Leader sends condolences over actor Kourosh Zarei's death
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President Masoud Pezeshkian (Front 4th R), poses for a family photo during a UN Climate Change Conference in Antalya, Turkey, on November 11, 2026.
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Lack of Israeli consensus stalls Trump's Gaza peace plan

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

US President Donald Trump has urged Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to move forward with his Gaza peace plan, stressing that its implementation should not be held up pending the formation of a new government in Israel. Despite the implementation of the first phase of the ceasefire agreement in October 2025, outstanding disagreements have stalled progress on subsequent phases. In an interview with Iran Daily, international affairs analyst Mohammad Hossein Baghi said that while the United States may have the determination to resolve the issue, there is no consensus in Israel on reaching a solution.



Hossein Baghi

IRAN DAILY: Does Washington genuinely have the political will to force Israel to honor its commitments, or are these pressures largely diplomatic and aimed at public relations?

BAGHI: The Gaza peace plan should be examined within a broader agenda, namely the US elections and then the Israeli elections. The reality is that, following the defeat of Trump and the Republicans in the midterm elections, Trump is seeking to score points on the foreign policy front.

Given the deadlock in the Ukraine war, the impasse over advancing the Gaza peace plan and the stalemate in the war against Iran, I believe that now that the fate of Congress has been determined, Trump is keen to leave behind a legacy and secure at least one tangible achievement in foreign policy. Gaza is one of the areas where he could do so.

On the other hand, following the Israeli elections and the defeat of Netanyahu's camp, figures such as Imran Khalid, a geostrategic analyst at the Mail & Guardian, argue that "The conventional reading is that two weakened leaders will now become more cautious. But only half of that reading is correct. The calendar that constrained both men has expired, and what replaces it is not mutual caution but a widening divergence between their respective needs."

Against this backdrop, two distinct positions can be identified within the Israeli camp regarding the peace plan. The first is Netanyahu's security-oriented approach, which seeks only to disarm and destroy Hamas. The second is the approach of a likely Eisenkot-led government, which, although it categorizes settler violence as "Jewish terrorism," ultimately does not differ fundamentally from Netanyahu's position on Hamas and Gaza.

Therefore, Trump is willing to resolve the Gaza war and reach a settlement, but the Israeli side still lacks the consensus needed to arrive at a solution.

One of the main pillars of Trump's plan is the disarmament of Hamas and the transfer of Gaza's administration to a Palestinian technocratic structure. Can such an arrangement be implemented without an agreement among Palestinian factions and guarantees of an Israeli troop withdrawal?

In Israel's terminology, disarmament means the surrender of all Hamas weapons and, in practice, rendering the group incapable of operating. In Hamas's terminology, as it has repeatedly stated, disarmament means handing over some heavy weapons to a committee made up of Palestinian forces while retaining light weapons in its own hands.

So, at the outset, there is a fundamental difference between the two sides in how they view disarmament. The proposed Palestinian technocratic structure, meanwhile, would largely comprise Palestinian figures based in the West Bank rather than the Gaza Strip, which Israel has laid waste to. Thus, there is no consensus even between the two Palestinian territories.

At least as long as Netanyahu remains in power, there is no prospect of an agreement taking shape. After all, October 7 happened under his watch, and any retreat or move toward peace would spell the end of Bibi's political career.

In any case, if Eisenkot succeeds in forming a government and Netanyahu leaves office, there may be hope that Trump, during the remainder of his presidency, could compel the new government to make concessions on peace in Gaza.

Given the deep divisions between Israel and Palestinian factions over Gaza's future, what guarantees are there within the US plan to prevent continued occupation, military attacks and violations of the ceasefire agreement?

If Eisenkot fails to form a government, or if Netanyahu remains in power for any reason, there is no hope that the occupation will end. If the United States acts as a "guarantor" of the ceasefire, and Arab countries step in and offer incentives to both Hamas and Israel, then there may be a glimmer of hope.

Allow me to explain another reality through the words of Raymond Hinnebusch, who examines more precisely the role of "subnational" groups — Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, Ansarullah in Yemen and others. He believes that the problems of the Middle East stem from the region's geopolitical structure.

Unlike regions organized and shaped around a powerful center, East Asia, for example, with China at its core, the Middle East has developed around a fragmented center consisting of weak and, in some cases, pre-modern territorial states. These Arab identities continue to struggle to define themselves. Hinnebusch argues that the Middle Eastern order was largely imposed from outside by Western imperialism.

With the end of World War I in 1918 and the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, Palestine was among the territories that emerged from the empire, but it met a different fate from other Arab countries.

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Security chief says Iran's enriched nuclear materials will stay at home



The photo released on November 5, 2019 by the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, shows centrifuges in the Natanz uranium enrichment facility in central Iran.

International Desk

Iran will not allow "even an iota" its enriched nuclear materials to leave the country, top security official Mohsen Rezaei said in remarks published on Wednesday.

Rezaei, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, told Lebanon's Al Mayadeen television that Tehran had informed Russia it would keep the material inside the country and use it for domestic purposes, including designing nuclear-powered ships and submarines.

Russia has offered to hold Iran's enriched uranium on its territory as part of a possible nuclear agreement with Washington, but Tehran has rejected the proposal.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) estimated that Iran had 440.9 kg of uranium enriched to 60% before the US and Israeli attacks on Iranian nuclear sites in June 2025.

It is not clear how much of the stockpile survived the strikes. Iran has not allowed IAEA inspectors to return to the bombed sites to account for the material.

US President Donald Trump said after the June 2025 strikes on the Fordow, Natanz and Isfahan nuclear facilities that Iran's main enrichment sites had been "completely and totally obliterated".

Western countries have long accused Iran of seeking to develop nuclear weapons, an allegation Tehran denies. The stockpile and the future of Iran's enrichment programme remain central issues in efforts to resolve the dispute.

No meeting planned

Rezaei also rejected reports that he was due to meet US Vice President JD Vance in Qatar, describing the claims as "unfounded".

The reports followed comments by Ibrahim Kalin, head of Turkey's National Intelligence Organization, who said on November 9 that Vance and Rezaei were expected to meet in Doha the following week to look for solutions to end a war that the US and Israeli waged against Iran in late February.

Kalin described the proposed meeting as an opportunity to advance negotiations between Washington and Tehran. He said Turkey and other regional mediators were working on a seven-point framework that included lifting sanctions on Iran, releasing frozen Iranian assets and a commitment by Tehran not to pursue nuclear weapons. The proposal also called for renewed cooperation with the IAEA.

Iranian officials subsequently denied that a meeting had been arranged. Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi described the reports as baseless speculation, while a senior Iranian security official said Tehran would not negotiate with Washington until the United States took practical steps to meet its demands.

Rezaei told Al Mayadeen that US claims about continuing negotiations and a planned meeting in Qatar were "lies". He said the reports were intended to ease economic pressure and push oil prices lower.

Top general warns of deadlier response to any new US, Israeli attack

International Desk



Iran's top military commander Ali Abdollahi (L) and commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps' Aerospace Force Majid Mousavi inspect a new underground missile arsenal in an unknown location inside Iran on November 10, 2026.
IRNA

Iran's top military commander warned the United States and Israel on Wednesday that any fresh military action against the country would trigger a "far more devastating" response, as tensions remain high despite a pause in an all-out war and efforts to secure a diplomatic settlement.

Major General Ali Abdollahi, head of Iran's Armed Forces General Staff, also said any location that became a center of threat against the Islamic Republic would be directly targeted by Iranian forces through "asymmetric operations".

Abdollahi made the remarks in a message to Brigadier General Majid Mousavi, commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps' Aerospace Force, marking the 15th anniversary of the martyrdom of Hassan Tehrani Moghaddam, one of the architects of Iran's missile program, Tasnim reported.

"The previous slaps were only the beginning, and in the event of any new miscalculation, far more devastating blows await them," Abdollahi said.

He described Iran's warning as "credible", saying it was backed by the country's military capabilities.

Abdollahi also said that Iran had moved its missile and drone production lines deep into underground tunnels, allowing it to continue manufacturing and upgrading weapons even under bombardment.

He mocked Western air defense systems for failing to intercept Iranian missiles and drones, and said the IRGC aerospace force had made significant progress toward military self-sufficiency.

The warning comes as US President Donald Trump has put off further military strikes against Iran for now, while insisting that a US naval blockade of Iranian ports, in force since mid-July, will remain in place and that American forces are ready to act if necessary.

Qatar has sought to mediate between Tehran and Washington, but the two sides have yet to reach an agreement to end a war the US and Israel launched against Iran.

Iran has called for an end to US attacks and the naval blockade as part of any deal to resume negotiations, while Washington has opposed some of Tehran's demands.

The war, which began with US and Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28, has also disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, a key route for global oil and liquefied natural gas supplies.

Rubio repeating Pompeo's 'drivel' in forcing sanctions on Iran: *Araghchi*

International Desk



Marco Rubio *Mike Pompeo*

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has slammed US Secretary of State Marco Rubio over his remarks on the effectiveness of economic sanctions against Iran, saying Washington's policy is driven by "delusions" that have repeatedly led to failure.

In a post on X on Wednesday, Araghchi recalled similar remarks made eight years ago by then-US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who had said that Iranians would have to follow Washington's demands "if they want to eat."

"8 years ago a cartoon character like Pompeo said Iranians must follow White House diktat "if they want to eat"," he said, according to Press TV.

Araghchi added, "Today, Rubio—whose fellow Cubans are victims of the same policy—repeats that drivel. Forget about the inhumanity. It is the delusions that are producing failed US policy."

Rubio said on Tuesday that he saw no need to resume major military aggression against Iran, claiming that economic sanctions and other restrictions were proving highly effective.

"Eventually, you have to eat, you have to pay your own fighters, your own security forces," Rubio insisted, referring to the impact of US economic pressure on Iran.

Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, successive US administrations have imposed waves of economic sanctions against Iran, repeatedly seeking to weaken the Islamic Republic, undermine its stability, and force it into submission.

Despite decades of escalating economic pressure, Washington has failed to achieve these objectives.

Instead, the repeated resort to economic coercion has exposed the failure of Washington's pressure strategy, with successive administrations continuing to impose new restrictions despite the inability of previous rounds to deliver their intended political outcomes.

INTERNATIONAL TENDER NOTICE

Since **ESFAHAN MOBARAKEH STEEL COMPANY** intend to purchase 10,000 tons of High Carbon Ferro Manganese with tender no 48642886 , hereby informs whom is interested in that tender documents can be received by sending a request to below contact details (Email or WhatsApp), the sealed and closed envelops according to what has been mentioned in tender documents must be submitted to ESFAHAN MOBARAKEH STEEL COMPANY- Raw Materials Purchasing Department (RMP) until 3:00 PM (According to Tehran time) Monday 30. Nov .2026 (Monday 09.09.1405 Persian Calendar).

Contact Details:
Contact Person: Ms. Khorasani
Email: N.khorasani@msc.ir
Cell Phone/WhatsApp: 0098 9134083545

Note:
ESFAHAN MOBARAKEH STEEL COMPANY reserves the right of return or rejection of those tender documents in which haven't observed at least one of items of covering letter.

ESFAHAN MOBARAKEH STEEL COMPANY PUBLIC RELATONS (1405-48)



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Iran steps up technology cooperation with Qatar, Russia and Brazil

Initial understanding reached with Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan on digital corridor

Economy Desk

Iran is seeking to deepen cooperation with Qatar, Russia and Brazil in telecommunications, digital technologies, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity, while also reaching an initial understanding with Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan on establishing a regional digital corridor linking Central Asia to the Persian Gulf, the Communications Ministry reported.

On the sidelines of the 2026 Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in Doha, Communications and Information Technology Minister Sattar Hashemi met his Qatari counterpart, Mohammed bin Ali bin Mohammed Al Mannai, to discuss ways to expand bilateral cooperation in information and communications technology, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and smart government.

The two ministers also emphasized the need to develop an implementation framework to follow up on the proposed areas of cooperation.

Hashemi thanked Qatar for hosting the conference and stressed the importance of preserving the ITU's technical and non-political character. He also expressed Iran's support for Qatar's candidacy for membership in the ITU Council and called on the Qatari delegation to support Iran's proposed documents and resolutions at the conference, the ministry said.

In a separate meeting with Grigory Borisenko, Russia's deputy minister of digital development, communications and mass media, the two sides focused on specialized cooperation and preparations for the sixth meeting of their joint working group, planned for the first quarter of 2027.

Iran proposed holding a specialized forum involving technology companies from both countries, exploring the establishment of a joint technology park and expanding cooperation in cybersecurity. Russia welcomed the proposals, the ministry said.

Hashemi also met Carlos Manuel Baigori, head of Brazil's telecommunications regulator, to discuss cooperation in telecommunications infrastructure, fiber-optic networks, data centers, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity.

Their talks also covered academic and university cooperation, exchanges of expertise, joint research, space technology and satellite applications, as well as stronger links between the two countries' private sectors and technology companies. Hashemi invited Baigori to visit Tehran and the Communications and IT Research Institute. Brazil welcomed the prospect of expanding bilateral cooperation, the ministry said.

Iran also reached an initial understanding with Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan on establishing a digital corridor connecting Central Asia to the Persian Gulf and neighboring countries.

The understanding was reached at a meeting between Hashemi, Turkmenistan Communications Minister Haji Murad Khudaigulyev and Doszhan Musaliyev, Kazakhstan's deputy minister of artificial intelligence and digital development.

The three countries are expected to discuss the details in further negotiations and finalize an agreement in the near future, the ministry said. The proposed corridor is intended to develop regional communications routes, increase connectivity capacity, strengthen telecommunications infrastructure and improve the resilience of digital services. It is also expected to facilitate data exchanges between Central Asia, the Persian Gulf and neighboring countries.

The ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, the union's highest decision-making and policy-setting body, is being held in Doha, Qatar, from Nov. 9 to 27, 2026. Convened every four years, the conference brings together representatives of member states to set the organization's future strategies and priorities.



Iranian Communications and Information Technology Minister Sattar Hashemi (L) shakes hands with his Qatari counterpart, Mohammed bin Ali bin Mohammed Al Mannai, on the sidelines of the 2026 Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in Doha, Qatar, on November 11, 2026.
ict.gov.ir

Kazakhstan plans joint terminal with Iran at Shahid Rajaei Port

Economy Desk

Kazakhstan plans to establish a joint terminal with Iran at Shahid Rajaei Port in the southern province of Hormozgan, with agreements already signed to advance the project, Duisebay Dauirbek, head of Kazakhstan's consulate in Bandar Abbas, said on Wednesday.

Dauirbek said Kazakhstan attaches particular importance to Hormozgan's ports and that the country's private sector is ready to participate in port investment projects and expand maritime cooperation with Iran, IRNA reported.

Speaking at a news conference marking Kazakhstan's Independence Day (December 16), Dauirbek said a delegation from Kazakhstan's Trade Development Fund, accompanied by businesspeople and investors, had recently visited Shahid Rajaei Port to assess its capacities, facilities and infrastructure.

Agreements have been signed to establish the joint terminal, which is intended to facilitate port operations and provide a platform for traders and investors from both countries, he said.

Kazakhstan signed a $25 million agreement in June to develop a logistics hub at Iran's Shahid Rajaei Port. Iranian officials have said the facility will support the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).

Dauirbek said visits by high-level Kazakh economic delegations to Shahid Rajaei Port reflected the two countries' determination to expand trade, increase investment and make greater use of the transit route's potential. He said Iran and Kazakhstan were seeking to raise their annual bilateral trade to $3 billion. Dauirbek also pointed to investment opportunities in Kazakhstan, saying about 500 Iranian companies were currently operating in the country. He said cooperation could be expanded in industry, mining, agriculture, energy and infrastructure. Iranian companies could also participate in construction and engineering projects in Kazakhstan, supply building materials and establish manufacturing facilities there, he said.

Kazakhstan's efforts to diversify its economy and attract foreign investment were creating new opportunities for Iranian businesses, Dauirbek said. Participation in investment projects could also help Iranian companies gain access to markets in Central Asia and the Eurasian Economic Union. He also highlighted opportunities to expand agricultural trade between the two countries. Kazakhstan exports wheat, barley and other agricultural products to Iran, while Iranian exports of dates, citrus fruits, rice and other agricultural goods to Kazakhstan could be increased, he said. Other potential areas of cooperation include establishing farms for growing Iranian rice in Kazakhstan, developing industrial greenhouses and expanding fish farming, Dauirbek added.

The consul also called for closer academic and educational ties between the two countries. He said the consulate was pursuing cooperation between a university in Aktau and the University of Hormozgan. A draft memorandum of understanding is being prepared, and a joint committee has been established with the participation of the Iranian university, he said.

On tourism, Dauirbek said a memorandum of understanding to expand cooperation between Kazakhstan and Hormozgan Province had been prepared and was expected to be signed during a planned visit to Kazakhstan by a political and economic delegation from the province.

The agreement also includes a proposal for Bandar Abbas and Aktau to become sister cities, he said.

Dauirbek also welcomed joint ventures with Iranian companies in energy, petrochemicals, mining, processing industries, digital technologies, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment manufacturing.

He said the opportunities offered by Kazakhstan extended beyond exports, allowing Iranian companies to undertake manufacturing projects and establish long-term investment partnerships, while gaining access to Central Asian markets and the Eurasian Economic Union, which has a population of about 186 million.

NIGC says gas supply remains stable after fire at South Pars platform

Economy Desk

Iran's domestic gas supply remains stable, with no disruption reported for consumers following a fire at a gas platform in the South Pars field, the head of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) said on Wednesday, adding that the platform's lost output had been offset by production from other platforms.

Saeed Tavakoli said coordination between the oil and gas sectors, along with technical and engineering measures, had helped maintain the stability of the country's gas network after Tuesday night's fire at a platform in Phase 14 of the South Pars gas field, IRNA reported.

He said coordinated management across the oil and gas sectors had played an important role in keeping the network stable.

"During the seasonal transition to colder weather, actual gas consumption sometimes exceeds forecasts slightly," Tavakoli said.

Gas consumption in Tehran province reached a record 95 million cubic meters on Wednesday morning, while household and commercial users across the country consumed nearly 450 million cubic meters, he said.

Tavakoli urged the public to join the "20 Degrees" campaign, which encourages households to set indoor temperatures at 20 degrees Celsius, to help ensure stable gas supplies through the fall and winter.



SHANA

According to the NIGC, Iran was facing a daily gas shortfall of about 300 million cubic meters before the 40-day US-Israeli war began in late February. Attacks on four South Pars gas refineries in March initially knocked out about 230 million cubic meters of daily gas production capacity. About 100 million cubic meters of that lost capacity has since been restored, leaving 130 million cubic meters of daily production capacity still offline and adding to the country's existing supply constraints. This has underscored the importance of efforts to curb consumption.

Iran holds about 34 trillion cubic meters of proven natural gas reserves, the world's second-largest after Russia, accounting for about 17% of global proven reserves. Despite its vast reserves, a significant portion of the country's gas potential remains undeveloped because of sanctions-related constraints and insufficient investment.

The fire at the South Pars Phase 14 platform was brought under control through the timely response of operational and safety teams. Evacuation operations began immediately alongside firefighting efforts, according to the report.

Separately, Sepahdar Abbaszadeh, operations and support deputy at Pars Oil and Gas Company, said the fire at the SPD14D platform had been fully extinguished and 17 workers had been rescued despite adverse weather conditions.

He added that the platform's daily gas output of 14 million cubic meters had been made up through production from other platforms in the field.

Abbaszadeh described SPD14D as a relatively new platform that had recently entered production.

He said reports on maintenance and work carried out there over the previous two weeks had been reviewed at a crisis management committee meeting.

According to the reports, no process-related or operational problems had been identified at the platform, and no major or critical maintenance work had been carried out there during that period, he said.

Lack of Israeli ...

The partition of the "Sick Man of Europe," however, did not happen without a prelude. Britain

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fired the first shot at the heart of the Ottoman Empire by separating Egypt from it in 1882.

The second shot was fired in 1916, when Charles François Georges-Picot, the French foreign minister, and Sir Mark Sykes, the British foreign minister, signed the Sykes-Picot Agreement to divide the Ottoman Empire. The agreement reshaped the geography of the Middle East. Following the Ottoman Empire's defeat, it served in 1918 as the principal framework for an understanding between the two colonial powers on administering Ottoman territories in the region.

Palestine, however, was among the territories that took a different path. Unlike Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia and others, it did not become a state and remained under British Mandate rule until 1948.

Following this agreement, Arab territories were diverted from their natural course and took on a new shape through colonial border-making. More than a century after the Sykes-Picot Agreement, it remains deeply embedded in the Arab collective consciousness.

Some regard the agreement as the root cause of all the Middle East's crises. This partition marked the beginning of a crisis across a vast region. Setting aside the European territories of the Ottoman Empire and the problems associated with them, it can be argued that the Arab Middle East entered an era of crisis through artificial border-making, a crisis that has continued in various forms to this day.

Against this backdrop, Hinnebusch argues that the Middle East was incorporated into the global division of labor as an exporter of commodities, particularly oil. In Wallerstein's terms, it became part of the "periphery," in contrast to the "core" represented by Western powers.

The proliferation of weak and insecure states, the arbitrary drawing of borders and the erosion of allegiance to the state, among other factors, led to the emergence of subnational identities. Where the concept of the "nation-state" itself was fraught with question marks, subnational groups assumed some of its functions. In other words, tasks that fell within the state's responsibilities were carried out by one or more subnational groups.

Added to these factors were the establishment of Israel in May 1948 and external colonial interventions in the region's affairs. Together, they created significant disparities between the imposed material order and nationalist and revisionist norms.

The result was a vicious cycle of violence and conflict, both within these systems and, at times, spilling over into the regional order. This gave rise to anti-hegemonic ideological approaches and pan-Arab movements. In Hinnebusch's words, where revisionist states failed, subnational movements emerged to fill the "state-nation" gap. The emergence of Hezbollah, Hamas and many similar groups can be examined within this framework.

Could Trump's plan pave the way for reviving the process of establishing an independent Palestinian state, or might it push the issue further to the margins of regional calculations?

The overall picture emerging from foreign reports is that there is no difference between Netanyahu's coalition and Eisenkot's camp on major domestic policy issues, including Gaza and the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Perhaps the only figure who stands out in this regard is Yair Golan, leader of Israel's Democrats party, who is willing to cooperate with the Palestinians.

At least so far, appearances suggest that the idea of a "Palestinian state" does not figure in the thinking of the others. I believe that even if Trump's pressure leads to some kind of breakthrough on Gaza, everything will return to square one once his term in office ends.

Trading history for investment

Carney's opportunistic play against Iran



By Saman Sofalgar
Political researcher

OPINION
EXCLUSIVE

Mark Carney's October 28 joint statement with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan did more than reaffirm Canada's growing partnership with the United Arab Emirates. It inserted Ottawa into one of the Persian Gulf's most sensitive territorial disputes, explicitly describing Abu Musa, Greater Tunb, and Lesser Tunb as UAE islands under occupation by Iran. The language was categorical. The historical and legal questions, however, are considerably more complicated.

For Tehran, the three islands are an inseparable part of Iranian territory. Their sovereignty is not a matter that can be settled through diplomatic declarations issued by foreign governments, particularly those whose economic interests are closely intertwined with one of the parties to the dispute. Carney's intervention therefore deserves scrutiny not simply as a diplomatic disagreement, but as a case study in the increasingly transactional character of Western foreign policy.

A diplomatic declaration with an economic context

The timing of Carney's statement is difficult to overlook. The declaration followed an intensive effort by Canada and the UAE to transform their bilateral relationship into a strategic economic and security partnership. On October 27, the two governments signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement after just 47 days of negotiations.

The agreement is designed to reduce or eliminate tariffs on more than 99 percent of current Canadian exports to the UAE. More significantly, Ottawa welcomed the UAE's commitment to invest $70 billion in Canada, covering opportunities in energy, infrastructure, technology, logistics, and other strategic industries. The two governments also advanced defence cooperation and established a broader framework for political and economic collaboration.

These are substantial interests. Canada is seeking to diversify its international trade relationships, attract foreign capital, and reduce its economic vulnerability to an increasingly uncertain relationship with the United States. Against this background, Carney's endorsement of Abu Dhabi's position on the islands raises a legitimate question: has Ottawa allowed the pursuit of economic opportunities to influence its approach to a contested question of sovereignty? There is no publicly established evidence that the islands issue was explicitly exchanged for investment commitments. Such a claim would go beyond the available record. Nevertheless, the political timing creates an appearance of alignment that Canada has a responsibility to address.

The concern is not that Canada is pursuing investment from the UAE. States are entitled to develop commercial relationships. The concern is whether the pursuit of capital has encouraged Ottawa to adopt a position on another country's territorial sovereignty without adequately confronting the historical and legal complexities involved. In that sense, Carney's approach resembles a familiar pattern in Western engagement with wealthy Persian Gulf monarchies: economic access, strategic cooperation, and political accommodation increasingly operate together.

History cannot be rewritten through a joint statement

The three islands occupy a strategically important position near the entrance to the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most consequential maritime energy corridors. Their history predates the establishment of the UAE in 1971. Iran's connection to the islands is rooted in a much older regional history, and Tehran maintains that its sovereignty over them is supported by historical records and long-standing administrative ties.

The events of November 1971 are particularly important. As British forces withdrew from the Persian Gulf, Iranian forces established control over Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb, while Iran and the Emirate of Sharjah reached a memorandum of understanding concerning Abu Musa. The UAE was established on December 2, 1971, shortly after these developments. Abu Dhabi disputes Iran's interpretation of these events and maintains that all three islands belong to the UAE. This is a claim that Tehran calls it as false. The existence of a competing claim does not transform that claim into an internationally established legal fact.

Crucially, no binding judgment by the International Court of Justice has awarded sovereignty over the three islands to the UAE. Nor has a binding United Nations Security Council resolution established that Iran's administration of them constitutes an unlawful occupation. This distinction matters. Calling the islands occupied UAE territory is not simply acknowledging that a dispute exists. It is adopting one side's legal and historical interpretation as though it were an established international determination. Carney's statement offers no detailed historical or legal reasoning to justify that conclusion. A government genuinely committed to international law should be particularly careful about making categorical declarations on sovereignty disputes without explaining the evidentiary basis for its position.

Politics of Western courtship

There is a broader geopolitical dimension to this episode. For years, Western governments have competed to deepen their economic and strategic relationships with Persian Gulf monarchies. The UAE, with its sovereign investment resources, international financial networks, energy infrastructure, and growing role in regional security, has become an especially attractive partner.



Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney (back-R) and Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (back-L) participate in a signing ceremony in Ottawa, Canada, on October 27, 2026.
JUSTIN TANG/ THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada is no exception. Carney's government has explicitly identified the UAE as a key partner in its strategy to diversify trade and attract investment. The $70 billion investment commitment has been presented as a major achievement of Canadian economic diplomacy. The relationship also extends beyond trade. Defence cooperation, energy partnerships, critical minerals, artificial intelligence, and infrastructure are all part of the expanding bilateral agenda.

In this environment, political accommodation can become an instrument of economic diplomacy. The question is whether Carney has crossed that line. His endorsement of the UAE's territorial narrative, delivered during a high-profile effort to consolidate the relationship, provides grounds for examining whether commercial priorities have taken precedence over diplomatic caution. The term opportunism is relevant here as an interpretation of the timing and political incentives, rather than as proof of a private bargain.

> The concern is not that Canada is pursuing investment from the UAE. States are entitled to develop commercial relationships. The concern is whether the pursuit of capital has encouraged Ottawa to adopt a position on another country's territorial sovereignty without adequately confronting the historical and legal complexities involved. In that sense, Carney's approach resembles a familiar pattern in Western engagement with wealthy Persian Gulf monarchies: economic access, strategic cooperation, and political accommodation increasingly operate together.

Ottawa may see political alignment with Abu Dhabi as a relatively inexpensive way to strengthen a valuable partnership. For Iran, however, the implications concern territorial sovereignty and national interests. The asymmetry is striking: Canada gains access to investment and strategic opportunities, while its declaration creates diplomatic costs for a country with which it has no comparable economic partnership.

Double standard in Canada's foreign policy

Carney's position also raises questions about Canada's commitment to the principles it invokes in its own international diplomacy. The joint statement itself reaffirms the importance of sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference in domestic affairs, and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Yet, in the same document, Canada endorses the UAE's claim that Iran is occupying Emirati territory! This juxtaposition is difficult to reconcile. If territorial integrity is a fundamental principle of international relations, it cannot be selectively applied according to the political preferences of a country's economic partners. Nor should the sovereignty of one state be treated as negotiable simply because another state has greater financial leverage or strategic importance.



The map shows the strategic position of the three Iranian islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb, and Lesser Tunb in the middle of Persian Gulf shipping and tanker lanes near the Strait of Hormuz.
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Canada would undoubtedly object if another government unilaterally endorsed a competing territorial claim against Canadian territory in an official bilateral declaration. Iran is entitled to expect the same consideration. This is particularly important because diplomatic language carries consequences. Describing a territory as occupied is not an innocent rhetorical choice.

It implies that the administering state is exercising control over territory belonging to another sovereign state. Such language can reinforce political pressure, deepen regional divisions, and complicate diplomatic efforts. Ottawa should explain why it believes this particular dispute warrants such an unequivocal formulation.

What Canada could have done differently

Canada was under no obligation to endorse Tehran's position in order to maintain constructive relations with Abu Dhabi. Equally, it was under no obligation to endorse the UAE's territorial claims. A more consistent diplomatic approach would have acknowledged the existence of the dispute, encouraged direct negotiations, and supported peaceful mechanisms for resolving competing claims without prejudging the outcome. Such a position would have allowed Canada to strengthen its economic relationship with the UAE while avoiding unnecessary confrontation with Iran. Instead, Carney chose language that effectively elevated Abu Dhabi's preferred interpretation into Canada's official diplomatic position.

That choice deserves particular attention because the joint statement simultaneously invokes international law as a foundation of bilateral cooperation. A credible commitment to international law requires more than repeating familiar principles. It requires applying them consistently, especially when doing so may be inconvenient for economic or strategic partners.

Iran's sovereignty is not a commercial bargaining chip

The Persian Gulf is not merely a geographical space through which global energy supplies pass. It is a region with deep historical connections, complex political relationships, and competing security interests. The three islands are particularly significant because of their strategic location and their importance to Iran's territorial integrity. For Tehran, the issue cannot be separated from its broader national security interests. Nor can the historical relationship between Iran and the islands be erased through declarations negotiated in Ottawa.

Canada is entitled to maintain close relations with Abu Dhabi. But neither relationship gives the Canadian government a special authority to determine the sovereignty of Iranian territory. The distinction between diplomatic support and legal determination must remain clear. Carney's statement has exposed a fundamental tension in Canada's approach to the region: Ottawa wants the economic advantages

of a close relationship with the UAE, but it must also account for the diplomatic consequences of taking positions that directly challenge Iran's territorial claims. Ultimately, the controversy is about more than three islands.

It is about whether Western governments apply international law as a consistent framework or invoke it selectively when doing so serves their economic and strategic interests. Carney's government has yet to provide a sufficiently detailed historical and legal explanation for its categorical language. Until it does, the timing of the declaration, its alignment with Abu Dhabi's position, and the substantial economic incentives surrounding the visit will remain legitimate subjects of scrutiny.

For Iran, the position is clear: Abu Musa, Greater Tunb, and Lesser Tunb are Iranian islands and an integral part of the country's territorial identity and sovereignty. No trade agreement, investment commitment, strategic partnership, or diplomatic declaration can alter that position.

Canada may seek to benefit from the UAE's financial resources. It may deepen defence cooperation and expand access to Persian Gulf markets. But the pursuit of those interests should not come at the expense of historical scrutiny, diplomatic consistency, or respect for Iran's sovereignty. A partnership built on economic opportunity should not require political concessions on the territorial integrity of a third country.

As Trump blows up Mideast

Regional leaders look to Europe



By Ellie Geranmayeh

Deputy head of the Middle East programme at the ECFR

OPINION



From left to right: Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot, German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, British Foreign Minister Edward Miliband, Pakistani Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, and Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty pose for a group photograph during the R4 and E3 foreign ministers' meeting in Istanbul, Turkey, on October 23, 2026.
MUSTAFA HATIPOGLU/ PICTURE ALLIANCE

"Anything's possible" was Donald Trump's response when asked if he would launch a new attack on Iran after the midterm elections. Fears of what a return to all-out war would bring have set off a flurry of diplomacy. Two noteworthy tracks from European and regional powers have emerged as last-gasp attempts to prevent, or at least limit, the destruction a renewed conflict would cause. If they succeed, they could become the pillars of a new "coalition of the willing" to stabilise the Middle East without America in the lead.

The negotiators

The first track brings together the E4 — Britain, France, Germany and Italy — and the R4 of Egypt, Pakistan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia. The foreign ministers of the E4+R4 met in Istanbul on October 23 to discuss preserving the viability of a two-state solution in Israel-Palestine, ending the US-Iran war, reopening the Strait of Hormuz and defending Saudi Arabia against the latest offensive launched by the Ansarullah (Houthis).

On the European side, the addition of Italy to the E3 is welcome. It bolsters Europe's diplomatic weight, offsetting Britain's Brexit-induced weakness and Germany's loss of regional influence over its staunch support for Israel. Berlin's relations with Tehran have also been tense since 2022. Italy does not carry the same baggage, nor did it take part in the E3's decision last year to trigger the "snapback" of sanctions on Iran. That could eventually help it reopen the path to negotiations.

The Istanbul meeting also showed how far the R4 has come since it formed earlier this year in response to the shifting power balance in the Middle East. All its members but Egypt signed the joint Defence Alliance, a military pact, in August. The pact was recently tested when members activated the collective defence measures in response to the Houthi offensive against Saudi Arabia. The grouping signals that the region's powers are increasingly willing to take responsibility for their own security.

The second diplomatic track opened three days after the Istanbul gathering, when security chiefs from Pakistan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia met Iran's leaders in Tehran. The meeting was an attempt by regional powers to avert a new round of fighting by including Iran in a serious diplomatic process. It also allowed Iran to host, giving it a PR victory at a time when the Trump administration is attempting to impose a full blockade on the country.

These regional powers are scrambling to de-escalate as Tehran has made clear that its response to renewed US or Israeli strikes would be far more damaging than anything the Middle East has absorbed in the past eight months. It has already shown its reach through its ally in Yemen. In recent weeks, the Houthis have damaged critical infrastructure inside Saudi Arabia and attacked shipping through the Red Sea. A joint effort by the Houthis and Iran to disrupt transit through two vital waterways — the straits of Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb — would have global economic ramifications. Pakistan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia probably also warned Iran during the Tehran meeting that further strikes on its neighbours' critical infrastructure and civilian targets would undo any prospect of regional integration.

A coalition of the middle

Whether these tracks succeed or fail, they point to a changing reality. Most glaring is America's absence from both meetings, as European and regional powers increasingly try to work around an unpredictable Washington rather than with it. For the R4, the Trump administration's handling of Iran has shattered the assumption that America's armed forces offer iron-clad protection to its allies, a reality Europeans are also confronting over Ukraine. America and Israel might have the military capacity to devastate the region, but they have proved unable or unwilling to win the peace. Left to pick up the pieces, Middle Eastern and European countries have been made all too aware that stronger diplomatic efforts are needed for their own security. If war and maximum pressure pushed Iran, a country of more than 90 million people, towards state collapse, the consequences for its neighbours and Europe would be disastrous. This is particularly so given that neither America nor Israel is likely to invest the time and money needed to rebuild it. Yet the Islamic Republic's elite will probably remain in power for the foreseeable future.

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Averting disaster

The immediate priority for both tracks is to prevent a return to high-intensity war. It remains to be seen whether the E4+R4 can exert influence over both Trump and Tehran to end the conflict and reopen the Strait of Hormuz. But their combined leverage, if used with greater purpose and willingness, could add new force to diplomacy.

Teaming up more actively with the R4 would also give Europe better access to Washington and Tehran, both of which have increasingly dismissed European influence. That would improve Europe's chances of advancing two of its strategic objectives: ensuring the peaceful nature of Iran's future nuclear programme, and stabilising the Middle East. The E4 and R4 could also use their combined economic clout to press China to use its deep trade ties with Iran to secure the lasting reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

The regional powers have also seen an advantage in fostering deeper cooperation with Europe. As the R4 countries seek to strengthen their defences, modernise their militaries and heal their economies after successive wars, Europe remains an attractive partner.

The E4 could also help middle powers in the region contain and potentially moderate the behaviour of Israel. Europeans could restrain Israeli military activity in Lebanon and Syria through stronger economic and technical support to central governments and increased funding for the Lebanese Armed Forces. The R4 will similarly look to European countries to expand measures targeting Israeli occupation policies and illegal settlements.

On Iran, Europe and its regional partners could use the prospect of eventual sanctions relief to nudge Tehran towards a stronger agreement on its nuclear programme. The E4 and R4 share concerns that in a future deal with Iran, Washington may be willing to curtail the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in monitoring Iran's nuclear activities. Europeans could therefore make EU sanctions relief conditional on enhanced international monitoring, whatever Washington agrees bilaterally with Iran. The R4 could reinforce this by offering to be the first to invest in Iran's post-sanctions economy, given that European companies, wary of reputational exposure, are likely to be slower to return.

Both the E4 and R4 view Iran's missile and drone programme as a direct threat. Yet precisely because of its demonstrated effectiveness in the past year, Tehran is unlikely to negotiate a major rollback. Instead, the E4 and R4 could intensify efforts to slow Iran's advances by disrupting supply chains from China and Russia and interdicting shipments to groups such as Hezbollah and the Houthis. They could also press Beijing to demand that Iran halt technology transfers to non-state armed actors.



Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian (bottom 2nd-L) and other top officials meet with Saudi Arabia's Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman Al-Saud (top L), Pakistan's army chief General Syed Asim Munir (top 2nd-L), and Turkey's intelligence chief Ibrahim Kalın (top 3rd-L) in Tehran, Iran, on October 26, 2026.
president.ir

Security without superpowers

The E4+R4 format creates opportunities for Europeans and regional powers to lay the foundations of a broader security architecture for the Middle East, one that goes beyond the deterrence framework envisaged by the joint defense pact. Europe's own experience with security mechanisms across the EU could prove useful in de-escalating tensions, managing military capabilities, and, eventually, building shared security and prosperity.

A return to full-scale war between America and Iran may be inevitable given Trump's zero-sum instincts and apparent desire for a hard-power legacy. But even if the E4+R4 effort falters, it points to an emerging order shaped by the region's middle powers. These countries are now looking to Europe, not America, to shore up their diplomacy. For Europeans, it is a chance to bring their diplomatic weight to bear after a long period of marginal influence in the Middle East. The initiative's underlying commitment to de-escalation and a more inclusive diplomatic approach is precisely what the region needs.

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

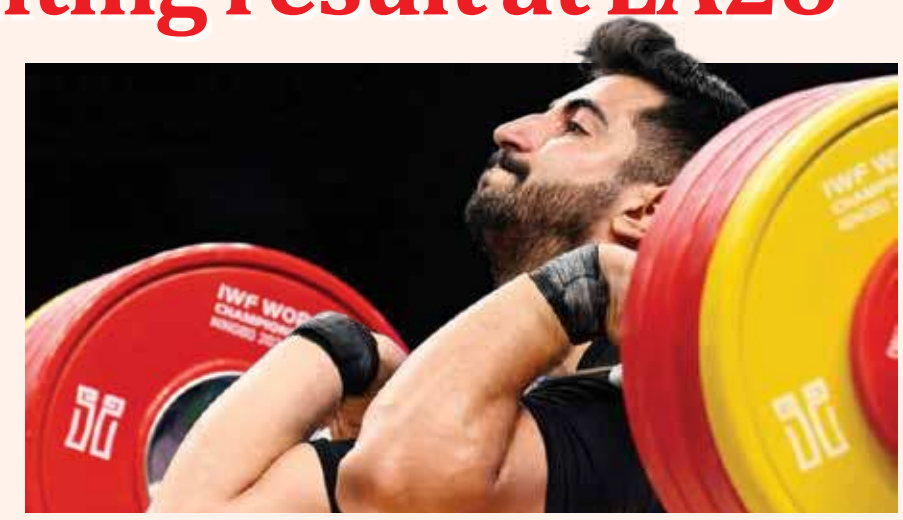
Ex-coach Beiranvand backs Iran to achieve best-ever weightlifting result at LA28



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

While a third-place finish at the recently concluded IWF World Championships in Ningbo, China, consolidated the Iranian men's team's position among the world's top weightlifting nations, it also represented a step backward compared to last year's title-winning campaign.
The highlight of Iran's campaign came in the +110kg division, where Alireza Yousefi set a new world record to win gold in the clean and jerk before settling for silver in the total, while Ali Davoudi claimed a bronze medal in the snatch.
Beyond assessing the national team's performance and results, several other issues warrant attention when considering the future of Iranian weightlifting. These include squad selection given the proximity of the World Championships and Asian Games, the need to develop a stronger pool of athletes across different weight categories, the progress of women's weightlifting, and providing opportunities for younger lifters.
Despite a mixed overall showing, with Iran collecting eight medals across the eight men's weight categories, former national team head coach Mohsen Beiranvand, who guided the country to its maiden world team title in 2017, believes the current squad has what it takes to achieve its best-ever result at the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics. In an interview with Iran Daily, Beiranvand discussed Iran's recent performances at the World Championships and September's Asian Games, as well as the team's prospects at the Olympic showpiece in two years' time.



● IWF



Mohsen Beiranvand

IRAN DAILY: How would you evaluate Iran's overall performance in Ningbo, particularly in light of its failure to retain the world team title?
BEIRANVAND: Iranian weightlifters gave their all at the competition. However, the final outcome clearly reflects a decline in our team's performance. The figures speak for themselves.
One issue that deserved closer attention was the way the teams were selected for the Asian Games and World Championships. Youth development and having adequate replacements in every weight category are also extremely important.
Given the short interval between two major events, we should have sent our first-choice team to the World Championships and used our second-string squad, along with some of our top lifters who did not need to cut weight, at the Asian Games.
Some athletes were able to compete in both events, but we also needed to consider their physical condition and the time required for recovery.

So, do you believe the short interval between the two competitions and the decision to use some athletes at both events affected Iran's performance at the World Championships?
Yes. Recovering within such a short period is extremely difficult. For example, Iran's wrestling team used two different squads for the World Championships and Asian Games under similar circumstances. Of course, wrestling has a different situation from weightlifting in terms of the depth of its talent pool and the number of athletes ready to compete.
We should have planned for such circumstances well in advance. We had four years to prepare suitable athletes for the Asian Games. Some steps were taken in that direction, but the results we expected from those reserves did not materialize.
I believe the federation could have done a better job of developing a stronger talent pool. There is still considerable room for improvement.

One of the major concerns in Iranian weightlifting is our lack of competitiveness in the lighter weight categories, where we have struggled for years compared to the heavier divisions. What is behind this problem, and what needs to be done to address it?
I believe this is partly related to the genetic and physical characteristics of our athletes. However, it is a manageable issue that requires a long-term plan.
We need to identify talents at an early age. If an athlete enters the sport at the age of 20, we have already lost a significant part of the opportunity to develop that athlete and prepare them for their prime competitive years.
We should start identifying talent at the youth level and look for children with the physical attributes and body types suited to the lighter weight categories.
The goal should be to help these athletes win senior-level world and even Olympic medals before they turn 20. Unfortunately, Iranian weightlifting lacks a strong school-based development system, and serious activity in the sport does not begin at the grassroots and school levels.
On the other hand, federations are generally focused on achieving results at the senior level and pay less attention to long-term development programs.
We should have two or three talented and competition-ready athletes in every weight category and age group.
In addition to our youth and junior teams, we need to establish a dedicated under-23 team to support lifters who graduate from the junior ranks but are not yet ready to compete at the senior level.
In other words, we need a proper succession plan across all weight categories and age groups.

Under these circumstances, do we currently have any genuine medal prospects in the lightweight categories at the World Championships or Olympic Games?
Unfortunately, at the moment, I cannot name an athlete who is a definite medal prospect.
We need to identify talented 14- and 15-year-olds who can become serious contenders in different weight categories over the next four to five years.
An important point is that we must consider an athlete's physical development from the outset. A lifter may compete in a lighter weight category at a young age but move up several categories as they grow older and develop physically, making them unsuitable for our plans in that division.
We need to identify athletes who can remain in their intended weight categories even after completing their physical development. This is extremely important for the future of Iranian weightlifting.

At this year's World Championships, countries such as China and North Korea collected a considerable number of points through their strong women's teams and finished first and second in the standings. How do you assess the state of women's weightlifting in Iran?
Our women performed really well at this year's Asian Games in Nagoya, and, thankfully, we managed to win two medals. Considering that the women's weightlifting in Iran began only six or seven years ago, this was an excellent and valuable achievement.
Our female weightlifters have the potential to compete at the World Championships and even win Olympic medals. However, only one Iranian woman was able to compete at this year's World Championships. We should be sending female lifters in as many weight categories as possible.
Of course, simply sending athletes to the World Championships is one thing, while having genuine medal prospects is another. To become competitive at this level, we need to have enough athletes at home with strong competition totals to ensure that our representatives can compete in the A group and challenge for medals.
For example, Reyhaneh Karimi finished 10th in the 69kg category. Competing at such an event is a valuable experience, but if we want to challenge the world's best, we need a larger pool of athletes capable of posting competitive totals.

Looking at the individual performances of Iranian lifters in the men's competition, how would you assess Mir-Mostafa Javadi's and Abdollah Beiranvand's results in the 85kg category?
Mostafa Javadi is a highly motivated and technically gifted athlete. However, he has been struggling with injuries for several years and is no longer at his best.
The coaching staff needs to develop a precise plan to help him return to peak condition.
Unfortunately, we did not see the fit and competitive Mostafa we had known in the past at this competition. We also did not have a suitable replacement for him.
As for Abdollah Beiranvand, I believe he performed well. We certainly expected more from him, but he has a bright future and can achieve better results in upcoming competitions.
His physical build also makes it possible to consider moving him up to a higher weight category. If we invest in this young athlete and improve his preparation, I believe he can deliver better results in the future.

Among our younger lifters, Alireza Nasiri and Ali A'alipour also impressed. Nasiri won two silver medals despite his young age, while A'alipour claimed three bronze medals. How do you see their future prospects?
Both have very bright futures. I am also optimistic about their chances at the Olympic Games. They are highly talented and can win valuable medals in the years ahead.
Both lifters performed exceptionally well. Nasiri had experienced a slight dip in form before the competition, but, thankfully, he managed to regain his best condition. His performance in the clean and jerk event of the 110kg class was particularly impressive.
Alipour also did an excellent job. Winning three medals in the 95kg category is difficult given the level of competition.

Alireza Moeini, who previously competed in the 94kg division, moved up a weight category this time and finished 12th at 110kg. How do you assess this change?
Alireza is extremely talented, particularly in the snatch. However, moving up in weight has created a new situation for him and, to some extent, presented challenges for his professional career.
Competing in an Olympic weight category while also trying to remain a medal contender in the heavier division is difficult. Nevertheless, given his talent, I believe he has made a smart decision. I hope he can achieve excellent results in the future.
We should also remember that this was his first experience in the new weight category and with proper planning and as his body adapts to the demands of the new weight category, he can deliver better performances.

Iran enjoyed an outstanding performance in the superheavyweight division, with Alireza Yousefi breaking the world record in the clean and jerk to win gold and taking silver in the total. How would you assess his performance?
Alireza Yousefi is doing an excellent job, and I believe he is following in the footsteps of great Iranian weightlifters such as Hossein Rezazadeh and Behdad Salimi.
He has tremendous talent, and, thankfully, he also comes from a supportive family. Hearing about his success was genuinely exciting.
However, he needs to improve his snatch numbers. Given his strength in the clean and jerk, he must narrow the gap between himself and his rivals in the snatch if he wants to compete for Olympic gold.
His main rival at the moment is Ali Ammar of Iraq. If Alireza wants to take the gold medal in the total away from him, he needs to reach at least around 205kg in the snatch.
I believe he is capable of achieving that mark. Physically, he also has the potential to attempt lifts of around 270kg in the clean and jerk.

Alongside Yousefi, Ali Davoudi also won a bronze medal in the snatch at the competition. Given that the two lifters have different strengths in the two disciplines, how do you assess their competitive positions?
Ali successfully lifted some impressive weights. However, he failed to register a 261kg lift in the clean and jerk, despite having successfully lifted 260kg at the Asian Games.
We have two excellent and experienced weightlifters in the superheavyweight division, which is a source of pride. However, we must already start thinking about developing replacements for them.
If the World Championships and Asian Games are scheduled close together, we should not be forced to rely on Ali Davoudi or Alireza Yousefi for both competitions.
We must bring young athletes such as Taha Nemati up to a level where they can compete and win medals at the Asian Games, while also having two fully prepared, top-level weightlifters available for the World Championships.

Given the performances of our young and experienced lifters in Ningbo, how optimistic are you about Iran's prospects at the next Olympic Games? Can weightlifting be considered one of the country's main medal hopes?
As for the women, I believe the first important objective should be to qualify for the Olympic Games and reach Group A, among the world's top 10 to 12 lifters.
In the men's events, given the talented young lifters we have and the performances they delivered at this competition, winning prestigious Olympic medals is certainly within reach.
Iran has a rich history of winning medals in weightlifting, and we currently have athletes capable of challenging for Olympic medals.
However, achieving this goal requires a well-defined, long-term plan. We need to determine from now on the level of preparation each athlete should reach in every season, the competitions they should enter, and how their training and preparation should be managed between successive events.
Such planning should not be limited to technical and training matters. Weight management, mental and psychological well-being, counselling, sports supplements, domestic and overseas training camps, participation in domestic leagues, and even athletes' educational and personal circumstances must all be taken into account.
Each athlete needs an individualized program because their personal lives and family circumstances can also affect their sporting performance.
If we focus exclusively on winning medals and overlook these other factors, even a minor family or financial problem could prevent an athlete from reaching peak condition and achieving success.
We must provide these athletes with comprehensive support so that their only concerns are training and competition, allowing them to participate in international events with peace of mind.
I believe we have the potential to achieve a better Olympic result than ever before. I cannot predict the exact number of medals, but winning Olympic gold is certainly within the reach of Iranian weightlifters.
We have a proud history of winning medals in this sport, and we currently have talented athletes who can be genuine Olympic medal contenders.

Historic wall of Isfahan gains national heritage status

Iranica Desk

The ancient wall surrounding the historic city of Isfahan has been officially added to Iran's National Heritage List under the name 'Daylami Wall,' the deputy head of Isfahan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization announced.

The wall was built during the post-Islamic period, under Hasan Rukn al-Dawla of the Buyid dynasty (335–366 AH), and enclosed a vast area corresponding to the extent of Isfahan at the time.

Seyyed Ruhollah Seyyed Alasgari told IRNA that the registration dossier for the Daylami Wall, a valuable historical landmark reflecting Isfahan's identity during the Daylamite period, had been approved by the National Heritage Registration Council.

He said the Daylamite period, particularly the reign of Rukn al-Dawla, marked a turning point in Isfahan's history, as the city evolved from a collection of scattered villages into an important political and cultural center. The wall is considered significant evidence of the city's development during that era.



● IRNA

Located in a neighborhood known as Poshteh Baroo (Behind the Rampart), the wall underwent changes over successive historical periods, particularly during the Safavid era, when additions were made to its southeastern section.

According to Seyyed Alasgari, remnants of the wall were discovered several years ago within houses in the Poshteh Baroo neighborhood. During a site inspection, an archaeological team examined the remains and, drawing on archaeological records and other evidence, concluded that they belonged to the ancient city wall known as Isfahan's Daylami Wall.

He added that a registration dossier was compiled based on research and documentation prepared by archaeologist Aqil Aghili and architect Saeed Ghaseminejad. The dossier was first approved by the Cultural Heritage Registration Council of Isfahan Province before being submitted to the ministry's National Heritage Registration Council, which reviewed it in Isfahan on Tuesday.

He said the surviving sections of the wall had been altered over the past 150 years as a result of construction activities. In some areas, particularly where the wall has been incorporated into private houses, niches have been added. In some properties, sections of the structure remain visible from the alley, while others are preserved on the interior side of the buildings.

He noted that surviving sections of the wall can be seen in three houses along its route, with parts of the structure incorporated into the buildings and other sections still visible from the adjacent alley.

He added that the wall's location among privately owned properties in the Poshteh Baroo neighborhood poses a major legal challenge to its protection, despite its recent inclusion on the National Heritage List.

Seyyed Alasgari stressed that the monument is important to Isfahan's historical identity, noting that only a limited number of architectural remains from the Daylamite period have survived.

Ancient tree fossil reveals Golestan's natural history

Iranica Desk

A fossilized tree trunk discovered along the Azadshahr–Shahroud road, with a reported age of approximately 170 million years, offers a glimpse into the natural history of Golestan Province. Documenting and preserving this specimen could create opportunities for educational and scientific research while attracting greater attention to the province's potential for scientific tourism.

Mahmood Shakiba, Head of the Wildlife Protection and Management Office at the Natural History and Genetic Resources Museum of Golestan Province, described the specimen as a valuable part of the region's natural heritage, according to chtn.ir.

He said the fossilized tree trunk was discovered in 2021 during road-widening operations along the Azadshahr–Shahroud route. Following an examination and confirmation of the discovery, environmental protection personnel transferred it to the provincial department.

Highlighting the specimen's research value, Shakiba said that studying such remains helps researchers understand the region's geological history and past vegetation. It can also contribute to raising public awareness and expanding paleontological research in Golestan.

Explaining the initial identification, he said preliminary examinations suggest that the specimen belongs to the conifer group. However, determining its exact species and geological age requires further scientific investigation and specialist confirmation.

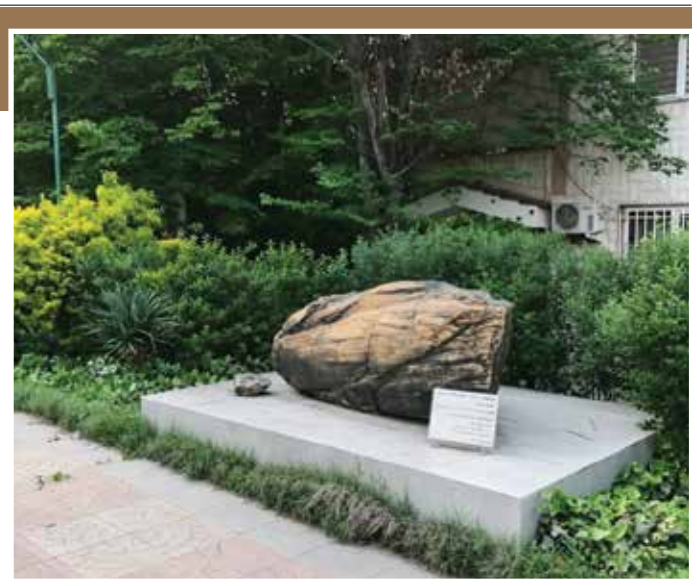
Shakiba described the donation of a section of the fossilized trunk to the Biodiversity Museum of Iran's Department of Environment in Tehran as a step towards introducing the province's natural heritage and scientific potential.

He said that housing the specimen in specialized museum collections would not only help preserve geological heritage but also make it available for scientific and educational purposes.

He emphasized that the proper preservation of fossil remains in museums plays an important role in documenting and researching the history of life on Earth, while helping pass knowledge about geological changes on to future generations.

Shakiba also announced that 100 plant and animal fossil specimens had been collected across Golestan Province. The specimens are currently housed in the museum collection of the Department of Environment of Golestan Province. Recently, 50 samples from this collection were sent to the Biodiversity Museum of Iran's Department of Environment in Tehran for further examination and identification.

He described the protection and introduction of fossil remains as part of a shared responsibility to safeguard the country's natural heritage, adding that greater attention to these specimens could improve public understanding of Iran's natural history and strengthen environmental conservation awareness.



● chtn.ir

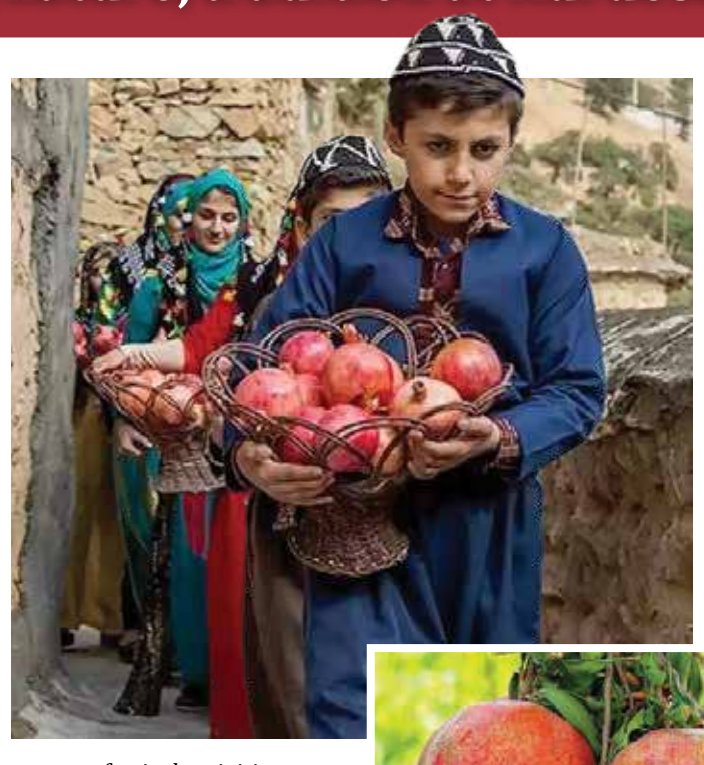
Celebrating nature, tradition at Kurdestan's Pomegranate Festival

Iranica Desk

The Pomegranate Festival of Kurdestan Province is one of the traditional cultural events of the Hawraman region, held every autumn during the pomegranate harvest season. Celebrated in several villages across Sarvabad, the festival brings together local communities and visitors to highlight the region's agricultural heritage, cultural traditions and natural beauty.

As autumn arrives and pomegranates ripen, villages across Hawraman, particularly those near the Sirvan River, prepare to celebrate the harvest. More than an agricultural celebration, the festival reflects the close relationship between nature, rural livelihoods and the cultural heritage of the Hawrami people. It is also an expression of gratitude for the harvest and a symbol of abundance and prosperity in local life.

Traditional Kurdish music and dance, traditional clothing, local agricultural products, handicrafts and a variety of pomegranate-based foods and products are among the main features of the festival. The event offers visitors an opportunity to discover the customs and traditions of the Hawrami people, learn about traditional pomegranate harvesting methods and experience the region's distinctive rural culture.



Alongside the cultural performances, festival activities may include visits to pomegranate orchards, local markets, exhibitions of handicrafts and the sale of fresh pomegranates and their various products. Cultural events and competitions may also form part of the program. The nature and scope of these activities vary from year to year and from one host village to another.

The festival is not confined to a single village. Over the years, several villages in the region have hosted the celebration, with Zhivar, Selin and Bolbar among the best-known locations associated with the event. These villages are notable not only for their pomegranate orchards but also for their distinctive stepped architecture, mountainous landscapes and rich cultural traditions. Together, they represent some of the region's important rural tourism destinations in Kurdestan Province.



● kurdtourism.com

Zhivar

Zhivar is one of the prominent villages of Hawraman, known for its stepped architecture, lush orchards and spectacular mountain scenery. Its location near the Sirvan River and its traditional village landscape give it a distinctive natural and cultural character. Pomegranate cultivation and the traditional lifestyle of its residents are among its notable features.

Selin

Selin is another picturesque village in the Hawraman region. Its proximity to the Sirvan River and the surrounding natural landscapes make it an attractive destination for visitors. Agriculture and orchard cultivation remain important aspects of local life, alongside the preservation of traditional customs and cultural practices.

Bolbar

Bolbar is a traditional village in Hawraman, situated near Zhivar and along the route leading to Hawraman Takht. Its mountainous surroundings, rural architecture and scenic landscapes are among its main attractions. Together with Zhivar and Selin, Bolbar contributes to the cultural and tourism appeal of the region.

Other attractions

A visit to the Pomegranate Festival also offers an opportunity to explore the wider tourism potential of Hawraman. Beyond its orchards and traditional villages, the region is home to remarkable natural landscapes and important cultural attractions.

Hawraman Takht

Hawraman Takht is one of the region's best-known destinations, renowned for its distinctive stepped architecture, historic village fabric and mountainous setting. Its houses, built closely together along the slopes, create a unique architectural landscape and represent an outstanding example of traditional vernacular architecture in the region.

Sirvan River and valley

The Sirvan River and its surrounding valley are among Hawraman's most remarkable natural features. Flowing through mountainous terrain and deep valleys, the river creates spectacular landscapes that are particularly captivating in autumn. The surrounding scenery is an important attraction for nature enthusiasts and visitors exploring the region.

The close proximity of Zhivar, Selin and Bolbar also makes it possible to visit several traditional villages and natural attractions during a single trip, offering a broader experience of Hawraman's landscape and cultural heritage.

Preserving cultural heritage

The Pomegranate Festival is more than a seasonal agricultural celebration. It is a cultural event that reflects the historical identity, social traditions and close connection between the people of the region and their natural environment.

By bringing together local residents, farmers, artists and visitors, the festival provides a platform for showcasing regional products, supporting local producers and passing traditional customs and cultural values on to future generations.

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Pezeshkian to highlight war's environmental toll at COP31

Social Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Wednesday he would use the COP31 summit in Turkey to highlight environmental damage from two wars waged by the United States and Israel against Iran, in June 2025 and late February 2026.

COP31 is the 31st United Nations Climate Change Conference and will be held in Antalya from November 9 to 20, 2026. Speaking before departing Tehran for Antalya, Pezeshkian said the conference would provide an opportunity to discuss climate conditions, regional issues and the environmental consequences of conflict.

"The representatives of 196 countries would attend the 31st United Nations Climate Change Conference, with 71 countries represented by their presidents or prime ministers," he said.

Pezeshkian said he had been invited by the Turkish president and had more than 10 meetings scheduled with foreign leaders and officials, including his Turkish counterpart.



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (C), flanked by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (R) and United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, poses for a group photo at the COP31 Leaders' Summit in Antalya, Turkey on November 11, 2026.
President.ir

The Iranian president said he intended to raise the impact of the war and actions by Washington and Israel that had damaged the environment in Iran and across the region.

Describing relations between Tehran and Ankara as being at a "very good level", Pezeshkian said the two countries shared interests in regional, economic, social and cultural affairs. These common interests, he added, could help deepen bilateral ties and promote regional security.

Pezeshkian said he hoped to convey the Iranian people's message to summit participants and secure positive outcomes from his visit.

COP31 is bringing together countries to discuss climate change and international efforts to address its effects.

Leader sends condolences over actor Kourosh Zarei's death



Arts & Culture Desk

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei has sent a condolence message over the death of actor and theater director Kourosh Zarei, praising his efforts to expand performing arts in underserved regions of the country.

In the message, Ayatollah Khamenei described Zarei as a "committed and revolutionary artist" whose tireless efforts to promote theater in smaller cities and less-developed areas, as well as his steadfastness in upholding the values of the Islamic Revolution, were "admirable".

The Leader offered condolences to Zarei's family and Iran's artistic community, and prayed for divine forgiveness and reward for the late artist.

Zarei, a prominent figure in Iranian theater and cinema, died on Monday. A farewell ceremony was held at the venue of Islamic Revolution Art Bureau, in Tehran on Tuesday, before his body was taken to Qom, a religious city in south of Tehran, for burial on Wednesday.

Zarei headed the Art Bureau's Center for Dramatic Arts for years, supporting religious, revolutionary and popular theater. His work included promoting the 'Mosque Youth Theater' initiative, organizing theatrical events and supporting productions focused on religious rituals and resistance.

He also appeared in several film and television productions. One of his best-known roles was Levi in the television series 'Prophet Joseph (PBUH)'.

Iran, Armenia seek to ease travel, boost health tourism



The Norduz border terminal, a major land crossing between Iran and Armenia

Social Desk

Iran and Armenia have agreed to remove obstacles to land travel, expand direct flights and develop health tourism, Iran's deputy tourism minister said on Wednesday.

Anoushirvan Mohseni-Bandpey said they seek to increase visitor flows between the neighboring countries.

the agreements were reached at the 19th Iran-Armenia Joint Intergovernmental Commission, held in Yerevan, the Armenian capital, on November 9 and 10.

The two sides also agreed to hold their sixth joint technical tourism committee meeting in Tabriz, in northwestern Iran.

"Border crossing difficulties remain a major barrier to tourism," Mohseni-Bandpey said.

Officials plan to bring together tourism authorities from Armenia's southern Syunik Province and Iran's East Azerbaijan Province to identify obstacles and propose practical solutions.

Iran's Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization, Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, and customs authorities have pledged to help facilitate cross-border movement.

The two countries also agreed to pursue more direct flights, with the issue to be examined at future technical meetings. Mohseni-Bandpey said stronger air links were essential to expanding bilateral tourism.

Health tourism is another priority. Citing Iran's medical facilities and healthcare capacity, he said Tehran was seeking to ease the entry of Armenian patients and health tourists.

"Iran is the third-largest destination for Armenian tourists, after Russia and Georgia, while Armenia ranks fifth or sixth among destinations for Iranian travelers, depending on the year," he said.

Mohseni-Bandpey estimated that 7 million to 8 million ethnic Armenians live outside Armenia, adding that many have an interest in Iran.

He said the two countries could also develop joint tourism packages for international visitors traveling to the region.

The sixth technical committee meeting in Tabriz is expected to focus on turning the agreements into practical steps, moving cooperation beyond general commitments toward improved border access, air connections and health tourism.

Shajarian brings Iranian ensemble to Kish Island

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian singer Homayoun Shajarian brought his 'Wherever You Are' tour to Kish Island in the Persian Gulf on Wednesday.

Followed by earlier stops in Shiraz, in southern Iran, and Isfahan, in central Iran, the concerts aimed to support an education campaign for disadvantaged students.

A defining feature of the tour is Shajarian's decision to perform with an entirely Iranian ensemble.

The Siavash Ensemble includes Azad Mirzapour on oud, Hossein Rezaeinia on daf, Mahyar Toreihi on santur, Radman Tavakoli on tar, Mehrzad Azami Kia on kamancheh and Morteza Momenian on tombak.

The lineup brings together traditional Iranian string and percussion instruments, placing the country's musical heritage at the center of the performances.

The concerts were also held in support of the 'Wherever You Are' campaign to help provide educational resources and better learning opportunities for students from underprivileged backgrounds.

The project is organized by the Homayoun Shajarian Cultural and Artistic Institute.



Born in Tehran in 1975, Shajarian is the son of Mohammad Reza Shajarian, one of Iran's most celebrated traditional singers. He began studying the tombak at the age of five and later trained in Persian classical singing under his father.

He also studied kamancheh at the Tehran Conservatory of Music. After accompanying his father as a percussionist from 1991, he began performing as a vocalist in 1999. His first solo album, 'Nassim-e Vasl', was released in 2003.