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Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian (7th-R top row) and Iranian medalists at the 2026 International Science Olympiads pose for a family photo during a ceremony in Tehran, Iran, on November 17, 2026.
president.ir

Prospects of full-scale war with Iran recede as chances of medium-term de-escalation rise

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

The administration of Donald Trump appears to have shifted its stance on a potential war with Iran following his party's defeat in the US midterm elections. In recent days, several US officials, including Trump himself, have voiced positions suggesting that military confrontation with Iran may not be necessary in the first place.



Omid Khazani

In an interview with Iran Daily, international affairs analyst Omid Khazani said the failure of the assumptions underpinning previous US military campaigns against Iran had reduced the likelihood of a full-scale war, while increasing the prospects of de-escalation in the medium term.

IRAN DAILY: To what extent can the shift in the US officials' tone be attributed to domestic considerations and developments in the United States, including the election results, and how much should it be viewed in the context of regional countries' concerns and pressure over the potential spread of the conflict?

KHAZANI: The war that began on February 28 last year was based on several assumptions. The first was that extensive aerial bombardment, along with the assassination of Iran's senior military commanders, its Supreme Leader and other influential officials, would lead to the collapse of the country's governing system. That did not happen. The second assumption was that a massive air campaign would completely destroy Iran's missile cities, as well as its offensive and defensive capabilities, thereby paving the way for a possible ground invasion if necessary. This assumption also proved wrong. The failure of these assumptions, which underpinned the broader military campaign, has made the option of a full-scale war less likely.

Another factor is the position of Iran's southern neighbors. Before February 28, they were either supportive of or at least neutral toward a large-scale military attack on Iran. But after witnessing Iran's fierce resistance, and seeing their own territories come under extensive Iranian attacks, their economies severely disrupted and their oil exports affected, they changed their stance. This has made launching another war considerably more difficult.

Logistical constraints are another factor that complicate the prospect of a new war. US bases have, for the most part, been put out of action, creating serious logistical challenges for any large-scale military campaign against Iran. This makes sanctions a more viable alternative to a new war.

Another factor making a new war more difficult for Washington is the Republican Party's heavy losses in the midterm elections, including the loss of both the House of Representatives and the Senate. It will be extremely difficult to sustain a war with no clear endgame and no tangible gains for the United States. Such a conflict would neither bring about a change in Iran's governing system nor destroy its missile cities or eliminate its nuclear capabilities. It would ultimately leave Washington with more casualties and exacerbate the energy crisis.

Therefore, the current situation appears to be serving primarily as a means of strengthening Washington's bargaining position in negotiations with Iran.

How should JD Vance's exclusion from the negotiation process be interpreted? Could this signal differences within the Trump administration over how to deal with Iran?

Yes, this can certainly be seen as a sign of deepening divisions within the White House and the Republican Party. We know that JD Vance's camp has favored a compromise, while the factions represented by Pete Hegseth, Marco Rubio and the CIA director have been the hawkish voices in the White House. They held the upper hand on February 28 and derailed the negotiations.

Vance openly blamed supporters of war with Iran for the failure. It was clear that divisions within the Republican Party had intensified. As we move forward, Vance will probably become increasingly critical, particularly because he is almost certain to be one of the Republican Party's presidential candidates in the election two years from now. He therefore wants to distance himself from the disastrous consequences of a war between Iran and the United States.

Vance himself is also not particularly keen on being part of the negotiating team unless he sees a prospect of a favorable outcome for himself.

These internal party dynamics will certainly have an impact on how events unfold over the next two years.

How does the upcoming trilateral meeting between the United States, Russia and China, and the developments surrounding it, relate to the Iran issue and Washington's approach toward the country?

For countries, national interests come first. China is certainly seeking energy security. A war between Iran and the United States, as well as threats to energy security in the Persian Gulf, would be detrimental to China in both the medium and long term. Russia, meanwhile, is seeking certain concessions from Trump so that he can help bring the Ukraine war to a favorable conclusion during the remaining two years of his presidency. Iran is a different card for each of these two countries. Ultimately, both have placed greater importance on Iran, and this has made them more determined to strengthen their strategic ties with Tehran and help facilitate a resolution to the crisis.

China now has a stronger incentive to engage in the Iran-US crisis and the wider Persian Gulf crisis. Although this incentive has grown, the Chinese still have doubts about Trump's intentions and continue to act cautiously. Nevertheless, they will certainly convey Iran's views to the United States. Since Trump is looking for an exit strategy, China can help him in this regard.

Russia can also play a facilitating role. The meetings between Iranian officials and President Vladimir Putin, particularly the meeting involving Iran's secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, could help convey Tehran's positions to Washington through Russia and China, both of which are partners of Iran. In this regard, China and Russia have greater leverage than the Persian Gulf Arab states.

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Tehran warns against 'malicious campaign' to justify attacks on infrastructure



A damaged bridge that was hit by a US strike is pictured along the road connecting Roudan and Bandar Abbas in southern Iran on July 18, 2026.
ISNA

International Desk

Iran on Tuesday strongly condemned recent reports by American media outlets concerning its dams and alleged Iran's dirty bomb plans as part of a "malicious campaign" aimed at justifying further strikes against the country, warning that any renewed aggression would be met "unforgettable response".
Iran's reaction came in response to a recent report published by The New York Times titled, "War May Answer Longtime Riddle of Iranian Dams Built for No Clear Reason."
The report claimed that environmentalists long questioned the extensive network of dams and water transfer projects across Iran, particularly in regions lacking apparent agricultural or civilian need.
Following US and Israeli airstrikes on concealed Iranian missile sites, the newspaper cited analysts who concluded that some of these water projects might have been developed to support the country's military infrastructure.
CNN also in a report claimed that new US intelligence indicates that Iran is developing plans to target senior Trump administration officials by detonating a so-called dirty bomb or a chemical weapon in Washington, DC.
Iran's Foreign Ministry's spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei in a post of X said that the baseless allegations seeking to link Iran's dams to missile bases constitute yet another example of a malicious campaign to manufacture propaganda and security pretexts aimed at justifying attacks on a country's vital infrastructure.
"Portraying the geographical proximity of civilian infrastructure to military facilities as grounds for designating it a legitimate military target is neither a credible argument nor a substantiated claim. Rather, it is a sinister fallacy intended to legitimize attacks against civilian infrastructure and normalize grave violations of international humanitarian law" Baqaei said.

Alleged dirty bomb plan

"Those who initiated the aggression against Iran are now seeking to lay the media groundwork for their sinister designs by manufacturing and disseminating baseless allegations, including the recent claims published by The New York Times and the fabricated media narrative surrounding an alleged "dirty bomb" propagated by CNN. Step by step, they are attempting to manufacture a veneer of legitimacy for further aggression and atrocities" Baqaei added.
The Foreign Ministry's official underlined that Iran knows well how to respond to any act of aggression and ensure that it is met with an "unforgettable response".
US President Donald Trump said that US authorities take "very seriously" any possible threat to Washington.
"If there is (such a threat), they will pay a price the likes of which no other country has ever paid before."
Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf also reacted to The New York Times's report, saying that Tehran will consider any dam, port, or power plant near US or Israeli military bases a "dual-use" military targets.

'We'll apply your logic'

"Prepping the next round on civilian infra, their 'experts' tell NYT: 'dams near Iran's missile sites are dual-use,'" Qalibaf said in a post on X. "Cool. New rule: Any dam, port, or power plant near a US or Israeli base is dual-use. We'll apply your logic consistently and even-handedly," he wrote.
The US and Israeli war of aggression against Iran began on February 28, with immediate strikes on civilian facilities in the country's southern provinces.
In the following weeks, the US and Israel expanded their target list to include broader civilian and energy infrastructure.
Extensive strikes damaged or destroyed several seaports and commercial airports, including Tehran's Mehrabad International Airport.
During a consecutive series of night attacks, US forces struck multiple bridges and regional airports as the military pushed further into Iranian territory.

Araghchi: Iran pursuing diplomacy while remaining resolute in defending its sovereignty

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi outlined Tehran's diplomatic initiative to end the US-imposed war during a meeting with Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said of Oman, stressing that Iran has always been serious about pursuing diplomacy while remaining resolute in defending its territorial integrity and national interests.
Araghchi briefed the Omani ruler on the latest developments, including Iran's diplomatic proposal to bring the war to an end, and expressed appreciation for Oman's mediation efforts. The two sides also discussed the latest regional developments, particularly the growing insecurity and heightened tensions stemming from the US acts of aggression against Iran. Reaffirming Tehran's longstanding policy of promoting trust and cooperation among regional countries, Araghchi underscored the importance of concerted efforts by countries across the region to advance their shared interests and safeguard collective regional security. For his part, Oman's sultan welcomed Iran's responsible approach toward regional peace and stability, and called for continued consultations among regional countries to manage the current critical situation and prevent tensions from escalating further. Araghchi also held a separate meeting with his Omani counterpart, Badr al-Busaidi, to discuss bilateral relations and regional developments, emphasizing the need for stronger cooperation among regional countries to safeguard their shared interests and maintain peace and stability in the region.
In a post on X following the meeting, Al-Busaidi described the talks as constructive, saying the two sides reviewed the steady course of Oman-Iran relations and practical ways to deepen cooperation.
"We also exchanged views on the latest diplomatic efforts underway to address regional challenges, and reaffirmed the importance of continued dialogue and consultation in support of de-escalation and peaceful solutions," he added.
Oman's Foreign Ministry said the diplomatic efforts were aimed at expanding areas of mutual understanding among the parties concerned and preventing the crisis from widening, along with its repercussions.
Oman has long served as the intermediary between Washington and Tehran. In the months leading up to the US-Israeli aggression against Iran early this year, Muscat was the primary venue for indirect US-Iran negotiations. Oman News Agency also said on Tuesday Iran and Oman's foreign ministers discussed "safeguarding" shipping and diplomatic options to contain tensions, months into Tehran's blockade of the vital Strait of Hormuz sparked by the US aggression.



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (4th L) holds talks with Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said of Oman in Muscat, Oman, on November 17, 2026.
IRNA

IRGC drones target US military radar at Bahrain airbase

International Desk

Bahrain was targeted by a third Iranian drone attack in five days on Tuesday, with Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) describing the operation as a response to continued violations of Iranian airspace by American military drones.
"In response to the continued violations of the airspace of the Islamic Republic by drones operated by the aggressor US military, and following the IRGC's successful air defense and electronic warfare operations to intercept, destroy, and capture MQ-series and MQM-170 drones, the IRGC's combat drones precisely targeted a radar system belonging to US forces at Sheikh Isa Airbase in Bahrain early this morning," the IRGC said in a statement on Tuesday.
The IRGC once again stressed that continued violations of the country's airspace and the use of regional military bases and facilities for hostile actions against Iran would not go unanswered. "The commanders of the US aggressor military will bear responsibility for the consequences of such actions."
The announcement followed an IRGC statement on Friday that its Aerospace Force had destroyed a US military early-warning radar in Bahrain in a precision strike.
Bahrain's Armed Forces claimed on Tuesday that they confronted, intercepted, and destroyed a number of Iranian aerial attacks before they could achieve their objectives.
Bahrain, which hosts the US navy's Fifth Fleet, was heavily targeted earlier in the war that started with US-Israeli strikes on Iran in February. It had been peaceful for weeks until Iranian drone attacks on Friday and Sunday.
The latest attack came as the US moved the USS Theodore Roosevelt into the region, bringing the number of American carrier strike groups in the region to three.
Qatar on Tuesday called for restraint following the Iranian attack on Bahrain, warning that the "escalation" in the Persian Gulf posed an "extremely serious" threat to the chances of reaching an agreement to end the war.
"We call on all parties to exercise restraint during this period and to avoid any escalation that could undermine negotiation efforts," Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesman Majed Al Ansari said at a press briefing in Doha.

Prospects of full-scale ...

Given these developments, how do you assess the outlook for Iran-US relations? Have the prospects for de-escalation and a diplomatic agreement improved, or should the possibility of military confrontation still be taken seriously?

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The prospect of a full-scale war has diminished in light of the changing assumptions and realities on the ground. However, the possibility of war has not disappeared entirely. The risk of renewed conflict remains because maintaining the current situation does not amount to lasting peace. It is merely a temporary cessation of hostilities.
Iran will certainly not tolerate being subjected to a sweeping blockade over the medium to long term. After January 4 or 5, it will undoubtedly step up its actions and adopt a more confrontational approach to breaking the blockade. It will also seek to raise the risks and costs of such a move for the United States. Within the United States, there are two opposing camps. On one side is the pro-peace faction, which, with an eye on the next presidential election, is seeking to restore the Republican Party's lost credibility. On the other side are major shareholders in US arms manufacturers who would not mind taking another shot at war, even if only in the short term, and trying out the option of using tactical nuclear weapons.

Therefore, amid the current uncertainty, either side could succeed in changing Trump's mind. The prospect of a full-scale war has become considerably lower, but the possibility of a short-term conflict remains.

At the same time, when two sides have been locked in years of tensions and eventually engage in a major war, but neither manages to secure a decisive victory, the prospects for a gradual reduction in tensions become stronger. If neither side can achieve a clear-cut victory, and various parameters continue to shift, the likelihood of de-escalation increases. Ultimately, the two sides may prefer to adhere to a limited agreement, even an imperfect one, rather than return to a full-scale war.
Iran's southern neighbors are also reassessing their calculations regarding Iran and increasingly recognizing that it would be better to coexist peacefully with their powerful neighbor. They will certainly lobby in this direction as peace brokers.
Russia and China, too, have reassessed Iran's importance and will undoubtedly step up their lobbying efforts.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Minister says inflation brought under control after four months



Ali Madanizadeh
IRNA

Economy Desk

Iran has brought monthly price increases under control after about four months, with inflation expected to stabilize and continue its gradual decline, Economy Minister Seyed Ali Madanizadeh said on Tuesday.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of an exhibition on stock markets, banking and insurance, Madanizadeh said the improvement had been achieved through cooperation with the Central Bank, IRNA reported.

He said the measures had prevented the economy from spiraling into hyperinflation, slipping out of control and losing economic stability, despite widespread predictions of such an outcome.

Already grappling with high inflation amid Western sanctions over its nuclear program, Iran has also remained on a war footing since a US-Israeli coalition launched attacks in late February, particularly targeting civilians and infrastructure during a 40-day conflict.

The rial has fallen to record lows amid mounting economic pressure, trading at more than 2.5 million rials per US dollar on the open market in recent months.

Describing the country's difficult economic conditions over the past two years, Madanizadeh said the economy had been facing two major crises when the current administration took office.

On the one hand, economic imbalances threatened to push the country into recession and inflation even without a war. On the other, the consequences of the war, a state of "neither war nor peace" and the uncertainty surrounding it had weighed on the economy, he said.

Madanizadeh said the economy had faced mounting pressures from both recession and inflation, which were expected to lead to severe economic stagnation and price increases.

However, he said the government had focused all its plans on "economic resilience" to prevent the adverse effects of war and structural imbalances.

The Central Bank said last week that the average annual inflation rate for the 12 months ending in the seventh month of the Iranian calendar year (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) stood at 71.4%, compared with the corresponding period a year earlier.

Iran's consumer price index in urban areas reached 836.8 in the month, up 4.6% from the previous month, the Central Bank said.

The figures also showed that year-on-year inflation, which had been rising in previous months, declined in the sixth and seventh months of the current Iranian year, reaching 83.8% and 83.5%, respectively.

Iran ready to build oil refinery in Armenia, expand energy trade

Economy Desk

Iran is ready to use its technical and engineering capabilities to build an oil refinery in Armenia and expand bilateral energy trade, Acting Oil Minister Hamid Bovard said on Tuesday, as the two countries discussed boosting cooperation in energy, infrastructure and cross-border transport.

Speaking at a meeting with Armenian Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure Davit Khudatyan in Tehran, Bovard said Iran was prepared to undertake major energy projects in Armenia, including refinery construction, IRNA reported.

"Iran is ready to use its technical and engineering capabilities to implement major energy projects and build an oil refinery in Armenia," he said.

Bovard said Iran saw no limits to expanding energy ties with Armenia and was fully prepared to strengthen cooperation across various sectors.

He added that constructive discussions had been held on the participation of Iranian private companies in building a refinery in Armenia, and that Tehran was ready to consider proposals from the Armenian side.

He also proposed exploring new routes for natural gas trade, saying Iran's Oil Ministry was prepared to conduct technical assessments of different options and develop cooperation through alternative channels.

On petroleum products, Bovard said Iran was ready to export liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) to Armenia without restrictions and could also help provide the infrastructure needed for such exports.

He called for proposals from both sides to be referred to a joint working group for technical assessment and follow-up, urging Armenia to make use of Iran's experience in the oil industry, which he said had been developed under the toughest sanctions.

Khudatyan, for his part, said the two countries had maintained successful cooperation for years through a gas-for-electricity swap arrangement. He said Armenia was interested in expanding trade in natural gas and petroleum products with Iran and was also ready to work with Iranian private companies across various energy sectors.

Broader energy, infrastructure cooperation

In a separate meeting on Tuesday, Iranian Vice President and Head of the Plan and Budget Organization Hamid Pourmohammadi and Khudatyan discussed ways to expand bilateral cooperation, with a focus on energy and infrastructure, including increased electricity exchanges and energy exports between the two countries.

The meeting was attended by Iranian Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi and Acting Oil Minister Bovard.

Pourmohammadi described closer cooperation with Armenia as a government priority, pointing to the successful 19th session of the Iran-Armenia Joint Economic Commission, held in Armenia the previous week.

He said the two sides had reached agreements in several areas of mutual interest and signed a comprehensive document covering cooperation in infrastructure, including roads, transportation and energy.

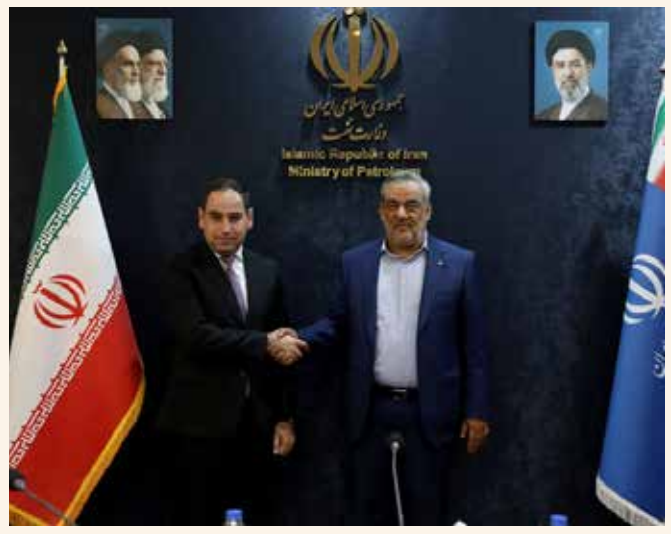
Pourmohammadi noted that Khudatyan's visit to Tehran came less than a week after the document was signed, adding that Tuesday's meeting provided an opportunity to examine ways to expand energy cooperation.

He also said Iran was determined to transform the Norduz border crossing into a model facility and the country's busiest land trade gateway within a year.

Referring to efforts to facilitate truck movements between the two countries, Pourmohammadi said the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration, border guards and East Azerbaijan provincial authorities had been mobilized to improve traffic at the crossing.

A total of 297 trucks had crossed the border during the period, he said, expressing hope that the figure would increase.

Iran was also working to remove obstacles and improve coordination among the relevant agencies to make truck movements between the two countries smoother and easier within the next two months, Pourmohammadi added.



Iran's Acting Oil Minister Hamid Bovard (R) shakes hands with Armenian Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure Davit Khudatyan after a meeting in Tehran on November 17, 2026.
SHANA

Iran reports progress in easing cargo bottlenecks in Pakistan, Iraq

Economy Desk

Iran has resolved documentation problems holding up thousands of its containers at Pakistan's Karachi port and secured the release of 170 trucks carrying export goods that had been stranded at the Chazabeh border crossing with Iraq, trade officials said.

Peyman Sanandaji, head of the Transport Commission of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, said efforts involving the Tehran Chamber, the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade had resolved problems with cargo manifests and documentation for land shipments in Pakistan.

The first shipments began moving toward Iran last week, he told Tasnim news agency.

Some containers have already been transported by sea through shipping lines, but land transport was particularly important because obstacles related to the different destinations of the cargo also had to be addressed, Sanandaji said.

He estimated that more than 3,500 containers had been affected, although figures varied, with some estimates putting the number as high as 16,000 to 17,000.

With the required documents corrected and follow-up efforts completed, the movement of containers has begun, and a substantial part of the previous problems appears to have been resolved, he added.

Sanandaji said he had also written to the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration, thanking it for its cooperation and requesting that the border with Pakistan operate around the clock to speed up the transfer of cargo, given the restrictions and difficulties at the two countries' border.

He said storage and demurrage charges at Karachi port were very high, imposing additional costs on cargo owners. Round-the-clock border operations could accelerate shipments and help reduce those expenses, he added.

Truck delays at Iraq border

Separately, Shahla Amouri, head of the Ahvaz Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, said Iran's customs authority had agreed to extend until November 21 the deadline for accepting cargo declarations at border customs offices, following difficulties caused by a new customs directive. The directive had left 170 trucks carrying export goods, particularly agricultural products and fresh produce, stranded at the Chazabeh crossing with Iraq, she said. "Intensive consultations were held at the national level with the chairman and officials of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce. Through cooperation with security officials stationed at the border, the immediate problem of the 170 trucks stranded at the crossing was resolved and authorization was issued for them to leave," Amouri said.

The Al-Sheib crossing, known as Chazabeh on the Iranian side, resumed operations last Tuesday, allowing passenger traffic and goods shipments to restart, Omar al-Waeli, head of Iraq's Border Ports Authority, said at the time.

The reopening followed a closure that had been in place since October 21. Iraqi government spokesman Haider al-Aboudi said at the time that the crossing lacked the necessary technical facilities, technology and infrastructure. Subsequent reports cited security measures and the installation of inspection equipment to strengthen controls and combat smuggling. The developments come as Iraq faces US pressure to curb trade with Iran. Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein said on November 8 that Washington had asked Baghdad to close all but two of its border crossings with Iran. Hussein told Al Jazeera that the US was pressing ahead with the request, while Iraq was negotiating with Washington over the issue. He warned that closing the crossings could hurt the Iraqi economy and said Iraq had lost about $60 billion because of the suspension of oil exports through the Strait of Hormuz.

Notice of tender for export sale No. Z/1405/22
GolGohar Mining and Industrial Company

Hereby Golgohar Mining & Industrial Co. announces selling and export 70,000 metric tons of Pellet (%Fe:65.50) on basis of F.O.B at Barco Jetty Bandar Abbas - Iran. Interested bidders should find tender documents at Golgohar website: www.geg.ir. All bids on conformity to tender instructions must be submitted no later than 9:00 A.M. on 24. Nov.2026 to Golgohar complex in Sirjan (50 km in shiraz road).

Bidders are invited to the transactions commission department of the seller with an introduction letter of interested buyer and personal identification of the representative. Tender results shall be announced at 9:00 A.M. on 24. Nov.2026 at the office of the Seller.

GOLGOHAR MINING & INDUSTRIAL CO.

Feirahi theorist of a democratic reading of jurisprudence: *Professor*

INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE

Six years have passed since the passing of Davood Feirahi, yet the questions he raised concerning the relation of religion and politics, jurisprudence and democracy, right and duty, and the possibility of dialogue between tradition and the modern world, remain present in the midst of Iran's intellectual and political issues. Feirahi's significance for us today lies in these very open questions and in the method he chose for confronting them; that is, the re-reading of Iran's and Islam's intellectual and political heritage in the light of the times, with emphasis upon the bond between religion and knowledge.
In this regard, Iran Newspaper sat down for a conversation with Alireza Hosseini Beheshti, professor of political philosophy and faculty member of Tarbiat Modares University. In describing Feirahi's intellectual project, he speaks of the concept of "regrowing from the root"; an expression that can be one of the keys to understanding Feirahi's station in contemporary Iranian political thought.



The AI-generated image shows the late Muslim thinker Davood Feirahi in front of certain Islamist and Iranian elements.
dinonline.com



Alireza Hosseini Beheshti

IRAN: Which dimension of the late Feirahi's thinking caused him to be distinguished from other Muslim religious "new-thinkers"?

HOSSEINI BEHESHTI: "Religious new-thinkers" comprises a broad spectrum of actors and thinkers, and perhaps it would be better to ask why he was distinguishable from the more celebrated movements of religious intellectualism. The intellectual transformations of the period after the first decade of the post-Islamic Revolution indicate a kind of intellectual turn in the more celebrated current of religious new-thinking in Iran, which, by criticizing the traversed path — as a path in which the two currents of traditional religious thought and political Islam were more prominent than religious new-thinking — attempted to distance itself from those two, and this was done predominantly by resorting to modernist viewpoints. While many conceived the way out of cultural and intellectual impasses to be the expulsion of religion from the domain of politics and challenged the possibility of a religious perspective in the organization of society and the development of the country, there were a few new-thinkers who, instead of "demolishing" the past heritage, thought of "recognizing" it in accordance with spatial and temporal exigencies. I place the late Dr. Feirahi in this latter category. This was a difficult task that required profound insight and much patience and perseverance since neither the adherents of the discourse of political Islam tolerated it nor the revisionist new-thinkers. This was a kind of "regrowing from the root" instead of the negation of roots.

One of the important concepts in Feirahi's thought is the displacement of the focus of discussion from "duty" to "right". What philosophical and political consequences does this displacement have? Can it be said that Feirahi endeavored, from within the jurisprudential language, to arrive at a kind of new image of the "citizen" and the "human being possessed of right"?

Yes, this inclination toward the concept of "right" is more manifest, in particular, in his later works. However, it must be noted that Feirahi did not perform this task, like certain other religious thinkers, in an "intellectual vacuum". That is, he did not wish to employ the (obsolete) Cartesian method, and this arose from his familiarity with the critiques of the postmodern and postcolonial outlook.

Feirahi's emphasis upon the history of the transformation of concepts in Iran must be viewed from this perspective; a highly valuable project that he followed in his last written work concerning the transformation of the concept of right in Iran. We know that today, attention to contextualism and the historicity of our human perceptions has become very prevalent, and scarcely anyone any longer defends the "view from nowhere" that was regarded in the modern intellectual tradition and the Enlightenment project as the point of departure of human knowledge. Of course, a portion of the intellectual, cultural, economic, and political movements of the revisionists still think within the framework of that same modern, predominantly Cartesian thought and disregards the intellectual transformations of the last four decades.

Is Feirahi's method in re-reading the history of political thought still effective for researchers today?

Certainly. This is a path that must be pursued after him by his like-minded colleagues; especially since the other two intellectual movements that I mentioned do not particularly have much to offer in terms of ways of escaping from the present intellectual deadlock in Iran. In my classes at the university, I observe clearly the impact of the late Feirahi's pioneering endeavor in the domain of Islamic-Iranian political thought among students who have either read his books or had the good fortune to be his pupils.

What relation did Feirahi posit between jurisprudence and democracy? What was his novel idea concerning the relation of these two?

In the last conversation that I had with him, which relates to a few days before his transfer to the hospital (which led to his death), I spoke of this matter that, in my view and from a Rawlsian perspective, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), after the migration from Mecca and the entry into Medina, migrated also from the role of leader of a congregation to the role of leader of a political society. The result of this migration was the transition from "the rational" to "the reasonable," and the content of the contract concluded in that same year among the Muslims, the Jews, the polytheists, and later the Christians of the region is evidence of this transition; a social contract based upon the moral principle of fairness and the mechanism of reciprocity. This can be an understanding of the Prophet's (S) conduct that is highly illuminating for our today.

However, the objection that the critics of this kind of view of the history of Medina raise is that the Prophet (PBUH), at the outset, since he had not yet become sufficiently powerful, undertook this initiative and later did not continue this procedure. Dr. Feirahi, while confirming that point, said concerning the "social contract" that for some time, he had raised this discussion during a course he offered at the university. He further announced that soon its book would also be published, and therein he had shown that the Prophet (PBUH), throughout all the years of his governance, relied upon a "network of contracts".



Davood Feirahi (C) attends an event among his fellow Muslim clerics.
MOHSEN AZADEH/JAMARAN

> The late Feirahi propounds the theory of "democratic leadership," according to which the Islamic leadership is fundamentally not in conflict with democracy but is itself democratic. In this view, leadership is based upon the rule of "contract," and satisfaction and peace are considered among its principal components, and we know that the foundation of democracy is the informed satisfaction of citizens with the decisions that shape their lives. In this theory, religion and politics are not separate from one another.

Is this the same book that was recently published under the title "Prophethood and Contract"?

Yes, unfortunately he did not have the opportunity to publish it in written form, but fortunately, his students made the effort and published the transcribed text of three courses of those lectures. In that conversation that I had with him, he emphasized that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), until the end of his life, that is, until the end of his 10-year period of governance, had based his governance upon a network of contracts and never deviated from that procedure. During the past summer, I had the opportunity to read the book "Prophethood and Contract" carefully; truly, the late Feirahi had begun a valuable project.

In the very first sessions of these lectures, he says that concerning the state-building of the Prophet (PBUH) in Medina, there exist two different views. He places the first view also into three categories: the theory of leadership, the theory of imamate, the theory of separation. Most classical theories regard the Prophet's (PBUH) practice as based upon the theory of leadership, which is an elitist idea, that is, top-down decision-making in which democracy has no place. From that perspective, even if the Noble Prophet (PBUH) sometimes formed a council, it was an advisory council and not decision-making.

The second theory is the theory of the imamate of the community and regards the imamate as a transitional period toward a situation in which the people find the capacity for democratic decision-making.

The third theory is the theory of the separation of religious imamate from political imamate, the first of which cannot be democratic and the second of which, of course, can also be democratic. In distinction from these three categories of the first view, the late Feirahi propounds the theory of "democratic leadership," according to which leadership is fundamentally not in conflict with democracy but is itself

democratic. In this view, leadership is based upon the rule of "contract," and satisfaction and peace are considered among its principal components, and we know that the foundation of democracy is the informed satisfaction of citizens with the decisions that shape their lives. In this theory, religion and politics are not separate from one another, but the community is of two kinds: the religious community and the political community. The religious community is based upon equality in faith, and the political community upon order and political commitment despite the different religions and denominations of the citizens.

This is a good path that the late Feirahi opened. I think that if this is conjoined with that very precise separation between "the rational" and "the reasonable," it would be highly useful for delineating the framework of a governance that, by recognizing equal respect for the different religions and denominations in which citizens believe, can establish a kind of political solidarity based upon the satisfaction of all; this means "unity in plurality".

This is a project that I began 30 years ago under the title "the coexistence of union and separation" and have authored a trilogy of which two volumes have thus far been published; they explore the separation of "politics based upon rationality," which is suitable and specific to within cultural communities (religious, philosophical, ethnic, etc.), and "politics based upon reasonableness," which is suitable and specific to the regulation of relations among different cultural communities living in a single political society. I personally have derived much benefit from the late Feirahi's intellectual project in explicating my view, and I think many others likewise evaluate it as an auspicious beginning.

Why do you think Feirahi returned to political jurisprudence and placed it at the center of his research?

Political jurisprudence is a part of the heritage of our political thought that we cannot disregard. But we can, and indeed must, subject it to our review, our recognition, and expose it to time-awareness. This is the task that the late Feirahi prepared himself to perform. There are other experts as well who undertake this difficult task. The road is long, but, in my view, bright and illuminating horizons are also observable. On this path, if continuous intellectual dialogue and interaction between religious new-thinkers in the university and the seminary takes shape, it will certainly bring many fruits.

This is the same reconciliation between religion and knowledge that for more than a century has lit a fire under our religion-oriented reformers. The element of religion is one of the wellsprings of the formation of Iranian identity which, alongside Iranian culture, tradition, and modernity, constitutes the four elements that, in the words of Dr. Farhang Rajaee, without the establishment of a balance among them, comprehensive and sustainable development will not be realized.

Some still imagine that the sciences possess only universal aspects and are heedless of the particularity of important aspects of present-day knowledge. Therefore, they think that the shortcut and tried solution is recourse to secular political knowledge. If there were time, I would explain why recourse to secularism does not solve our problem. In Rawls's expression, secularism is itself a comprehensive and encompassing doctrine that cannot serve as the basis of an overlapping consensus and the social contract arising therefrom. Recent literature in the field of understanding secularism, such as Charles Taylor's magnificent work, also shows why secularism does not become prevalent among Muslim societies.

In your view, what is Professor Feirahi's most important legacy for the discipline of political science in Iran?

Dr. Hossein Bashiriyeh, to whom the science of politics in Iran owes a great debt, in recent years and after a revision in his approach, which previously was more firmly based upon political sociology, draws our attention to the "return to political thought". If we regard political governance as based upon structure and agent, we are necessarily in need of the design of the former and the cultivation of the latter in a manner compatible with the Iranian model of development. For this purpose, we are in need of knowledge-based public policymaking. Political science is an important foundation for this domain, and the important and principal foundation of political science is "political philosophy". In political philosophy, for us Iranians, both the recognition of the intellectual achievements of the West and the recognition of our own intellectual roots — whether Iranian or Islamic — are important. Perhaps this is the very thing to which the late Feirahi continually invited us under the title "return to the wellspring."

May God have mercy upon him, for the wound of losing him is still fresh. We must also remember his devoted wife, who likewise, unfortunately, bade farewell to the mortal realm a short while after him. The bearing of that heavy scientific burden by the late Feirahi would not have been possible without the patient companionship of his wife and family. May their memory be honored.

The interview first appeared in the Persian-language newspaper Iran.

Primacy of right over duty

Feirahi's unfinished project, capacities of democracy



By Mahdi Fadaei Mehrabani

Faculty member at the University of Tehran

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Davood Feirahi, in the final decade of his scholarly life, pursued a project that one may designate as "a turn from duty to right" in the reading of Shia jurisprudence. This project was not a superficial rectification, but rather a foundational endeavor to alter the "point of departure" of political jurisprudence; a change that, in his estimation, could prevent jurisprudence from cascading into authoritarianism and engender a democratic capacity therein. Nevertheless, the fundamental question is whether jurisprudence, with its duty-centric structure and its vast corpus of normative rulings, fundamentally possesses the capacity to formulate a right-centric theory.

Feirahi maintained that the principal predicament of traditional political jurisprudence resides in the "sultanic order". In his conviction, the historical hegemony of this order caused jurisprudential questions to coalesce predominantly around concepts such as obedience, emirate, and the like, whereas concepts such as consultation and participation were relegated to the periphery. In his view, jurisprudence, within such a context, had presumed the sultanic order to be a natural affair, and this very presumption foregrounded an authoritarian interpretation of religion. Consequently, Feirahi sought to demonstrate that this authoritarian interpretation is a historical and political affair, not an intrinsic attribute of religion; in his estimation, one can read jurisprudence in a manner that does not culminate in authoritarianism.

His solution was to alter the starting point of jurisprudence from "duty" to "right". Feirahi argued that democracy becomes established where a right has been recognized. He held that Islamic jurisprudence is not merely a compendium of duties, but that within it, there exist wellsprings of rights that can fertilize the democratic facets of jurisprudence.

On this basis, he endeavored, by emphasizing the "duality of the concept of right and ruling," to re-read a narrative of Shia jurisprudence that reckons the domain of "right" as more expansive than that of "ruling," and thus to furnish an opportunity whereby democracy might assume the seat of governance.

To substantiate this primacy, Feirahi turned to the "practical principles". By examining the conduits of the production of right in jurisprudence, he made use of principles that posit the default as the absence of duty. His argument was that in instances where no clear ruling exists, the basis of exemption propels the jurist toward the "principles of non-ruling," and "the absence of evidence is evidence of the absence of ruling". In his view, this situation is the product of the lack of evidence, and it is designated as "rational permissibility," wherein both reason and revelation are conduits for the production of right and confer discretion upon the duty-bound. Feirahi even went further and stated that "the most abundant and richest source of the production of right in Shia thought is the religious ruling and especially the rights emanating from the generalities of the law."

Nevertheless, this is precisely the point at which one may pause within Feirahi's project. He himself acknowledged that Shiism, in contrast to the West which arrives at democracy via the path of natural rights, and the Sunnis who arrive via the path of consultation, can open a path toward democracy only from "spheres devoid of text". This acknowledgment implicitly confirms that the principal arena of jurisprudence is the arena of duty, and that right can only emerge on the periphery and in the shadow of the Lawgiver's silence. It is for this reason that certain scholars, in their assessment of Feirahi's project, have articulated this limitation with clarity: that he was able to find a path from within the jurisprudential tradition for the justification of fundamental human rights, but this path encountered numerous limitations before religious texts. For the practical principles to which Feirahi appealed were operative only where the terrain was devoid of religious text.



Davood Feirahi
faradeed.ir

This limitation is precisely where the more fundamental critique becomes manifest. The principal bulk of jurisprudence is rulings and oughts and ought-nots; a jurisprudence that deems its principal task to be the determination of the duty-bound's obligation before the Lawgiver. Within such a structure, "right" is not a foundational concept, but rather an incidental and conditional affair. Feirahi, in order to open a space for right, was compelled to take refuge in the "region of emptiness"; the very place where jurisprudence is silent.

But this refuge-seeking is, in a sense, a contradiction of purpose: if the democratic capacity of jurisprudence is activated only in its silence, then this capacity arises not from the heart of jurisprudence, but from its void. Feirahi himself formulates this reality thus: that the instances in which one arrives at a ruling directly and independently from the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah are exceedingly few, and therefore in most instances where no clear ruling exists, one must posit one's basis upon exemption. This position, though an endeavor to magnify the "region of emptiness," is simultaneously an acknowledgment that the principal burden of jurisprudence rests upon duty.

Another question that arises here is why Feirahi insisted that this reconstruction be undertaken within jurisprudence. His answer was clear: in Feirahi's conviction, Islamic civilization is jurisprudentially centered, and "whatever is to occur in this civilization must pass through such a discipline." He regarded jurisprudence as "the most corpulent discipline of Islamic civilization," which occupies the place of civil wisdom in the West. Therefore, from his perspective, any political rectification in the Islamic world must inevitably pass through jurisprudence. This argument, though historically comprehensible, places itself before the question of whether other Islamic disciplines do not possess greater capacities for democratic formulation. Feirahi's critics have likewise foregrounded this point: why did he not envision a path other than jurisprudence? Would the latent capacities in other Islamic disciplines not have paved a smoother path to democracy?

In this midst, Islamic mysticism, by virtue of its gradational and stratified epistemology, offers a different capacity. Mysticism, in contrast to jurisprudence which operates within the domain of binding norms, emphasizes the inner journey and transformation of the human being and regards truth as a gradational affair. Within such a framework, "right" is formulated not in opposition to "duty" and in a region devoid of text, but as the manifestation of the existential truth of the human being and his relation to the Absolute. This capacity, though it does not directly culminate in political democracy, furnishes a space for a non-authoritarian understanding of the human being's relation to God and to the other, which differs from the duty-centric logic of jurisprudence. Feirahi himself showed no attention to this path, but his project at least leaves this question remaining: whether the democratic reconstruction of Islamic thought must pass solely through the passageway of jurisprudence or can also avail itself of other wellsprings?

In sum, Feirahi's project must be evaluated as a sincere endeavor and a serious theoretical undertaking for the reconciliation of jurisprudence and democracy. By propounding the primacy of right over duty, he opened new horizons and demonstrated that jurisprudence can be read otherwise. But the duty-centric structure of jurisprudence and the dependence of his project upon the "region of emptiness" renders manifest the limitations of this path. Perhaps the most important achievement of Feirahi is not the presentation of a final model, but rather the opening of this very question: whether jurisprudence, with all its historical and structural weight, can bear a project that is, at its foundation, in tension with its internal logic?

The article first appeared in the Persian-language newspaper Iran.



Davood Feirahi (R) listens to a critique of his book, titled "Jurisprudence and Politics in Contemporary Iran," by his colleague Saeed Edalatnejad in a session attended by students and scholars on April 14, 2015.
AMIR GHOLAMI/IBNA

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A'alipour sets sights on dethroning Olympic champion Nasar

Sports Desk

Iranian weightlifter Ali A'alipour has set his sights on dethroning Bulgarian superstar Karlos Nasar, saying he relishes the prospect of challenging the world and Olympic champion as he targets a gold medal at the Los Angeles 2028 Games.

The 21-year-old has emerged as one of Iran's brightest prospects in recent years.

A'alipour made his mark on his World Championships debut in 2024, collecting bronze medals in the total and clean & jerk in the 96kg class in Manama, before claiming snatch silver in the newly introduced 94kg division last year in Førde, Norway.

Also a two-time Asian champion, A'alipour enjoyed a memorable campaign at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games in September, claiming gold in the 95kg class at the expense of 2024 world champion Nurgissa Adiletuly of Kazakhstan, who settled for silver.

The Iranian followed his Asian Games triumph, which ended the country's eight-year wait for a weightlifting gold at the continental showpiece, with another impressive performance at the World Championships in Ningbo, China, earlier this month.

A'alipour posted a 181kg snatch, a 215kg clean & jerk and a 396kg total to collect three bronze medals, taking an important first step in the qualifying process for LA28.

Nasar, however, proved to be in a league of his own in the 95kg division, setting three world records (185kg snatch, 230kg clean & jerk and 415kg total) to sweep all three gold medals.

Adiletuly, meanwhile, settled for three silver medals with a 182kg snatch, a 217kg clean & jerk and a 399kg total.

In an interview with IRNA, A'alipour said he was encouraged by the praise of Iranian weightlifting legend Hossein Rezazadeh, who believes the young lifter has the potential to outperform Nasar, but stressed that he still has room to improve.

"I am grateful to have reached a level where one of the great figures in world weightlifting acknowledges my performance. I don't want to praise myself, but I lifted good weights in Ningbo," he said.

"If I can avoid serious injuries and continue to improve gradually, I believe I can win Olympic gold."

A'alipour admitted that a back injury and insufficient recovery time affected his performance at the World Championships, which came just 25 days after the Asian Games.

He said he had suffered severe back spasms upon returning from Japan, leaving him unable to train for 10 to 15 days and requiring physiotherapy instead.

His coaches even suggested that he withdraw from the world event, but he decided to compete because of its importance as an Olympic qualifying competition.

"I had only a few days of training and even lifted behind the scenes at the competition venue to assess my condition. Thankfully, I managed to come close to the weights I had lifted at the Asian Games," he said.

A'alipour added that fatigue from the Asian Games, combined with his injury, prevented him from producing his best performance in Ningbo.

Weightlifting requires considerable recovery time, he noted, while the tight competition schedule had left him and his teammates short of the time needed to recover properly.

He also pointed to the impact of the demanding schedule on his compatriot Ali Davoudi, who was unable to lift 260kg in the superheavyweight competition.

A'alipour, however, is unfazed by the prospect of competing in eight or nine events over the two-year Olympic qualification cycle, saying the demanding schedule is nothing new to Iranian lifters.

Beyond his Olympic ambitions, the young weightlifter is also motivated by the prospect of making history for his home province of West Azarbaijan.

No weightlifter from the province has won an Olympic medal, while his hometown of Shut has yet to produce another international medal-winning lifter, he said.

A'alipour added that competing against the world's best had always been part of his ambitions, rather than taking the easier route to medals.

"I had always imagined myself competing against powerful opponents from different countries. I never wanted to face weaker rivals and win medals easily," he said.

"Competing against a strong opponent like Karlos Nasar, who is an Olympic champion and holds world records, is much more enjoyable. Beating him would be worth far more."



Iranian weightlifter Ali A'alipour competes in the men's 95kg category at the IWF World Championships in Ningbo, China, on November 4, 2026.
IWF

Asian Women's Handball Championship:

Iran unfazed by tough group, targets World Championship berth, says coach Fakhri

Sports Desk

Iran women's handball team is targeting a fourth successive qualification for the World Championship despite facing strong opposition from Asian heavyweights Japan and China in the group stage at the upcoming Asian Championship, Iranian coach Seyedeh Maryam Fakhri said.

Fakhri made the remarks after Iran completed its ninth and final training camp ahead of the 21st edition of the continental showpiece, which will get underway in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on Monday.

Iran will kick off its Group A campaign against Hong Kong on the opening day of the competition at Dostyk Universal Sports Complex, before squaring off against 10-time silver medalist China the following day.

A semifinalist in the previous three editions, Iran will then take on Thailand next Wednesday, followed by a daunting test against defending champion Japan on the final day of the group stage.

The top four in each of the two groups will progress to the quarterfinals, with the semifinalists securing direct qualification for the global showpiece, scheduled to be held in Hungary from November 30 to December 19 next year.

Iran's final camp began with 19 players, with the coaching staff focusing on improving the team's readiness and identifying its strengths and weaknesses, Fakhri told ISNA.

Fakhri also highlighted the team's preparations through a friendly tournament in Turkey, saying it was the first time Iran had had the opportunity to take part in an international preparatory competition ahead of an Asian championship.

Iran faced Ukraine and hosts Turkey in the tournament, with Fakhri describing both matches as valuable tests that helped the coaching staff assess the team's strengths and shortcomings. With an average age of 24, the Iranian squad is determined to make the most of its preparations and compete for a place at the World Championship.

"China and Japan are among the contenders in Asian handball, but we have also done our best in preparation, and we hope to put in good performances and establish ourselves among the contenders," Fakhri said.

The coach also expressed appreciation for the support provided by the Iranian Handball Federation, saying it had played an important role in the team's preparations.

Fatemeh Khalili, Elnaz Yarmohammadi, Zahra Afshari, Bahar Izadgashb, Hadiseh Norouzi, Aseman Badvi, Arezoo Kianiara, Fatemeh Merikh, Mehrban Badvi, Shahrzad Nasouhi, Mobina Hassannejad, Negar Zandeboodi, Saeideh Ghazanfari, Hanieh Karimi, Samin Karimi, Leila Hosseini, Elaheh Nikan, Elnaz Ghasemi and Maedeh Oshaghi have been named in the Iranian squad for the upcoming showpiece.

Hanieh Karimi acknowledged changes to the national team squad, saying: "Several players have retired from international handball, while others were ruled out due to injuries, paving the way for younger faces to join the squad."

"Securing a World Championship berth is our main objective, and we are looking to take a bigger step forward. We will fight to achieve this goal and strive to deliver a better performance than in previous editions," added the Iranian.



IRIHF



Khatoon Bam's Sara Didar celebrates one of her two goals during a 4-1 victory over Persepolis in Iran's Women's Premier League in Tehran, Iran, on November 16, 2026.
MARZIYEH SOLEIMANI/IRNA

Iran's Women's Premier League:

Khatoon hammers leaders Persepolis

Sports Desk

Eleven-time champion Bam Khatoon strengthened its status as the dominant force in the Iranian Women's Premier League after hammering leaders Persepolis 4-1 in Tehran on Monday.

Eager to bounce back from a group-stage exit at the AFC Women's Champions League in Yangon, Myanmar, earlier this month, Khatoon started on the front foot at Shahid Kazemi Stadium, with Mona Hamoudi giving the visitors the lead from the penalty spot in the 15th minute as they went into halftime 1-0 ahead.

Khatoon picked up where it had left off after the break, with Sara Didar finding the net twice and Zahra Sarbali also getting on the scoresheet as Marziyeh Jafari's side scored three goals in nine minutes to establish a commanding lead just past the hour mark.

Zeinab Abbaspour pulled one back for the Tehran Reds with 10 minutes remaining, but it proved too little, too late as Niloufar Ardalan's team suffered its second defeat of the season.

Despite the setback, Persepolis remained top of the table with 18 points from eight games, while Khatoon climbed to fourth on 14 points with two games in hand.

Persepolis now has Golgohar and archrival Esteghlal breathing down its neck after both teams won their matches to move into second and third place, respectively, on 16 points apiece.

Hajar Dabbaghi and Tania Jahanshahi scored in either half as Esteghlal defeated Malavan FC 2-0 at home.

Having managed just one victory in its previous five outings, Golgohar Sirjan bounced back in style with a 5-0 home thrashing of Ava Tehran.

Afsaneh Chatrehnoor stole the show for Golgohar with a hat-trick and an assist, with all five goals coming in the second half.

Elsewhere, Sepahan returned to winning ways after three games with a 2-0 home victory over Ista Alborz to move up to fifth in the table on 13 points.

Varesh Nowshahr, meanwhile, defeated bottom-placed Palayesh Gas Ilam 1-0 away from home.

Shiraz represents Iran at int'l historic cities conference in Himeji

Iranica Desk

The 20th World Conference of the League of Historical Cities (LHC), held under the theme "Preservation and Utilization of Cultural Heritage for a Sustainable and Resilient Future," took place in Himeji, Japan, from November 10 to 12, 2026, with representatives from 24 cities across 12 countries in attendance.

Shiraz Deputy Mayor Arash Farajzadeh said Shiraz Municipality was the only representative of Iran at the international event, owing to its membership on the League's Board of Directors. He added that the municipality also raised issues and restrictions affecting the participation of other Iranian cities in the network's meetings and activities, according to ISNA.

Despite a considerable number of Iranian cities and metropolises being members of the League of Historical Cities, sanctions-related restrictions prevented other Iranian cities from attending this year's conference, leaving Shiraz as the country's sole representative.

Farajzadeh said that during the Board of Directors meeting, as well as discussions held on the sidelines of the conference with the League's secretary-general and board members, several challenges and restrictions affecting the participation of Iranian cities in the international network were raised. Participants also exchanged views on ways to facilitate their involvement in future programs.

Referring to the main themes of the conference, Farajzadeh said historical and cultural heritage was not merely a legacy of the past, but an integral part of cities' living identities and an important resource for shaping a sustainable future. He stressed that protecting such heritage while making responsible use of it required a balanced, forward-looking approach.

He added that the conference addressed a range of issues, including safeguarding cultural heritage against natural hazards, the impacts of climate change and social transformations, strengthening the resilience of historic cities, and reconciling heritage conservation with sustainable development.



The photo shows an aerial view of Shiraz, southern Iran.
mrestate.ir

The deputy mayor said historic cities needed greater cooperation to preserve their cultural values and pass them on to future generations. Exchanges of experience among cities, he noted, could help identify effective solutions to shared challenges and strengthen efforts to protect historical heritage.

Meanwhile, Hashem Mazaherizadeh, head of Shiraz Municipality's Department of International Relations, outlined the conference program, noting that representatives from 24 cities in 12 countries had participated.

Among the cities represented were Nara and Kyoto in Japan, Xi'an in China, Gyeongju and Andong in South Korea, Florence in Italy, Phoenix in the United States, Konya and Bursa in Turkey, and Wellington in New Zealand.

He said the program included keynote speeches, specialized panel discussions, a mayors' meeting, an experts' meeting and activities focusing on young people. These sessions provided opportunities to examine different cities' experiences in preserving and promoting historical heritage, addressing the challenges of managing historic cities, and expanding international cooperation.

Commenting on the League's Board of Directors meeting, Mazaherizadeh said its agenda included applications for membership from new cities, amendments to the organization's charter, the review and approval of financial statements, a report by the secretary-general on the League's activities, and preparations for future events.

During the meeting, one city from Kosovo and two from South Korea were admitted as new members, bringing the League's total membership to 140 cities. Amendments to the charter were also approved, the financial statements endorsed, and the secretary-general presented a report on the organization's performance.

Mazaherizadeh highlighted the importance of cities' participation in international networks, saying such events not only offer opportunities to exchange experience with other historic cities but also enable participants to take part in management and decision-making processes and pursue areas of mutual cooperation.

He added that these interactions could help showcase Shiraz's historical and cultural potential and strengthen the city's international ties.

The League of Historical Cities was established in 1994 in Kyoto, Japan. Shiraz Municipality joined the organization in 2014 and currently holds a seat on its Board of Directors.

Tehran home to more than 200 private museums

Iranica Desk

Tehran is home to more than 200 private museums, in addition to dozens of museums run by the municipality and other institutions, the head of Tehran's Tourism Headquarters has announced, stressing the need to embrace modern technologies to make museum collections more accessible and attract visitors.

Speaking at a press conference ahead of the 8th National Museum Conference to be held Nov. 18-19 in Tehran, Amir Qasemi said experience had shown that museums which made more effective use of emerging technologies had succeeded in attracting larger audiences, according to ISNA.

He described the conference, which focuses on scientific and research-based approaches to heritage and tourism, as an opportunity to organize and highlight the potential of museums and other cultural institutions across the country.

Referring to a visit to the Iranian National Science and Technology Museum, Qasemi said the museum offers visitors the opportunity to interact with scientific phenomena.

He said such interactive experiences were particularly valuable for children, school pupils and university students, regardless of whether their fields of study were directly related to science and technology.

Visitors, he added, can explore and experience phenomena they may have heard about for years or encountered in everyday life but never had the opportunity to see or understand firsthand.

Highlighting Tehran's extensive museum resources, Qasemi said the municipal network alone includes more than 60 museums. Other institutions, including banks, also operate museums, while more than 200 private museums are active across the capital.

He described the themes selected for the eighth edition of the National Museum Conference, as well as the papers to be presented, as significant, expressing hope that the discussions would help bring about meaningful changes in the museum sector and museum management.

Qasemi also referred to the preparation of a national policy document providing an overarching framework for museums, saying the document had been finalized and was awaiting official notification.

According to the official, the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution had spent more than a year working on the document, holding a series of meetings before completing it.

He said such a framework had long been needed to guide the management of museums and protect the most important cultural assets of cities. Once implemented, it would establish a common framework for the activities of various institutions and organizations, rather than applying solely to municipalities.

Qasemi further highlighted the importance of registering museum objects in the Comprehensive Heritage System, known as JAME.

He acknowledged that the process had faced resistance and practical difficulties, noting that the issue had been under discussion since 2002. However, he said Tehran Municipality had now made following up on the registration process one of its priorities.

He stressed that registration should not be treated merely as an administrative obligation. Instead, the system should make registered objects accessible and help introduce them to the public, thereby promoting museums and encouraging people to visit them.

The tourism official also called for wider use of modern technologies, including two-dimensional, three-dimensional and four-dimensional tools, to present museum collections.

Such technologies, he said, should not be employed simply to fulfil formal requirements. Experience had demonstrated that the more effectively museums adopted new technologies, the more successful they were in attracting visitors.



Iranian National Science and Technology Museum
karnaval.ir

Khorasan Razavi's traditional sheep-milking ritual gains national recognition



tasnimnews.ir

Iranica Desk

The traditional Shirdooshan (sheep-milking) ritual in Soleymani village, Firuzeh, Khorasan Razavi Province, has been officially registered in Iran's National Tourism Events Calendar. A plaque commemorating the registration was unveiled at a ceremony.

Hojatoleslam Hamed Mirzakhan, Friday prayer leader of Firuzeh, speaking at the unveiling ceremony held at the county's Friday prayer complex, described the Shirdooshan ritual as more than an agricultural tradition, calling it a valuable symbol of goodwill and altruism.

He said the nearly 200-year-old custom reflects a spirit of religious devotion and charity, as the first milk collected during the spring milking season is distributed among people in need.

Mirzakhan described the registration of the event as a strategic opportunity to introduce Firuzeh's cultural potential and help turn the town into a destination for rural and religious tourism.

Jalil Seddiqi, head of Firuzeh's Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, said the Shirdooshan ritual in Soleymani village was the town's second cultural and tourism event to be included in the national tourism calendar, thanks to the efforts of local organizers and heritage custodians.

According to Tasnim, at the beginning of each year, villagers dedicate the first milk obtained from their sheep to Imam Hussein (PBUH). The offering is made with prayers for good health, the hastening of the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (PBUH), and the well-being of their families and the entire village community.

Women in the village carry out the milking, after which all the collected milk is taken to the village mosque and heated until it boils. Each family contributing milk also brings some rice to the mosque. The villagers then work together to prepare Shir Berenj (rice pudding), which is distributed among the community.

The tradition has been passed down through generations and continues to be observed by the villagers.

With the registration of the Shirdooshan ritual, it has become Firuzeh's second cultural and tourism event to be included in Iran's national tourism calendar. The first was the religious gathering known as the Hassaniyoun congregation in Kafki village.

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Pezeshkian pledges greater role for young scientists in Iran

Social Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian vowed on Tuesday to bring young scientists into government and national development, saying Iran's scientific achievements must translate into practical solutions to the country's problems.

Speaking at a ceremony honoring Iranian medalists at the 2026 International Science Olympiads at the Young Scholars Club in Tehran, Pezeshkian said scientific knowledge, combined with practical skills, could help overcome national challenges.

"If you are determined to solve the country's problems, we in the government will provide the groundwork for your participation," he told the students, urging them to look beyond winning medals and put their expertise to work at home.

He said no obstacle could halt Iran's scientific progress, despite mounting difficulties and what he described as aggression by foreign adversaries.

"Scientists, specialists and entrepreneurs could help the country overcome its problems," he added.

Pezeshkian also accused Iran's adversaries of targeting scientists and scientific infrastructure during the war, questioning why they attacked research facilities, researchers and children rather than confronting Iran on the battlefield.

The pledge comes as Iran's academic and research infrastructure has sustained damage during the 40-day waged by the United States and Israel.

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 32 universities were hit. Among the affected institutions were Sharif University of Technology in Tehran and the Pasteur Institute of Iran, where attacks damaged research facilities, laboratories and scientific equipment.

"Education remained a government priority despite wartime conditions," he announced.

Pezeshkian vowed to draw on the experience of developed countries to improve teaching and school management, and called for public and charitable contributions to build and equip schools.

He said the government had built more schools and provided more classrooms, promising to equip them and improve teaching methods. He also stressed the need for continuous improvements in education.

Education Minister Alireza Kazemi and Young Scholars Club head Reza Hosseini presented reports on Iranian students' international achievements.

They described the club's mission as preparing future generations and shifting its focus beyond medal-winning toward producing knowledge and skills to address national challenges.

The ceremony honored medalists in economics, geography, chemistry, mathematics, biology, physics, computer science, earth sciences, astronomy and artificial intelligence.



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian presents a certificate of recognition to a young olympiad medalist during a ceremony in Tehran on November 17, 2026.
president.ir

Tehran, Moscow to use AI in anti-corruption drive



Social Desk

Iran and Russia have agreed to expand judicial cooperation, including the use of artificial intelligence to detect violations and flag corruption risks, under a two-year plan signed in Moscow on Monday.

Asghar Jahangir, head of Iran's General Inspection Organization, and Russian Prosecutor General Aleksandr Gutsan signed the agreement in Moscow. It sets out joint priorities for 2027 and 2028.

Gutsan said the plan would define key areas of cooperation over the next two years.

He singled out expert consultations on digitizing oversight activities, particularly the use of artificial intelligence to uncover violations and flag areas vulnerable to corruption.

The agreement aims to strengthen cooperation between the two countries' oversight institutions, which play a role in protecting citizens' rights and promoting administrative integrity, Jahangir said.

Jahangir said Russia's position could help deepen bilateral and multilateral cooperation against what he described as unilateralism in the international system.

He was visiting Moscow to attend the 11th meeting of the Eurasian Ombudsman Alliance and the 10th International Scientific Conference on Best Ombudsman Practices.

Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali and Mansour Aghamohammadi, the General Inspection Organization's deputy for international cooperation, also attended the meeting.

The Eurasian Ombudsman Alliance gathering brought together judicial officials, human rights institutions and law enforcement oversight bodies from member and observer countries.

Iran's Asghar Jahangir (R), head of the General Inspection Organization, and Russian Prosecutor General Aleksandr Gutsan pose for a photo in Moscow on November 17, 2026.
IRNA

Five-year cinema deal deepens Iran-Turkey ties

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran and Turkey have signed a five-year deal to expand joint film production, festival exchanges and professional cooperation, strengthening cultural ties between the two countries.

The memorandum was signed in Istanbul by the Fasl-e Honar Cultural and Artistic Institute and the International Cinema Association. The signatories were Mehdi Heydari, Nazif Tunç and İhsan Kabil.

The agreement covers co-productions, film exchanges, reciprocal participation in festivals, workshops and other professional programs, ILNA reported on Tuesday.

It is also intended to give filmmakers from both countries more opportunities to work together and promote cultural ties through cinema.

The signing took place during the sixth Korkut Ata Turkic World Film Festival, held in Istanbul from November 3 to 7, and the 14th Bosphorus Film Festival, which ran from November 8 to 15.

On the sidelines of the festivals, Iranian representatives met filmmakers and cultural figures from Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to discuss potential cooperation.

The Bosphorus festival featured 88 films from 41 countries, according to the organizers.

The Iranian delegation also met Istanbul tourism officials to discuss developing cultural tourism and enabling artists from both countries to take part in each other's cultural events.

The five-year agreement is intended to provide a framework for continued cooperation between the Iranian and Turkish film industries through joint productions, festival participation and professional exchanges.



A scene from 'Intoxicated by Love' (2024) by Hasan Fat'hi, a film co-produced by Iran and Turkey
imdb.com

Academic cooperation on agenda for talks with Indonesia

Social Desk

Iran and Indonesia will hold a virtual meeting in December to identify joint academic projects and expand faculty and student exchanges, following bilateral talks in Moscow.

The meeting was agreed during discussions on the sidelines of a BRICS university ranking workshop at RUDN University in Moscow from November 11 to 14.

The talks brought together Mukhamad Najib, director of institutional affairs at Indonesia's Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology; Abdolhamid Alizadeh, deputy for international relations and specialized organizations at Iran's Center for International Scientific Cooperation; and Mansour Haghighat, head of the Islamic World Science Citation Center (ISC).

The two sides discussed ways to strengthen ties between their universities and research institutions, including faculty and student exchanges, closer academic engagement and joint research.

They also stressed the need to maintain regular contact and identify areas for shared initiatives.

Under the agreement, Iranian and Indonesian representatives will take part in a webinar next month to examine potential areas of cooperation and identify the resources and capabilities needed to design and carry out joint programs.

The meeting is intended to turn the discussions into practical initiatives and provide a basis for more structured academic ties between the two countries.



From right: Abdolhamid Alizadeh, Iran's deputy for international scientific cooperation; Mansour Haghighat, head of the Islamic World Science Citation Center (ISC); and Mukhamad Najib, Indonesia's director of institutional affairs, attend a meeting in Moscow, Russia, on November 16, 2026.
IRNA