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Xi calls for regional cooperation as APEC summit opens in China

From Shenzhen, Iran Daily correspondent writes



China's President Xi Jinping (C) pose for a group photo with other leaders before the welcome banquet at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Shenzhen, China, on November 18, 2026. ● *AFP*

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

REPORT EXCLUSIVE

The 33rd Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) gathering opened in the Chinese city of Shenzhen on Wednesday, with President Xi Jinping calling on regional economies to strengthen cooperation, uphold peace and stability, and pursue shared prosperity amid mounting global economic uncertainties.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the APEC Summit, Xi said the world was undergoing profound changes, with sluggish global growth, rising unilateralism and protectionism creating new challenges for international economic cooperation.

Despite these headwinds, global trade continued to expand and breakthroughs in emerging technologies were accelerating, he said, stressing the need for Asia-Pacific economies to determine how best to respond to the changing international landscape.

"To open doors or close doors, work together or against each other, adapt to change or stick to old ways?" Xi asked, describing these as pressing questions that countries must address.

China is hosting APEC for the third time and is ready to work with other participants to build an Asia-Pacific community and promote shared prosperity, he said.

Xi outlined four priorities for achieving prosperity across the region: safeguarding peace and stability, expanding openness and cooperation, promoting innovation as a driver of economic growth, and pursuing mutual benefits and win-win outcomes.

The Chinese president also highlighted the opportunities offered by China's 15th Five-Year Plan for economic and social development, which begins this year, saying it could contribute to growth across the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

He described China's economic development as an opportunity for international business communities, pointing to the country's vast consumer market, its large middle-income population and considerable potential for investment and consumption.

China, the world's second-largest economy, would offer global businesses a broad and open market, a promising environment for development and opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation, Xi said.

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Army chief threatens 'more devastating' response if Iran attacked

Iranian drones strike US air defense systems in Kuwait



Iranian Army Chief Amir Hatami addresses a meeting with military academy students in Tehran, Iran, on January 7, 2026.
IRAN'S ARMY

International Desk

Iran's Army chief said on Wednesday that Tehran's response to any new attacks by the United States would be "more devastating" and directed at both US forces and their allies.

"Should the enemy make a mistake and repeat actions that have previously led them to despair, our response – directed at both the enemy and their backers – will undoubtedly be even more devastating and will know no geographical boundaries," Amir Hatami said.

General Hatami made the warnings amid heightened regional tensions and the arrival of another US aircraft carrier in West Asia, warning that Tehran is closely monitoring developments and has not let up on its military preparedness.

"We are monitoring the enemy's movements with vigilance and precision, and we are not wasting a single moment in preparing ourselves," he stressed.

US Central Command announced on Monday that the USS Theodore Roosevelt and its strike group arrived in the West Asia region. The USS George H.W. Bush and USS George Washington also arrived in the region back in April and August, respectively.

General Hatami said all branches of the Iranian Army are continuously improving their readiness while keeping a close watch on potential threats.

Earlier on the day, the Iranian Army said that its combat drones targeted US air defense systems and drone launchers at the Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait.

The Army said the operation destroyed Patriot air defense systems and launch pads used by the US military at the base. It described Ali Al Salem as a critical air transport hub and a primary gateway for US forces entering West Asia.

This followed an announcement by the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) on Tuesday that they targeted a US-operated radar system at the Sheikh Isa Air Base in Bahrain in response to US drone violations of Iranian airspace. The retaliatory strikes follow a US airstrike on Iran's Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz.

The US and Israel launched a war of aggression against Iran in late February 2026, prompting Tehran to launch retaliatory attacks against American bases in the Persian Gulf region.

American officials have threatened to resume strikes on Iran, keeping tensions high in recent weeks.

Iran has consistently maintained that its military actions are strictly defensive measures under international law, targeting the military assets of aggressors in response to the ongoing blockade and aerial bombardment.

On Wednesday, Bahrain and Kuwait claimed that they had repelled air attacks launched against them.

Tehran: US media fabrications aimed at creating pretext for further aggression

International Desk

Iran's UN mission categorically dismissed reports by The New York Times and CNN respectively concerning the country's water infrastructure and an alleged plan to use unconventional weapons in Washington, describing them as fabricated narratives intended to create pretexts for further aggression against Iran.

"The recent ridiculous allegations published by The New York Times concerning Iran's dams, alongside CNN's fabricated narrative about alleged 'dirty bomb,' are part of a calculated disinformation campaign designed to manufacture pretexts for further aggression and war crimes," the mission said in a statement on Tuesday.

The warning followed a November 16 report by The New York Times examining, what the paper called, possible connections between Iran's water infrastructure and military installations. The newspaper suggested that some dams and water-transfer projects might have been constructed to provide water and electricity to underground missile facilities. Citing "several experts," it raised the possibility of such connections, but did not present conclusive evidence establishing that the projects were linked to missile installations.

On the same day, CNN, citing "new US intelligence," reported on the alleged plans, while noting that US officials were still debating whether Iran could or would carry out such an operation.

"Iran categorically and unequivocally rejects these baseless allegations. No amount of propaganda or false and misleading information can conceal aggression, legitimize war crimes, or absolve those responsible for committing such heinous crimes," the mission, however, stated.

Addressing the implications of the reports concerning Iran's dams, the mission warned that any deliberate attack on civilian dams or water supply infrastructure would constitute a grave violation of international humanitarian law and amount to a war crime.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also reacted to the reports.

He said media campaigns targeting Iran have intensified in recent days, warning that the Israeli regime and its lobbyists are seeking to reproduce the propaganda tactics used to justify the US-led invasion of Iraq in the early 2000s. "In the past 72 hours, pro-Israel media have 'reported' that Iran is supposedly plotting to use chemical weapons in DC while building missile bases under dams. RUBBISH," Araghchi said in a post on X.

False intelligence claims

Araghchi said the reports echoed the false intelligence claims about weapons of mass destruction used to justify the 2003 US invasion of Iraq and rally support for the aggression against the Arab country.

"Spare us the Iraq War-style propaganda, especially with Israeli fingerprints all over it. Nobody is buying it," he said.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi also criticized the claims.

"The New York Times, which has raised and sought to normalize the prospect of attacking Iran's dams on the pretext of their proximity to alleged missile facilities, cannot absolve itself of responsibility for the humanitarian and legal consequences," Gharibabadi said in a post on X.

"Targeting vital civilian infrastructure constitutes a war crime, and normalizing or carrying out such attacks will not come without consequences," he added.

Gharibabadi also rejected CNN's report, describing its allegations as an outright fabrication and challenged the historical record invoked in the accusations.

Iran denies North Macedonian 'terrorist plot' claims



Iran's Embassy in Greece

International Desk

Iran on Wednesday rejected as "completely unfounded" claims by North Macedonia that it had found a Tehran-backed assassination plot targeting a person in Greece.

The Iranian Embassy in Greece said the "baseless accusations" were part of a "worn-out campaign by the Israeli regime and its propaganda and psychological warfare apparatuses to discredit Iran and in line with previous false-flag operations."

The embassy said the allegations had no value or credibility and stressed that vigilance is required in the face of such deceptive schemes. North Macedonia's National Security Agency claimed on Tuesday that it had foiled an alleged plot and dismantled a network linked to Iran, in cooperation with Greek intelligence.

Four suspects have been placed in custody and another put under house arrest in North Macedonia.

One suspect was arrested in Greece and handed over to North Macedonian authorities, according to officials of the neighboring country. Some Greek media, including the ERT state broadcaster and the daily Kathimerini, reported that the target was allegedly an Israeli-born executive of an Israeli company based in Greece.

Greek police said they were investigating the alleged plot. "We do not know who the target was," Greek police spokesperson Konstantia Dimoglidou told ERT. "It is not clear whether it was about an assassination that was to be carried out in our country against a specific individual or whether it was something else, a terrorist action," she said.

North Macedonia's security agency claimed that the dismantled network were "proxy actors" linked to Iranian national Edris Jahangiri Mavaneh, who was a "collaborator of the Iranian security and intelligence services".

Xi calls for ...

He added that Beijing would remain committed to win-win cooperation with other countries regardless of changes in the international landscape.

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Russian President Vladimir Putin also addressed the gathering, highlighting the growing influence of developing countries and emerging economies in the global economic system.

He said their share of the global economy had nearly doubled over the past 35 years, increasing from 35% in 1990 to 61% in 2026.

Putin described the Asia-Pacific experience as an example of the emergence of a fairer and more equitable international order, in which traditional hierarchical and centralized structures are increasingly giving way to broader networks of horizontal cooperation.

However, he cautioned that the shift in the global economic balance had not been universally welcomed, arguing that former hegemonic powers were seeking to restrain countries making progress rather than adapt to the emerging realities.

He also stressed the importance of strengthening sovereignty at the state, societal and socioeconomic levels, saying this was essential for countries to preserve their national identities, independently determine their development paths and maintain their sovereignty on the international stage.

Other speakers at the gathering included the leaders of Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam, as well as Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney.

The 2026 APEC summit is being held under the theme "Building an Asia-Pacific Community to Prosper Together," with participation from 21 member economies.

The agenda focuses on three main priorities: openness, innovation and cooperation. These include supporting the multilateral trading system, advancing digital technologies and artificial intelligence, strengthening supply chain resilience and expanding regional economic partnerships.

The APEC CEO Summit, which brings together political leaders, business executives and representatives of member economies, also began on Tuesday and runs through Wednesday.

On Thursday, a trilateral meeting between Xi, Putin and US President Donald Trump is scheduled to take place on the sidelines of the summit. The meeting is expected to address international security and strategic stability, with Iran, the Ukraine conflict and nuclear arms control among the issues Trump has indicated he wants to discuss.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Pezeshkian urges fuel savings as Iran reports rise in CNG consumption



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (C) attends the fourth meeting of mayors of major cities and provincial capitals in Qazvin, Iran, on November 18, 2026.
president.ir

Economy Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has called for more efficient fuel and energy consumption, saying the country uses at least three times the global average, as government measures to manage fuel demand have boosted daily compressed natural gas (CNG) consumption by 16-17%, an oil official said.

Pezeshkian made the remarks on Wednesday at the fourth meeting of mayors of major cities and provincial capitals, held in the northwestern province of Qazvin to discuss ways to improve fuel and energy consumption and review the performance of municipal officials, IRNA reported.

He urged mayors, officials and the public to make energy conservation a priority, citing the country's high consumption levels and the need to navigate current challenges.

Pezeshkian also stressed the importance of maintaining industrial production despite what he described as hostile actions by Iran's adversaries and the restrictions imposed on the country.

Since late February, when a US-Israeli coalition launched a 40-day war, Iran has been operating under wartime conditions and facing a maritime blockade from the south. The blockade aims to reduce Iranian oil exports to zero and deplete government revenues. Iran has also been subject to decades of Western sanctions over its nuclear activities.

"Fuel and energy supplies to industries and production units should be the last option when restrictions are imposed, because if the wheels of production stop turning, unemployment and numerous other problems will follow," he said.

He also called on industrial units and businesses to improve the efficiency of their equipment and machinery in line with their actual needs and available resources to reduce costs and manage energy consumption.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Sadeq Azimifar, chief executive of the National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company, said daily CNG consumption had risen to more than 18 million cubic meters from about 14.5 million before the introduction of new measures.

CNG consumption had been declining since 2021, falling by around 1 million to 2 million cubic meters annually, but new government policies had reversed that trend, Azimifar told reporters.

CNG consumption rises 16-17%

"With the implementation of consumption management policies and the cooperation of the public, consumption of this fuel has increased by an average of 16-17%, adding more than 3.5 million cubic meters to daily consumption," he said.

In early September, the government raised prices for gasoline purchased outside monthly quotas for the second time in less than a year and adjusted monthly allowances.

Gasoline is sold at three rates. Each vehicle receives 60 liters a month at 15,000 rials per liter, followed by another 50 liters at 30,000 rials per liter. Additional purchases are unrestricted but cost 100,000 rials per liter.

Iranian refineries produce about 110 million liters of gasoline a day, compared with average daily consumption of 135 million liters. To narrow the gap, the Oil Ministry also ordered several petrochemical plants to allocate part of their capacity to gasoline production. The move added 20 million liters to daily output, taking total production to 130 million liters.

Following two rounds of fuel price adjustments, the government has also moved to expand the conversion of vehicles to dual-fuel systems, with CNG conversion centers resuming operations.

Azimifar said that before the current government took office in August 2024, consumption of several petroleum products had been rising. Average annual growth in gasoline consumption was about 6%, while diesel consumption grew by around 4%. Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) consumption was also increasing, while kerosene consumption followed a different trend because of the expansion of natural gas distribution.

Since the government took office, measures tailored to the characteristics of different petroleum products have been introduced to manage and optimize consumption, producing improvements and even negative growth in some sectors, he said. In the non-power sector, diesel consumption growth shifted from a positive 4% at the start of the government to a negative 4% last year, meaning consumption was about 8% below the baseline projected if the previous trend had continued, Azimifar said.

Gasoline consumption growth also fell to minus 3% in the seventh Iranian calendar month, which ran from Oct. 23 to Nov. 21, for the first time, compared with an earlier growth rate of 6%. This represented a 9% reduction from the projected baseline, he said.

Azimifar said the reductions had been achieved despite the conditions and restrictions facing the country, adding that public cooperation, patience and understanding of the country's circumstances had been among the main factors behind the results. He said managing energy consumption required coordination across different sectors and could not be achieved solely through policies targeting consumers. Various government bodies had responsibilities in this area, and shortcomings in some sectors in previous years had contributed to the problem.

Azimifar also stressed the role of automakers in reducing fuel consumption, saying they had repeatedly been urged to bring vehicle fuel efficiency in line with international standards.

He identified public transportation development as another essential part of fuel management, saying it was the responsibility of municipalities but that the coverage of public transport services across the country had been declining. He called for expansion of the public transport fleet.

Iran's external debt falls 6% to $4.27 billion

Economy Desk



Iran's external debt stood at $4.267 billion at the end of the fifth month of the current Iranian calendar year, on Aug. 22, down 6% from the start of the year on March 21, according to data released by the Statistical Center of Iran.

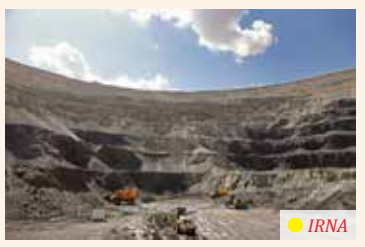
The total comprised $2.662 billion in short-term debt and $1.605 billion in medium- and long-term obligations, the center's latest report showed, ISNA reported.

External debt stood at $4.54 billion at the beginning of the Iranian year. It declined to $4.476 billion in the second month and $4.34 billion in the third month, before falling further to $4.087 billion in the fourth month.

Separately, Central Bank of Iran data showed that the country's external debt, measured as actual outstanding obligations based on original maturity, stood at $5.38 billion, equivalent to 4.57 billion euros, at the end of the sixth month of the previous Iranian calendar year, on Sept. 22, 2025.

IMIDRO says 600–700 mines revived under recovery plan

Economy Desk



IRNA

Iran has brought between 600 and 700 inactive mines back into operation in recent years under a government mine recovery plan, Deputy Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade Vajihollah Jafari said on Wednesday.

Iran has about 13,000 mines, some of which are inactive for various reasons, Jafari said at a meeting of the Supreme Council of Mines in Qazvin. He cautioned, however, that a mine classified as inactive in official statistics is not necessarily completely shut down, as some operate seasonally, under extraction permits or subject to specific conditions, IRNA reported.

The recovery plan, launched several years ago, targets mines with the potential to resume operations, Jafari said. Measures to bring them back into production include providing financing, supporting investment, attracting investors and helping secure liquidity and machinery through the resources of the insurance fund. Some mines, however, cannot continue operating because their reserves have been depleted or due to other specific circumstances, he said. The Supreme Council of Mines meeting in the northwestern city of Qazvin also addressed national and provincial mining issues, including mining royalties and foreign exchange difficulties facing companies in the sector. A separate meeting was held with mineral industry representatives to discuss currency-related problems, Jafari said.

He said the industry ministry and other relevant bodies were working to coordinate efforts and remove obstacles to investment in order to revive mines and expand mining activity.

Iran ranks 15th globally among countries with significant mineral resources. Iranian officials describe mining as the backbone of industrial development and say the sector should replace oil as the country's main source of revenue.

Date association chief expects $400m in export earnings

Economy Desk

Iran expects its date exports to generate about $400 million in foreign exchange earnings this year, despite sanctions and trade restrictions that have complicated shipments, the head of the Iran Date Palm Association said on Wednesday.

The country is expected to produce about 1.35 million metric tons of dates this year, with around 70% consumed domestically and the remaining 30% exported, Mohsen Rashid Farrokhi told IRNA.

Iran, already hit by Western sanctions over its nuclear program, has been under a US naval blockade since April, following a 40-day US-Israeli war that began in late February. The restrictions were aimed at forcing Tehran to accept Washington's terms. Washington seeks to bring Iran's trade and oil sales to zero to pressure Tehran into accepting its terms for peace.

Farrokhi said private-sector exporters had been seeking ways to overcome obstacles created by sanctions and other restrictions on exports this year, including identifying multiple border crossings for shipments.

He said reaching the projected $400 million in export earnings would require special measures and the easing of export regulations under current conditions. The association has discussed the sector's problems with government officials, the Agriculture Ministry, the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry and the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration, he said, adding that officials had pledged cooperation.

Some measures to remove export barriers need to be implemented quickly, and export regulations should be adapted to conditions imposed by sanctions, he said.

Farrokhi said a problem involving customs tariffs and the formula used to calculate duties on dates had been resolved following consultations with government agencies, and the relevant resolution had been issued. He said the measure was expected to help facilitate exports. On domestic prices, he said date prices at the point of origin had not risen significantly and had increased by less than the government's reported inflation rate. While unusually high prices may be seen in destination markets, he said, the relevant authorities should intervene and monitor the situation.

He also pointed to pest infestations in date palm groves and the damage they have caused farmers. The association is working with the Agriculture Ministry to address the problem, he said.



The association would continue working with the ministry's specialized departments to tackle pest problems and support farmers, he added.

Trump, Xi, and Putin

What to expect from APEC summit

The 33rd Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders' Meeting will take place in Shenzhen, China, on November 18–19, 2026. With another interaction likely between Presidents Donald Trump and Xi Jinping on the margins of this summit, what are the major outcomes expected? What will the two leaders seek to accomplish with their third interaction of this calendar year? Can meaningful US-China progress be achieved on trade and other security issues?



Russian artist Alexey Sergienko's new pop art painting dubbed "Shenzhen, 26" sits at his gallery in Saint Petersburg, Russia, on November 12, 2026.
OLGA MALTSEVA/AFP

All thunder, no rain



By Jonathan A. Czin
Michael H. Armacost Chair in Foreign Policy Studies

OPINION

"All thunder, no rain." This Chinese aphorism has been an apt description of the last two summits between Trump and Xi — and thus far, it seems likely to apply to this next summit as well. For a long time, in the run-up to such meetings, US diplomats and policymakers would "trade optics for substance" — making concessions to China on protocol in exchange for substantive concessions. Now, both sides appear content to prioritize optics over any substance. The result is pantomime diplomacy.

Theoretically, there is much for the two leaders to discuss — everything from the risks of AI to global hotspots — but it seems more likely than not that these two leaders will miss the moment, again.

Xi is likely already looking past Trump and thinking about how the fallout from the US midterm election will affect China policy in the next administration — and whether the United States will revert to a more competitive posture toward China. Xi will host Trump fresh from a major Chinese Communist Party meeting, which fortified Xi's iron grip on the party and laid the groundwork for his next five-year term, which will begin late next year. Xi's goal in the meantime remains to do as little as possible to mollify Trump.

The bigger question right now is what will backstop the bilateral relationship in the coming year. The two leaders are supposed to meet one more time in December on the margins of the G20 summit in Doral, Florida, but after that, no meetings are scheduled. And Xi will be increasingly preoccupied with the preparations for next year's Party Congress as we approach the second half of the year, which will limit his time and bandwidth for another engagement with Trump. In the absence of direct engagement by the top leaders, it remains an open question which force prevails: the inertia of Trump and Xi's gentleman's agreement to halt the trade war, or the entropy of the two superpowers' competitive dynamic.

Staying the course



By Ryan Hass
Director of John L. Thornton China Center

OPINION

Typically, when the leaders of the United States and China meet, it is a major global news event. The planned meeting between Trump and Xi on the margins of APEC may be an exception. The meeting will occur in the aftermath of a resounding reckoning for Trump in the US midterm elections and in the shadow of an expected trilateral meeting between Trump, Xi, and Russian President Vladimir Putin. This will be the third in-person encounter between Trump and Xi of the calendar year. Neither side is preparing ambitious deliverables for this meeting.

Even so, the two leaders will have plenty to discuss. The headline issue will be whether the two leaders agree to extend their trade truce past its current deadline in January. Since Trump and Xi plan to meet again on the margins of the G20 this December in Florida, they may not feel pressure to finalize any trade truce extension at APEC.

The two leaders will be expected to endorse progress on institutionalizing coordination on AI, including through the launch of a bilateral AI dialogue and a bilateral incident reporting channel. Efforts in this space will likely be more focused on agenda-setting and establishing processes and expectations than on any breakthroughs or major deliverables.

Trump and Xi may also use their meeting to announce progress on strengthening military crisis communication, including in the nuclear domain.

The Chinese side likely will use the meeting to amplify the shared definition both leaders have endorsed for the relationship: constructive strategic stability based on fairness, reciprocity, and mutual respect. Beijing values this shared definition as a symbol of both leaders' investment in preserving bilateral stability and avoiding crises. Although Trump has shown less enthusiasm for the definition, he similarly appears to value keeping the US-China relationship on a relatively stable track for the foreseeable future.

This will be the second consecutive year when Trump will meet Xi on the margins of the APEC economic leaders meeting. Last year, Trump never set foot in the venue where the APEC economic leaders meeting was held. Trump's focus will be on meeting other leaders on the summit's margins, as opposed to the details of the summit meeting itself.

> The Chinese side likely will use the meeting to amplify the shared definition both leaders have endorsed for the relationship: constructive strategic stability based on fairness, reciprocity, and mutual respect. Beijing values this shared definition as a symbol of both leaders' investment in preserving bilateral stability and avoiding crises. Although Trump has shown less enthusiasm for the definition, he similarly appears to value keeping the US-China relationship on a relatively stable track for the foreseeable future.

Real work happens below summit



By Yun Sun
Nonresident fellow with the John L. Thornton China Center

OPINION

Compared to Trump and Xi's Beijing summit in May and Washington summit in September, the APEC summit in Shenzhen will be a multilateral occasion. Any potential side meeting between Trump and Xi will be significantly shorter in duration, which means any negotiations over concrete issues will also be limited. Before the Washington summit, it was announced that the two countries' trade truce would be extended by two months until January 2027. This also alleviates the pressure on the two presidents to deliver major outcomes during their potential bilateral meeting in Shenzhen.

In terms of military security, the two countries have made considerable progress this year. For example, both countries participated in the Indo-Pacific Chiefs of Defense Conference in Canada in late August to early September, where US Pacific Command chief Admiral Samuel Paparo met with the Chinese General Yang Zhibin, the commander of China's Eastern Theater Command. References to a memorandum of understanding on crisis prevention and communication were also made during the Washington summit. More military-to-military communications could be in the pipeline for 2027. As such, another leadership summit at APEC will be politically significant, and concrete deliverables and meaningful progress on functional issues are more likely to be generated at the working level.



Chinese President Xi Jinping greets delegates after speaking at the 2026 APEC CEO Summit held ahead of the APEC China 2026 summit in Shenzhen, southern China's Guangdong Province, on November 18, 2026.
NG HAN GUAN/AP

A three-way meeting with two winners



By Jonathan A. Czin

Michael H. Armacost Chair in Foreign Policy Studies

OPINION

It is difficult to envisage a scenario in which a meeting among Trump, Xi, and Putin has a happy outcome for the United States and its interests. The visual from such a meeting alone would be an unsettling imitation of the "Big Three" meeting at Yalta in the midst of World War II. Although this meeting will be more photo op than substance, like the original Yalta, this meeting could pave the way for a carving up of Eastern Europe to accommodate Russian interests. That is a worst-case and perhaps unlikely scenario. But if these three men emerge elated from this meeting, it would likely bode ill for Ukraine — and more importantly, for European security. Last century, an America buffered by two oceans had to learn the hard way that its interests are in fact bound up with the security of Europe and East Asia — yet we seem to periodically need a remedial reeducation in the realities of geopolitics.

Alternatively, if each of these men finds himself frustrated, that is also a potentially dangerous outcome. Acrimony among heads of state is no mere spat — a personal contretemps can have enduring and dangerous consequences, inflaming rather than assuaging the many points of tension and divergence between these leaders.

While Xi and Putin are more likely to humor than to humiliate Trump, even that outcome is a poor one for the United States. It will bait Trump further down his current path of trying to conciliate rather than counter these two strongmen. And, ironically, Trump's very willingness to participate in such a meeting with so little time to prepare will only make his nominal objective of ending the war in Ukraine even more elusive. Trump has already demonstrated that he has little appetite or wherewithal to avail himself of the leverage he might have over either leader if he were to work in tandem with American allies and partners. And both men know Trump's time is expiring even more quickly than his leverage — and that he will be irrelevant in a mere 26 months. That is a pittance for two leaders who can measure their tenures in decades, not years. Why would either man make a deal with a leader whose time and leverage are waning? They will only do it if they think they can pilfer more from Trump diplomatically than they will be able to gain from the next American president.



Rustem Umerov, the head of the Ukrainian delegation, speaks during a briefing on the second day of trilateral talks between the United States, Russian, and Ukrainian delegations in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, on November 11, 2026.
RULA ROUHANA/REUTERS

More downside risk than upside potential for US



By Ryan Hass

Director of John L. Thornton China Center

OPINION

The risk/reward calculation for all three leaders is different.

For Russia, this meeting offers major upside. By sitting down with the leaders of the world's two most powerful countries in a trilateral format, Putin will be recognized as a major player on the world stage rather than a pariah. He will have achieved his return to the top table in global diplomacy without making any significant concessions on Ukraine or elsewhere.

For China, the meeting will be mixed. On the one hand, Xi will bask in the glow of China serving as the convener and agenda-setter for how China, Russia, and the United States will relate to each other. The meeting will highlight Xi's statesmanship and China's centrality in the international system. On the other hand, Beijing will bear the burden of setting an agenda, ensuring a productive exchange, and holding some responsibility for follow-through on any outcomes the meeting generates. Xi typically avoids owning responsibility for high-profile diplomatic events with uncertain outcomes, so this event will stretch the Chinese side's comfort zone.

For Trump, the meeting will pose greater downside risks than upside potential. Trump will face the risk of being outmaneuvered by more prepared and more cunning leaders. In this triangle, the closest and warmest relationship among the three leaders is between Xi and Putin, who have met over 40 times since 2013 and share a desire to diminish American leadership on the world stage. The meeting's optics will also send a chill to America's allies and partners, who will fear Trump is prioritizing his relations with Xi and Putin over their interests and concerns. This chill will be felt most acutely in Ukraine and Taiwan.

Ultimately, symbolism may prove more enduring than the substance of this meeting. It is unlikely that there will be any breakthroughs on Ukraine or on launching trilateral arms control efforts, Trump's putative focus for this meeting. Beijing has long been unwilling to enter arms control negotiations until it is closer to reaching parity in nuclear capabilities with the United States and Russia. Beijing is concerned that doing so could lock China into a permanently subordinate position that could expose China to risk. At best, the three leaders could find common principles to endorse, such as maintaining open sea lines of communication, reaffirming that nuclear wars can never be won and should never be fought, and affirming an interest in an end to war in Ukraine, while leaving the terms of such an end ambiguous.

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A once-unthinkable alignment



By Scott M. Moore

Managing Director of Global Initiatives, Research, and Strategy at Penn

OPINION

Much has been made of Trump's apparent rapport with the leaders of Russia and China, long regarded as America's foremost adversaries. But a trilateral summit with Putin and Xi in Shenzhen would go well beyond bonhomie. It would dramatically signal that Washington is prepared to trade away the liberal international order it built after 1945.

The White House has framed the meeting around the legitimate goal of advancing nuclear arms control. But the meeting has broader implications. Holding a three-way meeting with Russia, just as Moscow says it will resume talks with Washington and Kyiv, represents Ukraine's worst fear: the image of the war being settled among great powers, over Kyiv's head. Beijing, too, would benefit from being portrayed as a would-be peacemaker, rather than as an enabler for sustaining Russia's war economy.

The summit may also preview a broader convergence of interests. The Wall Street Journal reports that the Trump administration has encouraged former Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán to run for UN secretary-general as a joint US-Russia-China candidate. Meanwhile, Beijing reportedly considered a bid to host the 2028 UN climate conference, the annual meeting of parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, a treaty from which the United States will formally withdraw in February 2027. Washington is not merely leaving a gap in multilateral leadership. In the Orbán case, it appears to be working with Moscow and Beijing to reshape the multilateral system.

For America's allies, the message is stark. A trilateral meeting in Shenzhen will reinforce European concerns that their security is negotiable. In Asia, partners such as Japan and Taiwan will wonder whether their own US security commitments are up for negotiation. The result could be that many will hedge, toward Beijing, toward strategic autonomy, or both.

If the summit goes ahead, it will symbolize a once-unthinkable alignment between the United States and the world's foremost powers. It will also speed up the fracturing of Western alliances that Moscow and Beijing have long sought and make it even more difficult to tackle shared challenges and provide global

China wants spotlight, not arms control



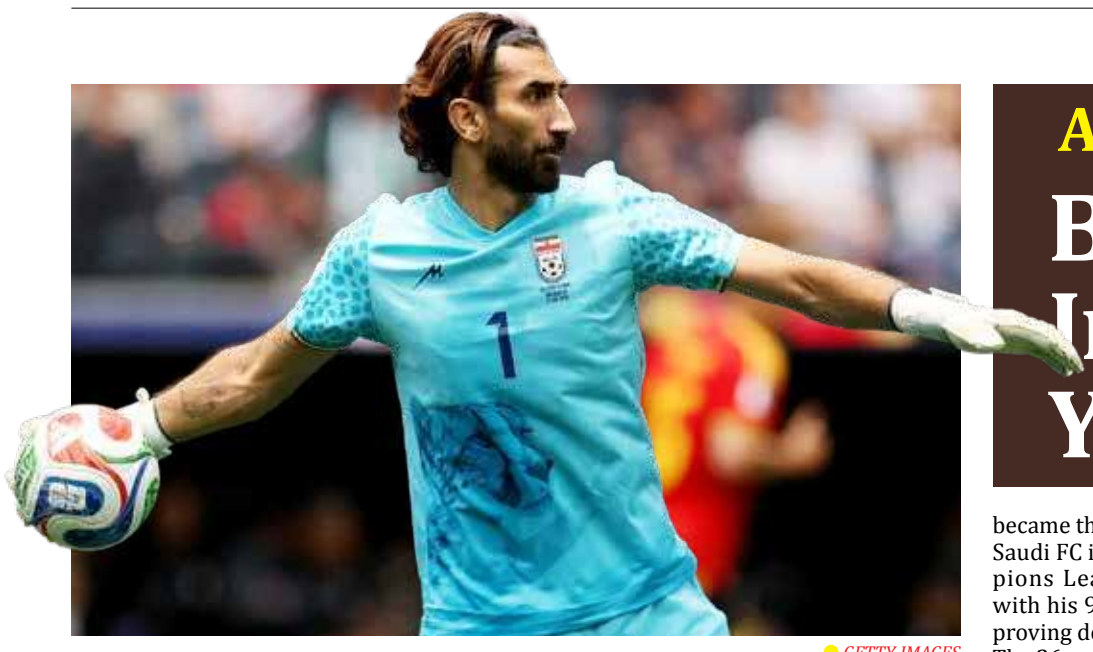
By Yun Sun

Nonresident fellow with the John L. Thornton China Center

OPINION

Russia has been the primary driver of a potential trilateral summit during APEC, with Moscow circulating the possibility as early as this past summer. The Chinese are not necessarily actively driving such a summit. However, if the United States and Russia clearly call for it, there are few reasons why China would not embrace such an event. In recent weeks, the United States has engaged in active Track 2 diplomacy and dialogue with China and Russia. The Chinese enthusiasm is obvious, despite the struggle over the deliverables and substance of such a summit. Some Chinese officials have suggested that some in China are viewing the trilateral summit as "the most significant meeting in the history of international relations since the end of World War II." If it happens, China will be presenting itself as the peer of the United States and Russia and playing a pivotal role in US-Russia relations at a historical moment to end the Ukraine war. That is not an opportunity that Beijing would like to miss. In addition, according to Chinese and Russian interlocutors, Russia has made a genuine plea for China to host the trilateral summit. Beijing will have to develop a really strong and convincing argument about why it would refuse to do its Russian partner a solid. Beijing is likely concerned by Trump's and Secretary of State Marco Rubio's references to such a summit containing a trilateral dialogue on arms control and nuclear weapons. China has consistently rejected the concept of US-China-Russia trilateral arms control and nuclear dialogue, citing its significantly smaller nuclear arsenal. The Chinese do not seem to see the Ukraine war as coming to an end so soon. By the time of the APEC summit, the US midterm elections will already be over, and Trump will have lost the motivation to use peace in Ukraine to boost the Republican Party's popularity. Therefore, a trilateral summit will be unlikely to end the war in Ukraine anyway.

The full article was first published by Brookings.



GETTY IMAGES

AFC Awards Bangkok 2026:

Beiranvand bids to end Iran's wait for Player of Year award

Sports Desk

Iranian international goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand will look to end the country's 22-year wait for the Asian Player of the Year award at the AFC Awards, with the annual ceremony set to take place at Bangkok's Aksra Theatre King Power on Thursday.

Hoping to become the fifth Iranian footballer to win the prestigious award, following Khodadad Azizi (1996), Ali Daei (1999), Mahdi Mahdavikia (2003) and Ali Karimi (2004), the Tractor goalkeeper faces competition from Saudi international duo Feras Al Brikan and Salem Al Dawsari.

The Iranian number one once again stood tall on the biggest stage with his splendid performances at June's FIFA World Cup, even as Team Melli missed out on progress from the group stage on goal difference despite going unbeaten in all three matches.

The highlight of his campaign came against European powerhouse Belgium, when Beiranvand produced an astonishing point-blank save to deny Maxim De Cuyper during a goalless draw. The 34-year-old made seven saves in the match and was named Player of the Match.

One of Asia's finest goalkeepers, the 1.95m giant made his senior international debut in 2015 and has become Team Melli's most-capped goalkeeper with 90 appearances, representing the country at each of the last three editions of the AFC Asian Cup and FIFA World Cup.

Beiranvand, who began his professional career in 2011, also enjoyed a stellar campaign at club level with Tractor FC, helping the team reach the last 16 of the AFC Champions League Elite 2025/26.

The only goalkeeper to be shortlisted for the award since Saudi Arabia's Mohamed Al Deayea in 1996, Beiranvand is making his second appearance among the nominees after 2019 and could make history with a victory.

Meanwhile, instinctively swiveling to unleash an unerring finish, Al Brikan became the hero for Al Ahli Saudi FC in the AFC Champions League Elite final, with his 96th-minute goal proving decisive.

The 26-year-old's contribution in extra time, possibly the most important strike of his career, helped his club retain the crown and become only the second team to win back-to-back titles in the modern era.

Al Brikan, who is the first Al Ahli Saudi player to earn a nomination, also featured in every league match and contributed five goals to the club's third-place finish, while helping them win the Saudi Super Cup for the second time.

A Saudi Arabia international since 2019, with 19 goals in 80 appearances, Al Brikan scored twice in a crucial victory over Indonesia in the World Cup qualifiers to help his country secure qualification for a seventh FIFA World Cup.

At the finals in the United States, the striker started all three matches as the Green Falcons bowed out in the group stage.

Having won the accolade in each of his previous nominations (2022 and 2025), Al Dawsari could become the first-ever three-time men's winner if he retains the trophy at this year's ceremony and matches Aya Miyama's record of three awards in the women's category.

One of Asia's greatest-ever players, the 35-year-old remains an integral figure for both club and country, captaining both sides. After successfully leading Saudi Arabia through the World Cup qualifiers, Al Dawsari featured in every match at the finals to take his tally to nine appearances across three tournaments. He thus moved into joint second place for the most appearances at a FIFA World Cup by a Saudi player, behind only Mohammed Al Deayea's 10.

Capped 114 times by the Green Falcons, the mercurial attacker has spent his entire domestic career at Al Hilal SFC and ranks among the club's leading appearance-makers (506) and goalscorers (147).

Al Dawsari helped Al Hilal enjoy an unbeaten 2025/26 league campaign as they finished second, while also adding a record 10th King's Cup title. On Asia's grandest stage, he helped the Blue Wave reach the last 16 of the AFC Champions League Elite 2025/26, taking his career appearances in the competition to a record-extending 110 and moving up to third on its all-time top scorers' list with 35 goals.

Jafari, futsal duo nominated

In other categories, Marzieh Jafari, who made history last year by becoming the first Iranian to win the Women's Coach of the Year award, has again been shortlisted for the prize. She faces stiff competition from Ma Xiaoxu, head coach of China's U17 women's team, and Park Youn-jeong, coach of South Korea's U20 side.

Iran will also look to claim a fourth successive AFC Futsal Player of the Year award, with international duo Hossein Tayyebi and 2023 winner Saied Ahmadabbasi among the nominees. The pair scored nine goals between them to help Iran secure a record-extending 14th Asian Cup title in January.

The Iranian Football Federation is also shortlisted alongside Football Australia and the Japan Football Association for the AFC President's Recognition Award for Grassroots Football (Gold).

Rostamian aiming for Olympic breakthrough after securing LA28 quota

Sports Desk

Hanieh Rostamian took the first step toward a third consecutive Olympic appearance by securing Iran's first quota place across all sports for the Los Angeles 2028 Games, with the pistol shooter now setting her sights on reaching the final and potentially winning a medal at the multi-sport extravaganza.

Rostamian missed out on the podium in the women's 10m air pistol competition at the ISSF World Championships in Doha, Qatar, last week, finishing fourth, but still managed to secure an Olympic quota place after two Chinese shooters occupied the top two positions.

The 28-year-old Iranian, who is now preparing for her third successive Olympic appearance, will have a chance to pursue a more ambitious target this time around, having fallen short of reaching the final at both the Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024 Games.

Nevertheless, her experience at those two major events, alongside years of competing on the international circuit, could prove invaluable as Iran looks to win only its second shooting medal in Olympic history, following Javad Foroughi's gold in the men's 10m air pistol in Tokyo.

Unlike in her previous appearances, Rostamian will head to Los Angeles with a better understanding of the Olympic environment and what it takes to compete against the world's leading shooters.

She also demonstrated her ability to compete at the highest continental level at the recent Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games, where she won bronze in the mixed event. That achievement, coupled with her latest success in Doha, where she also claimed mixed team silver alongside Vahid Golkhnadan, offers further encouragement about her progress ahead of the next Olympics.



IRISSF

With two Olympic appearances behind her, an Asian Games medal to her name and considerable international experience, Rostamian will be hoping to deliver a different performance in Los Angeles and finally secure a place in the Olympic final, with a medal also within her sights.

Another factor that could benefit the Iranian shooter is her experience competing abroad. Rostamian is among the few Iranian shooters to have pursued a professional career overseas, having competed in the German league alongside international athletes.

Such exposure has given her an opportunity to become familiar with professional shooting environments, gain valuable competitive experience and face different styles of opposition, all of which could contribute to her technical development.

Considering the progress she has made in recent years, targeting an Olympic final and even a place on the podium does not appear beyond her reach.

Shooting, however, is a sport in which the smallest details and the ability to maintain concentration at crucial moments can determine the outcome, with success ultimately depending on performance on the day.

For Rostamian, Los Angeles could represent much more than a third Olympic appearance. It is an opportunity to make up for previous disappointments, demonstrate how much she has developed through years of experience and reach the stage that eluded her in Tokyo and Paris.

The World Championships in Doha, which marked the first stage of Olympic quota allocation for the Los Angeles 2028 Games, have now concluded, with Rostamian becoming the first Iranian shooter to secure a quota place.

However, the road to Los Angeles is far from over, with several major qualification events scheduled for 2027.

According to the announced calendar, shooters will have further opportunities to secure Olympic quota places at competitions hosted by South Korea, Egypt, India, Azerbaijan, Germany, Italy, Mexico and China.

Beyond their importance in the Olympic qualification process, these events will also provide valuable opportunities for athletes to assess their technical readiness and measure themselves against the world's best.

Rostamian, meanwhile, will be looking to make the most of those opportunities, maintain her presence on the international circuit and further strengthen her preparations for what she hopes will be a memorable third Olympic appearance in Los Angeles.

AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup:

Iran to open title defense against Afghanistan



AFC

Sports Desk

Iran will begin its bid for a record-extending fifth title – and third in a row – at the AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup when it takes on Afghanistan in Group B today in Phang Nga, Thailand.

The two sides also met in the group stage of last year's competition, with Iran routing its eastern neighbors 14-0.

Having established themselves as the undisputed kings of Asian beach soccer after winning their fourth continental title in 2025 to move past Japan as the most successful team in the competition's history, Iran will be confident of retaining its crown.

Head coach Ali Naderi remains at the helm, with Ali Mirshekari, who was named Most Valuable Player and finished as the top goalscorer at last year's tournament in Pattaya, leading Iran's charge.

Afghanistan endured a difficult campaign in 2025, finishing bottom of Group C after conceding 27 goals and scoring just five in three matches.

Naderi's men will then face Vietnam at Memories Beach Arena on Saturday before concluding the group stage against Lebanon two days later.

A relative newcomer to the tournament, having made only two previous appearances, Vietnam's enterprising performances at Thailand 2025 will not go unnoticed as head coach Mai Van Duc targets a successful campaign, with reaching the knockout stage a priority for the Southeast Asian side.

Lebanon, meanwhile, will view Thailand 2026 as an opportunity to progress beyond the quarterfinals after reaching the last eight in two of the previous three editions. The West Asian side can draw confidence from a strong showing at the 2026 Arab Beach Soccer Championship earlier this month, where it recorded victories over Oman and Libya.

The top two teams in each of the three groups will be joined by the two best third-placed sides in the quarterfinals.

The top three finishers in the competition will qualify for the 2027 FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup.

Qaleh Geli sheds light on Iran's ancient past

Iranica Desk

Located in Qaleh Afghan Village on the Khanmirza Plain, the ancient archaeological site of Qaleh Geli (lit. Mud Castle), known also as Qaleh-ye Afghan, preserves evidence of several historical periods, including prehistoric times, the Middle Elamite period and the Islamic era.

Historical sites are far more than collections of mounds, artefacts and surviving remnants of the past. They form an essential part of the cultural and historical identity of a region, telling the story of the way of life, civilization and heritage of the people who inhabited the land centuries ago, according to ISNA.

Across Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province, numerous archaeological sites offer valuable opportunities to explore the region's past. These remarkable remains deserve protection not only to preserve the heritage of previous generations but also to pass on the region's historical identity to future generations.

The ancient archaeological complex of Qaleh Geli is one such historical treasure, containing evidence of different periods of human occupation. Archaeological finds and evidence from the site date back to prehistoric times, the Middle Elamite period and the Islamic era, making it an important part of the province's archaeological heritage.

Its preservation requires serious attention, continuous protection and effective measures to prevent encroachment and destruction. The importance of safeguarding such sites becomes particularly clear when we consider that any damage could result in the permanent loss of irreplaceable evidence about the region's history. The site has also been officially listed as a national heritage monument.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a visit to the archaeological site, Ali Asghar Norouzi, an archaeologist, highlighted the historical significance of Qaleh Geli in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province.

He said the archaeological complex is located in Qaleh Afghan Village and covers approximately 15 hectares, of which nearly four hectares comprise the main archaeological mound. The mound stands about 25 meters high.



IRNA

Referring to the history of the site's discovery, Norouzi said the archaeological mound had been identified before the 1979 Islamic Revolution, but its remains had not been comprehensively studied.

In 1996, archaeological test excavations were carried out to determine the site's boundaries. These investigations revealed the extent and significance of the archaeological complex. The discovery of a cuneiform inscription further enhanced its historical importance.

Norouzi described Qaleh Geli as the most important and largest archaeological site in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province.

According to studies conducted at the site, the mound was formed through the accumulation of successive layers of human occupation, including the remains of houses and other buildings constructed during different historical periods. Following their destruction, new structures were repeatedly built on the same location.

He said the archaeological evidence identified so far dates back approximately 7,000 years, adding that further research could reveal even earlier phases of occupation.

The site was inhabited and used repeatedly throughout different historical periods and, at certain times, served as one of the region's important centers.

Explaining its significance during prehistoric times, Norouzi said that approximately 7,000 years ago, Qaleh Geli functioned as a central settlement because of its size and importance, with various activities taking place there.

The remains of pottery kilns are among the archaeological evidence indicating the activities carried out at the site during that period.

The archaeologist also discussed the remains dating from the Elamite period, explaining that Elamite history is generally divided into the Old, Middle and Neo-Elamite periods.

He said that most of the archaeological materials identified at Qaleh Geli so far belong to the Old and Middle Elamite periods.

According to inscriptions and cuneiform texts discovered at the site, one of the kings of the Middle Elamite period made offerings at this location through a temple identified by archaeologists. These offerings were intended to secure the health and well-being of the king and his family.

Norouzi said this evidence demonstrates the site's considerable religious and historical significance during that period, suggesting that the Elamite king personally visited the location to perform religious rituals.

He further emphasized that archaeological evidence and research indicate that Qaleh Geli also held considerable political importance. At one stage in its history, the site served as an administrative and political center for the surrounding region.

Evidence also suggests that several generations of kings visited Qaleh Geli and that the site played a significant role in controlling and administering a substantial part of the High Zagros region.

Discussing the site's historical standing, Norouzi said Qaleh Geli had been an important regional center during the Elamite period but subsequently experienced a period of decline.

Nevertheless, archaeological evidence indicates that the site once again assumed an important central role during the Islamic era.

How clothing reflected social class in Qajar-era Iran

Iranica Desk







iichs.ir

Iran's historic bazaars during the Qajar era (1789-1925) served not only as major centers of trade and commerce but also as important social and cultural hubs. They were places where goods were exchanged, people interacted, news circulated and different segments of society came together.

In a written account, Mohammad Salehi, head of museums in Markazi Province, said the clothing worn by people in bazaars reflected their social standing, economic circumstances, religious beliefs, climatic conditions and prevailing customs, according to chtn.ir.

Examining the clothing of men and women in Qajar-era bazaars, he noted, offers valuable insight into Iran's social structure and clothing traditions during the period.

Men's clothing in Qajar-era bazaars varied according to social status, occupation, financial means and local climate. Nevertheless, certain garments were widely worn across different segments of society.

One of the most common items was the Qaba, a long robe generally worn over a shirt. Shirts, loose-fitting trousers and various types of outer garments were also essential components of men's attire.

In many cases, men wore a sash around their waists, which served not only as part of their clothing but also as a practical means of carrying small personal belongings.

The material and quality of garments varied according to individuals' financial circumstances, ranging from simple, inexpensive fabrics to finer and more costly textiles.

Headwear was another important element of men's clothing. Styles of hats changed throughout the Qajar period, with different types becoming popular among various social groups at different times. Turbans were also commonly worn by certain groups, particularly religious scholars.

Men's footwear was generally chosen according to their occupations and daily activities. Merchants, craftsmen and laborers typically wore simple, durable shoes, while wealthier individuals could afford better-quality footwear.

The clothing of merchants, shopkeepers, porters and artisans also differed according to the nature of their daily work.

Women's clothing during the Qajar period was influenced by religious beliefs, social conventions and prevailing cultural norms.

In many Iranian cities, women wore garments in public that covered their bodies and hair. However, clothing styles varied across regions and social classes.

The chador, a full-body outer covering, was among the most common garments worn by women in public. Face veils or coverings were also used in some regions and among certain groups of women, although their prevalence varied across cities and historical periods.

Underneath the chador, women wore garments such as shirts, skirts or trousers, with their styles, fabrics and decorative details differing according to economic and social circumstances.

Women from wealthy families generally had greater access to high-quality fabrics, elaborately decorated garments and a wider range of jewelry. By contrast, women from less affluent households tended to wear simpler, more practical clothing.

These differences reflected the close relationship between dress, economic circumstances and social standing.

Women's presence in bazaars also depended on the cultural and social conditions of each region. Some visited markets to purchase daily necessities, fabrics and household goods or to engage in economic activities.

Women involved in certain occupations and production-related activities also wore practical clothing suited to the nature of their work.

Qajar-era bazaars brought together people from a wide range of social backgrounds. Merchants, tradespeople, artisans, laborers, shoppers and travelers moved through these commercial spaces, each wearing clothing that reflected different lifestyles and circumstances.

The type of garment and quality of its fabric could sometimes indicate an individual's economic and social position. However, clothing alone cannot provide a definitive measure of a person's social standing.

Climate was another important factor influencing clothing choices. In colder regions, thicker outer garments were more common, while people in warmer areas generally wore lighter clothing suited to local weather conditions.

Fashion during the Qajar period was also influenced by cultural developments and contact with other countries. In particular, some changes in clothing styles became apparent among certain segments of society during the later Qajar period, although the extent to which these changes were adopted varied across social classes and regions.

Studying the clothing worn by men and women in historic bazaars provides valuable information not only about everyday life but also about social relations, class distinctions, consumption patterns and cultural developments.

Historical documents, travel accounts, photographs and surviving paintings from the Qajar period can help researchers reconstruct clothing styles and better understand how people dressed and interacted in the bazaars of the time.

Overall, men's and women's clothing in Qajar-era bazaars formed an important part of Iran's social and cultural identity. Men's garments, including the Qaba, shirts, trousers and various types of headwear, as well as women's chadors and underlying garments, were worn according to social, economic, cultural and climatic conditions.

Differences in fabric quality, tailoring, decoration and garment design also reflected the social diversity of the period.

The study of clothing in Qajar-era bazaars can therefore serve as an important area of historical and anthropological research, contributing to a deeper understanding of everyday life in Iran and the preservation of the country's cultural heritage.

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Leader offers condolences over death of senior cleric Vahid Khorasani



Grand Ayatollah Hossein Vahid Khorasani

Social Desk

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei offered condolences over the death of Grand Ayatollah Hossein Vahid Khorasani, praising his decades of teaching and his influence on Shiite seminaries.

In a message dated November 17, 2026, the Leader described Vahid Khorasani as a leading figure in teaching Islamic jurisprudence and legal theory.

He said the cleric's two daily classes had been among the seminaries' most important academic gatherings in recent decades.

Ayatollah Khamenei said the lectures combined Vahid Khorasani's own research with close study of the views of prominent scholars from recent generations of the Najaf seminary in southern Iraq.

The cleric's command of their work and clear, structured and rigorous teaching made each session valuable to students of religious sciences, he said.

Many teachers and senior scholars at the seminary in Qom, central Iran, and at other religious schools across the country had attended Vahid Khorasani's classes, the message said.

Ayatollah Khamenei also praised the cleric's deep and sincere devotion to the family of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), saying it was evident in both his words and conduct.

He said Vahid Khorasani's sustained efforts in the service of Islamic law and Shiite religious tradition had earned him a significant place among believers and in religious seminaries.

Vahid Khorasani was a prominent teacher of Islamic jurisprudence and legal theory in Qom, one of the main centers of Shiite religious education.

Italian composer to join Tehran symphony concert

Arts & Culture Desk

The Tehran Symphony Orchestra will perform Italian composer Antonio Pappalardo's 'Petros Enì' on Wednesday, with Pappalardo attending, in a concert highlighting cultural and religious ties between Iran and Italy.

Pappalardo arrived in Tehran on Tuesday evening ahead of the performance at the iconic Vahdat Hall in central Tehran.

Composed in 2006 to mark the 500th anniversary of the start of construction of the new St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City, the symphonic oratorio tells the story of the life and mission of Saint Peter the Apostle through orchestral and choral music.

The Tehran performance coincides with the 400th anniversary of the consecration of the basilica's present structure in 1626. The site is one of Christianity's most important religious centers.

The concert is a joint project of Iran's Roudaki Foundation, the Organization of Culture and Islamic Relations, and the Iranian cultural mission in Italy.



Members of the Tehran Symphony Orchestra perform in an undated file photo.
M.MAHDI POURARAB/IRNA

Pappalardo's presence is expected to give Iranian musicians an opportunity to meet the composer and perform his work in his presence.

The orchestra will be conducted by Nasir Heydarian and accompanied by a choir.

Separately, a discussion titled 'From Composition to Artistic Identity: What Does Artificial Intelligence Take Away from Music, and What Does It Add?' is scheduled for November 29 at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art.

The event will examine artificial intelligence's impact on music, including its implications for artistic identity and creativity.

Iran's solar power capacity rises more than fivefold in two years



AKBAR TAVAKKOLI/IRNA

Social Desk

Iran's solar power capacity has increased more than fivefold in two years, an environmental official said, as Tehran urged developing countries to secure greater access to climate finance and clean technologies at a D-8 meeting in Antalya, Turkey.

Ahmad Taheri, head of the National Center for Air and Climate Change at Iran's Department of Environment, said the growth reflected the country's commitment to renewable energy and low-carbon development.

Speaking at the ministerial meeting on the sidelines of the UN climate summit COP31, Taheri cited shared challenges facing D-8 members, including water shortages, drought, desertification, extreme weather, ecosystem degradation and threats to food security.

He called for stronger regional cooperation and coordinated action.

"Developing countries, despite their smaller share of historical greenhouse gas emissions, were among the most vulnerable to climate change," he said.

He commended fair and predictable access to climate finance, including grants, preferential loans and technology transfers.

Taheri also said unilateral coercive measures should not restrict access to climate funding, environmental technologies or essential equipment.

"Iran is ready to share expertise with D-8 members in clean technology, water management, climate resilience and joint projects," he added.

The meeting, chaired by Turkish Environment Minister and COP31 President Murat Kurum, addressed climate commitments, South-South cooperation, adaptation and technology transfers.

Delegates presented national climate plans, known as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and discussed a 2027-2030 climate and environmental cooperation roadmap.

The Iranian delegation was led by Saeed Mahmoudi, deputy head of the Department of Environment for human environment affairs.

The meeting also addressed implementation of the Antalya Ministerial Action Framework and the D-8 Climate and Environment Roadmap. COP31 runs from November 9 to 20, 2026.

Asian, Pacific libraries back regional AI cooperation plan

Arts & Culture Desk

National libraries from 14 Asian and Pacific countries have endorsed a regional working group on artificial intelligence and invited Iran to coordinate its initial activities, the National Library and Archives of Iran said.

The decision came at the 32nd Conference of Directors of National Libraries in Asia and Oceania (CDNLAO), hosted online by Iran for the first time on November 17, 2026. The meeting focused on the role of national libraries in the age of AI.

Representatives from Singapore, Armenia, Bangladesh, Brunei, the Maldives, India, Qatar, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Pakistan, China and Japan attended.

Participants backed a voluntary framework to identify shared priorities, exchange expertise and develop joint projects.

They asked the National Library and Archives of Iran to consult interested members and coordinate the working group's initial activities.

Proposed areas of cooperation include using AI to digitize and preserve documentary heritage, develop bibliographic metadata, improve knowledge organization and expand multilingual search and information retrieval.

The final statement also identified copyright, data governance, the reliability of AI-generated information and specialist training for library staff as priorities.



The 32nd Conference of Directors of National Libraries in Asia and Oceania, hosted online by Iran, is held on November 17, 2026.
MEHR NEWS AGENCY

The working group will draft an operational roadmap covering priority activities, joint projects, participating institutions and implementation requirements.

It has been asked to present an initial report and proposed plans within 12 months, at the 2027 conference.

Participation will be voluntary and subject to each library's resources, capacity and national laws.

The conference also featured Iran's experience with automated thesis cataloging, an AI-powered system for issuing national bibliographic records, a research assistant drawing on National Library resources and national knowledge-management infrastructure.