olympic medal. Even at this World Championships, he had some difficulty making weight.

At 86kg, Kamran Ghasempour is an exceptionally talented wrestler. Unfortunately, he has suffered several injuries in recent years. With a carefully designed programme, I believe we can still hope for valuable medals from him in this category.

The situation at 97kg, however, is more complicated. Hassan Yazdani faces a difficult challenge following his move up in weight, and his situation requires very careful consideration.

Following Hassan Yazdani's defeat to Arash Yoshida and his bronze-medal finish, do you think he can win Olympic gold at 97kg?

As I said, he faces a difficult challenge competing against other wrestlers in this weight class at the world level.

Hassan Yazdani is one of the great talents in Iranian wrestling and one of the finest and most sportsmanlike wrestlers in our history. I have worked with him closely and know his character and abilities. However, we need to assess his situation realistically. When a wrestler moves up to a higher weight class, age, physical condition and time can work in his favour, allowing him to gradually adapt to the new category.

Yazdani, for example, made the transition from the lower weight classes to 86kg successfully and adapted well to the new conditions.

But things are different now. He is at a different age and stage of his career, making the move to 97kg more difficult. Unlike before, time is not on his side.

In Yazdani's case, we need to create conditions that allow him to protect the standing and achievements he has built throughout his career. We should not simply focus on getting him back on the mat. We must also consider how to preserve his sporting legacy and ensure that his current performances do not undermine his remarkable record.

At 74kg, Amir Mohammad Yazdani won bronze. Do you consider him a suitable Olympic candidate, or should other young wrestlers be given more opportunities in this category?

I believe Amir Mohammad Yazdani could have performed better and has the potential to deliver stronger results.

We have other options in this weight class, too. Younes Emami is an established contender, while young wrestlers such as Ali Karamipour and several others could emerge as serious candidates in the future.

The 74kg category has always been one of the toughest and most competitive weight classes in world wrestling. Even at this competition, some prominent contenders were absent because of injuries. Therefore, we should not assume that we can achieve our desired results under the current circumstances without proper planning and serious competition.

I believe we should open the door to more wrestlers in this category and allow different athletes to prove themselves at international competitions.

At 57kg, Milad Valizadeh produced an encouraging performance despite failing to advance. How do you assess his prospects?

I believe Valizadeh is a young wrestler who is making steady progress. He faced some formidable opponents at this competition, and his match against the prominent American wrestler Spencer, an Olympic silver medalist, was particularly challenging.

I also think the draw and the composition of his group affected his performance.



Iran's Hassan Yazdani (blue) competes against Japan's Arash Yoshida in the men's 97kg freestyle division at the Wrestling World Championships in Astana, Kazakhstan, on October 29, 2026.
IAWFIR

We should not forget that competition at 57kg is extremely tough in Asia, where there are several outstanding wrestlers. We have never had an easy time in this weight class.

Nevertheless, Valizadeh's presence in the category and the progress he has made so far are encouraging.

If we support him and give him, along with the other young wrestlers in this weight class, opportunities to compete in different tournaments, we can develop a strong wrestler for the next Olympics.

Of course, this will not be easy and requires proper planning and sustained support.

The selection of national team members is another important issue in the preparation process. Do you see any shortcomings in the current selection system, and what approach would you recommend?

I believe we need to open the door to more wrestlers.

Selecting one wrestler, leaving another out and eventually deciding the national team through a single trial involving a handful of competitors is not always the right approach. It may work at a particular stage, but it is not sufficient for the future of wrestling in the country.

We need to have a plan for every wrestler from today and know, for example, which tournament he will compete in four months from now. Wrestlers should participate in different competitions, face domestic and international opponents and test their abilities.

For example, this year the United States fielded a 35-year-old wrestler in the 86kg category who managed to achieve an excellent result despite competing two weight classes above his usual category.

The Americans did not simply look at a wrestler's age or past achievements. They considered his current form and condition.

Although he was no longer young, he earned the opportunity to wear the US national team singlet because he defeated the other contenders in the selection trials.

This approach gives wrestlers who have been waiting for their chance hope that they have not been forgotten and that they can still make the national team and compete at the World Championships and Olympics.

If we restrict opportunities and determine wrestlers' futures through just one selection competition, many talents could walk away from the sport.

But if we open up the field and give young wrestlers more opportunities, we will undoubtedly achieve better results in the future.

At 61kg, Ahmad Mohammadnejad-Javan defeated world and Olympic champion Zaur Uguev to win gold. Do you think he can maintain this level of performance?

Ahmad is an exceptionally talented wrestler. I first noticed his potential when he was around 18 and finished third at the U23 competition.

At that stage, he did not have much experience in senior or international competitions, and perhaps few people expected him to perform at such a high level.

But he has now produced an outstanding performance at the World Championships and even defeated a world and Olympic champion. This demonstrates his considerable potential.

The important thing is for the coaching staff to develop a carefully structured plan for him. We need to identify his strengths and weaknesses now, work on his shortcomings and create the conditions for him to continue improving against top international opponents.

We must not allow one major success to create the impression that his path to the Olympics is already clear. On the contrary, we need to work with even greater attention from this point onward to ensure he can continue succeeding at the international level.

At 65kg, Rahman Amouzad failed to win gold despite the high expectations surrounding him. How do you assess his performance?

I believe Amouzad is a very good wrestler who gave everything he had at the competition. You could even say he used all his resources, but ultimately missed the opportunity to win gold.

We have considerable potential in this weight class and can create the conditions for him to achieve a better result at the next Olympics through proper planning.We need to work on every detail, from physical conditioning and weight management to match management and decision-making in crucial moments.

The American wrestler who competed in this category in Kazakhstan also delivered an excellent performance and won gold. He has already sent a strong message to the other contenders.

Nevertheless, I believe Rahman can still be the best wrestler in this weight class.

With around two years remaining before the Olympics, what should be the main priority for Iranian freestyle wrestling to achieve the desired results?

The most important thing is to make full use of all the resources available in Iranian wrestling. We need to carefully examine the team's technical and physical shortcomings and develop plans to address them.

I suggest establishing an analysis group to review the team's performances and examine the strengths and weaknesses of each wrestler. We should also involve more coaches and former champions and allow capable individuals with different perspectives to contribute to the sport.

Giving young wrestlers opportunities, increasing the number of competitions, developing long-term plans for individual athletes and strengthening technical education from the grassroots level are among the most important steps we need to take.

At the same time, we should not assume that winning a gold medal or a world title means a wrestler's job is done ahead of the Olympics. Our rivals will not stand still; they will continue working to improve. A new talent can emerge at any competition and change the balance of power.

For example, Amirhossein Zare should not think that his current titles mean he has already done enough to secure further success at the Olympics. He must continue training and working hard every day to reach an even higher level of readiness.

Olympic success is the product of consistency, planning and hard work right up to the final day.

Art of storytelling through Iranian Qalamkari



ISNA

Iranica Desk

Qalamkari, the traditional art of printing and painting patterns on fabric, flourished in Isfahan and became one of Iran's best-known artistic crafts during the Qajar era. Adorned with carved wooden stamps or hand-painted designs, these textiles were used not only for clothing and tablecloths but also to depict epic tales and scenes from religious and historical narratives. Today, examples of this art are held in museums around the world, preserving a part of Iran's artistic history.

According to ISNA, one example of Iranian Qalamkari is housed at the Weltmuseum Wien in Vienna. The cotton textile, titled Qalamkari Wall Hanging, dates to mid-19th-century Isfahan, during the Qajar period. Measuring 176 centimeters in height and 116 centimeters in width, it entered the museum's collection from the Museum of Trade in Austria.

In its description of the piece, the museum notes the variety of motifs found in Iranian Qalamkari, ranging from scenes inspired by Persian epic tales to floral patterns, cypress trees growing from vases and animal figures. Depending on their designs and dimensions, such textiles were used for clothing, wall hangings or tablecloths.

The piece is just one example of the presence of Iranian Qalamkari in museum collections around the world. In this art form, the surface of the fabric serves as a canvas on which patterns and colors are brought together.

In its traditional form, Qalamkari is based on transferring designs onto fabric. The artisan first prepares the desired pattern and then applies it using carved wooden stamps. Each stamp may transfer one part of the design or a particular color. Multicolored patterns therefore require several stamps to be carefully aligned. Even a slight misalignment can disrupt the pattern and reduce its clarity.

The stamps are usually made of wood, with the parts intended to transfer the color left raised. Dye is applied to the stamp, which is then pressed onto the fabric to transfer the design. The process is repeated for different parts of the pattern until the final image takes shape. In some examples, hand-painting is also combined with printing, meaning that not all textiles classified as Qalamkari are produced in exactly the same way.

The craft requires more than skill in carving stamps. Knowledge of dyes, fabric preparation, the pressure applied by hand and the precise alignment of patterns are also essential. The artisan must be able to turn a design carved into a small stamp into a regular, coordinated pattern through repeated applications across the fabric.

Isfahan is one of Iran's best-known centers of Qalamkari production. The craft flourished particularly during the Qajar era, when patterned textiles became part of everyday life and home decoration. Variations in the size, color and subject matter of the designs gave the textiles a range of uses, from clothing and tablecloths to large wall hangings.

Traditional Qalamkari designs included floral motifs and cypress trees, alongside geometric patterns, animals and narrative scenes. Some pieces went beyond repeating a simple decorative motif, bringing together characters and events across the surface of the fabric. In such examples, Qalamkari became a narrative art form, using color and imagery to tell a story.

Like many Iranian handicrafts, the history of Qalamkari is not simply one of skill and creativity; it is also closely linked to economic changes and shifts in the market. In the 19th century, the arrival of cheaper and higher-quality textiles from Britain and Russia made competition increasingly difficult for producers in Isfahan.

An article in the Encyclopaedia Iranica on the history and condition of Qalamkari in Isfahan explains that the quality and price of locally produced textiles were not competitive with those of some imported fabrics. To keep their businesses going, producers at one point began importing plain, undyed fabric and printing designs on it in Iran before selling it to the market. This approach helped the industry survive, but it was not enough to address its structural problems in the long run.



A lack of innovation, difficulties competing on price and the use of chemical dyes also contributed to the craft's decline. By 1920, only 46 Qalamkari makers remained in Isfahan, compared with hundreds who had previously worked in the trade.

These figures show that even an art form with a broad market and an extensive network of artisans can be vulnerable to technological change, imports and shifting consumer tastes. The skills of artisans alone are not enough to sustain an industry; its survival also depends on production quality, innovation, market access and support for the trade.

Despite its decline, Qalamkari did not disappear. Government support in the 1920s helped bring about a short-lived revival, while after World War II, renewed demand from foreign buyers and support programs once again created conditions for growth. By the 1950s, around 30 Qalamkari workshops were operating in Isfahan and Najafabad. Their annual output reached approximately 40,000 pairs of curtain fabrics and 10,000 tablecloths. Over the following two decades, support from the Handicrafts Organization helped increase the number of workshops and artisans, while new products and techniques were introduced.

The revival, however, was not without challenges. In the 1970s, environmental restrictions on washing textiles and fixing dyes in rivers affected production. Efforts to standardize the industry also at times led to the use of unsuitable chemical dyes, damaging the market for these products. Improvements in dyes and changing market conditions subsequently helped production continue.

Qalamkari remains connected to everyday life in contemporary Iran. Tablecloths, covers, curtains and other textile products are still among the main forms in which the craft is marketed. Alongside traditional patterns, these products have adapted to changing uses and consumer preferences.

Another example of Qalamkari's narrative potential is held at the Weltmuseum Wien: a painted and printed textile from late-19th-century Isfahan titled The Day of Judgment. The cotton wall hanging depicts scenes from the Day of Resurrection through the lens of Shiite beliefs, addressing the events of Karbala and the fate of the martyrs and their opponents. The work shows how Iranian pictorial textiles could carry religious narratives and ideas, extending beyond floral and geometric decoration.

The subject of this piece sets it apart from more conventional Qalamkari textiles, which tend to rely on repeated decorative motifs. By bringing together multiple figures and scenes across a single textile surface, it turns the fabric into an expansive visual narrative. The Weltmuseum Wien attributes the work to Isfahan and the late Qajar period.

The works held at the Weltmuseum Wien, from Qajar-era wall hangings to pictorial textiles, illustrate two important aspects of this art: the widespread use of decorative patterns in everyday life and the ability of fabric to depict historical, epic and religious stories. They are a reminder that Iranian art is not confined to metalwork, pottery, tilework and fine textiles. Sometimes, a simple piece of cotton fabric can preserve the history of a community's craftsmanship, visual sensibility and storytelling traditions.

Bishapur's ancient moat highlights Sassanid military engineering

Iranica Desk





partojonoob.ir

The ancient moat surrounding the Sassanid city of Bishapur was a key element of its sophisticated defensive system, reflecting the engineering skills and strategic planning of its architects, according to a commentary by Mohammad Khalil Mahmoudi, a senior archaeologist and the internal affairs director of the Bishapur World Heritage Site, published by chtn.ir.

A moat is a wide, often deep, linear ditch excavated around a settlement, fortress or government complex. Designed as an artificial barrier, it creates a physical separation between potential attackers and defensive walls. More broadly, it serves to protect and define the boundaries of a fortified area.

According to archaeological research, the practice of digging moats dates back to the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt, eventually becoming a standard feature of defensive urban planning. Their construction required specialized engineering techniques, including slope management, the handling of excavated earth, drainage and water disposal. Moats therefore served a dual purpose: enhancing urban security while helping to manage water resources. These multifunctional structures brought together engineering expertise, military defense and water management.

If the towering walls of Bishapur represented the visible expression of Sassanid power, its moat embodied a less conspicuous but equally sophisticated approach to defense, Mahmoudi noted. Although less visible, the structure played a significant role in safeguarding the city.

Unlike mountains and rivers, which provided natural protection, the moat was an entirely man-made feature of Bishapur's defensive landscape. It was the result of deliberate planning and engineering, with Sassanid architects using it to compensate for the areas where natural barriers offered insufficient protection.

Bishapur was laid out on a rectangular plan, with each side serving a distinct defensive purpose. The northeastern flank was protected by a mountain, while the northwestern side was shielded by a river. The southwestern and southeastern sides, meanwhile, were fortified by the moat, an entirely artificial defensive structure.

This arrangement demonstrates that Bishapur's architects not only prioritized military security but also made strategic use of the natural landscape. Their engineering approach incorporated existing geographical features, with artificial fortifications added only where natural protection was lacking.

The moat had a U-shaped cross-section and extended along the city's southern and eastern sides. It began in the northeast, near Dokhtar Castle, continued along the eastern and southern flanks, and ended on the western side. This layout created a continuous defensive barrier, leaving attackers with virtually no viable route into the city.

The moat was not an independent defensive feature but part of a multilayered fortification system. Bishapur had two defensive walls, each standing at least seven meters high. One comprised the towers and ramparts surrounding the royal citadel, while the other enclosed the entire city.

Together, the moat and the towering walls formed a classic yet highly effective system of ancient military architecture. The combination of a deep ditch and a high defensive wall was designed to slow down advancing forces and make any attempted assault considerably more difficult.

One of the most sophisticated aspects of the moat's design was its relationship with the Shapur River, which flowed along the western side of the city. In addition to serving as a major natural defensive barrier, the river was likely the main source of water for the moat.

The integration of a natural water source with an artificial defensive structure reflects an approach frequently seen in Sassanid hydraulic architecture, demonstrating the civilization's understanding of engineering, urban planning and water-resource management.

Bishapur is an ancient city in southwestern Iran, in present-day Fars Province, founded during the reign of Sassanid King Shapur I in the 3rd century CE. Strategically located near the Shapur River, the city was built according to a carefully planned rectangular layout, reflecting the advanced urban planning and architectural achievements of the Sassanid Empire.

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Minab reconstruction plan seeks nationwide support

Arts & Culture Desk

A national plan to rebuild Minab, a city in southern Iran, is taking shape following wartime damage that has left the town in need of extensive support, Cultural Heritage Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri said on Thursday.

Minab in Hormozgan Province came under attack during the war waged by the United States and Israel against Iran on February 28. The attacks killed children and teachers at Shajareh Tayyebeh elementary school in the city, drawing national attention to the town and its losses.

The government now says its recovery should extend beyond physical reconstruction to preserving the city's place in Iran's collective memory.

Government agencies, provincial authorities and major businesses being called on to help restore its infrastructure and cultural life, Salehi-Amiri said.

Speaking at the fourth national meeting of the Minab Martyrs Headquarters in Bandar Abbas, the capital of Hormozgan province, Salehi-Amiri said 22 government agencies had accepted responsibility for supporting the city.

"Projects are to be carried out in two phases, ending on February 28, 2027, and February 28, 2028," he added.

The minister proposed that each of the country's other 30 provinces take responsibility for one project in Minab, and called for contributions from 50 public and private banks and major companies in the oil, steel and petrochemical industries.

The proposed measures include tourism infrastructure, handicraft workshops, a specialized museum in Minab and a national museum in Sarabad.

They also cover psychological and social support for families of those killed, alongside weekly cultural and artistic events.

Salehi-Amiri said film, music, literature and visual arts should help introduce Minab nationally and internationally.

He also called for Iranian legal experts to pursue international legal aspects of the Minab issue.

"Minab must become part of the national discourse and the collective memory of Iranians," he said, describing support for the city as a shared responsibility.



A woman in traditional dress looks at the ruins of the missile-struck Shajareh Tayyebeh school in Minab, southern Iran.
MEYSAM ALLAGHEMANDAN/IRNA

Tehran to honor Bahram Beyzaie with play readings



Arts & Culture Desk

Six plays by the late Iranian playwright and director Bahram Beyzaie will be staged in readings in Tehran from November 8 to 12, organizers said.

The five-day program, titled "Beyzaie Week", will take place at the Hall of Fame of the iconic City Theatre Complex in Tehran.

Theater students and members of another theater group will perform the readings under the direction of actor and theater instructor Sirus Esnaqi.

The University of Culture and Art, Unit 48, is organizing the event.

"The readings would bring Beyzaie's work to a younger generation of performers and provide professional opportunities for promising student actors, Esnaqi said.

Beyzaie, who died in 2025 at the age of 87, was a leading figure in Iranian theater and cinema. He was also a playwright, director, educator and researcher of Iranian theater history.

The program opens on Sunday, November 8, with "Ziafat," directed by Roham Amin, followed by "Karnameh-ye Bandar Bidakhsh," directed by Zohreh Sadeghian.

On Monday, "Sahel-e Nejat," directed by Mani Nouri, will be read.

Tuesday's program features "Chahar Sanduq," directed by Zahra Tat, at the same time.

The readings continue on Wednesday, November 11, with "Azhdahak", directed by Sedigheh Hamrahi, and conclude on Thursday, November12, with "Arash", directed by Ardeshir Sheibani.

Mashayekhi works return to Tehran stage after seven years

Arts & Culture Desk

Three works by Iranian composer Alireza Mashayekhi received their first performances in Tehran on November 5, 2026, as his music returned to the Iranian stage after a seven-year absence.

The concert, titled "New Music in Iran", was held in two parts at Vahdat Hall in central Tehran.

It was organized by the Tehran Music Group, founded in 1993 by Mashayekhi and pianist Farimah Ghavam-Sadri to promote contemporary music and support composers and performers.

The program featured the Persian Gulf String Orchestra, the Namad String Quartet and the Karvan Percussion Ensemble, under the direction of conductor Arash Amini. Violinist and violist Amin Ghafari performed as a soloist in several pieces.

The three premieres were "Second Pichak", for two recorders, cello and percussion; "String Quartet No. 6: Reverse Accident", for string quartet and percussion; and a concerto for viola, string orchestra and percussion.

Other works included "The Sea: Iranian Suite for String Orchestra", "String Quartet No. 4" and "Violin Concerto No. 2", representing different periods of Mashayekhi's career.



Born in Tehran in 1939, Mashayekhi is regarded as a pioneer of modern music in Iran. He was among the country's first composers to write electronic music and has explored multicultural approaches by bringing together musical traditions from different cultures.

The Tehran Music Group was established to introduce new music in Iran and promote education and performance in the field. The concert renewed attention to Mashayekhi's contribution to contemporary Iranian music and the continued presentation of his works to new audiences.

Iran proposes regional education network at ECO meeting



IRNA

Social Desk

Iran has proposed establishing a regional education network among member states of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Education Minister said on Friday.

Speaking at the fifth meeting of the board of trustees of the ECO Educational Institute, Alireza Kazemi called for greater protection of children's right to education during conflicts

The education ministers from member states attended the meeting.

"Shared history and cultural heritage could serve as a foundation for regional cooperation in education, science and development," Kazemi added.

He said more than 4,000 civilians had been killed in the war waged by the United States and Israel against Iran, including 331 students and 72 education workers.

About 1,500 educational facilities had also been damaged, he added.

Kazemi cited two planned attacks on an elementary school in Minab, in Iran's southern Hormozgan province, saying 168 children under the age of 12, both girls and boys, along with their teachers, had been killed.

Iran proposed creating a network connecting universities, teacher-training institutions and research centers across ECO member states.

It also called for expanded cooperation in artificial intelligence and other emerging educational technologies, stronger vocational training programs and measures to ensure children can continue their education during wars and other crises.

Kazemi urged member states to increase exchanges of students, teachers and specialists, describing educational cooperation as a form of diplomacy that could foster mutual understanding, solidarity and friendship across the region.

"Education is an investment in peace, resilience and the shared future of nations," Kazemi said.

He called on ECO members to translate existing agreements into practical cooperation among schools, universities, teacher-training centers and other educational institutions.

"No child should become a victim of war and crisis," he said, adding that lasting peace begins in the minds of future generations.